WARFARE

IN PEACETIME

PROXIES AND STATE POWERS

CHRISTOPHER C. HARMON

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FOREWORD

Though attractive to military theorists, the sharp bifurcation between war and peace oversimplifies the violent realities of international affairs. The same holds true for legal definitions of armed conflict that are devised to label messy realities rather than explain them. Strategists and policy makers alike would do well to remember that the terms *war* and *peace* cover a gamut of activities rather than discrete categories.

For states that are reluctant to risk direct conflict or that lack the resources to do so, war by proxy is often an attractive alternative. State support to proxy forces can take many forms, including entities providing advisors, weapons, money, and political succor. Sometimes, the assistance is delivered quietly, reflecting an intent to preserve the sponsor's deniability. At other times, states may trumpet their backing of proxy forces for political reasons.

This volume by Christopher C. Harmon offers an expansive and elaborated portrait of overseas proxy wars. The structure and substance of the book will prepare observers, analysts, and participants seeking to understand challenges before leaders and heads of state, including Americans. The case studies and analytical work here will help frame analysis for other morasses: Syria, with all its foreign links; the contest for influence in Libya, where innumerable hands vie for dominance; the fighting in Yemen, where Houthi Shia organizations backed by Iranian sponsors battle Sunni tribes; and life along the borders of Russian expansionism, where Ukrainians plea for outside assistance, including weapons from Washington.

Such ongoing "warfare in peacetime" has a thousand precedents in a dozen ages, including our day, and some of the patterns are explored in this volume's innovative introductory chapter. There follow seven detailed case studies, none ever before published. They take in the Cold War

as well as later contests and have a refreshingly wide geographical reach. Here, the studies examine the actions of great democratic capitals (New Delhi and Washington) and powerful despotic governments (Moscow and Beijing). An essay explores Hezbollah relations with Tehran, one of the most adept practitioners of proxy warfare in modern times.

Once a foreign policy advisor to a congressman on the House Armed Services Committee, Dr. Harmon turned to teaching graduate-level international relations and security studies, as well as courses on insurgency and counterterrorism. He began publishing books in 1994, as I came to know him at Marine Corps University, and his newer volumes include a study of terrorists and insurgents. Unlike some political science journal literature, this book is neither saddled with unwieldy theoretical constructions nor are its actors assigned numeric values and evaluated via mathematical equations. Instead, readers will find vigorous and clear prose supported by deep research and wide learning about one of the most important realities of global affairs: warfare in peacetime.

The Honorable James H. Anderson, PhD
Former Acting Undersecretary of Defense for Policy
Washington, DC, December 2021

PREFACE

Two themes — strong, almost undeniable — wind together through all these pages. One is that political violence is a tragic constant in human affairs. Low intensity conflicts persist, sometimes for decades, and new ones begin, even in an era without open general war. The author turned to the phrase "warfare in peacetime" as a younger analyst writing about Cold War behavior; unfortunately, decades after 1990, the phrase remains just as useful now. The second theme is that states and other parties often advance such low-level kinds of violence, including terrorism and insurgency, via proxies. They want to use force, or create hostilities, and yet they want to keep them limited or under control. This desire may reflect a state's limits on moral or political commitment to the cause, a fear of exposure, aversion to loss of citizens' lives, dread of retaliation, or other reasons. Whatever its causes or limits, proxy war is commonplace in international relations, an undercurrent below more usual business, other affairs, and pacific politics. This volume hopes to advance our understanding of these intertwined problems: the seemingly perennial current of violence below the level of open war and the instrumental use of proxies to carry it out. Some of the discussion here is based on years of experience behind the scenes in the congressional environment, and three decades providing graduate-level academic support necessary for traditional and military education on national security and international relations topics. The book draws upon that experience as well as other primary and secondary sources.

An introductory chapter relates essential concepts to both past and present examples. Those pages address why states and other actors carry on violence through proxies. The subsequent chapters present seven case studies, taken from many continents, forms of political activity, and recent decades. There are Cold War studies — two from the perspective of Moscow, and two from that of Washington. These examples are

followed by current considerations of proxies of two of the great Asian powers — India and China. A final chapter focuses on Iran, which has earned grudging respect for its proxy war skills even from its victims, such as the United States and Israel. One could say that Iran has conducted warfare steadily during four decades. On rare occasions, Tehran has had to pay a modest price for it, as with sunken naval vessels, mysterious murders, or the death of an Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps commander.

Except for Iran and the United States/Contras chapter, these deep case studies are little known to most English-language readers. New books on proxy war give them at most a passing mention. All seven case studies unfold naturally within their own strategic environments, but all are also connected by 11 lines of thought. Chapters begin with several unique features of the named proxy relationship. When and where appropriate, each chapter then includes at least these further subtopics: the political character of the entities; strategic context; formal status (sovereignty, treaties, etc.); political support; the level of arms flow; intelligence coordination or direction; money, supplies and other logistics; whether there is real integration (economics, etc.) of the collaborators or more distance between them; special primary sources or testimonies revealing proxy relations; and finally what are termed here "third-level extensions" — cases where the parties in a proxy relationship spawned one or more further proxies. A rich study of the latter is found in the ways the Soviet Union dominated Cuba, but Havana then energetically developed and deployed proxies without contravening larger purposes shared with the Soviets.

The concluding chapter reviews the limits of all proxy relations. Even in warfare, rife with possibilities for escalation, states and recipient parties usually impose parameters around some activities and levels of violence. Prussian military theorist Carl von Clausewitz, the first to write at length about this topic, was fascinated by the way wars always threaten to overrun their banks but are *usually contained* by innumerable reservations, fears, inabilities, and policy decisions of those managing the conflicts. The longer he lived, the more he concerned himself with limited war. No surprise then that in our day some states and substate

actors forego opportunities to partner or take proxies. Others take proxies but keep tight reins on them. Some capitals, including that of the United States, have had proxies but then dismissed them unilaterally.

The conception of this book and its writing have gone smoothly, but I owe appreciation to national security practitioner and former U.S. Army officer, Christopher Booth. I studied and wrote about China's advancement of the United Wa State Army in Burma, but then I took the chapter to Booth, with his expertise in that region and creative skills, and asked that he do better. He certainly did. Chapter six had promise as a valuable look at a largely unnoticed aspect of Chinese strategy; now, it is unusually good because of Booth's analysis.

This is the place to thank Donald Bren and the Marine Corps University Foundation for generous support during three good years (2018–21) while I shaped this book, other essays, conferences, and projects such as three new elective courses for Marine officers. All told, it has been more than three decades since my first lectures at the Marines' university, which opened relations with their staff and faculty — a beginning thanks to prompts by my Marine Corps friend, Colonel Stanley G. Pratt, who taught beside me at the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island. Marine Corps graduate students have been and are wonderful. The substantive things I have been able to contribute in Quantico have been accepted with interest and kindness, even as my shortcomings have been accepted without remark. That is not an uncommon experience for civilian professors lucky enough to work in academics alongside Marines.

Finally there are individuals who deserve mention and gratitude — perhaps for helping me think through a problem discussed in these pages, or for reviewing a draft chapter, maybe for help finding certain sources or elusive facts, or for enriching intellectually my last three years at the Marines' university: Angela Anderson; James Anderson; Jay Bargeron; Christi Bayha; Donald Bishop; Ian Brown; Jack Cann; Mac Carey; James A. Courter; Richard DiNardo; Darren Fazzino; Winston Gould; David Green; Val Jackson; Rebecca Johnson; James Phillips; Gordon Rudd; Adam Seitz; Kevin Smith; Doug Streusand; Amin Tarzi; Dennis Teti; Yuval Weber; Jack Wheeler; and Chris Yung.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AA	Arakan Army
ANO	Abu Nidal Organization
AQIM	al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
AVC	Alfaro Vive, Carajo
CCP/NPA	Communist Party of the Philippines/ New People's Army
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency (U.S.)
CISPES	Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador
COMECON	Council for Mutual Economic Assistance
Contras	Nicaraguan resistance fighters (after 1979)
CPB	Communist Party of Burma
DEA	U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration
DGI	*Dirección General de Inteligencia* or the Intelligence Directorate, (Cuba)
ELN	*Ejército de Liberación Nacional* or National Liberation Army (Colombia)
EPRLF	Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front

FAL	*Fuerza Armadas de Liberación* or Armed Forces of Liberation
FARC	*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* or Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia
FLN	*Front de Libération Nationale* or National Liberation Front
FMLN	Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (El Salvador)
FNLA	*Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola* or National Front for the Liberation of Angola
FRELIMO	National Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (ruling)
FSLN	*Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional* or Sandinista National Liberation Front
GDR	German Democratic Republic (Communist); a.k.a. DDR for *Deutsche Demokratische Republik*
HVA	*Hauptverwaltung Aufklärung* or Main Directorate for Reconnaissance (Stasi)
IPKF	Indian Peace-Keeping Force
IRGC	Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (Iran)
JVP	*Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna* or People's Liberation Front (Sri Lanka)
KGB	*Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti* or Committee for State Security (Soviet)

KIA	Kachin Independence Army
KIO	Kachin Independence Organization
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (Sri Lanka)
MNA	*Mouvement National Algérien* or Algerian National Movement
MPLA	Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola
MRTA	*Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Amaru* or Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement
NJM	New Jewel Movement
NPA	New People's Army
NSC	National Security Council
OAS	Organization of American States
PCES	*Partido Comunista de El Salvador* or Communist Party of El Salvador
PIJ	Palestine Islamic Jihad
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
PLOTE	People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam
PRC	People's Republic of China
RAF	Red Army Faction or *Baader-Meinhof Gang*
RAW	Research and Analysis Wing (Indian intelligence)

RENAMO	*Resistência Nacional Moçambicana* or Mozambique National Resistance
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SDI	Strategic Defense Initiative or Star Wars Program
SWAPO	South West Africa People's Organization
TELO	Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization
TULF	Tamil United Liberation Front
ULFA	United Liberation Front of Assam (India)
UNITA	*União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola* or National Union for the Total Independence of Angola
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
UWSA	United Wa State Army (Myanmar)
UWSP	United Wa State Party (Myanmar)
YPG	*Yekîneyên Parastina Gel* or People's Protection Units (Kurdish)
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union

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INTRODUCTION

Warfare in Peacetime and Patterns of Proxy War

If making war is difficult and doing it well on a large scale is complex, so too is the making of peace. We learn to respect the work of leaders who could defeat Napoleon Bonaparte and then bring to Europe a general peace that (with exceptions) lasted a century between 1815 and 1914. We know of the drama of Irish nationalists who battled against British hegemony, managed a peace in 1921, saw it collapse back into civil war, but emerged anew in later days with accords that now largely prevail. Making peace is usually extraordinarily difficult and then it always remains under threat. Carl von Clausewitz taught that the results of war are never final, and the same unfortunate line of thought can be ascribed to peace. When most pause and hope, there are some who will see new opportunity. General peace — where and when it prevails — slowly moves humanity forward, but nearly always there are also the irritants of small wars, of low intensity conflicts, or of insurgencies and the purposeful uses of terrorism by what are sometimes remarkably small and unrepresentative minorities.

A narrower but equally common dimension of conflict — the way of the world — is the presence of limited war by proxies.

To fully understand these concepts, it is important to first analyze what a "proxy" is. All those familiar with international relations know these exist, but the term challenges our understanding of those relations. Where there is some power relationship like a proxy status, observers, analysts, and rivals may be eager to grasp the purposes of the relation-

ship and try to anticipate resultant actions. For example, any military attaché or diplomat watching the 2020–21 negotiations between the U.S. government and the revolutionaries in Afghanistan had to ask: "Is the Taliban an *ally* of Pakistan, or a *subordinate* and proxy of Pakistan?"[1] By their nature, as that actual relationship suggests, proxy relationships in foreign affairs are usually difficult to assess.

Even the concept can be elusive. One standard dictionary of international relations has no entry for proxy, and fine books in security studies, such as Paul Kennedy's *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* and Henry Kissinger's *Diplomacy*, do not index the term.[2] Proxy usually has pejorative connotations in international relations, so few political actors or states apply this term to themselves or to allies, and rarely does a party self-describe as dependent on another. Domestic law is different. A proxy can be a neutral and precise thing, as when someone makes their spouse or attorney or stockbroker a proxy for a certain limited business deal. One person is a direct representative for the other and both may be fully open about that legal relationship. A short and efficient definition is that a proxy is an agent representing and acting for the principal actor, one of the meanings indicated in *Black's Law Dictionary*.[3] In this volume, where the focus is on international security affairs and warfare in peacetime, the definition of a proxy is a state or substate actor that, either in part

[1] On Taliban/Pakistan relations, see Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001), 39–48; and Hassan Abbas, *The Taliban Revival: Violence and Extremism on the Pakistan—Afghanistan Frontier* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014). The Taliban's swift capture of the Afghan government in August 2021 will yield many new studies about the group, some probing for differences between its current incarnation and its original form in 1994.

[2] Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (New York: Random House, 1987); and Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York: Touchstone, 1995).

[3] "A person who is substituted or deputed by another to represent him and act for him, particularly in some meeting or public body." *Black's Law Dictionary*, thelawdictionary.org, accessed 10 November 2022.

or wholly, knowingly acts internationally on behalf of a stronger party and thus serves interests of that dominant party.[4]

THE MANY WAYS OF CONSIDERING PROXIES

A proxy falls short of being an "ally." Allies typically possess more similar powers internationally while a proxy is most often a smaller entity or subordinate. A true ally also shares many common interests, sometimes over decades, while a proxy relationship is neither as intimate nor as long-standing.[5] An alliance also may entail formal agreements — written accords that a state may not wish to have, at least publicly, with a proxy. For instance, Portugal has been a British ally for six and a half centuries, whereas mercenary forces in Africa that Britain made use of as proxies were associated with the larger power for a mere moment in time.

Foreign affairs reveal many dimensions of proxy relationships. First, it becomes apparent that — like that stockbroker making a buy for their client — the proxy may well be acting to degrees *in their own* interest. The proxy in international affairs is usually no slave, having other choices more often than not. Second, there is rarely transparency about the relationship. It is more common to obscure matters of real control or even disguise them with a tissue of lies. Third, as is suggested by numerous examples of civil wars or insurgencies, both nonstate agents and actors and sovereign states can act as proxies. These and many more special dimensions of proxy relationships will emerge in the case studies that follow.

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[4] While these words are the author's, there are dozens of other definitions. For example, Assaf Moghadam and Michel Wyss argue that a state's interest in proxies turns on "reliance on military surrogates that are outside the purview of the state's conventional armed or security forces, and that offer services to their benefactors in exchange for tangible material support." By the time the author encountered their article in September 2021, he had already formed views and text on what he terms "third level extensions" — when a proxy takes a proxy. Wyss and Moghadam did well to support their finding through three case studies: Kurds of the People's Protection Units and other anti-Islamic State fighters; al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and local Sunni tribes; and Hezbollah and Sunni forces in Iraq and Syria. Moghadam and Wyss, "The Political Power of Proxies: Why Nonstate Actors Use Local Surrogates," *International Security* 44, no. 4 (Spring 2020): 119–57, https://doi.org/10.1162/isec_a_00377.

[5] The words about an ally having "many common interests" while a proxy may have just one are those of Donald Grove, a 2021 graduate of the Institute of World Politics in Washington, DC.

In the years since 2014, when Russia snatched territories from Ukraine, outsiders have mocked the idea that indigenous Ukrainians had the lead in the political changes. Numerous observers have used the dark-humor phrase "little green men" to describe the unrevealing uniforms of trained armed forces that entered a neighboring country and severed parts of it for assignment to Moscow. Of course, Russian combat forces are agents of Moscow but so are some of their Ukrainian partners — making the term *proxy* for those Ukrainians fit the definition fully.

Students of the Second World War recall the sharp contest over the future of Poland. "Lublin Poles," nominated and controlled by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) to lead a postwar government from Warsaw, were seen as agents of the Soviet state. Westerners, especially British hosts of other exile leaders called "London Poles" — rivals to the group in the east — respected the independence of mind of these future leaders of a postwar revivified Poland. Indeed, the Polish proto-government in London consisted of such independent minds and personalities that Prime Minister Winston Churchill, who admired them, was often exasperated in his dealings and found their view of political possibilities too narrow and selfish.[6] Five years of arguments about who would be guiding the restored Polish nation when the Axis powers were at last driven out caused not just tension, but real and regular anguish for those involved. Observers could thus term the London Poles a proxy of Britain, or better said of the United Nations as the Allies called themselves during the war, although none in this arrangement used the term.

International law specialist John F. Murphy pioneered another way to understand the many characteristics of proxy relations. He identified a dozen forms of support that sponsoring states may give to transnational terrorist groups, including planning and guidance; intelligence support and training; arms and explosives; high technology for communication, transportation, and finances, among others; and even extending down to mere rhetorical support, which can be important to a substate ac-

[6] Nobly, Britain went to war over Poland. Polish tensions are addressed throughout Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, 6 vols. (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1948–53); see especially *Triumph and Tragedy*, vol. 6 (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1953), 365–87, 647–67.

tor's sense of legitimacy and its reception in official circles.[7] In the early 2000s, Brookings Institution's Daniel L. Byman made his own furrows in this analytic field and uncovered some diverse practices of newer insurgents and terrorists.[8] These types of state aid can be greatly influential and indicate degrees of authority over the less powerful party, the aid recipient. Firm control, however, is difficult to prove, difficult to exercise, and is not common. When the list of aid types is far shorter than a dozen — as it usually is — the receiving group may be a gratified, friendly recipient, but not necessarily a reliable proxy.

The present volume measures the strengths and weaknesses in proxy relations in ways that include the following 11 factors. Without being mechanical, and with a respect for the cases that argues against homogenization of results, each of the chapters will at some point address these 11 factors:

Unique features of the relationship. The state of Iran's support to Hezbollah members in Lebanon and around the world is a four-decade old pattern that is often understood as an expression of the Shia religion's more extremist schools.[9] Yet, it has offered "the dispossessed" everywhere a kind of home and a source of political power. In Iraq, where Shia are the largest population but extremist religion does not dominate the government, the Khorasani Brigades, Khatib Hezbollah, and other substate Shia groups look to Tehran for support as surely as Tehran looks to them to help with Iranian maneuvering within Iraqi politics.[10]

The political character of the entities, at times, surprise students of low intensity conflict and the shadow world of parties that are instruments of others. For post–World War II Communist insurgencies, it

[7] John F. Murphy, *State Support of International Terrorism: Legal, Political, and Economic Dimensions* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1989), 32–33.
[8] Daniel Byman, *Deadly Connections: States That Sponsor Terrorism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
[9] More specifically, Iran advances a unique school of the Velayat-e Faqih, or guardianship of the Islamic jurist. Usually, most other Shia do not insist on such governance and neither do the schools of Sunni Islam.
[10] Saraya al-Khorasani, a Shia militia in Iraq, has an official logo that is identical to that of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps. December 2020 brought news of the arrest of a number of principals in these Khorasani Brigades; their status at this writing is unknown.

was routine to form a so-called "national liberation front" peopled with no end of affiliates. Diversity was an advertisement, a tool in the drive for legitimacy that allowed many to join without requiring adherence to ideological Communism or a commitment to carry out violence. A case of this today may be found in the Philippines. After a half-century in the field, the New People's Army (NPA) and its political guide, the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), have not fared well. China's Mao Zedong posited three phases of insurgency that guide the NPA and its supporters. Yet the group remains stuck in phase one — propaganda and low intensity conflict and organizing.[11] The overt political affiliates of the Filipino party and its NPA are doing very well, however, and doubtless are also recruiting for the intelligence organizations and guerrilla war structures deep below the political covers. The party's National Democratic Front is a democratic tool that, if empowered one day, would destroy democracy, but there are few indications that the Filipino voters will allow this.

Strategic context is essential. The case above, of a failing insurgency in the Philippines' republic, could be transformed in one year if the Communist Party and its guerrillas won serious outside support from a state, but these Maoists find too few adherents in the politburo in Beijing. If Communist leaders in Beijing do network at times with foreign Maoist parties, they prefer relations with established state governments these days. And most of the Maoist parties overseas are cash poor. The Filipino diaspora is wide, including 2 million living in the United States alone, but the CCP and NPA have had little success tapping into it. Canada's Tamil diaspora was martialed up and bled regularly by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in Sri Lanka; Filipinos outside their country will not tolerate such behavior. In short, while the NPA has a scattering of foreign sources, it has no heavy and direct aid and is severely limited

[11] Christopher C. Harmon, "The Philippines Face the New People's Army: Fifty Years in the Field," in *Routledge Handbook of Democracy and Security*, ed. Leonard Weinberg, Elizabeth Francis, and Eliot Assoudeh (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2021). The reader may explore the National Democratic Front, an overt entity, on the internet.

thereby. The paradox may be that NPA might be stronger if it was the proxy of a foreign power.

Formal status, such as when laid out in treaties, helps observers define and compare the varied partnerships or proxy relationships. It has mattered much — at least until the confusing presidential term of Rodrigo Duterte — that the Philippines have a mutual defense treaty with the United States, which in the past provided intelligence, financial, and military support to the smaller country's forces fighting the NPA and Islamist armed sects. It has been remarkably important to late twentieth century history that Yugoslavia was never part of the Warsaw Pact, and it is interesting to any close student of Cuban ties to the USSR to ponder why that state had no formal Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with Moscow from the 1960s through most of the 1980s. It goes without saying that most substate actors have more informal arrangements with a sponsoring state and normally possess a nonpublic status.

Political support. In the recent international campaign against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), great numbers of Kurds — who have been fighting for their own separate state — emerged as determined fighters. While Kurdish men and women fought for their future against politico-religious tyrants of ISIS, they were also receiving supplies, encouragement, and sometimes other support from the administration of President Barack H. Obama. The United States, however, has never advocated for Kurdish nationhood. Proxies always see one limit or another on their sponsors. Turkish officials in Ankara, for their part, worried that the established terror group, the Kurdistan Workers' Party, would inevitably dominate any Kurdish forces. On the ground, what mattered most was local knowledge, legitimacy, and commitment to take on ISIS fanatics and brutes. Kurdish fighters supplied all three elements. While the United States perhaps gave less than it should, it did give and certainly profited politically from what it gave. The relationship with Kurds of the People's Protection Units (YPG) and other groups was also efficient. Given the generally dismal status of outside forces in Iraq, this moment was no time to introduce an American army into new counterinsurgency roles. Kurds did for the United States what

it preferred to avoid doing by itself and may be considered a U.S. proxy in one sense.[12]

Arms flows, even if not present, are invariably looked for in a proxy relationship due to the importance of weapons. Several clever experts have long observed the Beijing program of putting mid-tech equipment and new weaponry into the hands of ethnic Wa tribal members who govern territory along the Myanmar-China border. The United Wa State Army is well equipped, which gives it options, including direct, if seemingly impassive, opposition to the Burmese central government. The army and its associated political forces are also an inspiration to other separatists in the much-troubled state of Myanmar. Beijing enjoys varied means of pressuring the smaller state due to arming this Wa instrument.

Intelligence coordination is a dangerous business that requires patience and expertise. Israel, deprecated as a mere American proxy by some, certainly does not share certain kinds of intelligence with its North American partner. Anyone thinking the two might work together without leaks would be wrong, as the Israeli helpers to the U.S. National Security Council during the mid-1980s "Iran-Contra" will exemplify in chapter 3. Washington is a leader of the Five Eyes relationship, an exclusive intelligence coalition of English-speaking democracies — the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. There are no discussions of opening the partnership to the largest English-speaking nation, India, even after relations were upgraded and warmed by the bilateral relationship between the Narendra Modi and Donald J. Trump administrations. And yet, even *inside* so exclusive a relationship there can be troubles. In 2021, members of the Five Eyes publicized concerns that New Zealand has become less inclined to "share" than the other four states.[13] If such close allies can decline to give up some secrets,

[12] YPG is an acronym for *Yekineye Parastina Gel*, or people's defense units. Tangles on the ground in Kurdish areas of Syria and elements of group subordination to others are explored in Moghadam and Wyss, "The Political Power of Proxies," 143–46.

[13] See "New Zealand Raises Questions over Remit of Five Eyes" and the longer story "Shared Vision" in the June 2021 issue of *Jane's Intelligence Review*. Much evolved from a century ago when describing the world's navies in a bound annual. *Jane's* now publishes authoritative magazines and websites on all manner of security issues, including low intensity conflict.

there is little wonder that a state rarely coordinates intelligence work with any proxy, except on a basis of fierce limits and hard dates for the sunset of such exchanges.

Logistics, such as money and supplies, are a standard marker for proxy relations. During the Obama and Trump administrations, limited aid has flowed to the Saudi- and Sunni-backed forces in their war against Iranian-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen. The mutual objective has been to check the Iranian influence among the Houthis. The Saudis have been a traditional American ally and, at times, an especially independent one. Officials in both Riyadh and Washington look to each other to advance their purposes in Yemen, and both are stronger than the armed forces of the semifailed central government there. The latter aided the United States in the Global War on Terrorism; Osama bin Laden usually had operators in Yemen, attacked U.S. forces there, and saw it as a prized, pure, and even holy land. Present levels of U.S. influence over either the Saudis or the local Sunnis is less clear during the shift to Joseph R. Biden's presidency, leaving the question of how much influence any offer of supplies will have over the recipient actor.

Economic and political integration may bind together sponsor and proxy, whether voluntarily or not. The levels of this combination are as varied as any phenomenon in nature. Economic pacts regularly vivify and intensify state-to-state relations. Political alliances promise long-term stability and a level of comfort for participants, even as governments and parties change in one state or both. For instance, who expected, in 1970, that a future Maastricht Treaty would unify so many European countries with the creation of the European Union. That said, few in 2010 expected to see it damaged by the British exit. An early modern terror organization, the Algerian National Liberation Front, showed diplomatic sophistication that surprised the far stronger party, the French. Subsequent substate actors like the Palestinian Authority attend to pacts and partners with as much close interest as any famous capital. Of course, no benefits are guaranteed. The small, violent party can find troubled waters when fishing for outside support, such as when foreign connections bring illegitimacy instead of prestige. It will always

be impressive that the Taliban enjoyed a quarter-century of the heaviest support from Islamabad without being despised for it, or disturbed by it, among typical Afghans.[14] This accomplishment of the Talibs in "public diplomacy" and political psychology is only exceeded by their success in minimizing the damage to their religious reputation from profiteering in heroin and opium. In modern times, few more crude and systematic criminal offenses have so lightly escaped critical eyes.[15] This second reality — independent financing — allows the Taliban a degree of freedom from the first reality — their proxy status to Pakistan.

Primary sources — letting players and witnesses speak to balance the outsiders' views — are invaluable for uncovering who controls matters in a low intensity conflict or proxy war. A typical view of Hezbollah, from a safe distance, might see loose connections to Tehran. In truth, the linkage is very tight and always has been, and it is so stated in the opening lines of a founding document by Hezbollah, as chapter 6 will show. Another errant view that may be corrected with primary sources is in the loud voices blaming the United States for the presence of al-Qaeda or the Taliban in Afghanistan. The charge against Washington is blowback. Certainly Pakistani, Saudi, and American support advanced the Afghan mujahideen war against the Soviet armed forces in the 1980s. Now, because Afghans are still at war and a few aging recipients of Pakistani-U.S. material aid in that conflict are still in the fighting, there are assertions that the United States is only getting its grim due. One new American book recklessly reduces the ongoing war in Afghanistan

[14] The reference to a *typical* Afghan means no more than this: a Taliban member is usually Pashtun and extremist Sunni; millions of other Afghans are either from other ethnic tribes, moderate Sunnis, or follow Shia teachings. Most Afghans would prefer a weak central government if their only choice was the tyranny of Taliban — be it that of the late 1990s or today.

[15] The author's earlier writings often saluted journalist Gretchen Peters for her field research on the heroin trade in Afghanistan. Her study recounts her difficulties in persuading others, as in North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), of the vastness and diversity of Taliban drug dealing. Remarkably, she won the argument, and NATO adjusted its financial estimates, and those help explain the insurgents' longevity and strength and gains on the ground up through 2021. More remarkably, much of the world still does not seem to care about this Taliban business model. Gretchen Peters, *Seeds of Terror: How Drugs, Thugs, and Crime Are Reshaping the Afghan War*, 2d ed. (New York: Picador, 2010).

to "conflict born of blowback."[16] But U.S. aid never flowed to al-Qaeda, and no less an expert than Ayman al-Zawahiri, then deputy and later chief, confirms it in his 2001 volume *Knights Under the Prophet's Banner*.[17] Similarly, the U.S. role in Afghanistan had ended years before the founding of the Taliban (in fall 1994)—a group it certainly has never funded or assisted.

Third-level extensions—when parties in a proxy relationship spawn yet more proxies—are adumbrated in the chapters of the present work. One of the best-documented cases is that of the New Jewel Movement (NJM), which seized power in Grenada in 1979. It sought self-aggrandizement, support, and protection through and with Cuba up to the Soviet level and was initially successful. Only outside intervention in October 1983 ended the NJM's trajectory.

THINKING ALONG CONTINUA

Although the 11 conceptual measures of strength listed above feature in this volume's chapters, there are many other ways to identify the essentials of proxy relationships. Another fresh approach, devised especially for this study, is by thinking about a given proxy relationship as having some nonpermanent place on a continuum or various continua. The

[16] Nick Turse, *Tomorrow's Battlefield: US Proxy Wars and Secret Ops in Africa* (Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2015), 37. Turse's excesses, such as that quoted, overshadow some of his valuable reporting. One of his effusive blowback allegations ties the death of three American hostages in Africa to the terrorist group al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and planner Mokhtar Belmokhtar, whom he calls "a veteran of the U.S.-backed war against the Soviets in Afghanistan." Belmokhtar was a seven-year old living in Algeria when the USSR invaded Afghanistan. Additionally, AQIM would not form until 2006. The mujahideen were a loose coalition who won their war against the Soviets by the end of the 1980s. Many then remained in internecine fights in country. The Taliban did not exist until the fall of 1994, when it was born of a seminary in Kandahar with a narrow brand of extremist Islam that most mujahideen or other Afghans did not share. The strongest argument for the Taliban as blowback from prior wars would not be against the United States. It would be an argument against the Saudis, who funded extremist seminaries in Afghanistan, and an argument against Pakistan, mentor to the Taliban from its beginning.

[17] Ayman al-Zawahiri, *Knights Under the Prophet's Banner*, in *His Own Words: Translation and Analysis of the Writings of Dr. Ayman Al Zawahiri*, trans. Laura Mansfield (Old Tappan, NJ: TLG Publications, 2006), 34, 39. Osama bin Laden and some others later in al-Qaeda *did* fight the Soviets in Afghanistan, but their terrorist group (which means "the base") was not even formed until the end of the 1980s when Soviet troops were leaving. It also had different objectives than the mujahideen.

broader realities and challenges of proxy warfare can be explored in this way without artificial strictures, or diagrams, or the empty exercise of ascribing to them fractions of numerical value. Changing phenomena in social science are rarely advantaged by shoving in mathematics, though it has become common to try. Instead, the relations between the stronger actor and the weaker may be flexible, or even somewhat mysterious.[18] Thinking less of a snapshot or formula and more of a continuum prompts experts to *begin* considering these power relations with a mind open to their real variety. It also prepares the analyst for *changes* in that relationship over time or during a campaign or war. Human conflict is an interactive struggle, not the actions of one living thing against a fixed and dead opponent; a proxy, for example, may well begin in subordination but come to be a full partner in the course of time.[19]

Following are some measures of proximity, power, and collusion. They estimate leading characteristics of proxy relations and they cannot be found in any set place or position. They are continua.

States and nonstate agents. At times, states either have been or were accused of being proxies of other states. When the Warsaw Pact was up and running after 1955, the People's Republic of Bulgaria adhered to Soviet directions year after year without suggestion of real differences between Communists in both countries. In foreign policy, the capital city of Sofia consistently appeared as a Moscow proxy. In 1984, as one example, Bulgaria inked trade agreements with Soviet partners Afghanistan, Vietnam, and Cuba, while also welcoming delegations from others closely cooperating with Moscow, such as Sandinista Nicaragua, North Korea, and Mozambique. Party leaders in Sofia seemed proud of

[18] The question above about the Taliban's proxy status under Pakistan has been oft-raised but not conclusively answered. Decades of research and writing on Cuba have frequently asserted the degree(s) to which Fidel Castro's Havana was a proxy to the Soviet Union, but there has been no resolution on the question, and nearly all the belligerents of the 1958–59 war and the three decades following it are deceased. Such case studies teach modesty to analysts and prevent us from insisting on perfect precision, as with attempts to assign numerical values to particular states' relations. Aristotle wrote in book 1 of *Nicomachean Ethics* that one ought not demand more precision of a matter than its nature allows.

[19] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 75–77, 149, 585.

their intense loyalty to Moscow.[20] That eagerness to please was tangible under Joseph Stalin and the relationship does not seem to change *after* Stalin. Yet, slavishness by a nominally sovereign state is not normal in modern international affairs.

Consider an important actor at the far end of this same continuum, a political and militant group aspiring for statehood but distant from it, an actor with no homeland and the most vague of political bases. The nascent Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was in many respects dependent on and a proxy of the Warsaw Pact. By the mid-1950s, leading Palestinian young men — such as Yasser Arafat and Salah Khalaf (a.k.a. Abu Iyad), who was to be Arafat's intelligence chief and deputy and the future mastermind of terror operations in Western Europe as in the Black September attack on Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympic Games in 1972 — were probably committed to Moscow's guidance. There is a 1956 photograph of them at a student conference in Prague, Czech Republic, and their *Fatah* newspaper reported years later that, after their meeting, Khalaf went to East Germany for a visit. Arafat, due to illness, canceled a planned trip to Romania, a Communist country he later visited repeatedly.[21] When the PLO was founded in 1964, these emergent Palestinians were indeed "independence" advocates but were also enmeshed in Soviet Bloc affairs, making their independence compromised.[22] In those early decades, PLO leaders often visited the Soviet Bloc and they stood with it

[20] John D. Bell, "Bulgaria," in *Yearbook on International Communist Affairs 1984: Parties and Revolutionary Movements*, ed. Richard F. Staar (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1984), 307.
[21] About 1978, the author saw the 1956 photograph when Harold W. Rood, then of Claremont Graduate University in California, shared a copy of the English-language version of the PLO newspaper *Fatah*. This Soviet-sponsored student summit in Prague is also noted in Jillian Becker, *The PLO: The Rise and Fall of the Palestine Liberation Organization* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984), 42. In mid-1986, Soviet diplomat Vladimir Polyakov conducted meetings with top Palestinian militants and terrorists in Prague, as well as Moscow and other cities, in an attempt to heal divisions within the PLO. *Foreign Report* (London: *The Economist*), 9 October 1986, 5.
[22] Among those to chronicle some of PLO's activities and foreign relations is Paul Thomas Chamberlain, *The Global Offensive: The United States, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and the Making of the Post–Cold War Order* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

on foreign policy issues.[23] By the end of the 1970s, numerous Palestinians were taking training or doing studies throughout the Soviet Bloc. None of the attacks by PLO hurt Soviet Bloc interests, defying analysts who overuse the term *indiscriminate* to define terror attacks. This care for Soviet interests suggests proxy status, albeit a proxy moving toward declaring national independence. In 1994, the PLO was to gain semi-state form as the Palestinian National Authority, which has loose authority over hundreds of thousands of people, even if Gaza has been closed off to them by the Hamas (Islamic Resistance Movement) government since 2006.[24]

Activities from legal to illegal. Among further appropriate continua, the next is the range between legal and illegal activities. International and American law do not forbid proxy relationships in foreign affairs. When the United States and Israel collaborate closely in international relations, it may actually be unclear who is most directing the given mutual activity, but such partnership is normal and many proponents of the partnership are publicly proud of it. Economics, immigration, counterterrorism, and the science behind and making of missile shields are all illustrations. So is diplomatic collaboration in which both parties hold certain powers aimed at reducing low intensity conflicts in the Middle East. In the drive for the recent Abraham Accords, the greater power lay with the United States and was exercised through Trump, his son-in-law Jared Kushner, and American diplomats, but no wise observer would label Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu their proxy.

Below the level of the fully legal are actions in the so-called gray zone between war and peace that partners or proxies might share. The *New York Times* wrote extensively in 2012 on what it presented as "collaboration" by Israel and the United States on Stuxnet, a cyber strike to sab-

[23] Notes on several of Arafat's travels behind the Iron Curtain are in Roberta Goren, *The Soviet Union and Terrorism*, ed. Jillian Becker (London: Allen & Unwin, 1984), 108. Goren notes that Arafat was the first president of the Palestinian Students' Association and that a subsequent president, Muhammad Jabih, reported "conclusive evidence of some Eastern bloc support for the terrorist organizations," such as the PLO.

[24] Robert Satloff, ed., *Hamas Triumphant: Implications for Security, Politics, Economy and Strategy* (Washington, DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2006).

otage Iranian nuclear engineering.[25] The action was forceful but silent, nonlethal violence against property. One might guess that Washington deemed the action illegal but necessary. An example near the middle of the illegality to legality continuum would be the successful rendition and intelligence operation that France undertook to remove Ilich Ramirez Sanchez (a.k.a. Carlos the Jackal) from safe haven in the Sudan in 1998. The terrorist had shot policemen in Paris and authorities brought him back to that city for trial, where he received a life term in jail. An example of a state's entirely illegal use of criminal proxies is the North Korean regime's export of drugs for hard currency profits. The Kim government was doing this in the 1990s via a Pyongyang Office 39 of the Communist Party, but it appears that some of the selected exporters were business and shipping experts, some state-owned and some freelancers. Most could be considered proxies of the state, especially a state-owned import-export firm.[26] Understanding such entities may reveal the logistical pathways by which international terrorists in Hamas and Hezbollah arm themselves since North Korea is involved in illegal trade and support — to the latter, certainly, if not to both.[27]

Willing to unwilling in spirit. A third continuum is that ranging between the enthused volunteer and the foot-dragging conscript. In foreign affairs, as in domestic crime, it can be difficult to identify who feels empowered versus who feels entrapped. But it matters to police to know where the real culprits are and what orders they have given and where a larger criminal system's pressure points are. It is the same with matters of justice in a domestic U.S. courtroom as in a terrorism case. Whether the actor is a volunteer, a conscript, or has been enlisted in some other

[25] David E. Sanger, "Obama Order Sped Up Wave of Cyberattacks against Iran," *New York Times*, 1 June 2012.

[26] Defectors have helped expose official North Korean drug dealing. Col Kim Kuk-Song, who left his country in 2014, spoke with the British Broadcasting Corporation, which aired the interview on 11 October 2021. He claimed to have helped set up a drug lab that produced crystal methamphetamine (a.k.a. ice), among other ways of aiding the state effort to bring in hard currency.

[27] The leading authority on such liaisons is Bruce E. Bechtol Jr. See Bechtol, *North Korean Military Proliferation in the Middle East and Africa: Enabling Violence and Instability* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2018).

way is significant when the subject is proxy warfare. In international relations, there are also degrees of willingness and degrees of subservience.

Hezbollah is a Lebanese organization that Dr. Amin Tarzi of Marine Corps University's Brute Krulak Center for Innovation and Future Warfare calls "Iran's most successful proxy."[28] Tarzi is describing common practice. The policy is evident in the forceful testament of the opening words in Hezbollah's foundational document published in 1985: We of Hezbollah "abide by the orders of a single, wise and just command represented by the guardianship of the jurisprudent, currently embodied in the supreme Ayatullah Ruhallah al-Musawi al-Khumayni." This flat declaration of subservience comes under a subheading "What Is Our Identity?"[29] While Hezbollah's name translates as the "Party of God," it is more a party responsible to Tehran. Today, as before, this Shia terrorist organization is still a fully willing player and its enthusiasm for the mutual work may well exceed the enthusiasms of its patron, Iran. This unusual case is a warning against presuming that a proxy is being coerced, even when Iran is in an excellent position to exert its power. A proxy might be quite proud of its roles, even if related armed groups might be forced, directed, and unhappy, due to the overwhelming power advantages.

From direct to mere indirect support. A state or some lesser party may give direct and physical support to violent agents, a practice the United States legally opposes. During President William J. "Bill" Clinton's administration, the United States made material support to foreign terrorists a crime. Now, the law is the most common grounds for

[28] Amin Tarzi, interview by author, Gray Research Center, Marine Corps University, 2020.
[29] The "Open Letter to the Oppressed in Lebanon and the World" of 16 February 1985 has not been published in English officially by the group; the fullest copy appears in Joseph Alagha, *Hizbullah's Documents: From the 1985 Open Letter to the 2009 Manifesto* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2011), 39–55. Another good source on Hezbollah as an Iranian proxy is Ali Soufan, "Qassem Soleimani and Iran's Unique Regional Strategy," *CTC Sentinel* 11, no. 10 (November 2018): 1–12. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps featured in the Soufan article, however, is no proxy in the Hezbollah style but a direct arm of the Iranian state. More generally, on Iran's "gray area" warfare, sources include *Outlaw Regime: A Chronicle of Iran's Destructive Activities* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, 2020). An earlier edition was published during the Trump administration in 2018.

the conviction of terrorists.[30] But what a sponsoring state gives its proxy may range to very low levels, even down to acquiescence or permission.

Surprisingly, given that Iran is a home of zealous Shia faithful, the mullahs there provide virtually all the resources used by a small Sunni terrorist group, Palestine Islamic Jihad (PIJ). It was formed in the first year of the Khomeini regime in Iran in 1979. In many subsequent years, especially in 2014, 2018, and 2019, the PIJ has carried out mortar or rocket attacks on population centers in Israel. A 2002 volume on extremist groups observed that the PIJ is "ostensibly controlled by Iran, as compared to Hamas. While Hamas has considerable cooperation with Iran, they act according to their [Palestinian] interests, while PIJ often acts according to Iran's interests."[31] The U.S. coordinator for counterterrorism at the State Department's Bureau of Counterterrorism, Nathan Sales, announced that the PIJ is a "proxy" of Iran, a state that spends a billion dollars a year on its terrorist parties.[32] So two important Sunni Palestinian groups — the PIJ and Hamas — are Iranian aid recipients. PIJ seems to be a mere proxy of Tehran, whereas Hamas is less reliant and relatively more independent.[33] By one account, these two Sunni groups formed a joint command for operations in Gaza, which if true is newsworthy at of this writing in May 2021 when Gaza is the point of origin for hundreds of rocket launches against Israel.

Central direction or spot guidance. For any state to give central direction to a large foreign group or populous entity overseas is exceedingly difficult and uncommon. But the difference between such direction, on

[30] The Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996 created 18 U.S. Code § 2339B-Providing material support or resources to designated foreign terrorist organizations.

[31] Sean D. Hill and Richard H. Ward, *Extremist Groups: An International Compilation of Terrorist Organizations, Violent Political Groups, and Issue-Oriented Militant Movements*, 2d ed. (Huntsville, TX: Institute for the Study of Violent Groups, 2002). Although not well known, this rather informally written one-volume encyclopedia has proven reliable on terrorism, avoiding mistakes of certain rival media and academic authors.

[32] Nathan A. Sales, "Counter-terrorism Coordinator Ambassador Nathan Sales on the Release of the Country Reports on Terrorism 2018" (press briefing, U.S. Department of State Press Briefing Room, Washington, DC, 1 November 2019).

[33] For a literate and elaborate effort to discount Iranian aid to Hamas, see Zaki Chehab, *Inside Hamas: The Untold Story of the Militant Islamic Movement* (New York: Nation Books, 2007), 129–72.

the one hand, and spotty authority or even less, on the other, helps analytics and serves well here as continuum number five.

An example of impressive control of a proxy would be the way the Soviet intelligence service, known as the Committee for State Security or the KGB, gradually assumed important influence over (a) Cuban intelligence services in the 1960s and (b) Libyan military procurement and security services in the 1970s.[34] In both of these distant, small countries, the Soviets deployed their own professionals and others from the Soviet Bloc, especially Czechs and East Germans, in the hundreds or thousands.[35] Military equipment and training was a favored medium given between patron and proxy. State diplomacy was another, greatly important vehicle. So was technical support, a very different thing. Libyans and Cubans had vigor, talent, and an ideological edge, but they were not as advanced in some technical sectors as their Warsaw Pact comrades. At the center of it all, especially in the Cuban case, was domination of the smaller states' intelligence services. The Soviets set up overhead assets, on-ground advisors, special electronic means, and certain big facilities, such as the KGB station at Lourdes, Cuba. Through the sum of such assistance and involvement, Moscow gradually extended its authority over its "little brothers" in Cuba. Even then, the Caribbean Communists sometimes manifested independence; Fidel Castro famously used the diplomatic track on several public occasions to prod the USSR.

A countervailing example, showing aid but lack of control, is evident in the financial lines connecting U.S. government aid to the mujahideen (Holy Warriors) fighting against the Red Army occupation of Afghanistan from 1980 onward. American officials were the source but not the con-

[34] The *Foreign Report* (London) reported on Soviet intelligence and other personnel in Libya's inner circles on multiple occasions in the late 1970s and 1980s. A book of that time reported that police, secret police, other security services, the army, and the revolutionary committees were East Bloc trained. "They are trained by Eastern-bloc specialists: the Romanians train and advise the police, the East Germans controlled military intelligence, the Czechs and Poles control political intelligence." David Blundy and Andrew Lycett, *Qaddafi and the Libyan Revolution* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1987), 28–29, 127.

[35] East German experts served widely in Africa and Czechs were involved in training Sandinista Nicaraguans in policing. These two Eastern European countries are mentioned in "Terror: A Soviet Export," *New York Times Magazine*, 2 November 1980, 21–24.

duit for money, flour, and bullets going to Afghan guerrilla units in the field. Washington channeled all its aid through Pakistan's secret service, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). Intriguingly, this exchange made Islamabad a kind of U.S. proxy and agent, while Pakistani authorities had every right to consider the United States as its proxy. Perhaps neither capital felt enough warmth in the bilateral relationship to call the other an ally. Certainly, the mujahideen did not decide which fighting group received what from the U.S.-supplied aid. In the parlance of military operations, Washington worked "by, with, and through" the Pakistanis in the 1980s to support the anti-Soviet war.[36]

Independence to dependence as considered by outsiders. Sixth among the continua on which proxy relations may be measured is independence as rated from abroad by the dispassionate. In theory, a party could be extremely independent in thought and most kinds of action, and yet still offer services as a proxy, similar to an attorney or business agent. Such an agent makes a willful, and perhaps partial or temporary, surrender of independence. More usually, in foreign affairs, there are levels of disempowerment and patterns by which both parties know the little actor has no escape. They may act well and energetically within their role but cannot set down their duties nor escape the situation. At the bottom, there are colonial relationships or satellite status and, given the character of the larger power, it may be a form of enslavement.

Consider the "full independence" end of the spectrum. The U.S. Congress voted openly to give financial aid to the labor union Solidarity in Poland. For Washington, this act was nonviolent political warfare and a lever point in the Cold War. For American citizens of many political stripes, it was a serious matter of freedom inside Poland. What is significant is that Washington never controlled, or sought to control, the Polish anti-Communist labor movement in any respect. It was more the case of a great power's enthusiasm at seeing the rise and growth of an idealistic movement. There was anti-Soviet and anti-Communist utility in it for Washington, but the latter was not at all in control. Indeed, Washing-

[36] Gen Joseph L. Votel and Col Ero R. Keravuori, "The By-With-Through Operational Approach," *Joint Force Quarterly* 89, no. 2 (April 2018): 40–47.

ton saw no advantage to the United States *seeking* control. Reportedly, one senior American diplomat quietly carried public funds, money appropriated by Congress, directly to Solidarity. Most aid probably moved in other ways. Media referred to gifts of printing presses, paper stock, and the like. The *Solidarity* newspaper became one of the most consequential soft-power instruments of the twentieth century. Polish free trade union success in no way depended on American assistance, but it enjoyed the political and economic support. Polish success in turn supported American foreign policy as it worked to weaken the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet ideological bloc.[37]

Between full independence and full control, multiple middle grounds lie along the continuum. Some of these are economic. The Philippine economy and its economic independence from the United States are one of the debated questions of bilateral relations in the post–World War II era. The archipelago had come within the U.S. orbit in 1898 after the end of Spanish-American War. At that time, Washington was in a position to dictate what it would. As the controlling power, and acting only somewhat in Filipino interests, the United States cofounded economic relations according to what it thought best. In 1946, the Philippines accepted full and formal political independence, but the new set of economic relations between the two nations became grounds for dispute. Hukbalahap Communists, left/labor insurrectionists, and certain American academics and observers issued calls of economic woe and advanced a critique of U.S. policy. The conventional American view is that, in a new postcolonial era, a balance was created that helped both republics. Communist voices call Manila the subject of Washington's "neo imperialism," an economic subordinate position enforced indirectly by a massive naval and air presence, more subtle but no more just. The Communists charge that since 1946 the relationship is based on an economic depletion that extracts Filipino natural resources, draining the Asian country and

[37] The Institute of World Politics has explored aspects of U.S. aid to *Solidarity*. See the review essay by Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, "The CIA and 'Solidarity'," Institute of World Politics, 17 March 2019. The book's author then spoke at the institute. See Seth Jones, "A Covert Action: Reagan, the CIA and the Cold War Struggle in Poland," Institute of World Politics, 9 June 2020.

thus furthering Communist insurgency. One spokesman for this view is Jose Maria Santos, founder in the late 1960s of the fighting NPA and the larger Communist Party of the Philippines.[38] For other Filipinos — most, in fact — that Communist/Maoist critique fails. More citizens than not blame economic ills of maldistribution on famously wealthy families, but they do not see Communism as any way to fix the malady.[39]

For a tangible lack of economic independence, one could consider Afghanistan when it was "owned" by the Soviets. Moscow had moved steadily, if not always effectively, to control more and more of the ground and the business of this southern neighbor, insinuating itself into the country before the Red Army invasion in December 1979. The term *Democratic Republic of Afghanistan* had an echo of the satellites of the Eastern European Bloc, and a series of Soviet proxies ruled from Kabul: Nur Mohammad Taraki from 1978 to 1979; Hafizullah Amin from late 1979 onward; Babrak Karmal from that year until 1986. Afghan natural gases were being pumped out through lines going northward and that Soviet technicians controlled the apertures, spigots, and gauges. It was years before Afghans could control their own resources or know how much had been taken. Paradoxically, although Soviet occupation failed, the country was a Soviet satellite for years. Its government was a proxy of Moscow and the Afghan polity could do little that was genuinely Afghan in purpose.

Success or failure. Finally, a seventh way that proxy wars may be appreciated and studied along a continuum is to focus on success versus failure. This measure is meant to answer the question, to what degree is the senior power in a given relationship successful in utilizing the

[38] Some early speeches and writings on economic issues displaying the Maoism of Jose Maria Sison (a.k.a. Amado Guerrero) may be found in his book *Building Strength Through Struggle: Selected Writings, 1972 to 1977* (Utrecht, The Netherlands: International Network for Philippine Studies and Aklat ng Bayan, 2013). Sison poses as less the overt Maoist and as more the generic hard-left critic in a later set of writings and addresses from 2001 to 2006, in *Crisis of Imperialism and People's Resistance*, vol. 3, *Selected Writings of Jose Maria Sison, 1991–2009* (Quezon City, Philippines: Aklat ng Bayan, 2009). In all cases, Sison is consistent in deriding the Philippines as capitalist but weak, the economic dupe of the neo-imperialist United States. Sison died as this volume went to press.

[39] An exploration of Sison's media efforts against the Republic of the Philippines may be found in Christopher C. Harmon and Randall G. Bowdish, *The Terrorist Argument: Modern Advocacy and Propaganda* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2018), 37–58.

proxy and even enhancing its own power at the expense of others, perhaps including the proxy? Three examples of Moscow's activities serve well for such considerations.

Russia infiltrated and suddenly captured the Crimea region from Ukraine in 2014, making some use of people who are legally Ukrainian but ethnically Russian. Russian planners simultaneously used paramilitary Russian forces, armed and paid by Moscow but protected by open denials of such status, as well. Given the snatch of this vital Black Sea peninsula, will historians and geopoliticians one day study this action as a stroke of mastery, deserving of the kind of attention devoted to Prussian statesman Otto von Bismarck's first two wars of German unification in the 1860s? However successful, the Russian campaign was certainly illegal, by innumerable accounts, even if a few Westerners generously said, "remember, in the past Russia had owned that peninsula." For serious and neutral observers, the action was a shock and seemingly mocked the United Nations as well as the declared aspirations of the Commonwealth of Independent States. It was an ugly precedent — more related to Axis irredentism and maneuvers of the 1930s than to today's liberal picture of how nations are to relate.

In the middle of the success continuum lies the matter of two Russian-held borderlands of now-compromised Georgia. South Ossetia and Abkhazia were occupied beginning in 2008 and clutched to Russia by military power ever since, including lines of bases that can prevent Georgians from reasserting their authority.[40] In some circumstances, this issue would now be under the most active and formal international arbitration. In this case, the two areas most likely have already been relabeled on Russian maps. The longer this conflict goes on, the worse it is for Georgian sovereignty because that which was once aggression may come with time to be a new status quo.

[40] This form of aggrandizement at the borders is how the Russian Empire was first constructed. Since the end of the Cold War, Moscow has attempted a sort of rebuilding, sometimes by special efforts against borderlands. See the prescient article by Kevin D. Smith, "The Soviet Re-Union," *Strategic Review* (Fall 1995): 71–75.

At the far end of the spectrum are the proxy efforts that can only be called failures. One such instance was laid bare in Vatican City's St. Peter's Square in May 1981. Earlier that year, Soviet and Bulgarian officials plotted to assassinate Pope John Paul II, a singularly important spiritual leader whose faith, charisma, and Polish bloodline unnerved Communists throughout Eurasia. They employed a proxy, a Turkish man named Mehmet Ali Agca, who was known to affiliate with the Gray Wolves. His association with this right-wing terror group meant that the far left was making use of the far right. The bloc's thinking may have been thus: If Agca shoots straight, he will kill a world figure opposed to Communism and Soviet control of Poland. If the shooter is caught, the left/right paradox will serve terrorism's ends, sow confusion, and stoke anti-Muslim feelings among Catholics who loved their pope, damaging two religions at once. But this time, fortune went against Sofia and Moscow; the foreign assassin's bullets wounded and did not kill. The famous and open location of the attack made it a promising forum for trying terrorism but a public relations disaster once the shooter was linked to the Bulgarian state. Agca, one of the most infamous individual proxies of the late twentieth century, failed. The pope only grew in repute, and then looked magnanimous in visiting Agca in his Italian prison. Meanwhile, the Soviet Bloc's international violence was ubiquitously splashed across page one, and mainstream opinion in the West increasingly looked on the Warsaw Pact as exporting terrorism. Italy, which had seen its moments as an appeaser of Moscow, angrily ejected a batch of Communist diplomats and agents.[41]

LOOKING TO THE CASE STUDIES

Several thoughts conclude this initial framing essay and point toward seven case studies, specialized chapters that illuminate different parts

[41] See Paul Henze, *The Plot to Kill the Pope* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1983); and Christopher C. Harmon, "Left Meets Right in Terrorism: A Focus on Italy," *Strategic Review* (Winter 1985): 40–51. Recently, historian Paul Kengor has argued that the Soviet military intelligence service GRU had the operational lead in the plot, and that CIA knew as much by 1985. See Kengor, *A Pope and a President: John Paul II, Ronald Reagan, and the Extraordinary Untold Story of the 20th Century* (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2018).

of the globe and multiple decades. First, proxy warfare in peacetime has been and is attractive to states — and to many dependent actors — for the apparent efficiencies. These begin with being able to project power without risking one's own soldiers' lives. Another prime motivator for taking a proxy is to enjoy deniability where the purpose or violent methods are suspect to the international community.

Second, there exists an inherent risk of escalation in such struggles. All war brings such danger, as has been recognized for centuries, but low-level violence contracted out to others does not escape such risks. The possibility of engaging only to then mire down is never far from the deliberations of a state council. There is nothing like being bogged down to challenge all of the very efficiencies states hope for when they choose proxies.

Third, great states place high value on prestige. Reputation is a form of power.[42] The obverse of this is that failure in proxy war can cause loss of prestige that may be more damaging to the sovereign state than to its proxies.

Fourth, this book will not imply — as large segments of the new proxy war literature do — that this phenomenon is increasing. Such a generalization would demand evidence this author has not seen. Proxy war is an ancient idea. While modern societies practice it, they probably do not do so more than other strategists before them. The author has lived amid, learned from, and contributed to gray area studies in the last several years, but the author also did so in the 1980s when the Soviets and the Americans were locked into "low intensity conflicts" that first made the author search out the right words for "warfare in peacetime."[43] Although some feel there is greater interest today, proxy warfare is neither new nor more important than it was before 2023.

[42] See, for example, the discussion of President Dwight D. Eisenhower's concerns in John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy During the Cold War*, rev. ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 142. This new edition of a classic has an 11th chapter touching on the "Reagan Doctrine" issues, which in this volume are central to chapters 4 and 5.

[43] "Warfare in Peacetime" was done for and with James A. Courter of the House Armed Services Committee for his speech in Dallas, TX, on 31 October 1987. See *Proceedings of the International Churchill Society*, ed. Martin Gilbert (Hopkinton, NH: International Churchill Society, 1989), 51–63.

CHAPTER 1

The USSR and East Germany

UNIQUE FEATURES OF THE PROXY RELATIONSHIP

East Germany, known as the German Democratic Republic (GDR) from its founding in 1949 until German reunification in 1990, stands out in three ways that recommend it for further study. One is its close adhesion to Moscow's purposes and guidance. While Western observers of Soviet Bloc affairs showed a fascination with the glimmers of independence they perceived in Hungary or Romania, the German client state was proud of its intimacy with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). A second feature of this state is found in its outward-looking ministries and media. Foreign aid, foreign trade, martial alliances, and international security affairs were a purview of East Berlin in its Communist period. Like nineteenth-century Prussian statesman Otto von Bismarck, the leadership looked to opportunities in varied parts of the African continent, especially, and perhaps Germans worked harder than in Bismarck's day to build those dreams. Third, East Germany was much more than a loyal proxy for the Soviets; it was itself a successful builder of bridges to other players — both state and nonstate — around the globe. The GDR exemplifies and is in the middle of the pattern of third-level extensions explored in this text. Through Soviet and East German influence, many further, smaller proxies were prepared and indulged with aid to their mutual benefit.

Map 1. GDR/East German security force presence in the 1970s and/or 1980s in Africa

Source: courtesy of author, adapted by MCUP.

POLITICAL CHARACTER OF THE ENTITIES AND STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The German Democratic Republic was not entirely German, not a democracy, and not a republic. Formed after 1945, already it is receding in memory. In Europe and in the United States, the regime is recalled mainly for two things: its grim survival under the shadow of Moscow with its armored divisions, and the East Germans' own internal policing

by the feared Ministry for State Security, better known as the Stasi. Neither of these impressions is an illusion bred by Cold War hatreds. Stacks of Stasi files exposed after 1989 and the memoirs of regime figures, including intelligence manager Markus Wolf, confirm the above. Millions were turned against each other by the pervasive spy system. Audiences moved by the drama *The Lives of Others*, which won the Academy Award for Best Foreign Film in 2006, were seeing truth through cinematic fiction. The film creates — or recreates — feelings of dread.[1]

Officials in East Berlin and all the Warsaw Pact states were acutely aware of a third significant aspect of the GDR: it had prolific, strategically minded foreign relations across the Third World.[2] The nation's gifted scientists, engineers, mass media experts, arms manufacturers, military trainers, and other advisors assumed missions abroad in the service of national objectives, Moscow's bidding, and the broad principle of international Communism. In large numbers, these people delivered aid, managed construction projects, rendered medical assistance, trained armies and indigenous intelligence officers, and schooled some of the praetorian guards that protected late twentieth-century leftist dictatorial governments. German expertise was thus turned in Marxist-Leninist directions that Moscow and East Berlin deemed most promising. This bond was a proxy relationship but much more — a trusted partnership running from Moscow through East Berlin to the Third World. After several centuries in which nationalism and nation-state building were archetypes of European life, the long-serving general secretary of the Communist Party in the GDR, Erich Honecker, expressed the Communist

[1] Espionage files and primary sources on East German internal espionage have been studied by John O. Koehler, *Stasi: The Untold Story of the East German Secret Police* (New York: Basic Books, 2000). Researchers into East Bloc country foreign terrorism include French investigative magistrate Jean Louis Bruguiere, *Ce Que Je N'ai Pas Pu Dire: Entretiens Avec Jean-Marie Pontaut* (Paris: Robert-Laffont, 2009).

[2] According to *Britannica*, the historical definition of *Third World* was a "former political designation originally used . . . to describe those states not part of the first world — the capitalist, economically developed states led by the U.S. — or the second world — the communist states led by the Soviet Union. When the term was introduced, the Third World principally consisted of the developing world, the former colonies of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. With the end of the Cold War and the increased economic competitiveness of some developing countries, the term lost its analytic clarity." "Third World," Britannica, accessed 3 October 2022.

alternative when he spoke of his desire for "integration" with the USSR, not merely "alliance." A proxy relationship is usually rather limited, while these two governments had many shared interests.

