ABSTRACT

TITLE OF THESIS: Outsourcing War: An Analysis of Proxy Warfare

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Proxy warfare is a type of conflict that has yet to be adequately studied in existing literature. This thesis fills this void by first establishing an academic definition for proxy warfare, which is *a conflict where at least one power is using a third party as a supplement or as a substitute for fighting another power directly*. Three defining characteristics were derived from this definition in order to create a practical framework for analyzing both proxy warfare and specific proxy wars. The three characteristics are the proxy groups that are involved, the conflict that the proxy war takes place in, and the overriding dispute that is driving states' involvement in the local conflict. These are referred to as the proxy, the conflict, and the point, respectively, and together create a trinitarian construct for analysis. An examination of each element individually revealed that there are two types of strategies that states can use to fight proxy wars, war by proxy and war with proxy. These are differentiated by the degree of interaction between the proxy and its state sponsor. The strategy each state engages in determines which type of proxy war is being waged, which can be either mixed or pure. This theoretical construct is explained then applied to two case studies, the ongoing Somali conflict since 2004 and the Kashmir conflict since 1990. The intent of the case studies is to demonstrate the validity and utility of the analytical framework outlined in this thesis.

The goal behind creating this framework is to discover the best method for countering this poorly understood but increasingly prolific type of conflict. It provides a method for an analyst, in either intelligence or academia, to organize existing conflict data and identify areas of insufficient information in order to formulate a strategy for resolving the conflict. The only way such a strategy will be effective is if it is based on a comprehensive understanding of the conflict in question, and within the existing literature a basis for understanding proxy warfare was noticeably absent. The framework presented in this thesis is particularly useful in dissecting complex conflicts like Somalia, where the multitude of actors and the complicated relationships among them can make analysis difficult.

UNCLASSIFIED

OUTSOURCING WAR:
AN ANALYSIS OF PROXY WARFARE

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my family and friends, because without their support I would not have made it this far. I would also like to thank the Lucky Dogs of Track 13, who made this year both informative and enjoyable.

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INTRODUCTION

> "It is increasingly apparent to both coalition and Iraqi leaders that Iran…seeks to turn the Iraqi special groups into [a] Hezbollah-like force to serve its interest and fight a proxy war against the Iraqi state and coalition forces in Iraq."
> -Gen. David Petraeus[1]

Proxy warfare as a type of conflict is by no means a recent development in warfare. Though many writers believe that the heyday of proxy warfare was the Cold War period, history has many examples that date back well before the 20th century. One such example close to American hearts is our own War for Independence where France at first secretly supported the revolutionaries as part of its ongoing struggle against the British Empire. Prior to the war, the European powers encouraged anti-British propaganda throughout the colonies and provided valuable supplies and support once hostilities broke out.[2] Competition between Britain and France spawned several other proxy conflicts through their respective colonies. The Cold War was similarly characterized by a series of proxy conflicts as the United States and the Soviet Union sought indirect outlets and out-of-the-way locations for their battles in order to avoid a costly head-on collision. As the Soviet Union grew closer to collapse, these proxy struggles waned and proxy warfare seemed to have lost its relevance as a tool of the national strategist. Some argued that proxy wars were a characteristic unique to a bipolar

[1] Ann Scott Tyson, "How Significant Would the Pullback Be?" *The Washington Post,* September 11, 2007.

[2] Roy Godson, *Dirty Tricks or Trump Cards: U.S. Covert Action and Counterintelligence* (Washington: Brassey's, 1995) 19.

international system and would have no place in a world with only one superpower. [3] However, as the evidence mounts of Iran's support of insurgent and terrorist groups throughout the Middle East, American policymakers, analysts, and warfighters are revisiting the issue of proxy warfare. Now authors are contending that the incentives for states to pursue these types of "nontraditional modes of war" are actually increasing as the potential lethality and capability of non-state actors is becoming clearer.[4]

CONCERNS

One problem with studying proxy warfare is that while the phrase is commonly used in newspapers, magazines, and academic literature, there has been a lack of systematic examination of the phenomenon. The phrase is frequently attached to a conflict without explaining what is meant by it or how the conflict in question is an example of it. For example, in Michael Haas's analysis of the Cambodian civil war, he states "a proxy war was in progress"[5] with no further explanation of who the proxies were, who they were acting as proxies for, or what the ultimate point of the proxy war was, leaving the reader to try to infer the answers to these questions from later chapters. Similarly, discussion of the Cold War often references the "bitter proxy wars" that were fought during the period without explaining which of the many conflicts that broke out

[3] Louise Richardson, "Global Rebels: Terrorist Organizations as Trans-national Actors," *Terrorism and Counterterrorism: Understanding the New Global Environment*, eds. Russell Howard and Reid Sawyer. (Guildford, CT: McGraw-Hill, 2004) 68.

[4] Frank Hoffman, "Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars" (Arlington: Potomac Institute for Policy Studies, December 2007) 8.

[5] Michael Haas, *Genocide by Proxy: Cambodian Pawn on a Superpower Chessboard* (New York: Praeger, 1991) 36.

between the 1950s and the 1990s could be considered proxy wars. [6] Unfortunately this type of terminological carelessness is common and leaves readers with a sense that they know what proxy warfare is when all they really know is basically what it might look like. This type of "I'll know it when I see it"[7] approach is extraordinarily arbitrary given proxy warfare's long history and current prevalence. You can find a similar frustration in Bruce Hoffman's efforts to describe terrorism: "most people have a vague idea or impression of what terrorism is, but lack a more precise, concrete, and truly explanatory definition of the word."[8] On the other hand, a phrase like "guerilla warfare" brings to mind a clear set of defining characteristics such that when a conflict is labeled a guerilla war the reader already has an idea about what the conflict is like and how it is being conducted.

The lack of academic attention to the concept of proxy war does not reflect military discussions of it or its application in practice. The U.S. military, one institution responsible for proxy warfare, has been engaging in this tactic since the 1950s. There is an established body of literature on this topic within these circles, though it is more commonly referred to as "surrogate warfare." The U.S. Department of Defense, particularly the Special Forces of the Department of the Army, the Special Operations Command (SOCOM) and, more recently, the Marine Special Operations Command (MARSOC), are fully aware of the benefits of engaging proxies to fight in foreign wars. The high operations tempo brought on by the recent conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan,

[6] Charles William Maynes, "The New Pessimism," *Foreign Policy* no. 100 (1995).

[7] Jacobellis v. Ohio, 378 U.S. 184, 197 (1964).

[8] Bruce Hoffman, "Defining Terrorism," *Terrorism and Counterterrrorism: Understanding the New Security Environment,* edited by Russell Howard and Reid Sawyer. (Guilford, CT: McGraw-Hill/Dushkin, 2004) 3.

which has stretched the resources of U.S. ground forces, has caused the military to appreciate anew the role that indigenous fighters can play in achieving national goals.[9] This strategy has become increasingly important as the United States seeks ways to maximize capability while limiting commitment and casualties.[10] Despite this recently renewed interest, however, within the military little attention is paid to what proxy warfare is in and of itself. Instead, most authors address how these forces are currently being used and how they can be used more effectively. While this discussion is valuable, and will be included in this analysis, it still does not represent a systematic examination of proxy warfare.

Another difficulty in examining proxy warfare is that other better known areas of study overlap onto the phenomenon. For example, from the viewpoint of the supporting state, engaging in a proxy war is simply one of many types of covert action. The United States' support to Afghan *mujahideen* resisting the 1970 Soviet invasion is one of the most well known proxy wars of the Cold War but the most extensive academic coverage of this conflict has been in the covert action genre. This literature primarily analyzes the efficiency and effectiveness of the United States' involvement. On the other hand, when proxy warfare is discussed from the viewpoint of the state being targeted it is better known as state-sponsored terrorism, a largely political term that has nevertheless been adopted by the academic community as a distinct phenomenon in international relations. Therefore any comprehensive analysis of proxy warfare will have to borrow concepts from many existing disciplines in order to describe a phenomenon that has been talked

[9] Kelly H. Smith, "Surrogate Warfare for the 21st Century," (Masters Thesis, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2006) 2.

[10] Priscilla Sellers, "Incorporation of Indigenous Forces in Major Theater War: Advantages, Risks, and Considerations," *Student Issue Paper* 04, no. 05. U.S. Army War College (July 2004): 4.

around but not talked about.

IMPORTANCE

An incomplete understanding of this phenomenon, which fails to account for the various forms that proxies and proxy war can take, will make it difficult to develop a strategy to counter this type of warfare. Developing an effective counterstrategy is crucial because American soldiers are facing it again on the battlefield in Iraq and Afghanistan, just as they faced it in Vietnam. The proxy war between Pakistan and India sparked a tense nuclear standoff in 1987[11] and Africa has been and still is plagued by proxy wars. As the twentieth anniversary of the end of the Cold War approaches, the United States is finally recognizing that proxy warfare did not end with the Soviet Union. This realization can be quantified by the fact that of the four priorities outlined in the *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism,* the third is to eliminate "support and sanctuary from rogue states,"[12] which is one of the integral parts of a proxy war. However, reducing the complexities of proxy warfare into the pejorative concept of "state sponsored terrorism" would be a mischaracterization of an important type of conflict.

The intent of this thesis is to provide a definition of proxy warfare and describe the characteristics that make this type of conflict unique. It is essential that we understand this type of warfare because it will inform decisions on multiple levels. As the United States faces proxies in a battle space, it will impact on operational and tactical strategies; having a state as a sponsor changes the behavior and logistics of the supported group or state, all of which need to be taken into consideration when battling these actors.

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[11] Praveen Swami, "Failed Threats and Flawed Fences: India's Military Responses to Pakistan's Proxy War," *India Review 3* no 2 (April 2004) 154.

[12] *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism* (September 2006) 15.

Politically and diplomatically, it changes the dialogue surrounding the conflict and will influence diplomatic behavior towards the supporting nation because, as the *National Strategy* points out, ending state support is a priority when trying to defeat proxy groups.

On the intelligence side, it will influence collection tasking as well as the allocation of collection and analysis resources as more attention is devoted to understanding the type and amount of support that the proxy is receiving. This intelligence is critical for providing insights into capabilities and intentions and for getting inside the opponent's decision cycle.[13] Knowing what a proxy war looks like will enable analysts to identify them more quickly so that the relationship between the proxy and the sponsor can be targeted before it becomes too entrenched to be easily defeated. For example, during the United States' Civil War, the Union hastened the defeat of the Confederacy by working throughout the conflict to prevent the British from supporting the secession; without money and arms from Britain, the agricultural South could not maintain the war effort.[14] Similarly, part of France's tactical and operational success in Algeria was because it was able to effectively seal the borders with Morocco and Tunisia, preventing the revolutionary forces from finding a safe haven and support in these sympathetic nations.[15] On the other hand, the Soviet Union was unable to prevent the United States and Pakistan from supporting the Afghan rebels, an event which proved to

[13] Troy S. Thomas, *Beneath The Surface: Intelligence Preparation of the Battlespace for Counterterrorism* (Washington D.C: Center For Strategic Intelligence Research, 2004) 2.

[14]Susan-Mary Grant, *The War for a Nation: The American Civil War* (New York: Routledge, 2006) 83-84.

[15] Jeffery Record, "External Assistance: Enabler of Insurgent Success," *Parameters 36* no. 2 (Autumn 2006) 47.

be a turning point in the conflict.[16] To turn attention to the present conflict, an anticipation of Iranian involvement in Iraq may have prevented or slowed the Shi'a leader Muqtada al-Sadr and his militia's quick rise to power.

Looking to the future, an understanding of proxy warfare will also aid in making estimates regarding the types of conflicts that may arise, allowing analysts to identify future hot spots before an actual conflict breaks out. In ongoing conflicts that can be considered proxy wars, such as the civil war in Somalia, knowledge of the underlying dispute that prompted state involvement may point the way to resolving the "hot" conflict. Academically, understanding proxy warfare on a theoretical level will allow us to evaluate it as a form of warfare in general and perhaps to refine existing doctrine, tactics, techniques, and procedures on how to counter these types of wars.

HYPOTHESIS

Based on my research in all of the aforementioned areas, I define a proxy war as *a conflict where at least one power is using a third party as a supplement or as a substitute for fighting another power directly*. There are three key elements that make up a proxy war and differentiate it from other types of warfare, which are the proxy, a hosting conflict, and an underlying intent for becoming involved in the hosting conflict. This is the comprehensive definition of proxy warfare that that has yet to be found either in academia or in government publications. I will show that this definition and the three characteristics encompasses all types of proxy wars and can be analytically useful for establishing whether or not a proxy war is being waged. The following chapter will

[16] Ivan Arreguin-Toft, *How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) 186.

explain the definition in more detail and show how I derived the three characteristics from it. All three elements must be present for the conflict to be a proxy war, and together they make up proxy warfare's "perfect trinity."[17] This chapter also describes types of state support as well as a group's costs and benefits in having a state sponsor.

Based on these characteristics, Chapter Three will describe and discuss two main tactics or types of strategic behavior in engaging in a proxy war, known as war by proxy and war with proxy. The difference between the two, the involvement of the supporting state's conventional forces, is simple in theory but changes the entire character of the conflict. This chapter will also discuss the risks and benefits that a state faces when engaging in either type of strategic behavior.

By analyzing a state or state's behavior in engaging in proxy war we can separate proxy wars into two loose categories, "mixed" and "pure." The demarcation between the two types is based on how many powers in the conflict are using a proxy and how they are being used. Mixed and pure proxy wars will be discussed in Chapter Four.

In Chapter Five, the analytical framework and terminology that was described in the previous chapters will be applied to two case studies, which are the current war in Somalia and the ongoing conflict in the Kashmir between Pakistan and India. These studies are meant to show that not only does the definition established in this thesis satisfy an academic deficiency but that it is also useful for analysis.

Chapter Six will draw on the previous chapters and the lessons learned from the case studies to suggest strategies for targeting and defeating proxy warfare. It will also discuss the future of proxy wars and suggest areas for further research.

[17] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, eds./trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976) 89.

CHAPTER 2

PROXY WARFARE

> "Our task therefore is to develop a theory that maintains a balance between these three tendencies, like an object suspended between three magnets."
> - Karl von Clausewitz[18]

Proxy warfare has a long and largely unrecognized tradition in international relations. Much like warfare itself, proxy wars have evolved over time in response to changes in technology and other political and social pressures. This is to be expected; as societies change, social institutions and behavior will change with them. However, while conventional warfare was moving through its four generations[19] into some unknown but much theorized fifth, the core principles that govern proxy warfare have remained constant. Every proxy war must have three elements: the proxy, a local conflict for the war to take place in, and an ulterior motive in engaging the proxy. If proxy war is the "what," these characteristics are the "who," the "where," and the "why." Together they form, with a bow to Clausewitz, what I call "proxy warfare's perfect trinity." Having two out of three of these characteristics is insufficient for a conflict to be a proxy war. It may represent a situation that has the potential to break out into proxy war or is another type of situation entirely, depending on which aspect is absent. As with every type of strategy, proxy warfare has its costs and benefits for both the proxy and the sponsor. The costs and benefits that the proxy actor faces when deciding to accept state sponsorship will be

[18] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, eds./trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976) 89.

[19] Thomas X. Hammes, *The Sling and the Stone: On War in the 21st Century* (St. Paul: Zenith Press, 2004)

discussed in this chapter, while those that the sponsor faces will be explained in the next.

HISTORY

In terms of international geopolitics, the 17th and 18th century has much in common with the Cold War. In both periods the world was divided up into zones of influence dominated by one of two great powers. Along the edges of these zones the two powers competed for resources and influence, competitions that often broke out into small hot wars. Two hundred years ago, these wars were fought in the colonies. Fifty years ago, these wars were fought in Third World nations where the process of decolonization provided an abundance of opportunities for proxy warfare.[20] France supported the American Colonies against the British as a way to weaken their traditional enemy,[21] and the Soviet Union did much the same in Vietnam against the United States. In return, Britain supported Spanish guerillas as part of the Napoleonic War and the United States supported fighters rebelling against the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Proxy war, like terrorism, is by no means an invention of the 20th century. Some authors even point to proxy wars from as far back as the Roman period, when the rule of *Divide et Impera* applied to other states as well as fractious minorities.[22]

Despite this long history, during the 1990s many authors considered proxy warfare to be a relic unique to the Cold War, to be relegated to history alongside the idea of mutually assured destruction and a nuclear holocaust. However, just as the threat of

[20] Donna M. Schlagheck, "The Superpowers, Foreign Policy, and Terrorism," *International Terrorism: Characteristics, Causes, Controls*. Edited by Charles Kegley Jr. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990) 171.

[21] Jeffery Record, *Beating Goliath: Why Insurgencies Win* (Washington DC: Potomac Books, Inc, 2007) 26.

[22] Walter Laqueur, *New Terrorism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000) 156.

weapons of mass destruction has re-emerged in the form of renewed proliferation and the prospect of nuclear terrorism, proxy warfare has been given a new life. More recent analyses, uncolored by the idea that fall of the Soviet Union created peace dividends and instituted a global *Pax Americana*, show that proxy warfare did not die out with the end of the Cold War. Instead, it has evolved in tandem with the global political system into a form that looks very unlike its Cold War antecedents.[23]

There are two theories that try to explain why proxy warfare evolved away from the Cold War model. The first points to the 1979 seizure of the American Embassy in Tehran as the watershed event, when the world watched as a handful of students were able to hold the United States at bay. Though the students claimed to have been working independently from the government, the lesson that many states drew from this event was that they didn't need a nuclear weapon to be a player on the international scene. Supporting guerilla or terrorist groups was a relatively inexpensive and potentially risk-free way to attack a stronger enemy.[24] This theory also explains why there was an increased proliferation in non-state groups to act as proxies throughout the 1980s and 90s.[25]

The other theory argues that the fall of the Soviet Union was the pivotal event in the evolution of proxy warfare. Counter to most of the prevailing opinion at the time, in the 1990s proxy warfare did not die out so much as it decentralized. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia could no longer afford to offer the same support to

[23] Daniel Byman et. al, *Trends in Outside Support for Insurgent Movements* (Washington DC: Rand Corporation, 2001) 2.

[24] Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Colombia University Press, 1998) 258.

[25] R. Hrair Dekmejian, *Spectrum of Terror* (Washington DC: CQ Press, 2007) 204.

its proxies. This fact became clear very quickly with the onset of the Balkan conflict, when the United States intervened uncontested in a region that, two years prior, was firmly in the Soviet camp.[26] Russia protested, but was in no shape economically or militarily to back up the communist regime in Yugoslavia. Realizing that it was the uncontested winner of the Cold War, the United States also began to reduce the support and commitments that it had previously afforded to its proxies.[27] The governments that owed their stability to superpower support began to collapse, and the non-state actors that relied on this support were forced to look elsewhere for sponsors. The overall result was that proxy war proliferated as regional actors stepped into the vacuum. Though some states provide support to groups far beyond their borders, on the whole, proxy warfare became a regional rather than global phenomenon, with most state support being provided by neighboring governments.[28] Along with the end of superpower sponsorship came a reduction in the scale of assistance provided to the proxies, primarily because the new set of patrons did not have access to the same resources as the two superpowers.[29] The proliferation of conflicts and sponsorship led to a brief spike in proxy wars during the 1990s which declined following the September 11, 2001 attacks and the declaration of the Bush Doctrine regarding state sponsors of terror.[30] However, the third world has apparently been unimpressed by this doctrine as proxy wars still rage throughout Africa,

[26] Michael Lind, *Vietnam: The Necessary War* (New York: The Free Press, 1999) xi.

[27] Daniel Byman et. al., *Trends* 17.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid., 104.

[30] Daniel Byman, *Deadly Connections: States that Sponsor Terrorism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) 59.

the Middle East, and Central Asia.

DEFINITION

When looking for a definition for proxy warfare the dictionary, that mainstay of the inquiring mind, is uninformative. The *Random House Webster's Unabridged Dictionary* had no entry for proxy war.[31] An online dictionary from 2006 states simply that it is "a war instigated by a major power that does not itself participate,"[32] a definition that does not explain why the Vietnam War or the Korean War are referred to as proxy wars.[33] In both cases the United States (and in the case of the Korean War, China) had military forces that were engaged in combat alongside the "proxies." This implies that a looser definition is required, one that may stretch the boundaries of how we understand the concept of a proxy.

First we must make a distinction between defining a tactic of war and defining a type of war. It is not as easy to make this distinction as it would seem. On one end of the spectrum we have terms that clearly refer to a tactic, such as terrorism or swarming, and on the other we have phrases that clearly describe a type of war, such as revolutionary war or insurgency.[34] Other phrases, however, can be either. Guerilla warfare is one example. In these instances, the type of war is defined by the primary tactic used in it, so an actor can fight in a "guerilla war" using "guerilla warfare" tactics. The fact that

[31] *Random House Webster's Unabridged Dictionary,* 2nd ed.

[32] *WordNet 3.0,* Princeton University; available from dictionary.com http://dictionary.reference.com /browse/proxy%20war; Internet; accessed 16 October, 2007.

[33] Charles William Maynes, "The New Pessimism," *Foreign Policy* no. 100 (1995).

[34] Troy Thomas in *Defining the Intelligence Battlespace* makes the same distinction but uses the labels "forms of war" and "strategic concepts," respectively.

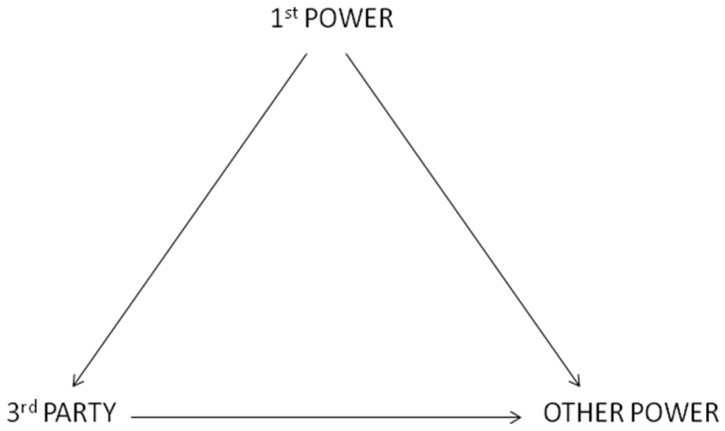
"guerilla" describes both a tactic and a type of war is why there is a difference in *fighting* a guerilla war and fighting *in* a guerrilla war. Proxy warfare also falls into this category. An actor could be fighting in a proxy war but not be fighting a proxy war. However, in this case there are a few subtleties that do not exist in a guerilla war. The fact that there may be three or more distinct actors in a proxy war (the bare minimum being an actor on each side of a conflict and at least one proxy) complicates the issue. While at this point making such a distinction seems tautological, it will be important in later chapters as we describe two distinct tactics of proxy warfare that allows us to differentiate between two types of proxy wars.

Having said that, proxy warfare as a tactic is *the act of using a third party as a supplement or a substitute for fighting another power directly.* This definition is more inclusive and provides a way to distinguish between two methods of fighting in proxy war based on whether the proxy is acting as a supplement or a substitute. In this thesis they will be labeled as a war with proxy or a war by proxy, respectively. While the strict definition of "proxy" does not incorporate the idea of the surrogate and the represented party acting together, this additional qualifier allows for the inclusion of Cold War conflicts like the Vietnam and Korean Wars and some aspects of the current conflict in Somalia. From this tactical definition we can describe a proxy war as *a conflict where at least one power is using a third party as a supplement or as a substitute for fighting another power directly*.

From this definition I derived three distinct characteristics that differentiate it from other types of conflicts. To do so, I drew out the three actors that are a part of a proxy war: the supporting state, the third party (which I will call the actor), and the "other

power" that is being targeted by the third party.

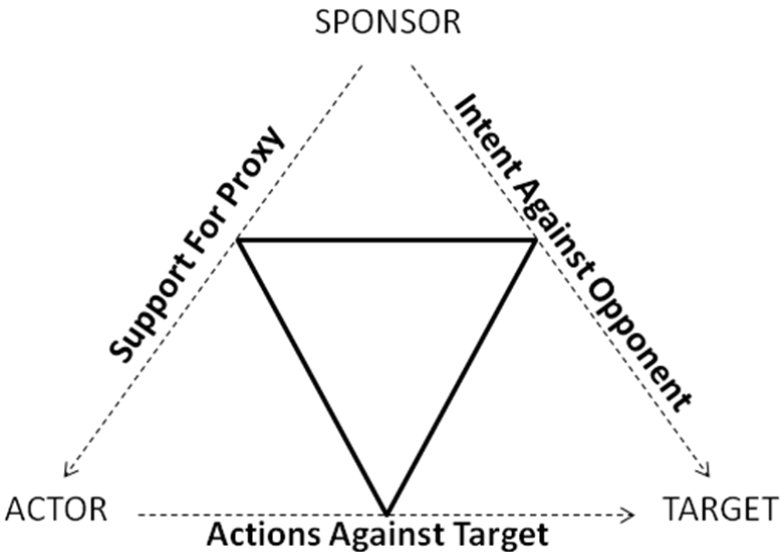
Figure 2.1: The Three Actors



It is the interaction among these three actors that make up a proxy war, which means that the key to understanding proxy warfare is to understand these relationships. From the extensive literature on international relations and state-sponsored terrorism, I concluded that the link between the first power and the third party actor is the support that the state gives the group, which establishes the "proxy" relationship. The relationship between the third party and the other power is defined by the actions that the actor takes against the targeted other power on behalf of the actor's supporter, or sponsor. These two relationships are the most obvious aspects of proxy war, and some authors stop their analysis there.[35] However, the relationship between the sponsor and the target is still unaccounted for. There must be some underlying intent or purpose that is motivating the sponsor to support the actor against the target. Reworking Figure 2.1 to show these relationships gives us Figure 2.2.

[35] Chris Loveman, "Assessing the Phenomenon of Proxy Intervention," *Conflict, Security, and Development 2,* vol. 3 (December 2002) 32.

Figure 2.2: From Actors to Key Elements



The result of this analysis is that we have arrived at three characteristics that form the core of proxy warfare. The first is that at least one of the parties actually engaged in combat is acting as a surrogate or proxy for a third party, a relationship that is created by the provision of some type of support. The second is that the proxy is acting against the target in return for the support, which takes place in the context of a pre-existing conflict or grievance.[36] The third is that the state's true objective in engaging a proxy lies with the target on the other side of the conflict that the supporting state is trying to affect. These three characteristics together form what I call proxy warfare's perfect trinity, which will be discussed after each element has been explained individually.

THE PROXY

The use of a proxy or proxies to create a degree of separation between two opposing parties is a core characteristic of proxy warfare. If destruction was a state's

[36] Ibid, 33

goal, it could be accomplished much more efficiently with their own forces. Such an act, however, is an act of war if their involvement is discovered. Supporting a proxy, on the other hand, have been historically proven to be effective and have the added benefit of deniability. There are two primary types of these groups, state and non-state, and the relative frequency of each type's use depends on the characteristics of the international system at the time.

The phenomenon of having a sovereign state as a proxy actor was more prevalent during the Cold War due to the bipolar nature of the international system, which demanded that states give their allegiance to either the United States or the Soviet Union. Unaligned states were prime areas of contention in the battle between the two superpowers. The Soviet Union preferred to have embedded and long-term control over its allied states, which it gained from a combination of ideology, financial strangleholds,[37] puppet governments, and control over a state's military[38] or intelligence[39] structures. These states were loosely organized into a "controlled core" surrounded by a circle of indebted and allied states.[40] Cuba is an excellent example of a state proxy: through a combination of ideology and financial aid the Soviet Union was able to send Cuban troops into a conflict in which Cuba itself had no conceivable strategic interest.[41] The Soviet Union also delegated the responsibility of training its proxies to client states

[37] Brian Crozier, *The Surrogate Forces of the Soviet Union*, Conflict Studies Security Special no. 92 (London: Institute for the Study of Conflict, 1978) 1.

[38] Ibid, 3.

[39] Ibid, 7.

[40] J. Bowyer Bell, "Explaining International Terrorism: The Elusive Question," *International Terrorism: Characteristics, Causes, Controls*. Edited by Charles Kegley Jr. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990) 180

[41] Brian Crozier, *Surrogate Forces,* 1

like Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Hungary, and East Germany.[42] However, that is not to imply that only states were used as proxies during the Cold War; both the Soviet Union and the United States supplied and funded many non-state actors in the hopes of advancing their respective strategic interests.

Today's international system, on the other hand, is not conducive to using states as proxy actors. It is rare today that one state has the type of absolute control over another that was seen during the Cold War, which has led to the increased use of non-state actors. Another reason for the trend towards using non-state actors is the fact that the states that emerged as sponsors in the 1990s were economically and militarily too weak to provide the type and scale of assistance required to support a state. The United States and the Soviet Union could afford to prop up tottering and unpopular regimes; Libya could not. Non-state actors require much less in the way of support, both in terms of expense and commitment.

Using non-state actors as proxies have a number of benefits over state actors; though non-state actors do not have access to the same resources, they have ease of movement and an anonymity that is rarely afforded to a state. Non-state actors are also easier to control, although instances where a state has complete control over their proxy is rare and usually requires the involvement of the state's intelligence service.[43] As with state actors, the independence of the proxy depends on the degree to which they rely on their supporting state for financial and logistical support.[44]

There is a very indistinct line between a proxy and an ally, but this distinction

[42] Walter Laqueur, *New Terrorism,*161.

[43] Louise Richardson, "Global Rebels," 69.

[44] Ibid.

must be made so the definition of a proxy war does not become too inclusive. A proxy is defined as a person authorized to act as a deputy or substitute for another or "an ally or confederate who can be relied upon to speak or act on one's behalf."[45] An ally, on the other hand, is "a person, group, or nation that is associated with another or others for some common cause or purpose."[46] In these two definitions the connotation is that a proxy is dedicated to the cause of the patron while an ally is only dedicated to the common cause that binds the actors together. In practical terms, one can say that the amount of influence or control that one actor has on another is the determining factor as to whether one is a proxy or an ally. This control must be to the degree that the sponsor can induce the proxy to act against its own self interest or without having any strategic interest in the action. It is this standard that we will use in this thesis to make a distinction between groups or states that are acting as allies and those that are acting as proxies. For example, as mentioned earlier, Cuba was "convinced" to intervene in Angola through a $5 billion debt to the Soviet Union and multiple embedded Soviet advisors, despite the fact that there was absolutely no purpose for Cuban involvement.[47]

One complication for the proxy/ally differentiation is a non-state actor that emerged during the 1990s known as private military corporations (PMCs). The current war in Iraq has raised questions among some authors regarding the legitimacy of these organizations and their role in conflicts. Though this point is debated, these corporations can be considered heirs to the mercenary tradition that flourished in the 14th to 18th

[45] *Random House Webster's Unabridged Dictionary,* 2nd ed., s.v. "proxy."

[46] Ibid., s.v. "ally."

[47] Brian Crozier, *Surrogate Forces*, 1.

centuries.[48] This phenomenon died out during the 19th and 20th centuries as states regained and secured their monopoly over the use of force,[49] but, for a variety of reasons, mercenary corporations have re-emerged and flourished in the post-Cold War era.[50] Whether this trend is detrimental or beneficial to overall international security is a question for another time, but the question that is presented by the existence of these corporations is whether or not they can be considered proxies within the context of a proxy war. On one hand, PMCs do not rely on any one state for operational support; in theory, a PMC can be hired by anyone with enough money. This open market approach to sponsorship argues that no one state could have enough control over a PMC for it to be considered a proxy. On the other hand, these organizations are often contracted for a specific mission and are therefore legally obligated to carry it out. So while the "sponsor," in this context more appropriately known as the client, has no operational control over the proxy, it can dictate what must be done and when. Because of this aspect of the relationship between a PMC and its client, these corporations are academically no different than any other non-state actor and therefore can be considered proxies in the context of this thesis.

Types of State Support

How much and what kind of support a state provides varies according to the needs of the proxy. Some proxies may only need or want money and will reject other offers, while other groups are open to as much support as the sponsor is willing to give them.

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[48] Eugene B. Smith, "The New Condottieri and U.S. Policy: The Privatization of Conflict and Its Implications," *Parameters 32* no. 4 (Winter 2002/2003) 105-106.

[49] Ibid., 107.

[50] P. W. Singer, "Corporate Warriors: The Rise of the Privatized Military Industry and Its Ramifications for International Security," *International Security 26*, no. 3 (Winter 2001/2002) 188.

The kind of support that a state can provide can be divided into active and passive and ranges from simple moral support to military intervention. The metric that I used to separate between active and passive is whether the support required effort on the state's part and if the support was operationally useful.

Based on these two requirements, types of passive state support include the granting of safe haven, free transit, political support, and propaganda. Of these, granting safe haven and free transit is the cheapest and most deniable form of support but can be the most valuable.[51] Having a sanctuary presents a number of benefits for the proxy group. It allows the group to rest, re-organize, train, plan, and do the other activities that are inherent to the operations of these groups, but more importantly it also grants the group a reprieve from the opposing state's countermeasures. Providing a safe haven is the most popular type of support because the demand on the supporting state is low while the benefits are high. It can also be the most problematic for the targeted state to counter because it is easily denied and their opponent may not even be aware that the group is operating out of its territory. Political support and propaganda are useful in that they provide legitimacy and can help increase popular support or recruiting efforts, but still constitute passive support because it has little real effect on how operations are conducted. The most well known instance of this type of support is Arab governments' vocal backing of the Palestinian and other various groups' causes. This lobbying worked so well that at one point the Palestinian Liberation Organization had diplomatic relations with more states than Israel.[52] One author included providing fighters as a form of state

[51] Daniel Byman, et. al. *Trends*, 84.

[52]Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Colombia University Press, 1998) 75.

support,[53] but I argue that this is the result of the state allowing the group to recruit among its population, which is one of the many fringe benefits of providing a safe haven.

As useful as these types of support are, passive support is not enough for the state to be considered engaging a proxy. The support must be active and operationally useful. Active support includes providing concrete support, such as funds and armaments, or more intangible support like training and organizational assistance. Depending on the relationship between the proxy and the sponsor, the type and amount of concrete support may vary. For example, the sponsor can provide weapons that may rudimentary or highly sophisticated, depending on access and interests; in the 2006 conflict with Israel, Lebanese Hezbollah was able to field unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and rockets with the help of Iran.[54] Concrete assistance may also come in the form of food, fuel, ammunition, technology (such as communication or surveillance equipment), forged documents, or anything else that the group may require but is unable to acquire on its own. The most extreme form of concrete aid that a state can provide is the involvement of its military. The most common form of this is for a state's Special Forces or intelligence professionals to provide on the ground assistance to the group but there have been instances where a state was driven to mobilize conventional forces in support of its proxy. The most well known of this was the Vietnam War but it has also happened in the current civil war in Somalia as Ethiopia moved troops into Somalia to support the

[53] Daniel Byman et. al, *Trends* 95.

[54] Yaakov Katz, "UAV packed with explosives strikes warship," *The Jerusalem Post*, 14 July 2006 http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?apage=1&cid=1150885994586&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull [accessed 29 April 2008]

transitional government against attacks by Eritrean-backed militants.[55]

There is a similar but not as extreme array of intangible support that a state can provide. Organizational assistance is what turns an ineffectual and inexperienced group into a coherent force that is able to conduct operations. A well organized proxy will require a great deal of assistance at first but will ultimately be self-sustaining and self-sufficient. The best example of this is the Lebanese Hezbollah, a highly successful organization that owes its success largely to Iranian intervention. Training is what allows that same inexperienced group to conduct the operations successfully and is the most common form of active state support.[56] Other types of intangible assistance are providing intelligence, logistical aid, and occasionally strategic or operational direction. Intangible support usually indicates a closer relationship between the proxy and sponsor than material support because it requires interaction with members of the supporting state's intelligence or military apparatus.

THE CONFLICT

The second characteristic of proxy wars is that they are used to exploit pre-existing conflicts. An ideal local conflict to exploit is one where there is already a guerilla or terrorist force engaged in operations. This group already has the infrastructure they need to operate, which means less work and commitment for the supporting state. One problem with this, however, is that these groups will be less open to state sponsorship,

[55] Stephanie Hanson "Proxy War in Africa's Horn," Council on Foreign Relations, December 20, 2006. www.cfr.org/publication/12225/proxy_war_in_africas_horn.html [Accessed January 9, 2008].

[56] Daniel Byman, *Deadly Connections,* 59.

particularly if they have been successful in their operations.[57] There is a definite trade-off when it comes to engaging proxies. Successful groups are more attractive to sponsors but are less willing to have one, and unsuccessful groups are less attractive but will eagerly accept support. The former requires little assistance to conduct operations but are harder to control while the latter needs a great deal of help during the initial phases but will be much easier to direct. The best option for a state is for it to be vigilant in looking for opportunities and find an organization that is in its infancy. One benefit of this is that the incremental benefit accrued by providing support is greater when the group is not yet fully developed.[58] The state gets more return for its dollar by supporting a fledgling proxy. Young groups are also more eager for support and will also be more dependent on the sponsor as they mature.

Another option is finding a country or region where the conditions are such that a force will be easy to create. These conditions include anything from regional disputes to ethnic or racial issues, and are necessary because they provide the cause around which a proxy group can organize.[59] Many of the Soviet Union's proxies began as "offshoots of relatively non-violent movements that expressed particular political, economic, religious, or ethnic grievances."[60] It is far easier for a state to take advantage of existing conflicts or circumstances than it is to stand up and sustain a force that has little or no support,

[57] Louise Richardson, "Global Rebels," 19.

[58] Daniel Byman, et. al., *Trends,* 17.

[59] Ashima Jahangir, *States of Violence: Nature of Terrorism and Guerilla Warfare* (New Delhi: Dominant Publishers and Distributers, 2000) 213.

[60] Clair Sterling, "Terrorism: Tracing the International Network," *New York Times Magazine,* March 1, 1981, 19.

active or passive, from the local populace.[61] There are ways to create a full blown conflict from a minor grievance. Terrorism is often used to provoke an extreme reaction from the government in the form of increased repression, which is then leveraged to increase support for the group's cause.[62] This was a common tactic during revolutions and is how some colonies, such as Algeria, gained their independence.