TREATIES AND TRADE

If these two unequal states shared space in an enforced post–1945 political culture, they were also both aware of their strategic circumstances and needs. Moscow, a sort of eastern director of Cold War affairs, actively and, at times, aggressively competed for clients, supporters, and allies around the globe. The central authorities, especially the International Department of the Communist Party led by Boris Ponomarev between the mid-1950s and 1986, used their expert analysts, linguists, intelligence operatives, and many others to create opportunities abroad.[3] The Kremlin, as center of gravity, urged its semicircle of East European clients and subordinates to do the same. Czechoslovakians turned up within the security apparatus of some Third World states and were a leading arms supplier, beginning in Egypt, where for a time the image of Prague helped veil Moscow and its purposes. Romania was probably the most diplomatically active of the East European states in the Warsaw Pact. For example, its help to Yasser Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was consistent and important.[4] East Germany competed with such Warsaw Pact partners, even surpassing them in southern Africa. East Berlin's role in Angola was particularly important, given an early 1975 decision by the Kremlin to fully back the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA). At that time, it was the smallest of three

[3] Widely cited in security studies of the 1970s and 1980s, Boris Ponomarev was senior Soviet Communist Party official who understood soft power and influenced the views of many foreigners. Scholar Richard H. Shultz Jr. indexed Ponomarev's influence on 11 different pages of his book, *The Soviet Union and Revolutionary Warfare* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1988). An example of those influenced was Fred Warner Neal, a senior professor at Claremont Graduate School, who repeatedly mentioned Ponomarev with respect and affection.
[4] Romania earned repute for some independence from the Soviet Bloc. The moniker overused by the Western press and social science community was "maverick," but there was little room for a maverick in the Eastern Bloc. Yugoslavia had attempted to be one and found itself expelled. A detailed source on Romania's indulgence of Yasser Arafat and the PLO is LtGen Ion Mihai Pacepa, *Red Horizons: Chronicles of a Communist Spy Chief* (Washington, DC: Regnery Gateway, 1987).

factions in the Angolan Civil War, but with aid from the Soviet Bloc it went on to take control of the state. By the next year, thousands of Cuban combat troops and other Communist Bloc partners arrived to intervene on behalf of the MPLA. From then on, East Germans were enmeshed in Angolan security affairs.

The East Germans had a list of purposes for entering the conflict, only beginning with fulfilling Soviet interests. East Berlin was conducting its own small Cold War overseas with Bonn, the capital of the Federal Republic of Germany or West Germany, each pursuing partners in a race for full diplomatic recognition — a key factor in building prestige, coalition relations, and supporting security needs. The West German republic declared its counterpart a falsity and published a "Hallstein Doctrine" under which it refused state-to-state relations with any country that formally recognized the GDR.[5] Angola was one of the African countries where the GDR indicated its seriousness of political intents, signing a 20-year "Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation" between Honecker and then-MPLA chief, Agostinho Neto, early in 1979. East Berlin attacked its West German rival's efforts to marginalize it by using further elements of national power. One was economic aid. East Germans and other East European states put three times as much economic aid into Angola between 1954 and 1981 than did the Soviets. They also created formal trade and economic accords, made in the knowledge that these agreements are useful themselves and that they may mature into political relations, which happened occasionally in Africa. One of the first to write about the German contest for influence in the Third World, professor John M. Starrels, judged that by the end of 1979, East Berlin achieved notable diplomatic victories and a compelling set of economic relations.[6] Alto-

[5] Sources on East German actions in Africa include Erich Mielke, *Man Without a Face: The Autobiography of Communism's Greatest Spymaster,* with Ann McElvoy (New York: PublicAffairs, 1997); and John M. Starrels, *East Germany: Marxist Mission in Africa*, Critical Issues (Washington, DC: Heritage Foundation, 1981).

[6] *Problems of Communism* was among the unusual journals of the late 1970s that covered the expansion of Soviet and Cuban power into southern Africa as in articles of November–December 1977 and January–February 1978. Rarely did any periodical in the United States (including *Problems of Communism*) focus on East German roles within this larger Communist effort. Several years passed before there were published works on such GDR work.

gether, the Communist Germans had reached in a lasting way into an impressive 52 Third World countries. These relationships included trade missions in Algeria, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Sudan, and Zambia. For the African recipients, the main fear in so stepping forward was that Bonn would back off in its assistance. East Berlin's counteroffer was aid of its own, aid from other German hands.[7] Other students of East German roles wrote for *The World Today* (August 1980) and *The Washington Quarterly* (Winter 1980). Book-length treatments of East European work in the Third World included volumes by Mark N. Katz, David E. Albright, and Michael Radu. A few details are added in a new work by Julia Lovell in *Maoism: A Global History*.[8]

Another facet of East German overseas work was service to the larger Soviet Bloc in its problem with the People's Republic of China (PRC). The rivalry between Moscow and Beijing was evident, and a split was apparent by 1960, despite the two nations being adherents to Marxism-Leninism and sharing many strong interests, such as Vietnamese reunification and the expulsion of the U.S. Army. By 1965, Mao Zedong and the PRC were exporting their form of Communist ideology after Minister of Defense Lin Biao released a pamphlet titled *Long Live the Victory of People's War*, which promoted liberation movements around the world.[9] In addition to ideological differences with Moscow, Communist China was in the middle of its own race for diplomatic respectability compared to Taiwan, an ally of many Western powers and holder of a valued permanent place on the Security Council of the United Nations.[10] In Africa, Chinese

[7] John M. Starrels, *East Germany: Marxist Mission in Africa* (Washington, DC: Heritage Foundation, 1981), 6–7.

[8] Julia Lovell, *Maoism: A Global History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2019).

[9] Lin Piao (or Biao) was the PRC's longest-serving minister of defense from 1959 to 1971. His pamphlet on worldwide revolution was not only important but famous for a generation. Embarrassingly, and perhaps because Communist internationalism is such an underappreciated theme in Western social science, the current online *Encyclopedia Britannica* omits mention of the pamphlet in its multipage article on Lin Biao. This would have been inconceivable at the time of his death. See Lin Biao, *Long Live the Victory of People's War!: In Commemoration of the 20th Anniversary of Victory in the Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japan* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1966).

[10] This intra-Chinese battle continues today, as in Beijing's insistence on relabeling airline destinations on international reader boards at the expense of Taiwan.

commitments of the 1960s, including economic aid and advice, political influence, arms supplies, and more, expanded quietly and steadily. By the end of the 1970s, the Chinese possessed 40 formal bilateral accords with African nations after establishing no fewer than two dozen new country-to-country relationships in that decade. In the 12 years between 1954 and 1966, the PRC tendered only $428 million in economic grants and credits to Africa, but the dollar figures then exploded. In only half the time, from 1970 to 1976, China committed to Africa a further $1.815 billion in economic aid, far more than the Soviets offered.[11] China also shipped arms and advisors. Nor did China neglect that key element that leavens revolutionary conditions — charismatic leaders. The PRC systematically welcomed promising foreign prospects for prestige tours, lengthy stays, political education programs, or martial training.[12] Beijing and Moscow, and to a degree North Korea, which was surprisingly active in the 1960s and 1970s, became contestants with one another as well as the Western powers in African politics and martial affairs.[13] No strangers to duty, Eastern Europeans and Cubans deployed media relations and diplomatic opportunities to make rhetorical sallies against the Chinese, using Soviet-prescribed lines of attack with ideological or geopolitical themes.[14] East Germany aided in this ideological and psychological contest when offering spots for foreigners in universities or doing media training in Third World countries. Only with Mao's death in 1976 did China begin to back off its patronage in Africa, yielding "communist outreach" in the theater to the Soviet Union and its proxies. Besting China

[11] Apparently, the data include all known forms of aid, including military. Soviet totals are $1.9 billion for the first period and $1.019 billion for the shorter second period. George T. Yu, "China's Impact," *Problems of Communism* (January–February 1978), 42.

[12] One example, on whom there is more said in chapter 4, was Jonas Savimbi, founder of the (all black) National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) faction in Angola's anti-Portuguese resistance. He did not remain a Maoist, however. See *The Angola Road to National Recovery: Defining the Principles and the Objectives* (Jamba, Angola: UNITA, 1983).

[13] For Beijing, "the USSR replaced the United States as the main foe. . . . Africa soon assumed major importance as an arena of Sino-Soviet competition . . . especially . . . since the end of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in 1969." Yu, "China's Impact," 40.

[14] For an array of Chinese criticisms of Soviet neo-imperialism in the Third World, done without mention of the smaller Eastern European states in the Soviet orbit, see Yu, "China's Impact," 40–50.

in this form of great power competition, the Soviet Bloc redoubled its multifaceted efforts with an eye to surpassing the United States as well.[15]

East Germans, who had Soviet power standing behind them in ready support, had ambitions and much to offer when they approached African officials and military officers. Of course, not every investment paid off for East Berlin. Markus Wolf, who for a generation headed the Stasi's Main Directorate for Reconnaissance (HVA), writes of a setback with Zanzibar, the east African island where he debarked in early 1964.[16] Initially all went well, and local authorities clearly wanted a small Communist state's involvement rather than either Communist superpower — whose influence would radically disturb Britain — aiding the region. East Berlin was thus a good "stalking horse" for Moscow in Africa. In the same year Wolf traveled there, the island of Zanzibar was absorbed by the new state of Tanzania, which immediately proved unfriendly to Communist influence. The Communist Bloc experienced other losses in Africa, as in Mali, Somalia, and Algeria, but East Berlin also made innumerable gains in Angola, Ethiopia, Namibia, and especially Libya, where the East Germans eventually had considerable influence over Muammar al-Qaddafi's intelligence services. Warsaw Pact states made other inroads across Africa. It was not illusory when top Soviets began touting a perceived change in the world balance of power as Soviet general secretary Leonid Brezhnev did several times in the early 1970s. Soviet spokespersons, including Marshal Nikolai V. Ogarkov, noted how national liberation movements were among the factors that changed the correlation of forces in favor of the Communists.[17] Central America was seeing dramatic change in

[15] James A. Courter, "Winning Hearts and Minds: Foreign Scholarships and Foreign Policy," *Policy Review*, no. 33 (Summer 1985): 74–76.

[16] Markus Wolf directed the HVA, the foreign intelligence directorate of the Stasi, controlling some 20 departments. He was second to only one other intelligence professional, Erich Mielke, chief of the Stasi from 1957 to 1989. Wolf, *Man Without a Face.*

[17] Vidya Nadkarni, "Soviet Perceptions of the Correlation of Forces" (PhD diss., University of British Columbia, 1987), 198–209; and Richard H. Shultz Jr., *The Soviet Union and Revolutionary Warfare: Principles, Practices, and Regional Comparisons* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1988), 21–30.

Nicaragua, Grenada, and El Salvador.[18] Indochina had become officially Communist.[19] In some places, such as the Caribbean and Ethiopia, U.S. influence seemed to wane. One trade partner to the West, the Republic of South Africa, was under veritable siege from foes and friends alike, given its formal racist system of apartheid. A world that had begun the 1970s with barely a few developing world Communist governments had more than a dozen by the end of the decade. Casual opportunism was not the source of so broad a development; this was Soviet-led statecraft.

Syria and Egypt both broke the Hallstein Doctrine of Bonn when they asked for GDR diplomatic relations. Sudan, North and South Yemen, and the Republic of the Congo did the same.[20] Angola, Mozambique, and Ethiopia were most generously rewarded. East Germany may have had just 15–17 million people, but it was a talented country. By 1950, East Berlin was also an integral member in the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON) managed by Moscow, which opened possibilities for German partners in the Third World and allowed new arrangements that rivaled older ones with Western countries. East Germany, a state advanced in technology and industry, could be a fine benefactor. East Berlin was also a Warsaw Pact member, offering high-quality arms made domestically at good prices. Whether it was the Soviets, the Czechs, the East Germans, or others who supplied weapons, they often came with East German trainers who helped local recipients realize the full benefits of their purchases. Certain elements in the range of German bilateral relations deserve special mention, and the issue will be broadened

[18] "Meeting between Chiefs of General Staff of Soviet Armed Forces and People's Revolutionary Armed Forces of Grenada," 10 March 1983, Doc. No. 24, in *Grenada Documents: An Overview and Selection*, intro. Michael Ledeen and Herbert Romerstein (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State and Department of Defense, 1984), 24-1–5. Editors add in its introductory material that the Grenadians "saw themselves as Soviet proxies" whose future depended on helping Moscow export the revolution. Ledeen and Romerstein, "Introduction," in *Grenada Documents*, 6.
[19] Mockery of the "domino theory" concerns of Dwight D. Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, and others was common in the 1980s and 1990s. But Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia all became Communist states by 1975 and Thailand was under intense pressure. Today, Cambodia is no longer Communist but is a despotism run by a former Communist. Laos remains Communist. Vietnam is officially Communist, unofficially capitalist-to-socialist in some aspects of economics, and an American security partner, especially due to trade and shared concerns over the rise of Chinese power.
[20] Wolf, *Man Without a Face*, 286.

out beyond East Germans' work in Africa alone. It reached more widely. Following are six lines of effort in such GDR activities overseas. As the paragraphs will indicate, formal treaties governed these bilateral relations in many, but not all, cases. In all, to be sure, East Berlin served larger Soviet Bloc purposes.

ECONOMIC AID

Although too small to be transformative in most countries of the Third World, nonsecurity sector aid from East Germany was substantial and generous enough to put pressure on the national finances back in East Berlin. The GDR pledged $1.3 billion in economic aid to the developing world's non-Communist countries between 1954 and 1977.[21] Of course, one can say these credits enhanced East Berlin's exports, spurring overseas markets for excellent German machinery, fertilizers, chemicals, and arms. The East Germans, and the East Europeans generally, sent major loans to African states. In Angola, for instance, their tally, excluding contributions from Soviet Russia, was $183 million in 1975 and $290 million the next year. A 1977 U.S. congressional report on economic aid in southern Africa called East European and Soviet credits "instruments of expanding Soviet influence," citing Mozambique as an example.[22] In 1977 and 1978, 10,000 East European or Soviet technicians and experts were working in southern Africa alone.[23] Figures from 1981 show the presence of 3,900 East European and Soviet economic aid technicians in Angola; Cuban economic helpers made for an additional 6,500 persons

[21] Elizabeth Kridl Valkenier, "Revolutionary Change in the Third World: Recent Soviet Reassessments," in *The Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and the Third World*, ed. Roger E. Kanet (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 36–37, https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511628368.004.
[22] *The Soviet Union and the Third World: A Watershed in Great Power Policy?* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1977), 96. Soviet Bloc donors in Mozambique were competing with the Chinese. As one visual example there is a late 1970s photograph of leader Samora Machel with a Chinese military advisor; the caption reads: "The People's Republic of China provided finances, arms, and training in Machel's successful drive for independence in the former Portuguese colony." *Problems of Communism* (January–February 1978), 35.
[23] Valkenier, "Revolutionary Change in the Third World," 33.

from overseas.[24] In an example of dual-purpose assistance, which served either normal economic purposes or harder military ones, East Germany provided Angola with maritime pilots, who guided thousands of ships of varied kinds into harbor at Lobito and Luanda.

It was characteristic of the concepts of internationalism and worker solidarity that East German officials and like-minded foreigners beyond Africa sought each other out. Grenada provides an example in the Caribbean. The New Jewel Movement launched a bloodless coup in March 1979 that seized power from Prime Minister Eric Gairy, replacing him with a Marxist-Leninist Politburo led by Maurice Bishop. The new Central Committee chairman admitted to the "lack of technical skills and technical expertise of the working people," which happened to be a strength of East Germany and one reason for its involvement subsequently.[25] Agriculture led the Grenadian economy, but a large Soviet footprint might not have suited so small an island and would have angered the United States, already edgy about a Communist insurgency growing nearby in Nicaragua. Bishop admitted as much on the domestic side, veiling his new coterie of Leninists by adding in populists and liberals: "this was done deliberately so that imperialism won't get too excited and would say 'well they have some nice fellas in that thing; everything alright'."[26] To lend technical support as well as improve and expand the agro-industries, it was not Soviets but Soviet Bloc partners — personnel from East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, North Korea, and, above all,

[24] R. Craig Nation, "Soviet Engagement in Africa: Motives, Means, and Prospects," in *The Soviet Impact in Africa*, ed. R. Craig Nation and Mark V. Kauppi (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1984), 42. Kauppi went on to run an education program for U.S. government analysts in counterterrorism, and in the years after the 11 September 2001 terror attacks, the author had the honor of teaching there often on the favored subject of "How Terrorist Groups End."
[25] East German technical skills were much valued by aid recipients in Africa, although what those technicians contributed is unclear. See Colin Legum, "The Soviet Union's Encounter with Africa," in *The Soviet Impact in Africa*, 16; and Seth Singleton, "From Intervention to Consolidation: The Soviet Union and Southern Africa," in *The Soviet Impact in Africa*, 110.
[26] Maurice Bishop, "Line of March for the Party" (speech, General Meeting of the Party, 13 September 1982), in *Grenada Documents*, 1-3, 1-18. This priceless typescript was in the trove the United States captured during its invasion in October 1983.

Cuba — who arrived in Grenada.[27] Some of those countries were also home to delegations rendering assistance in fisheries as well.

Only a few months after this revolution in Grenada, Nicaraguan insurgents known as the Sandinistas seized power. Their triumph in July 1979 yielded a wave of enthusiasm in Soviet circles about new opportunities for guerrilla action to succeed in other countries. Che Guevara's theory of "focoism" — starting revolutionary war with roving small military units — had been disparaged by some Soviet theorists who found it politically inadequate. Communist victories in Cuba and Nicaragua, however, rehabilitated Guevara's reputation in Soviet circles. The new orthodoxy was upbeat, favoring working for revolutions promptly. GDR Germans were among the East Europeans to present themselves in the Nicaraguan capital, Managua, as advisors and patrons. A year after the revolution, East Berlin had signed scientific, technical, and economic accords with the Sandinistas. Bulgaria, the USSR, Czechoslovakia, and, inevitably, Cuba, later joined the GDR in making these agreements.[28] In short, 1979 was as important for revolution in Central America as it was in distant Iran.

INTELLIGENCE

Documentary primary sources show East Germany promising technical help to the New Jewel Movement's (NJM) security and intelligence services. The Cuban Ministry of the Interior, which controlled Cuban intelligence, wrote formally to Liam James, Grenada's new security chief, that comrades in East Germany wanted to help the revolutionary regime "in its struggle against . . . imperialism and the enemies of the people" and was sending aid "to strengthen the operative capacity of the Security Bodies of your country." The GDR's ambassador in Havana got directly involved "to realize this assistance," the letter assured the Grenadian

[27] On Cuba's military and technical involvements with the revolutionary government of Grenada, see numbers 16 and 17 in the aforementioned *Grenada Documents* published by the Department of State.

[28] *The Soviet Union in the Third World, 1980–85: An Imperial Burden or Political Asset?* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1985), 327.

partners.[29] Not one to miss an opportunity, the NJM also sought help for educating Grenadians in intelligence from the Soviets themselves. Hudson Austin, Grenada's secretary of interior, secretary of defense, and army chief, wrote directly to Yuri Andropov, the Soviet's chairman of the Committee for State Security (KGB). Austin opened with "warmest revolutionary greetings" and asked for a slot in an intelligence course for one Grenadian comrade for one year as well as similar periods of training inside the USSR for four comrades in counterintelligence.[30]

Such efforts by the German Democratic Republic and its Soviet partner in Grenada mirrored events following the Sandinista victory in Managua. As one U.S. study of the Soviets' "imperial burdens" of the early 1980s noted, East Germans assisted in intelligence and communications while also aiding the Sandinistas in other security-related roles. The USSR, in conjunction with Cuba, East Germany, and Bulgaria, provided security assistance to this new Nicaraguan government. Czechoslovakia contributed military advisers, the report added.[31]

PROPAGANDA SUPPORT

Mass media and propaganda were forms of East German soft power and were typical of its "exports" of that era. Grenada is an example of the recipients, and of East German interest in perpetuating new Communist governments overseas. When the New Jewel Movement seized power in 1979, the GDR was among those to help out with technical apparatus to create public support for the regime.[32] Cuba and East Germany each supplied radio station transmitters and East Germany trained appropriate technicians. Both East Germany and Romania conducted courses in

[29] "Document 9: East Germany Aids Grenada's Internal Security," in *Hydra of Carnage: The International Linkages of Terrorism and Other Low-intensity Operations: The Witnesses Speak*, ed. Uri Ra'anan et al. (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1986), 382–83. This volume of primary sources was of marked value during Cold War discussions when opinions were testy and facts could be difficult to establish.

[30] Gen Hudson Austin to Cdr Yuri Andropov, draft letter, 17 February 1982, in *Grenada Documents*, 27-1–2. It is not evident whether the USSR provided the five training slots requested.

[31] *The Soviet Union in the Third World, 1980–85*, 327.

[32] On details of Soviet Bloc support to New Jewel Movement propaganda, see Ledeen and Romerstein, "Introduction," 7.

journalism for Grenadians, although the documents recovered leave it unclear as to who went to which country for their training.[33] East Berlin thought that such mass media aid, like economic assistance, could influence a foreign population. Moreover, the effort could develop or reveal harder ideological compatriots, so that they would become state media reporters, editors, and film makers.

While supporting revolutionary movements in multiple nations, East Germany also acted in a counterrevolutionary role in some African countries. By 1974, East Germans were training journalists in Benin, where they had also written the statutes and program of what became that nation's ruling party.[34] East Berlin created state-to-state treaties in 1979 with radical regimes in Angola, Ethiopia, and Mozambique and committed to their defense against both internal foes and distant enemies. All three of these new Communist states produced propaganda with revolutionary flourishes designed to further their grip on state power. East Germany had a role helping the African regimes accomplish internal agitation and propaganda — or strategic messaging, as one might say now. Technical arrangements in some cases were formalized by the work of GDR Politburo member Werner Lamberz, a chief propagandist at home who was also in and around Africa on many trips of professional purpose. He negotiated agreements with Libya, Angola, Ethiopia, Congo, and Mozambique.[35] Although he and another senior political figure from the GDR died in a helicopter crash in Libya in 1978, East Berlin soon sent out a fresh emissary, Minister of Defense Heinz Hoffmann, to make new

[33] Nicholas Dujmovic, *The Grenada Documents: Window on Totalitarianism* (Washington, DC: Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis and Pergamon-Brassey's, 1988), 43. Soviets also aided the new Grenadian government in aspects of propaganda, as in providing one party team with a resident course in Moscow from November 1982 through May 1983. The list of seven topics for the study course began with "Social Psychology and Propaganda." "Report of Party Collective of 6 Months Course in Moscow Nov.–May, 1983," in *Grenada Documents*, 28-1–8.
[34] Michael S. Radu, "East Europe and Sub-Saharan Africa," in *The Case of Africa*, vol. 2, *The Red Orchestra*, ed. Dennis L. Bark (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1988), 77.
[35] Within Ethiopia, the GDR trained journalists and provided "highly influential instructors to institutions of higher education." See Radu, "East Europe and Sub-Saharan Africa," 77. Radu's source is given as David A. Korn, *Ethiopia, the United States, and the Soviet Union* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986), 93.

rounds of the continent.[36] East German treaties with Ethiopia and Mozambique addressed matters of media, film, and education. Other work carried on at levels lower than the diplomatic. The GDR's Union of Journalists ran courses for foreigners, aimed at producing the proper kinds of news coverage of Communist government activities. Presses in East Germany printed textbooks for use in foreign countries as did the Soviets, who took on larger efforts of the same type.[37]

MILITARY AID

Soviet Treaties of Friendship and Cooperation with Angola and Mozambique allowed for military intervention if the capitals invited them and Moscow agreed. Significantly, East Germany and Cuba had the same kinds of treaties and "almost identical language."[38] These treaties made for a directness and formality in the internationalist arrangements of the time and eased the many movements of troops, supplies, and major weapons systems that the Communist countries conducted in liaison with the Angolan and Mozambique governments during years of combat at the height of the Cold War.

Martial assistance from East Germany was prized by Africans and in other zones overseas. First-class advisors could bring a general sense of proficiency that always accompanies German armies. For many years, the famous arms industry of the Communist regime in Czechoslovakia dealt more weapons abroad than any other East European country; a remarkable $809 million in Czech arms changed hands in less than two decades between 1955 and 1973. The East German sales tally of those years was

[36] Valkenier, "Revolutionary Change in the Third World," 41.
[37] Michael Sodaro, "The GDR and the Third World: Supplicant and Surrogate," in *Eastern Europe and the Third World: East vs. South*, ed. Michael Radu (New York: Praeger, 1981), 115, 120. This East German books program manifests a larger Communist enterprise aimed at changing world opinion with a flood of low-cost books and journals, especially from the USSR and China. The author's source volumes of Marx, Lenin, Mao, Stalin, Enver Hoxha, and others are cheap and now worn, cracking paperbacks, but the ability to afford them as a college and graduate school student shows one way that Communist states "got the word out."
[38] Seth Singleton, " 'Defense of the Gains of Socialism': Soviet Third World Policy in the Mid-1980s," *Washington Quarterly* 7, no. 1 (March 1984): 102–15.

only $40 million.[39] After 1967, however, GDR players increasingly got into the game and added to the exports through signed agreements. A secret state company, called *Kommerzielle Koordinierung* (Commercial Coordination) or KoKo, was instrumental in getting armaments into Ethiopia during its two wars in which Cubans and the Soviet Bloc were helping. According to Wolf, the Ethiopian regime wanted weapons and "Moscow's position was to oblige them." Based on Wolf's statement, the Kremlin most likely decided to provide support to Ethiopia, but it allowed a leading pact member, East Germany, to employ one of its state corporations as the mechanism to execute it.[40] Another state mechanism for military aid to Africans was the GDR's official airline, Interflug. Additionally, some 300 East Germans worked in "regime sustenance" tasks in Ethiopia, including supplying electronic intelligence.[41]

As the Communist Germans spread their influence through technical assistance to armies and security services, they became an essential part of the web of Soviet activities. Warsaw Pact advisors became so common in Central America by 1981 that they were no longer a surprise to a skilled observer. There were thousands more in Africa. No fewer than 2,720 military advisors from East Germany alone served on the African continent in the early 1980s, including 650 in Libya and Algeria. In the south, East Germans trained Mozambique's border troops, directly controlled President Samora Machel's personal security, and signed at least 50 different treaties, agreements, and partial understanding that linked the two nations.[42] These contributions were a special skill of the GDR but were by no means freewheeling extracurricular activities by East Berlin;

[39] See Starrels, *East Germany*, 22. Of related interest, a June 1980 record of international operatives in Czechoslovakia refer to plans for Czech weapons being moved by that state to Salvadoran Communists via GDR ships.
[40] Wolf, *Man Without a Face*, 296.
[41] Radu, "East Europe and Sub-Saharan Africa," 76.
[42] Starrels, *East Germany*, 25. The volume *Hydra of Carnage* also contains many indicators of East German advisors in Africa. The book indicates there were 2,500 East Germans training soldiers in southern Africa. There is also (limited) evidence that GDR men took part in military operations in the field. For an example of East German trainers, see Richard H. Shultz, "Recent Regional Patterns," in *Hydra of Carnage*, 106.

there is clear evidence of cooperation with the Soviet Union.[43] East Germany's numbers only swelled in the following years with the *New York Times* indicating a rise to as many as 5,000 consultants in Angola alone by January 1984.[44]

In addition to such states wanting help from East Germany, innumerable antistate groups elsewhere had their own requests. Guerrilla armies naturally prized East German arms. El Salvadoran insurgents were among those in Central America during its revolutionary period of the 1980s who received GDR weaponry and utilized it in guerrilla and terror operations. East Germany also welcomed selections of those militants to training centers in Europe; beneficiaries started with the military branch of the Communist Party of El Salvador (PCES), the Armed Forces of Liberation (FAL). There are published notes from FAL's chief Schafik Jorge Handal during a 1980 trip through the Soviet Bloc that secured several hundred tons of arms for his Salvadoran fighters.[45] Substate actors were pleased by East German intelligence assets, higher educational opportunities for some of special promise, and medicine — the latter being especially difficult to arrange clandestinely in a field environment or a war. While each of the following topics can well apply to East German aid to a state partner, the focus below will be on substate actors, guerrillas, and terrorists opposed to existing states. As the Soviet infrastructure guided and served the GDR's foreign policy and overseas operations, the East Germans were themselves extending aid and influence and searching for new proxies for East Berlin.

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[43] Mark N. Katz, "Anti-Soviet Insurgencies: Growing Trend or Passing Phase?," in *The Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and the Third World*, 44–45. Sources confirm the large numbers and assert active training of Namibian insurgents and the South West African People's Organization, as well as the Angolan Army; see Shultz, "Recent Regional Patterns," 106–7, 124n49.

[44] The *New York Times* noted 2,000 Soviets in Angola as well. See "U.S. Moves to End Namibia Deadlock," *New York Times*, 25 January 1984; and Kauppi, "The Soviet Union and Africa: The Dynamics and Dilemmas of Involvement," in *The Soviet Impact in Africa*, 240.

[45] "PCES" and "FPL," in *Latin American Revolutionaries: Groups, Goals, Methods*, ed. Michael Radu and Vladimir Tismaneanu (New York: Pergamon-Brassey's International Defense Publishers, 1990), 190–91, 201, 218. Handal, whose son also fought in the FAL, was a principal in the unification by five armed groups into the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front alliance. Later, it became a political party and he was secretary general.

MEDICAL AID

Medicine and care of the wounded were an important service the GDR provided to foreign proxies and partners. The pattern, little-noticed in the West, was present in the low intensity conflicts of the 1970s and 1980s in the world. In peacetime or war, medical assistance is always appreciated and is widely supplied through civil action by the armed services of many states. In this, East German donors were skilled. One can imagine the relief felt by a farmer with a son or brother struck down in bush fighting after learning that the fellow would be treated by a nearby East German nurse or doctor. Many infirmed were flown from Africa to Berlin for treatment related to serious illness or to be fitted with a good prosthesis for an amputated limb. The limited accounts of such aid suggest that treatment and travel were usually free.

The GDR gave medical treatment to the Angolan MPLA soldiers.[46] During the civil conflict, East Berlin publicized this revolutionary party and then tendered formal diplomatic recognition when it triumphed. Serving the new Communist government, Angolan MPLA soldiers, when lucky, could be evacuated to German hands to receive treatment for wounds. The year 1978 saw 180 declared "freedom fighters" from Third World countries in hospitals in East Germany. This number undoubtedly included Angolans and guerrillas of the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) in the territory of apartheid South West Africa (now Namibia) under the administration of South Africa.

Fighting in Central America manifested some of the same patterns. By December 1979, after the Sandinista triumph in Managua that July, some of these Nicaraguan wounded were under treatment in East Germany at its good hospitals.[47] Guerrillas in El Salvador — Sandinista allies, but a long way from victory — quickly asked for the same beneficence. Handal, as the general secretary of the PCES, toured the Soviet Bloc in 1980 asking for aid of all kinds and keeping travel notes that were later

[46] George Volsky, "Cuba," in *Communist Powers and Sub-Saharan Africa*, ed. Thomas H. Henriksen (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1981), 63.
[47] Sodaro, "The GDR and the Third World," 113, 116; and Jiri Valenta and Shannon Butler, "East German Security Policies in Africa," in *Eastern Europe and the Third World*, 152, 165.

captured. Entries for his five-day-stay in the GDR that June indicate reception by a senior officer in international relations. They discussed a 1.9-ton shipment of medicines and other supplies just sent by East Germany to Managua. The meeting notes implied that Salvadoran comrades would get their share from Nicaragua. The East Berlin official also "offered to respond to the other requests which were principally for weapons."[48] Public announcements of such things were unusual, but when they surfaced the language was along the lines of proletarian internationalism, an aspect of Leninism that stood to unite such faraway partners. While Cold War analysts certainly took note of East German arms going abroad, there were *also* many other micro-arrangements for their comrades from global battlefields, such as deals for surgery, relief from tropical diseases, or fitting for prostheses. This was in every sense a program of foreign aid.

EDUCATION

Technical schooling and college education were a featured offering of the entire Soviet Bloc in its outreach. States from Cuba to the USSR worked assiduously through foreign scholarships to promote their ideological and intellectual visions as well as to provide skills in technical fields in certain circumstances.[49] Berlin was literally "exporting" education of Marxist-Leninist brands to Third World recipients; East Germans built schools and supplied prepared curricula in Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, and Guinea Bissau.[50]

The bloc often delivered schooling in the sciences and social sciences, such as politics, on sites behind the Iron Curtain — not to hide it but because that was where the facilities were present. By 1978, 18,000 for-

[48] "Document 4: Shafik Handal's Travel Notes," in *Hydra of Carnage*, 337.
[49] Courter, "Winning Hearts and Minds," 74–76.
[50] Hans-Joachim Fischer wrote on the GDR's "pedagogical work in developing countries" for *Deutschland Archiv* in June 1982. For more, see *The Soviet Union in the Third World, 1980–85*, 247. The Fischer document was made available in English by Foreign Broadcast Information Service/Joint Publications Research Service, a U.S. enterprise to which the author was introduced by lectures of Harold W. Rood, Claremont Graduate University. The author has several thousand clippings from such reports in his research files and boxes, as so many are (or reflect) primary sources of special value.

eign students, 8,000 of whom hailed from Sub-Saharan Africa, were in the Eastern Bloc.[51] Six years later, at least 30,000 Africans were studying in the Soviet Bloc.[52] The East German state, dissatisfied heir to a long and storied Germanic cultural and Christian line, boasted that in the five years between 1976 and 1980 some 8,500 foreigners studied in their country. Mozambique was home to some such recipients.[53]

A single institution, the GDR Solidarity School, gave 400 journalists from the Third World technical and academic training from 1963 through mid-1979. A Radio Free Europe research report of 1979 noted that "many leaders of the Zimbabwe Liberation Movement (Rhodesia), the PLO, Namibia, Guinea Bissau, Congo-Brazzaville, Guinea, Angola, the Cape Verde islands, Saint Thomas, and Prince's Island have studied in the GDR."[54] There was purpose, diplomacy, and cleverness in this policy. No matter the chill of the Cold War, few independent persons would look harshly upon any state paying to educate young people from a less developed region. Seen through another lens, this media work exemplified the phenomenon of third-level extensions in the world of proxies. While the Soviets were served in many ways by East Germans, the latter skillfully developed proxies themselves in Africa and Central America.

TERRORISM

East Germany also aided the Communist Bloc in making warfare in peacetime. There is strong and diverse evidence — then and now — that those nations gave extensive support to international terrorists. Just as Communists newly in power might well have gained East Berlin's aid, so too did revolutionary Communists in search of power, including terrorists. This decision was dangerous but logical, in line with what the Warsaw Pact structure could facilitate. It tracked with the statement that Leonid Brezhnev gave in August 1973 while in Prague about how nation-

[51] Valkenier, "Revolutionary Change in the Third World," 36.
[52] Radu, "Eastern Europe and Sub-Saharan Africa," 77.
[53] Valkenier, "Revolutionary Change in the Third World," 36.
[54] William F. Robinson, *Eastern Europe's Presence in Black Africa*, Radio Free Europe Research (Washington, DC: RFE, 1979), quoted by Starrels, *East Germany*, 20.

al liberation movements were changing the world correlation of forces.[55] East Germany was fully on board.

As early as 1956, the General Union of Palestinian Students sent a delegation of young men to Czechoslovakia for a student congress. Some of them, a decade later, would be leading figures in Fatah, the armed wing of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). As the Prague meeting wrapped up, at least one attendee, Salah Khalaf, who later became PLO intelligence chief, went on to East Germany; others visited nearby Communist countries.[56] Khalaf, later known by the name Abu Iyad, shared responsibility for the hostage taking and butchery of Israeli athletes at the 1972 Summer Olympic Games in Munich. Only a few months later, East Germany welcomed PLO chief Yasser Arafat and formally opened political relations with his organization. East Berlin thus flagrantly rewarded the umbrella organization that hid such armed parties as Black September, even as it showed off the more conventional guerrillas in Fatah.[57] No less a person than Abu Daoud, head of the group that carried out the massacre at the Munich Olympics, Black September, has called it a subset of Fatah.[58] Indeed, Fatah has rightly been described as one of the world's most successful terrorist groups; the credit it brought and the leverage it gave to Arafat explains why.[59] By the 1980s, Iyad and scores

[55] General Secretary Brezhnev's confidence about rising Soviet power, and commitment to Third World gains by Communism, is reflected, among other places, in Wolf, *Man Without a Face*, 293; and Ra'anan et al., *Hydra of Carnage*, 97, 102, 222, 298.

[56] This picture of Yasser Arafat and other youths, and the caption about their travels, was in the PLO newspaper *Fateh*, ca. 1978.

[57] For examples of book-length treatments on the PLO's armed organizations, see Jillian Becker, *The PLO: The Rise and Fall of the Palestine Liberation Organization* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984); and John Laffin, *The P.L.O. Connections* (London: Corgi Books, 1982).

[58] The simple "cut out" principle is too often ignored. Abu Daoud's admission is cited in Becker, *The PLO*, 107. Becker also authored the first authoritative English language account of the Red Army Faction in West Germany; the book's value has held up well over the decades. See Jillian Becker, *Hitler's Children: The Story of the Baader-Meinhof Terrorist Gang* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1977).

[59] Daniel Byman, *Deadly Connections: States that Sponsor Terrorism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 77. By contrast, another astute student of Middle East violence, Daniel Pipes, would go only so far as to call Arafat semi-successful, a leader with "little prospect of founding a Palestinian state." Pipes, "Why Asad's Terror Works and Qadhafi's Does Not," *danielpipes.org* (blog), accessed 24 November 2021.

of other Palestinians had been in and out of East Germany, including staying at length for schooling or for operations.

Wolf later admitted, "GDR and its intelligence services supplied technical and financial support for organizations we considered legitimate, and some of these organizations engaged in terrorism against civilians as a part of their strategy."[60] Political support was often part of the package. According to George Glass and John Starrels, East Berlin gave semiofficial standing to a range of groups known for terrorism, not just guerrilla fighters. PLO, SWAPO, and South Africa's African National Congress received approximately 30 million marks in East German assistance in 1978 alone.[61]

Eyes of astute reporters were opening. In November 1980 — coincidentally the month that Ronald W. Reagan was elected president — the *New York Times* published a feature by intelligence expert Robert Moss titled "Terror: A Soviet Export." He named several Eastern European cities and towns hosting foreign guerrillas and terrorist trainees from substate groups. According to the defecting Czech general Jan Sejna, Soviets supervised the training. East Germany, for its part, used a school near Finsterwalde.[62] According to Moss, a Cypriot Communist named Panaiyotis Paschalis, credited as a reporter by East German state TV, was part of a network doing photoreconnaissance of potential terrorist targets in Israel. Additionally, the Stasi was thought to be aiding Palestinians planning hits in West Berlin and other federal republic zones. William J. Casey, Reagan's director of central intelligence, was also con-

[60] Wolf, *Man Without a Face*, 278. The Black September personnel used land routes through Bulgaria and Yugoslavia on their way to the Olympic Games in Munich in mid-1972.

[61] Starrels, *East Germany*, 19. A supportive yet independent French view on Stasi and many other Eastern Bloc connections to terrorism is by investigative magistrate Jean-Louis Bruguiere, *Ce Qui Je N'ai Pas Pu Dire* [What I Could Not Say] (Paris: Robert Laffont, 2009).

[62] Robert Moss, "Terror: A Soviet Export," *New York Times* (Late Edition), 2 November 1980. Trainees were sent to a variety of camps and academies, sometimes in the East German countryside, which Wolf's memoirs reflect. See Wolf, *Man Without a Face*, 277–313. On 13 December 2018, *New York Times* published a photograph of Vladimir Putin's Stasi identification card. As a KGB major based in Dresden, Putin was a liaison to or observer of favorable forces in West Germany and his regular interface with East German intelligence required proper papers. Putin would have known a great deal about international terrorists in Germany and it may have been his job to track and aid East German work with such men and women of the underground.

cerned about Libya, where security services were interwoven tightly with East Berlin. For example, Casey noted that Libyan agents or surrogates in 1984 were responsible for at least 25 terrorist incidents, especially in Western Europe, where the Libyan embassies served as arms depots, and in the Middle East.[63] Other Libyan operations of the mid-1980s targeted individuals living in the United States. Years later, the West Berlin discotheque bombing of April 1986 revealed linkage between Libyan terrorists in that city and the East German apparatus.[64]

Publications including the *New York Times* and authors such as Robert Moss were vindicated as to evidence of East German state promotion of terrorism abroad when the Berlin Wall came down. Exposed were stacks of files, including masses of papers from Hungary and the USSR, many of which have been published or excerpted for publication. One from the Stasi, numbered 18613 and dated May 1979, discusses the passing through or presence of militants — such as Iyad and Daoud — and terrorists — such as Venezuelan Ilich Ramírez Sánchez — in East Germany. The document also records the presence of named West German terrorists — Leninists and anarchists of the 2 June Movement — in the GDR.[65] Based on the available evidence, many of these operators and leaders were in and out of the bloc, often armed, often planning a new mission while free of police pressure. Document 18613 is devastating and Wolf confirms much of its contents in his autobiography, in which he admits liaising with Red Army Faction (RAF) Marxist-Leninists from West Germany. East Germany even trained members of Sabri al-Banna's Abu Nidal Organization (ANO), a faction splintered from the PLO but more nihilist than Palestinian nationalist and infamous for barbarism, mass-casualty attacks, and even assassinations of PLO members.

[63] Moss, "Terror"; and William J. Casey, "The International Linkages — What Do We Know?," in *Hydra of Carnage*, 5–15.

[64] President Ronald Reagan disclosed secret information to document the 1986 case. On Libyan assassins inside the United States, see Louis R. Mizell Jr., *Target U.S.A.: The Inside Story of the New Terrorist War* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1998), chap. 2.

[65] Stasi Document no. 18613, GDR Ministry for State Security, May 1979, copy in author's personal files. The 2 June Movement was small and short-lived. Many members merged into the Red Army Faction, known as the Baader-Meinhof Group, which was not anarchist but Marxist-Leninist.

The ANO was a hallmark of terrorism's evils that only the Islamic State would surpass many years later.[66]

In Europe, especially among North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) members, terrorist organizations created an 18-month assassination campaign to disrupt military technology. The targets were leading professionals who were collaborating with the United States to create the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI or "Star Wars" program), a proposed antiballistic missile system that Reagan announced in 1983. Because it sufficiently threatened the Soviets' first-strike capabilities, the mere work to develop this deterrent seemed to traumatize top Soviets.[67] As the USSR's rhetorical attacks against SDI escalated, the parallel series of assassinations unrolled, taking down top scientists and military advisors throughout Europe. In West Germany, the RAF, known in part for East Germany's earlier financing of member Ulrike Meinhof's radical publication *Konkret*, launched four assaults between February 1985 and October 1986 that resulted in the murders of Ernest Zimmerman, Karl-Heinze Beckurts, and Gerold von Braummuhl as well as damage to the infrastructure of the Fraunhofer Institute for Laser Technology in Aachen. Certain terrorist communiqués specifically linked some of these attacks to West German or French governmental assistance on the SDI.[68] Much about this campaign remains unclear, but no student of low intensity conflict should ignore the matter; it has all the appearances of third-level

[66] Paul Thomas Chamberlin, *The Global Offensive: The United States, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and the Making of the Post–Cold War Order* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 173. In July 1987, the Department of State published a white paper of approximately 30 pages about the Abu Nidal Organization's operations in Europe and its terror sponsors in Eastern Europe. Another set of details, mainly on Abu Nidal and Romania is in Pacepa, *Red Horizons*, 25, 32–34.

[67] George P. Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph: My Years as Secretary of State* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1993).

[68] James A. Courter (R-NJ), of the House Armed Services Committee, publicized the run of murder cases in a Dallas, TX, speech entitled "Warfare in Peacetime" on 31 October 1987. See *Proceedings of the International Churchill Society*, ed. Martin Gilbert (Hopkinton, NH: International Churchill Society, 1989). French "Direct Action" terrorists spoke to a radical German newspaper in February 1986 about their loathing of the SDI and NATO and took credit for attacks on the European Space Agency. Other relevant terror attacks were in the United Kingdom. One in Italy was linked by the attackers to the SDI. On Communist Berlin's funding of a radical West German newspaper, see Becker, *Hitler's Children*, 133, 144.

proxy war. That is, following Soviet policy against SDI, tracking with the integration of Soviet Bloc intelligence agencies, and probably using East Germany's direct assistance, Germans and other terrorists in the West participated in a focused campaign aimed at suppressing development and deployment of a highly technical system meant to defeat a first strike by Soviet ballistic missiles.

CONCLUSION

Warfare in peacetime and proxy warfare are politically divisive topics. In the West during the Cold War, a sometimes small but highly qualified set of experts, including academics who understood that the Soviet Union directed Eastern Europeans in violent foreign activities as well as various aid programs, portrayed states such as Romania and East Germany as mere subordinates, which may have underestimated the full willingness of those clients to take initiatives and prove themselves as Communist internationalists and enthusiasts. On the other side of the debate, a broader set of experts and commentators refused to acknowledge Soviet direction of foreign low intensity conflicts, insurgencies, and terror campaigns — even when those fighting openly paid honors to Moscow.[69]

In 1986, Stanford University's Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, assembled experts including Lewis H. Gann, Richard Bissell,

[69] A flaw comes in an otherwise good book of 1984. Much can be questioned in the statement: "The USSR is neither a principled, adequate nor reliable source of support for African liberation movements and socialist-oriented regimes" in Nation, "Soviet Engagement in Africa," 48. Specifically, the phrase "socialist-oriented regimes" falsely characterizes the political principles of several governments that featured prominently in that volume, such as Mengistu's Ethiopia and Neto's Angola. These regimes announced their own Marxism-Leninism and claimed for their narrow Communist parties the right to be dictators. Watering that reality down into words about an "orientation" to "socialism" is grossly misleading; such academics help explain why, in 2019, the United States entered into a rather barren internal discussion of what socialism is. *Socialism* refers to state ownership of the major means of production and distribution. Communism is very different. For example, after orthodox Marxist-Leninists took over Grenada in 1979, they produced internal state papers showing profound hostility to the Socialist International. Nonetheless, they attended regularly in the hopes of bending it to Soviet Bloc purposes. A more recent example of confusion appears in an October 2021 book review in the *Washington Post*. Think-tank academic Jude Blanchette suggests that PRC President Xi Jinping "might be tacking back to the party's socialist roots" in Blanchette, "An Insider's View of China's Communist Party: Corruption and Capitalist Excess," *Washington Post*, 15 October 2021. Party roots were Communist, not socialist.

Paul B. Henze, and Paul Seabury to study the problem in Africa. As one in a chain of conferences exploring Soviet outreach beyond Europe, their speculations included the question of whether to refer to Moscow's role as head of an "orchestra"—whose every sound was scripted from the center—or a "jam session"—where there is no score or conductor but only the players' skills and "sympathetic improvisations." In the end, the scholars titled their resulting book series *The Red Orchestra*. One reason for their answer was by recourse to primary sources, in which the principal figures speak for themselves.[70] They found, for example, that in 1983, the Soviet general secretary Konstantin Chernenko made an address to the Central Committee of the Communist Party that included the following passage:

> The battle of ideas in the international arena is going on without respite. We will continue to wage it vigorously. . . . Our entire system of ideological work should operate as a well-arranged orchestra in which every instrument has a distinctive voice and leads its theme, while harmony is achieved by skillful conduction.[71]

A second general conclusion is suggested by the example above involving RAF terrorists that the East German state sponsored. It is fascinating how proxy relationships may develop, descending level by level to cojoin with others and give birth to new proxies. Grenada and southern Africa provide two additional illustrations. In the case of Grenada, from which a special and massive government archive was collected in 1983, one sees power relationships at their most stark, attended by disturbing ramifications in political psychology. Having studied the full archive, State Department editors in Washington concluded:

> The Grenadans [*sic*] saw themselves as Soviet proxies. Their Ambassador to Moscow, W. Richard Jacobs, reminded his comrades in Grenada that their importance to the Soviets would

[70] Dennis L. Bark, ed., "Introduction," *The Red Orchestra: The Case of Africa*, vol. 2 (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1988).
[71] Konstantin Chernenko, quoted in Bark et al., "Introduction," 2.

> eventually depend on their success in exporting revolution: "To the extent that we can take credit for bringing any other country into the progressive fold, our prestige and influence would be greatly enhansed [*sic*]."[72]

Another interlocked proxy relationship connected with SWAPO had four levels. Observers of southern Africa witnessed dynamics of influence on a substate actor, SWAPO, all the way down through a tall hierarchy: Moscow to East Berlin to Luanda to SWAPO. Namibians eager to expel hostile foreign actors from their region formed the SWAPO in 1960. It was trained by specialists from Soviet proxies: Cubans and East Germans. This training — which included thousands of SWAPO members according to an American intelligence officer who watched the region, Constantine C. Menges — was done inside Angola, a Soviet and East German proxy by 1976. This Soviet Bloc guidance from levels above was a continuity of the 1970s and 1980s alike. The living chain grew in March 1977, when Cuban president Fidel Castro visited Angola, creating a link to another Soviet proxy. Similarly, the opening of a SWAPO mission in Moscow in 1988 and a major increase in weapons deliveries to SWAPO took the relationship a step further. The results worked for all partners, who jointly over the years developed notable positional warfare capacities in a "fourth-level" proxy, militant Namibians. The way the story ends is telling: "Conventional SWAPO forces began operating with Cuban units in early 1988" during Angola's counterinsurgency war. By then, the proxies were working with others' proxies.[73]

It may be argued that Soviet orchestration efforts enjoyed many successes only to end in failure. Perhaps in economic and military aid in the Third World, the Soviet Union overextended. Soviet methods may have worked so well at energizing their frontiers, the peripheries, that back home inside the USSR the core came to exhaustion and rot. Moscow's

[72] Ledeen and Romerstein, "Introduction," 6, quoting Document 26 of the collection.

[73] Constantine C. Menges, *The Twilight Struggle: The Soviet Union v. the United States Today* (Washington, DC: AEI Press, 1990), 123–25. Menges's volume remains perhaps the most thorough of those on "Reagan Doctrine" aid programs, covering Washington perspectives and actions as well as in-country recipients.

empire collapsed. For proxy warfare, the results were particularly curious in southern Africa. Soviet and East German Communists vanished. The Cuban and Angolan regimes survived and remained Communist. SWAPO assumed control of Namibia in 1990 and its guerrilla leader held executive powers for the next 15 years. In 2021, all three smaller countries remain entirely dominated by single political parties. Proxy offspring outlived their sponsors.

CHAPTER 2

The USSR and Cuba

UNIQUE FEATURES OF THE PROXY RELATIONSHIP

The Cuban case of proxy warfare is extraordinary in its breadth and depth. First, there are few parallels in recent decades in which a small country strives as mightily to serve — and surpass — its senior partner in ideological internationalism and combat overseas. At its height, as many as 40,000 Cuban troops and advisors were serving in a dozen African countries. Soviet pilots transported these units in Soviet aircraft so they could fight for political objectives that the Soviets and Cubans shared.[1] One Congressional Research Service study concluded that Cuba was "an instrument of Soviet policy in Latin America and the Third World" by 1985. Similarly, it found the two nations had "an uneven relationship

[1] References for details of Cuban engagements for this chapter include Arthur Jay Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War: A Study in Soviet Policy in the Third World* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1980), 109–20. A different example of Cuban service at a distance from home yet within Soviet Bloc enterprises is offered by analyst Kevin D. Smith, interviewed by the author in 2020. Researching American prisoner of war/missing in action (POW/MIA) issues, he learned of Cuban intelligence officers interrogating U.S. prisoners held by the North Vietnamese. He notes further that when three U.S. POWs were released to the company of antiwar activist Tom Hayden, they were flown out of Indochina on a Czechoslovakian airliner headed for an antiwar demonstration staged in Prague. The matter was related later by one of the prisoners, Dan Pitzer, "The Release," in Al Santoli, *To Bear Any Burden: The Vietnam War and Its Aftermath in the Words of Americans and Southeast Asians* (New York: Dutton, 1985; repr., Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 159–64. Such "internationalist" collaboration by Cubans and Czechs in as distant a place as Vietnam was not unusual; it was a norm within the Communist Bloc.

Map 2. Cuban fighters and security advisors in Africa

Source: courtesy of author, adapted by MCUP.

between a powerful patron and a willing, valued, but essentially weak client state."[2]

Second, Havana had an amazing utility in serving the Communist bloc enterprise at levels below itself in the proxy business. That is, Moscow was the dominant force, but Havana was both compliant and willing—

[2] Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, *The Soviet Union in the Third World, 1980–85: An Imperial Burden or Political Asset?* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1985), xxv.

like a business director's overachieving executive assistant grimly working 18-hour days; from their combination flowed many directives, delegations, and deliveries of arms and assistance. Many recipients at the next level down were what political scientists call substate actors, such as the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) insurgents who fought the government of El Salvador throughout the 1980s. Still, countries, especially Angola, Ethiopia, Grenada, and Nicaragua also became proxies of the USSR-Cuban enterprise. These nations were never mere subjects of Cuban will. They accepted significant direction from both Moscow and Havana on a limited range of security matters while moving toward accepting Communist governments at home. The Cuban experience is thus a vivid case of this volume's concept of *third-level* proxy war: the proxy was busily siring more proxies. "Cuba is clearly a Soviet proxy," wrote Romanian-American scholar Michael S. Radu in 1986, but "Nicaragua is far more directly a Cuban proxy than a Soviet one."[3]

POLITICAL AND STRATEGIC INTEGRATION

Communism may be studied through multiple lenses—as an ideology, as a form of organization of a polity, and as a movement. The international system that Moscow led and directed was rightly known as a "bloc," and in the 1970s and early 1980s it was a self-confident, outward-looking organization.[4] It quarreled fiercely in print with its Marxist-Leninist rival, the Maoist regime in China, even as that government moved into a post-Mao Zedong phase under the direction of Deng Xiaoping. The two Communist great powers engaged in border fighting, nuclear alerts and fears, rhetorical heat, and extended, expensive competition to win over clients in the world. Chinese spokesmen frequently, and correctly, labeled the Soviet Union as neo-imperialists. There, state rhetoricians were

[3] Michael S. Radu, "Soviet Proxy Assets in Central America and the Caribbean," in *Instruments of Soviet Policy in Latin America and the Caribbean*, vol. 1, *The Red Orchestra*, ed. Dennis L. Bark (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1986), 101.

[4] The Soviets and their allies usually spoke as a bloc, as demonstrated in their state press, translations which appeared in English from the Foreign Broadcast Information Service/Joint Publications Research Service. External studies that document intrabloc cooperation include a monograph series by a team of scholars at The Hoover Institution, Stanford University: *The Red Orchestra* was published during the mid-1980s.

in that way more accurate than some of the Western social scientists and politicians who could not see the moving outlines of Soviet expansionism. Some of those who did recognize the Soviets as "containment busters" did not fully appreciate Moscow's richly orchestrated approach and divisions of labor overseas. Among sages of the Congressional Research Service, however, were several who would author a thick report that well-captured action on the ground in Africa:

> The decade of the 1970s was notable for the "quasi-alliance" or "quasi-coalition" formed between the Soviet Union, Cuba, and the (East) German Democratic Republic (GDR), chiefly in southern Africa and Ethiopia. Moscow served as the principal supplier of arms; Cuba supplied the majority of military and civilian personnel; while the GDR specialized in providing security and intelligence services to radical governments.[5]

Soviet direct aid to Cuba was a linchpin of this multilevel relationship.[6] The Cuban economy was never remotely large enough to sustain its fantastic overseas deployments in Latin America and Africa, and it possessed few indigenous resources, such as cash, oil or technical capabilities, to outsource. Moscow made its first formal aid commitments in 1960 and later allowed Cuba into the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON). Soviet aid flowed in via multiple channels: varied economic credits; subsidies for technical education and training in the Soviet Union; hyperinflated prices (heavy overvaluation) paid for Cuban sugar; free oil; and donated infrastructure related to the energy and agriculture sectors. Analysts in 1984, estimating Soviet *economic* assistance alone, believed it ran at about $5 billion per year.[7] These Soviet sums represented one-quarter of Cuba's gross national product. The dona-

[5] *The Soviet Union in the Third World, 1980–85*, 204.
[6] An excellent survey of Cuba's roles within the Soviet Bloc is found in chap. 5 of Rood, *Kingdoms of the Blind*.
[7] Nestor D. Sanchez, deputy assistant secretary of defense for inter-American affairs, 16 November 1984, quoted in *The Soviet Union in the Third World, 1980–85*, 311.

tions permitted a range of actions to Cubans in foreign policy.[8] Armaments also poured in with 250,000 metric tons of them entering by sea in 1962 alone. Thereafter, such arms shipments tallied between 20,000 and 40,000 metric tons annually and regularly.[9] Visits to Cuba from Soviet bombers and warships became commonplace.

Cuba's intentions within Soviet Bloc efforts were never simple to assess, but time has permitted a better view. General Secretary Fidel Castro and his brother, Raúl Castro, acting as minister of defense, prudently disguised their early links to mainstream Communism. Fidel Castro's first public admission would not come until two years into his rule, on 2 December 1961, when he proclaimed "a Marxist-Leninist programme" for Cuba.[10] But the revolutionaries' links to the Soviet intelligence services reach back to 1953 when Raúl Castro visited Romania, where he encountered Nikolai Leonov, a Latin American specialist of the KGB. Leonov met with Castro and Argentinian recruit Ernesto "Che" Guevara in 1955 in Mexico City.[11] The three were together again in Moscow in November 1960 when meeting with Premier Nikita Khrushchev. By then, Guevara was a Marxist-Leninist, as demonstrated in Jon Lee Anderson's recent biography—which, surprisingly, does not fully align with the traditional view of Guevara's "focoist" emphasis on largely spontaneous

[8] Strangely, while Cuba was openly Communist after 1961 and joined COMECON in 1972, there was no Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with the USSR. Such a treaty was made (or made public) only when it no longer mattered—under Mikhail Gorbachev in 1989. Mervyn J. Bain provides only a single line on the whole subject in his inadequate coverage, writing merely that the 1989 treaty "may" have strengthened bilateral relations, but at that moment there were probably no states with which the Soviets were strengthening relations. See Bain, *Moscow and Havana 1917 to the Present: An Enduring Friendship in an Ever-Changing Global Context* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019), 130.

[9] "Cuba," in *The Soviet Union in the Third World, 1980–85*, 308.

[10] John Paxton, ed., *The Statesman's Yearbook: Statistical and Historical Annual of the States of the World for the Year 1975–1976* (London: Macmillan, 1975).

[11] According to Jon Lee Anderson, this meeting occurred in Mexico City in the summer of 1955, although he later suggests it could have been 1957. Anderson, *Che Guevara: A Revolutionary Life*, rev. ed. (New York: Grove Press, 2010), 165. Anderson's coverage of the topic is excellent and sometimes daringly independent. For more on Guevara in Mexico City, see Anderson, *Che Guevara*, 157–207.

revolutions.[12] In sum, the top three revolutionaries in Cuba—the Castro brothers and Guevara—were prepared to work in Soviet directions from early on and increasingly committed to do so.

There is a limited consensus among scholars that Cuba did not submit fully to Soviet designs in its macro decision making until 1968–1970.[13] Castro's vocal support of the Soviets' foreign policies, including the invasion of "fraternal" Czechoslovakia, told of Havana's new focus. Harder to elaborate are the multiple causes for such subordination by the once young and hubristic Cubans. Disappointing sugar harvests, fast-rising prices for oil at the same time that the Soviets deliberately cut supplies to Cuba, and greater pressures from the United States, such as economic embargos, apparently caused the Cuban Politburo to submit to the Kremlin's insistence on five-year centralized economic plans and unprecedented integration of the two economies. The plans, of course, were developed on the leads of in-resident Soviet Bloc advisors. By 1979, two-thirds of Cuban trade was with the USSR.[14]

INTELLIGENCE COORDINATION AND FURTHER ASPECTS OF INTEGRATION

Intelligence collaboration took a new form by the early 1980s after the KGB came into full control of the resourceful and large Cuban intelligence

[12] Che Guevara's development into Marxism-Leninism is indicated on many pages of Anderson, *Che Guevara*, 125–26, 129, 130, 165–66, 172, 183. Che's "focoism"—by which discontented populations may be roused to action and arms by roving propaganda and guerrilla teams—was laid out in his diaries and his handbook, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, intro. Maj Harries-Clichy Peterson (New York: Praeger, 1961). A lucid brief on focoist theory—and its scores of failures—appears in *Operations Other than War*, British Army Field Manual, vol. 5 (London: Chief of the General Staff, British Army, 1995), sec. B, pts. 1 and 2. The author is obliged to Roger Lane of the Royal Marines for a copy and to Marine Corps University for bringing us together as faculty.

[13] This is the estimate, for example, of a senior DGI defector from Cuba who testified before a Senate subcommittee in early 1982, Gerardo Peraza. *The Role of Cuba in International Terrorism and Subversion*, Hearings before the Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism, Committee on the Judiciary, U.S. Senate, 97th Cong. (26 February 1982), 11-12.

[14] A good source elaborating some of the factors considered is Robert S. Leiken, *Soviet Strategy in Latin America*, Washington Papers no. 93 (Washington, DC: Praeger, 1982), 44–56.

service, the *Dirección General de Inteligencia* (DGI).[15] Soviet general Vasily Petrovich of the KGB oversaw the purgation of any anti-Soviet officers from DGI.[16] At one listening station at Lourdes, near Havana, 1,500 Soviet technicians, analysts, and managers worked together in intelligence collection operations.[17] A Russian defense minister described it as an "installation that enabled Russia to monitor the airwaves throughout the Western Hemisphere and make appropriate domestic and foreign policy decisions based on reliable information."[18] Inevitably, Moscow created mechanisms for sharing such data with Havana though Moscow owned and directed the facility and kept possession for 11 years after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Lourdes is illustrative of the two decades in which Cuba held a proxy status yet received service of some Cuban Communist interests.

Life under a Soviet shadow had ironies. In 1959, when Cuba was a newly revolutionary state near the equator and thought to have a sunny disposition, they primarily worried about the Yankees to the north. The White House had been influential in Cuba since the breaking of Spanish colonial power at the end of the nineteenth century, and Washington was prone to occasional armed interventions in the region. That reality, combined with larger ideological differences of the Cold War, further energized the rhetoric and actions of the new Communist regime. Che Guevara's early travels as a formal diplomat took him to Moscow in November 1960 and such governmental contacts would grow thereafter.