Having this pre-existing conflict to exploit is important because it essentially provides a "cover for action" to camouflage a state's involvement. Non-state actors can move with relative freedom within a country but operations will be much easier and harder to counteract if they are part of a larger conflict. It also provides an opportunity to strike out at an opponent with little risk of reprisal. For example, the current civil war in Somalia is seen by many as a proxy war between Ethiopia and Eritrea, who have a long-standing boundary dispute that has soured relations between the two countries. The outbreak of war in neighboring Somalia provided both countries an opportunity to resume their border war by picking and providing assistance to either side of the conflict. The two could not combat each other directly because of a UN peacekeeping force deployed on their common boundary and because neither was truly willing to restart a costly direct confrontation.[63] Similarly, the United States' invasion of Iraq provided Iran with an opportunity to attack the "Great Satan" with relative impunity.

The consequence of this characteristic of proxy warfare is that more often than not the involvement of one or more states tends to exacerbate the conflict in question,

[61] Jahangir, *States of Violence,* 212.

[62] Carlos Marighella, *The Minimanual of the Urban Guerilla* (San Francisco: Patrick Arguello Press, 1978) 32.

[63] Michela Wrong, "War By Proxy, But Not the One We Think." *New Statesman* (January 15 2007).

either in length or in scale. It may even transform what was a local conflict into an international war.[64] This fact means that the state or population that hosts this pre-existing conflict will pay the highest price in terms of destruction of its infrastructure and loss of life.[65] Not only is proxy war waged with little concern to the hosting nation, but once the war is over very rarely does the supporting state or states help rebuild the nation ravaged by the conflict. By choosing other locations for waging war states are essentially exporting or outsourcing their conflict so that others will wage the war and bear the brunt of the cost for them.

THE POINT

The third characteristic of proxy warfare is that the ultimate point of a proxy war does not lie with the indigenous conflict in which the proxy war takes place. On the other side of a proxy war there must be an actor whose behavior the supporting state is trying to influence. For example, the primary aim of the United States engaging in the war in Vietnam was to stop the expansion of Soviet influence; defending the South Vietnamese against North Vietnam was a secondary concern. Most of the conflicts in which the U.S. were involved in during the Cold War were to achieve this aim, known as the containment policy, which is why they are often labeled as proxy wars. This feature distinguishes proxy wars from conventional wars and other types of military actions where the ultimate point of becoming involved is the conflict itself.

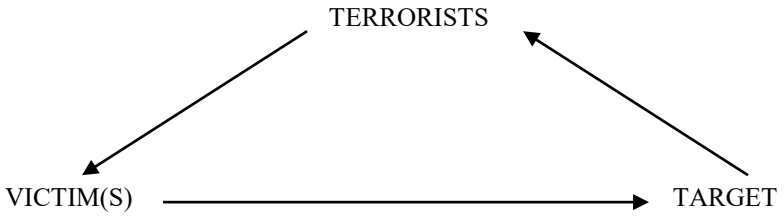
Donald Hanle, in his book *Terrorism: The Newest Face of Warfare* does an excellent analysis of the actor-target relationship in terrorism that can also be applied to

[64] Daniel Byman et. al, *Trends* 3.

[65] Paul Salem, "The Future of Lebanon," *Foreign Affairs 85*, no. 6 (Winter 2006) 1.

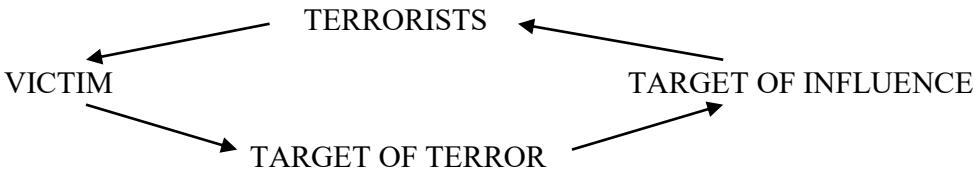
proxy warfare. In a terrorist attack, the victim of the attack is not the intended target of the act; the terrorist acts on the victim physically in order to affect the behavior of the target psychologically.[66] This is the traditional "direct" form of terrorism.

Figure 2.3[67]: Direct Terrorism



There is also an "indirect" form of terrorism where a further distinction is made between the "target of terror" and the "target of influence."[68] The al-Qaida bombing of the Samarra Mosque in Iraq is an example of this. The victims of the attack were those who died in the attack, and the target of terror was the Iraqi population. As the population began to fragment along sectarian lines, the target of influence, the United States, was forced to act. Al-Qaida had hoped that the United States would grow frustrated with trying to deal with a potential civil war and would withdraw from Iraq.[69]

Figure 2.4[70]: Indirect Terrorism



[66] Donald Hanle, *Terrorism: The Newest Face of Warfare.* (Washington: International Defense Publishers, 1989) 112.

[67] Ibid., 113

[68] Ibid., 114.

[69]Bruce Riedel, "Al Qaeda Strikes Back," *Foreign Affairs* (May/June 2007) Council on Foreign Relations, http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20070501faessay86304/bruce-riedel/al-qaeda-strikes-back.html.

[70] Donald Hanle, *Terrorism,* 115.

This intent to affect the target audience is one of the characteristics that separate terrorism from guerrilla warfare and establishes terrorism as a unique form of war.[71] If we may make a parallel comparison, it is one of the characteristics that make proxy wars unique as well. However, aside from the general intent to affect an audience, the motivations behind proxy warfare vary more than that of terrorism. With the exception of the apocalyptic style of terrorism, where destruction is the purpose of the attack, [72] the intent of terrorism is to paralyze political will or affect its target on a moral plane, either directly or indirectly.[73] The intent of a proxy war, however, is less about publicity than it is about achieving a state's foreign policy objective. Unlike terrorism, which is always part of an offensive strategy, the strategy behind proxy warfare can be offensive or defensive.[74] As such, there are a variety of possible motivations for sponsoring a proxy, such as: regional influence, destabilizing a neighbor, payback, regime change, ensuring influence within the opposition, internal security, prestige, supporting coreligionists or co-ethnics, irredentism, ideology, and plunder.[75]

However, not all of these motivations qualify as the intent required for proxy warfare. As mentioned earlier, there must be an actor on the other side of the conflict who the supporting state is trying to affect. In engaging a proxy for domestic and international prestige, for example, or to ensure internal security, there is no intended target, just a general benefit that the state is attempting to accrue. Supporting coreligionist

[71] Louise Richardson, "Global Rebels," 67.

[72] Matthew J. Morgan, "The Origins of the New Terrorism," *Parameters XXXIV* no.1 (Spring 2004).

[73] Donald Hanle, *Terrorism,* 115.

[74] Walter Laqueur, *New Terrorism,* 156.

[75] Daniel Byman et. al, *Trends,* 23-40.

and co-ethnics means that the focus of the state is on affecting the outcome of the conflict in question and is not on affecting the target on the other side of the conflict. The same logic applies to irredentism and plunder. The remaining motivations, however, are all definite factors that drive proxy wars. Payback, for example, explains why Libya gave arms and money to the IRA and why Sudan began supporting rebel elements in Chad.[76] Ideology can be a motivator if it is part of a concerted effort aimed at a single nation, which is why Soviet attempts to spread the revolution can be considered a proxy war even if it were divorced from other geopolitical motivations.[77]

In addition to the motivations mentioned earlier, sometimes there may be no other motivation than to exacerbate conflicts. In this situation, the proxy can be used to preoccupy the target state's government and weaken the military either by overstretching its forces or by weight of attrition. As with the example cited previously regarding the American Revolution, simply occupying an opponent's forces is a useful end in and of itself. This is a very common strategy, and in my opinion is the primary motivation behind Syrian and Iranian involvement in Iraq. Also, a state may become involved with a proxy to counter another state's involvement. For example, as Daniel Byman points out, "The particular composition of the regime in Beirut was not a vital interest for Iraq, Israel, or other neighboring states. However, these and other powers sought to ensure that Syria or other states did not control Lebanon, a concern that led them to support their own proxies."[78] The state may also engage a proxy to use as a bargaining chip by

[76] Colin Thomas-Jensen, "Nasty Neighbors: Resolving the Chad-Sudan Proxy War," *ENOUGH Strategy Paper 17* (April 2008) 2.

[77] Walter Laqueur, *New Terrorism,* 161.

[78] Daniel Byman, *Deadly Connections,* 40.

offering to cease state support in return for some desired concession from the targeted state.

Assessing a state's intent in engaging a proxy can be difficult and subjective. States are not forthcoming about their strategic goals, so the analyst or the writer is left to second-guess the state based on knowledge of the state's history and geopolitical position, and even then it can be difficult. For example, despite thirty years of a proxy war India is still not sure why Pakistan chose to back separatist movements in the Kashmir. Multiple theories have been suggested but none have gained widespread support.[79] To those who argue that assessing a state's intent is too difficult, and is irrelevant in any case because the important factor is the result of the action, I would point out that intent is the difference between murder and manslaughter and is what separates criminals from terrorists. In more practical terms, however, understanding a state's motivations in supporting a proxy is vital in determining how to stop them.

PROXY WARFARE'S PERFECT TRINITY

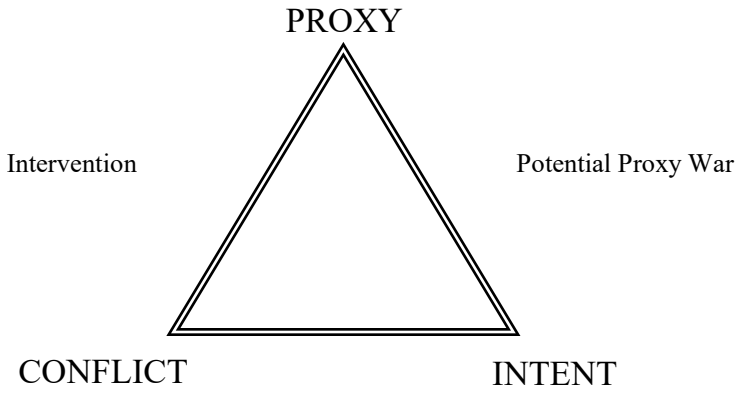
Just as Hanle's analysis of terrorism was used to explain the motivation behind proxy warfare, we can use Karl von Clausewitz's idea of the "remarkable trinity" to help create a framework for explaining and analyzing proxy wars. Clausewitz's trinity consisted of the government, the people, and the military, and he argued that the interactions between these three elements formed the dominant tendencies of war.[80] He saw these elements as being deeply rooted within the idea of war but acknowledged that they could have a variable relationship to one another, which affected the outcome of the

[79] Praveen Swami, "Failed States and Flawed Fences," 149.

[80] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, 89.

conflict.[81] Similarly, all three characteristics of proxy war need to be present and strategically aligned for the war to be successful, but each individual element may vary in type, strength, or severity.

Figure 2.5: Proxy Warfare's Perfect Trinity



Proxy + Conflict – Intent: Without an ulterior motive in engaging a proxy the supporting state is merely trying to influence the outcome of the conflict to support its own ends. This, as pointed out earlier, does not constitute a proxy war. A state that is engaging a proxy in order to gain access to another state's natural resources, such as Uganda's use of *Rassemblement Congolais pour la Democratie* to gain access to Congo's natural resources,[82] would be an example of this type of situation.

Proxy + Intent – Conflict: Without an existing conflict in which to operate, you have a potential versus kinetic proxy war; in this situation, the supporting state will inevitably encourage the proxy to engage in activities that will turn a political or social crisis into a violent conflict. This situation could also represent a state financing and equipping a covert cell that is not (yet) actively engaged in conducting operations.

[81] Ibid.

[82] Daniel Byman, *Trends,* 39.

Intent + Conflict – Proxy: This type of situation is one where there is an underlying grievance between two states and a local conflict breaks out, in either state or in a neighbor. Because of this each state has been given an opportunity to open a front in a proxy war, which, if the underlying motivation is strong enough, is an opportunity they will seize. The state or states that intend to exploit this conflict for their own ends will be actively attempting to make contact with or create a proxy.

Each of the scenarios described above represent unstable situations. They may represent a period in a conflict that lasts for a very short time, sometimes only months or even weeks. However, it is important to recognize the situations because each represents an opportunity for the international community or the targeted state to prevent a proxy war from beginning.

COSTS AND BENEFITS

Despite the obvious benefits of having a state sponsor, accepting state support is not an automatic decision for non-state actors, because while the support reduces some constraints on the group it introduces others. Perhaps it would be better to say that having a sponsor is a mixed blessing; while it inarguably increases the capabilities of the organization and more often than not is a factor in the group's overall success, it has been noted that a serious organization "is well advised to rely mainly on its own resources."[83]

The primary benefit that a proxy gains from a having sponsor is an increase in capability and effectiveness.[84] This effect accrues from access to more and better

[83] Gerard Chalian, *Terrorism: From Popular Struggle to Media Spectacle* (London: Saqi Books, 1987) 58.

[84] Daniel Byman et. al., *Trends,* 2.

weapons, increased funding, and professional training. Advisors and intelligence will enable a group to capitalize on these advantages. As mentioned before, having access to a safe haven can be invaluable to a non-state actor by providing an area for the group to perform the logistical and support operations that go into running one of these groups. Political or moral backing helps by giving the group legitimacy and increasing its prestige, which in turn translates into more support from the local populace and more recruits. Curiously, the state sponsorship that may earn them more local support decreases their reliance on it.[85] This last point is important because the need to maintain popular support is the Achilles heel of most non-state actors.[86] With state sponsorship, the effects of the loss of this support can be mitigated by the backer, thereby making traditional countermeasures less effective.

For many groups, another benefit is that becoming a proxy is undeniably lucrative. The Abu Nidal Organization, for example, found that being a proxy was so profitable that it eventually abandoned its ideology to become a "hired gun." Over its history it accepted sponsorship from Syria, Iraq, and Libya and eventually accrued an estimated $400 million in assets by 1988.[87] As with many covert or illegal activities, proxy wafare provides ample opportunity for profit, particularly at the higher levels. The amount of money routinely supplied to proxies (estimated to be in the tens or hundreds of millions) more than covers the cost of the operations, with room left over for extraneous expenses such as "Martyrdom Funds" in many Arab groups or Hezbollah's extensive

[85] Brian M. Jenkins, *International Terrorism: The Other World War* (Santa Monica: Rand, 1985) 19.

[86] Audrey Kurth Cronin, "How al-Qaida Ends: The Decline and Demise of Terrorist Groups," *International Security* 31, no. 1 (Summer 2006) 27.

[87] Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism,* 259.

network of social services. Organizations and high levels of leaders can easily become corrupted into maximizing profit margins over achieving ideological objectives.

The costs of being a proxy are much less straightforward than the benefits. One of the primary drawbacks is that state support also comes along with a decreased freedom of action as the state attempts to control a group for its own purposes.[88] For example, if the supporter feels that the conflict or situation is getting too "hot" it will attempt to de-escalate by curbing the proxy. This is all part of a delicate guessing game as the state tries to see how far it can push its opponent without incurring serious reprisal, a game Iran and Pakistan have succeeded at for years.[89]

Another problem is that if the goals or ideology of the sponsor is significantly different from that of the proxy, the conflict of interests may cause the group to splinter. Accepting state sponsorship may also lead to diminished legitimacy among the group's support base, the "selling out" effect. This becomes particularly true if the leadership of the organization becomes corrupt or lazy as a result of the support. Becoming too dependent on state support leaves the group extremely vulnerable to the whims of the state; Libya's rejection and expulsion of Abu Nidal, for example, basically spelled its demise as an organization.[90] Taking advantage of a safe haven can cut off or alienate the group from its base of support. For example, years of being exiled from Palestine meant that the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) became increasingly out of touch with its supposed constituency until it finally became irrelevant.

Another problem is that inviting one state sponsor into a conflict paves the way

[88] Daniel Byman, *Deadly Connections* 40.

[89] Praveen Swami, "Failed Threats and Flawed Fences," 151.

[90] Audrey Kurth Cronin, "How al-Qaida Ends," 29.

for others to get involved; as competing states set their proxies to tilt at those of the other state, the overall condition and situation of the proxies deteriorate. For example, multiple state interventions in the Palestinian conflict led to an overall lack of cohesion and success in the movement. It is estimated that three quarters of the casualties that the Palestinian militant groups suffered were due to the involvement of Arab states.[91] Also, while some proxies, most notably Lebanese Hezbollah, have been extremely successful in incorporating more advanced weaponry into their operations, other groups have instead allowed this technology to distort an already successful strategy, leading to tactical setbacks. [92] Some proxies may have been unaware of these possible consequences when they agreed to state support but others, like the Palestinian organizations, are all too aware of the downsides. These groups zealously guard their independence, and will actively work to prevent becoming too reliant on a single sponsor.[93]

CONCLUSION

Despite the fact that an analysis of proxy warfare must, out of a paucity of pre-existing literature, draw upon the concepts from a variety of other genres it should be clear that it is a distinct type of conflict with unique characteristics. It is the interplay among the three elements that make proxy wars unique. Any one element or two without the third are insufficient for a proxy war. Though there are very real benefits for the proxy in working with a sponsor, the most important one being a greater likelihood of

[91] Barry Rubin, *Revolution until Victory? The Politics and History of the PLO* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994) 52.

[92] Daniel Byman, *Trends*, 101.

[93] Louise Richardson, "Global Rebels," 19.

success, there are also trade-offs in the form of decreased freedom and self-sufficiency. This fact is why many non-state actors, even those that are acknowledged proxies like Lebanese Hezbollah, find other sources of support, either from the local populace, crime, or a different state sponsor.

CHAPTER 3

STRATEGIC BEHAVIOR

> "[Though] you may have fortress, if the people hold you in hatred fortresses do not save you; for to peoples who have taken up arms foreigners will never be lacking to come to their aid."
>
> - Niccolò Machiavelli[94]

As outlined in the previous chapter, proxy warfare can essentially be described as the projection of force across territorial boundaries through the use of a third party. We can distinguish between two methods of fighting a proxy war based on whether the proxy is acting as a substitute or a supplement. In this thesis they will be labeled as a war by proxy and a war with proxy, respectively. These two are not types of proxy wars but rather represent strategies to conduct a proxy war. In practice, the only difference between the two is the involvement of the supporting state's conventional forces. However, this single difference changes the dynamics of the state-sponsor relationship and the character of the overall proxy war, the most important effect being the overt nature of a war with proxy compared to a war by proxy. Each strategy has unique characteristics and presents its own risks and benefits that must be taken into consideration before a state chooses to engage in proxy warfare. If this cost/benefit ratio changes the state may decide to withdraw its support, as Libya did in the face of international pressure and other competing domestic concerns.[95]

[94] Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 2nd ed. translated by Harvey Mansfield (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985) 87.

[95] Audrey Kurth Cronin, "How al-Qaida Ends," 29.

WAR BY PROXY

One of the difficult aspects of analyzing war by proxy is that it has been labeled and analyzed differently depending on the side of the conflict the author is studying. For example, when viewed from the perspective of the supporting state, war by proxy is one of many types of covert action. The 1975 Angolan Civil War and the Vietnam War are both proxy wars that were initiated as covert operations.[96] As such, we can use the extensive literature on covert action to describe aspects of war by proxy. On the other hand, when viewed from the opposite side of the conflict, war by proxy is also known as state-sponsored terrorism, though this is not a very useful term for analysis. It is highly pejorative and often used for political reasons. For example, North Korea is officially designated as a state sponsor of terrorism by the United States government even though there is little evidence that North Korea itself gave direct support to a terrorist group or that they would even be willing to if its economy could support it.[97] It is also an inaccurate and insufficient descriptor because proxy tactics are not limited to terrorism but can range from traditional guerilla warfare to sophisticated influence operations. However, despite the inadequacies of the phrase, the literature on state-sponsored terrorism is useful because it provides insight into the relationship between the state and its proxy. By capitalizing on the research that has been performed on the various aspects of war by proxy we can extrapolate a number of characteristics that are unique to this type of conflict and evaluate the benefits and risks that a state faces when engaging in it.

[96] Gregor Treverton, *Covert Action: The Limits of Intervention in the Postwar World* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1987) 15.

[97] Louise Richardson, "Global Rebels" 68.

Characteristics

The first defining characteristic is the degree of separation between the supporting state and its proxy. This separation manifests itself in three ways. The most obvious way a state distances itself from the proxy is through public denial. War by proxy would be a very poor strategy if a state openly admitted its involvement before it is forced to. Even in the face of clear evidence the state will repudiate the relationship as long as plausibly possible. Second, members of the proxy group are rarely citizens of the supporting state, which maintains the separation and allows for plausible deniability if members of the group are killed or captured. The exceptions to this are private military corporations; though the government cannot deny their presence in a conflict, they can and do deny any knowledge of their actions. Instead, because the proxy war is taking place in a local conflict, the members of the group will usually be part of the community that is hosting the conflict. Members of the supporting government may be present within the proxy group but this depends on what degree of control the state has, or wishes to have, over the proxy.

Third, states may communicate with and supply their proxy through an intermediary in order to further disguise their involvement. For example, a majority of the armaments and funds the United States sent to Afghanistan in 1979 was distributed by Pakistan.[98] During the American Revolution, France, eager to support the revolutionaries but unwilling to do so openly, negotiated with Prussia to provide military training to the Continental Army.[99] This was a favored tactic of the Soviets during the Cold War, who

[98] Gregory Treverton, *Covert Action*, 213.

[99] Roy Godson, *Dirty Tricks,* 167.

used its client states as proxies or as intermediaries with other proxies to obscure their activities around the globe.[100] Using an intermediary can backfire, however, if the intermediary has an agenda of its own. Pakistan, when acting as an intermediary for the United States in 1979, took advantage of its role and channeled the support to its own favored group, the extremists that eventually organized into the Taliban.[101] Another method is to distribute weapons made by foreign manufacturers in order to disguise their origin.[102]

The degree of separation between the proxies and the sponsors can vary, and to what degree the state chooses to distance itself from the group determines how much control the state has over it. At one end of the spectrum the state has complete control over its proxy, which is usually accomplished by embedding members of the state's intelligence or military services within the proxy group.[103] For example, during the Cold War the former Soviet Union had a number of "advisors" embedded in the intelligence services of its satellite states, such as Cuba, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia.[104] Similarly, the current leader of the Syrian-supported Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC) was a captain in the Syrian Army.[105] In the middle of the spectrum are the relationships where the state has a certain amount of control over the proxy through the support that they provide, but the control is not absolute. Lebanese

[100] Brian Crozier, S*urrogate Forces,* 1.

[101] Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden* (London: Penguin Books, 2005) 210.

[102] Gregory Treverton, *Covert Action,* 27.

[103] Louise Richardson, "Global Rebels," 69.

[104] Brian Crozier, *Surrogate Forces,* 7.

[105] Louise Richardson, "Global Rebels," 69.

Hezbollah depends heavily, but not solely, on the support provided by its sponsors Iran and Syria. Though it is responsive to the commands of these states it also maintains a degree of independence. In the years following the end of the Cold War this type of loose control became popular because it is a happy medium between having control over the proxy and maintaining a low profile for deniability.

At the other end of the spectrum the relationship between the sponsor and the proxy is so casual that it escapes the definition of "proxy" and veers into the mutually cooperative concept of ally. In this situation a state may give money and support to a proxy group but exercises no influence over its actions; the support was given because the goals of the sponsor and the group are aligned. For example, Libyan leader Muammar al-Qaddafi provided support to the Irish Republican Army (IRA) out of the knowledge that the group was operating against the British government and the desire to punish Britain for its involvement in the bombing of Tripoli. His support, however, did not give him influence over the actions of the IRA.[106] This situation represents an area where state sponsorship of terror and proxy warfare diverge; though the other defining elements of proxy war are present, the degree of separation between the state and the group is so great that it cannot truly be considered a proxy, so the overall interaction cannot be considered a proxy war.

A war by proxy can be fought using a wide spectrum of tactics. In existing literature conflicts that can be considered proxy wars are separated into categories such as state-sponsored terrorism or state-sponsored insurgencies and are analyzed separately. However, this distinction is artificial. Insurgencies are largely marked by the use of

[106] Ibid, 70.

guerilla warfare, and guerilla tactics and terrorism are only differentiated in terms of the legitimacy of the target. Guerilla warfare focuses on the state's military, government officials, or other targets directly associated with the government.[107] These are seen as legitimate targets because of their association with the state's "instruments of coercion."[108] Terrorism focuses on non-combatants and targets that may or may not be associated with a government. The less association the target has with the state's instruments of coercion, the more likely it is that an attack will be perceived as an act of terrorism.[109] Also, "terrorism" and "guerilla" are terms with pejorative associations and are therefore often applied for political purposes, not due to reasoned analysis. Once there may have been a real difference between guerilla groups and terrorists, perhaps in regards to motivation or the legitimacy of their tactics, but today most groups are hybrid adversaries, both terrorist and guerillas as well as criminals and soldiers.[110] This trend is part of the reason why the world has seen an increased lethality and overall effectiveness of these groups.

Benefits

The reason why proxy wars have a long historical tradition is they have a variety of benefits while being relatively cheap in terms of cost and casualties. As such it often represents the best option for a state to achieve its goals. Just as terrorism is known as the

[107]Roberta Goren, *The Soviet Union and Terrorism,* ed. Jillian Becker (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1984) 12.

[108] Troy S. Thomas, *Beneath The Surface,* 20.

[109] Ibid.

[110] Ibid.

poor man's war,[111] war by proxy can be considered a poor nation's war. States with weak economies, little international clout, and obsolete or outclassed militaries find that supporting proxies is a cheap way of achieving national objectives. Certain types of support, such as providing sanctuary or training, can be achieved at very little cost to the supporting nation. Even if the state provides an extensive amount of support it is still cheaper and certainly easier than developing conventional military abilities. [112] Sponsoring proxy groups also allows the state to influence events far away from their borders, a projection of power that most states cannot achieve otherwise.

However, there would be little use for a cheap tactic if it weren't also effective. Non-state actors succeed against ostensibly stronger state actors with alarming frequency, a phenomenon that has sparked an interest in the phenomenon of asymmetric warfare as writers try to determine why this is true. This success rate is why states have historically been interested in supporting these groups. With terrorism, groups with state sponsorship are more deadly and prone to attack.[113] With regards to civil wars or insurgencies, one writer argued that the factor with the highest correlation of success was state support.[114] Enabling the proxy group to be more effective benefits both the group and the sponsor.

To the point that the support remains covert, the plausible deniability provided in a war by proxy is invaluable. The possible repercussions for supporting these groups, which may engage in terrorism or other equally reprehensible actions such as torture or

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[111] Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism,* 34.

[112] Daniel Byman, *Deadly Connections,* 5.

[113] Chris Quillen, "A Historical Analysis of Mass Casualty Bombers," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism 25* no. 5 (September-October 2005) 285.

[114] Jeffery Record, *Beating Goliath: Why Insurgencies Win* (Washington DC: Potomac Books, 2007)

genocide, can be severe. The deniability that is provided by engaging in war by proxy allows the state to operate with impunity so long as the relationship remains unknown or unproven. Though other states may accuse the supporting state of engaging a proxy, the more severe forms of reprisal, such as international sanctions or military action, usually require concrete proof. However, for many states the costs of a little war are not high enough to justify a big one, particularly when the war would be with another nuclear state.[115] States that engage in this activity walk a fine line between conducting enough attacks to achieve their objectives and not attacking so much that they prod their opponent towards war. Pakistan nearly crossed this line with India in 2001, when India threatened conventional retaliation if Pakistan did not cease their unconventional activities. Only the threat of nuclear war kept the situation from escalating.[116]

This separation and deniability allows the state to maintain its freedom of action to use other elements of national power. [117] While supporting a proxy does represent a commitment of resources, even with poorer nations it is rarely a large portion of the state's overall capacity so the state is free to commit the bulk of its resources elsewhere. It also allows the state to publicly take one position while covertly engaging in another, such as Iran's claim that they want a stable Iraq while at the same time they conduct destabilizing operations through their proxies.[118] Both the United States and the Soviet Union had the public policy stance that they denounced terrorism throughout the Cold War while they supported insurgencies aimed at overthrowing governments around the

[115] Praveen Swami, "Failed Threats and Flawed Fences," 155.

[116] Ibid.

[117] Daniel Byman, *Deadly Connections,* 22.

[118] Patrick J. Buchanan, "Petraeus points to war with Iran" *WorldNetDaily.com* 10 April 2008 http://www.worldnetdaily.com/index.php?pageId=61277 [Accessed 22 April 2008]

globe.[119] In some respects Syria can be seen as the most adept in pursuing this tactic. Throughout the 1980s, Syria "became a master at the strategy of helping groups to take hostages with one hand and gaining favor with the West by aiding in their release with the other hand."[120]

Risks

Engaging in war by proxy also entails significant risk on the part of the supporting state. First is the threat of exposure; because proxy groups often use terrorist tactics, states that are known to be supporting these types of groups face reprisal, including international opprobrium, sanctions, and military action. The United States, in particular, uses the threat of labeling a nation a state sponsor of terrorism as a political and diplomatic tool to try to convince states to withdraw their support from these groups. In June 2006, the United States removed Libya from the list when they agreed to cut off their support to Palestinian terrorist groups.[121] Other states so designated, like North Korea and Iran, have been unresponsive. In states where the government is also accountable to their citizens, exposure can also lead to public outrage and investigations. The U.S. government is no exception and has felt the sting of public backlash from the 1986 Iran-Contra scandal and the 1961 Bay of Pigs debacle. This behavior may also provoke a more serious backlash in the form of military reprisals; following the 2001 bombing of the Parliament building in New Delhi India mobilized along its border with

[119] Walter Laqueur, *New Terrorism,* 161.

[120] Cindy C. Combs, *Terrorism in the Twenty-First Century* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2006) 90.

[121] Audrey Kurth Cronin, "How al-Qaida Ends," 29.

Pakistan and threatened war if the cross-border attacks did not stop.[122] In regions where proxy warfare is particularly prolific, such as Africa, the more common form of reprisal is to sponsor proxy groups in return.[123]

Second, proxies are never as effective an instrument of national power as the state's own military or intelligence apparatus. This means that a war by proxy may be an unreliable method to achieve strategic or even tactical objectives.[124] The Soviet Union learned this lesson when it realized that much of its support either had a fleeting effect on the loyalty of the proxies or translated into few tangible benefits, particularly in the case of non-state groups.[125] This is particularly true if the proxy itself is inadequate or unreliable; during the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan, the Northern Alliance, the United States' chosen proxy in the conflict, was seen as weak, undertrained, underfunded, and generally unenthusiastic about fighting the Taliban.[126] In such a case the state must evaluate how vital its interests are and decide whether increasing the level or quality of support is worth the increased risk of exposure. The supporting state may be limited on how much it can improve the quality of its proxy without revealing the source of the support.

Even when successful, supporting a proxy can threaten or setback the cause of the supporting state. Studies by the Soviet Union suggested that revolutionary groups ultimately weakened the communist movement through public backlash over the use of

[122] Praveen Swami, "Failed Threats and Flawed Fences," 154.

[123] Colin Thomas-Jensen, "Nasty Neighbors."

[124] "Hit the Ground." *The New Republic* November 19 2001, 9.

[125] Walter Laqueur, *New Terrorism,* 161.

[126] "Hit the Ground," 9.

terrorist tactics.[127] This trend was exacerbated by the Soviet Union's tactic of supporting many proxies in the same region. As the proxies began to turn on each other, the Soviet Union was forced to take sides and withdraw support from the disfavored proxy, which led to a number of counter-revolutions.[128] The recent history of al-Qaida and the Taliban is an extreme example of how supporting these groups can backfire; al-Qaida's success in attacking the United States ultimately led to the overthrow of the Taliban regime that supported it.[129]

A third and entirely different problem arises when the supporting state does a poor job vetting its proxies and finds itself supporting groups whose interests do not entirely align with its own. This has two repercussions: one, the supporting state now finds itself associated with a cause that it does not necessarily support, which increases the potential damage caused by discovery; and two, the state may find that its support results in a situation that was entirely unintended.[130] For example, U.S. support for the *mujahideen* in Afghanistan, who's virulently anti-Western sentiments were only compatible with U.S. interests in that they were also anti-Soviet, eventually resulted in a series of terrorist attacks against U.S. targets that culminated on September 11th, 2001. The Soviet Union eventually came to the conclusion that many of the groups they supported were too unpredictable and could not be trusted; Libya's Qaddafi in particular was seen as a loose cannon.[131] There is always the risk that the proxy will follow his own

[127] Walter Laqueur, *New Terrorism*, 162.

[128] Ibid.

[129] R. Hrair Dekmejian, *Spectrum of Terror,* 205.

[130] Gregory Treverton, *Covert Action,* 118-119.

[131] Walter Laqueur, *New Terrorism,* 163.

agenda rather than adhere to the sponsor's objectives, an agenda that may or may not be compatible with the sponsor's.[132] When creating or supporting a proxy there is always the risk that the proxies may turn on their supporter. [133] The Soviet Union had this fear to the point that during the 1980s it began to pass warnings about possible terrorist attacks to the West.[134] It is this threat of unintended consequences that has led to the debate within the United States as to whether the government should continue to engage in this type of "indirect aggression."[135]

The fourth issue is that though one of the benefits of war by proxy is that it is theoretically possible to disengage from a proxy at will, in practical terms it is not that easy. Commitments, once made, tend to take on a life of their own as "operational realities set deadlines, the political stakes of…leaders changed, and the human stakes represented by those secretly supported…begin to acquire force."[136] The very act of providing support creates its own commitment that makes it difficult to withdraw. Another difficulty is the idea of an "upward spiral" of escalation.[137] When one state involves itself in a conflict, other states may see the opportunity to influence the situation through their own proxies. As the conflict begins to escalate, states may find that the operational reality is such that more damage would be caused by withdrawing than by

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[132] Stephen Biddle, "Afghanistan and the Future of Warfare: Implications for Army and Defense Policy," Strategic Studies Institute (November 2002) 4.

[133] Maroof Raza, "'Sheer Military Might' Cannot Defeat Insurgencies in South Asia," *World News Connection*, November 15, 2007. http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=tsh&AN=SAP 20071115384016&site=ehost-live [accessed 29 April 2008]

[134] Walter Laqueur, *New Terrorism*, 162.

[135] Roberta Goren, *The Soviet Union and Terrorism,* 40.

[136] Gregory Treverton, *Covert Action,* 8.

[137] Bertil Duner, *Military Intervention in Civil Wars: The 1970s* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985) 83.

maintaining support. In the case where the proxy favors terrorist tactics, a withdrawal of support could result in reprisal attacks; Saudi Arabia experienced this as it began to crack down on the religious extremists that it once supported.

WAR WITH PROXY

Parallel to the earlier discussion on how proxy warfare as a whole has changed since the Cold War, the conduct of war with proxy has evolved over time. In the post-World War II period war with proxy was "irregular partisan warfare in support of the conventional battle,"[138] which is what I call the Vietnam model of proxy warfare. The emphasis was on how this type of unconventional warfare could be used in the context of a general war. Proxies were created either just prior to invasion or after the initiation of the conflict[139] in order to augment the regular military forces. However, in more recent decades the United States, in response to the casualty-phobia of the 1990s, has developed a new way of conducting war with proxy focusing almost exclusively on Special Forces and close air support.[140] Here the military creates and support proxies to operate "during conflicts short of war" such as guerilla warfare and insurgencies and with activities like sabotage and subversion.[141] This shift in focus has led to the increased popularity of surrogate warfare, where Special Forces teams and the forces that they "organized,

[138] Thomas K. Adams, *U.S. Special Operations Forces in Action: The Challenge of Unconventional Warfare* (London: Frank Cass, 1998) 47.

[139] Kelly Smith, "Surrogate Warfare," 26.

[140] Jeffery Record, "Collapsed Countries, Casualty Dread, and the New American Way of War," *Parameters 32* no. 2 (Summer 2002) 5.

[141] *FM 3-05.201 Special Forces: Unconventional Warfare Operations* (Washington DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, United States Department of Defense, 2003) 1-2.

trained, equipped, supported, and directed"[142] are meant to take the place of conventional military action. Other states that have the capacity to conduct this type of war with proxy, such as Iran with its Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps – Quds Force (IRGC-QF), realize its benefits over the Vietnam model of intervention. In regions where the sponsor borders the hosting conflict, though, the latter model is still popular because it is easier to move a military across a border than across an ocean. For states with little or no Special Forces capabilities, conventional military intervention may be the only option, despite the attractiveness of surrogate warfare. In Africa, for example, most of the wars with proxy are fought using conventional rather than unconventional forces.

Just as examining literature on state-sponsored terrorism and covert action gave insight into the characteristics of war by proxy, analyzing literature on surrogate warfare can provide insight into war with proxy. This type of state-actor and non-state actor relationship has not been discussed extensively in academia but has an extensive body of literature devoted to it in military circles. This is understandable, because while war by proxy can be argued to be primarily the responsibility of the state's intelligence service, a war with proxy will fall under the aegis of the military because of the introduction of the state's armed forces into the equation. Even if the state's previous involvement was covert in name only, committing conventional forces brings the conflict officially into the open forum, significantly changing the dynamics of the conflict and the state-proxy relationship. The risks and rewards of such an endeavor are also radically different.

Characteristics

As outlined above, war with proxy can be conducted according to two models. The first is the Vietnam model, where the surrogate forces and the state's conventional

[142] Ibid, 1-1.

forces operated in tandem. The conventional force's commanders work with the proxy as early as possible so that its activities are "controlled and coordinated to make a maximum contribution to the accomplishment of his mission."[143] Ideally, though the guerilla force is operating in hostile zones far from the conventional force, its efforts are meant to augment or directly support the regular army's operations. These types of operations were conducted as early as the Korean War but, in this conflict, the South Korean paramilitary forces were ill-organized and their operations poorly coordinated with the conventional forces.[144] This model of war with proxy is best demonstrated by the relationship between the U.S. forces and those of South Vietnam which is why I refer to it as the Vietnam model, though it also describes Ethiopia's involvement in the current Somalian civil war and India's intervention in Bangladesh's war for independence from Pakistan.[145] The metric for separating between the Vietnam model and the Special Forces model is drawn from the Correlates of War project, which requires that a state must have 100 or more battle fatalities or over 1,000 troops engaged in active combat for it to be considered a participant in the conflict.[146]

The second model I would term the Special Forces model because, in almost direct opposition to the Vietnam model, in this style of war with proxy the conventional

[143] *FM 31-21 58 Department of the Army Field Manuel: Guerilla Warfare and Special Forces Operations* (Washington DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, United States Department of Defense, 2002) 10.