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[15] *Hearing on the Role of Cuba in International Terrorism and Subversion, before the Senate Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism*, 97th Cong. (26 February, 4, 11–12 March 1982) (testimony of Gerardo Peraza, Cuban intelligence official). Peraza was among the many officers trained in intelligence in Moscow.

[16] Robert Moss, quoted in Leiken, *Soviet Strategy in Latin America*, 51. Leiken is among those saying definitively that 1968 was the year Cuba became a proxy.

[17] In a speech in March 1983, President Ronald W. Reagan said the 28-acre facility had been expanding and employed 1,500 Soviet technicians. Reagan, "Address to the Nation on National Security" (speech, White House, Washington, DC, 23 March 1983).

[18] Lourdes and its Soviet personnel are mentioned, for example, in the U.S. Department of Defense's annual assessment of the Soviet military, *Soviet Military Power: An Assessment of the Threat, 1988* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1988). Bain writes that the station earned Cuba a subsidy of $200 million annually from Moscow but that the Russians closed it in January 2002 to save money; he quotes a senior Russian's regrets over the closure. Bain, *Moscow and Havana 1917 to the Present*, 22, 142, 149, 153.

The Third Congress of the Cuban Communist Party in 1986 concluded with affirmation of the "indestructible ties of friendship with the Soviet Union." The Moscow-managed COMECON listed Cuba as a full member, not just as an "observer" like Yugoslavia. Although the party called itself "socialist," it moved toward a more centrally planned economy and full political and economic communization. A few free-market reforms, tried much later, were limited in reach.[19]

Such legal and political formalities locked Cuba into a relationship of mixed advantages with the Warsaw Pact that went beyond ideology. Fidel Castro was never fully comfortable as a proxy. For instance, in June 1972 while visiting Moscow, he publicly claimed Cuba was a partner, not a proxy.[20] His attention to terms helps explain why, even now, foreign observers may decline to recognize the rigors of Cuba's full military collaboration in the high Soviet era. The new book *Moscow and Havana 1917 to the Present* all but ignores such Cuban bilateral military relationships, perhaps out of the author's attachment to a view of Cuba as autonomous. Havana lacked the power to be autonomous in the 1970s and 1980s, however. Soviet troops and advisors were still there in the fall of 1991, when General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev announced that they would leave.[21] Vladimir Putin, Russia's presumed-president-for-life, has depicted Cuba and Russia as "leading partners in the region," declaring in 2014 that "we closely coordinate our foreign policy."[22] His contentment with the rapport may have been due in part to Cuba's support for Russia's snatching Crimea from Ukraine—a unilateral victory by Moscow that will be seen by historians as one of the greatest failings of the international order that the United Nations created in 1948—and for Russia's incursion into Georgia, with Cuba declaring the latter was the "aggressor" in 2008.

[19] *1987 Yearbook on International Communist Affairs*, ed. Richard F. Starr (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1987); for the quotation and the note on COMECON, see 82–83.
[20] Bain, *Moscow and Havana 1917 to the Present*, 118–19.
[21] Bain, *Moscow and Havana 1917 to the Present*, 136.
[22] Olga Tanas and Anna Andrianova, "Russia Writes Off 90% of Cuba Debt as Putin Meets Castros," Bloomberg, 11 July 2014.

"INTERNATIONALISM" AND ITS BENEFICIARIES ABROAD

By 1980, Cuba had advisors or troops in more than a dozen foreign countries, especially in Africa. While one would expect Havana to side with African revolutionaries, they only did so occasionally. Some groups the Cubans aided; some they created. In 1965, Guevara and some 100 Cubans attempted to establish a revolutionary group in the Republic of the Congo, a venture that eventually failed, causing deep disappointment for Guevara, as his diaries show.[23] The larger Cuban approach, however, was to aid leftist governments holding power against revolutionaries. Starting in 1972, for instance, one Cuban mission in Somalia initially aided revolutionaries there, but they changed course soon after. Indeed, aid to the Somali revolutionaries was dramatically reversed when Havana threw its support behind the fearsome Derg military government (a.k.a. Provisional Military Administrative Council) that came to power in Ethiopia in 1974 and sought to crush Somali secession. Ground and air power from Cuba were critical. A secret airlift of thousands of Cuban troops from three other African capitals where they served, orchestrated with Soviet flights, turned the tide of fighting and secured power for the revolutionary new government in Addis Ababa in 1978. Approximately 16,000–17,000 Cubans at any one time were operating under Soviet command in this war.[24] After it saw victory, Ethiopia's Derg turned these bilateral assets against other secessionists, the Eritreans, whom they also suppressed in 1978. Castro admitted to having as many as 12,000 troops in Ethiopia; another authority's estimate of the numbers there in 1980 hits the same mark.[25] As late as 1986, there were still 5,000 Cuban troops in Ethiopia.[26] Cuban intelligence won recognition there as a Soviet Bloc asset. One East German spy manager, Markus Wolf, had his own nation-

[23] Ernesto "Che" Guevara, *The African Dream: The Diaries of the Revolutionary War in the Congo*, trans. Patrick Camiller (New York: Grove Press, 2000). See the introduction by Richard Gott.
[24] On Cuban troop levels in Africa, apart from specialized sources in other notes here, one may also consult the annual series *Yearbook on International Communist Affairs*, ed. Richard F. Starr (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press); and *The Soviet Union in the Third World, 1980–85*, 315.
[25] George Volsky, "Cuba," in *Yearbook on International Communist Affairs 1987*, ed. Richard F. Staar (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1987), 71–72, 82.
[26] William W. Pascoe, "The Cubans in Africa," in *The Case of Africa*, vol. 2, *The Red Orchestra*, ed. Dennis L. Bark (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1988), 92.

als deployed in Ethiopia, of course, but he reported later that while his agents felt adrift in the sands of Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa, Cuban spies' "confidence and professional competence grew, (and) they became the best intelligence operators in Africa."[27]

Other Cuban military missions worked in Africa to train local armies, advise in combat, or take direct fighting roles themselves. These contributions qualify as a phenomenon of geopolitics of those years. In an era when Cuban officials frequently cried out against a purported U.S. threat of invasion, they had 40,000 troops involved in wars on a distant continent. Analysts may run through much of the alphabet of African countries to account for where Cubans were engaged. The Algerian struggle against the French from 1954 to 1962, a famous war of decolonization, has a forgotten Cuban angle. Havana gave modest martial aid to the rising Front for National Liberation (FLN), which remained steady once the FLN took power in 1962. The following year, a Cuban battalion fought alongside the new Algerian government against Morocco during a border conflict known as the Sand War. Angola had Cuban advisors with guerrilla forces starting in the mid-1960s during that country's war for independence. When the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), a favored Communist faction, triumphed in 1975, the Cubans became the veritable backbone of state armed forces.[28] At four different bases, they trained MPLA soldiers with Soviet weapons as Angola fell into a civil war. From 1976 onward, Cuban units arrived in the country on Soviet transport aircraft. One specialist concludes that "the Cubans undoubtedly won the war for the MPLA" in Angola.[29] The West African nation of Benin had 20 security advisors from Cuba. Cameroon count-

[27] Cubans had "an understanding of the continent's mentality and a sense of events that we lacked," wrote Markus Wolf. Wolf, with Anne McElvoy, *Man Without a Face: The Autobiography of Communism's Greatest Spymaster* (New York: PublicAffairs, 1997), 297.
[28] Literature on Cuban forces in Angola includes the journal *Problems of Communism* and articles by Robert Moss in the London *Sunday Telegraph* during 1977. There are worthy books supplying details by Hoover Institution scholar Thomas H. Henriksen, and Al J. Venter, and works already cited by Arthur J. Klinghoffer, and East German Markus Wolf, as well as David E. Albright, *Communism in Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980).
[29] Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 114, 117.

ed some in their ranks as well.[30] The Cubans in Congo have been noted, as have those in Eritrea and Ethiopia. Equatorial Guinea had 100 Cuban martial advisors. There were more such military personnel in Guinea. Ghana had an official Cuban military mission from 1961 until a change of government in 1966, and Cuban advisors were stationed in Guinea Bissau from 1965 onward. In Libya, Cubans, along with other larger delegations of the Warsaw Pact, assisted the armed forces of the country. More worked with the separatist Polisario Front guerrillas in Morocco. Havana made a major commitment to Mozambique starting in 1963 that was vital to keeping the country Communist during the early 1980s when international assistance encouraged anti-Communist rebels of the Mozambique National Resistance (RENAMO). Sierra Leone had 100–200 Cuban military advisors and Cuban personnel insinuated themselves into the theater of Tanzania. Somalia's Cuban mission has been noted above. In Zimbabwe, then known as Rhodesia, Cubans based in Angola and others of the Soviet Bloc helped train that nation's revolutionary force called the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), a runner-up in the race to overtake power there after elections established its modern government in 1980.[31] This network of "mil-to-mil" relationships was buttressed in most countries by economic or diplomatic links. Cuba had additional ties in Botswana, Burundi, Cape Verde, Chad, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Upper Volta. Nor should one forget that the "little" Caribbean island of Cuba also deployed 8,000 civilian technicians and advisors across reaches of Africa.[32]

Cuba's astonishingly active foreign policy was not at odds with that of the USSR after 1960. The two worked in tandem, or along separate

[30] Pascoe, "The Cubans in Africa," 87.

[31] In Rhodesia, the revolution by ZAPU (later merged with Zimbabwe African National Union or ZANU) advocated for Black-majority rule against the minority White ruling class. The revolution therefore also had racial dimensions. Initially, there were two major revolutionary groups fighting against White-minority rule: ZANU and ZAPU. Additionally, Rhodesia served as a proxy for apartheid South Africa with their announcement of "military cooperation." An alliance between South Africa and Rhodesia purportedly existed before the creation of ZAPU. See Eliakim M. Simbada, *The Zimbabwe African People's Union, 1961–87: A Political History of Insurgency in Southern Rhodesia* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2005).

[32] The estimate is for the year 1979. See *The Soviet Union in the Third World, 1980–85*, 204.

tracks, both showing initiative. Some observers argue that Cuban ideological and martial fire actually reignited older Soviet energies toward revolution, recasting a Kremlin policy grown staid, formal, and too closely tied to sleepy formal Communist parties abroad. At any rate, the combination of Moscow and Havana fueled violent revolutionary activism of real and influential types as Ethiopia and Angola exemplify. In both those nations, Communist Bloc aid flowed first to revolutionaries, and then it "flipped" to the new Communist governments in Luanda and Addis Ababa. These militant leftist governments became active centers of new Marxist-Leninist energy, limited partners in wider Communist Bloc collaborations. In these and many other African cases, Havana was not on the side of "struggling masses" but rather the side of left-wing dictatorships whose populist rhetoric was less than genuine populism. As many as 375,000 Cuban soldiers served as counterrevolutionaries in the service of Angola's central government between 1975 and 1989.[33]

Although Cuba's contributions in Africa reflect numerous direct actions in support of Soviet purposes, they took part in a different, and more diplomatic, type of work as part of the Non-Aligned Movement that began in 1961 as an international organization focused on developing countries. Yugoslavia had carried its reputation for Communist opposition to Communist hegemony when it entered this new global organization, being one of many states looking for "a third way" between ideological polarities. Yet, Cuba—like Libya—undermined the entire concept of nonalignment as it seems to have devoted itself to Soviet purposes within the movement. After 1968, Cuban speeches and actions challenged rather than helped the express wishes of scores of small independent states while gratifying the Moscow axis of the Cold War. For four years, Castro was president of the Non-Aligned Movement and worked hard, though not always successfully, to get the global group to regard the USSR as their "natural ally." Fidel's profile overshadowed the actual neutrals. By 1985, analysts in the Congressional Research Service

[33] Stephen L. Weigert, *Angola: A Modern Military History, 1961–2002* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 99. The author is obliged to Aaron Danis for recommending this valuable book.

flatly concluded that "the Soviets have used Cuba as a surrogate within the Non-Aligned Movement."[34]

NICARAGUA: MANAGEMENT AT THE THIRD LEVEL

It is at the third level of proxy relationships that Cuba is the most impressive and intriguing. That is, the Kremlin's fostering of Havana's success at home and in the Third World opened a whole new tier of Communist expansionism, via Cuba, into other states, especially in Central and Latin America.

"The New Nicaragua" was an early Cuban priority. Havana began aiding the revolutionary group that eventually became the Sandinista National Liberation Front, or Sandinistas, even before the party's official establishment in 1961. Sandinista leaders had direct ties to Cuba. Carlos Fonseca Amador frequently visited Cuba. Tomás Borge Martínez, another Sandinista founder, received cash for the movement directly from Che Guevara during a visit to the island. Guevara and other Cuban operatives hosted Nicaraguans opposing the Somoza dictatorship, founded and led by Anastasio Somoza García, giving some military training. After the formation of the Sandinista National Liberation Front, its leaders could be found as often in Cuba as inside Nicaragua, given the ongoing guerrilla war.[35] All the while, a sizable number of individual Sandinista soldiers trained in Cuba before returning to Nicaragua.[36] The insurgents,

[34] *The Soviet Union in the Third World, 1980–85*, 316–17. The judgment is similar to that of scholar Harold W. Rood, author of the fine Cold War volume *Kingdoms of the Blind: How the Great Democracies Have Resumed the Follies that So Nearly Cost Them Their Lives* (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 1980). Rood sometimes stated: "What is notable about the Non-Aligned Movement is that you always know whose side they're on." Former deputy national security advisor J. D. Crouch and Dr. Patrick J. Garrity coauthored a compendium to Rood's work. Crouch and Garrity, *You Run the Show or the Show Runs You: Capturing Professor Harold W. Rood's Strategic Thought for a New Generation* (Lanham, MD: Roman & Littlefield, 2015).

[35] Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) founder Carlos Fonseca Amador was among the frequent Nicaraguan visitors to Cuba. He had studied in Moscow, later writing an apologia, *Un Nicaragiiense en Moscú* [A Nicaraguan in Moscow] (Managua, Nicaragua: Publicaciones de Unidad, 1958). He was involved in a failed 1959 invasion of Nicaragua "which was organized, planned, and largely manned by Cuban disciples of Ernesto 'Che' Guevara." "FSLN," *Latin American Revolutionaries: Groups, Goals, Methods*, ed. Michael S. Radu and Vladimir Tismaneanu (New York: Pergamon-Brassey's International Defense Publishers, 1990), 293–94.

[36] "FSLN," 301. Apart from Cubans, other Soviet Bloc specialists and Palestinians also trained the FSLN, but always outside Nicaragua.

who made systematic use of both guerrilla war and terrorism, received coordinating influence as well as money and arms from Havana. Deliveries of weapons crested in 1978 and early 1979 with 30 planeloads arriving in Nicaragua.[37] Such aid was less significant compared to, say, Cuban receipts of the time from the USSR, but it was critical at a moment when the United States was cutting its aid to the Somoza dictatorship. President James E. "Jimmy" Carter found that government distasteful, as did many members of Congress.[38] Seeing an opportunity fructifying, Havana increased assistance. The Sandinista recipients, including current Nicaraguan president Daniel Ortega, his brother Humberto, and their comrades, marched victoriously into Managua in July 1979. Cuba swiftly contributed several thousand civilian personnel, reaching 6,000 strong by 1984.[39] Military and security personnel also arrived in Nicaragua in large numbers.[40] Meanwhile, the new Sandinista authorities began the deliberate and systematic suppression of liberal opponents, free newspapers, and independent businesses, among other groups, engendering a "Contra" movement. More than four decades after the victory parade, Daniel Ortega, who served as president between 1979 and 1990 before his second election in 2007, was still making headlines for repressing other Nicaraguans and arresting political opponents in 2021 and the repression has continued in 2022.

With victory secured in 1979, the Soviet-Cuban program kept moving, with Nicaragua now in trace. In neighboring El Salvador, the guerrilla front FMLN became the new favorite for the future of revolution. Cuban coordinators, Soviet arms exporters, varied intelligence operatives

[37] *Hearings before the Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism of the Committee on the Judiciary on the Role of Cuba in International Terrorism and Subversion, 26 February, 4, 11–12 March 1982*, 97th Cong., 2d Sess. (responses of journalist Daniel James to written questions of Senator Jeremiah A. Denton [R-AL]), hereafter *Role of Cuba in International Terrorism and Subversion*.
[38] "Milestones in the History of U.S. Foreign Relations: Central America, 1977–1980," Office of the Historian, Department of State, accessed 19 October 2022.
[39] Ray S. Cline and Yonah Alexander, *Terrorism: The Soviet Connection* (New York: Crane Russak with the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University, 1984), 72.
[40] Cuban arrivals in Sandinista Nicaragua are reported by, among others, Leiken, *Soviet Strategy in Latin America*, 83–88.

and military advisors, and others moved into that theater.[41] Also key to this work was Sandinista Nicaragua, newly host to dozens of Bulgarians, East Germans, Czechs, Russians, and, especially, Cubans. Nicaragua also accepted these states' doctors and nurses (medicine being a classic post-1959 Cuban export) as well as other technicians.[42] Geography made the Sandinista state a priceless asset in the practice of outside support to insurgency, which may well flourish if it has safe havens.[43] The Salvadoran state found itself attacked by rebels via economic sabotage, guerrilla warfare against security services, or classic acts of terrorism against civilians. The government was simultaneously discredited at home and abroad, sometimes for its actions, and always due to widespread media accounts of atrocities in the internal war, some of which were true.[44] Yet, this team effort against El Salvador, led by Nicaragua, Cuba, and the USSR, failed.[45] It ran hard into a countervailing outsider, the United

[41] "Guerrilla training for Salvadoran cadres has been provided in Cuba, arms have been furnished and steps taken to enlist the cooperation of all leftist forces in El Salvador and surrounding countries to support the insurgency," a Defense Intelligence Agency officer told Congress; "U.S. Analysts Say Cuba Sees Itself as 'Arsenal, Catalyst for Revolution'," *Los Angeles Times*, 31 July 1980.

[42] East German medical aid began arriving as early as August 1979, according to Theodore Schwab and Harold Sims, "Revolutionary Nicaragua's Relations with European Communist States, 1979-1983," *Conflict Quarterly*, no. 5 (Winter 1985): 10. The International Service of East Berlin reported "Nicaragua Expresses Thanks for Material Support," 30 July 1985. Harold Sims noted Cuban medical aid to Nicaragua in "Nicaragua's Relations with the Communist Party States During 1984," *Conflict Quarterly*, no. 5 (Fall, 1985): 55. "Nicaragua Reports Soviet Bloc Is Stepping Up Aid," *New York Times*, 27 October 1985. Brian Crozier, ed., *Foreign Report* (London: *Economist*), e.g. 29 November 1984 and 5 December 1985. On training of Sandinista police in Czechoslovakia, see Rep. James A. Courter, "Tom Diaz on Czech Link to Nicaragua," U.S. House, *Congressional Record*, 5 September 1985. Czech officials and experts had other roles in the new Nicaragua. In 1982, the Czech ambassador to Nicaragua announced varied aid and said that new consular agreements would make visas unnecessary for travel between their two countries; *Grand Strategy: Countercurrents*, ed. Patrick J. Garrity (Claremont, CA: Claremont Institute, 1982).

[43] Daniel Byman et al., *Trends in Outside Support for Insurgent Movements* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 2001), https://doi.org/10.7249/MR1405.

[44] The *Los Angeles Times*, which the author read daily between 1979 and 1983, was a paper in which news and opinion pieces usually opposed American support to El Salvador as well as wider actions in Central America. Critics in the national press were opinion makers such as academics and U.S. House of Representatives members, as well as hard-left activist groups such as the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES).

[45] See chapter 3 herein and its sources, as well as John Norton Moore, *The Secret War in Central America: Sandinista Assault on World Order* (Frederick, MD: University Press of America, 1987).

States. Washington doubled, and redoubled, its assistance to the Salvadoran government. The administration of President Ronald W. Reagan, seeing a hemispheric emergency, ramped up aid to the judiciary, economic sectors, and security forces. They blocked the guerrilla offensive with a wide campaign that had but the narrowest military footprint: by U.S. law, no more than 52 American military advisors could be in the country. El Salvador was preserved in the world democratic camp. International Communism had devoted massive assets to a protracted war by the FMLN but failed, leaving the guerrillas to morph into a pacific left-wing political party that must compete at the polls.[46]

Another enterprising effort by Cuba was in the nearby island of Grenada. Cuba had aided the rise of the tiny "New Jewel Movement" (NJM), and with the coup that brought it to power in 1979, Cuba naturally envisioned new internationalist opportunities.[47] Grenada's resultant leap into formal Marxism-Leninism is detailed with unusual thoroughness by the NJM; the U.S. intervention of October 1983 resulted in the impounding of all its records, many of which were then published by government or private editors. All the usual red team players were getting their time on the field. Soon after the NJM takeover, Havana sent several hundred combat-trained construction workers to build an immense airstrip that, documents later showed, was intended to support the largest of Soviet transport aircraft.[48] Additionally, East German mass media experts edu-

[46] Knut Walter and Philip J. Williams, "The Military and Democratization in El Salvador," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 35, no. 1 (1993): 39–88, https://doi.org/10.2307/166102.

[47] According to one editor of the papers recovered from Grenada, the NJM was "a West Indian black power group" that grew into "a pro-Soviet, ideologically committed, Marxist-Leninist party," arguing that "the Documents show that through the 1970s the NJM increased its ties to Cuba." Nicholas Dujmovic, "Summary Overview," in *The Grenada Documents: Window on Totalitarianism*, ed. Nicholas Dujmovic (Washington, DC: Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, 1988), viii. Maurice Bishop was the NJM leader who came to power in 1979; he was replaced in a violent intraparty maneuver by Bernard Coard in 1983. For the latter's Communist views and activities, see especially pp. 16–17, with text and footnote about documents on the new despot's regard for Stalin and use of Stalin's books in ideological instruction in Grenada. Also useful is the article by John Simkin, "Bernard Coard," Spartacus Educational, updated January 2020.

[48] Just before the U.S. intervention, "this tiny island had some 800 Cubans, 49 Soviets, 17 Libyans, 15 North Koreans, 10 East Germans and 3 Bulgarians engaged in military and security-related activities." The Cuban construction workers fought when U.S. forces arrived. Moore, *The Secret War in Central America*, 7.

cated the Grenadians, some of whom were invited to study in East Germany, on their tactics. Czechoslovakian internal security experts, heirs to the legacy of erasure of democratic opportunities during the Prague Spring in 1968, trained Grenada's new police, who were jailing their political opponents and suppressing activists in the Roman Catholic Church. The intelligence apparatus was aided by the East German Stasi and the Cuban DGI. Uniquely, this revolution produced few swells in public debate within foreign democracies, such as the United States, probably because the New Jewel Movement of "liberation" had so many documents revealing craven dutifulness to the Soviet Bloc and the Soviet model. There would be no doubts as to the party's uniform "Line of March," to borrow the title of one of the Grenadian dictator's speeches. Some outside Grenada debated the legality of the American intervention or the appropriateness of the Caribbean nations that supported it and supported regime change, but almost no democratic outsiders mourned the disappearance of the NJM's "dictatorship of the proletariat."[49]

Cuba led a somewhat similar effort that also failed in Puerto Rico. Havana worked to further a small independence movement on the neighboring island, an American territory since 1898 and a commonwealth since 1952. Cuba had begun early with leftist political support and a few Puerto Rican political figures such as Juan Mari Brás, leader of the People's Socialist Party.[50] In a parallel, quieter effort, militancy emerged in the Puerto Rican underground. The subversives were male and female, highly public and largely private, young and old. In 1954, a fiery Puerto Rican separatist without Cuban ties, Lolita Lebrón, led a team from New York City to Washington, DC, where they shot up the interior of the U.S. House of Representatives.[51] Soon, the Castroite revolution in Cuba favored this cause and some of the Puerto Rican independence groups would be linked to Cuban patronage and inspiration. Scores of Puerto Ricans

[49] *Governmental Illegitimacy in International Law* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012), 96–104, https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199243013.001.0001.
[50] *Role of Cuba in International Terrorism and Subversion*, 169. Additional testimonies and reports throughout this hearing also cover violence in Puerto Rico, see 4, 7, 60, 164, 168, 181.
[51] "Lolita Lebron: Puerto Rican Liberation Fighter," in *The Young Lords: A Reader*, ed. Darrel Enck-Wanzer (New York: New York University Press, 2010), 83–85.

trained for guerrilla war and other tactics inside Cuba, although national U.S. media showed surprisingly little interest in it all.[52] From 1975 to 1981 alone, according to testimony before a Senate committee, Puerto Rican groups perpetrated 260 acts of violence on the island and up to 100 on the U.S. mainland.[53] One leader with Cuban connections, Filiberto Ojeda Rios, formed several successive organizations that terrorized citizens, both in Puerto Rico and on the mainland, with bombings and shootings. His last creation, Los Macheteros, is known for an explosives attack that destroyed nine U.S. National Guard aircraft on Muñiz Air National Guard Base in Carolina, Puerto Rico. When this group later stole $7.2 million in one of America's largest robberies, greenbacks were smuggled in bulk into Cuba.[54] Unembarrassed by such violence, Cuban policy makers restated their "unshakable support" for Puerto Rican separatism in 1987.[55] But terrorism in this campaign was a strategic failure, neither winning over legions of new undergrounders nor igniting wide popular hopes for independence. No poll of the era ever showed more than a few percent of the Puerto Rican population supporting independence, but a sizeable proportion polled was for full statehood.

[52] The author traveled to Puerto Rico and interviewed persons from the FBI, the U.S. Marshal's Service, and a local journalist about the transnational threat picture.
[53] *Role of Cuba in International Terrorism and Subversion*, 4.
[54] See Ronald Fernandez, *Los Macheteros: The Wells Fargo Robbery and the Violent Struggle for Puerto Rican Independence* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1987). The author was in Hartford briefly to observe court and read relevant indictments. The judge convicted a group of Macheteros, but not Ojeda Rios, who was not yet captured and who later died in Puerto Rico during a gunfight with the FBI. One government brief declined to indicate firm links to other armed groups or states and did not mention Cuba. See Peter Probst, DOD White Paper, "Terrorist Group Profiles," November 1988, 92–94. However, Cuba—and Puerto Rico's Jose Mari Bras, "a close political colleague" of Fidel Castro—are mentioned in Peter Janke, *Guerrilla and Terrorist Organizations: A World Directory and Bibliography* (New York: Macmillan, 1983). The *Hartford (CT) Courant*, then known for investigative journalism, was the major newspaper reporting on this case, providing often day-by-day coverage for several years as details emerged. For example, see George Gombossy's stories on 26–27 September 1985 and 23 and 30 October 1985. The paper continued to update case matters, as with articles of 14 April and 15 July 1992, and a 7 November 1999 profile of missing robber Victor Gerena, whom testimony indicated fled to Cuba.
[55] The record is quoted in Volsky, "Cuba," 83.

A FACTORY FOR YOUNG REVOLUTIONARIES

Our final case of Cuban internationalism is a remarkable illustration of third-level proxy warfare, and it is also evidence of how ideology without borders can be powerful and animating. Havana's Communist government turned its Isle of Pines into an "Isle of Youth" (renamed in 1978) for developing world comrades. Young people from scores of foreign countries came—or were brought—to this Cuban territory to study, work, be trained, and think about new futures in their homelands. Africa, Latin America, and Central America were the main places of origin. Some, as from the Congo, may well have been brought against their wills. In a network of 17 schools for foreigners, Cubans led by a former vice minister of the armed forces managed or processed thousands each year, so that by 1981 approximately 26,000 had passed through the doors. Cuba's government was absorbing all the expenses, estimated at less than $1,000 per annum/per student; the bill for travel alone would have been enormous for a cash-strapped island such as Cuba. The *New York Times* detailed the Cuban training programs on the Isle of Youth in 1981; the U.S. Senate held revealing hearings the next year and took in new ideas and third-party views.[56]

Few analysts have addressed the question of the effectiveness of this program creating Communist journeymen. There are not usually good "metrics" for ideological influencing. The intent, clearly, was for a Soviet Bloc proxy (Cuba) to create new proxies and partners in future work on the continents of the developing world. It is very likely that in many cases the program did exactly that, especially as the Cuban troops deployed to Angola helped assure that boys and girls returning home could count on a friendly and strengthened MPLA government. Luanda seemed pleased by the indulgence Havana was showing the new Communist regime. An annual for 1984 events reads in part:

> In March, President Jose Eduardo dos Santos of Angola spent almost a week on a state visit to Cuba. With Castro he toured

[56] Jo Thomas, "Cuba's School for Exporting Marxism," *New York Times*, 4 October 1981; and *Role of Cuba in International Terrorism and Subversion*, 4. No witnesses at the hearings suggested the *Times* report was untrue.

> camps where some three thousand Angolan students were undergoing training. The two leaders signed a communique stating that Cuba and Angola had "excellent relations."[57]

This chapter must close without space for discussion of present-day Cuban foreign policy. But in the years following the Soviets' collapse, the Cubans could not afford their elaborate practices of Communist internationalism. So-called "barefoot doctors" and related forms of Cuban medical assistance to Third World countries can still be found overseas and are doubtless welcome in needy countries. But the busy export of radicalism and political violence fell off markedly in the 1990s and with that, apparently, most of the infrastructure devoted to training foreign revolutionaries. Handfuls of fugitive terrorists from older decades still have Cuban residence, but they may be inactive. Espionage abroad, particularly against the United States, remains a passion and a craft of Cuban excellence.

What more concerns the world, now and generally, is the domestic human rights situation. As with the Daniel Ortega regime in Nicaragua, there endures in Cuba's government the instincts and reflexes of totalitarian political ideology, which lead inevitably into practices of repression. Cuban protest marches of 11 July 2021 ended in arrest of at least 500 of the democratically minded.[58] There were already many other political prisoners in jail.

[57] Volsky, "Cuba," 67. It is likely—though not certain—that the camps the two leaders visited were on the Isle of Pines.

[58] Press coverage included the 12 July 2021 article in the *Washington Post*. See Anthony Faiola, "Cubans, Broken by Pandemic and Fueled by Social Media, Confront Their Police State," *Washington Post*, 12 July 2021.

CHAPTER 3

The United States, the Reagan Doctrine, and Nicaraguan "Contras"

UNIQUE FEATURES OF THE PROXY RELATIONSHIP

The engagement of the United States with Nicaraguan fighters known as Contras was a late Cold War effort that offers unique features in the arenas of gray zone fighting and proxy wars. First, the White House was doing something for which most of the world was unprepared. Many around the globe had an impression of America in the post–World War II era as a country that was interventionist and usually on the side of some right-wing government. In this multiyear program of the early 1980s, however, the United States was supporting a revolution. Nicaraguan men and women who refused the Sandinista transformation of their country along Cuban lines were disdained by the new government in Managua as "counterrevolutionaries."[1] The Contras embraced that phrase as an honor. Second, this phenomenon earned a small place in U.S. military schools and doctrine. While manuals of the 1960s and 1970s doted on such terms as *foreign internal defense* and *counterinsurgency*, certain manuals of the 1990s added a paragraph or two about helping foreign insurgents. For example, the publication of *Joint Doctrine for Military Operations Other*

[1] One researcher offers that some Contras were not "counter" to the "revolution"—they had been in revolution against Anastasio Somoza García—but they did oppose the new Sandinista government. See Quint Hoekstra, "Helping the Contras: The Effectiveness of U.S. Support for Foreign Rebels during the Nicaraguan Contra War (1979–1990)," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 44, no. 6 (2021): 525, https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2019.1568004.

Map 3. Nicaragua and Central America

Source: courtesy of author, adapted by MCUP.

Than War, Joint Publication 3-07, from 1995 covered 16 types of likely conflict including "support to insurgency."[2] Third, as understood within the American government, the Nicaragua enterprise was not alone as the "Reagan Doctrine" was supporting other insurgencies against newly Communized governments as well. Unique to Contra support, however, was a phase in which the Ronald W. Regan administration seemingly used the National Security Council to get around a congressional ban on aid.[3] The resulting public scandal of 1986–87, the Iran-Contra Affair, pulled back the veil on citizen volunteers, spies, liaisons to Iran, and

[2] *Joint Doctrine for Military Operations Other than War*, Joint Publication 3-07 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, 1995), iii–15. Not many papers and publications in this area added this element of "support to insurgency" to American missions.
[3] "Milestones in the History of U.S. Foreign Relations: Central America, 1977–1980," Office of the Historian, Department of State, accessed 19 October 2022.

unusual foreign partners in the battle for Nicaragua's future. Few forget the adventures of Lieutenant Colonel Oliver L. North, who accepted some of the blame aimed at Director of Central Intelligence William J. Casey and President Reagan. A veteran of the Iran-Contra Committee argued, however, that Congress made an unsuccessful play to be a co-equal partner in controlling foreign policy with the executive branch.[4]

Nicaragua, with key geography with littorals accessible from the Pacific and the Atlantic oceans, experienced multiple interventions before the 1980s. The United States had usually been on the side of the Nicaraguan government, such as when U.S. forces intervened in a Nicaraguan revolution and then left behind a contingency force between 1912 and 1933.[5] Within six months of the Fidel Castro/Che Guevara revolutionaries taking control in Cuba in January 1959, Havana started aiding Communist guerrillas for combat in Nicaragua. Eight years later, Cuba had training camps to foreign Communist revolutionaries, and Radio Havana expressed hope that Nicaragua could be the first "liberated country" in Central America. By the fall of 1978, Sandinista members were funneling back into Nicaragua to fight. Fidel Castro helped unite Nicaraguan guerrilla factions and move them forward to the point where they captured state power in Managua the next July.[6] The new regime quickly, and self-evidently, became a proxy of Cuba and the Soviet Bloc.[7] Since the Sandinistas were of a revolutionary character, some of them were bewildered when other Nicaraguans showed opposition to their consolidating power. The still-new Sandinista government began calling for help

[4] Christopher C. Harmon, interview with Dennis Teti, associate staff member, Iran-Contra Committee of 1987, Hyattsville, MD, 7 December 2019. In 1986 and 1987, Teti, as the author did, served in the Washington, DC, office of Representative James A. Courter (R-NJ). The author also thanks Mr. David Green, who provided helpful comments on this draft chapter.
[5] "U.S. Intervention in Nicaragua, 1911/1912," Department of State, accessed 19 October 2022.
[6] Constantine C. Menges, *The Twilight Struggle: The Soviet Union v. the United States Today* (Washington, DC: AEI Press, 1990), 237–43.
[7] Professionals linking Cuba to Nicaragua included Fernando Vecino Alegret, a Cuban secret service (DGI) officer from Havana who moved to Managua in July 1979. He supervised incoming arms aid until being exposed in early 1981 and was then succeeded by the DGI's Daniel Herrera. Nicaragua immediately became a training base for foreign guerrillas, especially from El Salvador, fighters who used a network of camps in the northwest corner of Nicaragua. Brian Crozier, ed., *Foreign Report* (London: *The Economist*, 1981).

against counterrevolution, something well beyond the ritual denunciations of "Yankee Imperialism." The more success the Contras achieved, the more confusing it became for outsiders to say who were the legitimate revolutionaries.

The Sandinista run in power, although interrupted in the early 1990s, can be judged a relative success on *their* terms. It did become like a "dictatorship of the proletariat" and the initial ruler, Daniel Ortega, is head of state now as well.[8] In current, respected publications, the regime is making headlines for repressing independent journalism, in-country political opponents, and the Roman Catholic Church.[9] Although many U.S. and Contra aims were defeated, Washington still had an effect. It fought a low intensity war of attrition against the Soviet Empire, effectively draining enemy strength for some years. In that way, the Contra proxy was useful to the United States, the larger world, and the spirit of freedom. Yet, at no point could the United States state with pride to the ejecting of foreign Communism as it could with the mujahideen in Afghanistan.

THE POLITICAL CHARACTER OF THE ENTITIES

In a stirring, bipartisan 1989 book, journalist and writer Gregory A. Fossedal reviewed the long American past and its interest in fostering democratic change abroad. He argued that from President Thomas Jefferson down to President James E. "Jimmy" Carter, the United States had a tra-

[8] Vladimir Lenin added to Marxism the idea that a vanguard party must guide the revolution, which does not simply succeed by force of history and without human agency. The Sandinistas came to power as a Marxist-Leninist party intent on being the proletariat's dictatorship, as some willingly said. When the New Jewel Movement (NJM) took power in Grenada in August 1979, NJM leaders used similar language. In a speech to party leaders on 13 September 1982, NJM leader Maurice Bishop said: "Comrades, as we see it, this political essence—this dictatorship of the working people—is what we have to continue to develop and to build rapidly." "Line of March for the Party," Doc. No. 1, in *Grenada Documents: An Overview and Selection*, ed. Michael Ledeen and Herbert Romerstein (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State and Department of Defense, 1984), 1–26. In a memo of 11 July 1983 prepared for internal readership after a meeting in the USSR, a Grenada official recorded concerns that, while the Sandinistas received full and equal treatment from other Communist parties, the NJM was still proving itself. "My clear impression is that we are being treated as a fraternal party—i.e. a[n] M-L Party" [but we may not yet be accepted into the] "inner group" [and must strive]. "Report from Grenadan Embassy in Moscow on Relations with USSR," Doc. No. 26, in *Grenada Documents* 26–2.

[9] For example, see "Ingraining Power," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, October 2021, 22–25.

dition of democratic idealism. Although each administration varied by party and by degree of interest, they all wanted expansion of democracy overseas. That is true concerning why Americans make war and how they make peace. A young Republican such as Abraham Lincoln might coauthor a resolution supporting Hungarian freedom vis-à-vis the Hapsburgs and the Russians—but decline the option of sending material aid. A professorial Democrat, Woodrow Wilson, might outline a League of Nations and urge self-determining new nations to replace empires. In the case of Nicaragua, Carter was criticized in 1979 and 1980 for stopping aid to the Somoza dictatorship that was under attack by Sandinista revolutionaries, but this could be understood as signaling his administration's principled liberalism.[10] Reagan's decision to aid the Contras flummoxed many liberals, but he could rightly rejoin that his thoughts were with the embattled newspaper *La Prensa*, the independence of the Catholic Church, and trade unions being suppressed in favor of parallel new Sandinista "transmission belts."[11]

Entering office in 1981, the new U.S. president brought with him lifelong opposition to Communism and other dictatorships. While Reagan had been a member in each of America's two major political parties, he had never shifted in his thought that Marxism-Leninism was an unforgiving enemy of America and of freedom. He also brought pointed national security concerns to the Oval Office. The year 1979 saw a brazen cross-border invasion of Afghanistan, a Red Army effort to shore up the Kremlin's unpopular Afghan proxy governors in Kabul. Marxist-Leninists of the New Jewel Movement had seized power in the Caribbean island of Grenada, which then underwent ruthless repression and the arrival of Communist Bloc advisors and hundreds of armed Cuban con-

[10] Gregory A. Fossedal, *The Democratic Imperative: Exporting the American Revolution* (New York: Basic Books, 1989). Fossedal, a writer on public policy issues, was writing for the *Wall Street Journal* and the *New York Times* and was a principal in the early years of the Washington, DC, think tank the Alexis de Tocqueville Institution.

[11] *Transmission belts* refers to a Bolshevik term to describe how factory-level worker organizations should be part of Communist organizations. This is very different from the free trade unions organized in many non-Communist countries. Peter Shearman, "The Soviet Union and Grenada under the New Jewel Movement," *International Affairs* 61, no. 4 (1985): 661–73, https://doi.org/10.2307/2617710.

struction workers. Their projects included building an airport runway purposefully meant to serve the largest Soviet military transports. Grenada was a marker of a trend in the wider world: internal revolutions that either undermined stable governments or gave over state power to Marxist-Leninists.[12] A *New York Times* opinion piece from 1987, which was later quoted in a congressional report, stated: "While Congress fiddles, the world burns. In the 1960s, there were four openly proclaimed Marxist-Leninist regimes in the third world; today there are 16. Two Soviet client states are right at our doorstep, and they are working relentlessly to add another four to the Soviet fold."[13] Reagan did not see this shift in the balance of power as a paralyzing shock but instead as a challenge, fit for an optimist.

Some alert Nicaraguans, feeling the tightening grip of the Sandinistas, shared this strategic and realistic view. Resistance was evident in geographic communities, such as the Miskito indigenous people along the nation's Pacific coast, and in political sectors, including liberals and businessmen like Adolfo Calero Portocarrero, who were resentful of the swelling of controls by the new state. Intellectuals and editors were embittered as central government dogmas and bullyboys constricted free expression and publication. Military officers of the old guard made up a muscular minority of the new Contras. These former "Somocistas" were unhappy for their personal displacement or angered by the leftist radicals.[14] Most remarkable was the smallest Contra group: Sandinista defectors who left that party. Violeta Barrios de Chamorro was the wife of an

[12] Shearman, "The Soviet Union and Grenada under the New Jewel Movement."

[13] Daniel K. Inouye and Lee H. Hamilton, *Report of the Congressional Committees Investigating the Iran-Contra Affair: With Supplemental, Minority, and Additional Views* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1987), 668.

[14] Associated with the many human rights abuses of the Somoza regime, national guardsmen who joined militants on the Contra side were a political liability. By 1986, however, of 153 senior officers in the large Contra contingent called *Fuerza Democratica Nicaraguense* (FDN), only 41 were former guardsmen. Newer guerrilla recruits from multiple Nicaraguan sectors simply overwhelmed their numbers over time. Still, Eden Pastora and some other Contras declined options to merge efforts, based on this issue, undermining the unity of anti-Sandinista fighters. For more on the topic, see Darin H. Van Tassell and G. Lane Van Tassell, "The Politics of Intervention: The 'Underlying' Causes of United States Military Intervention in Central America," *Journal of Third World Studies* 10, no. 1 (1993): 252–305.

editor murdered by Somoza's forces; she had served on the Sandinistas' provisional government. Arturo Cruz Jr., an election advocate during the Somoza dictatorship, eventually headed the national bank under the Sandinista government, but he later resigned in protest. This insider knowledge was dreaded by the party as surely as was independence of mind. These defectors' criticisms were respected and valued by unaffiliated citizens. Wider political opposition took martial form: peasants joined in large numbers, proving to be good fighters.[15] Eden Pastora, known as "Commandante Zero," left the Sandinistas and attracted a militant following. Evolving were northern and southern blocs of civic and political opposition. In 1986, there emerged a "United Nicaraguan Opposition," ostensibly and avowedly democratic—even if it had many critics in the Americas on human rights grounds or was deprecated as a U.S. proxy.[16] Like nearly all lasting insurgencies, the Contras had safe havens over the borders: in Honduras to the north and in Costa Rica to the south.

The United States began quietly training Contra militants around late 1981, two years after the revolution.[17] Nervous neighbors helped as Washington increased and enhanced its patronage of regime opponents, especially via Honduras. American newspapers reported on U.S. support

[15] Hoekstra, "Helping the Contra," 528.

[16] Relevant papers include two documents released by the U.S. Department of State in mid-1986: "United Nicaraguan Opposition: Democratic Reforms and Support for a Peaceful Solution to the Conflict in Nicaragua," June 1986 (18 pp.); and "The Principles and Objectives of the United Nicaraguan Opposition," n.d. (110 pp.); advance copies in author's files. An example of the criticism of U.S. support given Contra human rights abuses comes via Quint Hoekstra. He asserts that the Contras "decided" to "use terror as a weapon." See Hoekstra, "Helping the Contra," 527. His source for such a morally damning verb as *decided* is apparently one Luis Morena, *The Contras War: From Beginning to End: Nicaragua's Civil War and One of the Last Battle of the Cold War* (n.p.: CreateSpace, 2016). As a close student at the time of the literature and the arguments, I learned of human rights violations and crimes but certainly no Contra leadership decision to use terrorism, and terrorism is *only* well-defined when the matter of intention is included.

[17] Inouye and Hamilton, *Report of the Congressional Committees Investigating the Iran-Contra Affair*, 3. U.S. support to the Contras had begun by December 1981, according to the report—the first year of the first Reagan term.

for Contra fighters both on land and on sea in 1984.[18] Contra forces were disparately positioned, inside and outside Nicaragua, and their numbers grew during Reagan's first term. As young adults joined after training, the guerrillas numbered approximately 20,000. Anyone who supported the Sandinistas could decry such military training in cross-border havens as illegal under international law; Washington's rejoinder was that it was Sandinista and Cuban "internationalism" that spawned earlier subversive efforts in neighboring countries, something that was confirmed in statements from Sandinista interior minister Tomás Borge Martínez. In 1979, he declared that their victory "will mean a transformation in the geopolitics of Central America."[19] Two years later, he argued, "This revolution goes beyond our borders."[20] The Reagan White House was thus responding with containment. In this contest of arguments to the law, it was Managua, not Washington, that would win the day in an International Court of Justice at The Hague in June 1986.

GREAT POWER RIVALS AND STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The strategic context in which the United States became a patron to the Contras is in the larger Cold War. Both the contemporary "Program of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union" and the Leonid Brezhnev-era constitution of the USSR had passages supporting "wars of national liberation."[21] For all their economic troubles at home, the Soviets were ambitious,

[18] One example is a story on CIA officers directing speedboat operations from a mothership. Charles R. Babcock, "CIA Reportedly Directed Early Nicaragua Raids," *Los Angeles Times*, 18 April 1984, A16. Another instance is a feature that named a dozen U.S. military operations or staging sites in Central America. See *San Francisco Examiner*, 6 May 1984. This author is, of course, in no position to verify or deny such details.

[19] James Nelson Goodsell, "Nicaragua: War for Export?," *Christian Science Monitor*, 25 July 1979, 1.

[20] Tomás Borge Martínez (speech, Managua, Nicaragua, 19 July 1981), quoted in *"Revolution Beyond Our Borders": Sandinista Intervention in Central America* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, n.d. [1983]), 3. A senior U.S. congressman and open opponent of U.S. policy, Edward P. Boland (D-MA), also admitted there was "pervasive evidence that the Sandinista government of Nicaragua is helping train insurgents and is transferring arms and financial support from and through Nicaragua to the insurgents [and is] thoroughly involved in supporting the Salvadoran insurgency." Boland, quoted in *"Revolution Beyond Our Borders,"* 1–2.

[21] "Introduction," in *Hydra of Carnage: International Linkages of Terrorism and Other Low-Intensity Operations: The Witnesses Speak*, ed. U. Ra'anan et al. (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1986), xv.

politically stable, and rich in natural resources such as oil and various metals. They were spending—willingly, lavishly, and optimistically—in the developing world. Their apparent purposes started with expanding Communism, but it also included a drive for prestige, to check the United States, and to fend off the rising threat of the People's Republic of China as an ideological rival and regional power. Additionally, Moscow aspired to possess a blue water navy, so distant harbors and naval air stations—particularly any in the warm Caribbean waters flowing past the American underbelly—were especially attractive. By the end of the 1960s, Soviet naval visits to Cuba and training exercises with the Cuban Navy were becoming commonplace.[22] Cuba was both a loyal proxy and an energetic partner.

Pro-Soviet Communist parties around the world were *not* being prodded into actual revolutions in the late 1950s. Cuba's success in Central American and Caribbean territories offered to staid Soviets a kind of freshening of Marxism-Leninism, a tonic, as when impressive children give satisfaction to their parents. Both Nicaragua and Grenada were added to the family in 1979. The latter two came to power with Cuban assistance and could further the enterprise by training and helping other militants in Central America, such as insurgents from El Salvador. All this challenged the principles of America's Monroe Doctrine, established in 1823, that asserted that European powers (now extended to any state beyond the Americas) should not meddle in the affairs of the American continents.[23]

The actions of the Soviet Bloc were an additional affront, given the nuclear weapons placed in Cuba in the early 1960s, the movement of Soviet bombers and ships through the Caribbean, progress on the military airstrip in Grenada, and the ferrying of Soviet and Cuban ideological supplicants and allies—including guerrillas, terrorists, and intelligence

[22] Between 1969 and 1985, the Soviet Navy "deployed task forces 24 times to participate in training exercises with the Cuban navy and to establish a periodic naval presence in the Caribbean." Departments of State and Defense, *The Soviet-Cuban Connection in Central America and the Caribbean* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1985), 3-10.

[23] The Monroe Doctrine was articulated in President James Monroe's seventh annual message to Congress on 2 December 1823.

assets—throughout Latin America.[24] Libya—influenced by East German intelligence and supplied by other Soviet Bloc states—was so active in Central America that the U.S. Department of State felt the need to publish a 1986 report detailing then Colonel Muammar al-Qaddafi's state activities there.[25] Nicaragua was thus a chapter in a fast-moving global saga. By August 1983, a member of the U.S. House Armed Services Committee informed constituents:

> Nicaragua is host to 5,000 Cuban civilian advisors, 2,000 Cuban military advisors, about 70 Soviet advisors, and others from East Germany, Bulgaria. . . . In anticipation of receiving Soviet MIG fighters on their own soil, Nicaraguan pilots are now training in Bulgaria. . . . The Nicaraguan intelligence service . . . is completely organized and directed by the Soviet KGB and Cuban intelligence officers, according to a former Nicaraguan agent who has fled his country.[26]

Earlier, the Carter administration responded to the insurgent Sandinistas by terminating aid to the Somoza dictatorship and moving food

[24] See Harold W. Rood, "Cuba: Payment Deferred," *National Review*, 27 November 1981.

[25] *Libyan Activities in the Western Hemisphere* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, 1986). One pro-Reagan group of the time was giving away a poster with a photograph of al-Qaddafi and Nicaragua's Daniel Ortega together aboard a ship. When Contras attacked a Sandinista training camp in Santa Clara, they killed Libyans as well as Cubans. See *San Francisco Examiner*, 9 September 1984. That year, in a ceremony with Borge, al-Qaddafi effused on how "we have fought along with Nicaragua some miles away from America" and sent Libyan arms and fighters to back the Sandinistas. Separately, it is known that arms aid flowed from Libya in 1981 and 1982. David B. Ottaway, "Mecca Plot Described by Qaddafi: Libyans Urged to Drop Plan for Seizing of Mosque," *Washington Post*, 2 September 1984, A29.

[26] James A. Courter, "Central America: Freedom at Stake," *Courier-News* (Plainfield, NJ), 18 August 1983. Two months later, the United States captured the island of Grenada, first because American medical students had been taken hostage en masse, and second because of the hundreds of armed Cubans and other Soviet Bloc assets there. Courter, a former Peace Corps volunteer in Venezuela, also wrote at length on it in "The Nicaraguan Crisis," *Defense Science*, October/November 1985. Some of his political papers on the "Reagan Doctrine" and Central American topics are reprinted in Courter, *Defending Democracy*, ed. Mark Lipsitz (Washington, DC: American Studies Center, 1986). Bulgaria had involvements with Nicaragua. For example, a Bulgarian freighter in early November 1984 delivered military helicopters, antiaircraft weapons, and radar to the port city of El Bluff. The helicopters would operate with grave effect against the Contras until U.S.-supplied General Dynamics FIM-43 Redeye missiles countermanded them tactically in 1987.

assistance and other economic aid, worth approximately $100 million, to the incoming Sandinista regime. The White House imagined that its help was humanitarian, not political. Assurances were asked, and given, about Nicaraguans' liberties, but even Carter saw the Sandinista government as the development of a new Nicaraguan dictatorship, basically the equivalent of an anti-American Somoza regime.[27] Carter ended his term by signing an intelligence finding that authorized covert support to Nicaraguans holding on as democratic elements.[28] Emergent trends were negative. Internally, the Sandinistas increased repressive measures. Externally, the government had created a third level of problems and proxies by acting as a conduit for "weapons and equipment sent by Cuba" reaching Marxist rebels in El Salvador.[29] The outgoing Carter administration also froze its last increment of aid to Sandinista Nicaragua.[30]

The incoming Reagan administration kept the freeze, did a reappraisal, and then authorized new covert aid to democratic opposition in Nicaragua, which was approved by December 1981. The new Republican team also wrapped the Central American challenge within its enunciated foreign policy objectives that included opposing the "Soviet Empire"

[27] Interview with Merrick Carey, chief of staff to a member of Congress, Rayburn Building, Washington, DC, 1985.

[28] Martha L. Cottam, "The Carter Administration's Policy toward Nicaragua: Images, Goals, and Tactics," *Political Science Quarterly* 107, no. 1 (1992): 123–46, https://doi.org/10.2307/2152137.

[29] Inouye and Hamilton, *Report of the Congressional Committees Investigating the Iran-Contra Affair*, 27. News reports recorded that multiple defectors from the Salvadoran rebel movement testified to their personal experience takings arms, training, or both from Cuba and Nicaragua for their own fighting in El Salvador. For profiles of the *political* views of some defectors from the Sandinistas, see the United States Department of State report *In Their Own Words: Testimony of Nicaraguan Exiles* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1986).

[30] Sandinistas in Managua held a giant demonstration in April 1981, which included banners and slogans suggesting two contradictory arguments: the government-run rally reaffirmed national "dignity" and "sovereignty," while also denouncing the end of U.S. assistance to their regime as "economic aggression" and "interventionism." See *Los Angeles Times*, 3 April 1981, quoting the Sandinista newspaper *Barricada*, and the *Los Angeles Times*, 7 April 1981, quoting Daniel Ortega. In a very different approach, *Christian Science Monitor,* 2 April 1981, argued that ending U.S. aid to Managua was foolish as it undercut Nicaraguan "moderates who have been trying to stem the Central American country's left-wing drift." The author doubts there was a drift; the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) founders had worked with Cuba since 1961 and their revolutionary regime's direction was principled and *set down* in Managua nearly two years before the aforementioned press articles. Jon Lee Anderson, *Che Guevara: A Revolutionary Life*, rev. ed. (New York: Grove Press, 2010), 376–79, 510–11.

and its regional thrusts, such as their "Cuban destabilizing activities" in the Caribbean and its fighting roles in southern Africa. This policy would be set in a classified *National Security Decision Directive 75, U.S. Relations with the USSR* (NSDD 75). All the key players on the new foreign policy team approved covert aid to the Contras.[31] Fatally, about half of the men and women of the United States legislative branch did not share their view. Indeed, Congress flipped back and forth, on the smallest of numerical voting margins, during the next five years. It is no exaggeration to say that Congress embarrassed itself; it was a display of that fickleness in popular government that worried ancient Greek philosophers—however much they loved democracy.[32]

Making low intensity war in and around Nicaragua was a strategy that accented the difference between two U.S. policy options: containment—preventing the spread of Communism—versus rollback—reversing the Communist gains, such as in Hungary and Cuba. Debates that careened through the House of Representatives and Senate in the 1980s did not often use those two words but the elected did sometimes focus on this conceptual and vital issue. Was the Reagan administration's policy against the Soviets and their proxies to create rollback? This venerable option was first discussed during the administration of Dwight D. Eisenhower had never been official policy, but it received strong consideration throughout the Cold War.[33] Some thought working to take back Soviet gains was too dangerous; prudence and sobriety trumped idealism. Others were willing to contest such territories. For instance, President John F. Kennedy green lit the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) operation that resulted in anti-Castro Cuban proxies invading the island at the Bay of Pigs in April 1961, resulting in failure. Despite doing so, his

[31] *National Security Decision Directive 75, U.S. Relations with the USSR* (Washington, DC: White House, 17 January 1983).

[32] If these words seem strong, they express the author's experience and views as a legislative aide there, 1985–88. See Christopher C. Harmon, "The Crisis Points to a Deeper Problem," Public Research, Syndicated, 3 December 1986.

[33] While this summary of intra-American discussion and debate is the author's, the reader should consult the second edition of a classic: John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy During the Cold War*, rev. ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

decision to withhold some U.S. air support for those proxies illustrates a hesitation to embrace rollback.[34] Since the United States never accepted rollback as official policy, debates typically centered on varied strategies for containment. For example, Kennedy and his three successors fought for Indochina, with the lesser objective of resisting Communist advances, a battle Washington eventually lost.

Reagan was not one to commit publicly to either rhetorical tradition. His administration often described a regional strategy of blocking Cuban and Soviet weapons reaching Nicaragua as well as preventing those already in Nicaragua from reaching insurgents in nearby democratic countries. Yet, their loud call for freedom in Nicaragua could suggest much more than containment. What emerged late in the first term was more than defense and was probably aimed at rolling back Soviet *gains* in Central America and elsewhere.[35] Reagan was careful in proceeding, given his good sense for American politics and, doubtless, his personal memories of how Franklin D. Roosevelt eased the United States into preparedness for World War II. The new name for U.S. policy in the 1980s would not be rollback or anything so suggestive of an American offensive. The new name, supplied by others than the president, would be the Reagan Doctrine.

THE REAGAN DOCTRINE

Jack Wheeler, a globe trotter and founder of the Freedom Research Foundation, was the most important figure thinking about how to bring together the anti-Communist fighters scattered around the world in the first years of the 1980s. Wheeler went to find them, aided in part by the

[34] After the Bay of Pigs, the United States continued trying to change Cuba. "From November 1961 to October 1962 a Special Group (Augmented), whose membership . . . (included) Attorney General Robert Kennedy and General Taylor (as Chairman), had responsibility for Operation Mongoose, a major covert action program aimed at overthrowing the Castro regime in Cuba." Air Force Gen Edward G. Lansdale coordinated the operations with the CIA and Departments of State and Defense. "The CIA units in Washington and Miami had primary responsibility for implementing Mongoose operations, which included military, sabotage, and political propaganda programs." "Note on U.S. Covert Actions," in *Afghanistan*, vol. 12, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1977–1980* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, 2018), xxxviii.

[35] Malcolm Byrne, *Iran-Contra: Reagan's Scandal and the Unchecked Abuse of Presidential Power* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2014), 18.

libertarian *Reason* magazine for which he wrote in-depth political travelogue and analysis.[36] He met leaders of active movements and protoinsurgencies, celebrated their causes and conflicts, told them about each other, talked up their prospects, and emphasized global thinking about local endeavors. Challenging an American security establishment that favored stability over revolution, Wheeler called for more instability, more resistance, more guerrilla wars, and more self-assertion against despots armed by overseas Soviet Bloc actors. His song of freedom had verses about Cambodians, Nicaraguans, Afghans, Angolans, and Mozambicans, all indigenous people fighting foreign proxy security forces. His chorus sounded for the Reagan Doctrine that could bring them all into harmony.

Reagan's speechwriters, including Dana Rohrabacher (later a California representative), brought Wheeler to the Old Executive Office Building beside the White House in November 1983 to debrief his travels in Nicaragua's borderlands, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, and his encounters with fighters and political militants.[37] Wheeler began occasionally meeting with William Casey or his National Security Council designee Constantine C. Menges. He also met Secretary of State George P. Shultz and again with Reagan, for whom he had campaigned in a California

[36] For example, see Jack Wheeler, "Fighting the Soviet Imperialists: The New Liberation Movements," *Reason*, June/July 1985, 36–44; and Wheeler, "From Rovuma to Maputo: Mozambique's Guerrilla War," *Reason*, December 1985, 31–38. As a congressional aide supporting Reagan Doctrine issues, the author did not favor a U.S. security partnership with rebels in Mozambique called RENAMO. The author wrote a memo arguing that, despite being anti-Communists, (a) their hands had too much civilian blood and (b) their interest in governance in areas they controlled seemed minimal. Anyone aiding them would have to answer for them. Luckily for this young aide, Representative Courter agreed; he signed many bills and "Dear Colleague" letters for other Reagan Doctrine aid recipients but declined to advocate for RENAMO.

[37] A press secretary to Ronald Regan in two elections, Dana Rohrabacher became a speechwriter in the White House between 1981 and 1988 and played a key role in developing the Reagan Doctrine, according to his friend Jack Wheeler. Rohrabacher later served multiple terms in the House of Representatives through 2018. Wheeler's recollection in 2019 was that this meeting occurred just before Thanksgiving at the Eisenhower Executive Office Building, formerly known as the Old Executive Office Building; another report suggests it was in the White House proper. Thanks to 2019 liaison work of Maj Timothy F. Reimann and Maj Ian T. Brown, working with the author at the Brute Krulak Center, Marine Corps University, for two interviews of Dr. Wheeler, Skype, 29 July and 18 September 2019.

state election.[38] Working the halls of Congress, Wheeler made good impressions.[39] Allies there included Senator Gordon Humphrey (R-NH) and Representative Charles N. Wilson (D-TX), both known for supporting aid to the Afghan mujahideen. Columnist Charles Krauthammer wrote a 1985 *Time* feature labeling this conception and international enterprise the "Reagan Doctrine."[40] The next year, a reporter did a light and long profile on Wheeler in the *Washington Post*.[41] In early 1986, Wheeler's liaison work led to a gathering of several leaders of the mujahideen armies in Afghanistan; Jonas Savimbi of Angola; and Adolfo Calero of the Contras in a Washington, DC, hotel ballroom. They heard an address by Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, the tough political commentator and professor who became Reagan's ambassador to the United Nations.[42] The president's team was using the doctrine as a conceptual framework for America's ongoing aid programs for "freedom fighters," of which the president spoke directly and frequently, such as his reference in the State of the Union speech in 1985.[43] Reagan found a way to turn the tables on his domestic critics as well as his Soviet Bloc enemies. Emphasizing the work of freedom fighters abroad made it hard for his opponents to disparage "Reagan's

[38] Political scientist Beth A. Fischer attributes the Reagan Doctrine to Secretary Shultz but lacks good evidence for so doing. Also, notably, she abruptly dismisses that doctrine: "This promise of interventionism was nothing new." Fischer, *The Myth of Triumphalism: Rethinking President Reagan's Cold War Legacy* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2020), 37–38. While her book is of interest, it misses the doctrine's original aspects and good effects, and partly for that reason it fails to appreciate how the Cold War was won. Reagan's strategy can be seen as a modified form of "roll back," a classic policy option of containment years that had been much discussed but not explicitly tried.

[39] Working in the Rayburn House Office Building in Washington, DC, the author was among the staffers in a visit by Wheeler (early 1986) and found his briefing invigorating and promising. He had been promoting the concept for more than two years.