[144] Thomas K. Adams, *U.S. Special Operations Forces*, 48-49.

[145] Bertil Duner, *Military Intervention*, 44.

[146] Charles Gochman and Zeev Maoz, "Militarized Interstate Disputes, 1816-1976," *Measuring the Correlates of War*, ed. by J. David Singer and Paul F. Diehl (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990) 196.

forces are meant to support unconventional warfare efforts.[147] Rather than a large military intervention, ground forces are small and aimed at supporting and directing the operations of the surrogates, with the larger force being held in reserve.[148] The intervention is still overt though the footprint of involvement is relatively small. The U.S. invasion of Afghanistan in 2003 is an example of this model; ground forces were limited to Special Forces or small conventional units with specific responsibilities with close air support available and the larger force serving as reinforcement. While this strategy does lessen combat casualties, many criticize this model as being less effective.[149]

In a war with proxy the degree of separation between the supporting state and the proxy is all but nonexistent, allowing the supporting state more control over their proxy. Ideally this control is absolute because of the embedded presence of members of the sponsor's military. In the Vietnam model, this control is exercised so that the operations of the proxy, while tangential to the overall campaign, will augment or support ongoing conventional operations. The two forces are separate but operate in the same battlespace.[150] In the Special Forces model the control is less certain because there are fewer military members on the ground to direct operations. There is a fine line between the Special Forces model and war by proxy; the difference is in the overt nature of the former and the covert nature of the latter. In both, the footprint of the sponsor may be small and limited to small teams to advise and guide, but in the Special Forces model of

[147] *FM 3-05.201,* 1-3.

[148] Jeffery Record, "Collapsed Countries," 18.

[149] "Hit the Ground."

[150] Frank Hoffman, "Hybrid Wars" 8.

war with proxy the teams that are on the ground are supported by air power and conventional ground forces. There is no such reinforcement mechanism in a war by proxy.

As just mentioned, a further characteristic of war with proxy is the overt nature of the conflict. By bringing the conflict into the public eye, the state must justify its participation in the conflict both internationally and domestically. To this end, another reason why a state chooses to maintain a relationship with the proxy is that it provides political legitimacy.[151] The proxy provides the justification for the supporting power to stay or remain in the conflict; working alongside indigenous forces allows the state to argue that they are intervening on behalf of the proxy, not out of self-interest. This does not always translate into widespread acceptance, especially among the state's citizens who may question the wisdom of intervening and the native population who may be suspicious of the sponsor's motives, but it does provide a good starting point to try to build international support for the military action.

Finally, wars with proxy generally do not last as long as wars by proxy. The supporting state is rarely willing or able to commit its troops for extended periods of time in foreign conflicts and is usually intolerant of the higher casualty counts incurred by doing so.[152] Many states engage in this strategy when it becomes apparent that diplomacy or covert actions are no longer sufficient and they believe that the stakes are high enough to warrant intervention.

Benefits

The primary purpose of engaging in a war with proxy is that military involvement

[151] Kelly Smith, "Surrogate Warfare," 27.

[152] Priscilla Sellers, "Indigenous Forces," 4.

is meant to be a show-stopper. When a state wants to resolve a conflict fast, engaging in a war with proxy will be more effective than a war by proxy. With military support the proxy is able to conduct larger and more coordinated attacks, make use of advanced land and air systems, and occupy territory.[153] It is now able to challenge its adversary on a conventional plane in order to defeat a formerly superior force. None of these activities are available in a war by proxy, when both the proxy and the supporter must be satisfied with hit-and-run tactics or terrorism.

In both models of war with proxy the surrogate force is valuable for several reasons. Depending on the size of the proxy it can reduce the demand on the state's forces by delaying or disrupting hostile military operations, interdicting lines of communication, denying the hostile power unrestricted use of territory, diverting the hostile power's attention and resources, and interdicting hostile warfighting capabilities.[154] These operations can be crucial in helping the state maintain a high level of operations or in maintaining continuous operations for longer than would otherwise be possible.[155] The group may also have capabilities that the state does not have, such as linguistic abilities, cultural awareness, or an understanding of the human and physical terrain. In this way the proxy can serve as an invaluable intermediate between the military and the local population.[156] Continuing to work with the proxy throughout the conflict also means that once the supporting state withdraws its military there is a force

[153] Daniel Byman, et. al, *Trends,* 91.

[154] *FM 3-05.201,* 1-3.

[155] Kelly H. Smith, "Surrogate Warfare," 27.

[156] Brian L. Thompson, "Surrogate Armies: Redefining the Ground Force" (Research Paper: Naval War College, 2002) 3.

already in place to (theoretically) take control.[157]

Risks

As with engaging in war by proxy there are also a number of downsides to this particular strategy, most of which derive from the participation of the military. First, as mentioned previously, by committing ground troops the supporting state has much less strategic and diplomatic flexibility. The commitment of conventional military forces is a sizable undertaking because it involves a great deal of money, political capital, supplies, and logistical capabilities. How much commitment is required is dependent on the state's proximity to the conflict; states are more likely to become involved militarily if the conflict is nearby.[158] This degree of commitment limits the availability of resources for other undertakings or conflicts, limiting the state's options for action. The state is running the risk that another conflict, perhaps more important, will erupt while it is already committed. If the commitment is significant compared to a state's capabilities, the states deterrence position is diminished, which can make it more likely that another conflict will erupt. Also, getting militarily involved in a conflict can make a state vulnerable to the proxies of another, drawing the state deeper into the conflict it was trying to resolve. In Afghanistan, for example, since the American invasion, the country's neighbors have undermined Afghan unity by sponsoring factions to fight with each other and against the United States.[159]

Second, despite the use of proxies on the battlefield, the state's military

[157] Priscilla Sellers, "Incorporation of Indigenous Forces," 2.

[158] Bertil Duner, *Military Intervention*, 75.

[159] Ahmed Rashid, "Fledgling Afghan Government Faces Scourge of Warlordism – Local Leaders Who Ousted Taliban With the Aid of the U.S. are Restoring Old Fiefs," Wall Street Journal (January 16, 2002). A10 {online database} available from ProQuest [accessed May 16, 2008]

inevitably does the majority of the fighting and therefore incurs most of the combat casualties. Aside from the drain on military forces, the state is vulnerable to increased criticism and a loss of domestic support, which only worsens as the casualty count increases.[160] In democratic nations or states that are vulnerable to internal unrest, this virtually always results in a military withdrawal. This is the particular downfall of the Vietnam model of war with proxy and is what spurred the development of the Special Forces model.

Third, not only is the state liable for actions perpetrated by their own troops but they are also automatically liable for the behavior of their proxies. There is no plausible deniability in war with proxy. This has gotten the United States in trouble during the Vietnam War and currently with its proxies in Afghanistan.[161] Whether the proxy is acting on its own or is being used to do the supporting state's "dirty work," a criticism of the United States' relationship with the South Vietnamese,[162] the supporting state's international and domestic standing will be damaged. Some argue that democratic states in particular are prone to this "squeamishness," in that they are not willing to tolerate the "level of violence and brutality" that may be necessary to secure victory.[163] It is certainly true that misbehavior on the part of the proxy will hasten or exacerbate public backlash to the conflict. Democratic states are also held to a higher standard internationally and therefore their actions draw criticism in that arena as well.

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[160] Jeffery Record, "Collapsed Countries," 13.

[161] Babek Dehghanpisheh, John Barry, and Roy Gutman. "The Death Convoy of Afghanistan," *Newsweek* 140 no 9, August 26, 2002.

[162] Donna Schlagheck, "The Superpowers," 175.

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

CONCLUSION

Asymmetry, like technology, seems to be the wave of the future. The days of the early 20th century when the state with the largest, best trained, and most technologically advanced military would carry the day are over; we are done with the third generation of warfare and are well into the fourth.[164] In effect, these states, by the very fact of their overwhelming power, have forced this type of war to take "the seat of a B actor."[165] Instead, it seems that irregular wars, fought by asymmetric actors using unconventional tactics, will be the future of warfare. That is not to mean, however, that states will become irrelevant. History has proven that states are fully capable of exploiting the advantages of asymmetry through proxy warfare, particularly in war by proxy.

War by proxy is a type of warfare that is often difficult for the targeted state to counter. Not only must it deal both with the proxy and the supporting regime, it must also counter the advantages that the relationship gives to each party. Dealing with the proxy is difficult because the group is able to leverage the weak-actor advantages inherent to asymmetric warfare while not being limited by some of the disadvantages, such as the need to maintain a base of popular support. Having a supporter also ensures that the proxy will not run out of funds, armaments, or any of the other benefits of state sponsorship as long as the sponsorship continues. The state enjoys the benefit of achieving its strategic goals with a relatively low cost while maintaining plausible deniability, which places the burden of proof on the targeted nation. The states that habitually engage in this type of war are those for whom the risks have little meaning,

[164] Thomas X. Hammes, *The Sling and the Stone.*

[165] Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui, *Unrestricted Warfare* (Beijing: PLA Literature and Arts Publishing House, 1999) 4.

such as failed or failing states and rogue regimes.

The other style of proxy warfare, war with proxy, is less straightforward. The idea that a state would commit its ground forces alongside a proxy actor seems counterintuitive but many of the more well-known proxy wars in history, such as the Vietnam and Korean War, incorporated this tactic. Part of what explains this phenomenon is the fact that many proxy wars evolve from a war by proxy to a war with proxy. This escalation usually occurs as the supporting state perceives that the stakes and objectives of the conflict have increased beyond the ability of a proxy to achieve or if the situation warrants military involvement. In some cases the state will involve its military when the proxy is close to winning, in order to seal the victory and solidify its influence. During the American War for Independence, for example, France began by supplying munitions, gunpowder, and supplies to American forces, a classic case of war by proxy. However, after the Battle of Saratoga and the signing of a formal alliance in 1778, France escalated its involvement into a war with proxy by providing military and naval support as well.[166]

The differences between these two types of strategic behavior are such that it is almost difficult to believe they are part of the same phenomenon. However, both war by proxy and war with proxy contain the three core elements that define proxy warfare – the proxy, the pre-existing conflict, and the underlying intent. Differentiating between the two is useful for explaining the variety of proxy wars and describing why a state may decide to engage in this strategy.

[166] Jeffery Record, "External Assistance," 39.

CHAPTER 4

TYPES OF PROXY WAR

> "…The pulse of the God of War is hard to take. If you want to discuss war, particularly the war that will break out tomorrow evening or the morning of the day after tomorrow, there is only one way, and that is to determine its nature with bated breath, carefully feeling the pulse of the God of War today."
>
> - Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui[167]

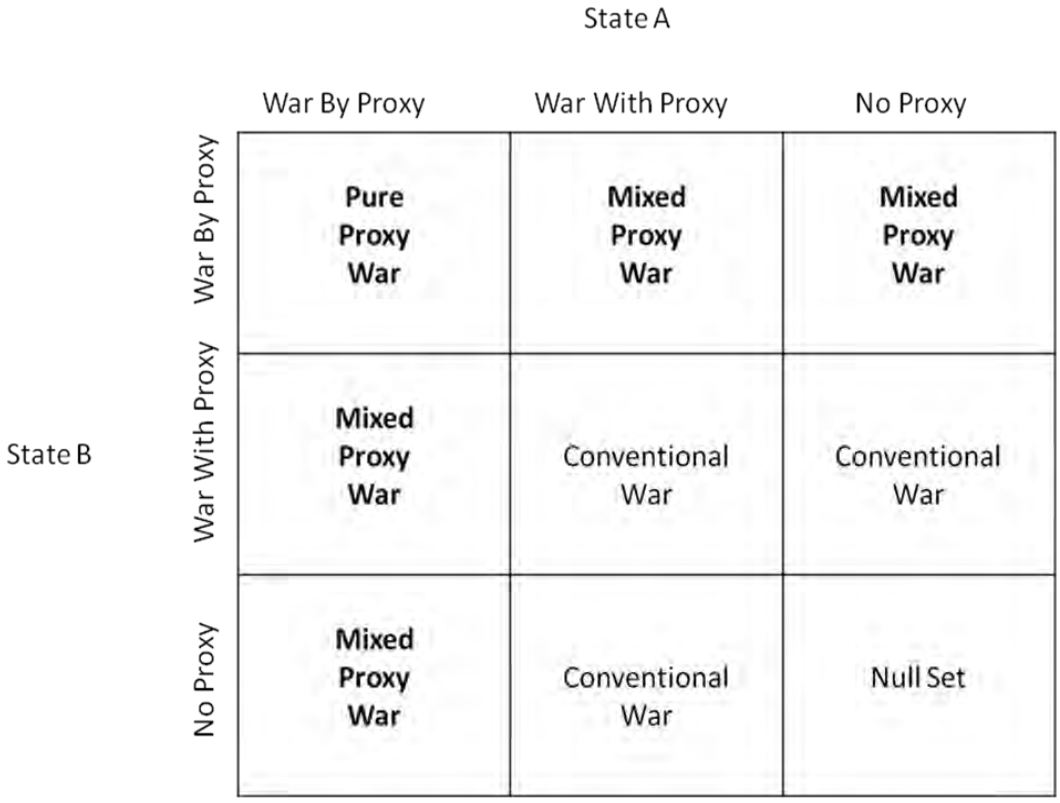
The previous chapter examined proxy warfare from the view point of the state sponsor and described two methods of conducting a proxy war, war by proxy and war with proxy. Here we will take a step back and examine how these tactics affect the conflict on a strategic level. Based on each state's behavior in the conflict we can distinguish between two overall types of proxy wars, "pure" and "mixed." A pure proxy war is one where both sides of the conflict are engaging in war by proxy. Using "pure" as the nomenclature for this type of proxy war is merely to reflect the fact that both sides are using the same strategy, which differentiates it from a mixed proxy war. An obscure example of this would be the 1960 Laotian civil war, where the United States supported the incumbent government and the Soviets supported the anti-government forces, a conflict that is often overshadowed by the noisier war next door in Vietnam.[168] A mixed proxy war has two varieties and describes most of the conflicts commonly considered proxy wars. Dividing proxy wars in this manner is for ease of identification and analysis; the boundaries between the two categories are by no means concrete. If a state changes its

[167] Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui, *Unrestricted Warfare,* 13.

[168] James Parker Jr., *Codename Mule: Fighting the Secret War in Laos for the CIA* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1995) xv.

strategy from war by proxy to war with proxy or vice versa the categorization of the conflict will change as well. With regards to proxy warfare, a state has three possible strategies: war by proxy, war with proxy, and not engaging a proxy. Figure 4 shows how these strategies interact to generate the two types of proxy wars, mixed and pure, and the two variants of mixed proxy wars.

Figure 4.1 State Interactions



PURE

As mentioned above, a conflict can be labeled a pure proxy war if both supporting powers are conducting a war by proxy. In addition to all of the costs and benefits that go along with this strategy, which were outlined in the previous chapter, pure proxy wars themselves are unstable and particularly prone to escalation. One, as each sponsor

increases its support in order to give their proxy the edge, the end result is proxy warfare's version of an arms race. This escalates until a sponsor gives up or decides to take the next step and intervene militarily. Two, they present tempting targets for other nations; many pure proxy wars are not fought for long without other states becoming involved. The best example of this instability is the United State's involvement in the 1975 Angolan Civil War. The initial outlay to the U.S. proxy was $14 million, the "minimum necessary to meet the Soviet strategic thrust."[169] Within five months this amount had ballooned to $33 million as the U.S. tried to compete with the Soviet Union, whose support was ultimately estimated to be in the hundreds of millions. Two months after the U.S. initiated their support the Soviet Union leveraged their client state Cuba into sending troops and South Africa soon joined the fray. As the fighting escalated, the secrecy surrounding U.S. and Soviet involvement evaporated, and the United States was forced by its Congress to cease its support.[170] Unlike mixed proxy wars, this type of conflict will always take place in the territory of a third party. Because of their inherent instability, pure proxy wars rarely last very long before they escalate into another type of conflict.

MIXED

The other type of proxy war I label as "mixed." As opposed to pure proxy war, here the two states are utilizing different strategies in the conflict. This combination of strategies creates the variations in mixed proxy wars. In both variants one side of the conflict is engaging in a war by proxy. As Figure 4 shows, they are differentiated by the opposing state's strategy, which is engaging in either a war with proxy or not engaging in

[169] Treverton, *Covert Action*, 153.

[170] Ibid, 156-158.

proxy warfare at all. In the latter case, one state is engaging in war by proxy against another state that has no proxies in the conflict. An example of this is the Pakistan-India conflict, where Pakistan supports a variety of militant groups that conducts attacks against India rather than a proxy of the state. This variation is most often referred to as state-sponsored terrorism because of the proxy's tactics. It is also the more common of the two variants. An example of the former is the current conflict in Iraq. The United States is conducting a war with proxy because of the combat operations conducted in conjunction with native Iraqis, while Iran is conducting a war by proxy by funding, arming, and training terrorist and insurgent groups that target both U.S. and Iraqi forces.[171] As Figure 4 shows, all other possible combinations result in conventional conflicts except for the null set.

Because the targets in mixed proxy wars are the opposing state or the opposing state's forces, this type of proxy war takes place in either the territory of that state or in disputed territory that is controlled by that state. For example, Iran's proxy war with Israel is conducted through Hezbollah, making it a mixed proxy war. The conflict began while Israel was occupying southern Lebanon, and during the occupation this is where most of the attacks took place. After the country pulled out, the group began attacking targets inside Israel. Unlike pure proxy war we cannot make the generalization that a variation occurs in one location more than another.

As mentioned earlier, pure proxy wars are prone to escalation as a state is tempted to move from a war by proxy to a war with proxy in pursuit of its objectives. In mixed proxy wars a state can similarly attempt to de-escalate a conflict by moving from a war with proxy to a war by proxy. A state that is fully involved in a conflict, having found

[171] Joseph Lieberman, "Iran's Proxy War." Wall Street Journal, July 06, 2007.

perhaps that military intervention did not bring the desired end to the conflict, may attempt to create a proxy that is capable of continuing on in its place as it withdraws. It also creates this proxy in order to draw fire from the opposing proxy. An example of this, though ultimately unsuccessful, is Israel's creation of the South Lebanese Army (SLA) which was meant to act as a buffer against Iran's proxy Hezbollah.[172] Despite a $30 million outlay to support the group, SLA remained an unreliable surrogate and Israel was forced to increase the numbers of its troops in Lebanon rather than begin its withdrawal.[173] In Iraq, the United States is rebuilding the Iraqi Army and police force in order to reinforce and ultimately replace U.S. forces in the battle against al-Qaida, the Sunni insurgents, and the Iranian-supported Shi'a insurgents, the success of which has yet to be determined.[174] Though mixed proxy wars do not represent a stable situation, they are less prone to escalation than pure proxy wars and can continue on for years or even decades.

CONCLUSION

The boundaries between mixed and pure proxy wars are very permeable. A conflict can move from one to the other and theoretically back again as the state changes its strategic approach. Pure proxy wars are defined by the use of war by proxy on both sides of the conflict and as such, though being the most intuitive example of proxy warfare, actually represents a small portion of proxy wars. More common are mixed

[172] Frederic M. Wehrey, "A Clash of Wills: Hizballah's Psychological Campaign Against Israel in South Lebanon," *Small Wars and Insurgencies 13,* no. 3 (Autumn 2002) 63.

[173] Ibid, 64.

[174] Michael M. Gordon and Alissa Rubin, "Operation in Sadr City is an Iraqi Success, So Far," *New York Times*, May 21, 2008. http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/21/world/middleeast/21sadr.html?pagewanted =1&_r=1&ref=middleeast. [accessed May 21, 2008].

proxy wars, which come in two variations that are demonstrated in Figure 4. The value in creating these labels of “pure” versus “mixed” is that they concisely identify how the conflict in question is being conducted and how many actors there are in the conflict, as well as providing categories for overall analysis.

CHAPTER 5

CASE STUDIES

> "It is not worth while [sic] to try to keep history from repeating itself, for man's character will always make the preventing of repetitions impossible."
> - Mark Twain[175]

Another difficulty with the academic treatment of proxy warfare as it stands today is that the phrase "proxy war" is not consistently applied to any one conflict, which means that there is no generally accepted prototype that can be used for analysis or comparison. The conflicts that are most often referred to as proxy wars occurred during the Cold War, lumping together the two dissimilar conflicts of the Korean War and the Vietnam War without explaining what the two have in common. That is not to say that all proxy wars look alike, but without a prior understanding of proxy wars and how they are conducted, it is difficult to extrapolate this information based on these conflicts. Given the fact that many aspects of proxy warfare have evolved since then, dissecting conflicts from an entirely different period of history for information that would be relevant to current conflicts could lead to misleading conclusions. Like, for example, the idea that proxy wars only occur between two superpowers in a bipolar world.[176] Also, there is no need to turn to conflicts from forty or fifty years ago when there are proxy wars still being waged today, such as the current civil war in Somalia and the ongoing fight between India and Pakistan, the two conflicts that will be discussed in this chapter.

This chapter is meant to fill this void by using the characteristics outlined in the

[175] Mark Twain, *Eruption: Hitherto Unpublished Pages About Men and Events*, ed. Bernard DeVoto (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1940) 72.

[176] Louise Richardson, "Global Rebels," 68.

previous three chapters to show that these conflicts contain all three of the elements in proxy warfare's perfect trinity. It also demonstrates the utility of the academic framework outlined in Chapters 2, 3, and 4 in analyzing conflicts by showing how proxy warfare's perfect trinity can be used to target collection assests and organize available information. This methodology is outlined below.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology that will be applied to the following case studies is based on the model used by Bertil Dunér in *Military Intervention in Civil Wars: The 1970s,*[177] which was a quantitative study of six conflicts using coding and statistical analysis. He began by describing a set of objective variables to apply to his case studies, which he derived from existing literature and theoretical discussions of military intervention. He then applied this framework to each study, coding each variable that was present in the data, and used this coding in the statistical analyses from which he drew his conclusion Though this is a qualitative analysis, and there will be no statistics, I also began by creating my own set of variables based on the idea of proxy warfare's perfect trinity as described in Chapter 2. The three characteristics that make up the trinity are the proxy, the conflict, and the intent, and from these general groupings we can derive a larger and more specific list of variables to be measured. These can be seen in Table 5.1. As mentioned in the discussion of the perfect trinity, in order for a conflict to be a proxy war it must include all three characteristics. The presence of one or more variables from each category would indicate that the characteristic is present in the conflict, making it a proxy war.

[177] Dunér's methodology is described in Chapter 2.

Table 5.1: The Analytical Framework

I. Proxy:
- Type
  - State
  - Non-state
- Support
  - Passive
    - Safe haven
    - Free transit
    - Political support
    - Propaganda
  - Active
    - Concrete:
      - Weapons
      - Funds
      - Supplies (ammunition, documents)
    - Intangible
      - Intelligence
      - Direction
      - Training
      - Advisors
    - Military
      - Unconventional Forces
      - Conventional Forces

II. Conflict:
- "Cold" conflict
  - Fragile or Crisis State
  - Failed State
- "Hot" conflict
  - Terrorism
  - Insurgency
  - Civil War
  - Interstate War

III. Intent:
- Ideological tension
- Prior conflict
- Interstate rivalry

Measuring Proxy

As discussed in the second chapter, the support that a state provides must be active for the actor to be considered a proxy. Therefore the conflict may have all of the "passive" variables listed in Table 5.1 but cannot be a proxy war unless there is an

"active" variable present. Also, one of the harder aspects of dealing with proxy warfare is evaluating how much control the sponsor has over the proxy. Dunér argued that this was essentially impossible to determine, though he was evaluating the use of other states as proxies rather than non-state actors.[178] I agree that such a determination is difficult to do on that level. This is not the case, however, when dealing with non-state proxies. In Table 5.1 the types of active support are listed as concrete, intangible, and military. Each type represents an increasing level of involvement and an escalation of commitment on the part of the sponsor. For example, concrete support is the easiest and most deniable type of support, because there does not need to be any direct interaction between members of the proxy and the sponsor. This type of support is also the easiest type for the proxy to achieve on the open or black market without the help of a state. This means that at the "concrete" level of support there is a high degree of separation between the proxy and the sponsor. As Chapter 3 discussed, the greater the separation between the two the less control the sponsor has over the proxy. Providing "intangible" support indicates a closer relationship because it requires interaction between the proxy and the sponsor, and with military support the two are working in close collaboration. Though imprecise, this method provides a way to estimate the relationship between the sponsor and proxy by examining the type of support that is being provided.

Measuring Conflict

I use the "Correlates of War" (COW) definition to distinguish between hot and cold conflict. According to this project, a war is "sustained military hostilities between the regular armed forces of two or more states, resulting in 1,000 or more battle

[178] Bertil Dunér, *Military Interventions*, 113.

fatalities."[179] The only modification for the use of this thesis is to replace "states" with "groups," and it is important to note that the 1,000 battle fatalities does not refer to per state but in total. Hot conflicts include terrorism, insurgencies, civil wars, and interstate wars. For the purposes of this thesis we will use the Department of Defense (DOD) definition for terrorism: "the calculated use of unlawful violence or threat of unlawful violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological."[180] Insurgency is defined as an "organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict."[181] A civil war is a struggle takes place "within the same political community" where the struggle for power is "decided through violence."[182] The difference between an insurgency and a civil war is a tricky one that is not very well defined. Metaphorically speaking, if we imagine that control over the state is an object that can be possessed, in an insurgency one side of the conflict has the object, and the other wants to take it away. In a civil war neither side has the object and they are fighting over who will take possession.

"Cold" conflicts on the other hand represent situations that may easily dissolve into hot conflicts, so they can be thought of more as conditions than conflicts. They include crisis or fragile states and failed states. The Crisis State Research Centre, which is devoted to the study of failing states, breaks them down into three categories: fragile

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[179] Charles Gochman and Zeev Maoz, "Militarized Interstate Disputes," 196.

[180] *Joint Publication 1_02: Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms,* s.v. "terrorism." 12 April 2001 as amended through 17 October 2007.

[181] *Joint Publication 1_02,* s.v. "insurgency."

[182] Lawrence Freedman, "What Makes a Civil War?" BBC News Online, April 20, 2006. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4902708.stm [accessed May 30, 2008].

states, crisis states, and failed states. Fragile and crisis states have been grouped together because both describe states where the government is functioning but is susceptible to shocks and conflicts and is in danger of failing.[183] A failed state is one where there is no government to perform basic security, developmental functions, and has no control over its territory and borders.[184]

For the purposes of this thesis, these categories will be considered mutually exclusive. The difficulty in distinguishing among these categories of conflict is that in some cases the conflict may appear to span across multiple categories; the easiest one to point out would be a civil war that is taking place in a failed state. To this argument I would defer to the differentiation described above between hot and cold conflicts; a failed state that is engulfed in a civil war will be coded as a civil war if it meets the "1,000 battle fatalities" criterion, but otherwise it will be considered a failed state. The type of conflict that the proxy war is imbedded will be important when we discuss how to resolve a proxy war.

Measuring Intent

In the discussion of "the point" from Chapter 2, specific motivations such as regime change and payback were described. These are not mentioned in Table 5.1 because from a quantitative point of view these are virtually impossible to demonstrate. Part of the problem is that these reasons can be subjective and open to interpretations. There is also no reason why the state cannot have multiple motivations, which makes proving any one even more difficult. To avoid this problem, I created three broader types

[183] "Crisis, Fragile, and Failed States: Definitions Used by the CSRC," Crisis State Research Center, March 2006. http://www.crisisstates.com/download/drc/FailedState.pdf [accessed May 30, 2008].

[184] Ibid.

of intent, named in Table 5.1, for analysis, because the point is not to prove what motivation is driving the state, only that there is an ulterior motive present.

Ideological tension is demonstrated by public statements made against the targeted state, like Iran's condemnation of the United States as "the Great Satan," or by public policy statements like the article "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," which outlined the policy of containment that drove the Cold War.[185] This type of motivation is not the strongest, and is usually a symptom rather than a cause. Ideological differences rarely arise in a vacuum but rather are triggered by a previous conflict or a rivalry. It is included because it may capture an intention that may not otherwise be represented.

Prior conflict includes any major conflict or dispute between the two nations that occurred within 10 years of the onset of the proxy war, particularly if the situation was not resolved amicably or to both parties' satisfaction. Lingering hostility, an unresolved dispute, or unaddressed feelings of being under threat are all motivations for engaging in a proxy war. The Correlates of War database,[186] which has a comprehensive listing of conflicts ranging from the threat of force to war, will be used to find such conflicts.

The best way to measure *interstate rivalry* is historical patterns of behavior. The Correlates of War Project has assembled an extensive dataset that describes interstate behavior, including sets that focus on intergovernmental organizations, diplomatic interactions, and most importantly for this thesis, international disputes. Using this data we will be able to determine if there is a historic pattern of rivalry between two states

[185] X, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," *Foreign Affairs* (July 1947) Council on Foreign Relations, http://www.foreignaffairs.org/19470701faessay25403/x/the-sources-of-soviet-conduct.html?mode=print [Accessed May 25, 2008].

[186] Faten Ghosn, Glenn Palmer, and Stuart Bremer, "The MID3 Data Set, 1993–2001: Procedures, Coding Rules, and Description," *Conflict Management and Peace Science 21* (2004) 133-154. The data sets can be found at http://www.correlatesofwar.org/ [accessed May 26, 2008].

based on the frequency and type of conflicts that occurred between them.

Application

The case studies in this thesis will be evaluated using the variables outlined and explained above. First will be a description of the recent history of the hosting conflict to provide context for the analysis. Data will be drawn from the available literature which will be then measured against the variables using a modified version of Table 5.1. The results of this analysis will determine whether the conflict is a proxy war. If it is, we will be able to identify what type of strategy the sponsor or sponsors are using and therefore what type of proxy war the conflict represents.

SOMALIA, 2004-PRESENT

Somalia has been in a state of chaos since the last functioning government collapsed in 1991. This chaos has spilled over into its neighbors, Ethiopia and Kenya, who are struggling to deal with the thousands of refugees caused by the crisis while also trying to secure their borders against the armed groups and terrorists that are attracted to it. Historically, the root cause of Somalia's problems has been warring clans and warlords, which are reluctant to build a central government that would diminish their own power and prestige. Opposing clans overthrew the government in 1991 and have been the reason why subsequent peace efforts have failed.[187]

Aside from the well known 1993- 1995 United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM), there have been over a dozen international reconciliation attempts aimed at

[187] Ken Menkhaus, *Somalia: State Collapse and the Threat of Terrorism,* Adelphi Paper 364 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004) 8.

creating a functioning state out of Somalia, with no success.[188] A mediation effort by Djibouti produced the Transitional National Government (TNG) in 2000, but despite recognition by the UN and millions of dollars in aid it was never able to completely control the capital, much less the entire state, and the agreement that created the TNG expired in 2003. In 2004, another deal was signed that created a parliament that later appointed the current president Abdullahi Yussuf Ahmed. This regime, which is still struggling for control and legitimacy, is known as the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) to differentiate it from its predecessor. However, even the TFG is considered to be simply an amalgamation of warlords attempting to control the state not in order to create a central government but rather to maintain their own power.[189]

The situation would be business as usual except for the emergence of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU, also known as the Union of Islamic Courts or UIC), which is fighting to bring Islamic sharia law to Somalia. The ICU quickly defeated many of the warlords in south Somalia and for a while controlled much of that territory, including the capital Mogadishu. The success of the ICU in gaining control of parts of Somalia has led to increased international attention, particularly from the United Nations and the United States who suspects it of having links to al-Qaida.[190] Neighboring countries, Ethiopia in particular, are also worried that the Islamist threat will spread to their own country.

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[188] Ibid, 15-19.

[189] Stephanie Hanson and Eben Kaplan, "Backgrounder: Somalia's Transitional Government," Council on Foreign Relations, May 12, 2008. http://www.cfr.org/publication/12475/#2 [accessed May 30, 2008].

[190] Terrence Lyons "Ethiopia-Eritrea Proxy war in Somalia Risks Broader Regional Conflict, Warns New Council Report" Council on Foreign Relations, December 14, 2006. http://www.cfr.org/publication/12216/ethiopiaeritrea_proxy_war_in_somalia_risks_broader_regional_conflict_warns_new_council_report.html?breadcrumb=%2Fregion%2Fpublication_list%3Fgroupby%3D3%26id%3D203%26filter%3D2006 [accessed May 9, 2008].

As the situation stands today, there is a war between the ICU and the transitional federal government that was established in 2004.[191] The majority of the fighting is centered in the south, where the ICU controls Mogadishu and the TFG is operating out of a city called Baidoa. The armed wing of the ICU, al-Shabab, has been labeled as a terrorist organization by the U.S. Department of State.[192] Clashes between the ICU and the TFG occur regularly, but result in more casualties from the civilian population than from either group.[193] The United Nations assesses that the ICU has been gaining territory in southern Somalia and that this success is causing the TFG to fracture into private militias as warlords attempt to consolidate their power at the expense of the coalition.[194]

State Support

However, the TFG and the ICU are not the only actors in this conflict. According to a November 2006 report to the Security Council of the United Nations, no less than ten nations were providing concrete support to the ICU or the TFG, seven to the former and three to the latter. [195] The states accused of supporting the ICU are Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Iran, Libya, Saudi Arabia, and Syria. Ethiopia, Uganda, and Yemen were all indicated to have supported the TGF. Table 5.2 shows the type of each state's support

[191] "Somalia Civil War." Global Security.Org, January 7, 2007. www.globalsecurity.org/ military/world/war/somalia.htm [accessed January 9, 2008).

[192] "Somali Militants Vow to Avenge Deadly U.S. Airstrike," Associated Press, May 2, 2008 http://www.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/africa/05/02/somalia.airstrike.ap/index.html?iref=newssearch [accessed May 30, 2008].

[193] "Somalis Say Ethiopian Troops killed 17 civilians," Associated Press, May 8, 2008. http://www.cnn. com/ 2008/WORLD/africa/05/08/somalia.clash.ap/index.html?iref=newssearch [accessed May 30, 2008].

[194] Bruno Schiemsky, Gilbert Barthe, Charles Lengalenga, and Julian Ruhfus, "Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia pursuant to Security Council resolution 1766 (2007)," United Nations Security Council, S/2006/274, (April 24, 2008) 6.

[195] Ibid, 9.

according to UN reports, which focus on the years since the 2003 renewal of a 1992 resolution regarding an arms embargo of Somalia.[196]

Table 5.2: Actors in Somalia

	ERI	DJI	EGY	IRN	SAU	LIB	SYR	ETH	YEM	UGA
Type										
▪ State										
▪ Non-state	ICU	ICU	ICU	ICU	ICU	ICU	ICU	TFG	TFG	TFG
Support										
▪ Passive										
• Safe haven										
• Free transit										
• Political support										
• Propaganda										
▪ Active										
• Concrete:										
o Weapons	X			X		X	X	X	X	X
o Funds	X					X			X	
o Supplies	X	X		X	X		X	X		
• Intangible										
o Intelligence										
o Direction										
o Training	X		X				X	X		
o Advisors	X			X				X		X
• Military										
o Unconventional										
o Conventional	X							X		

As you can see from the table, though ten states were providing support, the two that stand out from the rest are Eritrea (ERI) and Ethiopia (ETH). One thing that the table does not capture, however, is the scale of the involvement of each state. When this is figured into the analysis, Eritrea and Ethiopia still stand out among the rest of the state supporters. For example, though Iran, Syria, Libya and Eritrea all provided weapons to the ICU, Libya and Syria each only sent one shipment and Iran sent three, while Eritrea

[196] Ibid, 9-28.

provided at least 28.[197] Not only did Eritrea and Ethiopia provide the most types of support (six and five respectively, with the next nearest providing three) but they are also the only states to send their military forces into the conflict. The United Nations report states that Eritrea provided 2,000 combat troops to be deployed throughout ICU-held territory[198] and the number of troops from Ethiopia was numbered at 3,000.[199] The presence of Eritrean troops is still denied by the government, and to date there have been no clashes between Ethiopian and Eritrean forces.

Unlisted in the above table is the involvement of the United States, which has increased its presence in the Horn of Africa because of the ICU's suspected links with al-Qaida. The United States has been accused of fighting a proxy war in Somalia because of its renewed activities in the region[200] but this accusation is not supported by the data. To date, the extent of U.S. activity has been missile strikes against al-Shabab, which have been admitted by the government, and training military officers from Somaliland, an activity that which has not been publicly acknowledged.[201] The United States was not included in Table 5.1 for the latter because Somaliland, an autonomous region in northern Somalia, is not allied with either the TFG or the ICU and is therefore not within the scope of this case study.

Type of Conflict

Determining the type of conflict that Somalia represents creates some

[197]Ibid, 9-28.

[198] Ibid,14.

[199] Ibid,19.

[200] Michela Wrong, "War by Proxy."

[201]Ibid, 24

methodological difficulties. However, there are a few of the conflict types that we can eliminate at the outset. For instance, in regards to cold conflicts, Somalia is clearly a failed state rather than fragile or crisis. The problem is determining whether or not there is a hot conflict going on as well, which is where we run into problems, the primary one being how to measure the beginning of the conflict. If we consider the conflict to have started in 1991, the last time that the state had a functioning government, then there have been well over 1,000 combat deaths in Somalia. However, the combatants in the conflict have changed a number of times since 1991, with the biggest watershed events being the creation of the transitional governments in 2000 and 2004 and the emergence of the ICU. The question is whether the emergence of new actors represents the start of a new conflict, which means that the casualty count would need to be restarted. It would be simpler if with each new actor the sponsor-proxy relationships remained constant, meaning, for example, the same state that sponsored the TNG would also sponsor its heir, the TFG. However, this is rarely the case; for example, though Eritrea is now supporting the ICU, prior to the rise of this group it was a supporter of the previous transitional government, the TNG, and one year prior to that it was the sponsor of the opposition.[202] This means that each period in Somalia's history must be evaluated separately, which is why this case study focuses specifically on the years since the creation of the TFG in 2004. To attempt to fully catalogue and analyze outside intervention would be an appropriate topic for its own thesis, because alliance systems in this conflict change so frequently.