[40] Charles Krauthammer, "The Reagan Doctrine," *Time*, 1 April 1985.

[41] Sidney Blumenthal, "Jack Wheeler's Adventures with 'Freedom Fighters'," *Washington Post*, 16 April 1986, D1.

[42] Jeane Kirkpatrick and Wheeler were friends and allies. While fostering an international network of anti-Communist armies, Wheeler was a house guest at Kirkpatrick's and in a conversation pushed the notion that even *one* real victory anywhere could have a global effect, profoundly damaging Soviet prestige, psychology, and control of its empire. As he dangled that possibility, Kirkpatrick told him "Jack, they'll never let that happen." To which he rejoined politely: "Well, *they* may not have anything to say about it!," Wheeler, Skype interview, 24 July 2019.

[43] "Transcript of Reagan's 1985 State of the Union," CNN, posted 1 February 2005.

reactionary and distant wars," due to its framing as an idealistic plan for aiding others in their struggles and a furtherance of America's age-old revolutionary hopes. It was a political–military innovation by a man whom many popular nonfiction writers and reporters were mocking as a lethargic former actor who was too old for the job.[44]

UPS AND DOWNS: U.S. POLITICAL SUPPORT TO THE CONTRAS

As a substate actor, Nicaragua's Contras had little legal claim to U.S. support. Both the Contras and the White House argued that Managua was responsible for a rampant export of violence and Communist substate actors into the region, to the detriment of Costa Rica, Honduras, and El Salvador. All three would be allies to Washington during long parts of this struggle. The subversion they faced from Managua was strong, underscored by Sandinista proclamations about their "borderless revolution" and numerous trips to Moscow by Daniel and Humberto Ortega and other top Sandinistas.[45] Managua's profile in the Americas also was not helped as it formed diplomatic relations with every single country on the U.S. Department of State's formal list of state sponsors of terrorism, such as al-Qaddafi's Libya. The White House was confident such behavior made it reasonable to check these Sandinista exports with counteraction by a Contra force. In 1986, the International Court of Justice at the Hague refused that argument insofar as it applied to the CIA's use of Latin proxies to mine Nicaraguan harbors to inhibit further Soviet arms deliveries by sea.[46] Contras certainly felt they had a good moral claim to fighting for their freedom, and the future of their

[44] Examples of the many critics of the president's abilities were Lou Cannon and certain other columnists for the *Washington Post* or other national newspapers, author Haynes Johnson, and wide feeling in the hierarchies of U.S. higher education. For example, see Haynes Johnson, *Sleepwalking through History: America in the Reagan Years* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2003). Much of America's scientific community was against the purported foolishness of Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative (deprecated as "Star Wars"). But Gen Sec Mikhail Gorbachev took it seriously, and the USSR already had a (limited) strategic defense capability.

[45] Robert P. Hager and Robert S. Snyder, "The United States and Nicaragua: Understanding the Breakdown in Relations," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 17, no. 2 (2015): 3–35.

[46] *Military and Paramilitary Activities in and against Nicaragua (Nicaragua v. United States of America): Merits, Judgment* (The Hague, Netherlands: International Court of Justice, 1986).

country, and they easily elicited a moral and political promise from the White House.

Being diverse and often local in focus, the Contras suffered for organization at times.[47] This in turn made it more difficult to garner diplomatic favor, let alone formal recognition—something any insurgency seeks overseas while fighting at home. Foreign recognition is a legal game changer when combined with a foreign capital's declaration of a state of belligerency. Under traditional international law, such moves by a foreign government may clear its way to support rebels.[48] For the Contras, no foreign government made such a declaration. The Organization of American States, which had acted to unseat the Somoza government but not constrained the Sandinista government, never took the opportunity either. Similarly, no outside parties were willing to declare this conflict as a "civil war," which again would have invited more direct foreign participation.[49] In political and legal terms, contemporary global conversations focused on partisan allegations about foreign aid, whether for the Sandinistas or the Contras. Cubans and Warsaw Pact assets aided the Nicaraguan government as did some socialist-leaning Scandinavian governments and other West European states. The United States and a few other quiet helpers had smaller programs aiding dissidents and armed rebels. Honduras and Costa Rica permitted the Con-

[47] For its part, the Byrne volume, nearly always critical of the U.S.-Contra partnership, repeatedly describes the Contras as riven with faction, but of course faction is a defining characteristic of real democracy. Byrne, *Iran-Contra*, 176.

[48] International lawyers would have recalled that when five Andean Community countries recognized the Sandinistas as a "belligerent" in mid-1979, it advanced the cause of those revolutionaries against Somoza. Jessica A. Stanton, "Rebel Groups, International Humanitarian Law, and Civil War Outcomes in the Post-Cold War Era," *International Organization* 74, no. 3 (2020): 523–59, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818320000090.

[49] Worse still, our congressional office thought, many democratic state allies of the United States were sending aid to the Nicaraguan government when all such aid was controlled entirely by the Sandinistas. These foreign democracies included India, Canada, and Spain. We objected via an op-ed. See James A. Courter, "And Look Who Is Aiding Managua," *Philadelphia (PA) Inquirer*, 11 August 1986.

tras military training grounds and safe havens, even as the Sandinistas sometimes staged cross-border punitive raids on them.[50]

The U.S. House of Representatives *might* have begun to change the legal terms of debate. Continuing Resolution 41 called for breaking diplomatic relations with Managua. Such formal action is unusual but not without precedent. Washington broke diplomatic relations with the Somoza regime just before the Sandinistas' victory in 1979. Previously, Washington refused to establish relations with the new Communist government in Moscow after the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 and never recognized the Soviets' annexation of the Baltic Republics after 1945. Early in 1987, therefore, Representative James A. Courter (R-NJ) offered the bill. Cosponsors included Representatives Trent Lott (R-MS), Jack Kemp (R-CA), Ron Packard (R-CA), F. James Sensenbrenner (R-WI), Robert S. Walker (R-PA), Newton L. Gingrich (R-GA), Jon L. Kyle (R-AZ), Henry J. Hyde (R-IL), and other Republicans who supported the president's Central America policy, numbers insufficient to pass the resolution. The resolution's language declared the new regime worse than Somoza's, which the United States helped discredit through votes in the Organization of American States. For example, it recorded that "the Sandinistas have constructed ten new prisons to hold political prisoners, of which there are now more than 6,500, or ten times more than the number held by Somoza." The bill summarized Sandinista threats to regional integrity that had been voiced by Costa Rica, El Salvador, and Honduras, each speaking through diplomatic channels.[51]

[50] Another country mentioned for tendering early limited Contra support is Argentina. Roger Peace, "Cold War Interventionism, 1945–1990," U.S. Foreign Policy History and Resource Guide, 2019.

[51] *A Concurrent Resolution Expressing the Sense of the Congress that the President Should Break Diplomatic Relations with the Government of Nicaragua, Extend Recognition to the Nicaraguan Resistance as a Legitimate Force Pursuing the Democratization of Nicaragua, and Employ the Forum of the Organization of the American States to Press for Democracy in Nicaragua*, H.Con.Res. 41, 110th Cong. (1987). Notably, the bill ended with a call for Reagan to "explicitly recognize the Nicaraguan resistance as a legitimate force pursuing the democratization of Nicaragua." The administration never did so formally.

This bill recommended moving beyond failures and hopes that the Sandinistas would widen their political tent at home:

> Instead of pressing the Sandinistas to accommodate their many Nicaraguan opponents, something they refuse to do, the U.S. should be working to delegitimate their regime, militarily and politically, at home and abroad. . . . The White House (should act) by formally breaking relations with Managua. It could take another [step] by extending limited diplomatic recognition to the UNO, the United Nicaraguan Opposition umbrella organization.[52]

There was to be no unrecognition of the Nicaraguan government and no end to political battles over Central American aid policies on Capitol Hill. Whereas debates on aid to non-Communists in Angola were more civil, these on Contra aid hit closer to home, near American borders, and many domestic constituencies had major interests invested, which was not true of the more distant Reagan Doctrine countries. As a result, the language on Nicaragua was often harsh and sharp. More unfortunate was the way debates created interim decisions, at best, not real strategic plans. Covert aid began reaching Contra fighters in late 1981. A House of Representatives vote on an appropriations bill went against it in 1982 by connecting an amendment, which was written by Representative Edward Boland (R-MA) and directed a halt to the use of congressional monies as the legislature has the power to do under the Constitution. The ban applied where such funds were "for the purpose of overthrowing the Government of Nicaragua," which the White House

[52] James A. Courter, "It's Time to Break Ties with Managua," *New York Post*, 3 February 1987. The editorial endorsed wider aid to "non-Communist resistance movements in Laos, Cambodia, Afghanistan and Angola."

denied as an aim.[53] The following year, Congress reversed course and approved $27 million in aid for the Contras. In 1984, however, a second, stronger Boland Amendment blocked all aid.[54] In the next two years, Congress still voted on the aid packages in spite of the amendment. The House first voted "no" on Contra aid, and then "yes." The following year, Congress approved an additional $100 million—four times more than ever before—as the Boland ban was to "sunset." Yet, a few congressional seats changed hands in November 1986 elections and voting and policy confusion resumed.[55] Despite these issues, approximately $72 million in all had flowed to the Contras after 1984.[56] A Reagan backer in the Senate, Orrin Hatch (R-UT), later bemoaned this pitching about on policy.[57] One can imagine what thoughts needful Contra leaders and planners suppressed about their senior partner to the north. They were living with an inherent danger of proxy warfare: changes in plans by the stronger party.

[53] The Senate agreed in conference to the House initiative and, in December 1984, it became law. A congressional report details Boland's amendments. The report also notes that the White House declared policy had two features: holding the Sandinistas to their promises on democracy and pluralism and checking the growth of Communism in Central America. Inouye and Hamilton, *Report of the Congressional Committees Investigating the Iran-Contra Affair*, 3, 31. The Reagan administration did not say these required overthrowing the government in Managua, although more than a few Americans suspected that too was policy. Reagan's opponents routinely used the charged term *overthrow*. Jack Wheeler's early and flattering profile of the Contras argued that the Nicaraguan dissidents were "trying to overthrow the Marxist Sandinista government." Wheeler, "Fighting the Soviet Imperialists: The Contras in Nicaragua," *Reason*, June/July 1984.

[54] "The Boland Amendment," memorandum from J. R. Sharfen to W. Robert Pearson (Washington, DC: National Security Council, 23 August 1985).

[55] Harmon, "The Crisis Points to a Deeper Problem." This was one of the articles written for P.R.S./the Claremont Institute, a think tank in California that has helped several hundred young writers and analysts reach the public prints. The essay argues that congressional fickleness whipsawed the aid recipients trying to run a guerrilla war in the field. Quint Hoekstra offers a similar argument, adding that while people assume foreign state support is an advantage to rebels, "it is not always an effective mechanism" and U.S. sponsorship so often fluctuated that it proved of limited effectiveness to the Contras. Hoekstra, "Helping the Contra," 534–35.

[56] See Raymond W. Copson, *Contra Aid and the Reagan Doctrine*, Issue Brief 87005 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 1986), 4.

[57] Inouye and Hamilton, *Report of the Congressional Committees Investigating the Iran-Contra Affair*, 665.

Although the executive branch had argued a reasonable and principled position for Contra aid, it was compromised by scandal by 1987. Evidence indicated that the National Security Council (NSC) secretly used money that was illegal, foreign, or both to perpetuate White House policy. Press inquiries found unusual foreign proxies, such as Brunei, had sent donations for the Contras to the NSC. Critics said this was illegal, although the fiscal year intelligence bill authorization made it permissible.[58] Washington bribed Tehran to free American hostages held by their proxies, such as Hezbollah, in Lebanon, while shipping old U.S.-made missiles overseas to the Contras, arranging some of this via top Israelis. Some close students of government were sure this was illegal and most Americans agreed it was a tragic mess. Few of the actors involved in the Iran-Contra Affair escaped criticism and nearly a dozen of them, including Oliver North, then-Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Elliot Abrams, and White House officials, faced legal charges.[59]

The scandal inflamed political opponents of both Reagan and the Contras. Earlier, they denied that Nicaragua was a new Communist dictatorship and that the Contras had any just cause to rebel. As the debate about Contra aid continued, they also denied that the United States could legally support the group. Lyndon B. Johnson's former attorney general, Ramsey Clark; future mayor of New York City Bill de Blasio; democratic socialist senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT); leftist militants such as Robert B. Avakian, the chairman of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA; and a thousand others warmed the political climate,

[58] Byrne, *Iran-Contra*, 208–9, 225.

[59] The Iran Contra Committee was interested in whether crimes had been committed, but it was neither convened to determine that, however, nor did it have authority to do so. Separately, a dozen administration figures were charged with breaking laws, with very mixed results. Many were not convicted; numerous charges were later dismissed, vacated on appeal, or for another reason were dropped. Dennis Teti's service on the committee left him prepared to say that no one, having so served, doubted that this affair had many bizarre aspects unsuitable to proper governance, and that the handling of funds was particularly inappropriate. Prominent journalist Bill Moyers was a far stronger critic when hosting a *Frontline* documentary portraying many of the White House players as dirtied by the affair by their lying, deletion of records, and even criminal behavior. *Frontline*, episode 6, "High Crimes & Misdemeanors: The Iran Contra Scandal," directed by Sherry Jones and Foster Wiley, hosted by Bill Moyer, aired 27 November 1990 on PBS, transcript.

so that leaflets full of indignation blossomed on city telephone poles and at university auditoriums. Among those marching and manifesting opposition to Reagan's policy were members of Christian churches. Some Roman Catholics (e.g., members of Maryknoll missionary organizations) had accepted the concepts of "liberation theology," a mixture of communalism and religion that voiced "progressive" causes of the time such as opposition to El Salvador's government and indulgence of Nicaragua's ruling party.[60] Ironically, the new Nicaragua was brutalizing the Roman Catholic Church.[61] Yet, some Catholics in the United States thought that American policy was worsening the violence in Nicaragua and El Salvador. One organization in America, the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES), used community-based activism, empowering the CISPES national office to lobby in Washington, DC, and to organize public disruptions and demonstrations. Reportedly, CISPES was actually giving private money to the guerrillas fighting in El Salvador.[62] Certainly, the CISPES chapters on U.S. campuses were numerous and vocal. Older leftist and liberal constituencies aided their work, as did more than a few members

[60] Gustavo Gutiérrez's book was a seminal text. Someone observed that "he baptizes Marxism." Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation*, trans. and ed. Caridad Inda and John Eagleson (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1973).

[61] Michael Radu and others noted the defrocked or dissident priests in the Sandinista hierarchy, with credentials that included religion and politics, pressed the cause of "liberation theology." One example was Ernesto Cardenal, ordained priest, poet, and author. In his 1974 publication, which is an archetype of "political pilgrimage," Cardenal recounts his visits to Cuba in 1970 and 1971. The volume is dedicated "to the Cuban People and to Fidel." He wrote about disembarking from a Russian plane in Havana and being impressed by bulletin boards along the road to the capital with such slogans as "Our Battlefield Covers the Whole World." Cardenal, *In Cuba*, trans. D. D. Walsh (New York: New Directions Books, 1974). A related problem became routine on the ground in Nicaragua: Sandinista protesters or mobs blocked access to masses, smashed church property, harassed priests, and deterred worshipers from services. Brave reporters in Nicaragua as well as State Department reports covered the harassment. See also John Norton Moore, *The Secret War in Central America* (Lanham, MD: University Publications of America, 1987), 16.

[62] Steven F. Hayward, *The Age of Reagan: The Conservative Counterrevolution, 1980–1989* (New York: Crown Forum, 2009), 536. This well-written general presentation includes America's Contra debate and the Iran-Contra hearings and is especially useful on the executive-versus-legislative branch dispute. Dr. Hayward does not attempt a full account of the Reagan Doctrine; for example, there are only a few words on Angola, Savimbi, and UNITA.

of Congress, such as Representatives Barney Frank (D-MA) and Edward J. Markey (D-MA) as well as many delegates from California.[63]

For its part, the White House engaged in wide efforts on numerous Central American issues. The Department of State created an Office of Public Diplomacy for Latin America, headed by Ambassador Otto J. Reich. It sent material to editorial writers connected to U.S. newspapers and conducted public briefings by regional studies experts and diplomats. Congressional staffers, among others interested in Latin America, regularly attended these. The efforts were sometimes pilloried as "white propaganda" and "public relations lobbying at tax-payer expense."[64] The latter accusation, however, was less clear when it came to finding aid for the Contras. Private friends of the Reagan administration became involved, sometimes donating impressive sums of their own money. Indeed, one key aspect that the congressional committee that investigated the Iran-Contra Affair centered on was U.S. officials who had met pri-

[63] Few U.S. congresspeople actually supported the Communist front FMLN, which fought a guerrilla war on Marxist-Leninist principles in El Salvador in the 1980s, although some did help CISPES, which the minority report of the Iran-Contra Committee suggested included a leader of the guerrillas. Many contemporary observers, including the author, believed that CISPES was advocating revolution in El Salvador. As of spring 2020, the still-active group's website section on its history mocks older FBI investigations on whether they were a "foreign agent." Yet, the same page boasts of campaign support for FMLN (Salvadoran) candidates in post-2000 elections, most likely allowing the statement because these candidates now work openly for votes and no longer run a guerrilla war. That conflict is politicized even today. One think tank, which has done much good work on insurgency, published this indefensible paragraph in a recent chapter about the war: "The FMLN's primary goals were policy-oriented. They included coercing the Salvadoran government to transition to a democratic political system and ending its repressive internal security apparatus, as well as instituting key social and economic changes, such as land reform." El Salvador today is democratic; in the 1980s, the FMLN front was nondemocratic and antidemocratic. As to reform, Marxist-Leninists like those running the front in the 1980s despise reforms because they undercut impetus for full revolution. Land reform, in this case, would have been mass collectivization, not redistribution. Numerous historic examples, including the Bolsheviks in Russia and the Communist Party in Vietnam, illustrate that the revolutionaries promise "land" but then subsume most private land for the new state. Marxist-Leninists understand their strategy and process; liberal reformers sometimes do not.

[64] Inouye and Hamilton, *Report of the Congressional Committees Investigating the Iran-Contra Affair*, 34. The comptroller-general found against the new office on certain grounds and was especially concerned about the work of Mr. Jonathan Miller. The author attended one of the White House briefings, finding it demonstrated a growing focus in U.S. strategic interests.

vately with prospective donors to the Contras.[65] "Public-private partnerships" are usually praised in Washington, but this one was unusual.[66] Oliver North and others viewed this type of public-private partnership as a legitimate way to avoid violating the Boland Amendment, which had barred the use of public funds. Republicans who took part in the investigation and wrote a minority report argued that no law or constitutional provision could bar administration officials from talking to the Contras or encouraging foreigners or private American citizens to offer aid to Nicaraguans.[67] Others thought if private American citizens gave aid that was "lethal" it could violate the U.S. Neutrality Acts.[68] Still, private citizens were approached and contributed. By the end of the 1980s, the inflow involved tens of millions of dollars and its management by a few NSC staffers produced bizarre accounting difficulties, which for some observers represented a threat to good governance.[69]

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[65] Harmon, interview with Teti. As a staffer on the Iran-Contra Committee, Teti notes congressional "fascination" with the sequencing of the typical meetings that put a Contra representative in the room with private U.S. potential donors in the mid-1980s. No American official ever solicited funds, technically, but sometimes an official such as Oliver North would give a sophisticated slide briefing on Nicaraguan security affairs and the Contras and then leave the room. A person associated with the Contra enterprise might then ask the prospective donor for a contribution. Joseph Coors, the beer brewer, was among those who gave money, knowing that official U.S. aid had ended or was interrupted. The report on the Iran Contra Affair names others who collected private funds for the Contras, including Carl Channell. Inouye and Hamilton, *Report of the Congressional Committees Investigating the Iran-Contra Affair.*

[66] The Smith-Mundt Act, passed during the early Cold War, sought to prevent the U.S. government from "propagandizing" its own citizens. It barred government from making readily available the kind of strategic messaging it routinely did to affect overseas populations. The bar applied even where the information was all true. See The U.S. Information and Educational Exchange Act of 1948, Pub. L. No. 80-402 (1948). This well-intended law was not without ill effects; in the 1980s and 1990s, most citizens did not know of and could not access excellent media programs prepared by, say, the Voice of America or Radio Marti (aimed at Cuba). After 2000, experts on public diplomacy, as at the Washington, DC-based Institute of World Politics, worked for a modification of the act and succeeded. See Smith-Mundt Modernization Act of 2012, H.R. 5736, 112th Cong. (2012).

[67] Inouye and Hamilton, *Report of the Congressional Committees Investigating the Iran-Contra Affair*, 489.

[68] "The Neutrality Acts, 1930s," Office of the Historian, U.S. State Department, accessed 19 October 2022; and "The Counterrevolutionaries (The Contras)" from the project "Understanding the Iran-Contra Affairs," Brown.edu, accessed 19 September 2022.

[69] Maarja Krusten, *GAO: Reporting the Facts, 1981–1996: The Charles A. Bowsher Years* (Washington, DC: Government Accountability Office, 2018), 111–13.

INTELLIGENCE COORDINATION AND DIRECTION

The CIA, like the NSC, was a driver in Contra aid, mainly because Director William Casey was both a powerful advocate and a personal friend of the president. As congressional resistance to aid stiffened, Casey and his team were increasingly scrutinized. On one occasion, when Congress imposed a temporary ban on U.S. intelligence being provided to the Contras by the Defense Department or the CIA, Lieutenant Colonel North either passed intelligence to Contra leaders, with whom he was in continuous contact, or used a citizen named Richard Owens as a courier of intelligence. When the Soviet Bloc delivered Soviet-made Mil Mi-24D Hind-D attack helicopters to the Sandinista army, North went to the CIA and Defense Department—although his duty station was in neither bureaucracy, acquired information on where the helicopters were, and then passed this intelligence personally to Contra leader Adolfo Calero. North reportedly provided this and other protected information, including details on Soviet Bloc ships delivering arms and maps showing fixed positions of Sandinista forces.[70] As leaks and media revelations made interactions increasingly public, Casey began to fear that Congress could "catch" his agency for indiscrete or illegal intelligence activity on the Contras' behalf.[71]

More widely, fissures developed in the administration. Secretary of Defense Caspar W. Weinberger and Secretary of State George P. Shultz, influential but not decisive players, each went on internal record opposing certain actions helping Contra forces. There was also dissent when it came to light that the CIA mined Nicaraguan harbors to stop ship-borne deliveries of Communist-bloc arms, some of which were being routed to other Central American quarrels.[72] Other secrecy breaches would follow.

In 1986, the cover blew off the efforts by the White House to work around the Boland Amendments. Certainly, the executive branch was

[70] Inouye and Hamilton, *Report of the Congressional Committees Investigating the Iran-Contra Affair*, 40–41, 43, 497, 505.
[71] William Casey believed in the Reagan Doctrine, spoke out for something like it early on, and compared what the United States was doing with eighteenth-century French covert aid to American revolutionaries against England. Krusten, *GAO: Reporting the Facts, 1981–1996.*
[72] *Los Angeles Times*, 12 April 1984; and *Progress Bulletin* (Pomona, CA), 16 April 1984.

aware of its solid basis within the Constitution for acting with "secrecy" and "dispatch" of the kinds Alexander Hamilton and other founders deemed essential to any government—including those with broad legislative bodies—and a significant minority in Congress sought to protect the executive's power in foreign policy. Critics felt the Hamiltonian argument crossed an equally well-known demand in democracies for "transparency" and, in the case of Contra aid, they underscored that Congress, not the president, held the power to make war.[73] After the media exposure over the CIA's mining of harbors, Speaker of the House Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill (R-MA), respected Senator Daniel P. Moynihan (D-NY), and his Senate Intelligence Committee cochairman Barry M. Goldwater (R-AZ) all protested that they had been kept in the dark on this U.S. effort despite legal requirements for regular reporting on covert operations in accordance with oversight principles.[74] If the Reagan team could lose a conservative leader like Barry Goldwater, it lost yet more clout by breaching its own good principles against "trading arms for hostages" with Tehran. In 1985 and 1986, Reagan administration officials used a system to covertly sell U.S. missiles to Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps in an attempt to have Iran free hostages in Lebanon. The NSC gave proceeds from the sale to the Contras.[75] By right, the money was taxpayer funds generated by the sale of American property in violation of the Boland Amendments, which prohibited sending public funds to the Contras at that time.[76] Reagan would say later that he did not know of this "diversion"—which many people doubted—but that he was aware of third party and foreign donations to the Contras and supported those.[77]

[73] For more on the issue, see "Understanding the Iran-Contras Affair," Brown.edu, accessed 19 October 2022.
[74] Inouye and Hamilton, *Report of the Congressional Committees Investigating the Iran-Contra Affair*, 37.
[75] Iran's theocratic regime is protected by its Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps; the guard is among the Iranian sponsors of Hezbollah and other Lebanese terrorists who held Western hostages in Beirut. "Understanding the Iran-Contras Affair."
[76] This is the author's language, but see Inouye and Hamilton, *Report of the Congressional Committees Investigating the Iran-Contra Affair*, 269–76.
[77] "Understanding the Iran-Contras Affair."

While the American public may have forgiven covert actions and NSC machinations if done while the United States was in a state of open war, it did not accept these actions when involved in a covert war in what was considered peacetime. Some people hung the monikers "Contra-Gate" and "Pay-atollah" on this scheme.[78] Veteran senator Malcolm Wallop (R-WY) wrote in the journal *Strategic Review* that if there were a vital struggle, and if aid to freedom fighters including the Contras were an excellent idea, it should be done openly, not covertly.[79] The senator wanted an argument to ideals made straight-out to the public. The White House, on the other hand, contended that covert or semicovert aid was needed to prevent inflaming the region's opinion makers and giving the Sandinistas and Cubans fuel for their fires. "Deniability" was also a requisite for friendly governments surrounding Nicaragua and helping the United States, many American experts said. Jack Wheeler was among those to think Senator Wallop made a naïve argument. In a recent interview, he explained that the public acknowledgment of U.S. aid in the midst of their wars would have endangered too many potential partners.[80] For example, during the Soviet's invasion of Afghanistan, Pakistani authorities dispatched weapons to the mujahideen that Saudi, American, and other funds purchased and Pakistan wanted to keep this aid program secret.[81]

SUPPORT, DEPENDENCY, AND THE WANING OF THE CONTRAS

The Nicaraguan drama offered two distinct sets of sociopolitical groupings. On the one hand, there was messy debate and loud controver-

[78] Tom McArthur, "Idawanna Contragate," *American Speech* 62, no. 2 (1987): 187–89, https://doi.org/10.2307/455292.
[79] Malcolm Wallop, "U.S. Covert Action: Policy Tool or Policy Hedge?," *Strategic Review* (Summer 1984): 9–16.
[80] Wheeler, Skype interview, 24 July 2019.
[81] The Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and Pakistani armed services were involved in this long, successful effort against Soviet forces in Afghanistan. U.S. weapons flowed to Afghans via ISI. Ayman al-Zawahiri has written that his al-Qaeda—formed only by 1988/1989 and with almost no Afghan members—received no U.S. aid. See al-Zawahiri, *Knights Under the Prophet's Banner*, in *His Own Words: Translation and Analysis of the Writings of Dr. Ayman Al Zawahiri*, trans. Laura Mansfield (Old Tappan, NJ: TLG Publications, 2006). A later and very different group, Taliban, formed in the fall of 1994, years after the Soviet Army had left Afghanistan. The Taliban have always had Pakistani support.

sy dogging the steps that the Americans took to supply Contra fighters and other dissidents against the Sandinistas, which were in some sense proxies in accepting U.S. aid while lacking other foreign sources. On the other hand was the Soviet Bloc with its focused, usually silent, control of its public messaging and secret intelligence operations, pouring in aid of many kinds for the new revolutionary government. Meanwhile, by 1984, Nicaraguan armed forces received Soviet Bloc chemical weapons; military transport planes, fighters, and helicopters; some 100 medium tanks; hundreds of 9K32 Strela-2, also known as SAM-7, surface-to-air missiles; and 120 antiaircraft guns. To facilitate use of this new arsenal, there were Soviet Bloc advisors and managers, including 9,000 from Cuba—a country that also lived on Soviet subsidies.[82] Geopolitics in the region were changing for the worse for democracies.

Friction escalated as foreign allies to the United States were caught in the political swirls in Washington. Their exposure is not only unsurprising in a democratic world with a free press; it is a chief reason why many governments and substate actors decline in principle to take on a proxy or to accept proxy status even when they may want to do so, a theme explored in this volume's conclusion. The sultan of Brunei; Israelis; certain figures in Central American politics; Iranian dissidents as well as state agencies; and a range of private firms and mercenary outfits, such as the European arms company Defex and the American Secord Group, all became proxies of sorts and would all be named publicly as the American embarrassment unfolded. With appropriated Contra aid funds running low in 1984, Reagan's NSC and quiet partners, such as retired Army general John K. Singlaub, tapped into foreign funds for the first time. Administration officers including National Security Advisor Robert C. McFarlane claimed they kept the president apprised of at least some

[82] The *Foreign Report* (London), 29 November 1984, has these details on weapons. The chemical war gear delivery via Soviet freighter was reported by the *San Jose* (*CA*) *Mercury News*, 5 December 1984. Menges's sources indicate that "Soviet economic subvention amounted to about 25% of Cuba's annual gross national product, about $3 billion a year during the 1970s and about $5 billion a year during the 1980s. As a result Cuban economic dependence on the Soviet Union became far greater than its dependence on the United States had been in Batista's day." Menges, *The Twilight Struggle*, 240.

of these incoming gifts, which usually went directly into overseas bank accounts for the Contras.[83] Funds equaling tens of millions of dollars arrived at various Contra headquarters, such as those of Adolfo Calero, and were spent on masses of supplies and weapons to fight the Sandinista security forces. Oliver North was overworked but satisfied, once noting, "The FDN [a Contra organization] has well used the funds provided and has become an effective guerrilla army in less than a year."[84] The cash outlays, however, were also paving a direct path to congressional hearings, related legal proceedings, and a tumble in the prestige of the White House. The Reagan Doctrine was working as hoped in Afghanistan, but not so well in Nicaragua.

In 1985, political and military warfare continued on many sides in Central America. General Paul F. Gorman, U.S. Army head of U.S. Southern Command, testified that he could not see how the armed Nicaraguan resistance could win, calling their prospects "dim at best."[85] Determined, the NSC's team kept pushing what they called "Project Democracy" or "The Enterprise," using all manner of unofficial channels to keep support flowing to the Contras.[86] Supplies were airdropped from contracted aircraft, smuggled overland, and shipped in by private hands. Friends in neighboring nations labored and took great risks. Contra leaders remained popular with many in Congress and with the White House, enhancing their efforts to counteract the immense organizational powers

[83] In one detail of money reaching Contra leaders, a car pulled up outside the Old Executive Office Building in Washington, DC, where North's office was, a Nicaraguan indigenous leader was seated inside, and someone leaned into the car and handed the person cash as a "quid pro quo" for ceasing negotiations with the Sandinistas and instead joining the Contras. See Inouye and Hamilton, *Report of the Congressional Committees Investigating the Iran-Contra Affair*, 47. Miskito people opposed the new Sandinista despotism and were thus abused and punished, such as experiencing mass burnings of their villages. Twenty thousand Miskitos became refugees; some joined the fighting Contras. Wheeler, "Fighting the Soviet Imperialists."

[84] "FDN Military Operations," memorandum from Oliver L. North to Robert C. McFarlane (Washington, DC: National Security Council, 11 April 1985), 1.

[85] Later, however, in the spring of 1987, the head of Southern Command indicated the Contras *could* prevail. *Report of the Congressional Committees Investigating the Iran-Contra Affair: with Supplemental, Minority, and Additional Views*, 100th Cong., 1st Sess. (6 January 1987), 49.

[86] Michael Schaller, "The Iran-Contra Affair and the 'End' of the Cold War," in *Reckoning with Reagan: America and Its President in the 1980s* (New York: Oxford Academic, 1995), https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195090499.003.0006.

of the new Sandinista bureaucracy. In mid-1986, Reagan's allies in Congress enjoyed a major victory passing a measure for $100 million in aid, more than two-thirds of it in arms. In the next year, the Contras would receive U.S.-made General Dynamics FIM-43 Redeye surface-to-air missiles, which proved devastating to the Soviet helicopters Nicaragua was using. This was the largest, and the last, military package, however, followed later only by minimal "nonlethal" aid, and then a crushing "no" vote for small packages in February 1988.[87]

There were other signs of trouble. Allies in Washington began fading back, burned by the public exposure of a semicovert program of assistance. Human rights challenges, Sandinista propaganda through a New York law firm, and citizen activism inside the United States all had effects. Nicaraguan officials deepened population controls at home; accepted foreign aid; fostered external relations with centrist European states; entertained foreign terrorists and other ideological "internationalists"; and worked for new allies in such foreign constituencies as the Non-Aligned Movement, the Socialist International, and the United Nations.[88] All the while, Warsaw Pact countries continued to pour arms and economic aid into Nicaragua. American military aid to the Nicaraguan resistance, conversely, expired around February or March 1988.[89] Ever-fickle, Congress authorized nonmilitary aid a few months later.[90] The Contras may have been too dependent on the United States to withstand such whipsawing, however. Apparently, even one CIA study recognized the problems of subservience or dependency among the revolutionaries.[91]

[87] Bernard E. Trainor, "Contra Aid Cutoff: Setback, Not a Death Blow," *New York Times*, 6 February 1988, 1.3.
[88] As the U.S. State Department's valuable annual *Patterns of Global Terrorism* steadily reported, more than a few violent European or Latin American leftists and other fugitives were guests of the Sandinistas. Some still are; for example, a number of Basque *Euskadi Ta Askatasuna* (ETA or Basque Homeland and Liberty) terrorists whose home organization collapsed a decade ago.
[89] According to Hoekstra's review of Government Accountability Office reporting, "The last batch of (military) aid expired on 28 Feb. 1988." Hoekstra, "Helping the Contra," 532.
[90] February 1988 saw nonlethal aid packets of $36 and $30 million fail, but April saw a "yes" vote for $48 million. See Menges, *The Twilight Struggle*.
[91] A "Latin America Review" by the CIA, according to Hoekstra, "Helping the Contra," 530.

Intra-Nicaraguan negotiations of early 1990 ended the guerrilla war. When the Sandinistas surprisingly allowed elections, the broad opposition won and famous liberal and newspaper owner Violetta Chamorro was president for the next six years.

As one looks back through all the political turmoil and hot debates of the 1980s, a difficult question of principle, the matter of political prudence, was usually missing for many American observers, citizens, and legislators. That concept came down to judging when a democracy should or should not tender material assistance to violent revolutionaries abroad. A tradition beginning when the John Quincy Adams administration advised rendering moral support to causes of freedom abroad but to not intervene directly with material aid unless the United States faced a real threat.[92] In the height of the Cold War, with a range of new Communist states against the United States and self-evident growth in Soviet power and ambition on a global scale, Reagan saw a direct threat and came to the determination that material aid was necessary to U.S. security, not just the aspirations of foreign rebels whom he admired. In his State of the Union Address of 1985, he asserted that "we must not break faith with those who are risking their lives . . . from Afghanistan to Nicaragua," but also that "support for freedom fighters is self-defense and is totally consistent with the OAS and UN charters. . . . [We should] support the democratic forces whose struggle is tied to our own security."[93] It was the drive to protect American security that led the president's team to take so many unusual measures, to act covertly, and to evade the Boland Amendments. By contrast, the Russian threat to the United States today is not so great as to allow this prudential argument for extreme action.[94] Absent the rising global Soviet threat and their proxies opening in Central America, Reagan might have had a different answer to the

[92] Patrick J. Garrity of the Miller Center, University of Virginia, email discussions with the author, 2020. Dr. Garrity has since passed, leaving a wide circle of scholars in regret but also a corpus of first-class publications.
[93] Ronald W. Reagan, "Address before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union" (speech, State of the Union, Washington, DC, 6 February 1985).
[94] The argument of this paragraph is a paraphrase of the longer words of Dennis Teti. Teti, telephone interview with the author, 7 April 2020.

quarrels in Nicaragua. Yet, in those actual and particular circumstances of the early 1980s, he had cause to provide aid to the Contras. His claim to defend the national interest by material and lethal aid to proxies in Central America and elsewhere was plausible and real.

THE AFTERMATH AND THE THIRD-LEVEL EXTENSIONS

Proxy wars can engender new layers. On the Communist side, the proxies were layered: Moscow, then Havana, and then Managua all took the same marked path laid out in ideological conviction. Interlocked foreign Communist influences in the region were recorded in the astonishing files of the New Jewel Movement in Grenada, an archive that U.S. forces captured in late 1983.[95] The CIA was aware of this network, indicating in the mid-1980s that Nicaragua provided military training to militants in El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Colombia, Ecuador, Chile, Uruguay, Brazil, Venezuela, and the Dominican Republic.[96]

A prime destination for the Soviet Union, Cuba, and Nicaragua was El Salvador. Leftist rebel factions came together at a Havana meeting hosted by Fidel Castro in December 1979, only a few months after the Sandinista victory in Managua. The Sandinista's capital held a second summit of such Salvadorans in May 1980.[97] With this directorial aid, militant dissidence and insurgency built toward the apocalyptic in El Salvador.[98] The Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) made declarations and a series of guerrilla offensives against cities aimed at the capture of state power. In April 1985, a new document cache, the captured papers

[95] For more, see *Grenada Documents*. The Department of State's Office of Public Diplomacy for Latin America and the Caribbean also published a "summary report." See *Lessons of Grenada* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, 1986). The latter's photographs include one of May Day, 1980, in Havana, showing Fidel Castro standing with Daniel Ortega and Maurice Bishop, the two victors in 1979 Communist revolutions. *Lessons of Grenada*, 17.

[96] Undated one-page chart from a government briefing to the public, author's files. It indicates that many of those same countries' guerrillas were also getting arms, ammunition, safe haven, funds, or other support starting in the late 1970s and lasting through the following decade.

[97] Menges, *The Twilight Struggle*, 248.

[98] Nicaraguans assisted guerrillas in El Salvador, as with arms flows into that underground from Nicaragua, which "increased substantially during December (1980), including recoilless rifles, grenade launchers and rifles." See *Latin America Index* (15 January 1981).

of the Salvadoran guerrillas "showed arrangements for training of Salvadorans in the USSR, Bulgaria, Vietnam, East Germany, and Cuba," as a House member of the Iran-Contra Committee noted later.[99] They also exposed arms procurement efforts, such as a 1980 trip through the Soviet Bloc by the general secretary of the Communist Party of El Salvador, Shafik Handal, who garnered weighty results for his guerrillas.[100] Such discoveries clarified the Contra aid question. Concerns could not be limited to the character of the Nicaraguan polity; they extended further, into all matters of the region's security. El Salvador was the Soviet Bloc's next target and Communists knew it, saying so publicly. The Soviet chief of staff of the armed forces, Marshal Nikolai V. Ogarkov, even stated, "Over two decades ago, there was only Cuba in Latin America, today there are Nicaragua, Grenada, and a serious battle is going on in El Salvador."[101]

Success in Nicaragua excited other revolutionaries and numerous Marxist-Leninist terrorist groups came to Managua to take in the revolutionary air, lobby for position, and garner material aid or training. Both regional and international groups, including the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) from Peru; M-19, a narco-terrorist group from Colombia; Alfaro Vive, Carajo (AVC) in Ecuador; the Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA), Basque nationalists from Spain for whom Hispanic culture was an obvious link to some Central Americans; and even 44 men and women of the Red Brigades in Italy arrived in the new Nicaragua.[102] Middle Eastern radicals, including the Palestine Liberation Or-

[99] Office of Rep James A. Courter and Christopher C. Harmon, "The Future of Our Counterterrorism Policy," a statement for the Joint Hearings of the Iran-Contra Investigation, press release, 20 July 1987.

[100] Bulgaria was one of the stops on Handal's Soviet Bloc tour. Arms and ammunition were promised in the meeting with Bulgarian officials. Later, Bulgarian bullets were identified among munitions captured from guerrillas in San Miguel province, El Salvador. Robert S. Greenberger, "Congress Skeptics Balk at Nicaragua Evidence," *Wall Street Journal*, 15 June 1984, 1.

[101] Nikolai Ogarkov, quoted in George P. Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph: My Years as Secretary of State* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1993), 342.

[102] William J. Casey, "The International Linkages—What Do We Know?," in *Hydra of Carnage*, 9. If this seems an odd grab bag of global actors, it was not unusual; it was the standard way of doing business for Soviet Bloc adherents in that era. Recent State Department annuals show Cuba hosting people who were once in the Basque ETA, the American Black Panthers, and the Puerto Rican Los Macheteros.

ganization (PLO) had trained certain Sandinistas before 1979 and then forged new links to Managua. By 1981, PLO pilots and guerrilla war experts came to Nicaragua.[103] None of these linkages reached the breadth of the Nicaraguans' work with Salvadoran revolutionaries. Even after a peace accord made in Guatemala in 1987, the Nicaraguan regime carried on its robust support to the FMLN front.[104]

In the end, outcomes did not entirely support one frequent argument in Cold War politics—the domino theory. In this case, to lose in Nicaragua would also be to lose El Salvador. This likely pattern of events was overridden by muscular political efforts in El Salvador, and by the Reagan administration openly fighting Nicaraguan arms exports while keeping U.S. aid flowing to El Salvador. The Salvadoran domestic situation stabilized and slowly improved, along multiple lines of democratization, leading to the defeat of this political insurgency and its guerrilla forces. That latter process was lengthy and elaborate, involving diplomats of many regional states—especially Costa Rica and Mexico—as well as aid from other Central American states and the United States. Little of this seems to have protected the Salvadorans from rampant crime and gang violence in subsequent decades, but the Reagan administration did its part in protecting Salvadoran freedoms and keeping San Salvador from Soviet alignments. The Scylla of Communist militancy and the Charybdis of right-wing despotism were avoided. Salvadorans moved forward into the 1990s with many sound, open institutions and favorable democratic opportunities. If those are imperfect in El Salvador, they are missing, or rare, in Nicaragua and long gone in Cuba. Managua and Havana are centers of despotism, dominated by Communist ideologues.

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[103] *The Sandinistas and Middle Eastern Radicals* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, 1985).
[104] *Patterns of Global Terrorism: 1987* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, 1988). Similar reporting resulted from George H. W. Bush's Vice President's Task Force on Combating Terrorism, which noted an FMLN external headquarters located near Managua and regular training of FMLN members in camps in Nicaragua and Cuba. See Peter Probst, *Terrorist Group Profiles* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 1988), 82–85. Of related interest is Herbert Romerstein, "The KGB Today and Tomorrow" (paper presentation, Strengthening World Order and the United Nations Charter System Against Secret Warfare and Low Intensity Conflict Conference, U.S. Institute of Peace, Washington, DC, 13–14 October 1989). Other presenters included Jeffrey T. Richelson, Roy Godson, Ken Jensen, and Paul Seabury.

CHAPTER 4

The United States and UNITA of Angola

UNIQUE FEATURES OF THE PROXY RELATIONSHIP

Angola in southwestern Africa became a second theater for the Reagan Doctrine aiding anti-Communist fighters. For Washington, DC, policy makers, this was an unlikely engagement due to it being in the far reaches of a distant continent; few Americans were aware of the related national security interests. This struggle was in every respect a low intensity conflict from the American perspective—a miniscule national investment in a Black, tribal-based guerrilla movement about which most voters would know little, even at the end. The partner for the United States, Jonas Savimbi and the faction he founded, the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), was equally unusual. A charismatic figure with special talent for guerrilla warfare, Savimbi had lived briefly in Communist China and visited with Mao Zedong, but he held a doctorate in political science from a Swiss university and spoke the language of national freedoms that U.S. citizens treasured. These characteristics made him a superb insurgency leader, enhancing the prospects for bilateral success in the late 1980s.[1] More broadly, UNITA had

[1] Mainstream critics of Jonas Savimbi emerged in the West as his popular support grew. The tougher remarks usually came in his later years and with the suggestion that he had devolved. An example of a hostile passage comes from Geraint Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy: Proxy Warfare in International Politics* (Portland, OR: Sussex Academic Press, 2012), 62–86.

Map 4. Angola and Southern Africa

Source: courtesy of author, adapted by MCUP.

two further advantages: border safe havens, and moral righteousness felt by antigovernment Angolans. UNITA insurgents needed all such advantages: they were competing with thousands of Cuban troops, Soviet Bloc advisors, and their proxies, as well as a range of local Communist Angolan security forces.

This conflict's other special characteristics included an unusually high number of both outside parties and heated allegations of proxy politics.[2] International Communist actors backed the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) regime, but so too did some countries of the European Union and Africa. France, for instance, had a corporation pumping oil in Angola's Cabinda Province, providing revenue to the country's central government. Although receiving aid at dramatically lower rates, UNITA had just as many outside supporters. The Savimbi team and its anti-Communism won support from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Morocco.[3] More than a half-dozen members of the Organization of the African Unity backed UNITA, as did Zaire and the Republic of South Africa. The latter committed early and invested heavily, supplying great sums of military aid, direct combat support, and launching many independent military operations inside Angola.[4] However, this was not the limit to the confusion of actors in the Angola quarrel.

President Ronald W. Reagan's first term, between 1981 and 1985, freshened up the drama and accentuated a common problem in proxy wars: discord at the source. Although appointed by Reagan, Secretary of State George P. Shultz and his department's "Africa hands" were determined to find a region-wide solution to fighting in southern Africa, believing that meant *not* providing material support to UNITA. Even advancing a vote for nonlethal aid earned the House Republican leader, Representative Robert H. Michel (R-IL), a direct and negative letter from Shultz.[5] The State Department even approved $130 million in credits from the Export-Import Bank to support the Angolan oil industry, directly benefiting the Communist state fighting to suppress Savimbi's insur-

[2] Ian F. W. Beckett, "Angola," in *Encyclopedia of Guerrilla Warfare* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1999), 14.
[3] This aid from Muslim states is described by Geraint Hughes, whose sources include the head of French foreign intelligence at that time, Alexandre de Marenches. See Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 2.
[4] Witnesses to South African combatants fighting the Communist Angolan regime (and backing UNITA) include Dr. Chip Beck, then an American specialist aiding non-Communist guerrilla forces in Angola. Beck, email message to author, June 2021.
[5] David Hoffman, "Shultz Privately Asked Michel to Bar Rebel Aid," *Washington Post*, 23 October 1985, A18.

gency.[6] Adding to the economic discord, the U.S. oil company Chevron had major business in the oil-rich coastal region of Cabinda. Chevron's extractions, taxed by the MPLA, aided that Communist government; the MPLA then employed the funds to pay Havana for the Cuban combat forces deployed in Angola, the price tag for which later neared $8 billion.[7] Americans were fighting with themselves, even as Angolans did the same.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT WITHIN THE COLD WAR

Except for the Afghan mujahideen, destined to drive the Red Army from Afghanistan, UNITA probably had the best chances to win in the 1980s against the Soviet Bloc. Certainly, that was the view of Reagan Doctrine progenitor Jack Wheeler; he later offered two reasons for his optimism. First, Savimbi was an authentic African leader with popular support.[8] Second, to face the formidable Soviet Bloc presence, including its control of the air, the U.S. program brought UNITA military aid. Shipments included FIM-92 Stinger surface-to-air missiles, renowned for their long range and high accuracy even in the presence of countermeasures built into Soviet aircraft. "They got Stingers even before the Afghans

[6] Congressional figures challenged this designation in a federal lawsuit. It was dismissed. Later legislation formally declared Angola to be a Communist country; thereafter no Ex-Im Bank aid was legal. *"Namibia: The Exploration of Natural Resources and U.S. Policy," Hearings before the Subcommittee on Africa, House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs*, 99th Cong., 1st Sess. (29 October 1985), 52–53.

[7] Sources for this paragraph include "Dear Colleague" letters within the House of Representatives, as by Congressman Duncan D. Hunter (R-CA), and two books by Washington insiders of the day: Gregory A. Fossedal, *The Democratic Imperative: Exporting the American Revolution* (New York: Basic Books, 1989), 158–60; and Constantine C. Menges, *The Twilight Struggle: The Soviet Union v. the United States Today* (Washington, DC: AEI Press, 1990). Menges, who died in 2004, was an intelligence officer who served on the National Security Council and was an ally of CIA Director William Casey—the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) hand from World War II who did much to advance the Reagan agenda, including aid to anti-Communist guerrillas. Secretary of State Shultz's references to Menges are not complimentary.

[8] Savimbi was from the Ovimbundu tribe, Angola's largest ethnicity, counting 40 percent of the population (millions of potential followers). He was of solely African descent, which Jack Wheeler said put him in contrast with the MPLA and many other African leaders who were usually descendants of mixed European and African ancestry.

got them," Wheeler notes.[9] Yet, the many successes of UNITA fighters against Soviet Bloc airpower and other combat forces were inadequate; their tactical and operational gains would not be enough vis-à-vis the alliance of Communist enemies allied with the MPLA government. As with the Nicaraguan Contras, the U.S. effort to help Savimbi's UNITA was doomed by difficult political debates (even within Reagan's cabinet), all the usual problems with proxy warfare, and outsized military pressures applied by the global Soviet alliance. In so many ways, the U.S. action was the right thing to do and followed the well-proven methods from Afghanistan. UNITA's determined fighters did "bleed" the Soviet Bloc's warmaking capacities—sending hundreds of Cuban wounded home and leaving many dead in the fields of Africa.[10] And they did inspire other opponents of Soviet expansion, indicating strategic effects. Tragically, those who gave the most in the arrangement—Angolans who fought Communism—achieved no clear gains. Government *subjects* with the vision to demand better, they fought like *citizens*, but could not win.

[9] Jack Wheeler, Skype interview with the author, 18 September 2019. His account places Stingers in the hands of Angolan guerrillas in late spring 1986, whereas their first use in Afghanistan, he says, was 26 September 1986. Although photographic evidence from one missionary, Peter Hammond, documented that the group downed many Soviet aircrafts including Mil Mi-24D Hind-D and Mil Mi-8 Hip helicopters and MiG jets, these destroyed vehicles do not automatically link to Stingers fired, even if UNITA air defenses were quite good. In addition to downing the helicopters and jets, UNITA forces also captured two Cuban pilots. Democratic members of Congress circulated a "Dear Colleague" letter in the House on 26 June 1986, proclaiming "Stop Sending Stingers Overseas" and claiming they were downing civilian aircraft. David Ottaway mentioned Stingers when he later wrote an article, "UNITA Rebels Defeat Thrust by Angola," *Washington Post*, 2 November 1987, A17. The authoritative *Foreign Report* (London) showed caution in their reports, repeatedly declining to confirm that Stingers had actually arrived. See *Foreign Report* (London: *Economist*), 19 December 1985; *Foreign Report*, 12 June 1986; *Foreign Report*, 23 October 1986; and *Foreign Report*, 4 February 1988. The author's confidence that Stingers were supplied and were used effectively comes from personal interviews as well as the work of journalist Al J. Venter, *Battle for Angola: The End of the Cold War in Africa c. 1975–89* (West Midlands, UK: Helion, 2017).

[10] Estimating Cuban casualties is very difficult due to Cuba being a closed society. Conversely, participants sometimes boasted of how extensive deployments were, which assures casualties. MPLA president José Eduardo dos Santos said, "Cuba's sons have irrigated our sacred soil with their blood." James Brooke, "Angola Extols Cuban and Soviet Ties," *New York Times*, 16 December 1985. Of Cuba's major role in the Angolan contest, Fidel Castro proclaimed: "When the time came for the internationalist mission in Angola, more than 300,000 Cubans volunteered." Speech of 26 June 1986 carried by Havana Television, 28 June; "Castro Gives Speech at Enterprises Meeting," trans. Foreign Broadcast Information Service, 1 July 1986.

Those who survived did so under an MPLA dictatorship, as Angolans still do four decades on.

Insurgents first arose in the 1960s during Angola's war for independence from Portugal (1961–75). The Portuguese retreat from southern Africa became more pronounced after a coup in Lisbon in 1974, and Angolan parties vied for the future, throwing the nation into a civil war. The MPLA received Soviet favor, took power in Luanda in the mid-1970s, and spent the following decades entrenching against Angolan dissidence. The United States declined to recognize the new Communist government until 1993. The National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA), founded in 1954 and led by Holden Roberto, was a second major force on the ground and enjoyed support from the People's Republic of China. Their insurgent activities, and Roberto's following, grew well but peaked early. By April 1986, when the Republican Study Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives hosted Roberto in Washington for a hearing, he was in eclipse.[11] The third and final faction emerged out of a split from the FNLA block in 1966. With Jonas Savimbi at its head, UNITA gathered strength. It was seated in the country's largest ethnic group, fought toward worthy principles including social justice and democratic rule, and benefited from Savimbi's personal attractiveness. South Africa aided the movement for its own reasons: anti-Communism; regional power-plays against the encroaching Soviet Bloc; and that enemy's patronage of guerrillas inside and around the state of South Africa.[12] There were perhaps 1,000 armed fighters with Savimbi in 1974, initially making it the smallest of the three anti-Portugal factions. By 1985, however, observers counted between 35,000 and 40,000 soldiers at the time when

[11] One part of the Holden Roberto visit was a 10 April 1986 hearing in the House of Representatives, where Rep James A. Courter (R-NJ), Rep Robert Lagomarsino (R-CA), Mr. Dan Fisk, and other auditors heard testimony and asked questions of the guerrilla leader. The author's files of those days are missing the transcript, though it circulated in Congress. According to a reporter covering the hearing, Holden Roberto was living in Paris and had not even been in Angola since 1979. Fred Hiatt, "Rival Angolan Guerrilla Leader Reemerges to Appeal for U.S. Aid," *Washington Post*, 11 April 1986, A24; and *"The Struggle for Freedom in Angola," Hearing before the Task Force on Foreign Affairs, Republican Study Committee, U.S. House of Representatives Hon Jim Courter, Task Force Chairman* (Washington, DC: Jefferson Educational Foundation, n.d. [1986]).
[12] See, for example, *The Angola Road to National Recovery: Defining the Principles and the Objectives* (Jamba, Angola: National Union for the Total Independence of Angola, 1983).

the United States was getting involved, and those numbers continued to grow.[13] As the movement's foreign secretary explained that year, "UNITA firmly controls more than one-third of the country, covering 3.7 million of the country's total population of about 7 million; the armed struggle has been extended to the whole country, leaving all the big cities practically encircled by our forces; we are completely self-sufficient in food, thanks to our well-run agricultural schemes."[14]

Beijing and Washington each provided a minimum of covert assistance to Roberto's non-Communist faction.[15] U.S. aid to the FNLA began in the summer of 1975 but lasted only a few months. Worried about the "Vietnam syndrome"—Americans' reluctance to commit military power to foreign nations without clear reasons or objectives—and other factors, Congress blocked all further aid of military or paramilitary types in Angola by attaching the Clark Amendment to the U.S. Arms Export Control Act of 1976.[16] China and the United States were dipping their toes into the waters of proxy politics while the USSR was to jump in with boots on. Moscow contested China wherever it could and drove for broadened influence in the region.[17] The Soviets brought more Cu-

[13] While later one would see estimates of UNITA strength as high as 55,000 or 60,000 (see, for instance, *The Angola Road to National Recovery*), the author prefers to be conservative. The early history of the anticolonial fight is set out by Menges, *The Twilight Struggle*, 102–11.

[14] "Angola and the West," by Jeremias K. Chitunda, secretary of foreign affairs, UNITA, 2 July 1985; p. 5 of the 6-page text in author's files from work on this issue in a congressional office. For a report on the UNITA insurgents' programs in medicine, clothing production, and agriculture, see pp. 28–29 of the lengthy feature story by Dr. Jack Wheeler, "Fighting the Soviet Imperialists: UNITA in Angola," *Reason* (April 1984).

[15] Jiri Valenta leaves some doubt in his writings, yet suggests that Beijing and Washington may have teamed up against Moscow in a limited way in supporting Angolan rebels who were not with MPLA. Jiri Valenta, "Soviet Decision-Making on the Intervention in Angola," in *Communism in Africa*, ed. David E. Albright (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), 93–117. In an important new book on the growth of Maoist movements outside China, author Julia Lovell does *not* detail Chinese aid to Angolans. See Lovell, *Maoism: A Global History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2019).

[16] See 22 U.S. Code Chapter 39-Arms Export Control; and Menges, *The Twilight Struggle*, 110–11.

[17] Although tension existed between the Chinese and Soviet actors as they sought power in Africa, the USSR shook off the Chinese rival in Angola by October 1975, only to find the United States as a renewed competitor in the mid-1980s. See Valenta, "Soviet Decision-Making on the Intervention in Angola," 94, 96–98; Colin Legum, "African Outlooks toward the USSR," in *Communism in Africa*, 7, 18, 21; George T. Yu, "Sino-Soviet Rivalry in Africa," in *Communism in Africa*, 168–88; and Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 70.

ban troops into Angola and increased its own regular aid to the MPLA, focusing its Angolan proxy on growth and taking state power. The Soviet decision in early 1975 to throw full military support behind one faction inflamed the Chinese, who pronounced its actions escalatory and contrary to the January 1975 Alvor agreement by which the three Angolan parties, the MPLA, FNLA, and UNITA as well as Portugal agreed to a gradual transfer of power. Meanwhile, the Soviet Union's International Department of the Communist Party and the Committee for State Security (*Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti* or KGB) apparently took the lead in making Soviet policy and strategy in Angola.[18] The Soviets' major commitments and donations caught American experts off guard, but there was little interest in Washington to participate in this civil strife initially. Only much later did the United States determine to back UNITA. While all three great powers took part in Angolan struggles, the United States and China exited by the end of 1975.[19] Angola was now destined to become an arena of Soviet-American competition in the 1980s.

When Reagan came to the White House in 1981, he was unable to get Congress to roll back the Clark Amendment to initiate sending aid to non-Communist insurgents in Angola. This repeal finally came in 1985 as more outsiders became aware of the importance of Angola. While Angola is large in size, it was also rich, especially in natural resources like highly prized metals, asbestos, and diamonds. In late 1984, a UNITA spokesperson prompted Washington to remember that "the United States imports all of its manganese and cobalt, much of its platinum group metals, and more than half of its chrome, ferrochrome and palla-

[18] Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 65.

[19] One source calls July 1976 the month when China "officially washed its hands (and) abandoned the FNLA"; Stephen L. Weigert, *Angola: A Modern Military History, 1961–2002* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 72. U.S. official actions and views on the insurgencies in Angola were covered periodically by Raymond W. Copson of the Foreign Affairs and National Defense Division of the Library of Congress; e.g., *Angola and the Clark Amendment*, Issue Brief IB81063 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 1982), 23.

dium, from Southern Africa."[20] As significantly, Angola provided tons of oil. The Cabinda Province, a detached northwestern Angolan exclave on the Atlantic coast, has massive reserves, and international firms including Chevron were already pumping there.[21] Fisheries and logging were other major economic assets.[22] During decades of MPLA rule, the nation extracted fantastic amounts of resources and spent immense sums as a result. In one illustration of the ways of proxy war, the MPLA government paid more than $15 billion directly to the Soviets and their Cuban partners for various aspects of their support.[23] After the war, the Angolan elites that profited remained wealthy and lavish spenders.

Angola's geographical position, as it would for other states, had its own value. As apartheid politics kept attention on the Republic of South Africa to the south and war stirred in Mozambique to the east, Angola came to be a high-traffic place, in which undergoverned "gray areas" within the borders were vulnerabilities. Concern was accentuated

[20] Jeremias K. Chitunda, "Negotiating the Cuban Withdrawal from Angola: A Strategy for Victory versus a Diplomacy of Accommodation," November 1984; UNITA documents in author's files. Chitunda called the MPLA "Moscow's most dogmatic and most faithful African ally." Of Cuba, he declares that "the Cubans gained notoriety as Soviet surrogates in the aftermath of their success in the 1975 Angola civil war. Since then, the Cubans have been intervening with impunity in many more countries in Africa and Latin America. To reverse this trend, the Cubans ought to be defeated militarily somewhere—anywhere; it so happens that in Angola the conditions are excellent for this. As a result of such Cuban military defeat . . . Russia could de-value Castro's mercenarism and Moscow would have to curb its aggressive expansionist programs . . . and . . . Moscow's surrogate regimes would be weakened." This aligns exactly with Reagan Doctrine originator Jack Wheeler's view that a defeat of the Soviets somewhere, anywhere, would have an outsized psychological and political effect. Chitunda served as secretary of foreign affairs for UNITA; for American readers, he wrote newspaper op-eds, met with politicians, and circulated official documents such as a Dr. Savimbi letter to the secretary-general of the United Nations (4 pp.) dated 5 October 1985; author's files.

[21] Austin Angel, "Cabinda and the Company: Chevron-Gulf, the CIA, and the Angolan Civil War," *CLA Journal*, no. 6 (2018): 75–86.

[22] Few could object to outside experts aiding a Third World country in its fisheries. Several experts suggested that Soviet Bloc aid to fisheries in Tanzania, Mozambique, and Angola was unhelpful. East Germany provided boats that were ill-suited to the local waters and the gift was also outshone by Chinese deliveries of agricultural equipment. Soviet sponsors were said to take more than a fair share of the catch and Africans did not gain from fish processing as most of it took place aboard Soviet factory ships. These ruffles on the surface suggest an underlying question of whether imperialism was profitable for the Soviets. *The Soviet Union in the Third World, 1980–85: An Imperial Burden or Political Asset?* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1985), 212–17.

[23] Menges, *The Twilight Struggle*, 113.

as mobile forces from South Africa directly intervened, almost at will, in both Mozambique and Angola.[24] Zaire's affairs also spilled over the border, just as Angola's crossed into Zaire. Were that not enough, Angola's southern neighbor, South West Africa, was embroiled in its own guerrilla war with the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO), another militant force interlinked with other pro-Communist movements in the region and a proxy of the Soviet Bloc. At any one time, hundreds or thousands of SWAPO guerrillas were welcomed in Angolan safe havens and Luanda deployed SWAPO guerrillas for occasional martial operations against UNITA.[25]

THE BEGINNINGS OF U.S. SUPPORT TO UNITA

In Washington, DC, perspectives on the Angolan problem formed quite slowly. The late 1970s were sleepy years. To the extent that people in the federal government were aware of Angola options, restrictions in the Clark Amendment seemed to ban any serious U.S. involvement there and aid to UNITA was little considered. When talk of it arose, the quick and often harsh reply was usually that the group's direct links to the Republic of South Africa soiled their reputation.[26] Few of the critics had met Savimbi, studied the insurgents' enunciated political principles (socialism, negritude, democracy, and nonalignment), or visited its broad

[24] South Africa's military interventions to its north were common between the 1960s and 1980s. For some observers, these excused the area's Marxist regimes for accepting the occupation of Soviet Bloc forces.

[25] Weigert, *Angola*, 74; Menges, *The Twilight Struggle*, 142–46; and *State Sponsored Terrorism*, a report for the Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism, Committee on the Judiciary, Senate, 99th Cong., 1st Sess. (June 1985), 64–65. Hughes notes East German training for SWAPO in Germany as well as Africa. Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*. The author also relied on a 1985 interview about SWAPO with Dr. Michael Radu, an expert on low intensity conflict then with the Foreign Policy Research Institute.

[26] To some in or out of Congress, the assistance the Republic of South Africa gave to UNITA made any American relations with those Angolan insurgents immoral. One noted left-wing commentator, Edward S. Herman, was so stirred after reading a 8 December 1985 letter to the *New York Times* supporting UNITA that he riposted on his university's stationary to the letter author in the crudest language. Herman was not dissuaded by the fact that his target, a congressman, was against apartheid in South Africa. Such was the climate in which advocates for UNITA slowly advanced their case.

lands under shadow government.[27] In short, notions about U.S. engagement in Angola emerged only gradually. Even later, few in Washington read UNITA's documents and political testaments or quoted them in the political debates.

Politically, the confusion that reigned in Angola was natural, the product of colonial withdrawal from a multitribal society. Stratification in the population, however, emerged along ideological lines rather than tribal ones. Soviet Communism, Chinese Communism, and a third school of pro-Western and prodemocratic sentiments changed local conversation and allegiances. Reagan learned of these quarrels early and formed his view even as a presidential candidate that freedom fighters against Communism deserved at least rhetorical support. Angolan rebels against the MPLA got a nod from the California politician as early as 1980. He was thinking of liberty and freedom versus Communism, but it would be several more years before American strategy linked liberty there with other fights in other places. Only with the progress of his own thoughts and the work of Jack Wheeler, congressional allies, and others in the DC environs that a "Freedom Fighters" standard of fighting against Communism with proxies might begin to fly over the Beltway.[28]

Strategically, in the mid-1980s, aid to UNITA developed into another arm of a limited yet growing effort that favored anti-Communists fighting in diverse theaters abroad. Angola was already at war and its government leaned on the rifles and armored vehicles of tens of thousands of foreign advisors and troops, especially Cubans.[29] This paralleled Afghan-

[27] See n. 12, above, on documents by UNITA about their principles and programs. This motto was found in frequent communiques. See Weigert, *Angola*, 76.

[28] The term *Reagan Doctrine* came from Charles Krauthammer—not Wheeler or Reagan. Wheeler always gave ultimate credit to the senior politician, telling the author, "The creator of the Reagan Doctrine and the man who made it possible was Ronald Reagan." Wheeler, Skype interview with the author, 18 September 2019. Jack Wheeler's essay on Angola was an early and formative contribution to public discussion of aiding anti-Communist fighters. Wheeler, "UNITA in Angola," *Reason*, no. 15 (April 1984): 22–30. See the Brian Lamb interview on C-Span (TV) of 31 March 1986 with Charles Krauthammer, "User Clip: Charles Krauthammer on Creating Phrase 'Reagan Doctrine' from C-SPAN Interview When He Was with *New Republic*."

[29] According to Menges, some 14,000 Cuban troops backed the regime in Angola in 1976 and more than 67,000 by late 1988. Most observers would call the latter number too high. Menges, *The Twilight Struggle*, 113, 116.

istan, which had been experiencing Soviet Red Army occupation since December 1979. Angolan fighters had not thought of Afghans or Nicaraguan Contras as allies, of course, and many never would, but the Reagan Doctrine, as it developed during his first term, made that connection. Starting with the greatest apparent weakness—disparate, distant groups with little culturally or geographically in common—the doctrine evolved something conceptually new and symbiotic: all over the globe, local people are fighting the expansion of Soviet Bloc Communism. Wheeler tells of sitting inside Afghanistan with a militia leader and finding him flabbergasted by an American suggesting he had something in common with Nicaraguans, but by the end of his visit, Wheeler had convinced the militant connections existed.[30] American logistics and intelligence could knit some of these efforts together. The Reagan White House cobbled together a global anti-Communist fighting team, which did not require the expenditure of American lives. It looked to be a perfectly efficient form of struggle—proxy warfare—and yet it had blossomed for idealistic reasons that Reagan and millions of other Americans could admire and support.

OPERATIONS AND COORDINATION

A feature of the U.S. program was its unusual semicovert character. Like the funds and printing supplies the United States appropriated for the Polish trade union Solidarity, the boots, blankets, and bullets for UNITA were discussed and voted on the floor of Congress, yet these were provided in secretive ways to minimize international opposition.[31] Routes into Angola were masked for the sake of neighbors' sensitivities. Apparently, by 1976, the CIA had several facilitators in the country working with Roberto's FNLA and moving weapons to their soldiers. One of these Americans, wishing to be an open advocate, actually left his agency and joined foreign mercenaries in the fighting but soon died in action.

[30] Wheeler, Skype interview with the author, 24 July 2019.
[31] Menges, *The Twilight Struggle*, 102–52.

By another account, U.S. intelligence specialists were moved in and out of Angola quickly due to political delicacies.[32]

It is likely that the CIA was the main coordinator of American aid to UNITA by the mid-1980s. Additionally, there were American intelligence liaisons, such as a Marine officer undercover with the CIA, attached to the group.[33] Weapons trainers sometimes arrived with such U.S. arms as 120 millimeter mortars and 106 millimeter recoilless guns.[34] One account indicates that senior CIA official Clair E. George directed the supply flights of the mid-1980s, using airstrips and ports in both Zambia and Zaire—now the Democratic Republic of the Congo.[35] Angolan recipients and belligerents, including Savimbi, for their part, were in the difficult position of any people who receive foreign aid while in a fight for their home country. While needing and asking for aid, Savimbi had to take prophylactic measures to protect his reputation as a nationalist and independent tribal leader of the Ovimbundu as well as an aspirant to Angolan national leadership.

Financially, U.S. assistance was inadequate. While being more than the funds Washington committed to Cambodians fighting their own government and its Vietnamese-backed leaders, it was far less than what the Soviets sent to the MPLA government as well as what Washington spent in sponsoring the winning mujahideen in Afghanistan. Ironically, as the United States gave limited aid to UNITA insurgents, Gulf oil and its major subsidiary Chevron continued to thrive and sell Angolan oil into the American and world markets with the profits going directly into MPLA government hands. With the MPLA's reliance on Cuban troops, that same money made its way into the treasury of Cuba, which received $17,000–

[32] George Bacon left U.S. service and took a combat role beside a guerrilla force, eventually attracting attention from reporters and photographers. Venter, *Battle for Angola*, 224–25, 324; and Christopher C. Harmon, 2020 interview with a former American intelligence officer. Venter goes so far as to claim "the CIA orchestrated much of what happened" in a battle at Quifangondo. Venter, *Battle for Angola*, 200.

[33] One Marine officer, who the author came to know later, was detailed with U.S. intelligence in Angola and liaised with UNITA.

[34] Robert Moss report quoted in Venter, *Battle for Angola*, 201.

[35] "Clair George: Deputy Director for Operations—Understanding the Iran-Contras Affair," Brown.edu, accessed 19 October 2022.

$22,000 per soldier per year. UNITA advocates were angered by Cuban troops guarding American laborers pumping oil in Angola that benefited the governments in Luanda and Havana, which possibly led to the group being responsible for some attacks at such sites.[36]

The UNITA forces did indeed receive aid from the United States, but the process was never easy. The Senate and House voted decisively against aiding the Angolans in 1976. A decade later, there were no guarantees and many undecided members when an initial House bill proposed $27 million in nonlethal aid. Although it failed, the United States may have sent $10 million to Angola in March 1986. More arrived at the end of the decade with the United States providing perhaps $30–45 million in 1988 and $50–60 million in 1989.[37] By placing self-imposed restrictions on aid to UNITA, Congress created limits on the success of the enterprise. While manpower was not a problem for UNITA, limited aid limited results.[38] On the one hand, the UNITA campaigns did not topple the despotism of the MPLA. On the other hand, and significantly for the United States, the escalated campaigns did demoralize Mikhail Gorbachev and his Politburo and created a financial drain on the Soviet Bloc. Savimbi survived many combats, often winning.

CAPITOL HILL: CONFUSION OR COORDINATION?

Congress determined the formal political status of the aid program for UNITA in key ways. The Reagan Doctrine was supported by *National Security Decision Directive 75, U.S. Relations with the USSR* (NSDD 75), containing such particulars as "increasing the costs of Cuba's role in southern Africa" and encouraging "democratic movements and forces to bring

[36] James Brooke, "Cubans Guard U.S. Oilmen in Angola," *New York Times*, 24 November 1986, A3.

[37] These three years of estimates come from Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 70.

[38] A March 1990 *Washington Post* feature explored U.S. aid to UNITA, which had been badly and recently slowed. It concluded that the problem was with opposition by the government of Zaire, previously the key transit country. The report suggested that the CIA still had the U.S. lead on supplies and was cooperating (as before) with the U.S. Department of Defense. Lally Weymouth, "Endgame in Angola," *Washington Post*, 25 March 1990, C1.

about political change inside these countries."[39] Policy had to be given flesh and then supported regularly, which would not be easy to achieve with numerous significant figures, including Secretary of State Shultz, objecting to it.[40] Some in Congress agreed with the secretary that a major aid program, especially when semipublic, would compromise and undercut the State Department's careful work toward a regional negotiated solution that could extract all foreign players, including the United States. The Reagan Doctrine and people Shultz dismissed as "right wing" or "conservatives in the Republican party" who were occasionally at odds with the State Department remained a theme throughout the 1980s.[41] For this reason, Reagan critically needed support from the Senate, which he received. As early as 1981, the Senate passed a bill allowing aid to Angolan militants, but the House of Representatives opposed the measure and did so for four more years. A renewed effort, led by Senators Steve Symms (R-ID), Jim McClure (R-ID), Orin Hatch (R-UT), and Gordon Humphrey (R-NH), moved the matter forward into the

[39] These are two phrases are from *National Security Decision Directive 75, U.S. Relations with the USSR* (Washington, DC: White House, 17 January 1983).

[40] The memoirs of George P. Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph: My Years as Secretary of State* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1993) make at most one or two mentions of the Reagan Doctrine. The secretary does take a modicum of pride in his own 22 February 1985 speech in San Francisco about seeing "popular insurgencies against communist domination" but does not mention a Reagan radio address on the theme just before, on 16 February, and he never mentions the labors of Wheeler, who enthused White House speechwriters 14 months before the Shultz speech and also published at least one paper in 1984. Therefore, the author sees no merit in references in books by John Lewis Gaddis and Beth Fischer suggesting that Shultz was the inventor of the Reagan Doctrine. Shultz opposed Reagan and congressional adherents on aid to UNITA, and he dropped his support for covert aid to the Contras when the program ran into legal problems. He largely inherited the Reagan Doctrine from its true advocates. Shultz, however, was an original and eloquent voice for strong counterterrorism, another formative issue of the mid-1980s and had many other achievements during the Reagan years.

[41] In his memoirs, Shultz made short, vivid references to battles with William Casey, Rep Jack Kemp, and others over Nicaragua and Angola. He seemed always to support the ideal, and sometimes to advocate for aid, but certain other drives for aid drew his opposition. Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*.

House again in 1985.[42] There, Republican Minority Leader Robert Michel recovered the effort, which led to a victory for Angolan aid that year.[43]

While U.S. aid—or its absence—might have been the decisive factor in Angola, the related political controversy on Capitol Hill was a true debate as there was no consensus in Congress. Many Democrats, especially in the House of Representatives, were emotionally engaged against any aid to UNITA. One opinion leader was Representative Howard E. Wolpe (D-MI), chair of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa. His many allies against aid to the Angolan insurgents included Representatives William H. Gray (D-PA), Ronald V. Dellums (D-CA), George T. Leland (D-TX), and Leslie Aspin (D-WI), who chaired the House Armed Services Committee. All five members were usually among those voting against aid to UNITA, but the House also featured Reagan supporters. Two of Wolpe's colleagues, William S. Broomfield (R-MI) and Mark D. Siljander (R-MI); Robert K. Dornan (R-CA); future Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich (R-GA); Richard Michael DeWine (R-OH); and two New York representatives on different sides of the political aisle, free market Republican and noted anti-Communist Jack Kemp and his colleague Samuel S. Stratton (D-NY), often fought for aid packages to UNITA.[44] The House debates were lively and members frequently held so-called "Special Orders," time on the House floor scheduled at day's end during which members could address any issue they thought vital. Although Special Orders often took place at 1800 or 1900

[42] Gordon Humphrey and his press officer, Bill Anthony, were vital allies in working within the Senate. Wheeler, Skype interview with the author, 18 September 2019.

[43] A House staffer who also served on the Iran-Contra Committee staff, Dennis Teti, remembers that Robert Michel came under pressure from the Department of State, which believed U.S. aid would harm peace processes in southern Africa. Michel held with the president, who continued speaking out for freedom fighters around the world. Author's interview by telephone, January 2020.

[44] Rep Jack Kemp had taken note of successful Soviet sponsorship of revolts in Angola, Mozambique, and Ethiopia, among others. "This has been accomplished by the Soviet airlifting of Cuban troops, military advisors from Soviet bloc nations, particularly East Germany, and the extensive use of Soviet intelligence personnel." Coming to power was followed by "ruthless suppression" of people by new Communist rulers. While critical of America for not responding—due to adhesion to détente—Kemp did not yet argue for aiding and arming anti-Communists in those countries. Later he would do so, vigorously. See Kemp, *An American Renaissance: A Strategy for the 1980s* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), 149.

the evening before a nearly empty chamber, senators, representatives, and their aides still engaged with the arguments and bills discussed in these hearings. Additionally, C-SPAN television's broadcasts of Special Orders served as publicity for the issues and as an educational opportunity for U.S. citizens. Members' words were preserved forever in the *Congressional Record*.[45] Similarly, newspaper columns or essays that members introduced into the *Congressional Record* were meant to either preserve factual information or trenchant views or to build alliances with various journalists or editors.[46]

After argument, aid to UNITA required approval. In October 1985, congressional leaders broke with Secretary Shultz and appropriated nonlethal material aid to UNITA. At the same time, Representative James A. Courter (R-NJ) drafted an approving letter that 27 legislators, all Republicans, also signed.[47] Courter later testified before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, arguing that American restraint had not worked. He contended that the presence of 35,000 Cuban troops in Angola fighting Angolans was only possible due to support the MPLA government "receives from the Soviet Union and its Cuban proxies."[48] As support for action from the House grew, movement became possible on a bipartisan bill. Jack Kemp and Claude D. Pepper (D-FL)—with thousands of anti-Castro voters behind him rallying against Cuban warmaking in Africa—used this increasing support to push through the assistance

[45] An example is the "Debate on Angola: Should the United States Provide Assistance to the Union for the National Integration of Angola?," with House Representatives of a bipartisan group including Howard Wolpe of Michigan, Henry Hyde of Illinois, and Steven Solarz of New York, *Congressional Record: House* 131, no. 25 (9 December 1985).
[46] Author's view of the discussions from his staff post within the House of Representatives. One example of a bipartisan bill was H.R. 3609, the "Angola Freedom Bill," to provide military aid to UNITA, offered by Rep. Samuel S. Stratton and Rep. Mark J. Siljander; it had won 86 signatures by 18 November 1985. For another early perspective on the growing debates, see "Conservatives Push for U.S. Aid to Angola Rebels," *New York Times*, 16 December 1985.
[47] The "Dear Colleague" letter and the larger legislative record are briefed in Menges, *The Twilight Struggle*, 129. The author also holds a copy of the letter in their personal collection.
[48] *Angola: Intervention or Negotiation, Hearings before the Subcommittee on Africa of the Committee of Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives*, 99th Cong. (31 October, 12 November 1985), 143.

bill.[49] Reagan publicly committed to direct aid to UNITA, and soon assistance in the forms of supplies, combat accessories, ammunition, and the like began to stream in. The weapons delivered during 1986 included some that could take down Soviet helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft, specifically Stinger missiles.[50] Whether the United States should have included Stingers in the aid package divided experts in the Department of Defense and the intelligence community. Ultimately those resistant to the supplying of Stingers were overridden by strong personalities, such as the Director of Central Intelligence William Casey, an outspoken proponent of Reagan Doctrine aid to anti-Communist fighters.[51] Both UNITA and mujahideen fighters received Stingers.

American aid to Angolans came none too soon. The UNITA organization had blocked or defeated major Cuban and Soviet offensives in 1985 and 1987, but the Communists would increase their forces when preparing to launch another assault in 1988. To the array of Cuban and Soviet pilots, ground officers, and armor and artillery specialists, they added Vietnamese personnel and recruits from local allies, including SWAPO and the African National Congress. As the two sides fought to a stalemate, UNITA performed well and lost fewer men. Cuban pilots in Soviet aircraft usually controlled the air, but some aircraft were knocked down by the rebels and their foreign weapons. Several captured Cuban pilots ended up being dragged out in front of the media during UNITA press conferences.[52]

One strong voice on U.S. aid in Angola, leading light on foreign policy Representative Stephen J. Solarz (D-NY), candidly laid down concerns in an article for the *New Republic* in 1985. Granted, Communism

[49] Claude Pepper was unusual for being a senator-become-House representative. He was widely recognized as a conservative Democrat and all his votes on "Reagan Doctrine" aid to foreign guerrilla forces were closely watched.

[50] "The Traffic in Stingers," *Christian Science Monitor*, 9 April 1986, noted the decision by the United States to send the missiles.

[51] See Menges, *The Twilight Struggle*, 119 and generally 102–52.

[52] Reports on military aspects of the struggle include *Toronto Sun* cofounder Peter Worthington, "Time Is on UNITA's Side," *National Review* (20 June 1986); "A Success for Savimbi?, " *Foreign Report*, 27 November 1986; "Angola Gets Infusion of Soviet Arms," *Washington Post*, 12 May 1987; and Helmoed-Romer Heitman, "Angola–FAPLA Prepares Offensive," *Jane's Defence Weekly* 8, no. 8 (29 August 1987).

was on the march, he wrote, and had only been turned back by U.S. forces in 1983 on the island of Grenada. The Reagan Doctrine now proposed to reverse recent strategic gains of Communist groups, "but not by deploying American forces." Solarz questioned whether the U.S. policy interest was in beating Communism or creating democracies. Solarz alleged that the doctrine's advocates were ambivalent. The first reason was not enough to go to war, he claimed, and the second opened a world of practical difficulties. Due to the dangers that interventions created, wiser presidents, such as Dwight D. Eisenhower during the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 and Lyndon B. Johnson during the Prague Spring of 1968 in Czechoslovakia, decided not to intervene despite the anti-Communist movements related to these revolts. If it is peace in southern Africa the United States wanted, he argued that negotiations had a good chance of success, taking a position similar to that of State Department officials. While he deemed UNITA's chances of prevailing militarily and their ability to govern after as poor, Solarz noted that negotiations had been ongoing, seemed promising, and were supported by most of the regional players with the exceptions of Zaire and South Africa.[53]

Of course, he avoided considering certain points. Specifically, he did not address two key questions: How could a liberal live with the purely despotic, militarist character of the MPLA regime and others akin to it in Africa? Also, what did it mean for the United States to be giving aid to, or ignoring, such Communist governments during a contest of hearts, minds, and ideologies? Solarz wrote that an America capable of reasonable relations with China and Yugoslavia must be similarly able to coexist with other Communist states. There was also tension between two of Solarz's arguments. First, he held that U.S. escalation would be matched by the Communist bloc in Angola, yielding only "a higher level of violence." Second, he doubted that American aid to UNITA would sufficiently empower that army, which could not win.[54] Why? Such questions are answered in the realm of prudence and answered personally by mem-

[53] Stephen J. Solarz, "Next Stop, Angola: Six Questions for the Reagan Doctrine," *New Republic*, 2 December 1985, 18–21.
[54] Solarz, "Next Stop, Angola," 18–21.

bers of Congress. In a related realm, the American public could assess the congressman's argument favoring aid to the resistance in Cambodia despite his opposition to aid other Reagan Doctrine designees. Solarz thus offered a third way forward, consistent with his roles as a skilled debater and a gentleman with no thought for the sort of brawling personal attacks that would be common in Washington only a decade later. By looking back darkly to the malperformance of American forces in the Indochina wars throughout the 1960s and 1970s, he cast doubt on the hope to save Angola from Communism, especially by fueling a war.

That position had opponents in both the House of Representatives and the White House. Representative Mark Siljander shared the view that Soviet strength was being exercised through proxies such as the MPLA government and that periodic gains were being consolidated under the doctrine named for former general secretary of the Soviet Union, Leonid Brezhnev. Brezhnev pledged in 1968, while sending tanks into Czechoslovakia, that because of the iron laws of history and the inevitable progress of world Communism, there could never be a retreat in any theater where Leninists had made gains. To congressmen such as Siljander, this approach meant that Americans must contest Communism in southern Africa; if lost in the 1980s, then Angola truly would remain "lost."[55] For him, the Brezhnev Doctrine for holding populations captive should be replaced in the mind of the world by the Reagan Doctrine for aiding liberty.[56]

Among the sources of political color and energy during such debates in Washington were think tanks and lobbyists. The former, when at their best, provide accurate research and focused policy papers that allow congressional members and their staffs to grasp essential issues, understand the constituencies involved, balance the arguments, and make decisions

[55] The House "Special Orders" and regular debates were substantive, civil, nearly always reasonable, in the view of this observer in 2422 Rayburn House Office Building. For examples on debates related to Angola, see 131 Cong. Rec. (daily ed. 10 July 1985); and 131 Cong. Rec. H11963 (daily ed. 12 December 1985).

[56] Announced in September and November of 1968 by Soviets including General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev, the doctrine stated that once "socialism" was in place anywhere in the world it must never be dis-established. Foreign guerrillas receiving "Reagan Doctrine" aid believed the opposite and proclaimed revolutionary and democratic ends.

that linger forever. A libertarian think tank could argue, with George Washington, that we ought not chase demons abroad, or that Americans had no interest in this Angolan fight. A liberal think tank might oppose aid to UNITA because it would put Americans on the side of South Africa's apartheid state and because many diplomats and liberals said that aid would undermine diplomatic peace processes.[57] The independent-minded New York businessman and Abraham Lincoln enthusiast, Lewis E. Lehrman, was among those helping open discussion of aiding UNITA. At one point in 1985, Lehrman "led a Democratic International in Jamba, Angola, with freedom fighters from several countries gathering to discuss how to make democracy triumph."[58]

A good example of an engaged conservative think tank was the emerging Heritage Foundation, which today is an established opinion maker. As early as August 1981, only six months into the new Reagan administration, the Heritage Foundation took the position that the MPLA government—still unrecognized by the U.S. government—was an urban minority propped up by non-Angolan security forces. Its major "achievements" after a decade in power, the foundation reported, were in wholesale violations of the rights of Angolans and distortions and waste in their economy. Support for UNITA was presented as a prominent alternative among the "Present Opportunities."[59] In taking such a tone, the foundation was honoring the limits of any advocacy; such institutions

[57] South African roles in the region were complex but consistently anti-MPLA. Ground and air strikes came north from the republic at many times during the 1970s and 1980s. UNITA admitted receiving regular South African support. In a paper by Jeremias K. Chitunda, "Angola and the West," *Internationales Afrikaforum* 21, no. 3 (2 July 1985), Chitunda declared, "South Africa is the regional military and economic superpower. All countries (Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Botswana, Malawi, Swaziland) in the region trade heavily with South Africa. Some of them are economically totally dependent on Pretoria. But this does not make these countries less resentful nor apologetic of apartheid." UNITA argued that it was fatuous to blame Black nationalist Angolans for taking help from a White regime (Pretoria) and mocked the common argument that Angolans could somehow be blamed for apartheid or supporting apartheid. But many U.S. congresspeople had a natural dread for any public suggestion that they could be found on the same side of this issue as the Republic of South Africa. International sanctions and internal dealmaking and the courage of many South African citizens brought an end to apartheid and then free elections in 1994.

[58] Fossedal, *The Democratic Imperative*, 143–44.

[59] Ian Butterfield, "U.S. Policy Toward Angola: Past Failures and Present Opportunities," Heritage Foundation *Backgrounder*, 25 August 1981, 1–18.

cannot lobby for any named bill before Congress while keeping their tax-free status. Heritage Foundation reports quickly made their way to Reagan's White House where the president, who had spoken years earlier in support of arming Angolan rebels, usually read them. Further papers on the issue from the Heritage Foundation followed in the subsequent years. When Jonas Savimbi came to Washington, he made a speech in the foundation's auditorium on Massachusetts Avenue only blocks from the Senate Office Buildings.[60]

Citizen action groups based in Washington, DC, were more political and guerrilla-like in their activism, and more attuned to the whims of mass media. Several organizations promoted the cause of Angola's rebels and criticized delays in aid. One group, Citizens for America, brought a folder through the halls of Congress in 1985 that contained photocopied opinion pieces, a Heritage Foundation report of 18 pages, and lengthy typed essays by UNITA's foreign minister, Jeremias Chitunda, on "Negotiating the Cuban Withdrawal from Angola" and "Angola and the West."[61] The latter—two primary sources offered informational help to legislators no matter their views. George Washington University professor and Reagan Doctrine intellectual Charles A. Moser also supported the push for UNITA aid through his coalition known as the Resistance Support Alliance, including publishing a slender monthly newsletter, the *Freedom Fighter*. One of the earliest issues of the newsletter argued for repeal of the Clark Amendment and another circulated the latest essay by Foreign Secretary Chitunda first published in the *Washington Times*—a DC-based national newspaper with a record of supporting Reagan Doctrine fighters overseas.[62] The Jefferson Education Foundation and the American An-

[60] Authors of Heritage Foundation papers on Angolan affairs included Bill Pascoe and James Potts.

[61] Jeremias K. Chitunda, "Negotiating the Cuban Withdrawal from Angola: A Strategy for Victory versus a Diplomacy of Accommodation, 1984," African Ephemera Collection, accessed 19 October 2022; and Jeremias K. Chitunda, "Angola and the West," *Internationales Afrikaforum* 21, no. 3 (1985): 277–79.

[62] Charles A. Moser edited a book of writing by activists and thinkers on particular regions where Soviet power was under attack by internal forces. Contributors included the celebrated Vietnam-era writer Al Santoli (on Cambodia) and others favoring the Reagan Doctrine concept. Charles Moser, ed., *Combat on Communist Territory* (Washington, DC: Free Congress Research and Education Foundation, 1985).

gola Public Affairs Council were in the fray on UNITA's side and against Chevron and Gulf for its oil production in Angola.[63] The Free Angola Information Service was registered with the U.S. Department of Justice as a foreign representative.[64] Additionally, defense intellectuals, such as Gregory A. Fossedal, a highly original, widely read newspaper editorialist and research fellow at the Hoover Institute at Stanford University whose contemporary book had a revealing title—*The Democratic Imperative: Exporting the American Revolution*—also joined the debate.[65] UNITA was attractive to such idealists, who thought and spoke less of proxies than of fighting allies who one day might help win the Cold War. Critics found that illusory, and yet it was to happen.

Lobbyists who pervade Washington work as fixers and conveners of working groups, speak as expert witnesses on legislation, and might be lawyers or business advocates. Some U.S. citizens may see them as "bottom dwellers," especially when they help write bills affecting their companies; but to prominent foreigners, such as UNITA representatives, they were as essential as a map to the first-time tourist. Without lobbyists, a foreign diplomat may get lost in another's capital. Top UNITA officers—Savimbi, Chitunda, Jardo Muecalia, and Brigadier General Tito Chingunji—all appeared in the Capitol at one or more points. Briefly, their official KWACHA News helped advance their case in English to American readers. To better garner American support, UNITA employed the local lobbying and law firm Black, Manafort, Stone, and Kelly, two principals of whom were more recent political advisors to Donald J. Trump (Paul Manafort and Roger Stone). The firm's work included releasing information packets focused on public relations work for Angolan rebels.[66]

[63] For more, see Bernard Gwertzman, "U.S. Is Urging Chevron to Quit Angola," *New York Times*, 29 January 1986.
[64] For more, see Reyko Huang, "Rebel Diplomacy in Civil War," *International Security* 40, no. 4 (2016): 89–126.
[65] See Fossedal, *The Democratic Imperative*, 139–77.
[66] Leon Dash, "Blood and Fire Savimbi's War against His UNITA Rivals," *Washington Post*, 30 September 1990. Lobbyists' distributions to influence the public, copies retained in author's personal files. Much later, Paul Manafort was campaign chairman for Donald Trump, who also kept Roger Stone as an intimate political advisor. Both recently served time in jail, for separate and recent legal violations.

All the while, Angolan government and MPLA personnel had their own lobbyists and enjoyed the prestige of New York City while also delivering addresses at the United Nations. Their speeches and other materials presented the status quo back in Luanda in a favorable light and offered diplomatic alternatives to the war. They rejected charges of being toadies of the Soviet Bloc and promised that Cuban personnel would be sent home as soon as South Africa ceased regional interventions.[67] The firm Gray & Company had a contract handled by former admiral Daniel J. Murphy until public pressure, especially from young activists, forced the firm to drop it. Elliot L. Richardson, who had held many senior public service positions including secretary of defense and U.S. attorney general, succeeded Gray & Company and bristled before critics saying he was now aiding Communists.[68]

Once Congress approved UNITA aid, for which the president was eager, it began flowing in by early 1986, usually via air and land routes from Zaire to the north and west of Angola.[69] This assistance reached tens of thousands of Angolans fighting as insurgents. Although the United States had been nearly petrified by being seen on the same side as the apartheid regime of South Africa, arguably, as American aid flowed in, it offset UNITA's receipt from the apartheid regime. UNITA did what so many minority movements and small governments do: it was open to help from all. Using the American aid well, UNITA extended its political following and its moderate influences over several million Angolans. Foreign reporters seeing its schools and agricultural areas and hospitals were impressed, especially given the omnipresence of war.[70]

[67] "Statement of H. E. Amb. Elsio de Figueiredo, Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of Angola to the United Nations," in the Security Council on 3 October 1985 is one example of the relevant releases from Angola's "Permanent Mission" at 747 Third Avenue (18th floor), New York, NY. Author's personal files.

[68] Elliot L. Richardson, *Reflections of a Radical Moderate* (New York: Pantheon, 1996).

[69] The significance of Zaire for delivering U.S. aid to UNITA is evident from the travels of a congressional delegation of 1988 that worked to assure the supply routes with top government officials before actually meeting with Savimbi. For more, see Arnold L. Punaro, *On War and Politics: The Battlefield Inside Washington's Beltway* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2016), 147–50.

[70] Jack Wheeler, "UNITA in Angola," *Reason*, no. 15 (April 1984): 22–30.

AFTER ANGOLA, ATTENTION TO MOZAMBIQUE

As the Reagan Doctrine established a limited presence in rural Angola, American attention turned toward Mozambique, along the Indian Ocean coast to the east. That country was anarchic in places and desperate in general, laboring to escape the mess of Portugal's hasty decolonization that was succeeded by Soviet Bloc ingress and domination of Mozambique's populace by the Communist Party and army of the Liberation Front of Mozambique (FRELIMO) and early leader Samora Machel.[71] They built their regime at the expense of most of the country, including its largest tribe, the Makua, who were without representation in the Politburo. East Germans were in charge of the policing system and oversized prisons.[72] As Soviet military aid poured into Mozambique, which could not pay for it, American policy makers naturally took a close look at alternatives. The most prominent option, an inchoate movement called the Mozambique National Resistance (RENAMO), was a public relations disaster. The U.S. Department of State was consistently negative in its reports on the group, insisting it could not govern and was accomplished mainly by its destructiveness. Within Washington, therefore, officials initiated a complicated discussion focused on whether the Reagan Doctrine aid recipients should include RENAMO.[73]

For any American of pure Realpolitik view, RENAMO offered another ally against the Soviet Bloc. Arriving at the same clear "yes" from another direction was the flaming idealist Jack Wheeler. After investigating Mozambique from 1983 onward, including a long visit to RENAMO villages and camps in mid-1985, he exuberantly wrote about "this thrilling prospect of a democratic liberation movement overthrowing—for the first time in history—a Soviet-backed Marxist-Leninist dictator-

[71] For more on Mozambique at this time, see John Christman and Winrich Kühne, "Mozambique: Between the Superpowers"; and "Country Profile: Mozambique," *Journal of Defense & Diplomacy* 4, no. 11 (November 1986): 14–18, 27–37.

[72] Chapter 2 of this volume explores some of East Germany's now-forgotten Third World enterprises. Christman and Kühne, "Mozambique: Between the Superpowers."

[73] "Mozambique and RENAMO: Should the Reagan Doctrine Apply?," WETA-TV and the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University, 8 November 1986.

ship."[74] He recorded maladministration of the governing FRELIMO, including the Communist economics that citizen after citizen denounced; the 9,000 plus Soviet Bloc security personnel; the prison camps through which several hundred thousand had passed or were held; and even the 2,000 Mozambican children sent to work in East Germany.[75] Despite noting these patterns of southern African politics, the State Department's insistence on aiding the FRELIMO, including an announcement of providing military training to some of their soldiers, baffled Wheeler.[76] Just as confusing to him was the department's hard opposition to RENAMO as an alternative. Even in the first three years of Reagan's first term, the Mozambique Communist government, an intimate partner to the Soviet Bloc, had received approximately $60 million with more authorized to come. The State Department's regional plans included reliance on the Machel government weaning it from unhealthy foreign influence. What emerged was a contest of views between leading Republicans. Reagan took the side of his State Department, meeting with two of the country's Marxist-Leninist presidents: Machel in 1985 and his successor, Joaquim Chissano, in 1987, when he reaffirmed tens of millions of dollars' worth of food and economic aid. After that second meeting, the *Washington Post* caption under the photograph stated that the leaders "indicated no policy change despite conservative lobbying" in Washington.[77]

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[74] Jack Wheeler, "From Rovuma to Maputo: Mozambique's Guerrilla War," *Reason*, December 1985, 37.

[75] The Soviet Bloc often brought workers into Eurasia from client countries. A Vietnamese community in eastern Germany today is the result of such practice of the Cold War. Angolans were especially cultivated by Cuba, which used the Isle of Youth to train, work, and educate thousands from Africa. Author's undated interviews with scholars Michael Radu and Alex Vuving.

[76] Jack Wheeler, "Why Is the U.S. Considering Aid to Mozambique," *Daily Review*, 24 February 1985.

[77] Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, 116–17; and David B. Ottaway, "Reagan Affirms Support for Mozambican Leader," *Washington Post*, 6 October 1987. Among the mentioned opponents of U.S. aid to the Communist government was Grover Norquist, an activist whose affiliations included Friends of UNITA and Americans for Tax Reform; the latter is now a national organization. One report noted that the retirement of CIA director Casey had removed a major administration voice for aid to the rebels in Mozambique. Neil A. Lewis, "Bid to Have U.S. Back Mozambique Rebels Halted," *New York Times*, 16 March 1987, A9.

The Mozambique issue was reflected in smaller ways inside the offices of Representative Courter. A defense hawk who was on the House Armed Services Committee and also on the Military Reform Caucus, Courter, a moderate but firm Republican, proved willing to go against some vocal conservatives by dissenting on policy in Mozambique. According to a memorandum sent to members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, ethics were a primary reason. The New Jersey congressman had a strong record of publications denouncing terrorism—defined as the deliberate abuse of innocent and nonbelligerent people for political purposes. RENAMO fighters in Mozambique wanted their freedom but also had a documented history of horrible abuses of their fellow compatriots, where they had wide sway. It was not enough to say "they may be winning"; an American had to be willing to carry the weight of the group's moral depredations. Their actions also left any supporters to question what would happen if RENAMO did win and assumed all the powers of government.

A second factor was yet more difficult: Would dissent from the Reagan Republican position related to RENAMO help prevent political damage or undermine the larger Reagan Doctrine? Given the purity and even religious purposes attached to some sectors of the Afghan mujahideen fighting the Red Army as well as the disciplined, humane governing tendencies shown by UNITA in its stable liberated zones in southern Angola, the United States would be compromising the qualities and idealism of the Reagan Doctrine to let into the tent groups famed for abuse and people unable to focus on good governance. To gain one more country for the Reagan Doctrine strategy, Courter would be diluting its good cause.

There could be a third reason to disdain RENAMO despite its anti-Communism: a banal matter of low politics of bureaucratic kinds. Having spent years in the House of Representatives, Courter had sometimes opposed the Department of State. This instance might be a chance for the legislator to work with rather than against the men and women at Foggy Bottom. Courter was not deeply involved in the peace processes the department had started in southern Africa and was taking his own independent line on the apartheid question. On this Mozambique ques-

tion, he joined the Reagan State Department on its chosen path; he declined to sign letters and bills aiding RENAMO rebels.

In the end, the Department of State, backed by most congressional Democrats, won its unusual struggle with Republican congresspeople. The United States denied aid to RENAMO while maintaining formal relations with the FRELIMO governors. The pool of Reagan's freedom fighters was deemed full without RENAMO, as judged by administration statements and congressional votes for aid. Instead, the administration would focus on Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia, and Nicaragua. Laos—on occasion—would be mentioned with a degree of hope, but few in Congress directed their attention there. It lingered on as a casualty of the spread of Communism during past Indochinese conflicts. There were no other publicly designated proxies and partners that emerged out of the Reagan Doctrine. Only in Afghanistan would the doctrine's recipients prevail against Soviet Bloc forces.

In the end, in southern Africa, African and foreign diplomats worked out a complicated regional peace arrangement. Communist regimes kept power in Angola and Mozambique. The political and guerrilla army SWAPO—an entity that was also a third-level extension of proxy war—gained power in Namibia, previously known as South West Africa, a territory occupied by South Africa. Cuban troops returned home by the end of the 1980s; Havana's missionaries of Marxism could no longer rely on Soviet transport aircraft, Soviet Bloc intelligence specialists, Soviet political cover, or Soviet subsidies.[78] As the Warsaw Pact fell to pieces between 1989 and 1991, it took down the organizing hands, with their Communist principles, that had set policy. Their enemy in UNITA, Jonas Savimbi, held on to battlefield command and party leadership. UNITA passed through many martial engagements, extensive and var-

[78] Cuba's official posture had been fully supportive of the Angolan government while indicating it would call troops back home if the Luanda government were secure and Namibia were freed from Republic of South African power. But then Fidel Castro indicated in 1986 that his troops numbers in Angola had risen to 30,000 and that they would not go home until apartheid had been dismantled in South Africa. This disturbed proponents of aid to rebels in Angola and Mozambique and underscored their commitment to low intensity conflict even as negotiations by State Department envoy Chester A. Crocker continued. "Proxy Wars During the Cold War: Africa," Atomic Heritage Foundation, 24 August 2018.

ied negotiations, peace processes, and even treaties of 1991 and 1994. In early 2002, Savimbi was killed in a battle with government troops. UNITA became a political party—as have some other insurgents, such as the 19 April Movement in Colombia (after 1985) and Sinhalese of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (People's Liberation Front) in Sri Lanka (after 1989). UNITA's share of the vote, as measured in Angola's rare elections, has been rising, reaching a full quarter of the electorate several years ago.[79]

The wisest observer may subscribe to the view of British analyst Geraint Hughes that Reagan's sponsorship of the UNITA proxy was "highly effective . . . in forcing the USSR to squander money and arms in its support of the MPLA regime."[80] Savimbi helped Reagan achieve several of the tenets of the U.S. national security strategy, even while failing in his own Angolan political enterprise. One may further suggest that the power of UNITA helped in balancing the region, checking Communism's growth, and getting Cuban and other Eastern Bloc troops out. One should not argue, however, that the proxy war was a successful one for UNITA. Nor can one say that UNITA adapted well to peaceful relations and helped usher in a solid new post–Cold War world.[81] Few militants do so, and, in the early 1990s, UNITA did not.

[79] Rachel L. Swarns and Henri E. Cauvin, "Angola Says Soldiers Have Killed Savimbi, Longtime Rebel Leader," *New York Times*, 23 February 2002; and John Prendergrast, *Angola's Deadly War: Dealing with Savimbi's Hell on Earth* (Washington, DC: U.S. Institute of Peace, 1999).
[80] Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 85.
[81] "Neither UNITA nor LTTE [Tigers, Sri Lanka] was involved in the bargaining process that 'ended' the two conflicts, and both groups, unsatisfied with the outcome and distrustful of the other side, continued to fight." Tyrone L. Groh, *Proxy War: The Least Bad Option* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2019), 100.

CHAPTER 5

India and the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka

UNIQUE FEATURES OF THE PROXY RELATIONSHIP

India's experience in aiding the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (Tamil Tigers or LTTE) in Sri Lanka is a cautionary tale. Few case studies in modern times speak so directly to all the reasons that thoughtful leaders of state may disdain acting through a proxy. Doubtless, the relations between Indians and Tamils of Sri Lanka began in warm ways. The two held a consciousness of mutual ethnic identity, shared religious affiliation, and a distaste for an officious arrogance by some Sinhalese, who were a commanding numerical majority in Sri Lanka and its governance. Also, a kind of soft leftist internationalism characterized New Delhi's foreign policy in the 1970s and 1980s, which suggested possibilities between the large state and the small substate actor of a revolutionary bent.[1]

Such sentiments were deceiving, however. Soon after initiating a relationship, the two groups would stumble from friendship into enemy status. In the process, India fared badly against the Tamils in open fight-

[1] Among the reasons India entered the Sri Lankan fray, one may have been requests for such an intervention by aggrieved Tamils, such as the pleading in Madras by Sri Lankans of the Tamil United Liberation Front in 1985. During recorded history, including Greek and Roman times, many military interventions began as a response to prompts by a weaker party in an overseas struggle seeking a new stronger ally. India's leftward lean in foreign policy noted here was well-known; e.g., Rep James A. Courter (R-NJ) of the U.S. House Armed Services Committee, "India Chooses Its Friends Unwisely," *Wall Street Journal*, 8 June 1987, 20.

Map 5. Some ethnic Tamil areas of India and Sri Lanka: Tamil-dominant littorals of Sri Lanka were once claimed by LTTE

Source: courtesy of author, adapted by MCUP.

ing on the latters' home soil between 1987 and 1990. The cycle was thus remarkable: Within the space of a decade, India brought up foreign Tamil friends, turned them into a foreign policy problem, saw some of the supposed proxies thwarting Indian state efforts, intervened against them militarily, and brought home from Sri Lanka an Indian Army bloodied and shocked by the virility of their Tamil opponents. The failure of Indian state aid to the LTTE supplies lessons to all states that contemplate meddling with the sovereignty of another.[2]

New Delhi initially supported the Tamil Tigers, who were to drive the war in Sri Lanka onward through 2009. Reasons for this include an ethnic complication: tens of millions of Tamils live in the subordinate Indian state, Tamil Nadu, and that regional government aided most Tamil militants who came north from Sri Lanka and into India proper during the early 1980s. These Sri Lankan Tamils were a seething tangle of competing aspirants to a single separatist cause, fired first by nationalism and secondly by Marxism. India favored the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization (TELO), but when the Tamil Tigers assaulted that group, India declined to protect its TELO assets.[3] India trained and armed many other factions only to watch them marginalized, cannibalized, or shot down in the streets by roughnecks of the LTTE. This occurred during a period when the Tamil Tigers' leadership was showing less and less deference to New Delhi. Additionally, India never constructed what a strategist could call a "policy-strategy match" in the enterprise. Tamil militants were firm national separatists, disdainful of their Sinhalese citizens, and bent on independence. Although India armed them, officials enunciated an official policy of some federal or "devolved" status for Tamils

[2] This case study has as a leading theme the relationship between India and the LTTE. While there is much he has not been privy to, the author hopes that the chapter is of utility to readers unacquainted with the Sri Lankan conflict or Indian roles in it. Apart from a fascination with suicide bombers, American terrorism scholars have rarely developed strong interest in Sri Lanka's two major insurgencies: People's Liberation Front (*Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna* or JVP) and LTTE. For example, Max Boot fails to mention JVP and offers only a few sentences on LTTE. See Boot, *Invisible Armies: An Epic History of Guerrilla Warfare from Ancient Times to the Present* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2013).

[3] M. R. Narayan Swamy, *Tigers of Lanka: From Boys to Guerrillas*, 6th ed. (Colombo, Sri Lanka: Vijitha Yapa Publications, 2005), chap. 5, 93–114.

within the island with Colombo remaining as the capital. When pressed, Indian diplomats always said they did not favor the hard division of the island along national lines.[4] These stances left Indian intentions unclear. Perhaps their policy was illogical, or perhaps they never saw the Tamil cause as anything but a chip to be played in the board game of nations.[5]

Sri Lanka's position in the 33-year, low-intensity war between 1976 and 2009 had its own unique aspects. For years, starting in the mid-1950s, the government neglected its proper duties to a major internal minority. Legally, Tamils were fellow citizens in a democracy, but they were not treated as such by most in the Sinhalese-dominated government and security forces. Tamils commenced their rebellion and began to use terror. The government allowed Sinhalese extremists to carry out rampant abuse and even what could be considered pogroms. Indulgence of pro-state terror mobs is entirely corrosive; it demeaned Sinhalese as surely as it horrified millions of Tamils, created émigrés by the tens of thousands, and drove new recruits into the LTTE.[6] After striking an inadequate deal with New Delhi in 1987, which included welcoming Indian soldiers as peacekeepers, Colombo mishandled its own affairs so badly that it was soon aiding and arming the Tamil Tigers in the hopes that they would help drive out the Indian forces.[7] By a remarkable paradox, the more India involved itself through its proxies, the more it came to be hated by nearly all parties on the island, including governors, Sinhalese, and Tamils, who felt completely betrayed by their larger ally.

[4] Swamy, *Tigers of Lanka*, 107, 111. Swamy's books and articles are well-researched. For the author, of great value have been the opportunities for direct talks with professionals from the region while directing counterterrorism studies at the Daniel K. Inouye Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies (Honolulu) for several years, ending with 2018. That program was detailed in Andrew White, "Regional Teamwork: U.S. Encourages Indo-Pacific CT and CVE Co-operation," *Jane's Intelligence Review* 30, no. 9 (September 2018): 32–36.

[5] This is a harsh conclusion but one reached by some close observers. For example, see William McGowan, *Only Man Is Vile: The Tragedy of Sri Lanka* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1992), 62.

[6] For accounts of this, see McGowan, *Only Man Is Vile*, 96–102; and Rohan Gunaratna, *Sri Lanka's Ethnic Crisis and National Security* (Colombo, Sri Lanka: Vijitha Yapa Publications, 1998), 111–12.

[7] "Indo-Lanka Accord," Columbo, 29 July 1987, peacemaker.un.org, accessed 17 October 2022.

POLITICAL CHARACTER OF THE ENTITIES

It is a fair generalization that modern democracies rarely go to war against one another. Indian forces in Sri Lanka in the late 1980s tested that idea. Sri Lankan officials invited India's army of approximately 80,000 troops to the island, during which the two central governments never contemplated fighting each other. Both are democracies and the conflict that emerged between the two was over an undemocratic rising nationalist group that worked fault lines between them. A further and intriguing player in the drama was the state of Tamil Nadu in southeastern India, which contained approximately 55 million citizens and held a degree of autonomy within the larger Indian federal system. Acting with initiative and the approval of central intelligence organs of the Indian government, Tamil Nadu indulged their Tamil brethren from the south, politically encouraging and materially aiding their separatism at the expense of Colombo. Tamils of LTTE and other armed organizations moving between India and Sri Lanka were obliged to negotiate with, and sometimes take direction from, two different sets of Indian authorities: those of the subordinate territory Tamil Nadu and those of New Delhi and its central powers, including the Intelligence Bureau and the rival Research and Analysis Wing (RAW). Tamil guerrillas had to become experts at politics as Carl von Clausewitz would have predicted.

Tamils had enjoyed equal status under British imperial rule; they tended to be well-educated and held numerous posts in civil service and government. Seeing their position threatened by majoritarian politics after British withdrawal in 1948, they came to seek more respect, more security, and, for some, national autonomy. Tamil moderates, of whom there were millions, were to see favored spokespersons and political representatives destroyed in this war by Tamil extremists. They were denounced as quislings and lackeys—so often the charge against moderates made by terror groups. Indeed, in 1975, the first well-known person murdered by LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran was not a Sinhalese general or brutal chief of police, but the respectable Tamil mayor of the Tamil-dominated city of Jaffna.[8] As terrorism increased polariza-

[8] Alfred Duraiappah was assassinated in late July 1975. See "Incident Summary," National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, accessed 30 August 2022.

tion, the ranks of Tamil extremists redoubled as recruits poured into their camps, sometimes after Tamil fighters' tactical victories, sometimes after incidents of Sinhalese violence against the innocent. As the Tamils became more powerful, so did their ways of filling the ranks. It became routine for caravans of LTTE members to turn up at Tamil family homes, intimidate the parents, and kidnap their children. Many thousands of youngsters, some quite young, were thus conscripted, even as many young adults and others joined the Tamil Tigers voluntarily.[9] In an era when the United Nations seemed almost incapable of taking a stand against terrorism, it gradually came to respond to the systematic, forcible recruitment of child soldiers by substate groups, of which LTTE was a grim example.[10]

Some scholars overlook or dismiss the limited Marxist elements of the motivations, organizations, and actions in the Tamil movement that commenced in the early 1970s. Both the Indian journalist M. R. Narayan Swamy, author of two books about the LTTE, and American Thomas A. Marks, whose field research and careful writing has also illuminated the central issues for English-speaking readers, declare that loose Marxist attachments were among the unifying factors for each and every Tamil

[9] Alagayya Arasaratnam, age 18, looked back to the training of approximately 350 fighters at Vaharai in March 1993 and said many were around 13 or 12 or younger. "Some of them cried when they were sent to Jaffna to battle Sri Lankan troops." The LTTE's "baby brigades" have not been totally disbanded, commented a journalist as late as 2005. M. R. Narayan Swamy, *Inside an Elusive Mind: Prabhakaran, the First Profile of the World's Most Ruthless Guerrilla Leader*, 3d ed. (Colombo, Sri Lanka: Vijitha Yapa Publications, 2005), 273. The problem is documented by numerous others, such as Ahmed S. Hashim, *When Counterinsurgency Wins: Sri Lanka's Defeat of the Tamil Tigers* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 194, 208. One government publication and picture set on "child soldiers" of LTTE is by Shenali D. Waduge, *I Am Free: The Story of a Child Soldier* (n.p.: 2013). The author acquired this and other research materials from Sri Lankan diplomats in Washington, DC, in January 2014 when preparing a class for colonels of the Marine Corps War College, Quantico, VA. For a broader account of modern violent movements exploiting children, see Mia Bloom with John Horgan, *Small Arms: Children and Terrorism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2019).

[10] After the war was over, a UN report confirmed in strong language, with footnotes to earlier UN reports, the regularity of the LTTE practice of snatching children from their homes as "recruits." See *Report of the Secretary-General's Panel of Experts on Accountability in Sri Lanka* (New York: United Nations, 2011).

militant group of the era.[11] Both also argue that within the LTTE the only hard ideologue of Marxist-Leninist thought was diplomat Anton Balasingham. He penned the group's seminal ideological document and was a crucial leader. He was deeply trusted by Prabhakaran to manage external relations and his Australian spouse was key to integrating female fighters into their forces. Tamil nationalism was the dominating motivation for most who joined LTTE or made cash donations that enlivened the Tamil Tigers' multifaceted operations. Legitimate nationalist aspirations were at times undergirded by hatred of Sinhalese, who also executed significant depredations. Extremism and violence on the Sinhalese nationalist side spurred the same on the Tamil left, with polarization wrecking the political middle. Sri Lanka became a political tragedy, squeezed between its own ideological extremes just like Turkey experienced at the same time.[12] Fortunately, both states eventually escaped this trap, with the Turks doing so far earlier by the mid-1980s.

LTTE was a sophisticated insurgency, not merely a terrorist group. It built a counter-state through which it controlled swaths of Tamil-dominated Sri Lanka. Administrators, local governors, militia leaders, school teachers, tax collectors, and other functionaries conducted quotidian business.[13] Like the Viet Cong of the 1960s or the Taliban until August 2021, the insurgents ran a shadow government to prove that they could build—not merely destroy—and to gain the legitimacy that political figures aspire to by nature. LTTE officers issued visas to Tamils

[11] Swamy, *Tigers of Lanka*, 102, 104; and Thomas A. Marks, *Maoist People's War in Post-Vietnam Asia* (Bangkok, Thailand: White Lotus Press, 2007), 217, 227. Observers do not think LTTE's leader was Marxist.

[12] Henri J. Barkey, "Turkey and the PKK: A Pyrrhic Victory?," in *Democracy and Counterterrorism: Lessons From the Past*, ed. Robert J. Art and Louise Richardson (Washington, DC: U.S. Institute of Peace, 2007), 343–81.

[13] Swamy covers the alternative state/shadow government well, as do essays by Thomas A. Marks of National Defense University in Washington, DC, including the book cited above, 217–29. In one 1987 meeting with Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, Prabhakaran, grudgingly agreeing to disarm LTTE, noting this would mean the loss of his tax base in northern Sri Lanka, but Gandhi promised to make good on the losses. Of course, Prabhakaran soon abandoned the accord.

seeking to travel to other towns or to the outside world.[14] From Jaffna, they ran a television station, known as Reality, for a few years and a radio service, called the Voice of Tigers, for decades. Their foreign offices in some 40 countries made the Tamil case in public and at demonstrations, kept track of complaints against the Sri Lankan army and government, and helped the process of systematically taxing all Tamils abroad.[15]

The LTTE's reach into Europe was impressive; their reach into Canadians' pockets was astonishing. Stewart Bell, a senior reporter at the *National Post* in Toronto, has explained the varieties of fundraising, which included direct appeals from the LTTE military and the more common drives of political fronts. He tracked several successful money streams and took note of one unusual day when the LTTE raised $1.6 million Canadian dollars. Bell saw secret Canadian intelligence reports showing how vast Canadian sums were reaching the arms sellers and fighters and Prabhakaran, not just LTTE managers of medicines and humanitarian relief. Tamil-Canadian citizens in Toronto as well as other cities found the extortionists who turned up at their homes and businesses all too well-informed about what they had given versus what they had earned. Threats were commonplace and enforcement could be lethal.[16] These systematic campaigns were not like the voluntary fundraising apparatus related to the Irish Republican Army in the 1970s and 1980s where Americans in Boston or Manhattan could drop change in an inviting jar at the local pub to support "republicans" in Northern Ire-

[14] Even the Socialist Equality Party in LTTE-occupied northern Sri Lanka objected to the systematic and tough internal controls imposed by Prabhakaran's shadow government, including internal visas, suppression of their party newspaper, and other measures antithetical to Tamil freedoms. "A First-Hand Report from LTTE-Controlled Territory in Sri Lanka," World Socialist Web Site, 27 April 2001.

[15] London was the most prominent of the LTTE offices overseas. Touring there in 2008 and 2009, the author saw evidence of Tamil advocacy for a homeland, as in demonstrations near Westminster. Two LTTE offices were in Bern and Zurich, Switzerland. Swamy wrote in 2006 that the Swiss were making efforts to explain federalism to the LTTE. Swamy, *The Tiger Vanquished: LTTE's Story* (New Delhi: Sage Publications India, 2010), 31–32. The federalism option, by which Tamil provinces would coexist with a larger number of Sinhalese provinces, might have met some Tamil hopes and saved Sri Lanka from war, but Prabhakaran rejected it—only to lose everything.

[16] Stewart Bell, *Cold Terror: How Canada Nurtures and Exports Terrorism Around the World*, 2d ed. (Mississauga, Canada: Wiley, 2007), 47–102.

land during the Troubles. LTTE supporters or members were going to private homes in Canada and extorting Tamils for funds to pay bills at home and abroad. Modern diasporas, such as those of Palestinians and Kosovars, have supported terrorist groups, but few fund drives have been as lucrative as this LTTE effort. They engendered a global network of fake and legitimate companies, managed by master logistician Kumaran Pathmanathan. Pathmanathan purchased arms, explosives, and supplies the LTTE army needed from abroad and then delivered them in his own fleet of boats.[17]

The Tamil Tigers' Velupillai Prabhakaran ruled the group. Prabhakaran emerged with the Tamil New Tigers after 1972 and then, four years on at the age of 22, renamed and reorganized the organization as his own. He was young, bold, and deadly. His governing structure included a "central committee" and other Marxist trappings, but he was a charismatic figure who followed his own star. He demanded and received individual and absolute loyalty from all, including his top deputy, Gopalaswamy Mahendraraja (a.k.a. Mahattaya), who served for years only to be accused of committing offenses against the group and then tortured and murdered in one of Prabhakaran's prisons.[18] Rallies—at home, in Europe, or in Canada—displayed huge portraits or statues of the supreme leader.[19] Suicide bombers, referred to as Black Tigers and Black Sea Tigers, in the last stage of preparation hoped for the ultimate honor: a final dinner with Prabhakaran.

[17] Pathmanathan (a.k.a. K. P.) became legendary as head of LTTE logistics and he deserved the attention. Once, running an academic counterterrorism program, the author posted the logistician's Interpol photograph and exhorted the international class to "please find this man." By amusing coincidence, not long thereafter, in 2009, Malaysians arrested Pathmanathan and he was "rendered" out to justice in Sri Lanka. Eventually he was "turned" and worked for the government trying to reconcile Tamil militants defeated by government forces. B. Raman, "Arrested Development," Outlook India, 3 February 2022.

[18] The case is disturbing because the aide was so close to the leader, but the larger numbers are also disturbing. Human rights advocates estimate that the LTTE put approximately 7,000 Tamils to death, quite apart from the use of civilians as human shields in battles.

[19] The many photographs of gigantic images of a god-like Prabhakaran include one from Toronto, which appeared with a *New York Times* article. See Somini Sengupta, "Canada's Tamils Work for a Homeland from Afar," *New York Times*, 16 July 2000, 1.3.

The group's regular cadre endured privations and their regimen of work and training was severe. The organization also provided cyanide capsules to their ranks to avoid capture by state enemies. Indeed, many Tamil Tigers did the "proper" thing by using the cyanide and dying before wounds or shortfalls might see them grabbed for interrogation.[20] All of this created discipline and high morale among the fighters, who also received Indian training and weapons. Having a direct connection with India, this Sri Lankan military force was one that few governments could have dealt with well, especially one with a small, unprepared force like the Sri Lankan government's in 1978, 1982, or 1993. The state that finally crushed the Tigers in 2009 would be a state with a new determination and a significantly larger, better-trained army.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

From Indians' perspectives, at least four reasons motivated their development and arming of Tamil proxies. The first was simple matters of power. Almost every state measures its power against its neighbors—even if its intentions are pacific, and even if, as in the present case, the maneuvering looks foolish to outsiders due to an enormous difference in size or capability. India's population was 49 times larger and its GDP was 41 times higher than Sri Lanka's. The two nations might have competed or collaborated in culture or in sport, but New Delhi was determined to enhance its already-overbearing position. They did not start with foreign aid but with the arming of hundreds of citizens from the smaller state. In December 1983, Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi's Congress Party faced elections in December 1983 and, in an attempt to garner support from the millions of voters in the state of Tamil Nadu, expressed support for ethnic brethren and Hindu believers and ideologues. This action was widely recognized by such regional statesman as M. G. Ramachandran, chief minister of Tamil Nadu. The training of Sri Lankan Tamil militants, including fighters from both the TELO and LTTE, in India

[20] Much has been written about the LTTE's cyanide capsules; reliable sources include a volume by Indian journalist M. R. Narayan Swamy, *Inside An Elusive Mind* (Delhi, India: Konark Publishers, 2003), 109, 149, 179.

began in Tamil Nadu throughout 1981 and 1982.[21] Initially, RAW threw significant support primarily to TELO, but all the other groups were also permitted ashore and were given training grounds, lodging, food, money, and arms. Indian authorities became increasingly involved, as would be inevitable given the weaponry flowing in and out of the camps. As the 1980s continued, further indicators emerged that pointed to India's true interest in power, not cultural liaison. For example, it supplied sophisticated training to naval commandos of several Tamil groups, including the LTTE naval wing known as the Sea Tigers. This decision was inconceivable without the expectation that they would damage and sink naval and shipping crafts or perform military reconnaissance in Sri Lanka. The island state's navy was to lose nearly a dozen major ships to suicide attacks from the Black Sea Tigers and assaults from the Sea Tigers.[22]

The second motivator was Indians' interest in the racial and religious demographics of their Sri Lankan brethren. The factors of race and religion make two firm grounds for mutual approaches of high- or low-minded liaison. On the island, Tamil Hindus are not the smallest group: Muslims make up about 7 percent of the population, but they did not take a side in the war. Tamils, however, are indeed a minority with Indian and Sri Lankan Tamils in Sri Lanka, making up some 18 percent of the island's population.[23] Tamil was accepted as a national language but not an official one on par with the majority Sinhalese, which many Tamils naturally resented. As violence broke out in the early 1980s, these racial and religious divisions intensified and increased the brutality on the island. Tamil guerrilla violence of early 1983, for instance, was answered that July with widespread and brutal retribution, including rioting and lynching. Sinhalese thugs even used necklacing—a terrorist act of placing a rubber tire around the neck of a bound captive, pouring gas-

[21] Swamy, *Tigers of Lanka*, 97.
[22] There is a book said to reveal that the United States was of help to the Sri Lankan government's navy in the final years of its long fight with the LTTE naval logistics network. Jayanath Colombage, *Asymmetric Warfare at Sea: The Case of Sri Lanka* (Chisinau, Moldova: Lambert Academic Publishing, 2016).
[23] David Little, *Sri Lanka: The Invention of Enmity* (Washington, DC: U.S. Institute of Peace, 1994), 4.

oline into the well of the tire, and setting it on fire. The July 1983 Sinhalese rampages were a horror. Prime Minister Gandhi spoke mildly when pronouncing, "The agony of our brothers and sisters . . . and all Tamils is our concern."[24] India was already liberal-to-leftist in foreign policy and prone to express support for anti-status quo popular movements abroad. The racist and anti-Hindu rampages against Tamils in Sri Lanka underscored a need for action and the Indian programs of aid to the foreign Tamils dramatically escalated and became semipublic. Yet, Indian officials always stated they aimed not for a separation of Tamil areas from Sri Lanka but for a reasonable devolution of power away from the center and into Tamil democrats' hands, something Gandhi continually emphasized.[25] After her assassination by Sikh extremists on 31 October 1984, grief in Tamil communities of Sri Lanka was widespread.