However, using the year 2004 as the beginning of the current conflict presents

[202] Ernst Jan Hogendoorn, Mohamed M'Backe, and Brynjulf Mugaas, "Report on the Panel of Experts on Somalia pursuant to Security Council resolution 1425 (2002)," United Nations Security Council, S/2003/223 (March 25, 2003) 24.

difficulties because the only numbers provided regarding casualties are the claims made by either side, which are impossible to verify. For example, Ethiopia claims that they have killed 2,000-3,000 ICU fighters[203] while the ICU claims responsibility for 500 Ethiopian casualties,[204] a figure that has been corroborated by Ethiopian sources. However, taking into consideration civilian casualties and displacement, the destruction of infrastructure, and the frequent clashes between the TFG forces and the ICU, I would argue that this situation can be considered a hot conflict.

Now the problem is, which type of hot conflict is it? Despite the presence of Eritrean and Ethiopian troops, it is clear that the conflict has not quite escalated to an interstate war. It has, however, escalated beyond the scope of terrorism. Therefore the primary question is whether the war in Somalia is an insurgency or a civil war. Recalling the definitions of both from the discussion under methodology, the primary difference between the two is that in an insurgency one side in the conflict has control over the state, whereas in a civil war it is that control that is under dispute. Despite the fact that the TFG is recognized internationally to be the rightful government, the facts argue that there is no effective government in Somalia. Most of the country has removed itself from the conflict by becoming the autonomous regions of Somaliland and Puntland, and the TFG does not even have uncontested control of the capital. Reports of human rights abuses on the part of TFG forces further undermine the legitimacy of the group as the interim Somali government. Given this, the current conflict in Somalia can best be described as a

[203] "Ethiopian Army accomplished 75% of its mission in Somalia – Zenawi," *Sudan Tribune,* December 29, 2008. http://sudantribune.com/spip.php?article19495 [accessed June 1, 2008].

[204] Somali insurgency to intensify," Reuters, in *Mail and Guardian Online,* December 16, 2007. http://www. mg.co.za/articlePage.aspx?articleid=327868&area=/breaking_news/breaking_news__africa/ [accessed June 1, 2008].

civil war where the ICU and the TFG are in a competition for control of the state.

Motives

According to the Correlates of War database, there were three instances of prior conflict between a state supporting the ICU and one supporting the TFG: one between Saudi Arabia and Yemen, one between Yemen and Eritrea, and one between Ethiopia and Eritrea.[205] The conflict between Yemen and Saudi Arabia was fought in 1998 and was a brief clash over on an ongoing border dispute. The clash was sparked by a dispute over three islands in the Red Sea that are claimed by both countries. The casualties in the conflict were low, and in June of 2000 the two states signed a border agreement resolving the dispute that has since been implemented and remains uncontested.[206]

The conflict between Yemen and Eritrea was very similar. In this case, there was a clash between Yemeni and Eritrean forces over the Hanish Islands in the Red Sea in 1995, a clash initiated by Eritrea.[207] The conflict was brief and the casualties were low. In 1996 the two states agreed to bring the case before the Permanent Court of Arbitration, which awarded the disputed islands to Yemen.[208] Eritrea did not dispute the finding and removed its forces from the islands.

The conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea, however, while also a boundary

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[205] Faten Ghosn, Glenn Palmer, and Stuart Bremer. 2004. "The MID3 Data Set, 1993–2001: Procedures, Coding Rules, and Description." Conflict Management and Peace Science 21:133-154.

[206]Chris Murphey, "Saudi Arabia – Yemen Border Dispute," *Inventory of Conflict and Environment Case Study 197*, American University (November 2006) http://www.american.edu/TED/ice/saudi-yemen.htm.

[207] Brian Whitaker, "Clash Over Islands," *Middle East International*, June 5, 1996. http://www.al-bab.com/yemen/ artic/mei15.htm [accessed June 1, 2008].

[208] "In the Matter of an Arbitration Pursuant to an Agreement to Arbitrate Dated 3 October 1996 Between The Government of the State of Eritrea and the Government of the Republic of Yemen: Award of the Arbitral Tribunal in the First Stage of the Proceedings," Permanent Court of Arbitration, The Hague. http://www.pca-cpa.org/upload/files/EY%20Phase%20I.PDF [accessed June 1, 2008] 147.

dispute was a great deal more involved than the prior two. This conflict lasted from 1998 to 2000 and involved well over 1,000 combat casualties.[209] The two parties agreed to a ceasefire in 2000 and, after negotiations, signed the Algiers agreement, in which both countries agreed to create a Boundary Commission that would be the final authority in demarcating the boundary of the disputed territory. Both parties agreed to abide by the decision of the Commission, which was announced in April of 2002 and clarified in March of 2003.[210] Ethiopia, however, was displeased with the ruling and attempted an appeal, which was rejected.[211] To date, the decision of the Boundary Commission has yet to be implemented by either party, and the United Nations has deployed a peacekeeping force along the boundary between the two nations to prevent the conflict from restarting.

Returning to the accusations that the United States is also fighting a proxy war in Somalia, this is another area where the idea falls short of reality. Even if the United States had been supporting one side or the other, the motive that is usually provided for US involvement – the fact that the ICU represents a faction of radical Islam, which the United States has all but declared war on – does not qualify as intent. There is no actor on the other side of the conflict that the United States is trying to affect. Without this, at best the United States can be accused of proxy intervention.

Conclusion

An initial glance at the above data would seem to indicate that there is not one but three proxy wars being fought in Somalia: between Saudi Arabia and Yemen, between

[209] "Ethiopia and Eritrea: War or Peace?" *ICG Africa Report No. 68* (Nairobi/Brussels: International Crisis Working Group, 2003) 1.

[210] Ibid, 6.

[211] Ibid, 7.

Eritrea and Yemen, and between Eritrea and Ethiopia. A closer examination, however, proves that there is in reality only one, between Eritrea and Ethiopia. First, the support that was given by Saudi Arabia to the ICU was "in the form of foodstuffs and medicines,"[212] which, based on the discussion in Chapter 2 on proxies, is not the operationally useful type of support required for there to be a proxy relationship. Second, according to this thesis's definition of conflict, neither the conflict between Saudi Arabia and Yemen nor that between Yemen and Eritrea counts as a conflict because there were less than 1,000 combat casualties. While there was enough of a dispute to be coded into the Correlates of War data set, it is not enough of a conflict to qualify as intent, particularly since each conflict was resolved amicably. One historical dispute apiece is not enough to qualify as an ongoing interstate rivalry, and there is no indication that the states are ideologically opposed to one another. Therefore the Saudi Arabia-Yemen aspect does not qualify as a proxy war on two counts, proxy and intent, and the Yemen-Eritrea aspect does not qualify because of the lack of intent.

This leaves us with the Eritrea-Ethiopia facet of the conflict. A timeline of this conflict shows that Ethiopia has been involved in the country since at least 1996, when Ethiopia invaded because of terrorist activity.[213] Eritrea, however, did not become involved until its first arms shipment in 1999,[214] during the middle of the two nations' border war. This argues that prior to the outbreak of war in 1998 Eritrea had little reason to get involved in a conflict far from its own borders. As described in Chapter 2, there

[212] Bruno Schiemsky, et. al., "Report of the Monitoring Group," 25.

[213]Ernst Jan Hogendoorn, et al., "Report on the Panel of Experts on Somalia," 7.

[214] Tafrov, Stefan. "Report of the team of experts appointed pursuant to Security Council resolution 1407 (2002), paragraph 1, concerning Somalia." United Nations Security Council, S/2002/722 (July 3, 2002) 20.

was a conflict and a potential proxy present but no motive, so there was no proxy war. However since then a proxy war has clearly emerged between these two states: they are the two states of the ten that provided the most types and the largest scale of support to two groups, the proxies, that are clearly fighting in a civil war, the hosting conflict, and there was a prior conflict between them that is still not fully resolved, which provides the intent.

Now that we have established that there is, indeed, a proxy war being waged in Somalia the question remains of what type of proxy war it is. As we showed earlier, both states are providing military personnel in the conflict but only Ethiopia's is actually engaged in combat; Eritrean troops are deployed in defensive positions.[215] This means that Ethiopia is conducting a war with proxy and Eritrea a war by proxy, which means that the overall conflict is a mixed proxy war.

There are a number of implications that this assessment has on the conflict. First, the fact that Ethiopia is engaged in a war by proxy indicates that it considers this conflict a national interest, so it will be extremely difficult to convince the state to withdraw. It also implies that if Ethiopia does in fact withdraw then its proxy the TFG will most likely be unable to continue fighting, particularly if Eritrea is not similarly convinced to withdraw its support. And as long as Eritrea has a motive for being in the conflict, that is, unless the lingering boundary issues are resolved or some other type of convincing leverage is applied, it will not withdraw. Without a guarantee that Eritrea will cease its support for anti-Ethiopian factions within Somalia, Ethiopia will not withdraw either, and the proxy war continues.

[215] Ibid, 14.

KASHMIR, 1987-PRESENT

The conflict between India and Pakistan is a complex one that dates back to the partition of the two countries following World War II. One of the many incarnations of this rivalry centers on the contested territory of Kashmir, which is located in the northernmost corner of the India-Pakistan boundary. The modern history of this region begins with the end of colonialism, during the time of the Partition when each of India's 562 states chose to belong to either India or Pakistan. Kashmir, which is more correctly called Jammu and Kashmir, was the notable exception. The ruler at the time, a Hindu in a state with a Muslim majority, had intended to vote for independence when the Muslims in the area bordering Pakistan revolted. The newly created Pakistan rushed to the aid of the irredentists, the ruler appealed to India for help, and the result was the first Kashmir War of 1948.[216] The United Nations brought a negotiated peace to the war, established the Line of Control (LOC), and put approximately 50 observers there to make sure that the LOC was upheld. These observers are still there today, making the peacekeeping mission almost as old as the United Nations itself.

The second Kashmir War was fought for similar reasons: in 1965 the Kashmiris staged anti-India riots, Pakistan invaded in support, and India defended its territory with a counter-invasion into the part of Kashmir administered by Pakistan.[217] This war was also resolved by UN mediation and resulted in no significant changes for either side. The current conflict in the Kashmir dates back to the late 1980s; in 1987, state elections were

[216] Mary Anne Weaver, *Pakistan: In the Shadow of Jihad and Afghanistan* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2002) 252.

[217] Anthony Spaeth, et. al, "Looking Down the Barrel," *Time* vol. 159 issue 2 (January 14, 2002) 37.

held that "were perhaps the most fraudulent in Kashmir's history."[218] Accusations of voter intimidation, threatened candidates, and rigged ballot boxes infuriated the local populace, who responded with violence.[219] Many in the region felt that the election malfeasance gave them no other option than to achieve their goals with violence. The first of many separatist groups, the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) was formed and made its first impact on to the international scene with the kidnapping of the Indian Home Affairs Minister's daughter.[220] The conflict exploded in 1989 with the end of the fighting in Afghanistan, which had three effects on the conflict in Kashmir: one, politics in the region moved away from a secular desire for independence to an Islamic desire to be part of Pakistan[221]; two, the Pakistani military and intelligence services focused their attention and the skills they learned in supporting the war in Afghanistan to Kashmir[222]; and three, many of the fighters engaged in the 'holy war' in Afghanistan surged into the Kashmir, providing a trained, experienced, and armed core of militants.[223] The Kashmiri's sense of grievance was exacerbated by harsh Indian attempts to quell the violence, which also created international outcry over human rights abuses.[224]

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[218] Mary Anne Weaver, *Pakistan:* 255.

[219] Sumit Ganguly, "Explaining the Kashmir Insurgency: Political Mobilization and Institutional Decay" *International Security 21,* no. 2 (Fall 1996) accessed at http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/sumit.htm on June 3, 2008.

[220] Stephen Saideman, "At the heart of the conflict: irredentism and Kashmir," *The India-Pakistan Conflict: An Enduring Rivalry,* ed. by T.V. Paul (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) 213.

[221] Iffat Malik, *Kashmir: Ethnic Conflict, International Dispute* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2001) 283.

[222] Robert G. Wirsing, *India, Pakistan, and the Kashmir Dispute: On Regional Conflict and its Resolution* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994) 113.

[223] Stephen Saideman, "At the heart of the conflict:" 213.

[224] "India's Secret Army in Kashmir: New Patterns of Abuse Emerge in Conflict" *Human Rights Watch Report 8,* no. 4 (May 1996) http://www.hrw.org/campaigns/kashmir/1996/ [accessed June 3, 2008].

Over the years since 1989 the violence in the Kashmir has waxed and waned according to international events and the warmth of Pakistani-Indian relations. In 1999, Pakistan attempted to take and hold a small mountain chain near Kargil but withdrew after less than two months of fighting. The tensest event in a long history of conflict, however, came in 2001, when a suicide attack on the Indian House of Parliament killed nine people and injured dozens.[225] Two subsequent attacks spurred a massive military build-up along the LOC in 2002, with both sides declaring their readiness to use nuclear weapons should the other make the first move.[226] Both sides eventually backed down, and to date peace talks are ongoing in the midst of sporadic violence in the Kashmir.

Two-thirds of the wider region known as the Kashmir are under India's control and are referred to as Jammu and Kashmir, and the third that is under Pakistan's control is known as Azad or "Free" Kashmir. Jammu and Kashmir can be broken down into three regions: Jammu, which is primarily Hindu and Sikh; Ladakh, which is Shi'a Muslim and Buddhist; and the Valley or Vale of Kashmir, which is predominately Sunni Muslim.[227] The Kashmir militant groups can be divided into those fighting for independence and those fighting to become part of Pakistan. The most powerful of the former is the JKLF and the strongest of the latter is the Hezb ul Mujahedin (HUM) and the Lashkar e-Taiba. One of the problems in studying or trying to resolve this conflict is that there are dozens of these militant groups and their collective membership is in the

[225] Mary Anne Weaver, *Pakistan:* 261-262.

[226] "Timeline: Conflict Over Kashmir," *CNN.com/World*, May 24, 2002. http://edition.cnn.com/2002/ WORLD/asiapcf/south/05/24/kashmir.timeline/index.html [accessed June 3, 2008].

[227] Stephen Saideman, "At the heart of the conflict:" 212.

thousands.[228] They are rarely consistent, but will fracture into new groups and create new identities in the face of government pressure.[229]

State Support

Unlike the conflict in Somalia, where there were few non-state actors but a plethora of state supporters, in the Kashmir there is a single state sponsor with a plethora of proxies. The type of support that Pakistan has been reported to provide is displayed in Table 5.3. [230] Pakistan's ultimate goal for the Kashmir is for the region to become part of Pakistan, not for it to be independent, so its support has been targeted to Islamic irredentist groups such as the HUM and Laskhar e-Taiba.[231] Other groups include the Jaish-e-Mohammed, Save Kashmir Movement, Freedom Force, Farzandan-e-Milat, and el-Badr,[232] as well as al-Umar, al-Barq, Muslim Janbaz Force, and Harkat al-Ansar.[233] Successionist groups like JKLF have been crowded out by these groups as the support given by Pakistan has made them better competitors, as it were, in the market that is the Kashmir conflict.

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[228] "India's Secret Army."

[229] "Who are the Kashmir militants?" *BBC News Online,* April 6, 2005. http://news.bbc.co.uk/ 2/hi/south_asia/ 4416771.stm [accessed June 3, 2008].

[230] The data in this table was accumulated from multiple sources, the most important of them being: "India: Arms and Abuses in Indian Punjab and Kashmir," *Human Rights Watch Report 6*, no 10 (September 1994) http://www.hrw.org/campaigns/kashmir/1994/index.htm#TopOfPage [accessed June 3, 2008]; "Proxy War Threatens to Unravel U.S. Alliance," *New York Times,* October 29th, 2001. http://tiger.berkeley.edu/sohrab/politics/ kashmir.html [accessed June 3, 2008]; Mary Anne Weaver, *Pakistan*; Stephen Saideman, "At the heart of the matter;" "Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence [ISI]," Federation of American Scientists Intelligence Resource Program, (July 25, 2002) http://www.fas.org/irp/world/pakistan/isi/ [accessed June 3, 2008]; "India's Secret Army in Kashmir: New Patterns of Abuse Emerge in Conflict" *Human Rights Watch Report 8,* no. 4 (May 1996) http://www.hrw.org/campaigns/kashmir/1996/ [accessed June 3, 2008]; and Robert G. Wirsing, *India, Pakistan, and the Kashmir Dispute.*

[231] Stephen Saideman, "At the heart of the conflict," 218.

[232] "Who are the Kashmir militants?"

[233] "India's Secret Army."

Table 5.3 Actors in Kashmir

	IND	PAK
Type		
▪ State		
▪ Non-state		X
Support		
▪ Passive		
• Safe haven		X
• Free transit		X
• Political support		X
• Propaganda		
▪ Active		
• Concrete:		
o Weapons		X
o Funds		X
o Supplies		X
• Intangible		
o Intelligence		
o Direction		X
o Training		X
o Advisors		
• Military		
o Unconventional		
o Conventional		

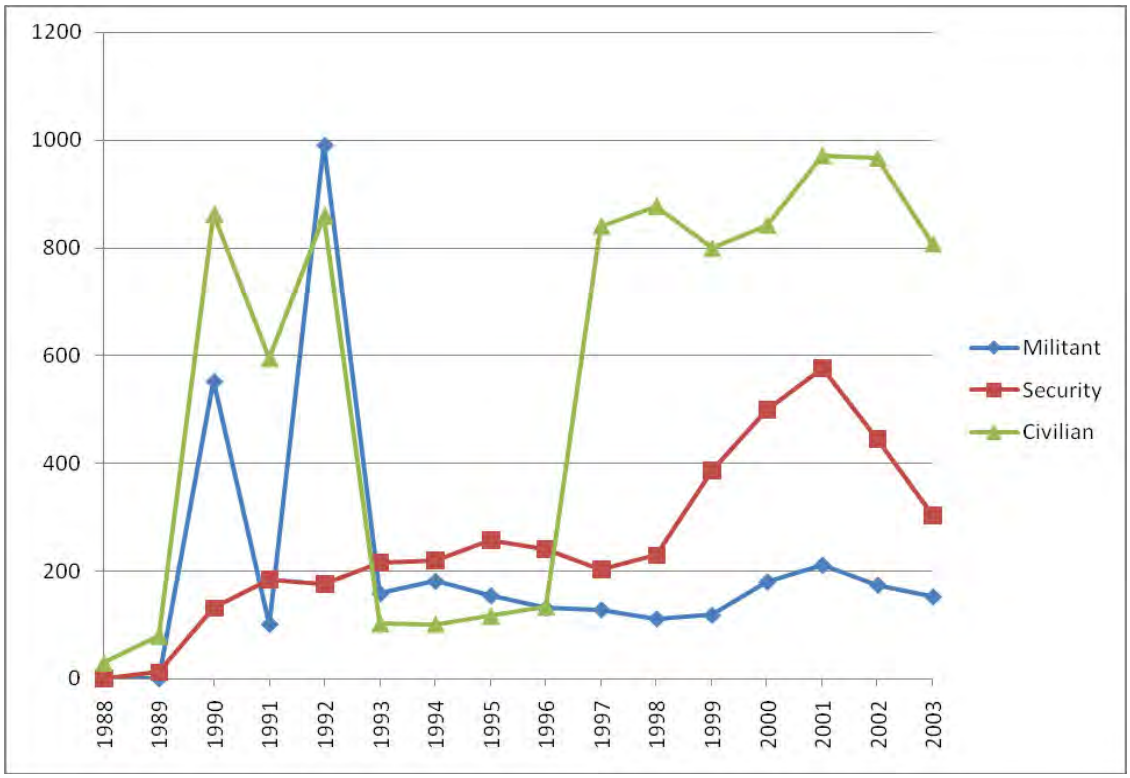
Type of Conflict

Here again we are faced with another conflict that is methodologically hard to categorize. It, like the Somali civil war, is clearly a "hot" conflict; 2001 casualty reports for Indian security forces were at 2,500 and at 11,800 for the militants since 1989.[234] Though wars between India and Pakistan are common, this particular conflict has yet to reach the level of interstate war, and it is also not a civil war because India is clearly recognized as the government in Jammu and Kashmir. This leaves us with the question of whether the Kashmir conflict represents an extended terrorist campaign or an insurgency.