Third, Indian actions on behalf of Tamils reflected an unusual fear of being surrounded.[26] The United States, which had a negative reputation for many in India, was in open liaison with the People's Republic of China after 1972. While this limited partnership was aimed to check the Soviet Union, Moscow's partner, New Delhi, saw it as unfavorable to Indian interests. That development, alongside solid American relations with Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and some of the region's other states enhanced Indian paranoia, according to some observers. Some Indians also feared that Sri Lankan prime minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike was about to grant the United States naval basing rights on the island's eastern coast at Trincomalee, lauded by eighteenth and nineteenth-century British vice admiral Horatio Nelson as the finest natural harbor in the world.[27] While there was not a drift toward Uncle Sam, that perception continued to grow as news of a discussion for a new Voice of America station spread and especially when Bandaranaike, seen as pro-Indian,

[24] Swamy, *Tigers of Lanka*, 96.
[25] Swamy, *Tigers of Lanka*, 114.
[26] Thomas A. Marks, *Maoist Insurgency Since Vietnam* (London: Frank Cass, 1996), 220.
[27] When India pressed itself on Sri Lanka in the 1987 accord, one of its provisions was that no Sri Lankan ports would be made available "for military use by any country in a manner prejudicial to India's interests." Quoted in *Sri Lanka: A Country Study*, ed. Russell R. Ross and Andrea Matles Savada (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, 1990), 215–16, 250.

was succeeded as prime minister in 1977 by J. R. Jayewardene, thought to be pro-Western.[28] New Delhi became convinced it needed new offsets in the south, and its choice was the millions of Tamils in Sri Lanka.[29] It thus backed all their militants, not just a few assassins or one political partner and, by May 1982, aid programs were underway.

Perhaps fourth in the range of Indian interests were ties to the Soviet Union. Socialist India did not confuse itself with Communists in the USSR, but New Delhi did share many foreign affairs positions with the Soviets, which caused concern in the West.[30] This position was sometimes awkward, however. India's government prided itself on its central role in creating the Non-Aligned Movement, but it did lean to the left, which attracted the attention of Soviet diplomats, and now it armed and assisted the Tamil revolutionaries. The Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front's leader, known as K. "Ranjan" Padmanaba, was Marxist. Indian journalist Narayan Swamy declares, "The only feature common to all the groups was their avowed espousal of Marxism" excepting the TELO (Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization), which was purely nationalistic.[31] He notes that several of the militants' efforts to link their groups together had much to do with the promise they each saw in India's pro-Soviet foreign policy. There is no suggestion here that Soviet intelligence or diplomacy had any role in such attempts to unite quarreling Tamils, or whether it would have been in their interest to do so.[32]

INTELLIGENCE, TRAINING, AND ARMS

State aid to foreign insurgents may be done secretly, openly, or as a mixture of both. Like American aid to the Afghan mujahideen during the early 1980s, Indian assistance to the Tamil militants of Sri Lanka was

[28] Marks, *Maoist Insurgency Since Vietnam*, 223. Jayewardene became president of Sri Lanka after a constitutional amendment established the position and removed the office of prime minister. "J. R. Jayewardene," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, accessed 30 December 2021.
[29] Marks, *Maoist Insurgency Since Vietnam*, 222–25.
[30] James A. Courter, "India Chooses Its Friends Unwisely," *Wall Street Journal*, 8 June 1987, 20.
[31] Swamy, *Tigers of Lanka*, 104.
[32] The earlier chapter dealing with Central American affairs noted roles Cuban intelligence took in bringing together disparate "liberation" groups where they were quarrelsome within a certain country; two examples were Nicaragua and El Salvador.

well-known but managed with caution and by intelligence agents who did not talk. By September 1984, Sri Lanka's national security minister, Lalith Athulathmudali, denounced Tamil Nadu's role as a sanctuary for terrorists bent on attacking Sri Lanka, which has always been a form of aggression in international law.[33] Yet, Athulathmudali's outcry was ignored. The problem of foreign sanctuary for Tamil assassins did not merely fester—it grew. In an outstanding account of the war, scholar Ahmed S. Hashim lays out the methodological approach of India's government:

> By . . . 1987 the number of Tamils provided with sanctuary, training, and weapons by the Indians had reached 20,000. Specialized training for the (LTTE) Tigers was conducted at Chakrata, near Dehra Dun, India's leading military academy. Tamil Nadu state was dotted with important bases and supply points for the LTTE, including Periya (uniforms), Coimbatore (ammunition, explosives), Tiruch (medical treatment for combatants), Tuticorin (smuggling port), Rameshwaram (transit port for arrival of Tamil refugees, among whom the LTTE recruited), Dharmapuri (explosives), Thanjavur (communications centre), and Nagapattnam (port where the LTTE unloaded weapons and ammunition from the Far East, Europe, and Middle East for transfer to smaller boats that could infiltrate Sri Lankan waters).[34]

India's foreign intelligence service, RAW, was the direct manager of the assistance program in Sri Lanka.[35] From minor and exploratory roles,

[33] This refers to traditional international law and various post 9/11 UN Security Council Resolutions, which require states to deny safe haven to terrorists, UNSC Resolution 1373, 28 September 2001.

[34] Hashim, *When Counterinsurgency Wins*, 89–90.

[35] The Research and Analysis Wing's primacy as liaison to Sri Lankan Tamil militants is clear, but that agency's involvement was not exclusive. The Intelligence Bureau, India's domestic intelligence agency, was also and often involved in reporting to New Delhi and in liaison to Tamil groups. The latter made sense because so many Sri Lankan Tamils were holding refugee or resident status in Tamil Nadu state within India. Sources naming the key roles of RAW in aid to Tamil militants include Gunaratna, *Sri Lanka's Ethnic Crisis and National Security*, 20, 175–76.

the mentorship and sponsorship efforts ballooned after the anti-Tamil mayhem in July 1983. In the months after, refugees poured into India by sea, and enthusiastic recruits on the island flooded violent Lankan groups that had spent earlier years competing for young Tamils with a will to fight. Now, these organizations had too many candidates for the ready supply of guns. Tamils came, or were brought, to a network of military camps springing up in India, especially in Tamil Nadu. As an indicator of the breadth of training, during four years of the mid-decade—between September 1983 and July 1987—RAW trained approximately 1,200 fighters "in the use of automatic and semi-automatic weapons, self-loading rifles, 84 mm rocket launchers, heavy weapons, and in laying mines, map reading, guerrilla war, mountaineering, demolitions and anti-tank warfare."[36] From LTTE, 10 recruits received training in antiaircraft gunnery in just one year. The varied training stints lasted between three and six months, a sound introduction into the technical mysteries of modern fighting. Tamil Nadu alone had 32 camps run by RAW, though it also trained Tigers in the far-distant northern hills of Uttar Pradesh from fall 1983 onward.[37] Many top military leaders took such training.[38] These were foundations of what would become one of the most adept guerrilla armies the twentieth century would see.

Over the years, LTTE became proficient in its own training regimens in Sri Lanka, allowing the Tigers to train its foot soldiers to operate as many of their armaments as possible. Between 1983 and 2009, they never faced the shortages of serviceable weapons common to groups such as Indian Naxalites or Filipinos of the New People's Army. Knives and machetes were easily available. At times, these served for massacring villagers silently without alerting nearby security forces. The Tamil Tigers received handguns and rifles from India in the 1970s and the group's logisticians acquired more from foreign sources, including Chinese-made Type 56 and Soviet-made Kalashnikov model (AK-47) assault rifles.[39]

[36] Swamy, *Tigers of Lanka*, 110.
[37] Hashim, *When Counterinsurgency Wins*, 89.
[38] Swamy, "India Begins Training Tigers," in *Inside an Elusive Mind*, chap. 11.
[39] On the profusion of weapons available to LTTE, another source is Gunaratna, *Sri Lanka's Ethnic Crisis and National Security*, 174–87.

They also garnered numerous forms of explosives, such as napalm bombs, rocket-propelled grenades, and hand grenades, some of which were made in Tamil Nadu and smuggled south. Their extensive implementation of land mines showed the level of explosives they had available, with one shipment purchased from Ukraine. LTTE used these weapons along local roadways, including suspending them overhead—a countermeasure to under-armoring of city buses. Mining was not limited to land forces: Sea Tigers employed limpet mines, a magnetic mine attached to a ship's exterior, placed usually by their expert divers, some of whom received training in India. They also learned that 55-gallon oil drums loaded with explosive could easily ruin one or more armored vehicles, no matter whether they came from India or Sri Lanka. The Tigers possessed numerous types of mortars, often with a surprisingly large supply of shells. One LTTE system fired a warhead with 5 kilograms of explosives.[40]

The LTTE also used numerous types of vehicles to assault their enemies. At times, they would add armor to bulldozers, both homemade and commercial, and constructed armored personnel carriers on commercial vehicle chasses. They placed car and truck bombs in Colombo, including two truck bombs that ripped apart buildings in the mid-1990s. The Sea Tigers sailed naval craft, and within that genus, different species of what would be considered suicide craft.[41] They used armored 30-foot long fast boats with an outboard motor that could slam 300 kilograms of explosive into the side of a Sri Lankan ship. They also employed smaller, wave-skimmers akin to the Ski-Doo, created in angular stealth forms, to make similar attacks.[42] Ultra-lite aircraft of mixed kinds, some im-

[40] Gunaratna, *Sri Lanka's Ethnic Crisis and National Security*.

[41] When teaching a course for foreign officers at National Defense University in Washington, DC, in the years after 11 September 2001, the author worked with several Sri Lankan officers of their martial services. One prepared an extensive and illustrated paper on varieties of Tamil Tiger naval craft. He and others helped begin the author's formal inquiries into this conflict. The author is grateful not just to those officers but more broadly for the U.S.-paid programs that bring such professionals into our military schools, where the cross-fertilization is extremely valuable to all. Modern war is often coalition war, and this is the sort of program that democracies should have in common.

[42] There are many available pictures of such LTTE craft; some of the author's came from an officer who went on to become a vice admiral of Sri Lanka's Navy.

ported from Czechoslovakia, provided the Tigers the ability to drop small bombs, such as in one 2007 attack on an airport.[43] Surface to air missiles reportedly took down several Sri Lankan government aircraft. Remote controlled bombs gave another level of attack. LTTE hid multiple cans filled with *plastique* in public places. Suicide belts, made for male and female bombers, were employed for attacks at public rallies or selective assassinations.

The Tigers were a war machine, ready for each level of the contest, from terrorism up through guerrilla operations on land or sea, semi-conventional war, and conventional infantry work.

India was not the only source of arms for Tamil Tiger fighters. They had a more global logistical system than any other insurgency or terrorist group of the late twentieth century. For example, the Irish Republican Army of the 1980s was uncompetitive even with its American and Libyan connections. The LTTE stole a shipment in Africa in a clever operation in which LTTE agents with false papers simply turned up dockside at a ship known to be awaiting orders. Most shipments came from arms markets in Singapore; Phnom Penh, Cambodia; and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, all places where the LTTE maintained offices for arms procurement.[44] Like the Afghan fighters, the Tamil Tigers also manufactured some of their own weapons at shops and factories scattered about areas that the Tamils controlled, including in Jaffna. The metal consumption for LTTE production was such that the government of Sri Lanka tried to block raw metal shipments and various hardware from entering Jaffna.[45] The Tamil Tigers' spirit of violent creativity and industry embraced all the military realms of air, sea, land, and cyberspace. Prabhakaran began a

[43] My sources, all unclassified of course, include a U.S. Marine Corps general who made an official visit to the island in fall 2007 but would decline to have his name used.
[44] See G. H. Peiris, "Secessionist War and Terrorism in Sri Lanka: Transnational Impulses," South Asia Terrorism Portal, accessed 29 December 2021. Chennai (Madras) on the Tamil Nadu coast of India is another major commercial port where LTTE had offices and residences. One article declared Cambodia to be a most significant arms source for the Tigers, with weapons also coming from other countries including North Korea, Lebanon, and Cyprus. See "USD 200 Million Profit Margins Maintain Sophisticated Tamil Tiger War," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, 19 July 2007.
[45] Swamy, *Tigers of Lanka*, 225.

nascent air force, putting his son Charles Anthony in command. At first, the branch employed ultralites, but eventually included Cessnas.[46] To provide air defense, Tamil Tigers possessed varied and specialized gunnery as well as surface to air missiles—something most other terrorist groups often lusted after and usually could not obtain. The LTTE stored much of this materiel at sea where it could be brought in to support ongoing battles and where it would not be bothered by the Sri Lankan Navy. Often, Tigers possessed a surplus of arms while in a fight. They had no need to depend upon RAW or other groups to move and deliver them. The LTTE's own logistical networks usually included several dozen commercial ships, many legally registered and some of oceangoing capability.[47]

Women who joined the LTTE entered either the political front—receiving the nicknames of Birds of Freedom—or the guerrilla force—with those women known as Tigresses. The latter members took part in the same training that made their male counterparts adept in using the group's war materiel. It is not apparent in most accounts, but some of the Tigresses also joined combat training in India.[48] The LTTE command began preparing females in earnest in August 1985, in Tamil Nadu. Normally, they trained in segregated camps, but some did join gender integrated units. A similar pattern emerged when engaged in fighting, taking part as separate units in some cases and integrated in others accord-

[46] Aircraft came into the LTTE arsenal well after the period of Indian intervention. Ultralites were procured in Europe. Cessnas were American and procured with British liaisons of LTTE, according to Col H. Ranasinghe, a military attaché the author interviewed from the Sri Lankan embassy in Washington, DC, in December 2013. The *International Herald Tribune* in a story on Gotabaya Rajapaksa noted on 22–23 November 2008 that just a month before "crudely-made Tamil Tiger fighter planes bombed an army base on the west coast." One admiral notes that when a series of LTTE cargo ships were sunk between 2006 and 2007, the many losses included three dismantled aircraft; the type is unstated. Hashim, *When Counterinsurgency Wins*, 176.
[47] LTTE purchased approximately 50 ships, starting in 1984, three years before the Indian Army intervention. Over time, it had several dozen ships in operation at once. "End of Global LTTE Network Imminent," *Sunday Observer* (Sri Lanka), 8 December 2009. For this and several related press clippings, the author is indebted to Larry Cosgriff, an expert on maritime shipping. Other sources on the naval contest include Paul A. Povlock, "The Coming Maritime Insurgent Century: Lessons Learned from the Sri Lankan Civil War Suggest a Growth Industry for Future Sea Tiger-type Operators," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 138, no. 12 (December 2012): 29–32; and Colombage, *Asymmetric Warfare at Sea*.
[48] Swamy, *Inside an Elusive Mind*, 100. There is a reference to training in India of Sri Lankan female guerrillas in de Soyza, *Tamil Tigress*, but not all accept the authenticity of the volume.

ing to military needs. It appears that women only took part in training in either India or Sri Lanka. One female unit under the command of a woman named Anoja, for instance, trained in India, but returned swiftly enough to enter the first battle of Mannar in 1986.

At home in Sri Lanka, the key to organization and training was a non-Tamil woman: Adele Ann Balasingham. She crafted a 40-page manual titled *Women Fighters of Liberation Tigers* to guide and indoctrinate women fighters and may have supervised their work.[49] Balasingham's photograph does not appear in this manual, but there are three pictures of her in a Sri Lankan government publication about her program and a few journalists' photographs appeared in news magazines.[50] Despite her central role with the Tigresses, Balasingham remains strangely unknown in the West—even to some social scientists writing about women in terrorism.[51] An Australian, she now lives in England, but left behind a legacy of thousands of Sri Lankan Tamil Tigresses. They often did the same hard physical work in camp as the men and took the same risks in fighting. Many accounts speak to their bravery.[52] They were commandos, naval commandos, infantry officers, intelligence specialists, combat nurses, administrators, and recruiters. Balasingham's manual lauds them for smashing chauvinism, shattering thousands of years of Sri Lankan history in which women did not make war and stirring new spirit into Tamil nationalism. Prabhakaran praised them and, at times, formally rendered honors. Thenmozhi Rajaratnam (a.k.a. Kalaivani Rajaratnam or Dhanu), who assassinated the campaigning politician Rajiv

[49] Adele Ann Balasingham, *Women Fighters of Liberation Tigers*, 2d ed. (Jaffna, Sri Lanka: Thasan Printers, 1993).

[50] Waduge, *I Am Free*, 36–37.

[51] An Indian magazine printed an undated photograph of Adele Balasingham in camouflage trousers with a rifle slung over her right shoulder. On Balasingham, and an alleged escape with Tamil Tiger funds in accounts in London and Australia, see Sarath Kumara, "A Further Nail in the LTTE Coffin!: Adele Balasingham the Former Consort of LTTE Idealogue Does a Number on Them!," Lankaweb, 3 September 2011. More on Balasingham's booklet and such primary sources by terrorists themselves is found in Christopher C. Harmon and Paula Holmes-Eber, "Women in Terrorist Undergrounds," *Combating Terrorism Exchange* 4, no. 4 (November 2014).

[52] Certain male officers of the Sri Lankan armed forces testify to the high quality of female cadres they fought or encountered in the war with LTTE; e.g., Maj Gen Shavendra Silva, meeting with author, Marine Corps University, Quantico, VA, 12 February 2013.

Gandhi, was among those who became national heroes among militant Tamils. Their pride in killing the famed Indian, who was considered pro-Tamil, accentuates how badly the Indian Peace-Keeping Force was received during its intervention in northern Sri Lanka between 1987 and 1990.

MISMANAGEMENT . . . AND A PROXY GOES ROGUE

As India handled the militant Tamils of Sri Lanka, it did not choose one or two groups with separable but parallel purposes. Instead, it opened its arms to all comers and equipped and trained them all. This decision might have produced a competitive spirit, but it also yielded rank rivalries, which eventually turned lethal. In the internecine contests, moderates were usually shouldered aside and, at some other times, they were simply murdered. The Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF), which was a parliamentary party until its expulsion from legal politics, showed the moderation that one hopes for in a nationalist movement when it advertised a unity conference in January 1984 in Madras, India. No other group attended, however; worse, the LTTE turned the special relationship that TULF thought it had with Indian sponsors against it, spreading the word that the group was a mere pawn of New Delhi. They assaulted and killed TULF members by the droves, often stringing up the victim's body from a lamp post with a sign indicating "treason." LTTE next turned the same propaganda lines and garrotes on Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF). The LTTE denounced the latter group as a toady of RAW, although they discreetly declined to use the name of that Indian intelligence organization that had been so generous to Tamils. Late in 1986, LTTE highlighted the dangers of Indian power looming over Sri Lanka as one of the motives for further massacres, such as one against the People's Liberation Organization Tamil Eelam (PLOTE)—itself responsible for internal purges.[53] Mostly due to its ruthlessness, LTTE won the struggle for dominance. Their maneuvering against fellow militants recalls how, in the 1950s, the National Liberation Front (FLN) of Algeria had laid down a marker, declaring themselves "the sole authentic represen-

[53] Swamy, *Tigers of Lanka*, 182–83.

tative of the Algerian nation." Palestine's Yasser Arafat soon mimicked that approach and even the wording of that slogan.[54] In 1983, Prabhakaran widened the political side of his insurgency by "pushing the Tamil community to recognize his group as the only authentic voice of their concerns and aspirations."[55] By the end of the 1980s, virtually all Tamil militant nationalism was suborned to the single-minded Velupillai Prabhakaran and his totalitarian organization. And the proxy—LTTE—had all but replaced the sponsor—India—in running Tamil militant affairs.

For all of its investments in Tamil militants, India's intelligence service garnered little return. With so many contacts, there was some value to RAW and to a national government interested in regional affairs. Yet, Sri Lanka represented no threat to India, lacking both intention and capability. Certainly, when India plunged into Sri Lanka with a peacekeeping army in 1987, its performance did not reflect absorption of information from Tamil militants, even though most of those Tamils had lived in the very areas in which Indian soldiers were to operate. The foreign intelligence service could have better put its labors into assessments of the nation's several powerful neighbors.

One form of payoff that India doubtless expected, although primarily ignored in social science literature on the topic, was state extraction of foreign intelligence from terrorist proxies. Were there matters on which India garnered special intelligence from Tamil militant groups it trained? Did India detail work to be done by such groups in intelligence? Such opportunities are present and entirely logical with a proxy and, at the time, RAW had the interest, and governors in New Delhi and Tamil Nadu's capital, Madras (now known as Chennai), needed to know of developments in Sri Lanka before they began arming Sri Lankans and especially thereafter. A reading of Narayan Swamy's research yields a few efforts of this kind. In May 1982, Prabhakaran was in jail in Madras for shooting a Tamil rival in the local streets. Swamy writes that Prime Minister Indira Gandhi approached the Tiger leader through RAW. Intel-

[54] Christopher C. Harmon and Randall G. Bowdish, *The Terrorist Argument: Modern Advocacy and Propaganda* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2018), 21–23.
[55] Swamy, *Inside an Elusive Mind*, 76.

ligence agents visited the imprisoned militant and asked about Sri Lankan facilities, especially the Trincomalee naval base and harbor. After two such visits and intervention by political figures—especially Pazha Nedumaran, the former chief of the Tamil Nadu unit of Gandhi's Congress Party—the insurgent leader received a pardon despite being charged with crimes in two countries.[56] "A limited number of Tamils were handpicked for intelligence gathering," Swamy reports, not noting whether LTTE intelligence managers, such as Chief Pottu Amman, were among those selected.[57] One trainee said his Indian hosts "asked us numerous questions about [Sri Lanka's] bridges, railway tracks, places to land, the depth of the sea, the coastline," and more. One RAW official attempted to explain away his liaison with Tamil militants in words that admitted as much as they denied, telling the Sri Lankan national security minister, "We trained people to keep a watch, not to kill."[58] It stands to reason that India would take whatever intelligence it could glean from such trainees and contacts.

While it is unclear how much intelligence India garnered from its LTTE connections, tantalizing aspects of modern terrorism outside of South Asia confirm the likelihood that a sovereign state might attempt to learn from the foreign terrorists it manages, especially from groups that could be called "pro-state" terrorists. British security services, for instance, learned about the mutual enemy of the Irish Republican Army from "Loyalists" in Northern Ireland during the Troubles.[59] As the Cold War peaked, leftist Palestinians were given wide sway in the Warsaw Pact countries and a few of them became liaisons with Eastern Bloc intelligence agencies. Members of the Red Brigades in Italy captured and

[56] Swamy, *Inside an Elusive Mind*, 67.
[57] Swamy, *Tamils of Lanka*, 111. Immensely capable and trusted, Pottu Amman headed intelligence for the Tigers until the end of the war, dying with Prabhakaran on 18 May 2009.
[58] Swamy, *Tamils of Lanka*, 110–11.
[59] Pro-state terrorists have been well-labeled as "preservationist" by Bard E. O'Neill. Writing that they fight for the status quo, he gave as examples the American Ku Klux Klan, South African Afrikaner Resistance Movement, and Northern Ireland's Ulster Defence Association. See O'Neill, *Insurgency & Terrorism: From Revolution to Apocalypse*, 2d ed. (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2005), 27–28. O'Neill saw the availability of Tamil Nadu to the Tigers as an important safe haven but noted it has the disadvantage of being noncontiguous.

then interrogated American Army and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) general James L. Dozier, asking him questions that later proved to have come from Bulgarian liaisons. The Red Army Faction (RAF) (a.k.a. Baader-Meinhof Gang) teams from West Germany collected intelligence on local military bases that would have been highly valued by East German and Soviet spies. Moreover, RAF individuals taking haven in East Germany—a frequent occurrence—sometimes wrote intelligence reports for the Stasi intelligence agency. The deputy leader of Stasi, Markus Wolf, describes his agency's hopes to extract intelligence from the terrorists they assisted. Although some such hopes were to no avail, Wolf writes that the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) provided information. The Palestinian group furnished strategic intelligence on Israeli-Egyptian relations prior to the signing of the Camp David Accords between those two nations in September 1978. He also notes that the PLO also gave "insights into the shifting politics, alliances, and enmities of the Middle East," that their formal contacts with the group "facilitated the operations of our intelligence officers in Damascus and Aden," and that they kept the East Germans apprised of which CIA and West German operatives were in the region, what covers they used, and who their sources were.[60] In short, it is logical to assume that Indian intelligence officers had their own motives supplemental to the grander designs of officials supporting Tamil militancy abroad. Their curiosity and professional needs for intelligence increased tenfold in 1987 when New Delhi decided to send the Indian Peace-Keeping Force (IPKF) over the Palk Strait.

[60] Markus Wolf with Anne McElvoy, *Man Without a Face: The Autobiography of Communism's Greatest Spymaster* (New York: PublicAffairs, 1999), 277–313. Erich Mielke ran Stasi, while Wolf directed the foreign intelligence branch, Main Directorate for Reconnaissance (HVA). The author has been careful with their words in the above text because, more often than not, Wolf deprecates what his agency could learn from terrorists. That is consistent with his minimization of all his institution's relations with terrorists. Roberta Goren, among the first scholars to work in the field of state-sponsored terrorism, anticipates Wolf's later statement about close relations the Warsaw Pact had with the PLO: "In view of the erosion of Soviet influence in the Middle East from 1973 to 1978, the PLO had come to represent the most reliable and dependent foothold for Moscow in the Middle East." Goren, *The Soviet Union and Terrorism*, ed. Jillian Becker (Boston, MA: George Allen & Unwin, 1984), 128. The quotation provides a good perspective on the value of a proxy.

Another mystery in the case of the Tamil Tigers has to do with the third-level extensions: where a proxy develops proxies. LTTE apparently did not, although it could have, being provided for and empowered by India. The LTTE grew dramatically and widened the scope of its political and financial activities through the creation of political fronts and lobbies, but the Tamil Tigers do not seem to have stepped outside of Tamil liberation affairs or encouraged Tamil Nadu independence from India, with perhaps one exception. In 1994, the LTTE reportedly helped the Pakistani terror group Harakat-ul-Mujahideen in smuggling weapons by sea. Allegedly, the recipients of the armaments were the Abu Sayyaf Group in southern Philippines. Although the LTTE was allowed to keep a share, their participation here might be considered transactional and nothing more. This single incident, only mentioned by one Indian diplomat and in passing by a former UN ambassador, seemingly did not spawn a consequential relationship with any other armed group, let alone a proxy relationship.[61]

FAILURES IN FORMAL POLITICAL RELATIONS

Three primary lines—formal approval from the highest political level in New Delhi; direct hands-on management by the minister-general of Tamil Nadu; and control of training and intelligence liaisons by the foreign intelligence service RAW—ran through India's relations with the multiple groups of Tamil fighters. By late 1983, these connections were so sturdy and multifaceted that strong elements of Indian control were assumed and appreciated by both sides. For example, the EPRLF kidnapped an American couple, Stanley and Mary Allen, in 1984, embarrassing the Indian government. Indian officials stepped in, with Indira Gandhi sending 11 words that spoke volumes: "Release the Allen couple. I will provide all help to you."[62]

[61] Bahukutumbi Raman, "Sri Lanka: Too Late to Learn?," South Asia Terrorism Portal, accessed 29 December 2021. See also Gordon Weiss, *The Cage: The Fight for Sri Lanka and the Last Days of the Tamil Tigers* (New York: Bellevue Literary Press, 2012), 78.
[62] Swamy, *Tigers of Lanka*, 125.

Indian officials, however, faced two growing problems that normally occurred in proxy relationships. The first was that the more military support the nation provided to needful Tamils, the more arrogant and demanding the latter became. Instead of keeping training and arms practice in Tamil Nadu covert, the Sri Lankan militants let journalists observe their activities and acted haughtily when in adjacent towns. As the number of Sri Lankan Tamils with guns increased, inevitably, hateful incidents with local communities would too. Pain and jealousies between these groups grew as it became more common for the young foreign fighters, who thought little before brandishing their weapons, to bully unarmed locals. Eventually, the Tamil separatist movement lost its single friend in India when Ramachandran broke off a meeting late in 1986, angrily saying to the rebel leaders gathered in the room: "We have given you shelter all these years, but you have misused the freedom. You have begun attacking innocent Indians. It is time all this ended once and forever and Tamil Nadu is cleared of you all."[63] Then Tamil Nadu took a step it had not imagined: In a well-prepared set of raids, state authorities confiscated weapons at all the rebel camps it was supporting, seizing surface-to-air missiles, revolvers, explosives, and more. Operation Disarm, as it was called, stunned the hubristic fighters from Sri Lanka. Few of them knew that the following year would be worse.[64]

India's second problem was the LTTE, now the most potent of the many Tamil groups. While New Delhi could be confident it had at least some restraints on most Tamil militants, Prabhakaran and his Tigers proved unmanageable. By 1986, his ego and his organization had grown to the point that he tricked his sponsors almost as often as he did other Tamils and the government of Sri Lanka. When cabinet-level efforts of Colombo to reach an accord based on devolution—with much power flowing from Colombo to the Tamil militants—fell short in the estimations of many groups, Prabhakaran was openly disdainful. Pressed to conform by the Indians, including the friendly authorities in Tamil Nadu, Prabhakaran instead unnerved everyone when he announced the cre-

[63] Swamy, *Tigers of Lanka*, 215.
[64] Swamy, *Tigers of Lanka*, chap. 8.

ation of a "Tamil Eelam Secretariat" to formalize governance in Tamil-controlled areas of the north, including Jaffna, with plans for issuing currency, licensing all businesses, and policing traffic in the streets, among other governmental functions.[65] He continued mocking and plotting against Tamil rivals in politics and the militant underground for selling out or being too close to Indian support lines. Even when circumstances made Prabhakaran submit to India during interim negotiations, the effect was always temporary. In the most famous case, after the Indian and Sri Lankan governments signed a peace accord in July 1987, which the Tamil militant negotiators were not allowed to help prepare, the LTTE leader arrogantly pronounced to a reporter, "So you think I am for this accord? I don't like it. At the first opportunity we will sabotage it."[66] He went even further with another journalist, promising to provoke the Indian Peace-Keeping Force into attacks on Sri Lankan civilians as a political maneuver.[67] It was a bold stance, and one Prabhakaran owned for the next two decades, even if it led to his death in 2009—not at the hands of the bumbling IPKF but a Sri Lankan multidivision offensive led by the strong-willed Mahinda Rajapaksa government that was backed by its victory in the 2005 national elections.

INDIA INTERVENES

By 1987, India recognized that while its proxies in safe havens in Tamil Nadu were merely irritating, their Tamil brethren in northern Sri Lanka were under dire threat from government offensives. The greater power decided to thrust itself into the smaller state. First, India sent a naval expedition billed as a relief operation, but it was turned away by the Sri Lankan Navy. The Indian Air Force then airdropped humanitarian assistance pallets directly into Jaffna, perhaps convinced this would be acceptable in international law. Sri Lankans were infuriated that Indian Air

[65] This may sound fanciful, but highly developed insurgent organizations regard themselves as governors. A few, such as ISIS, have discussed replacing status quo currency with their own.
[66] Prabhakaran, quoted in Swamy, *Tigers of Lanka*, 257.
[67] Swamy, *Tigers of Lanka*, 257. The LTTE leader, like other faction leaders, had been approached by the Indian government about the bilateral treaty. Prabhakaran even met personally with Gandhi to discuss it, during which meeting he promised to disarm. He did not.

Force transports invaded their airspace and hinted at the strength of Indian links to the Tamil revolutionaries. Nonetheless, with the Sri Lankan Army's drive northward into Tamil-held territory bogged down, it forced Sri Lankan president J. R. Jayewardene into signing a formal accord, which created a cease-fire and accepted the presence of the IPKF in northern Sri Lanka.[68] Both parts of that arrangement eventually failed, but there were additional ill effects no one foresaw. Officers of the Sri Lankan armed forces were indignant at the government's "selling out" to an unfriendly power. Worse, many in the Sinhalese majority—wary of India when not outright hostile—became incensed at the idea that any foreign power would protect the Tamil insurgents. The People's Liberation Front (JVP), an odd combination of Sinhalese nationalist and Maoist insurgency, which had been suppressed in 1971, exploded again into prominence. The years 1987–89 were astonishingly bloody for many parts of "the resplendent isle," Sri Lanka.[69] Facing one festering insurgency by Tamils in the north, it now had a second, more widespread insurgency in the center and south, creating an existential threat. The JVP danger would not pass until the killing of its top leader in 1989.

While Sri Lankan security forces repressed the JVP efforts in the center and south, the IPKF managed the war against the Tamils in the north. The Indian Army came in unprepared. They had little knowledge of local Tamil conditions, possessed outdated maps, lacked training in counterinsurgency, and did not know how strong a military force they faced. India was attempting to "ride the tiger" it had raised from a cub in Tamil Nadu, and most of what followed went badly. India's force of 80,000 could not even control the boundaries of its self-chosen theater of operations. Despite the Indian Navy's efforts to close the Palk Strait, "LTTE traffic between south India and northern Sri Lanka continued," observes Rohan Gunaratna. Furthermore, "LTTE boats transported injured cad-

[68] The text of the "Indo-Lanka Accord and Annexure" of 29 July 1987 may be found in Gunaratna, *Sri Lanka's Ethnic Crisis & National Security*, 380–85. It was signed by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and President J. R. Jayewardene.

[69] By war's end in 2009, estimates including those by the United Nations reached at least 80,000 dead. For speculation on the last months of war and indices of "disappearances," see "Sri Lanka," Human Rights Data Analysis Group, accessed 17 October 2022.

res to Tamil Nadu for treatment and returned with military supplies."[70] The Tamil Tigers took the steps through a prescribed disarmament as if it were a mere pantomime, occasionally surrendering obsolete weapons. During the process, the Sri Lankan government began to arm the Tigers as a way to check Indian arrogance and movement south. The LTTE inflicted almost 5,000 casualties on IPKF soldiers. Perhaps larger was the damage done to Indian pride; a guerrilla army completely thwarted a great power. As is so often the case, public opinion swung against the foreign force and raised nationalist feelings among a Sri Lankan nation that had been divided psychologically.[71] Initially, northerners had mostly welcomed Indian soldiers, hoping for an end to the Tamil insurgency. Soon, their opinions went sour and hostile, their optimism declining every time blood was spilled or Indian officials made some maladroit announcement. India withdrew, completing the extraction of its army by March 1990.

This Indian martial action took place amid general international silence about how to protect the Sri Lankan democracy with its mixed internal wars. Moscow and Washington did not take sides, had no proxies, and showed little interest in it all during the 1980s and 1990s.

There was limited action by outside negotiators throughout the three-decade conflict. Those attempts came from well-intentioned but weak negotiating parties such as Norway, which made two efforts between 2002 and 2006. The United Nations, although holding significant powers to act under chapter seven of its charter, watched this flagrant

[70] Gunaratna, *Sri Lanka's Ethnic Crisis & National Security*, 119. A decade later, the reports on LTTE supply from India include news on the smuggling base of Rameshwaram on Pamban Island, eastern Tamil Nadu, from which the passage to Mannar, Sri Lanka, is not difficult. Reportedly involved were Indians but especially Tamil refugee and LTTE figures from Sri Lanka. "Decoding LTTE's Supply Chain," *Times Now*, 16 August 2008.

[71] Tamil academic Stanley Tambaih has said, "Although India is undeniably their parent in many ways, all indigenous Sri Lankans—Sinhalese, Tamil, Muslim—become visibly annoyed, if not outraged, if Sri Lanka is mistaken physically to be a part of India . . . or if it is thought culturally to be part of greater India." Quoted in Hashim, *When Counterinsurgency Wins*, 97. Another analyst suggests that Sri Lanka was always divided. "Despite the best intentions and hopes of the British colonialists, a Ceylonese or Sri Lankan identity did not materialize." Ramya Chamalie Jirasinghe, "The International Community's Intervention during the Conclusion of the War in Sri Lanka," *Strategic Analysis* 40, no. 4 (July–August, 2016): 292, https://doi.org/10.1080/09700161.2016.1184789.

case of foreign meddling—India's fostering armed guerrillas—and let it burgeon into dramatic aggression even if UN lawyers might define what they were watching as *indirect* aggression. On occasion, the world body issued a political warning to the Sri Lankan government about the treatment of the Tamil minority or its failure to restrain death squad killings, or both. The UN had no constructive programs, or at least none that interested parties in the conflict. After the Sri Lankan victory in the war in May 2009, humanitarians and some UN observers registered their grave distaste for the climax.[72] A large state had systematically trained, armed, and exported illegal belligerents into a neighboring state for years with no serious UN attempt to block their aggression. Such neglect undercuts the UN's moral authority to show disapproval for the way that Colombo ended this rebellion: with great violence. Certainly no worthy state has any duty to ask the UN for the right to self-defense. Yet, nothing excuses individual war crimes; Sri Lanka did act brutally. Its actions, however, defeated separatists who had rejected moderate constitutional solutions and repeatedly declared their will to cleave off eastern and northern parts of its sovereign territory.

One other hope for international action might have come via the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). Consisting of eight countries including India and Sri Lanka, the SAARC promotes the welfare, political interests, and stability of the region south of the Himalayas. At the time of its establishment, SAARC also passed a use-

[72] UN discontent with the government of Sri Lanka was a commonplace in world media after May 2009; see, for example, Weiss, *The Cage*, 201–2, 211, 220. As late as February 2013, the repetition of a charge that "as many as 40,000 civilians were killed in the last months of the conflict" masks the way observers say the Tigers fought—using those civilians as human shields and conscript labor and openly shooting Tamils who tried to flee. "Sri Lanka: United Nations Says Leaders Must Do More to Investigate War Deaths," *New York Times*, 14 February 2013, A12. It was entirely consistent with the way they had treated Tamils not enrolled in their movement from the first day when Prabhakaran shot a Tamil mayor of Jaffna. Thus, if UN "accountability" pressure is to help heal war wounds, as it should, it must be balanced. If this seems a harsh set of observations, consider another way the UN failed to act in this long war: it did not block LTTE Tamil-forced relocations or massacres of Muslims in the country.

ful accord in 1987 for the suppression of "terrorism."[73] A second accord, in which partners underscored their willingness to counter terror, particularly the money flowing to terrorist groups after 11 September 2001, buttressed this regional body's position on the issue. Yet, two problems inherent to the institution inhibited SAARC action in the case of terror committed by Tamils and Sinhalese. One is cultural and political. The body does everything by unanimous consent and openly disdains the use of force, which has made it inactive in most (not just many) cases. Second, given the character of SAARC, its members most likely would never move together against its largest member, India, even though it illegally trained and armed the Tamils and made them a proxy. No effective SAARC action was expected or occurred. Indeed, in the last few years SAARC has not even been able to assemble for its annual conference, given poor Pakistani-Indian relations. One diplomatic initiative from this association in November 1986 was a symbol that things were going badly. The influential state minister of Tamil Nadu won support for an idea to fly LTTE chief Prabhakaran to the SAARC summit in Bangalore for quiet side meetings with Sri Lankan president Jayewardene. Prabhakaran was hesitant but went and had two lengthy meetings with Indian representatives. The sessions ultimately disappointed Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and his associates and the Tamil Tiger chief refused to meet with Jayewardene. These efforts only resulted in confirming Prabhakaran's convictions. First, he verified that "fight and talk" is a good strategy so long as the power to fight is never surrendered. Second, the meetings attested that creating and maintaining tension by low-level violence in psychological warfare is a way to get under the skin of dem-

[73] SAARC, which now includes Afghanistan, is chartered to strengthen collective self-reliance, promote common interests, take a nonuse of force approach, deter interference in other states' internal affairs, and resolve disputes. Those policies, and the members' opposition to terrorism, offered grounds for confronting Indian training, arming, and sheltering Sri Lankan insurgents. The three-page SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism, Third Summit, Kathmandu, 4 November 1987, is adequate but does have loopholes, such as the ability to deny extradition if it is "inexpedient."

ocratic opponents. It was to be "all or nothing" for Eelam.[74] In 2009, overwhelmed by an enlarged and fierce government army, the LTTE Tamils were crushed as a martial force.

CONCLUSION

India's fostering of the Tamil Tigers and their attempts at using them as a proxy was a failure. The Indians' early investment, it seems, protected Prabhakaran; when he fled to India in 1981, authorities there turned away a Sri Lankan official who flew in to facilitate a proper extradition. India knew of and steadily supported the presence of LTTE members in their country and Prabhakaran even lived in Tamil Nadu between 1983 and 1987. On many possible counts, India broke with international legal norms. In a 1989 book, one legal scholar identified 12 types of state support to terrorism: from 1981 to 1986, India frequently or systematically carried out at least eight of them, all to the Tigers' benefit.[75]

While trying to fly the banner of a leader of the Non-Aligned Movement, India hoped to be identified with Tamil liberation. Its image became sullied due to its support for a terrorist organization known to murder, to torture other Tamils in private prisons, and to use science to enhance mass bombings and suicide bombing technologies that took many Tamil lives, not just Sinhalese. Within months of landing on the island, the IPKF became "an army of occupation, whose methods included wholesale bombardment of civilian areas, commando

[74] The way LTTE chief Prabhakaran played the negotiations game was noted by an LTTE army commander, Col Karuna. Speaking of a 2002 cease-fire and negotiations, he said, "I was a member of those talks. What we were told by him [Prabhakaran] was to drag those talks out for about five years, somehow let the time pass by, meantime I will purchase arms and we'll be ready for the next stage of fighting." Roland Buerk, interview with Col Karuna Amman; and "A Date with a Renegade Rebel Tiger," BBC News, 4 April 2007. The LTTE chief's intransigence has been underscored to me by former Ambassador (U.S.) Mitchell Reiss, interview of 8 October 2022.

[75] John F. Murphy, *State Support of International Terrorism: Legal, Political, and Economic Dimensions* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1989), 32–33. Murphy does not apply his standard to a named group on these pages; the author is doing so here. Among the actions on the list that I do *not* see India as taking in the present case study is Murphy's first, the most grievous involvement, in which "state intelligence operatives . . . carry out terrorist acts in foreign countries."

seek-and-destroy missions, strafing by helicopter gunships of suburban streets, torture, summary executions and disappearances."[76] One can imagine how Sri Lankan officials saw such things. The conflicts compromised internal security for the island democracy and led directly to bouts of ferocious repression in which citizens took the lives of other citizens, just as in Colombo's repression of Sinhalese insurgents mobilized by JVP in the 1980s. New Delhi's IPKF could not quell the war, but its deployment cost India thousands of casualties. Even security within the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu suffered, especially after the militants' chief mentor turned on them in late 1986. Just after the Sri Lankan armed forces ended the war in May 2009, the UN's Human Rights Council in Geneva had a standoff between countries demanding the Sri Lankan government's actions be investigated and others "praising Sri Lanka for the 'promotion, and protection, of all human rights'." India voted with the latter, saluting the smashing of its former proxy.[77]

Most mystifying, in the list of Indian assessments, was its expectation of some form of power payoff. In major power rivalries, such as the USSR versus the United States, fostering insurgent proxies is comprehensible as a matter of weakening the rival. In the present case, the immensity of India so dwarfs Sri Lanka that the usual calculations of Realpolitik do not seem to apply. This might not have been true had Sri Lanka hosted any other major foreign state interest, but it did not. At the time India got involved, Sri Lanka was not about to give away control of a naval base or port to a rival of India, such as its recent decision to provide China domineering access to the port of Hambantota. Miscalculating, Rajiv Gandhi and India pressed themselves into quarrels that only grew with the intervention. The Tamil refugee flow northward across the Palk Strait was a problem but not one that more

[76] Weiss, *The Cage*, 53.
[77] Jon Lee Anderson, "Death of the Tiger," *New Yorker*, 17 January 2011, 51.

war could solve.[78] Differences over rights of fellow Tamils in Sri Lanka could have been accentuated by propaganda and addressed by diplomacy and covert intelligence operations without escalating as it did to the full range of armaments and deployments.

[78] Ironically, Indian politicians worried that embracing Tamil refugees and helping Tamils fight in Sri Lanka could provoke independence drives within the Tamil Nadu area of India. That should have meant restraint on aid to Sri Lankan Tamils, but apparently the thought was overruled by desire for proxies. See Weiss, *The Cage*; and Hashim, *When Counterinsurgency Wins*.

CHAPTER 6

China and the United Wa State Army in Myanmar

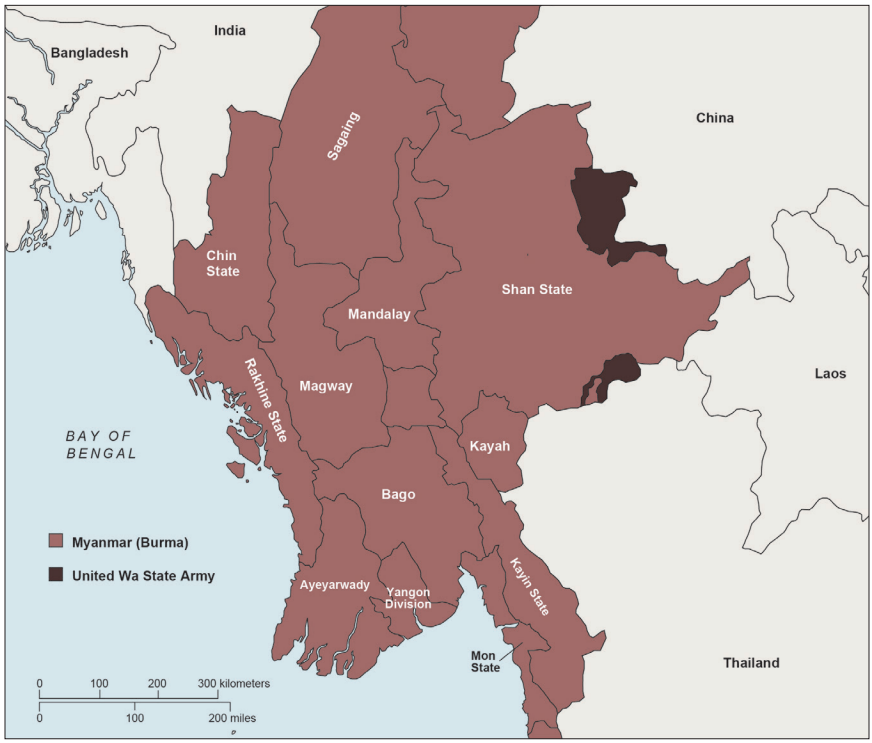
by Christopher D. Booth

The People's Republic of China's (PRC) sponsorship of the United Wa State Army (UWSA) in Myanmar, formerly known as Burma, is a remarkable illustration of how its interest in fostering guerrilla armies abroad has changed over time. The long-running relationship between the Chinese state and the Wa statelet's political and military arms has evolved. It now may be taking on a new character or role in Chinese foreign policy as China increasingly pursues policies in Myanmar to both influence the Burmese regime and to contest and impact India's activities in the region.

The UWSA is the military wing of the United Wa State Party (UWSP) and is the largest nonstate armed group in East Asia with an estimated 25,000–30,000 troops and another 10,000 reservists.[1] It conscripts at least one member of every household and is comparable in size to Lebanese Hezbollah.[2] The area that the UWSA currently occupies and its political party administers—two enclaves in Shan State along eastern borders of Myanmar—is the size of Belgium.[3]

[1] Dominique Dillabough-Lefebvre, "The Wa Art of Not Being Governed: The Wa Are Keen to Shed Their Image as Myanmar's Drug Lords or China's Proxies," *Diplomat*, 28 May 2019, 2; and Sourabh Jyoti Sharma, "Ethnicity and Insurgency in Myanmar: Profiling of Non-State Insurgent Groups," *World Affairs* 18, no. 3 (July–September 2014): 151.
[2] " 'Masters of Our Destiny': Myanmar's 25,000 United Wa State Army Rebels in Show of Force on 30-Year Anniversary of Ceasefire," *South China Morning Post* (Hong Kong), 17 April 2019.
[3] Dillabough-Lefebvre, "Wa Art of Not Being Governed," 2.

Map 6. Two-part territory of the United Wa State Army within the Shan State of Myanmar



Source: courtesy of author, adapted by MCUP.

China's grounds for sponsoring the UWSA have been inconsistent throughout their tumultuous history. The relationship has helped protect the business and political interests of powerful patrons in Yunnan Province, Chinese investments and businessmen in Shan State, and the approximately 2 million Chinese citizens in Myanmar.[4] China is heavily invested in its Belt and Road Initiative—their massive investment and development program stretching from East Asia to Europe—in Myanmar and seeks to increase the prosperity of its rural western provinces of Sichuan, Guizhou, and Yunnan by connecting them to the Indian Ocean

[4] Prashanth Parameswaran, "China Derailing Myanmar Peace Talks: Top Negotiator," *Diplomat*, 9 October 2015.

through that nation.[5] China has used its influence over the UWSA to redirect their drug trade from heroin, which was often trafficked into China, to amphetamine-type stimulants, such as methamphetamine, for which Chinese companies often produced the precursor chemicals, and yaba, the so-called "madness drug," now a scourge throughout Asia. While their influence with the Wa helps reduce drug flows into China, it also stems the spread of Christianity and other "subversive" elements. China is mindful of both the danger and opportunity that its 2,200-kilometer border with Myanmar presents. As the strongest and largest of the armed ethnic groups in Burma, the Wa have a patronage network of their own. Through the UWSA and its allied groups, China can apply pressure against the Burmese military, known as the Tatmadaw, and the ruling military junta when it is concerned that Myanmar has developed growing ties with India, Japan, or Western countries, particularly the United States and European Union. The UWSA has even served as a conduit for arming and training separatist groups in India's restive northeastern provinces.[6] This last element could have greater significance as China and India battle for influence in Myanmar and increasingly challenge each other along their shared borders.[7]

UNIQUE FEATURES OF THE PROXY RELATIONSHIP

The PRC's relationship with the Wa people and the UWSA did not begin with them. Instead, it started with the Communist Party of Burma (CPB) made up largely by the Bamar majority. Since Burma's independence from British rule in 1948, it has been racked by insurgencies and various armed factions seeking independence from the central govern-

[5] Hnin Wint Nyunt, review of *Where China Meets India: Burma and the New Crossroads of Asia*, by Thant Myint-U, *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 34, no. 1 (April 2012): 139–41, https://doi.org/10.1355/cs34-1i; and Andrew Chatzky and James McBride, "China's Massive Belt and Road Initiative," Council on Foreign Relations, 28 January 2020.

[6] Christopher D. Booth, "Clowns to the Left of Me, Jokers to the Right: The Threat of Increased Insurgency in India's Volatile Northeast," Modern War Institute, 25 April 2022.

[7] Robert Barnett, "It's Time to Sound the Alarm Over Chinese Intrigues in the Himalayas," *Washington Post*, 21 June 2021. See also Christopher D. Booth, "From Kashmir to the Land of Ice and Snow: Countering China in Antarctica through Combined Training with India," Modern War Institute at West Point, 9 June 2021.

ment. More than 30 percent of Myanmar's population belong to ethnic groups distinct from the Bamar and generally live in the remote forested highlands that form a horseshoe around the interior plains along the Irrawaddy River.[8]

One accelerant of conflict in Burma arrived from outside the country in 1949 after the end of the Chinese Civil War. Elements of the defeated Chinese nationalist Kuomintang Army took over most of Shan State in eastern Burma soon after. The Kuomintang began planting poppy and producing opium to fund their continued resistance against the Communists, launching seven invasions of Yunnan Province between 1950 and 1952.[9] These first small plantings would over time help transform Burma and the "Gold Triangle" into one of the world's largest heroin producers, fueling crime and instability that continue to this day, and have become a major funding source of Burma's ethnic armed groups, particularly the UWSA.

Around the same time the Kuomintang infiltrated Shan State, the CPB was adding to the chaotic scene in Burma. Founded in 1939, the CPB began leading an underground struggle in 1948 and was outlawed by the Burmese government in 1953.[10] While at first both the Soviet Union and the PRC supported the CPB, the party moved closer to China following the split in international Communism in the late 1950s and the Burmese Communist officials who had resided in Moscow moved to Beijing. In 1963, the PRC told the CPB leaders residing there—largely Marxist intellectuals rather than warriors—that their party needed to start actively fighting the Burmese regime. Soon after, the Chinese People's Liberation Army would begin training CPB cadres in Yunnan.[11] Chinese nationals largely subsumed the membership of the CPB. Angered by ethnically motivated attacks against Chinese targets in Rangoon, now known as

[8] "Myanmar's Ethnic War Grinds On," Worldview Stratfor, 8 October 2015.
[9] "Myanmar: The United Wa State Army's Uncertain Future," Worldview Stratfor, 22 July 2013; and Bertil Lintner, *Peaceworks: The United Wa State Army and Burma's Peace Process* (Washington, DC: U.S. Institute of Peace, 2019), 6.
[10] *Fire and Ice: Conflict and Drugs in Myanmar's Shan State* (Brussels, Belgium: International Crisis Group, 2019), 3.
[11] Bertil Lintner, *Peaceworks* (Washington, DC: U.S. Institute of Peace, 2020), 10.

Yangon, in June 1967, the PRC sent lightly disguised troops across the border into Burma on 1 January 1968. The ferment of the ongoing Cultural Revolution and the opportunity to export Maoism were also likely factors as well. During the next few years, Chinese volunteers wearing CPB uniforms carried Chinese weapons and rations into Burma. By 1974, the CPB controlled 20,000 square kilometers of north and northeastern Burma and many of its troops remained volunteers in the Red Guards.[12] When the Wa hills came under CPB occupation in 1972–73, it was the first time that many Wa were exposed to the Communist troops. The CPB moved its headquarters from the central region of Burma to the border city of Panghsang in the Wa territory, further incentivizing Wa people to join the Chinese-directed, and largely staffed, CPB in significant numbers.[13]

The experience with the Communists was a foundational one for Wa culture. Made up of a variety of related hill tribes, the Wa people are thought to number around 600,000 living in the mountainous and heavily forested Shan State in eastern Burma. Although ethnically distinct from the majority Bamar, the Wa are not of Chinese ancestry, including the majority Han population, although perhaps 400,000 Wa live in China's neighboring Yunnan Province.[14] They are a proud people who arrived tens of thousands of years ago. At the same time, they often feel as if they are treated as pariahs by others in their country and, even now, most still do not have Myanmar identification cards.[15] The Wa were never ruled by a central government, with the British even giving them space during their colonial administration as they were rumored to be fierce headhunters with their own distinct customs. As Wa people joined the CPB, communication was difficult as most members were illiterate and their various dialects were often not mutually intelligible. Wa leaders credit the CPB with ending Wa feudalism, putting an end to headhunting,

[12] Lintner, *Peaceworks*, 11–12.
[13] Sithu Aung Myint, "The UWSA: 30 Years of Going Its Own Way," *Frontier Myanmar*, 20 March 2019, 3. See also Lintner, *Peaceworks*, 6; and Andrew Ong, "Producing Intransigence: (Mis) understanding the United Wa State Army in Myanmar," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 40, no. 3 (December 2018): 457, https://doi.org/10.1355/cs40-3e.
[14] "Myanmar's Ethnic War Grinds On," Stratfor Worldview, 8 October 2015; and Lintner, *Peaceworks*, 4.
[15] Dillabough-Lefebvre, "Wa Art of Not Being Governed," 2.

quelling tribal feuds, and fostering a unified Wa culture, leading many tribes for the first time to see themselves as part of a unified Wa people and region.[16] Ultimately, Chinese became the common language of the Wa members of the CPB and the larger Wa community. Today, Wa, Chinese, Burmese, and English are all taught in schools in the region.[17] The elderly leadership that continue to lead the Wa were originally indoctrinated in the Marxism-Leninism of the CPB. While the political ideology has fallen by the wayside, the Wa, unlike many other ethnic armed groups such as the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), are held together on ethnonationalist grounds rather than shared religion.[18] Until the 1960s, most Wa practiced local animist religions and were not exposed to major world religions.[19] Today, many continue to practice tribal religions while others are Buddhist, Muslim, or Christian, although the CPB often persecutes Christians under direction from China.[20]

In 1961, the northern state of Kachin, with a majority Christian population, launched their own rebellion against the Buddhist central government due to their anger about concerns with a national religion and with their lands being unfairly traded to China resulting largely from a misunderstanding of border negotiations. The KIA—the military wing of the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO)—initially fought both the central government and the CPB, but, by 1972, it sought government support and weapons to allow it to resist CPB pressures. By 1976, Chinese intelligence officers had apparently achieved a coup, turning the KIA from a strong supporter of the Asian People's Anti-Communist League

[16] Lintner, *Peaceworks*, 4–5; and Ronald D. Renard, "The Wa Authority and Good Governance, 1989–2007," *Journal of Burma Studies* 17, no. 1 (June 2013): 144–48, 164, https://doi.org/10.1353/jbs.2013.0006.
[17] Magnus Fiskesjö, "Introduction to Wa Studies," *Journal of Burma Studies* 17, no. 1 (June 2013): 3, https://doi.org.10.1353/jbs.2013/0009.
[18] Bertil Lintner, "Spurned by the West, Myanmar's Kachin Look to China," *Asia Times* (Hong Kong), 24 January 2018. Leaders in the Kachin Independence Army are up against other political actors with influence over the Kachin people, such as the Kachin Baptist Convention.
[19] Hans Steinmüller, "Pioneers of the Plantation Economy: Militarism, Dispossession and the Limits of Growth in the Wa State of Myanmar," *Social Anthropology* 29, no. 3 (August 2021): 688–89, https://doi.org/10.1111/1469-8676.13009.
[20] Gina Goh and Jay Church, "Myanmar's CCP-Backed Wa State a Hostile Place for Christians," Persecution.org, 22 April 2021.

founded by Chinese nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek to a willing partner of the CPB. Having engaged in fruitless negotiations with the central government, the KIA reached an agreement with the CPB that July and began receiving Chinese weapons from them. With this support, the KIA gained complete control of Kachin state within a year.[21] The KIA grew to become an organization second only to the UWSA in relative size and power, with around 10,000 troops, and with its own quasi statelet nestled along the Chinese border north of the Wa's stronghold.[22] The KIA are frequent rivals as well as partners of the UWSA.

By 1981, five years after the death of Mao and the PRC's turn by degrees toward a market economy under Deng Xiaoping, Chinese interest in fostering revolution in Myanmar had flagged. The PRC encouraged CPB members to seek asylum in China, offering modest pensions and plots of land to those willing to end the armed struggle.[23] In 1989, the Chinese confronted the CPB leadership about ending the war. Reports of the disagreement apparently spread throughout the rank and file. By this time, the party was already riven by internal dissension and many of the Wa questioned why they continued to serve as cannon fodder and suffer the majority of casualties on behalf of aging Chinese and Bamar leaders. A coup followed, with the Wa majority forming the UWSP and the UWSA.[24]

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ENTITIES

Despite the Wa desire to throw off an outside agenda and pursue their own interests, the UWSP and the UWSA run a one-party state that remains modeled on the CBP's Maoist structure with a politburo and central committee. The chairman of the UWSP and commander in chief of the UWSA is Bao Youxiang, one of many ethnic Chinese who joined the CBP as a Red Guard in the late 1960s.[25]

[21] Lintner, *Peaceworks*, 9–13.
[22] Sharma, "Ethnicity and Insurgency in Myanmar," 155–56.
[23] Lintner, *Peaceworks*, 17.
[24] "Myanmar."
[25] Ong, "Producing Intransigence," 454; and Lintner, *Peaceworks*, 13.

Shortly after forming the UWSA, the Wa signed a cease-fire in 1989 with the military junta, negotiated by the head of Myanmar's Military Intelligence, General Khin Nyunt. This agreement provided them de facto autonomy and, throughout the 1990s, the UWSA kept close with Khin Nyunt, who allowed them economic independence.[26] Early in the decade, the UWSA sided with the Tatmadaw in its fight against another powerful warlord pushing for an independent state, Khun Sa and his Mong Tai Army, whose power was also a threat to the Wa force.[27] The Mong Tai Army was the dominant player in the opium market and Khun Sa was recognized as the " 'King' of the Golden Triangle" where he controlled 70 percent of the heroin supply.[28] By 1996, under combined military pressure from the Tatmadaw and UWSA and U.S. indictments against his drug empire, Khun Sa "retired" to a home in Yangon.[29] The UWSA's reward was control of the Mong Tai's enclave along the Burma-Thai border, a lucrative drug transshipment point and an ideal place to locate drug labs.[30] After taking over the region, the UWSA forcibly shipped 100,000 civilians from the northern territory to populate "southern Wa State."[31] Around the same time, the UWSA declared an opium ban in their territory, which led to food shortages and made many small farmers destitute. The policy allowed the UWSA to centralize their control of the drug trade, reduce the costs taken up in opium-to-heroin tribute taxes, and produce an even more profitable drug product, from high-grade crystal meth to low-grade yaba. Arrivals to the south quickly set up new labs.[32] In 2004, when their main ally in the Burmese government and military, Khin Nyunt, lost power, the UWSA renewed its ties with China.[33]

[26] Ong, "Producing Intransigence," 452, 454; Dillabough-Lefebvre, "Wa Art of Not Being Governed," 3; and Lintner, *Peaceworks*, 8.
[27] "Myanmar."
[28] Lintner, *Peaceworks*, 10; Namrata Goswami, "Realism Not Romanticism Should Dictate India's Pakistan Policy," *IDSA Comment*, 10 February 2014, 4; and *The Globalization of Crime: A Transnational Organized Crime Threat Assessment* (Vienna, Austria: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2010), 258.
[29] *Fire and Ice*, 4.
[30] Lintner, *Peaceworks*, 10.
[31] Lintner, *Peaceworks*, 10; and *Fire and Ice*, 4.
[32] *Fire and Ice*, 4.
[33] Dillabough-Lefebvre, "Wa Art of Not Being Governed."

The UWSA effectively administers its northern territory, providing schools, clinics, and government offices, while the south remains less organized and serves primarily as a transit zone for legal and illegal products.[34] The Wa areas are together officially known as "Shan State Special Region 2," or Wa State in English.[35] The Chinese name also uses the term *state*, which represents a less than autonomous entity.[36] The Burmese Constitution of 2008 does recognize that the Wa operate a self-administered region in Shan State "covering six townships split between two districts."[37]

Shan State sits on the Mandalay-Lashio-Muse highway, providing direct access to China's markets through Yunnan Province.[38] Its licit economy includes massive rubber plantations, one of the world's largest tin mines, logging, and sugarcane.[39] Other mines yield lead and gold. Reportedly, the KIA excavates rare earth metals in northern Shan State and the Wa are allegedly investigating the potential for their own repositories.[40] Jade may play an inordinate role not only in the Wa's financial situation but also in creating a tangled network of loyalties and patronage connecting the UWSA to Chinese businessmen, the Tatmadaw, and their frequent rivals, the KIA.[41]

In June 2021, Global Witness, an international nongovernmental organization, published a voluminous indictment of the Burmese jade industry that documents how the Tatmadaw captured the primary jade region from the KIA, but in turn leased out mining concessions to both

[34] Lintner, *Peaceworks*, 13.
[35] Christopher O'Hara and Niels Selling, *Myanmar's Ethnic Insurgents: UWSA, KNU and KIO* (Stockholm-Nacka, Sweden: Institute for Security and Development Policy, 2012), 19.
[36] Fiskesjö, "Introduction to Wa Studies," 2–3.
[37] Htet Naing Zaw, "Powerful Armed Ethnic Group Launches Its Own Military Academy in Myanmar," *Irrawaddy* (Yangon, Myanmar), 15 September 2020.
[38] *Fire and Ice*, 17.
[39] " 'Masters of our Destiny' "; and Aung Zaw, "The Wa Flex Their Muscles on the Hill," *Irrawaddy*, 24 April 2019.
[40] Bertil Lintner, "Myanmar's Wa Hold the Key to War and Peace," *Asia Times* (Hong Kong), 6 September 2019.
[41] Neil Thompson, "Myanmar's Unhappy Rebels: Dissatisfaction with the Government's Approach to Peace Talks Could Lead to Renewed Conflict in Myanmar's North," *Diplomat*, 8 January 2018.

the Wa and the defeated Kachin.[42] The UWSA was rewarded with concessions when it entered the cease-fire agreement with the regime in 1989.[43] The Tatmadaw has engaged in conflict regularly with the Kachin since 2011, launching major attacks against them in 2016 and 2018, and yet they both continue to cooperate in the jade trade.[44]

The UWSA pay taxes to the Kachin for jade mined in the region and Wa companies frequently serve as brokers for Kachin jade. The Wa often serve as intermediaries for the Kachin with the Tatmadaw and Wa entities often cooperate with the Tatmadaw in smuggling jade. Even the Kachin apparently smuggle goods to China through army checkpoints, causing one officer to remark to the reporters that he did not know why the Tatmadaw was fighting the KIA, who were also the military's customer.[45] The Wa also frequently collect taxes for the Kachin from Chinese companies or the Tatmadaw. Senior members of the KIA told Global Witness that the UWSA paid up to one-third of their taxes in weapons in lieu of cash.[46] A Kachin intelligence officer claimed that they provided 50 percent of those armaments to the Arakan Army (AA), a third level of proxy conflict. The AA is one of the newest of the ethnic armed groups, and also one of the most virulent in fighting the government. The group was founded in 2009, reportedly with the assistance of the KIA—the second most powerful ethnic armed group after the UWSA.[47] Some believe this Arakan force are actually yet another proxy for China, given they regularly attack Indian infrastructure projects and workers in Burma, while avoiding Chinese BRI projects.[48]

Given that the direct route between the Wa and Kachin crosses conflict zones occupied by other ethnic militias fighting the Tatmadaw, such as the Kokang, the Wa often direct weapons through China.[49] Consequently, Chinese military intelligence or officers in its Ministry of State

[42] *Jade and Conflict: Myanmar's Vicious Circle* (London: Global Witness, 2021).
[43] *Jade and Conflict*, 42.
[44] *Jade and Conflict*, 35.
[45] *Jade and Conflict*, 39.
[46] *Jade and Conflict*, 45.
[47] Brooks, "Clowns to the Left of Me."
[48] Anders Corr, "China's Diplo-terrorism in Myanmar," LICS News, 28 May 2020.
[49] *Jade and Conflict*, 46.

Security have a de facto veto over how many and what type of weapons the UWSA sends to Kachin forces.[50]

Roads in the Wa region are better than those that the government maintains. Given the limited reach of the central government, the Tatmadaw relies on local people's militia forces to run a "garrison state" in Shan State that controls the major highways and extends its authority outside prominent population centers.[51] These paramilitary collaborators along with the Border Guard Force engage in a variety of licit and illicit businesses, including drug trafficking.[52]

Chinese telecom networks provide cell service to the Wa region. Wa shoppers have access to the Chinese app WeChat, can read store signage in Chinese, and pay for items in the Chinese currency of renminbi.[53] The Wa capital, Pangkham, has numerous hotels, casinos, and shopping malls as well.[54] Yet, illicit trade also takes advantage of the Wa's autonomous zone, such as one Chinese Ponzi scheme that stole $7.6 billion from Chinese investors and moved its money to the Wa region in 2015. Additionally, criminals run profitable rackets in drugs, prostitution, illegal gambling, endangered animals, and money laundering, which pays for much of the booming real estate in Yangon.[55]

Any discussion of the UWSA is incomplete without talking about narcotics. Myanmar remains the world's second largest producer of heroin after Afghanistan.[56] The Wa claimed to have banned opium in 1999, but many doubt their sincerity. In 2005, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) indicted eight high-ranking leaders of the UWSA, naming one of the charged defendants—Wei Hsueh Kang, and the group itself—as designated "drug kingpins" under U.S. law.[57] The indictment

[50] *Jade and Conflict*, 45.
[51] Thompson, "Myanmar's Unhappy Rebels."
[52] *Fire and Ice*, 8.
[53] Zaw, "Wa Flex Their Muscles on the Hill."
[54] Zaw, "Wa Flex Their Muscles on the Hill."
[55] Ong, "Producing Intransigence," 459.
[56] *Fire and Ice*, 5.
[57] "Eight High-Ranking Leaders of Southeast Asia's Largest Narcotics Trafficking Organization Indicted by a Federal Grand Jury in Brooklyn, New York: The Defendants' United Wa State Army Controls Large Sections of Eastern Burma," U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency, news release, 24 January 2005.

alleged that the UWSA "is one of the largest heroin producing and trafficking organizations in the world," operating "as a powerful criminal syndicate" with worldwide distribution for decades. According to the summons, the organization was responsible for producing more than 180 metric tons of opium in 2004 alone. From 1985 to 2005, the DEA reported, the UWSA exported at least one ton of heroin to the United States valued in excess of $1 billion. Additionally, it recorded that the United States has also seized UWSA-produced methamphetamine.[58] Wei Hsueh Kang reportedly hides in a $30 million home in a small rural village guarded by an elite team of security specialists, and the United States is offering a reward of up to $2 million for information leading to his arrest and/or conviction under the U.S. State Department's Narcotics Rewards Program.[59]

Many experts believe that the Wa are the largest producer of amphetamine-type stimulants in Myanmar, especially Burmese methamphetamine.[60] The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime named the UWSA a major methamphetamine producer in a 2009 report.[61] Remarkably, Wei Hsueh Kang, while a leading military commander in the UWSA, pioneered the shift from heroin into synthetic stimulants.[62]

High-grade methamphetamine requires industrial-grade production with trained experts, well-equipped labs, and access to a high volume of chemical precursors, much of which comes from either China or Thailand, although the UWSA reportedly has developed its own organic capacity to manufacture these elements.[63] The top-quality crystal meth,

[58] "Eight High-Ranking Leaders of Southeast Asia's Largest Narcotics Trafficking Organization Indicted by a Federal Grand Jury in Brooklyn, New York."
[59] Edmund Clipson, review of *Merchants of Madness: The Methamphetamine Explosion in the Golden Triangle*, by Bertil Lintner and Michael Black, *Intelligence & National Security* 27, no. 4 (August 2012): 606, https://doi.org/10.1080/02684527.2012.688327; and "Wei Hshueh-Kang, Narcotics Rewards Program: Wanted," U.S. Department of State, 1 April 2017.
[60] Goswami, "Realism Not Romanticism Should Dictate India's Pakistan Policy," 3.
[61] *Globalization of Crime*, 258; and "Amphetamine-type Stimulants Market," in *World Drug Report 2009* (Vienna, Austria: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2009), 121.
[62] Joseph Allchin, "Yaba, the Madness Drug," *HuffPost* (blog), 5 March 2014.
[63] Bo Ze Kai, "Narco Diplomacy: Foreign Policy of the United Wa State Army," Mantraya.org, 27 January 2016; and "Myanmar Drug Surge Worry for Neighbors including India," WION News (New Delhi, India), 30 April 2021.

also known as ice, produced by the UWSA is intended primarily for export and, gram-for-gram, it is more valuable than heroin. One kilogram of crystal meth sold at the gate of a drug factory in Shan State might sell for $3,000. That same amount has a street price of $600,000 in Australia, where one ton of crystal meth has a value of $180 million.[64] The United States seized 25 tons of suspected Burmese crystal meth in 2017 and even more in 2018. Many experts believe that Burmese narcotics manufacturers produce more than 250 tons annually. The regional wholesale value alone is worth tens of billions of dollars with profits concentrated among the very few who distribute meth.[65] The UWSA control of a large section of the border between Myanmar and Thailand allows the group to reportedly smuggle 200 million meth pills annually into Thailand.[66] An increased supply of methamphetamines in Asia caused a major price drop in 2020.[67] The United Nations believes that the lower costs have benefitted drug trafficking networks despite the economic slowdown caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The organization expressed further concern that the UWSA and other major Burmese traffickers may use the instability resulting from the military coup in February 2021 to further increase drug production.[68]

Bertil Lintner is recognized as one of the few foreign experts on Myanmar and has focused some of his research on drug trafficking in the region.[69] He sees the UWSA as "by far the main player" in manufacturing and distributing yaba, a drug cocktail consisting primarily of meth and caffeine often with vanilla flavorings and bulking agents that are burnt on tinfoil so users can inhale the vapor. Whereas creating high-quality meth requires facilities that meet pharmaceutical-grade chemistry standards, yaba production is haphazard, and producers can easily set up small mom-and-pop-style labs. Independent labs cook their own yaba

[64] *Fire and Ice*, 6.
[65] *Fire and Ice*, 17.
[66] Goswami "Realism Not Romanticism Should Dictate India's Pakistan Policy," 3.
[67] "Myanmar Drug Surge Worry for Neighbors including India."
[68] "Myanmar Drug Surge Worry for Neighbors including India."
[69] Bertil Lintner and Michael Black, *Merchants of Madness: The Methamphetamine Explosion in the Golden Triangle* (Chiang Mai, Thailand: Silkworm Books, 2009).

in Wa territory and pay taxes to the UWSA.[70] Yaba is tailor-made for the working class and aspiring middle-class populations in booming South and Southeast Asia. Unlike heroin, yaba, being a combination of the stimulants of caffeine and meth, causes its users to feel more productive in short-term spurts. Eventually, however, their addiction comes to dominate their lives. In Myanmar, truck drivers and shift workers use it to stay awake and then take heroin to come down.[71] The UWSA reportedly assisted other ethnic militias in eastern Myanmar in their drug efforts, making yaba "a major export industry."[72] While most yaba is produced for export, manufacturers have dumped it at low prices to increase use in Myanmar, with some pills selling for around 10 cents. Even areas controlled by the UWSA and KIA have seen increases in addiction, with many claiming it is common for each family in a village to have at least one member, particularly children, some as young as nine, addicted to the drug.[73]

In addition to Bangladesh and Thailand, amphetamines have impacted four of the "Seven Sister" states that makes up India's northeast, the region surrounded by Myanmar, China, Bhutan, Bangladesh, and Nepal. Connected to the rest of India by the narrow strip of land known as the Siliguri Corridor, also known as "India's chicken neck," between Nepal and Bangladesh, these states are a constant concern for India due to them being under threat from China and the presence of an often-unruly population. An Indian security analyst noted that the four states of Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram, and Nagaland experience high levels of cross-border drug traffic and have some of the highest HIV rates in India as a result of drug use. The resulting instability benefits Indian insurgents who engage in smuggling and black market weapons trade. Similarly, Yunnan Province suffers from the highest HIV rate in China. To address these issues, in 2000, China directed the UWSA to move their

[70] Allchin, "Yaba, the Madness Drug."
[71] "Myanmar Struggles to Tackle Illegal Drug Trade that Has Morphed from Traditional to Modern Drugs," *Mizzima News* (Yangon, Myanmar), 17 August 2019.
[72] *Fire and Ice*, 5.
[73] "Myanmar Struggles to Tackle Illegal Drug Trade that Has Morphed from Traditional to Modern Drugs."

drug trade away from its border to Myanmar's border with Thailand and reportedly instructed them to shift from heroin to synthetic narcotics.[74]

The Wa have claimed they left the drug trade following the DEA indictments and after their opium ban. Experts on the Wa and Myanmar claim that satellite imagery shows that there is little evidence of opium cultivation in the northern Wa area, but production of amphetamine-type stimulants continues in their southern region. Recent reports, however, suggest that Myanmar's Border Guard Force and pro-government militias have taken up much of the synthetic-drug trade while Wa leadership has focused on its legitimate economic operations for its income.[75] Occasionally, news stories have centered on Wa crackdowns on the drug trade, such as one from October 2019 that details the UWSA announcing it killed 8 drug smugglers, arrested 10 others, and seized 1.8 million stimulants in counterdrug operations. A few days earlier, the UWSA claimed a similar success near the Thai border.[76] Cynics may suggest that the UWSA is merely reducing competition and may further note the lack of any UWSA press statements heralding such arrests in 2020 or through the first half of 2021, but some regional analysts believe that the Wa are seeking to "repair their reputation."[77] Wa leaders have also announced a 10-year plan to eliminate methamphetamine from all areas under their control by 2024.[78]

Others propose that the UWSA are astute enough to use drugs as a diplomatic weapon, suggesting that the economic power of their drug business gives them political autonomy.[79] The UWSA and their ally and neighbor, the National Democratic Alliance Army—another of the armed groups that broke off from the CPB—may have spread into their own more lucrative businesses associated with the drug trade. This growth

[74] Goswami, "Realism Not Romanticism Should Dictate India's Pakistan Policy," 1, 3–4.
[75] Bertil Lintner, "Myanmar's Wa Hold the Key to War and Peace," *Asia Times*, 6 September 2019.
[76] "Wa Ethnic Army Kills Eight Traffickers, Captures Ten, in Two Days of Drug Raids in Myanmar's Shan State," Radio Free Asia, 4 October 2019.
[77] "Wa Ethnic Army Kills Eight Trafficker, Captures Ten, in Two Days of Drug Raids in Myanmar's Shan State."
[78] *Fire and Ice*, 21.
[79] Kai, "Narco Diplomacy."

appears to include manufacturing their own precursor chemicals, leasing space and providing protection to other narcotics traffickers, giving transportation access along the Mekong River into Southeast Asia, and allegedly using UWSA cargo helicopters to transport sizeable drug loads.[80]

In November 2020, Thai police seized 11.5 tons of the anesthetic ketamine, worth nearly $1 billion. While not directly attributable to the UWSA, it was believed to originate in Shan State, described as "a de facto special economic zone for the industrial production" of a wide range of drugs.[81] Unfortunately, the International Crisis Group's study on drugs in Shan State stated that as of 2019, the methamphetamine business is so large and lucrative that it "dwarfs the formal economy . . . and is at the center of [the] political economy" of Shan State.[82] Walking away from this market would weaken the UWSA's economic power relative to their armed rivals, including the Burmese regime.

STRATEGIC FACTORS

China uses its leverage with the Wa in various ways. As mentioned earlier, China apparently swayed the Wa to push their heroin trade away from its border with Shan State to reduce its flow into Yunnan Province. At the same time, Chinese companies sell and transport significant quantities of precursor chemicals for the manufacture of stimulant narcotics into Wa territory with government approval or acquiescence.[83]

The UWSA also supports the Chinese Communist Party's security interests in Myanmar. Beginning in September 2018, the PRC asked the UWSA to crack down on Christians in Shan State, apparently to pressure foreign missionaries who might otherwise spread Christianity in Yunnan.[84] While many in the area are animist, pantheist, Muslim, or Buddhist, Christianity comprises the largest single religious denomination in the region, counting approximately 450,000 people or one-third of the

[80] Anthony Davis, "Why Asia Is Losing Its War on Drugs," *Asia Times*, 19 November 2020.
[81] Davis, "Why Asia Is Losing Its War on Drugs."
[82] *Fire and Ice*, 1.
[83] *Fire and Ice*, 26. See also "Myanmar Struggles to Tackle Illegal Drug Trade that Has Morphed from Traditional to Modern Drugs."
[84] Lintner, *Peaceworks*, 21.

population there.[85] At the direction of the Chinese government, the Wa arrested and interrogated pastors, teachers, and missionaries and destroyed many churches throughout Shan State.[86] Within its own borders, China has clamped down on spiritual movements considered a threat to the regime, starting in 1999 with the persecution of the Falun Gong and, more recently, the repression of Muslims and Christians. PRC leaders apparently worry that Christians in Wa may have connections to underground churches in China as well as ties to the West, particularly the United States since many Christians in Shan State are Baptists.[87] By December 2019, the UWSA had released many of the imprisoned Christians and allowed Baptist churches to reopen, but Catholics remain repressed and their schools and churches are still closed.[88]

The strength of the relationship between China and the Burmese government in Naypyidaw has vacillated back and forth over time. Beijing has long been the major investor in Myanmar and, generally, its greatest diplomatic patron since the 1980s. By the 2010s, however, many Burmese opposed what they saw as Chinese overreach and, in 2011, the regime listened to this public sentiment and cancelled a Chinese construction project—the Myitsone Dam—due to the population being upset about its cost and the anticipated debt.[89] Generally, they also had widespread resentment against Chinese extractive industries, which had a history of using primarily Chinese laborers, committing labor violations against non-Chinese workers, expropriating land, and causing environmental damage.[90] Myanmar's outreach to Western nations, including

[85] "Under China's Influence, Myanmar Christians Targeted," ChinaAid, 31 October 2018; and "Churches Open Again in Myanmar Areas Controlled by Wa Rebel Army," Radio Free Asia, 17 December 2019.
[86] John Zaw, "China-Backed Rebels Target Myanmar Christians," *La Croix International* (Paris, France), 3 October 2018; and "Rebels in Burma Who Closed More than 100 Churches Allow 51 to Reopen," *Morning Star News*, 20 December 2019.
[87] Lintner, quoted in Zaw, "China-Backed Rebels Target Myanmar Christians."
[88] "Churches Open Again in Myanmar Areas Controlled by Wa Rebel Army."
[89] Pascal Abb, Robert Swaine, and Ilya Jones, *Road to Peace or Bone of Contention?: The Impact of the Belt and Road Initiative on Conflict States* (Frankfurt am Main, Germany: Peace Research Institute Frankfurt, 2021), 13–17.
[90] Jonathan T. Chow and Leif-Eric Easley, *Upgrading Myanmar-China Relations to International Standards* (Seoul, South Korea: Asan Institute for Policy Studies, 2015), 11–12.

the United States, made China's Politburo increasingly unhappy with its southwestern neighbor. By 2015, China was using the UWSA and other armed actors as leverage to maintain pressure on the Burmese regime.[91] The PRC explicitly told the UWSA and KIA not to sign the National Ceasefire Agreement between the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the Ethnic Armed Organizations among the various militias because of Chinese displeasure with the inclusion of Japanese and Western observers in the peace process. Beijing wanted it understood that it controlled the ability to turn violence along the border on and off like a switch.[92]

Two years later, this open relationship with the West ended once the international community swiftly turned against the Burmese government when it initiated a genocidal campaign against its Rohingya Muslim population, including those nations placing sanctions on Myanmar. At that time, China happily stepped back in as Myanmar's major patron. The Burmese regime was forced to accept Chinese terms because of the sanctions, swallowing higher interest rates and shorter terms than what South Korea, Japan, and Norway previously offered.[93] In 2018, Myanmar's state counsellor and de facto leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, signed a memorandum of understanding to join the Belt and Road Initiative.[94] Next, China made its control over the ethnic armed groups explicit, publicly demonstrating the ability to ratchet down pressure on the Naypyidaw government when it instructed the leaders of the northern armed groups to meet with the regime regarding the stalled peace process and provided them with a chartered flight.[95]

Interestingly, in May 2020, despite being largely locked down due to COVID-19 and in an attempt to create better relations, the Burmese military sent a plane carrying 22 captured insurgents to India.[96] The generals

[91] *Commerce and Conflict: Navigating Myanmar's China Relationship* (Brussels, Belgium: International Crisis Group, 2020), 1–12.
[92] Chow and Easley, *Upgrading Myanmar*.
[93] Chow and Easley, *Upgrading Myanmar*.
[94] *Road to Peace or Bone of Contention?*, 13.
[95] *Commerce and Conflict*, 11.
[96] Bertil Lintner, "China, India Tensions Put Myanmar in the Middle," *Asia Times*, 29 May 2020.

were increasingly concerned about becoming a Chinese client state and sought to diversify their allies. Some outsiders suggest they were also desperate to recruit allies to fight the Arakan Army, which has been effectively ambushing the Tatmadaw.[97] They also turned to Russia for military training and equipment. Chinese influence in Myanmar has alarmed India as well and, like China, offered no criticism of the Tatmadaw's actions against the Rohingya. In fact, India and Myanmar held their first ever joint bilateral military exercises in 2018, after the ethnic cleansing in Rakhine State.[98] Similar to China seeking to link natural gas pipelines and roads from Yunnan to the Bay of Bengal, India is pursuing the Kaladan Multimodal project to connect its fragile northeastern states to the Indian Ocean.[99] Increasingly, Myanmar is becoming a new battlefield for contests between China and India.

The Tatmadaw launched a coup in February 2021 in response to the results of the national election that overwhelmingly supported free and civilian-led politics. Ethnic militias soon joined the large numbers of urban pro-democracy protesters, and groups took up arms and training.[100] The UWSA has notably stayed on the sidelines, apparently advised by China not to interfere because the PRC is not interested in having a civil war along its border.[101] Chinese security services also likely loath supporting any pro-democracy groups or allowing their proxies to do so.[102] In early April 2021, representatives of the junta traveled to Shan State and met with the UWSA and the Shan State Progress Party and its associated Shan State Army. The UWSA and Progress Party both agreed to observe their cease-fire agreements with the government. In contrast, 10 other militias, including the KIA, have assisted the pro-democracy advocates

[97] U Ba Tin and Satyen Borthakur, "Top Northeastern Rebel Leaders Flee into China," *Eastern Link*, 17 May 2020.
[98] Lintner, "China, India Tensions Put Myanmar in the Middle."
[99] Sudhi Ranjan Sen, "India Accuses China of Helping Rebel Groups on Myanmar Border," BloombergQuint.com, 6 December 2020.
[100] Thant Myint-U, "Myanmar's Coming Revolution: What Will Emerge from Collapse?," *Foreign Affairs*, July–August 2021.
[101] Myint-U, "Myanmar's Coming Revolution."
[102] Bertil Lintner, "New Age Rebels Rock and Roil Myanmar's Junta," *Asia Times*, 28 June 2021.

or launched their own attacks against the Tatmadaw to demonstrate solidarity with them.[103]

The Wa understand that China will never support their full independence for many reasons, most importantly perhaps because the PRC desires using Myanmar's ports in its Belt and Road Initiative.[104] As part of the initiative, China is establishing a multi-billion-dollar infrastructure system with upgraded roads and high-speed rail linking Southwest China to the Indian Ocean called the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor.[105] The PRC is also interested in developing a deepwater port and special economic zone in Rakhine State.[106] To protect its commercial ventures, including twin oil and gas pipelines through Myanmar, China cannot alienate the leadership in Naypyidaw by siding too closely with the ethnic rebel groups, but needs the support of the militias to also guard Chinese economic investments.[107] Finally, the PRC Politburo wants to avoid significant fighting breaking out in Shan State, which could send refugees into China.

UWSA leadership may worry that China's strategic calculus may change someday, leading the PRC to side more fully with the Myanmar regime.[108] Many Wa still harbor resentment over the past treatment of their people by the Han Chinese, both in China—where perhaps 400,000 Wa live—and in Burma. Lintner, citing anthropologist Magnus Fiskesjö, noted that in 1958, the Chinese Communists actively destroyed Wa tribal structures and religious implements and ended historical practices to ensure that the Wa fell in with Maoist ideology, a history that many Wa remember.[109] Sources close to UWSA leadership claim that they would "welcome ties with non-Chinese actors," likely sensing that being be-

[103] "Myanmar Regime Shores Up Ties with Two Powerful Northern Ethnic Armies," *Irrawaddy*, 10 April 2021.
[104] Zaw, "Wa Flex Their Muscles on the Hill."
[105] *Fire and Ice*, 19.
[106] "The Path to Peace in Myanmar Bends Toward China," Stratfor Worldview, 3 May 2017.
[107] C. S. Kuppuswamy, *Myanmar: United Wa State Army* (New Delhi, India: South Asia Analysis Group, 2013), 7.
[108] Myint, "The UWSA."
[109] Bertil Lintner, "Silence on Coup Makes Strategic Sense for Myanmar's Wa," *Irrawaddy*, 12 July 2021.

holden to China reduces their options.[110] In a speech at the UWSA's 30th anniversary celebration, its chairman, Bao Youxiang, spoke of "opening up to the outside world" and growing a market economy.[111] Elites around him have also stressed expanded foreign relations as a means to preserve Wa autonomy. The UWSA, for now, has agreed to stay on the sidelines in the ongoing violence between pro-democracy groups, aided by other ethnic militias, and the regime. It is likely that China has influenced this decision, but from a practical standpoint the UWSA's decision makers may be preserving their options. Even with up to 40,000 troops—if they called up their reservists—the UWSA likely would not decisively sway the fight against the Naypyidaw government and, unless circumstances radically change, discretion may be the best course of action.

ARMS, MONEY, AND SUPPLY FLOWS

While the UWSA has the capability to manufacture its own weapons, its high-end equipment continues to originate in China. In April 2019, the Wa celebrated 30 years of independence with a large military parade and invited foreign journalists to visit their de facto capital, Pangkham. During the procession, Wa troops carried new Chinese-made 5.56 millimeter QBZ-97 assault rifles—replacements for older 7.62 millimeter Type 81 assault rifles that the Wa's produced themselves, new sniper rifles, truck-mounted 12.7 millimeter QJZ-89 heavy machine guns, and Type 69 rocket-propelled grenade launchers.[112] Although some of the USWA's most significant military equipment remained hidden, they displayed many modern Chinese weapon systems, including twin-barreled 14.5 millimeter ZU-S towed antiaircraft guns.

Notably, some of these troops wielded third-generation, Chinese-made Fei Nu-6 (FN-6) man-portable air defense systems (MANPADs).[113] There are also claims that the UWSA obtained other MANPADs from

[110] Myint, "The UWSA."
[111] Dillabough-Lefebvre, "Wa Art of Not Being Governed," 9.
[112] Anthony Davis, "United Wa State Army Military Parade Showcases Ongoing Modernisation," Janes.com, 23 April 2019.
[113] Davis, "United Wa State Army Military Parade Showcases Ongoing Modernisation."

Russia in the early- to mid-2000s.[114] Reportedly, the PRC has provided Soviet-model Mil Mi-17 Hip Multimission helicopters to the Wa as well as providing aviation training to the UWSA in 2013.[115] These details are consistent with other accounts that the Wa have been employing cargo helicopters to transport drugs into Laos.[116] Others doubt this possibility. The Wa's air defense network, which includes MANPADs and radar installations, appears to provide the UWSA with a formidable area denial capability for contesting Tatmadaw aerial incursions.[117] The threat that the FN-6 poses to Tatmadaw aircraft was illustrated when the Kachins claimed to have shot down a Mi-35 Hind-E attack helicopter in May 2021, which video posted to social media strongly supports. Some suggest that the KIA may have obtained MANPADs from the Wa.[118]

In November 2019, the Tatmadaw captured an FN-6 during a raid against a stronghold of the Palaung Ta'ang National Liberation Army, one of the northern alliance of rebel groups led by the UWSA and aided by the Wa, in northern Shan State.[119] Although it had long been assumed that the Chinese exercised a veto on the UWSA's transfer of MANPADs to other armed actors, this seizure confirms that they shared such weapons. Some experts suggest that China provided FN-6s to the Wa to ensure that the Tatmadaw did not strike the Wa state and drive refugees into Yunnan province.

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[114] Michael Jonsson and Elliot Brennan, "Drugs, Guns and Rebellion: A Comparative Analysis of the Arms Procurement of Insurgent Groups in Colombia and Myanmar," *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research* 20, no. 3 (September 2014): 314, https://doi.org.10.1007/s10610-013-9228-0.

[115] "Chinese Assistance for a Myanmar Insurgent Group," Stratfor Worldview, 14 February 2014. See also Kuppusawmy, *Myanmar*, 6.

[116] Davis, "Why Asia Is Losing Its War on Drugs."

[117] The UWSA supposedly also employ Chinese drone specialists and even displayed an armed drone in their parade. Ong, "Producing Intransigence," 458; and Zaw, "Wa Flex Their Muscles on the Hill."

[118] Albert L., "Kachin Independence Army Claims Downing of Tatmadaw Mi-35 Attack Helicopter," overtdefense.com, 3 May 2021; "Myanmar Rebels Say They Downed Helicopter, Pro-Junta Official Killed," Reuters, 3 May 2021; and Davis, "United Wa State Army Military Parade Showcases Ongoing Modernisation."

[119] Anthony Davis, "China's Mobile Missiles on the Loose in Myanmar," *Asia Times*, 28 November 2019.

China continues to play a double-game even as it takes advantage of "vaccine diplomacy" during the COVID-19 pandemic. The nation has provided more than 13 million COVID-19 vaccines to the ruling Burmese junta while also sending a large number to a variety of armed ethnic groups, including, of course, the UWSA.[120]

THIRD-LEVEL EXTENSIONS AND INTELLIGENCE COORDINATION

For years, the Myanmar government has tried to get the various armed ethnic groups to sign the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA).[121] The UWSA serves as a linchpin in a powerful militia bloc—the Federal Political Negotiating and Consultative Committee and often referred to as the Northern Alliance—that seeks to negotiate with the government as a group to avoid it picking off individual groups.[122] The Wa chair the committee that is made up of seven militias, including the rival Kachin.[123] The committee represents 80 percent of the armed militant groups in Myanmar.[124] The UWSA has rejected signing on to the NCA because they believe that it would cause them to lose many of the rights that they currently enjoy, so they continue to insist that the government respect the 1989 agreement between the two parties. The government holds a peace conference every six months, which the UWSA, despite rejecting the ceasefire agreement, has attended largely to placate China.[125]

Since 2009, Myanmar has sought to bring the armed groups inside their tent as well as expand the government's reach by converting ethnic armed groups into units in the Border Guard Force, something the Northern Alliance has rejected.[126] Naypyidaw has had some success in getting former militant groups to join the border guards, which is partially staffed by Tatmadaw officers and soldiers. Although the army provides limited

[120] Sebastian Strangio, "China Aiding Myanmar Armed Groups in Their COVID-19 Fight," *Diplomat*, 24 September 2021.
[121] Thompson, "Myanmar's Unhappy Rebels."
[122] Thompson, "Myanmar's Unhappy Rebels"; and Lintner, *Peaceworks*, 14.
[123] Zaw, "Wa Flex Their Muscles on the Hill."
[124] Lintner, "Myanmar's Wa Hold the Key to War and Peace."
[125] Thompson, "Myanmar's Unhappy Rebels."
[126] Zaw, "Wa Flex Their Muscles on the Hill."

funding and supplies, its lack of support for these groups means the former insurgents typically operate on their own.[127] The Wa have been suspicious of dealing with the government since 2015, when the Tatmadaw attacked their closest allies, the Kokang, also known as the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army, and tried to take over their self-administered zone.[128] An earlier offensive against the Kokang in 2009 drove 37,000 refugees into China.[129] Naypyidaw demands that the UWSA vacate its position in South Wa without compensation, which is a nonstarter for the Wa, who want to remain autonomous and to have an official Wa State in Myanmar.[130] The Wa also seek amendments to both the NCA and the 2008 Burmese Constitution to recognize their claim to the Thai border area.[131]

The UWSA maintains authority among the other groups in its coalition by providing weapons, training, and logistical support to them. This connection also serves as a glue to hold their alliance together in an effort to force the government to negotiate with the northern rebels as a single bloc.[132] The UWSA also arms groups actively fighting the government, including the Arakan Army and the 8,000 soldiers of the Ta'ang Army, a group formed in 2015 and originally sponsored by the powerful Kachin.[133] The KIA also helped prop up the Arakan Army in 2009, initially as a proxy force for Kachin interests.[134] In April 2019, the leader of the Arakan Army attended the UWSA's 30th anniversary parade in Pangkham. He told a reporter that he met with a Chinese official during his visit, suggesting some level of coordination between the Arakan Army and the Chinese government.[135]

In January 2020, the commander in chief and military leader of Myanmar's regime, Min Aung Hlaing, raised objections to Chinese pres-

[127] *Fire and Ice*, 8–9.
[128] Thompson, "Myanmar's Unhappy Rebels."
[129] Jonsson and Brennan, "Drugs, Guns and Rebellion," 314–15.
[130] Ong, "Producing Intransigence," 454.
[131] Lintner, *Peaceworks*, 21.
[132] Thompson, "Myanmar's Unhappy Rebels."
[133] Lintner, *Peaceworks*, 14.
[134] *Jade and Conflict*, 39–40.
[135] "Rakhine Rebels: 'No Peace by Prayer' in Battle with Myanmar Army," *Dhaka* (Bangladesh) *Tribune*, 18 April 2019.

ident Xi Jinping about the sophistication of the weapons the UWSA had been providing militants fighting the Tatmadaw, which included rockets used against a naval vessel, and the provision of shoulder-fired antiaircraft missiles.[136] Interestingly, the UWSA has stayed away from the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army that is fighting the Tatmadaw in Rakhine State, likely in response to Chinese pressure to avoid assisting a group China characterizes as "savage Bengali Muslim terrorists."[137]

Perhaps most intriguingly, the UWSA have long supplied weapons to a variety of insurgent groups fighting the Indian government and pursuing various agendas for independence of several of the states in northeast India.[138] Wasbir Hussain, who has reported on northeast India since 1984, claims that the UWSA is "the most effective illegal weapons trader" of any of the Burmese ethnic rebel groups engaged in the gun trade that serves Indian insurgent groups.[139] The Wa deal their own weapons as well as equipment of Chinese origin. They obtained large quantities of weapons from Chinese units in Yunnan in the late 1990s after the PRC Politburo ordered those forces to modernize. Many Chinese army officers stood to profit from selling the weapons rather than returning them to the central government and some continue to engage in trafficking weapons from military stockpiles. The UWSA built and operated a factory on a compound belonging to its leader, Bao Youxiang, in his hometown that sits on the Chinese border, where they manufactured assault rifles and light machine guns. The Wa obtained technical assistance from Chinese weapons experts. The factory operated from 2006 to 2010 when the Chinese asked the Wa to dismantle it, apparently under pressure from the Tatmadaw. Nevertheless, the Wa continue to manufacture their own weapons elsewhere. Given the UWSA's close ties with Chinese security services, at a minimum, the UWSA is doing so with the consent, if not encouragement, of the PRC. Chinese authorities themselves may be arm-

[136] *Commerce and Conflict*, 10.
[137] Lintner, *Peaceworks*, 14.
[138] Vikram Rajakumar, "India," *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses* 6, no. 1 (January–February 2014): 21–22.
[139] Wasbir Hussain, "Insurgency in Northeast India: The Chinese Link," Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, 2 February 2015.

ing Indian insurgents, delivering them through the UWSA. Serving as a cutout, the UWSA provides China with plausible deniability.[140]

Journalists reported that Indian intelligence officials allege that leaders from various insurgent groups had been operating in China based on geolocation of satellite phones and that some injured commanders received treatment in Chinese hospitals.[141] By late 2020, India rejected Chinese denials and publicly accused the UWSA and the Arakan Army of serving as proxies for Beijing by sending Indian insurgent groups weapons and sheltering them in Myanmar. The UWSA refuted the Indian allegation of assisting any insurgent groups and its official spokesman stated that their claims that the group serves as a Chinese proxy are "groundless."[142]

The Arakan Army is one of the newest militant organizations, existing for little more than a decade. Made up of a younger cadre, it has been growing exponentially and has already become one of the biggest challenges to the Tatmadaw on the battlefield. The KIA helped birth the Arakan Army in Kachin State, providing weapons, training, and a safe haven. The Arakanese are from Rakhine State and began carrying out attacks against the Tatmadaw following the military's assaults against the Kachin. The Kachin also benefit from the opening of a second front against the Tatmadaw on the other side of the country. The UWSA has also provided training and firepower to the Arakan Army to maintain their own influence, reportedly providing some armaments for free in 2014.[143]

Additional sources claim, however, that China is the major sponsor of the Arakan Army, providing up to 95 percent of its weapons.[144] The same report asserts that the Arakans also receive weapons and drugs to sell in Bangladesh for fundraising from the UWSA and Kachin.[145] Others state that the Arakan rely in large part on UWSA manufactured weapons,

[140] Bertil Lintner, *Great Game East: India, China, and the Struggle for Asia's Most Volatile Frontier* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015), 134, 261.
[141] U Ba Tin and Satyen Borthakur, "Top Northeastern Rebel Leaders Flee into China," *Eastern Link*, 17 May 2020.
[142] Sen, "India Accuses China of Helping Rebel Groups on Myanmar Border."
[143] *Jade and Conflict*, 39–40, 43, 46.
[144] Anders Corr, "China's Diplo-Terrorism in Myanmar," *LiCAS News*, 28 May 2020.
[145] Corr, "China's Diplo-Terrorism in Myanmar."

though it is unclear if China funds any of this, as well as their chemical precursors for Arakan drug production.[146] Weapon shipments, reportedly including FN-6 MANPADs, have landed in Bangladesh and are then smuggled through the Chittagong Hill Tracts—home to tribal elements distinct from the Bengali majority—to the Arakan across the border in Rakhine State.[147] Lending credence to the claim of Chinese backing, the Arakan Army has notably avoided targeting Chinese-financed Belt and Road projects while attacking Indian development ventures, kidnapping workers, and otherwise damaging Indian economic interests in Myanmar.

Up to 30 different groups are engaged in insurgency against the Indian government along the northeastern border. Many of them are considered little more than criminal bands, but at least six significant rebel organizations representing different political philosophies, ethnic groups, and religious practices are fighting for independence in the Indian states of Assam, Manipur, and Nagaland.[148] Indian intelligence agencies have become more vocal in decrying Chinese assistance to these groups, alleging that Chinese intelligence services support separatist groups in northeast India.[149] A notable attack occurred in June 2015 when insurgents ambushed an Indian Army convoy in Manipur, wounding 11 and killing 18–20 soldiers. This assault has been variously attributed to the National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Khaplang or possibly the People's Liberation Army of Manipur and Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup.[150] Later that month, Indian special forces raided suspected militant camps in Myanmar in retaliation.[151] Four years earlier, India filed charges against Anthony Shimray, the chief arms broker for a separate Naga faction, claiming that he had visited China North Industries Corporation (NORINCO), the

[146] Iftekharul Bashar, "Arakan Army: Myanmar's New Front of Conflict," *RSIS Commentary*, 12 July 2019.
[147] Subir Bhaumik, "Arakan Army Gets Chinese Weapons through Bangladesh," *Eastern Link*, 25 April 2020.
[148] K. S. Subramanian, "A New Approach Needed to End Tribal Insurgency in North-eastern India," *Asia Times*, 22 June 2015.
[149] "China Pushes Weapons into Myanmar; Threatens Regional Security with India," *Orissa (India) Post*, 17 November 2020.
[150] Vikram Rajakumar, "India," *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses* 7, no. 1 (December 2015–January 2016): 52–56.
[151] Subramanian, "New Approach Needed to End Tribal Insurgency in North-eastern India."

nation's largest state-owned weapons manufacturer, headquartered in Beijing. During the visit, he purchased $500,000 worth of weapons for his organization and 1,800 assault rifles were offloaded in Cox Bazar in 1996 in Bangladesh. Bengali authorities seized half of these weapons while the rest were transported to northeast India.[152]

Evidence suggests that various insurgent factions maintain up to 60 camps in Myanmar. In 2015, Lintner wrote that China may not be directly aiding Indian rebels in Myanmar, but there were credible reports of Chinese intelligence officers present in Taga, a small village where they met with officials from the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), Naga separatists, and other rebel groups from the Indian state of Manipur.[153] Rajeev Bhattacharyya, an Indian journalist based in Guwahati, Assam, also claimed that the ULFA hosted Chinese intelligence officials in Taga. These intel officers regularly met with other insurgent groups there until the Tatmadaw dismantled this camp in 2019.[154] Bhattacharyya visited many of the rebel bases personally and claims that the heyday of the northeast insurgents was between 1990 and 2010 as many groups are now looking to settle with New Delhi. Other terrorism experts suggest that, as of 2017, insurgent groups in the northeast had become even more active, despite a decline in their support among the population.[155]

Historically, Chinese efforts to foment insurgency in India was more overt. As many as 1,000 Naga insurgents were trained in Yunnan between 1967 and 1976 when Mao died and their policy shifted. These rebels returned to their fight against India armed with Chinese assault rifles, rifle-propelled grenades, mortars, and assorted small arms.[156] Some northeastern insurgent groups maintained representational offices in Yunnan into the 1980s.[157]

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[152] Hussain, "Insurgency in Northeast India."
[153] Bertil Lintner, "Mysterious Motives: India's Raids on the Burma Border," *Irrawaddy*, 30 June 2015.
[154] Rajeev Bhattacharyya, "How China's 'Aid' to Rebel Groups Sustained Northeast Insurgency," *Quint*, 1 July 2020.
[155] Rajakumar, "India," 47–50.
[156] Bertil Lintner, "Behind China's Threat to Support Insurgency in India," *Asia Times*, 30 October 2020.
[157] Lintner, "China, India Tensions Put Myanmar in the Middle."

In 2004, Bengali authorities seized a weapons shipment intended for the ULFA in the port city of Chittagong, Bangladesh. The arms were valued at $4–$7 million and included Chinese assault rifles, grenades, and ammunition. It has not been conclusively established if the shipment came from NORINCO, but the weapons originated in Hong Kong.[158] The Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence may have financed the exchange. This interdicted shipment followed multiple other consignments of Chinese weapons provided to various Indian insurgent groups through Cox Bazar in Bangladesh in the 1990s, similar to the routes that reports suggest China is using to supply the Arakan Army. One shipment in 1997, apparently arranged by the Chinese People's Liberation Army for the ULFA via Bhutan, was disrupted when Indian authorities alerted the Royal Government.[159] It is worth noting that the ULFA had a liaison office in the Yunnanese town of Ruili until 2007, where it coordinated weapon purchases from Chinese and UWSA brokers.[160] In 2020, Bhattacharyya reported that the ULFA chief of staff lived in Yunnan starting in 2011, if not earlier, and continued to live there while handling relations with another insurgent group, the People's Liberation Army of Manipur.[161] In a separate article, Bhattacharyya wrote that the ULFA leader met with leadership figures in the UWSA in 2008 to request Wa assistance for his group.[162] In that same year, *Jane's Intelligence Review* reported that the UWSA served as the middleman transshipping Chinese weapons to Indian insurgent groups in the agitated seven sisters.[163] Following the seizure of Chinese arms in Chittagong in 2004, the ULFA increasingly relied on the UWSA for its weapons, though Bengali authorities began pressuring this channel as well by 2010.[164]

[158] Lintner, *Great Game East*, 145–48.
[159] "China Pushes Weapons into Myanmar; Threatens Regional Security with India"; and Bhattacharyya, "How China's 'Aid' to Rebel Groups Sustained Northeast Insurgency."
[160] Lintner, *Great Game East*, 151.
[161] Bhattacharyya, "How China's 'Aid' to Rebel Groups Sustained Northeast Insurgency."
[162] Rajeev Bhattacharyya, "Why Has China Given Shelter to a Rebel Leader from India's Northeast?," *Diplomat*, 26 February 2020.
[163] Manu Pubby, "China Emerges as Main Source of Arms to N-E Rebels: Jane's Review," *Indian Express* (Noida, India), 22 May 2008.
[164] Subir Bhaumik, "Where Do 'Chinese' Guns Arming Rebels Really Come From?," BBC News, 3 August 2010.

In October 2020, the president of a think tank run by the PRC's Ministry of Foreign Affairs warned that India's apparent outreach to Taiwan could lead the Chinese "to support secessionist forces in India as a countermeasure."[165] Given the nature of the forum, it is doubtful that this comment represented the opinion of an academic speaking off the cuff. India has been even more direct, alleging that four of its most wanted insurgents were meeting with active and retired People's Liberation Army officers, training, and obtaining weapons in Kunming, Yunnan Province, in October 2020.[166] Foreign military officers—retired or allegedly so—are a well-known mechanism for directing proxy wars around the globe.

Apparently to counter Chinese assistance to Indian rebel groups in Burma, Indian security officials have developed their own alliances with Burmese militants. The Chinese used the UWSA's rivals, the KIA, to train fighters from the Manipur PLA in the 1980s as well as groups of ULFA fighters. Interestingly, in 1989, the KIA flipped its allegiance, agreed to close these training camps, and desisted from providing future training to insurgent groups from India's northeast after entering an agreement with India's foreign intelligence service, the Research and Analysis Wing. In return for the Kachins' loyalty, Indian intelligence agreed to provide weapons to them. Recently, an American academic researching the use of elephants as a method of covert transportation for Burmese ethnic militias observed Kachin pachyderms returning with military supplies from across the Indian border.[167]

As Chinese and Indian sparring appears to increase across a variety of forums, China's ability to increase pressure on Indian security services in its restive northeast may become increasingly appealing. The UWSA already engage in assistance to these insurgent groups for their own interests. It seems likely that they would willingly assist China's efforts at boosting weapons flows and possibly deploying trainers to this region.

[165] Lintner, "Behind China's Threat to Support Insurgency in India."
[166] Sen, "India Accuses China of Helping Rebel Groups on Myanmar Border."
[167] Jacob Shell, *Giants of the Monsoon Forest: Living and Working with Elephants* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2019), 182–84; and Shell, email message to author, 30 May 2021.

CONCLUSION

Are the Wa a proxy force for China? Like most everything else in Myanmar, the answer is complicated and likely depends on the vantage point of the relationship that is being considered. China's relationship with the UWSP and UWSA is a tangled one. These ties have waxed and waned over time and the grounds for Chinese support and influence have similarly shifted. Although the UWSA is not an entirely independent actor, it has its own agenda while at the same time being sensitive to Chinese concerns and direction. Given the increasingly chaotic situation in Myanmar, the UWSA may represent an ever more important actor. It seeks both to capitalize on the conflict economically, through increased drug trafficking and weapons dealing, and to pursue its interests in creating an independent state and ensuring stability for its people. While the UWSA deals with multiple Burmese players engaged in the complex internal situation between the Tatmadaw and military junta, other armed ethnic groups, and pro-democracy forces, it is likely cognizant that China and India are increasingly contesting each other and their respective spheres of influence in Myanmar. Both China and the Wa have their own interests, which are often not congruent. Yet, given their complex history and the benefits that accrue to both sides through their continued relationship, these ties and proxy relationships in this low-intensity conflict will likely continue.

Christopher D. Booth is a career national security professional and served on active duty as a commissioned U.S. Army armor and cavalry officer. He has extensive experience abroad, including assignments in the Middle East, Asia, and Europe. He is a distinguished graduate of Command and Staff College at Marine Corps University. He graduated from Vanderbilt University Law School and received a BA from the College of William and Mary.

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CHAPTER 7

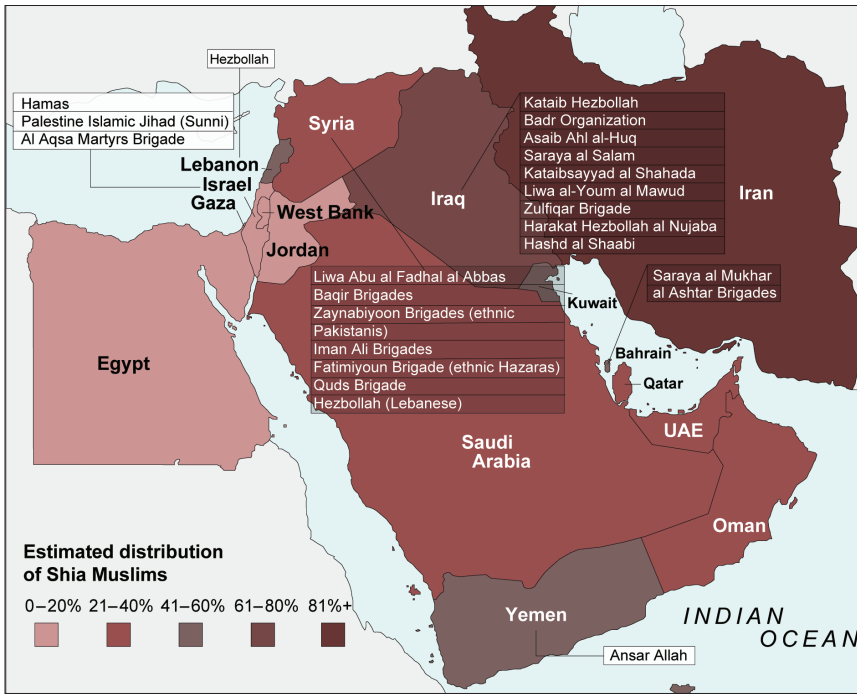
Iran and Hezbollah

UNIQUE FEATURES OF THE PROXY RELATIONSHIP

Since its establishment in 1979, the Islamic Republic of Iran was revolutionary, and its officials accept continuous conflict as natural. The regime adopted proxy warfare as a favored foreign policy instrument. While other states—such as Muammar al-Qaddafi's Libya in the 1970s and 1980s—showed a similar interest in such a policy/strategy combination, none has fared so well with it as Iran. Tehran conducts warfare in peacetime with a brashness and success rate that brings it grudging respect even from its enemies, including the United States. For instance, due in part to Iran's actions, Iraq has been a tragedy instead of a democratic success.

Iranian motives for roiling its region and beyond go further than the usual calculations states make about their self-interest and enlarging their national position. Unlike any other regime in this study, Iran's government and politics is religiously driven and zealously so. States could be placed on a spectrum for the significance of religion in its politics. For example, the People's Republic of China may be found on the far secular left. Sweden would sit somewhat to the right of that, approaching the center. Poland or Hungary could both be considered right of center, given the preeminence of Christianity in their national cultures and the conservatism of their governments since 2019. Turkey rests to their

Map 7. Shia-dominant areas and certain Iranian proxies



Source: courtesy of author, adapted by MCUP.

right and is moving further rightward. Currently, Afghanistan and Iran stand at the far-right end of this spectrum. Iran is there by choice; Iran's government is proud of its religious character and self-consciously promotes its political-spiritual projects in a world where, even among Muslims, the adherents of one state's ayatollah—Iran's Ali Khamenei—are a minority. This state is both wary and fierce.[1]

[1] Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini laid down a model of a supreme jurisprudent—a leader in both justice and religion. The supreme leader may trump or withdraw the president's power in the Iranian system; one expert goes so far as to argue that both the parliament and presidency are "increasingly irrelevant" given the power of current Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and the Revolutionary Guards. Mehdi Khalaji, "Iran's 2021 Presidential Vote and the Tightening of Regime Control," *Policy Notes* #89 (Washington, DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2020), 2.

A second perspective on Iran is that it is a revisionist power. It was and is considered revolutionary. That word is found in the proper title of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC or the Guard), which some wrongfully describe as a mere praetorian guard. The monarchic dynasties that had lasted two and a half millennia are gone, replaced with an Islamist state. In 1979, the first clash for the newly founded Islamic Republic of Iran was with a capitalist, largely Christian, superpower—the United States. American influences were, and still are, bitterly resented. In Tehran's governmental and clerical corridors, the United States is seen as the ultimate manifestation of the evil, external status quo power. The revolutions Iran has labored to spawn at home and overseas since 1979 are not always successful, but they do have the same goal—the weakening of an international system that has improperly contained Shia and Iranian enterprises.[2] This outcome is not what Iranians wish. Nor is it likely to find satisfaction in a world in which Sunnis vastly outnumber Shiites.[3] Non-Shia or semisecular Arabs govern most bordering countries. Russia is pressing in with neo-imperialist interests. Additionally, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has helped to police regional waters, protect Israel, and pressed itself—rather ineffectually—into the affairs of nearby states such as Iraq and Libya.

The religious and revisionist motives of Tehran account for the character of its proxies. Invariably, these subordinates are religious and radically unsatisfied with the status quo. Unusually, a few follow Sun-

[2] For an example of Shia extremists' language, see "The Text of Hizbullah's Open Letter Addressed to the Oppressed in Lebanon and the World," 16 February 1985, in Joseph Alagha, *Hizbullah's Documents: From the 1985 Open Letter to the 2009 Manifesto* (Amsterdam, Netherlands: Pallas Publications, 2011), 39–55. For Sunni extremists' similar views, see Osama bin Laden, "Resist the New Rome," transcript, printed in *Guardian*, 5 January 2004, and Christopher C. Harmon, "Al Qaida's War with the United Nations and the State System," in *Al Qaida after Ten Years War: A Global Perspective of Successes, Failures, and Prospects*, ed. Norman Cigar and Stephanie E. Kramer (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University Press, 2011), 15–34.

[3] Shia are most numerous in Iran and Iraq, with a large presence also in Bahrain and Lebanon; see map 7.

ni Islam, especially the Palestine Islamic Jihad and Hamas.[4] Although Hamas has many strengths, it is more an Iranian proxy than a partner. If Iran's geopolitical and religious project ever triumphed in the region, Sunni fundamentalism would be sidelined at best, or eradicated at worst. More typically, Iran's proxies are Shia radicals, found, recruited, or developed in other Middle Eastern countries, including Iraq and Bahrain. In Lebanon, Hezbollah—"The Party of God"—was founded in the first years of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's triumphant return to Iran from exile in February 1979.

Hezbollah is Iran's leading and most successful proxy. It was built for violence under Iranian supervision, often in Iran; it drove out armed peacekeepers from France and the United States; it has foiled other outside powers for 40 years.[5] By strategic choice, the group has broadened into a primary political force within Lebanon since its establishment, driving change via parliament and competing in elections starting in the early 1990s. Today, Hezbollah holds a minority of parliamentary seats, but it has an outsize reputation and can subtly threaten violence by degrees, allowing it to hold significant clout over key security issues. Hezbollah's social service programs receives positive credit globally. This favorable standing helps to legitimize this substate actor at the expense of Lebanese rivals as well as to rebuff foreign critics who dwell on the

[4] Palestine Islamic Jihad (PIJ) has operations in several countries but all of its funding is Iranian. PIJ's funding is unique: there seems to be no other prominent group so dangerously connected to single-source funding. Hamas, the Palestinian faction in control of Gaza, has authority, but trains its cadres in Iran, which also provides it millions of dollars a year. Iran's strength in this relationship has only grown as other donors—Saddam Hussein's Iraq and various Saudis—have dried up, making them subordinate to "Iran's pay-for-performance funding policy." For example, at a summit in Damascus in May 2000, the Iranians issued demands about actions in Palestine and made declarations about what must not be done versus what is allowed. Matthew Levitt, *Hamas: Politics, Charity, and Terrorism in the Service of Jihad* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 172–78.

[5] Proxies may be trained in their own countries or in that of their sponsor. Members of the South West Africa People's Organization were trained in Angola, in Cuba, and in the Soviet Bloc, but not usually at home in what was called South West Africa, now Namibia. Modern Lebanon, however, has been a state of dispersed powers—and now a near failed state. From the beginning, Hezbollah trained fighters there, such as at training camps in the Bekaa Valley. Others simultaneously received instruction in Iran as well. For more on Iranian connections to non-Iranian terrorists, see Steven K. O'Hern, *Iran's Revolutionary Guard: The Threat that Grows While America Sleeps* (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2012), 60–67, 110.

organization's terrorist activities. While Iran's economic, political, and military powers clearly lie behind Lebanese Hezbollah, the group's foundational document—an "Open Letter to the Oppressed in Lebanon and the World"—ties its own identity to the aspirations of Iranian ayatollahs.[6] So, though Lebanese nationalism may motivate some Hezbollah actors, it appears secondary to their allegiance to the clerics governing Iran. The Iranian Ali Akbar Mohtashamipur, one of the early founders of this relationship with the Lebanese, baldly told a newspaper in 2006: "Hezbollah is part of the regime in Iran, Hezbollah is an elementary factor in the Iranian military and security establishment; the connection between Hezbollah and Iran is much greater than the connection of a revolutionary regime with a party or a revolutionary organization outside of the borders of its country."[7]

Since the conclusion of World War II, "anti-imperialism" and "self-determination" are still mantras even for political entities that do not strongly assert nationalism. Mohtashamipur's statements are unusual in laying so bare the power relations of two actors. Rarely has a weaker party paid such public homage to its sponsor as Hezbollah has done. Indeed, its own seal—its official hallmark—is almost identical to that of Iran's IRGC, an army of another country.[8]

POLITICAL CHARACTER OF THE ENTITIES

Iran's anti-status quo posture has marked it indelibly. Outside the country, many onlookers have expected the revolutionary ardor to cool, and no year passes without some observer testifying to see new moderation in its government. While much of the Iranian middle class wants change, such hopes have been defied. Iranian authorities are overtly proud of

[6] "The Text of Hizbullah's Open Letter Addressed to the Oppressed in Lebanon and the World," 40.

[7] Quoted in Andreas Krieg and Jean-Marc Rickli, *Surrogate Warfare: The Transformation of War in the Twenty-First Century* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2019), 169.

[8] See Afshon Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam: Religion, Politics, and Iran's Revolutionary Guards* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 115, 128, https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199387892.001.0001. Ostovar explains these official logos, a revealing pursuit; in low intensity conflict studies self-made emblems of groups are often neglected, although they are valuable primary sources.

their opposition to the present world order.[9] Their language—expressing a desire to create "a new order of the ages"—sometimes suggests echoes of sentiments from movements as different as the American revolutionaries of the eighteenth century and the Nazi national socialists of the mid-twentieth century. When Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi abdicated and left the country in early 1979, the new regime quickly severed the nation's ties with Washington, breaking an elaborate bilateral alliance with the United States that the previous dynasty had sought to strengthen. Hoover Institution fellow Thomas H. Henriksen observes that some foreign governments were listed as "rogues" because they had classic Communist foreign policies; Iran is a rogue that has never been Communist and was instead a close security partner of the United States until the mid-1970s.[10]

The religious character of the regime is self-evident in the constitution and in the country's name, the Islamic Republic of Iran.[11] Unlike Indonesia, which has a moderate stance through *Pancasila* despite its theocratic leanings, there are no elaborated principles of moderation in Iran.[12] The Iranian clerical establishment trumps civil government and is protected by the IRGC's armed personnel with pseudo-religious duties. The Guard is not technically just an Iranian force but an Islamic

[9] Their documents, especially the "Open Letter" cited above, show this pride, which is also apparent to Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*.

[10] See the Iran chapter in Thomas H. Henriksen, *America and the Rogue States* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), including p. 63.

[11] For more on Iran's internal politics, see Mehdi Khalaji, *Iran's 2021 Presidential Vote and the Tightening of Regime Control* (Washington, DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2020); and Kenneth Katzman, *Iran: Internal Politics and U.S. Policy Options* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2020).