[234] L.K. Choudhary, "Cross-Border Terrorism: Pakistan's Compulsions, Constraints, and Stakes," *India Quarterly 57*, no. 2 (April-June 2001) 41.

As the hackneyed "one man's freedom fighter" saying suggests, the difference can often be subjective. Complicating the assessment further is the point made in Chapter 2 that non-state actors have become "hybrid adversaries" that use both terrorist tactics and insurgency's guerilla warfare.[235] Also, the influence of the influx of foreign Islamist fighters and new Indian policies towards the region has caused the conflict to evolve since its inception in 1987. Figure 5.1 shows the casualties by type that occurred in Jammu and Kashmir from 1988 to the end of the data in 2003.[236]

Figure 5.1: Fatalities in Jammu and Kashmir



It is clear simply from looking at this graph that the dynamics of the conflict changed significantly in the period between 1993 and 1996. The most obvious difference

[235] Troy S. Thomas, *Beneath the Surface,* 17.

[236] Source of Data: Union Ministry of Home Affairs [Internal Data] in Praveen Swami, "Failed Threats and Flawed Fences," 161.

is the severe drop in militant and civilian fatalities in 1993. What is interesting, however, is that security forces fatalities remained steady over the period, and didn't experience a signficant change until 1999, which corresponds to the 6 week clash between Pakistani and Indian forces near Kargil.

From my research, there are two events that occurred in 1993 that could have had this impact. One, Pakistan was warned by the United States that if support to the Kashmiri militants did not cease, diplomatic ties would be cut and sanctions would be placed on Pakistan.[237] Two, the first reports about the human rights abuses being conducted in Jammu and Kashmir by both the militants and the Indian Army were released,[238] which caused the central government to increase oversight of activities in the Kashmir. As a result, in 1994 the Human Rights Watch reported a decrease in reprisal killings and the use of lethal force on a large scale against civilians.[239] These two facts work together to produce the effect seen on the graph: a reduction in support from Pakistan led to decreased activity and therefore fatalities on the part of the militants, which, in addition to the reduction in attacks on civilians by the Indian Army, led to the decrease in civilian fatalities.

What happened in 1997, however, is more mysterious. What is clear, however, is that whatever event that occurred in 1997 that retriggered the violence in Jammu and Kashmir, after 1997 the civilian population again began to suffer a greater proportion of the fatalities. This sudden increase in civilian fatalites cannot be fully explained as "collateral damage" caused by increased clashes between the militants and the security

[237] "India's Secret Army."

[238] "India: Arms and Abuses."

[239] Ibid.

forces. Unless the Indian Army began to target civilians again, which is doubtful, the only reasonable explanation for the data is that the militants, as is often reported, started deliberately attacking the civilian population of Kashmir. This assertion is reinforced by or reinforces the assertions that Kashmiri militant activity does not represent an insurgency,[240] because attacking civilians over more legitimate targets is the primary hallmark of terrorism.

This may seem to be a torturous route to confirm a fact that many believe already, but given the pejorative and indiscriminate use of the word 'terrorist,' it is better to arrive at the same conclusion through data and analysis than by taking somebody's word for it. Particularly since in this case, there are some elements that would have weighed in for it to be an insurgency. For example, the fact that the conflict was instigated by a legitimate grievance that was then exacerbated by state repression would be a characteristic of an insurgency.[241] Despite this, the evidence argues that even if the Jammu and Kashmir conflict began as an insurgency, it's directions and methods have since been hijacked by Pakistan and its terrorist proxies.

Motives

Reading any history of India or Pakistan will show that these two states have a long history of being rivals, a history as long as their statehood. The Correlates of War project indicates that between 1947 and 2001 there have been over 40 conflicts between the two, ranging from military posturing to full blown wars.[242] This indicates that part of

[240] R.S. Saini, "Self-Determination, Terrorism, and Kashmir," *India Quarterly 57*, no. 2 (April-June 2001) 80.

[241] Stephen Saideman, "At the heart of the conflict," 216.

[242] Faten Ghosn, Glenn Palmer, and Stuart Bremer. 2004. "The MID3 Data Set."

Pakistan's motivation for sponsoring its proxies is interstate rivalry, particularly since the majority of the conflicts were initiated or instigated by Pakistan.[243] Either feeding into or perhaps being fed by this rivalry is an ideological tension, in which Pakistan defines itself as a nation as being "not-India." Since part of India's national identity is being secular, this means that Pakistan has created its identity as being an Islamic society.[244] Therefore Kashmir is important in two ways: one, it provides a venue for Pakistan to continue its rivalry with India, and as a predominantly Muslim region it is part of Pakistan's identity as an Islamic homeland.

Conclusion

The conclusions here are relatively straightforward. Pakistan is undeniably conducting a proxy war against India, using terrorist tactics under the aegis of Kashmiri independence. Since India is not using proxies, but rather defends itself using its conventional military forces, Pakistan must refrain from taking the field with its proxy lest it initiate yet another armed conflict between the two states. Therefore Pakistan is utilizing war by proxy tactics, and the overall conflict can be characterized as a mixed proxy war. Though on the surface this conflict is not as complex as that of Somalia, because there are fewer actors and behavior of the states involved is more consistent, it has a longer history and an ideological facet that complicates the issue.

[243] Ibid.

[244] Vali Nasr, "National Identities and the India-Pakistan Conflict," *The India-Pakistan Conflict: An Enduring Rivalry,* ed. by T.V. Paul (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) 184.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

> "Today, we're helping emerging democracies rebuild under fire from terrorist networks and state sponsors of terror. This is a difficult and unprecedented task -- and we're learning as we go."
>
> - President George W. Bush[245]

This thesis began as an attempt to create a definition for a concept that is well known but ill-understood. The academic inattentiveness towards proxy warfare is curious; there is a great deal of literature on what proxy wars look like, e.g. state sponsored terrorism, and literature on how proxy wars are conducted by the United States, i.e. covert action, but no one ever tried to examine what proxy warfare was as a concept. So I began by borrowing from these topics and others in order to create the missing definition. However, a definition is only as good as its utility, and in a world where proxy wars are a very real problem and not an academic curiosity a simple definition is not extraordinarily helpful. That is why I took the definition that I established and derived from it three characteristics that can be used to identify and describe proxy wars. These three characteristics, as was discussed in Chapter 2, are the proxy actor, the host conflict, and the ulterior motive. These elements are meant to be discrete, objective, and measurable. I focused on these characteristics in particular because I saw in them a way to provide a better framework to analyze and understand proxy wars in the past, present, and future. The framework I created and then used in the case studies was the idea of proxy warfare's perfect trinity, a concept I gave a rather flamboyant title as both a nod to the military's favored son Clausewitz but also to

[245] "President Bush Delivers Commencement Address at United States Air Force Academy," Office of the Press Secretary, the White House, May 28, 2008. http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2008/05/20080528-2.html [accessed June 6, 2008].

emphasize the fact that all three of the elements must be present for there to be a proxy war.

Of the three elements, a closer examination of the proxy and the types of support that a state can give show that we can differentiate between two proxy warfare strategies: a war by proxy, where the state has distanced itself from its proxy and has sacrificed control and efficiency for anonymity, and war with proxy, where a state fields its military forces in support of the proxy. As I discussed in Chapter 3, each type of strategic behavior has its own costs and benefits. Which strategy each state decides to use leads to two types of proxy wars, "mixed" or "pure." Because each type contains a different combination of state behavior (in the case of mixed, there are two) they provide a descriptive label for conflicts that is not included in the vague term "proxy war."

UTILITY

The ultimate goal of dissecting proxy warfare as it has been done in this thesis is to discover the best method for countering a type of conflict that is becoming increasingly prolific. In order to do so, I first created my definition and its attending analytical framework and explained its theoretical underpinnings. Then I showed that using this framework is an effective approach to examining proxy wars by applying it to the case studies of Somalia and the Kashmir. It provides a method for an analyst, in either intelligence or academia, to organize available data on a conflict in order to draw conclusions that will ultimately lead to a strategy for resolving the conflict. This is more useful in complex conflicts like Somalia than in the more straightforward case of Jammu and Kashmir.

The first step is identifying all of the actors in a conflict, both the non-state groups that are engaging in combat and the states that are providing support. Then by accumulating data on the relationships between these two sets of actors, i.e. the types and amount of support being provided to which group, we can discover who the major actors are and what they are doing. For example, in the Somalia case study Ethiopia and Eritrea emerged as the most active sponsors and the other eight states proved to be involved in a very narrow and shallow fashion. The less involvement the state has in the conflict, the easier it will be to convince it to disengage. Not only does this step identify who needs to be targeted in the conflict resolution process, but it can also provide a rough measure for how complex the conflict is. For example, states that provide many different types of support in large amounts have a closer relationship with the proxy than a state that only provides one or two. The degree of separation between the sponsor and the proxy can also provide information on the capabilities of the proxy and their ability to survive without the supporting state. Multiple states' involvement will be harder to deal with than a conflict with only one or two sponsors. Knowing that a state is supporting or is likely to be supporting a proxy can lead to the more effective targeting of collection assets, who can be instructed to watch for certain foreign nationals, weapons of suspicious origin, or for attempts to smuggle weapons, ammunition, or money across international borders.

The second step is identifying what type of conflict the proxy war is embedded in. This is obviously important in the resolution process because counterterrorism campaigns are very different from counterinsurgency efforts, which are both different from nation-building. Knowing whether a conflict is hot or cold is vital to peacemakers, who need to

know how much violence they are likely to encounter, and knowing what sparked the conflict is necessary for ensuring that the conflict does not erupt again in the future. It is important to remember that the local conflict, in addition to providing a venue for other states to act on a prior grievance, has its own actors and motivations that need to be addressed.

The third step provides insight into what is motivating each state to become involved in a proxy war. This element is a key driver of the overall conflict, so any conflict resolution strategy will have to address it for the strategy to be successful. Some motivating factors will be more difficult to address than others, of course. The underlying issue between Ethiopia and Eritrea, in the form of a single but recent prior conflict, will be easier to resolve than India and Pakistan's sixty year history of rivalry and warfare.

RESOLUTION

One of the problems with policymakers today is an increased reliance on the military to achieve national security objectives, despite the problems and complications that come with deploying the military. This leads to the general bias among thinkers that "strategy" solely consists of how to deploy the military, without taking into consideration the other elements of national power.[246] However, when dealing with proxy wars this bias will lead to failure. The inherent difficulty in countering proxy warfare is that there are three elements that must be dealt with, and for the swiftest resolution all three

[246] Colin S. Gray, "Introduction," *Modern Strategy.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) 15.

elements must be dealt with at the same time.[247] Attempts to resolve a proxy war are doomed to fail if they are not targeted at removing one or all of the three elements of the conflict. For example, many international observers of the Somali conflict call for Ethiopia to remove its forces from the conflict, thinking that it is Ethiopia that is exacerbating a local conflict. This is only partially true. Simply removing Ethiopia's troops would not resolve the conflict, because that would have little effect on the element that they are trying to target, which is the proxy relationship itself. In order to be effective, Ethiopia would not only have to remove its troops but it would also have to promise to stop all types of support to the TFG for any progress to be made, and even then there is still the issue of Eritrea's involvement to deal with. Without an understanding of proxy warfare, observers and analysts will be unpleasantly surprised when their initial proposition does not work.

However, most states do not have the resources at their disposal to deal with their rival state, defeat its proxy, and then resolve the local conflict simultaneously. Effort and resources must often be focused on one problem at a time. Of the three elements of proxy warfare, the one that should be dealt with first is the motivation that is driving the state to engage the proxy. Most observers recognize that one of the first steps to resolving the proxy war in Somalia is resolving the Ethiopia-Eritrea boundary dispute.[248] Here it is essential that the state use non-military means because military intervention only exacerbates a proxy war. As mentioned in the case study on the Jammu and Kashmir, the United States was able to convince Pakistan to halt support to its proxies by

[247] Benjamin Netanyahu, "The Strategy to End Terrorism," *New Perspectives Quarterly* 18, no 4, Fall 2001: 58.

[248] "Ethiopia and Eritrea: War or Peace?" 12.

threatening political isolation.[249] Though this success was short lived, more recently a similar threat caused Pakistan to ban the two largest groups in the Kashmir and arrest their leaders, something India had not been able to do with any military action.[250] Libya, one of the premier state sponsors of the 1980s and 90s, was convinced to abandon its proxies in favor of renewing political, economic and diplomatic ties to the West.

Once the state support is withdrawn, the proxy is much more vulnerable to defeat; this is where the use of force comes in. Many proxies, even when their support has been withdrawn and their capabilities are deteriorated will still continue to fight. During the Pakistani crackdown in Jammu and Kashmir one militant stated, "We know we cannot operate fully without government help. But we can carry on. Instead of ten, we can send two people into India now."[251] Once the proxy or proxies have been defeated, the local conflict comes closer to resolution. But simply ending the conflict is not ideal, because without a lasting resolution to the root causes of the local conflict it will simply start anew sometime down the road. Case in point, Jammu and Kashmir has plagued India and Pakistan since the 1940s, and Somalia has resisted fourteen separate attempts to bring stability to the failed state, most likely because in both the attempted peacemakers had little understanding of what was truly driving the conflict.

As with many conflicts, vigilance and precaution can in some cases prevent a proxy war from starting. Understanding proxy wars, how they work and how they are started makes a state more aware of opportunities to prevent these wars from starting. For example, identifying when circumstances are ripe for a proxy war provides the state

[249] "India's Secret Army."

[250] Anthony Spaeth, "Looking Down the Barrel."

[251] Ibid.

with an opportunity to possibly make peace with enemies. If Ethiopia had realized how vulnerable it would be to Eritrean involvement in Somalia, it may have had more incentive to negotiate on the boundary settlement. The state also has a chance to isolate the conflict from outside intervention. For example, in the Malayan Emergency the government, assisted by Great Britain, was able to prevent the communist insurgency from receiving outside support by effectively sealing the borders.[252] If this tactic isn't possible, a strong response to state support early in the conflict can be a deterrence to further support. One observer of the India-Pakistan conflict theorized that Pakistan initially provided low levels of support to test India's reaction, and feels that if India had responded more forcefully to these overtures then than the conflict would not have escalated.[253] The risks and benefits that a state faces when engaging in proxy warfare were discussed in Chapter 3; if the target state or international parties understands these, then it can manipulate them to its advantage.

FURTHER AREAS OF RESEARCH

The "face" of proxy warfare is subject to the same changes that warfare itself experiences. As we described in Chapter 2, proxy wars have already evolved since the Cold War period. In an age where conflicts will be increasingly fought on the psychological, informational, and social planes,[254] proxy warfare is only going to become more difficult to identify and target. One form that this type of conflict may evolve into

[252] Robert Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency: The Lessons of Malaya and Vietnam* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966) 19.

[253] Praveen Swami, "Failed Threats and Flawed Fences," 160.

[254] Frederick M. Wehrey, "A Clash of Wills," 70.

is one where non-state actors are sponsoring other non-state actors, something which has already been termed "franchise terrorism."[255] Further research into this area may result in other theories of what the next era of proxy warfare may look like.

Due to time and space constraints, I was only able to examine two case studies in this thesis. However, as a starting point for further analysis it would be helpful to have a database similar to that of the Correlates of War project that specifically lists proxy wars that have been analyzed in the same manner as the case studies. Having such an extensive data set would provide a new insight into current and historical conflicts and would generate new areas for research. This database would also bring together the quantitative studies that have already been performed on the phenomenon of state sponsored terrorism or insurgency, such as the work done by Daniel Byman in *Deadly Connections* and *Trends in Outside Support for Insurgent Movements* and Bertil Dunér in *Military Intervention in Civil Wars.*. It would help clarify the boundaries between proxy wars and state-sponsored terrorism so that both types of conflict can be better understood.

On the other side of the spectrum, I believe it would also be useful to perform a more in-depth analysis of a single conflict, preferably one as complex as the conflict in Somalia. An examination of such a conflict from start to finish would provide insight into how proxy wars begin and how they change over the course of the conflict. I am confident that it would further reinforce the theoretical framework that was outlined in Chapters 2-4 and applied in Chapter 5 with real world examples.

These are but a few out of many avenues of further research. Each new analysis performed on proxy warfare will create more avenues, some which may lead back to the

[255] Raymond Whitaker and Paul Lashmar, "Franchise terrorism: 'Trying to hit al-Qa'ida is like trying to hit jelly,'" *The Independent*, July 10, 2005 http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/franchise-terrorism-trying-to-hit-alqaida-is-like-trying-to-hit-jelly-498272.html [accessed June 12, 2008].

heart of what proxy warfare is and require that the definition and analytical framework described here be modified to reflect new realities. Proxy warfare is the Gordian Knot[256] of conflicts, with multiple actors, multiple motivations, and wars within wars further complicating the increasingly complex concept of warfare. Unlike the true Knot, however, history has shown that a proxy war cannot be resolved with the sword but must actually be untangled, a process that requires an understanding of proxy warfare itself. The existing literature does not provide this understanding, an incomprehensible lack considering how prolific these conflicts are today. This thesis was meant to fill this gap with a general discussion of proxy warfare as a concept while also providing a practical framework for analyzing individual proxy wars.

[256] The legend of the Gordian Knot originates from Greek mythology. It was prophesied that the one who could untie the knot would go on to rule Asia, but when Alexander the Great arrived at the city of Gordium he became frustrated attempting to solve the riddle of the knot and sliced it in half with his sword.

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