[12] Indonesian government websites explain the state ideology on consensus and democracy; one notes contrast with the Iranian principle of judicial and clerical dictatorship. *Pancasila* is the philosophical basis of the Indonesian state, consisting of two Sanskrit words, "panca" meaning five and "sila" meaning principle. The five inseparable principles are belief in the one and only God, just and civilized humanity, the unity of Indonesia, democracy guided by inner wisdom in the unanimity arising out of deliberations among representatives, and social justice for the whole. A recent English-language document on such issues is "Indonesia's Pancasila" by the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom: "Factsheet: Indonesia's Pancasila," U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom," March 2021.

one.[13] In turn, the Guard's spirit infuses its proxies overseas, such as the Shiite entity with a name as devout (or arrogant) as Hezbollah. Two European scholars who have examined Tehran's "surrogate warfare" miss this singular point, flatly assuring readers that Realpolitik considerations trump the religious views of Iranian leaders. There is little certitude about Iranian motives, but observers must decline to set aside the pronouncements of the principles.[14]

Iran is also determined to exert strong influence abroad. The first president of the Islamic Republic, Abolhassan Bani-Sadr, announced that "our revolution will not win if it is not exported. . . . We are going to create a new order."[15] His prominent rival thought similarly. A companion of Ayatollah Khomeini, Hossein Ali Montazeri, proclaimed, "One of the characteristics of Iran's Revolution is that its mundane scope cannot be confined to certain geographical and continental areas. Indeed, our revolution is an Islamic Revolution and not an Iranian one."[16] If some outsiders find this fantastical, it may be real to its initiators, and the conception is arguably evident in Iranian handling of proxies, aid to substate actors, deployments of advisors and covert liaisons, and radical policy announcements and actions in international affairs.[17] The government of 1979 immediately opened an Office of Liberation Movements dedicated to international duties, such as funding the reward offered for the ex-

[13] "Iranian" is not part of the formal name of the IRGC. Apparently, the second word "revolutionary" is commonly used even by specialists—a convention followed here—but in Persian it is precisely "revolution" in reference to guarding the "Islamic Revolution." Tarzi, interview with the author, 17 April 2019. A further question often arises as to whether the "Guard" is plural or singular, with Afshon Ostovar arguing for the former.

[14] See Krieg and Rickli, *Surrogate Warfare*, 164–93. The author's larger point is about the training and work of social scientists.

[15] "Export Revolution, Iran President Urges," *Globe and Mail* (Toronto), 5 February 1980.

[16] Miron Rezun, "The Pariah Syndrome: The Complexity of the Iranian Predicament," in *Iran at the Crossroads: Global Relations in a Turbulent Decade*, ed. Miron Rezun (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1990), 76, quoted in Kreig and Rickli, *Surrogate Warfare*, 167. For the rivalry between Ayatollah Montazeri and Bani-Sadr, see Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 62–79.

[17] A good comparison is the Sunni notion of the caliphate. Before the Islamic State or ISIS, area studies experts considered the policy end of a new caliphate as remote and implausible. Yet, from the views of the terrorist protagonists, a new caliphate is a commonly expressed policy end, as in Abu Musab al Suri, *A Call to Global Islamic Resistance*. See Christopher C. Harmon and Randall G. Bowdish, *The Terrorist Argument: Modern Advocacy and Propaganda* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2018), 143–63.

ecution of Salman Rushdie (the novelist stabbed in New York in 2022). More broadly, the office networked with Shia clerics around the world and explored political or religious opportunities for the new regime in Tehran. Today, the office is subordinate to the Foreign Ministry, whereas it once reported to the command of the IRGC.

This corps of guardians, or *pasdaran* in Farsi, has attracted attention to Iranian actions overseas. The IRGC is semi-independent, loyal first to the clerics, second to the government, and third to the nation. Their existence is assured by proximity to the high clerics, and their command structure runs through actors in the field who are separate from the Artesh, the formal national armed forces.[18] The Artesh claims approximately 350,000 troops in its ranks. Even if the IRGC is much smaller overall, both the Guard and the Artesh are substantial and diversified with components for naval, air, land, and cyber combat. Certain IRGC units, such as those with naval small craft, may equal or exceed the numbers in the Artesh. In some ways, the Guards are better provisioned, funded, and trained, and they are more professional. An observer might argue that these parallel forces manifest a foolish lack of unity of command and, doubtless, this system builds in degrees of both tension and disunity. Conversely, the close connection between the Guard and the regime fully protects it against an Artesh coup d'état. Other governments may worry about their own military forces; Iran does not fear theirs. According to some theories, rival agencies or forces may spur each other on to higher levels of performance due to a natural competition between central intelligence organs of any state and the intelligence arms of its military forces. For instance, the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) coexists with the Defense Intelligence Agency, and the Russian Foreign Intelligence service (SVR) in its way competes with the military intelligence service or Chief Intelligence Office (GRU).

[18] See *Iranian Naval Forces: A Tale of Two Navies* (Washington, DC: U.S. Office of Naval Intelligence, 2007).

The IRGC's numbers are curiously opaque.[19] Western sources often estimate 125,000 members in the Guard. Yet, the much-discussed Quds Force within the Guard is variously estimated at between 5,000 and 15,000, numbers so disparate as to indicate mere guesses rather than certainty. It is also notable to recognize the difference between full members and volunteers. The IRGC contains many professional personnel with highly developed skill sets and, often, international warfighting experience. The same organization has hundreds of thousands of volunteers, from the formal and full-time to the informal, called the *Basij* from the Persian word for mobilization. They help the regime keep order in quotidian ways. They are deployed during elections or public disturbances and have assisted in arranging medical care for the populace during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, they are always a ready force for territorial defense if the country's sovereignty is challenged.[20] *Basij* units also fought abroad after Iranian forces pushed back an Iraqi invasion and crossed the border early in the Iran-Iraq War between 1980 and 1988.[21] This impressive organization allows any citizen to feel involved with Iran's causes. It is far larger per capita than the U.S. National Guard but is not like the demibrigades of the late eighteenth century French Revolutionary Army, which paired inexperienced citizens with professional soldiers, combining passion with skill in battles abroad. *Basij* are more unique with their closest parallels being locally based village militias of Communist insurgencies—multitudes serve, but talented individuals or particularly hardened characters may be promoted to ranking positions in regular fighting forces. A final strength of the Guards, which underscores their uniqueness, is that they control a significant sector of the

[19] The author's studied generalization is based on differences, and silences, in the three books focused on the Guard referenced in this chapter—by Ali Alfoneh, Afshon Ostovar, and Steven O'Hern—and other published sources.

[20] For a detailed description of *Basij* and other regime apparatus for countering revolt, see Saeid Golkar, *Protests and Regime Suppression in Post-Revolutionary Iran* (Washington, DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2020). Thanks to Dr. Douglas Streusand of Command and Staff College, an expert on Islam and politics at Marine Corps University, for this and other suggested current readings. For a report on IRGC *Basij* work on public health during the COVID-19 crisis, see Erin Cunningham, "Iranian General Threatens Targeting of U.S. Vessels," *Washington Post*, 24 April 2020, A.11.

[21] Krieg and Rickli, *Surrogate Warfare*, 170–73, 179–80, 184.

Iranian economy. The IRGC control dams, power plants, mines, construction companies, arms factories, and other technical businesses.[22] By also owning banks, airlines, and certain ports of entry, the IRGC have managed their own export processes around the globe.

The Quds Force is remarkably different from the *Basij* although both are subordinate parts of the Guards. *Quds* references Jerusalem—an important religious site and long a target for conquest. This group's name's connection to the holy city denotes Quds Force as an externally focused entity, not one to defend the national territory.[23] By January 2020, Quds Force commander, Brigadier General Qassem Soleimani, was widely known for operations far from Tehran.[24] Soleimani personally visited, organized, paid, informed, and inspired fighters in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and Yemen. His subordinates also advanced fighting causes and cadres in other places, such as Afghanistan. He was an international force and a global celebrity. Observers tended not to ask how many enemies he was making. Instead, they commented on the breadth of his liaisons, the effectiveness of his partnerships, and the number of his supplicants. The United States sanctioned him, the Quds Force, and some of its subunits. On 15 April 2019, the United States declared the whole IRGC "a foreign terrorist organization." That same day, Washington unveiled "secondary sanctions" that would hurt any other country dealing with the Guards and effectively classify those companies or countries as giving "material aid to terrorism."[25] Soleimani had gone about his warmaking during peacetime semipublicly, but many observers were surprised when the

[22] Tarzi interview. For more on the IRGC's economic holdings, see Ali Alfoneh, *Iran Unveiled: How the Revolutionary Guards Is Turning Theocracy into Military Dictatorship* (Washington, DC: AEI Press, 2013), 165–203. The large economic holdings mean much to our understanding of IRGC power and of the impact when sanctions are imposed on Iran.

[23] There is disagreement about when Quds Force was named and/or activated. Alfoneh names December 1981; Ostovar, usually precise, vaguely refers to much later years. What is clear is that Quds Force has a special forces character and a focus on external operations, a combination that does not apply to other parts of the Guards.

[24] Ali Soufan, "Qassem Soleimani and Iran's Regional Strategy," *CTC Sentinel* 11, no. 10 (November 2018).

[25] "In the Matter of the Designation of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (and Other Aliases) as a Foreign Terrorist Organization," *Federal Register*, 15 April 2019, 15278; and U.S. Department of State, Brian Hook and Nathan Sales, "Briefing with Special Representative Hook and Ambassador Sales," press briefing, 8 April 2019.

White House ordered a surgical drone strike in January 2020 that resulted in his death.[26]

The IRGC grew and developed with remarkable speed, quickly building a reputation for courage while fighting Iraqi military forces in the Iran–Iraq War between 1980 and 1988. "The Guards saved . . . Iran," according to Dr. Amin Tarzi of the center for Middle East Studies at Marine Corps University.[27] The IRGC deployed its personnel in large numbers into Lebanon as early as 1980, two years before Israel invaded that country. As the Israel Defense Forces arrived, the Guards already had a name and a mission. After Israel invaded, they could add the claim of being a "liberation" force. IRGC members' competencies included infantry work and, for some, bomb making, and its range of skills has steadily broadened and become highly technical. Its influence is such that new Iranian assets or units often turn out to be identified with or controlled by the IRGC, usually through Quds Force or another subordinate. The corps also possess ballistic missiles, air defense, drone reconnaissance, cyber war, and naval enterprises in the Persian Gulf. This means that Quds Force personnel and units have a terrific base for planning and performing overseas missions. Quds Force retains its old abilities at singular narrow operations and can be secretive when taking direct action, planning assassinations, and conducting quiet liaison with foreign entities. Analysts of recent attacks in Western Europe, or ones in Asia a decade ago, can be quite challenged when trying to separate actions of the Guards, those of Iran's intelligence service the Ministry of Intelligence (MOIS), and those of its Foreign Ministry. Scholar Matthew Levitt has demonstrated that diplomats for Tehran sometimes double as facilitators of Iran's violent undergrounders abroad. The state diplomatic corps of Iran is a reminder of the varieties of state-sponsored terrorism.[28]

[26] American officials told of ordering the strike; "U.S. Strike in Iraq Kills Qassim Suleimani, Commander of Iranian Forces," *New York Times*, 2 January 2020.

[27] Amin Tarzi, interview in Quantico, VA, 17 April 2019. He also said Ayatollah Khomeini distrusted his regular military forces (*Artesh*) and so formed the newer joint forces of IRGC to protect the clerics and the regime.

[28] Matthew Levitt, "Iran's Deadly Diplomats," *CTC Sentinel* 11, no. 7 (August 2018). More broadly, see also his volume *Hezbollah: The Global Footprint of Lebanon's Party of God* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2013).

Quds Force proxies normally share the political and religious character of their patrons, with Hezbollah as the archetype. Built from the ground up in Lebanon, the Party of God brought together members from several existing organizations, especially Amal and its offshoot, Islamic Amal, each of which reflected the divisions in the Lebanese Civil War. Less expected was the influx of fighters from Yasser Arafat's secular and nationalist Palestine Liberation Organization after a large portion of the group fled Lebanon after Israel's invasion of 1982. Some PLO members stayed behind and joined Hezbollah, including Imad Mughniyah, who developed into an expert in building gas-enhanced vehicle bombs, bringing him repute and then a violent death in 2008.[29] Hezbollah has always been governed by a *shura*, or consultative council. Yet, it gradually developed a more formal apparatus, suggestive of Communist revolutions—a central committee led by a political bureau or politburo. For decades, Sheikh M. Hussein Fadlallah, who died in 2010, was Hezbollah's famed spiritual head and Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah has acted as the leading executive.[30]

Such stability in leadership and purpose is a key to the group's strategic strength. Nasrallah may be the third secretary general, but he has served since 1992. By contrast, at least three dozen different national security advisors, some of whom did not know the Middle East, have had directional roles in U.S. strategy against Hezbollah. Like certain other insurgencies, Hezbollah has been careful from the beginning to learn to govern, administer, and represent—not merely to fight or destroy. Hezbollah political figures have become enormously important to Lebanese politics, often making or breaking parliamentary movements. Fueled by Iranian funds—another key to Hezbollah's stability—its social and economic aid work acts as a recruiting tool, a service, and a rebuttal to many

[29] The PLO had trained a few Iranian radicals in their military camps in Lebanon until the PLO evacuated to Tunis in 1982. Some PLO members stayed behind in Lebanon and transitioned into the ranks of the IRGC, which had taken up positions in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley. See Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 114–15. Mughniyah was murdered in Damascus.

[30] Iranian cleric Ali Akbar Mohtashamipour, another important spirit from the founding days of Hezbollah, died in June 2021. His career appearances included a presentation at a conference of Holocaust deniers in 2006.

who would otherwise dismiss the organization as mere terrorists. Less known in the West are Hezbollah's media arms. Since 1991, the party has owned and operated both radio and television stations that are widely attended to among auditors in the Middle East—not merely in Lebanon.[31]

Views vary on Hezbollah, the IRGC, Iran, and the question of proxy status. Most generously to the substate actor, some experts argue that it so completely shares the worldview of authorities in Tehran that it makes a full and willing partner in security affairs. Other observers contend that Hezbollah, created by Iran, received direction from it from the beginning. Due to its dependence on Iran even today for cash, supplies, and arms, Hezbollah is an instrument of the clerics there, so compliant a surrogate as to repudiate Lebanese nationalism. The U.S. Department of State holds a middle ground: "Hizballah is closely allied with Iran and often acts at its behest but it can and does act independently."[32] Most observers are similar in neglecting the "charter" of the group, that aforementioned "Open Letter to the Oppressed in Lebanon and the World." This first appeared in Arabic in February 1985, and these critical lines appear early in the document under the heading "Our Identity":

> We are often asked: Who are we, the Hizballah, and what is our identity? We are the sons of the *umma* (Muslim community)—the party of God (Hizb Allah) the vanguard of which was made victorious by God in Iran. There the vanguard succeeded to lay down the bases of a Muslim state which plays a central role in the world. We obey the orders of one leader, wise and just,

[31] On the diversity of Hezbollah media, from poetry to stage rallies, see Lina Khatib, Dina Matar, and Atef Alshaer, *The Hizbullah Phenomenon: Politics and Communication* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2014). For more on Al Manar television, see Avi Jorisch, *Beacon of Hatred: Inside Hizballah's Al-Manar Television* (Washington, DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2004); and Harmon and Bowdish, *The Terrorist Argument*, 87–108.

[32] *Country Reports on Terrorism: 2005* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, 2006), chap. 8. Although the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency was directly interested in the Iran-Hezbollah relationship in 1985, at least some analysts declined to see it as a proxy matter. A collective analytical effort recognized the seriousness of the terrorist threat but stayed clear of a finding of Iranian command and control. Directorate of Intelligence, CIA, memorandum, "Terrorism as a Political Weapon: Four Middle Eastern Case Studies," 23 April 1985, Doc. No. NESA M#85-10080, George H. W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum, College Station, TX.

> that of our tutor and *faqih* (jurist) who fulfills all the necessary conditions: Ruhollah Musawi Khomeini. God save him![33]

STRATEGIC CONTEXTS AND PROXY PARTICULARS

Hezbollah and Iran share vital arrangements in policy and strategy, something that both sides have enunciated at times. The junior Lebanese organization, following the stance of its superiors in Iran, ties its origins and purpose to opposing Israel in Lebanon as well as Israel as America's proxy and "spearhead" in the Middle East.[34] Two analysts without links to either Tehran or Beirut, Andreas Krieg and Jean-Marc Rickli, locate Hezbollah's strategic value within the larger picture of *external* defense of Iran. Krieg and Rickli provide a summary of Iran's defense policy and its implications of defensiveness override their recognition of Iranian offensives.[35] Yet, their case for seeing "strategic defense" is complicated by declarations from senior Iranians. Hojjat al-Eslam Mohammad Montazeri, who directed the Office of Liberation Movements, stated that "keeping the enemy busy abroad" through the exportation of its revolution is the way of "keeping the enemy away from Iran's borders." Later, during enthusiasm around the Arab Spring of 2011, Soleimani declared, "Today, Iran's victory or defeat no longer takes place in Mehran and Khorramshar. Our boundaries have expanded and we must witness victory in Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, and Syria. This is the fruit of the Islamic revolution."[36]

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[33] Quoted in "The Hizballah Program-An Open Letter," *Jerusalem Quarterly*, 1 January 1988, reprinted by IDC Herzliya/International Institute for Counter-Terrorism, 1 January 1998. Not all English shortened editions of the open letter include this important passage. For a slightly different version of this section of the document, see Alaga, "The Text of Hizbullah's Open Letter Addressed to the Oppressed in Lebanon and the World," 40.

[34] Hezbollah refers to Israel as the "spearhead" of the United States in the region. It also calls Israel the "Rapist Entity" and "Cancerous Gland." The subtitle of Section 15 of the letter is "Israel Must be Completely Wiped Out of Existence." "The Text of Hizbullah's Open Letter Addressed to the Oppressed in Lebanon and the World," 48–49. The group used the "cancerous gland" epithet and called Israel the "forward base" of America in a later publication as well. See "The New Manifesto (30 November 2009)," in Alagha, *Hizbullah's Documents*, 121.

[35] Krieg and Rickli, *Surrogate Warfare*, 164–93.

[36] Hojjat al-Eslam Mohammad Montazeri and Qassem Soleimani, quoted in Alfoneh, *Iran Unveiled*, 233.

As actions speak to intentions, terrorism and guerrilla war represent a thread running through decades of Iranian foreign policy. France and the United States faced these threats in 1983 and 1984 when Iranian-directed terrorists attacked their embassies and military posts in Beirut. Some of these operations were carried out by combined teams of local Lebanese and foreign fighters, while others consisted of Iranian attackers.[37] The U.S. Marines, who were deployed to Lebanon as part of elaborate international peacekeeping efforts to end its civil war, were attacked in 1983 as "imperialists" by Iran, even though Tehran had previously plunged its own hands deep into Lebanese affairs. Syria, Lebanon's neighbor, had a remarkably close bilateral partnership with Iran, working with the Islamic republic to prevent new entrants into Lebanon. Iran's MOIS sent a direct message to Ali Akbar Mohtashemipour, the ambassador in Damascus, Syria, on 26 September 1983 ordering "spectacular action against the American Marines." Despite the National Security Agency's interception of that message, Navy intelligence, in what may be its worst slip since Pearl Harbor, never passed the message to the Marine commanders.[38] Iran's ambassador, meanwhile, did not fail. The IRGC readied a Hezbollah team in Baalbek in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley where the Guards had been at work for several years. Imad Mughniyeh prepared the truck bomb and, on 23 October 1983, Iranian Ismail Ascari drove it into the massive cement barracks, producing the largest explosion since World War II and causing 353 American and French casualties.[39]

[37] Hezbollah appeared to take credit for the attacks on the two countries' military barracks. It does not address the other attacks on the embassies and civilian staff of France and the United States. "Open Letter," 43.

[38] Col Timothy J. Geraghty, *Peacekeepers at War: Beirut 1983—The Marine Commander Tells His Story* (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2009), 165–80.

[39] A long, convoluted, and errant chain of command, and poor guidance from Washington, left Marine guards at their Beirut barracks holding unloaded rifles, rendering them unable to fire on the truck bomb speeding toward them. The author learned details of this in lectures by Jack Matthews, a PhD, a dean, and a retired Marine veteran of Lebanon, at the Command and Staff College, Marine Corps University, Quantico, VA, in the 1990s. The bomb driver's name appears in Warren Kozak, "How a Terror Attack against Our Marines—30 Years Ago This Week—Reverberated Down the Decades," *New York Sun*, 21 October 2013. The author was fortunate to discuss the case with Kozak in New York and later published a short essay; Christopher C. Harmon, "Remembering 23 October," Institute of World Politics, 19 November 2013.

These operations by Hezbollah against foreigners were soon combined with a pattern of kidnappings and other attacks. These acts established the Lebanese group as the most dreaded terrorist entity in the Middle East, a reputation enhanced in the years to come with further assaults. The organization hit European cities and Buenos Aires, Argentina, with significant attacks in the 1990s. In one apt example of how the state and substate proxy worked, a group of Iranian operatives, with instructions from the Minister of Intelligence, assassinated four Iranian-Kurdish political dissidents at Mykonos Restaurant in Berlin in September 1992. Kazem Darabi, logistician for the assailants, served in both Hezbollah and the IRGC before moving to Germany where he lived for more than a decade.[40] The Berlin court that investigated the assassination found that Iran had overtly threatened dissidents in Europe and that a Hezbollah cell on orders of the Iranian government committed this particular act of terrorism.[41] Murder plots against Iranian dissidents in Europe have continued over the past three decades.

Although no single attack is handled exactly like another, the leading players in these assaults have often included at least one of four groups: the MOIS, the Quds Force, Tehran diplomats, or members of Hezbollah. In 2003, the Quds Force found new opportunities to expand with the start of war in Iraq. While the timing of its introduction may be unclear, a Quds contingent of at least 50 officers was organizing Shia militias in Iraq by that May, only six weeks after the U.S.-led Coalition

[40] Levitt, "Iran's Deadly Diplomats," 12. Months before the murders at the restaurant Mykonos, Germany wisely sought to deport Darabi. Iran's intervention, causing the Germans to relent, illustrates the way terror attacks by foreign zealots have hardened many hearts and toughened laws in Europe's liberal democracies. In this vein consider how Salafist attacks have embittered the peoples of the Netherlands and Belgium, otherwise reputed to be gentle and open-minded. Levitt, "Iran's Deadly Diplomats," 12–14.
[41] Levitt, "Iran's Deadly Diplomats," 12.

forces entered the country.[42] In what seems to have been a format, Hezbollah operatives worked directly with the Iranians fighting in Iraq while attacking U.S. forces. In one instance at a U.S. training facility at Karbala south of Baghdad in 2007, Iraqi Shia gunmen, based on reconnaissance and direction from the Quds Force, assaulted the facility. Hezbollah member Azhar al-Dulaymi, who received training earlier for kidnapping missions near Qom, Iran, led and managed the large tactical attack and then personally drove the getaway car. Shortly after, the centrality of Iran's role in it came to light when Americans studying satellite photographs discovered a mock-up of the targeted training facility built within Iran's borders, apparently for the guerrillas' rehearsals.[43]

A banner year was 2012: Iranian plots unfolded in many corners of the world. That January, authorities in Bangkok, Thailand, preempted a massive fertilizer bomb scheme targeting presumed Israeli interests. Yet the world paid little heed as to why Iranian killers were in Thailand. In fact, Thailand is one of the many countries Hezbollah and Iran mark for strategic purposes of enhancing Muslim separatism and advancing radicalism in the region. A massive truck bomb plot in Bangkok in 1994 had nearly succeeded.[44] In July of 2012, halfway around the world, Hezbollah launched another bombing attack against a bus carrying tourists—mostly Israeli—in Burgas, Bulgaria, killing 8 and wounding 30. Bulgaria's deputy prime minister announced that the perpetrators were dual citizens, the bomber and a surviving attacker being Canadian-Lebanese

[42] Michael Ware, "Inside Iran's Secret War for Iraq," *Time*, 15 August 2005; David Crist, *The Twilight War: The Secret History of America's Thirty-Year Conflict with Iran* (New York: Penguin Books, 2012), 470; and Bradley N. Fultz, *Finding a Measured Response to Iran's Activities* (Quantico, VA: Middle East Studies, Marine Corps University, 2013), 15. Fultz says the Quds objective was organizing "proxy forces set to do Iran's bidding at a later date." In 2007, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Adm Michael G. Mullen, reported on Quds as organizing and arming Shia insurgents throughout southern and eastern Iraq. High-level tactical instruction for their officers was taking place in Iran proper. Fultz, *Finding a Measured Response to Iran's Activities*, 15.
[43] Christopher C. Harmon, "Iran as Competitor: Measured, Violent, Relentless," Brute Krulak Center for Innovation and Future Warfare, 6 May 2019.
[44] Pandu Yudhawinata, a career Iranian agent whom Tehran ultimately turned over to Hezbollah's control, had worked extensively in Southeast Asia. He ran this operation against the Israeli embassy in Bangkok but returned to the Hezbollah/IRGC stronghold of Baalbek in the Bekaa Valley when it failed. Matthew Levitt, *Hezbollah: The Global Footprint of Lebanon's Party of God* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2013), 117–45.

and another surviving conspirator being Australian-Lebanese, a kind of microcosm of Hezbollah's global recruitment and scheming. The surviving culprits fled to Lebanon after the attack. Israeli, American, and British intelligence had "direct, hard evidence" that placed Hezbollah at the head of its preparation, planning, and execution.[45] Assembling a list of such incidents around the globe, the U.S. Department of State concluded that in 2012 "Iran used the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps-Quds Force and militant groups to implement foreign policy goals, provide cover for intelligence operations, and stir up instability in the Middle East."[46]

THE MONEY THAT LUBRICATES OPERATIONS

No serious student of a Lebanese group calling itself "The Dispossessed" (Hezbollah does) believes that it can range so far and do so much on its own finances. That was true when Lebanon was wealthy; now it is near ruin. The Lebanese diaspora, due to the civil wars and other events, and some Lebanese expatriates working overseas, have created a financial network that gives generously to Hezbollah. The group has also established legal and illegal money-raising schemes in Venezuela, which has direct links to Iran through the Nicolas Maduro regime.[47] Such enterprises and schemes are ongoing in the tri-border region, where Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay meet, among other Latin American zones, which help the Shia extremists. Hezbollah moves drugs and other contraband, although it has been less successful than the Taliban or the Colombian

[45] Levitt, *Hezbollah*, 354–55.

[46] *Country Reports on Terrorism: 2012* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, 2013), 176. More recent descriptions of Iranian activities are found in *Outlaw Regime: A Chronicle of Iran's Destructive Activities* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, 2018), 15–17; and "Lebanese Hezbollah Select Worldwide Activities Interactive Map and Timeline," Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1 August 2020.

[47] For mention of the IRGC connection with Venezuela, see Alfoneh, *Iran Unveiled*, 165. In a January 2020 visit to Colombia, U.S. Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo was critical of Iranian ties to the Maduro government. More broadly, Lebanese Shia have long been known to live or operate in Venezuela, as well as nearby parts of Latin America, and this diaspora has facilitated Hezbollah moneymaking.

Marxist-Leninists in cornering a regional drug market.[48] A few ongoing Hezbollah investments, such as their television station Al-Manar and their arming and maintenance of combat forces now fighting in Iraq, consume more funds than their donors could supply. Iran has funded Hezbollah from its beginning, providing an estimated $100 million during the 1980s alone.[49] An authority on terrorism and intelligence, returning from diplomatic service in the Middle East in 2008, felt assured that the cash flow from Tehran to Hezbollah ran to several hundreds of millions each year.[50] The fountain only kept pumping a steady flow of cash. U.S. Special Envoy Brian Hook stated in 2019 that Iranian funds account for 70 percent of Hezbollah's budget, equaling as much as $700 million a year.[51] Hezbollah, in spite of some diversity in its funding, is dependent on Iran for major monies, but it is not embarrassed by being in such a compromised position, as statements from both parties have occasionally made clear.

Iran, for its part, faces many sanctions from international actors, led by the United States, which bite deeply into its economy and affects its support to Hezbollah. The *Washington Post* has documented evidence of reduction of salaries and other aid to Hezbollah.[52] Still, Iran continues to steadily give for religious, political, and security reasons. After a generation of published warnings, explications, and objections, the U.S. State Department considers Iran the "world's worst state sponsor of terrorism," noting:

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[48] For more on drug smuggling and terrorist groups, especially Hezbollah, see Rachel Ehrenfeld, *Narco-terrorism: How Governments Around the World Have Used the Drug Trade to Finance and Further Terrorist Activities* (New York: Basic Books, 1990), 54–55, 68; and Louise Callaghan and Alessandro Puglia, "€1bn Italian Amphetamine Drugs Haul 'Linked to Syrian Regime'," *Times* (London), 4 July 2020.

[49] Judith Miller, *God Has 99 Names: Reporting from a Militant Middle East* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 275.

[50] Andrew N. Pratt, a military officer with peacekeeping experience in the region, later seconded to National Security Advisor James L. Jones on a U.S. diplomatic mission to the Levant; discussion with the author at the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, Garmisch, Germany, 2008.

[51] "U.S. Envoy Brian Hook: Sanctions Are Hurting Iran's $700m Support for Hezbollah," *National*, 22 March 2022.

[52] Liz Sly and Suzan Haidamous, "Trump's Sanctions on Iran Are Hitting Hezbollah, and It Hurts," *Washington Post*, 18 May 2019.

> The regime has spent nearly one billion dollars per year to support terrorist groups that serve as its proxies and expand its malign influence across the globe. Tehran has funded international terrorist groups such as Hizballah, Hamas, and Palestinian Islamic Jihad. It also has engaged in its own terrorist plotting around the world, particularly in Europe [including Germany, Belgium, France, Denmark, and Albania]. . . . Furthermore, Tehran continued to allow an [al-Qaeda] facilitation network to operate in Iran, which sends fighters and money to conflict zones in Afghanistan and Syria, and it has extended sanctuary to [al-Qaeda] members residing in the country.[53]

Tehran's external ambitions run well beyond territories that Hezbollah now dominates. King Abdullah II of Jordon has stated that Iran is laboring toward consolidating a "'Shia Crescent' connecting Tehran, Baghdad, Damascus, and southern Lebanon." Multiple parties, cells, and guerrilla groups are part of the project, over which Qassem Soleimani had a directive role until his death in 2020. Iraqi Shia insurgent groups have enjoyed direct Iranian support of many kinds, including hands-on assistance from the IRGC, Quds Force, and Hezbollah for nearly two decades.[54] A lesser-known but illuminating example is the Khorasani Brigades (*Saraya al-Khorasani*), which systematically attacked multiple television stations around Iraq in early October 2019. The assaults left the offices of TRT Arabic, NRT Arabia, and Dijla TV, among others, with substantial damage.[55] Separately, Iran scholar Amin Tarzi and the Terrorism Research and Analysis Consortium (TRAC) note the brigades' dependency on its Iranian benefactors as well as its significance inside Iraq. TRAC adds that, unlike most Shia groups fighting in Iraq, this one "openly

[53] *Country Reports on Terrorism: 2018* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, 2019), 9. Despite the important religious differences within Islam, Iran accepted some al-Qaeda members fleeing defeat in Afghanistan in late 2001. Reports of their status and activity have been few and varied. An al-Qaeda leader was attacked and killed in Iran in late 2020.

[54] Henriksen, *America and the Rogue States*, 86; and *Country Reports on Terrorism: 2013* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, 2014), 220.

[55] Azhar Al-Rubaie, "Iraqi Armed Groups Raid Offices of Media Outlets Covering Protests," *Middle East Eye*, 8 October 2019.

states its allegiance to Iran."[56] The Khorasani Brigades also operate in Syria alongside Hezbollah units supporting the Bashar al-Assad regime so weakened by insurgencies and dissidents. It is unusual for Quds Force and its Hezbollah proxy to be fighting in a counterrevolutionary role as they are doing in Syria, where they were also instrumental in establishing the Syrian People's Army (*Jaish al-Shabi*), another force supporting the al-Assad government.[57]

THE FLOW OF ARMS AND TRAINING

Despite King Abdullah referencing just four countries in the crescent of Iranian expansionism, Tehran's sponsorship of important proxies exceeds that swath. Some groups of the Taliban in Afghanistan have enjoyed Iranian assistance, usually due to being part of the embattled Shia minority there. A former U.S. counterintelligence specialist believes that the Iranian training began around 2007 and is largely conducted within Iran. Plainclothes instructors from the IRGC taught military courses concerning assault tactics, weapons systems, and roadside bombs.[58] In one three-month course, "Part of the training included how to use secondary and tertiary bombs to kill rescuers attempting to treat and evacuate the wounded from the first attack."[59] After training in Iran, one Taliban commander stated, "Our religions and our histories are different, but our target is the same—we both want to kill Americans."[60]

Yemen is a country maimed by divisions. Initially, it had a formal line between its north and south; unification showed promise; now we have seen increasing civil war. As December 2020 ended, the implementation of a brokered peace between the Yemeni government and south-

[56] The author is grateful for the opportunity to review a manuscript under preparation by Amin Tarzi of the Middle East Studies Center, Marine Corps University, June 2020. TRAC notes the chain-like linkage between Iran and Saraya al-Khorasani, which has a logo replicating that of the IRGC. Information as of June 2020 from the website of the Terrorism Research and Analysis Consortium, Winston-Salem, NC.

[57] Krieg and Rickli, *Surrogate Warfare*, 177.

[58] O'Hern, *Iran's Revolutionary Guard*, 110–12.

[59] O'Hern, *Iran's Revolutionary Guard*, 110–11. For the history and purposes of the secondary bombing technique, see Christopher C. Harmon, "Double Bombings," *Journal of Counterterrorism and Homeland Security International* 11, no. 4 (Winter 2005): 42–47.

[60] Quoted in O'Hern, *Iran's Revolutionary Guard*, 111.

ern separatists led only to savage terror attacks on members of the new "unity government" as it stepped off an airplane at Aden airport. The north, which consists of land in the nation's northwest between the Red Sea and Saudi Arabian border, is predominantly Shia inland. The south, including the littorals of the Gulf of Aden, is overwhelmingly Sunni and home to al-Qaeda units. Gradually, the Houthi movement, officially known as Ansar Allah and consisting of Zaydi Shia people led by leaders from the Houthi tribe, which is fighting the Yemeni government, has been moving closer to Iran's interests and allying itself with the IRGC, as the arms flow to the group indicates. In January 2013, Yemeni authorities captured an Iranian dhow—a type of sailing vessel—with Chinese antiaircraft missiles, rocket-propelled grenades, and explosives. These weapons appeared to be headed for Houthi separatists, which Iran may consider part of a pan-Islamic effort under their leadership.[61] Two years later, the Houthis led the overthrow of the troubled Arab country's president.[62] Since then, numerous outside actors, especially Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, have intervened in the conflict. The United States has found itself in an indirect role through its weapons sales to Saudi Arabia.[63] Saudi Arabia's position has garnered much negative press since the civil war has furthered starvation in Yemen. According to Adam Seitz, a U.S. authority on the fighting, many Hezbollah fighters, as well as a dozen IRGC advisors from Iran, are assisting the Houthis.[64] In June 2020, another Iran specialist noted that "the Houthis

[61] *Country Reports on Terrorism: 2013*, 220; and O'Hern, *Iran's Revolutionary Guard*, 96.
[62] Adam C. Seitz, Center for Middle East Studies, Marine Corps University, interview with the author, 2019; and Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 241. Iranian intervention in Yemen is part of a disturbing war there in which the Saudis are deeply involved. Saudi anti-Iranian indignation has seen other heights. One came with the discovery of small arms hidden in luggage of numerous Iranian pilgrims on hajj to the great mosques in Saudi Arabia. Another was the brazen 2011 Quds Force plot with Mansour J. Arbabsiar to bomb the Saudi ambassador to the United States at a Washington, DC, restaurant. It ended in a 25-year prison sentence for the Iranian-American lead. See Benjamin Weiser, "25-Year Prison Term in Plot to Kill Saudi Ambassador," *New York Times*, 31 May 2013, A.19.
[63] Among the outside actors are child soldiers hired by the thousands, reportedly, by Saudi Arabia. See David D. Kirkpatrick, "Outsourcing War in Yemen with Child Soldiers," *New York Times*, 28 December 2018, A.1. More generally, see Adam C. Seitz, "Planning for the Gray Zone: The Yemen Quagmire," *Middle East Insights* 9, no. 4 (August 2018).
[64] Seitz interview. Today, Seitz works at the Pentagon.

are doing Iran's bidding" and, again, that the Yemenis' actions are "almost directly controlled by Iran."[65]

The Kingdom of Bahrain is surely unsurprised by Iran's actions in Yemen. Shia Islam is the dominant faith in Bahrain, but the nation's government is Sunni-run. Iran has taken on a long-term campaign of low-intensity malfeasance in Bahrain, including efforts to infiltrate the nation, to provoke unrest, and to overturn the existing power structure. In one of the earliest and more explicit affirmations of proxy policy of Tehran, top Khomeini lieutenant Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani described a meeting of 19 November 1981 with Prime Minster Khameni and several other high officials:

> We discussed the arrest of members of the Bahrain Liberation Movement and the claims about their relationship with Iran, expulsion of the Iranian ambassador from Bahrain and the wave of condemnation of Iran by Arab governments. It became clear that if we, because of the Constitution, should want to support the liberation movements, such incidents are unavoidable. But it was decided that the government should have precise control and should not be the secondary player to the Liberation Movements unit of the Guards, which without governmental supervision could make trouble.[66]

Forty years on, Iranian probing and provoking of Bahrain continues. Iranian-backed revolutionaries have been unable to ruin the sovereignty of Bahrain, but if the strategic purpose of terrorist campaigns begin with introducing elements of chaos, they have had notable days due to Iranian plans and satchels. For instance, in 2013, the Bahraini Coast Guard detained a speedboat full of weapons and explosives bound for inter-

[65] Amin Tarzi, "BruteCast Ep. 5-'Iran's Maritime Strategies and Tactics'," YouTube video, 50:29, 26 June 2020. The U.S. Department of State also notes, "In Yemen, Iran has provided weapons, support, and training to the Houthi militants, who have engaged in terrorist attacks against regional targets." *Country Reports on Terrorism: 2019* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, 2020), 198.
[66] Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, quoted in Alfoneh, *Iran Unveiled*, 218.

nal opposition, which they said enjoys direct IRGC support.[67] Bahrain's government sentenced 139 people for forming a "Bahraini Hezballah" in April 2019. That October, another five were prosecuted for forming a terrorist cell for the al-Ashtar Brigades. The latter organization, responsible for some 20 attacks, is another Shia extremist group and another barefaced proxy of Iran. Indeed, the Department of State recently reported, "In January 2018, [al-Ashtar Brigades] formally adopted Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps branding and reaffirmed its loyalty to Tehran to reflect its role in an Iranian network."[68]

As noted earlier, the IRGC Office of Liberation Movements was moved out from under the Guards and into the Foreign Ministry. There are multiple agencies in Iran formally charged with the export of the revolution, and the IRGC is merely the most directly violent. Whether from the individual incidents around the world or from general assessments by Matthew Levitt or the U.S. Department of State, it is clear that the Iranians and the Lebanese of Hezbollah are in intimate, active relations, and that Tehran is the more powerful player. One perhaps insoluble question for analysts, prosecutors, and foreign states is to what degree any given operation reflects any autonomy for Hezbollah. Of course, for the victims in such attacks, there are more pressing matters.

POLITICAL STATUS AND POLITICAL SUPPORT

Power is relative to multiple factors, and one reason Hezbollah can be considered powerful today is the marked weakness of its broader national host: the disarranged and battered Lebanon. French colonialism, which started after the First World War, had been a factor; even now for some it remains an irritant. Some Hezbollah supporters also resent the U.S. presence there. The U.S. Marines intervened briefly in 1958 and, be-

[67] This is among many terrorism-related incidents listed in the "Bahrain" section of the Department of State's *Country Reports on Terrorism: 2013* (Washington, DC: 2014), 126–28. On wider conceptions of creating "chaos," see Christopher C. Harmon, "Strategies of Terrorist Groups," in *Terrorism Today*, 2d ed. (New York: Routledge, 2007), 39–72.

[68] *Country Reports on Terrorism: 2019*, 245. The United States has designated them as a foreign terrorist organization, in part for promoting violent activity over the web against the Saudi, British, and U.S. governments.

ginning in the 1960s, Americans had a broad influence in higher education in Beirut. In the 1980s, American teachers and school administrators there were a prime target of Islamist terrorism, which is a meaningful part of a perceived cultural war.

Less recognized but similarly significant, the Palestine Liberation Organization was another cause of Lebanese decline. As the PLO became increasingly demanding and arrogant within Jordan, which identified itself as *the* Palestinian state, its ruler, King Hussein, ordered the army to expel the guerrillas violently, in what became known as "Black September," in 1970. While PLO's head, Yasser Arafat, moved his headquarters to Tunis, Tunisia, thousands of PLO members, including fighters and their trainers, flowed into Lebanon through Syria. Although part of a largely secular organization, these fleeing PLO constituents unexpectedly paired up with unsatisfied Shia militiamen in Lebanon.[69] By the early 1980s, Beirut and Lebanon more broadly had new internal troubles. As Hezbollah rose, public demonstrations came to feature the burning of the Lebanese national flag almost as often as those of Israel and the United States.

Syria is a larger and closer challenge to Lebanese governance. The regime in Damascus cannot divorce itself from the notion of a "Greater Syria," and neighboring Lebanon is above all a central part of this fantasy. After the Lebanese Civil War first broke out in 1975, the cagey Syrian president Hafez al-Assad sent armor, mechanized infantry, special forces, and intelligence specialists over the border, swamping the north and east of Lebanon, which Syria would occupy for 29 years. Most in the West quickly forgot this military rule, whose strength varied between 25,000 and 40,000 Syrian soldiers during that period. For a generation, many discussants of Middle East peace plans or the guerrilla wars that involved Lebanese Christians known as the Phalange, anti-Syrian Arab forces, Shia mujahideen, and others would only mention Syria's troop

[69] Their differences are profound and could lead to war for the same reason Palestine has been divided and quarreling since 2006 between secular and religious Palestinian political forces. In the 1970s, however, many in the PLO and the region's Islamist groups bonded over shared opposition to Israel and to the West.

presence in passing or omit it entirely. While diplomats and experts held unending dialogues related to new peace options or the removal of Western and Israeli troops from Lebanon, they declined to address how Syria would leave Lebanon.[70] The subject only became a focus because of an international scandal, the murder of former Lebanese prime minister Rafic al-Hariri in 2005, for which an international tribunal eventually indicted members of Hezbollah. For many Lebanese citizens and outside observers, the killing of al-Hariri, a popular statesman who had devoted tens of millions of his own dollars to rebuilding the shattered nation, was the metaphorical last straw in a long campaign of state and substate assassinations of national leaders, well-known journalists, and religious dignitaries. His death kick-started a mass, peaceful protest against Syria's occupation known as the Cedar Revolution.[71]

Despite the end to Syria's formal military occupation of half of Lebanon, Damascus retains some of its clout there. Through state agents and proxies, Syria still harms political figures of whom it disapproves. Explosives, arms, money, and supplies have continued to flow to a variety of Damascus-supported substate actors in Syria and Lebanon, especially Palestinians and religious militants favored by Iran. The Iranian embassy in Damascus was in the loop that pulled down the Marine Corps barracks

[70] This is merely the author's modest generalization, based on several decades of conversations and news reports. Two examples illustrate how this prejudice has remained. A web news source called KAKEabcCOM made a posting on 24 September 2019 promising "Everything to Know About Why Iran Supports Syria." It stressed "protection from the U.S." but not the Syrian-Iranian cooperation in dominating Lebanon, their mutual management of terrorist proxies based in Lebanon, or the years of Syrian military occupation between 1976 and 2005. While a seeming omission of current history, the other common way of leaving Syria alone is by glancing and indirect reference only. In one essay on Syrian-Iranian relations from 2006, the author notes that a proposed bilateral treaty between Damascus and Tehran would have included parts of Lebanon then "under Syrian control," but overlooks how this compromised Lebanese sovereignty. Esther Pan, "Syria, Iran, and the Mideast Conflict," Council on Foreign Relations, 18 July 2006. By contrast, some discussants argue that Israel's presence on the "Shebaa Farms" parcels justifies Hezbollah's dual policy of war and removing Israel from the map. One UN resolution mentions the farms by name, but it does not reference Syrian or Iranian arms and training for Hezbollah. United Nations Security Council, Resolution 1701, The Situation in the Middle East, S/RES/1701 (11 August 2006).

[71] For more on these assassinations, see Moredechai Nisan, "The Syrian Occupation of Lebanon," in *Peace with Syria: No Margin for Error* (Sha'arei Tikva, West Bank: Ariel Center for Policy Research, 2000), 53.

in 1983, and it maintains an important role in bilateral and multilateral relations for the region. The troika of Iran, Syria, and Hezbollah has held strong for four decades. It fortified Bashir al-Assad's tottering throne for years and has helped it remain secure against more recent rivals, such as the Islamic State, Kurdish and Arab opponents, or other religious forces. The teamwork expands Iranian influence in the region and among its militant undergrounds. The three actors also preserve the multiple paths by which logisticians supply Hezbollah's fighters, including their arsenal of tens of thousands of rockets threatening Israel under the watch of Mustafa Amine Badreddine, a relative of Imad Mughniyeh and a likely perpetrator in the murder of Rafic al-Hariri, the former Lebanese prime minister.[72] Hundreds of Hezbollah soldiers continue to support Assad's regime. Hezbollah's support for the Syrian despot acts as another reminder that to fully examine the intricacies of the Iran-Hezbollah proxy relationship. It is impossible to set aside a parallel and interwoven continuity: the close Syrian relationship to both other parties.

Outside the Middle East, Iran struggles to find partners, but it still has the ability to cause more trouble. Countries far from its borders, and therefore rarely disturbed by its touch, are wary of Iran and averse to engaging with the regime due to international sanctions against it. In an old rule of politics, such an isolated state may seek alliance with one or two other isolated states, as seen in the strange, limited contacts between the Republic of South Africa when it was under apartheid, Israel, and the Republic of China on Taiwan. Perhaps it is in that spirit that three current pariahs on the U.S. State Department's terrorism list—North Korea, Iran, and Syria—regularly work together to supply arms and technical material to Hezbollah. Former Defense Intelligence Agency analyst Dr. Bruce E. Bechtol documented this web by identifying Hezbollah officers

[72] "Hezbollah Commander Badreddine Killed in Syria," BBC News, 13 May 2016. Others reportedly involved in Hariri's murder were Hezbollah members Hussein Hassan Oneissi, Assad Hassan Sabra, and Salim Jamil Ayyash. In September 2019, the tribunal added a second indictment naming further assassination plots. Ayyash was named again. The United Nations Special Tribunal for Lebanon sentenced Ayyash to five counts and five life sentences. See "Documents," Special Tribunal for Lebanon, accessed 26 January 2022; and Sarah Dadouch, "Hezbollah Member Gets Five Life Sentences in 2005 Assassination of Hariri," *Washington Post*, 12 December 2020, A.22.

who attended training courses in North Korea, chronicling logistical collaborations of Syria with Hezbollah and North Korea in the Middle East, and tracking the provision of small arms and antitank missiles to Hezbollah via North Korean makers and Syrian handlers.[73]

Iran also has active agents in the Western Hemisphere, especially in Venezuela. Two decades ago, the socialist government in Caracas, then under Hugo Chávez, and the regime of Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad fathered a new trade relationship. The Latin American country badly needs trading partners as the once vibrant and wealthy nation has recently struggled as it emptied its own coffers due to socialist extravagances, experienced the emigration of hundreds of thousands of citizens, and deals with the Nicolás Maduro regime's reported attempts at dodging a proper presidential succession. Iran seems inclined to fill the gap. In May 2020, just as five Iranian oil tankers approached Venezuela, the chief of U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) noted an "uptick in Iranian state-sponsored activity and liaison with Venezuela that has included Quds Force and it has included other elements of support to the illegitimate Maduro regime cronies." Meanwhile, aviation experts have been tracking an increase in flight patterns of Iranian airline Mahan Air—a once-obscure IRGC company sanctioned by the United States for direct support of terrorism—into Venezuela.[74] "Other elements" referred to by Southern Command have clearly included Cuban and Russian mercenaries to protect the embattled president. The work of Russians in the country are quite mysterious. One Russian oil giant has withdrawn from their operations in Venezuela.

Hezbollah, likewise, maintains a presence in the region with Venezuela especially indulging the group. Hezbollah has established unsupervised economic and smuggling operations based in some 10 northern Venezuelan states, including Nueva Esparta, which contains Margarita Island, providing a gateway into the Caribbean. While their terms have

[73] Bruce E. Bechtol Jr., *North Korean Military Proliferation in the Middle East and Africa* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2018), esp. 80–117.
[74] Anthony Faiola, Missy Ryan, and Erin Cunningham, "Venezuela and Iran's Ties Raise Alarms," *Washington Post*, 24 May 2020, A.1.

recently ended, Secretary of State Michael Pompeo and the special envoy for Venezuela, Elliott Abrams, carefully watched Hezbollah, with Pompeo noting in early 2020 that the group has found a home in Venezuela. In 2014, the State Department recognized "Hezbollah supporters or sympathizers" in the country but did not mention the presence of Hezbollah guerrillas. The main concern among non-Venezuelans appears to be Hezbollah's established money-raising schemes.[75] One Venezuelan minister, Tareck Zaidan El Aissami, reportedly has trafficked drugs and also brought Hezbollah militants into his country, supplying them with passports and visas. This Latin state has a record of offering safe haven when certain militants have ideological favor. Colombian Marxist-Leninists of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia (FARC), a group known to take part in significant drug exports, and the National Liberation Army have often used the border areas of Venezuela as refuge, important during years when Colombian army operations have grown increasingly proficient and professional.[76] These patterns appeared to merge in the spring of 2020 when a former national assemblyman in Venezuela was indicted by U.S. authorities for being a liaison between that country, Hezbollah, and Latin criminal cartels including the FARC

[75] In 2019 both *Foreign Policy* magazine and the think tank CSIS published articles on Hezbollah operations in Venezuela, including Margarita Island. Diplomat Vanessa Neumann recognized this connection: "The two-track relationship with Iran and Hezbollah merged in 2007, when Nicolás Maduro (then foreign minister) and Rafael Issa (then vice minister for finance), joined by one translator, met with Hassan Nasrallah, the secretary general of Hezbollah, in Damascus. Afterwards, Nicolás Maduro flew to Tehran to join Chávez in his meeting with President Ahmadinejad. Here, a multitude of commercial ties were established, but dirty money was hidden among these broader commercial interests. IRGC opened subsidiaries in Venezuela that moved money through PDVSA (the Venezuelan state-run oil company), using it to enter the international financial system and evade sanctions. Chávez and Ahmadinejad became so close as to call each other 'brothers' and Chávez presented him with a replica of the Sword of Bolívar, a national symbol." Neumann, "The Funding of Terrorism (Part II)—Terrorist Financing Hidden among Commercial Ties: Venezuela, Iran and Hezbollah," *Strife* (blog), 5 August 2019.

[76] Michael Pompeo, "The OAS: Multilateralism that Works" (speech, Washington, DC, 17 January 2020). In 2013, Spain requested the extradition of an ETA Basque terrorist. Apparently, the two nations made a deal but then the captive was released, still within Venezuela. Cuba and Nicaragua similarly harbor ETA Basque militants. *Country Reports on Terrorism: 2013*, 116, 227–28, 274–75.

guerrillas. The legal charges in a U.S. federal court specifically include the Venezuelan's assistance with terrorist plots against U.S. targets.[77]

The close relationship between Iran and Hezbollah means they share opposition from international bodies, especially U.S.-led sanction efforts. Occasionally, the European Union (EU) speaks in unity, but they have often debated and disagreed over what kind of sanctions might be appropriate, usually coming down to whether the governmental body should bar Hezbollah as a whole or simply its "military" wing. As the political and military wings are too difficult to separate, the debate within the EU most often leaves the issue unresolved, if not within the individual states then certainly in the body's European Parliament in Strasbourg, France. It did proscribe or "list" the military side of Hezbollah as a terrorist threat in July 2013. More recently, European views of Hezbollah have been hardening. Britain named the entire party as a terror organization in 2019, with Germany following suit the next year, even going so far as to raid several mosques.[78]

The United Nations, for its part, is in a strong position to impose anti-Hezbollah or anti-Tehran sanctions, but a Russian veto threatens many such decisions, especially recently. A reorganization of the UN counterterrorism offices in 2017 has placed a Russian representative near the apex of the organization's bureaucracy.[79] Certain standing UN Security Council resolutions have firmly opposed the actions of Iran and Hezbollah in the region. For instance, UN Security Council Resolution 1701, which passed in 2006 after Hezbollah, according to UN General Secretary Kofi A. Annan, initiated a war by crossing into Israel, named no aggressors but demanded a cease-fire. It also emphasized that the Lebanese

[77] Alma Keshavarz and Robert J. Bunker, "Hybrid Criminal Cartel Note 1: Former Venezuelan National Assembly Member Adel El Zabayar Indicted on Charges of Narcoterrorism and Links to Hezbollah (Hizballah)," *Small Wars Journal*, 1 July 2020.

[78] Christopher F. Schuetze and Melissa Eddy, "Germany Tightens Limits on Hezbollah's Activities," *New York Times*, 1 May 2020, A.19. The story notes that Hezbollah's flag, often seen in the past in German demonstrations against Israel, will now be banned, apparently after the U.S. ambassador to Berlin had lobbied for the change.

[79] Separately in 2017, two Western diplomats, who asked to remain anonymous, expressed their worries about the future of UN counterterrorism work. One emphasized the problems of going forward under a senior Russian UN official. Telephone and in-person interviews with the author, Daniel K. Inouye Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies, Honolulu, HI, 2017.

military and the UN peacekeepers were the only legitimate armed forces there, that the governance and military reach of the Lebanese government must be enhanced, that no militias or private armies like Hezbollah could be armed by outsiders, and that no foreign country might ship arms into Lebanon except when ordered by its national government—an authority that Iran rarely worries about. Despite the UN demands, Hezbollah continues to receive shipments of weapons, including the rockets that have been fired at Israel's population centers, such as during the Lebanon–Israel War of 2006.

Today, the main inhibitor of the Iranian-Hezbollah axis is money. Lebanese sources are shrunk of late and the country's economy teeters on collapse. The international sanctions, especially successive rounds of American pressures that have become focused, direct, and effective, especially after 2016, have stifled the money flow Tehran can provide. Iran has suffered from the crimping of foreign oil sales and falling oil prices in international markets. Major political and social troubles at home have not helped Tehran's foreign involvements. There is now evidence that Iran has trimmed back some subsidies to its free-ranging Lebanese proxy.[80] Offsetting this success in weakening Hezbollah's hold through economic restrictions is the sharp decline in American combat operations in Iraq, where Iran was investing heavily, and in Syria, where Hezbollah has been bleeding freely for the Assad regime. In short, money may be less available to Iran and its proxy, but the pressing need for it has also diminished recently.

THIRD-LEVEL EXTENSIONS

One study on the IRGC described Soleimani, while acting as the head of its Quds Force, as "a surrogate puppeteer" who managed surrogates for

[80] Sly and Haidamous, "Sanctions on Iran are Hitting Hezbollah." Sly and Haidamous report, "The sanctions imposed late last year by Trump . . . have wiped $10 billion from Iranian revenue" and that Hezbollah sources quietly acknowledge their organization has felt the cuts in subsidies by Iran.

Iran.[81] Another study notes the job for Soleimani and the Quds Force, given its small size, was not to fight all of Iran's enemies but to "build a web of alliances across the spectrum of disenfranchised Shia communities to raise militias that would allow the Islamic Republic to externalize its burden of warfare."[82] The Badr Organization in Iraq and the Syrian People's Army are examples of such Iranian sponsorship. In 2014, Tehran responded to the rise of Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) Sunni strength with the creation of additional militias within the network of Popular Mobilization Units holding the ground in Iraq.

Hezbollah, however, is not merely another Iranian and Quds Force surrogate; Amin Tarzi calls it Iran's most important. After 40 years of experience and integration into Iranian foreign policy, Hezbollah members would, in prideful moments, likely think of their organization as Iran's partner. The organization's leaders can point to statements from Iranian figures to verify this position. The head of the IRGC's Aerospace Force once stated, "The IRGC and Hizbollah are a single apparatus jointed together."[83] As a result, the two are a conceptual challenge for an outside observer of proxy relations. The admitted subordinate is perhaps even more enthused about the relationship than is the larger power. Yet, both entities collaborate on a variety of regional aspirations while being individually involved in a global range of smaller, discrete missions, such as terrorism in Thailand and Western Europe.[84]

Has Hezbollah spawned its own proxies? It would not do so without Iranian knowledge. If it does, it might have Tehran's hearty approval. A few authorities, academic and governmental, have determined that

[81] O'Hern, *Iran's Revolutionary Guard*, 72–73, 85–114. In early 1999, Soleimani assumed control of the Guards from Ahmad Vahidi, who was indicted by Argentina for a bombing. Soleimani ran the Guards until his death in Iraq on 3 January 2020.
[82] Krieg and Rickli, *Surrogate Warfare*, 177.
[83] Quoted in *Country Reports on Terrorism: 2014* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, 2015), 286.
[84] Often there is evidence of this pattern in Europe. In 2013, Bosnia ejected two Iranian diplomats thought to be agents of intelligence service MOIS. One of them had been in a number of foreign countries, such as India, Georgia, and Thailand, in which there had been relevant bombing plots.

Hezbollah has become so advanced in its operations that it is now semi-independently training other terrorists.

Hezbollah provides explicit aid to Shia militias inside Iraq, where a U.S. coalition has sought to see the election through and strengthening of democratic governments that might hold with a people now badly divided by geography, ethnicity, and faith. It is well-known that Iran controls certain primarily Shia militias there as well. One of these is Kata'ib Hezbollah, described as "an elite Shia paramilitary group in Iraq modeled on the Quds Force and founded by a senior Badr Corps operative with links to Soleimani."[85] The Badr Corps in Iraq, a Quds Force foreign beneficiary, helped found a new militia there with support from Soleimani. Another case of this third-level phenomenon may be visible at the Sayyida Zaynab shrine in Syria. As of several years ago, it was under the protection of a militia raised by local Iranian recruiters. These volunteers "are being trained and paid by the *Basij* and Hezbollah fighters to execute an essential religious duty." So, Hezbollah, now a mature expert, has been training a subordinate in martial work, with the aid of the IRGC's mass-militia arm, the *Basij*.[86] Having existed since the Iranian Revolution, the militia model represented by the *Basij* is now being exported, expanding its reach abroad, and now contributes to the training of others in urban combat basics.[87] The larger point here is that Hezbollah instructors are training Syrians and Iraqis.[88]

The U.S. State Department has also taken notice of Hezbollah's extension into "training the trainer." At the height of the insurgency following the Iraq War, the department reported that Hezbollah itself, alongside Quds Force, was training Iraqi fighters facing the U.S. and the coalition forces:

> Despite its pledge to support Iraq's stabilization, Iran trained, funded, and provided guidance to Iraqi Shia militant groups. The IRGC-Quds Force, in concert with Hizballah, provided

[85] Krieg and Rickli, *Surrogate Warfare*, 179.
[86] Krieg and Rickli, *Surrogate Warfare*, 180.
[87] Krieg and Rickli, *Surrogate Warfare*, 180.
[88] Krieg and Rickli, *Surrogate Warfare*, 184.

> training outside of Iraq as well as advisors inside Iraq for Shia militants in the construction and use of sophisticated improvised explosive device technology and other advanced weaponry. Similar to Hizballah fighters, many of these trained Shia militants then use these skills to fight for the Asad regime in Syria, often at the behest of Iran.[89]

In 2013, the State Department reported something additional and less predictable: "Hezbollah provides support to several Palestinian terrorist organizations, as well as a number of local Christian and Muslim militias in Lebanon. Besides overt political support, support includes the covert provision of weapons, explosives, training, funding, and guidance."[90] In short, several of the Lebanese militias—including Christians—are routinely getting Hezbollah support. The ability of "dispossessed" Shia in Lebanon to tender such assistance points back to the never-ending flow of major aid from Tehran.

During four decades, hopeful observers have looked to certain rising individuals in Iran as signs of coming reform, a hope that has always outpaced the realities. This desire suffered a major blow in June 2021 with the election of Ebrahim Raisi, a cleric recognized as being among the most hard-line of the hard-liners, to Iran's presidency. Neither Iran's foreign policy generally, its development and use of proxies, nor its conduct of warfare in peacetime is likely to change much, or be diverted by the kind of domestic unrest Iran experienced in the fall of 2022. What the world community can do is better understand Tehran's policy and strategy in order to try to better blunt its cutting edge.

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[89] *Country Reports on Terrorism: 2013*, 229.

[90] *Country Reports on Terrorism: 2012*, 231–32. Similar language appears in *Country Reports on Terrorism: 2008* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, 2009), 300; and *Country Reports on Terrorism: 2011* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, 2012), 235.

The Limits and Prospects of Proxy Warfare in Peacetime

A mass of new literature has appeared exploring proxy relations.[1] While these explorations vary in strength, some of the authors errantly suggest this political structure is a new phenomenon. But this is untrue, as the Cold War case studies in this volume show. Most of the recent studies also sidestep a category of questions that many world leaders *would* find important to their daily considerations of strategies for advancing their national interests, questions and concerns that leave states with doubts about making war in peacetime as well as using proxies to do it.[2] If Russia can snatch Crimea from Ukraine through such "gray area" activities, why then are such strategies not far more common?

The answers lie in a range of sensible reservations of strategy makers. They often see proxy war not as a cost-free, clever solution to a problem but rather as dangerous, inefficient, or outright counterproduc-

[1] A half-dozen new books on proxy war indicates the outflow of literature, a pattern underscored in this volume's collection of footnotes. Examples are Tyrone L. Groh, *Proxy War: The Least Bad Option* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2019); Andreas Krieg and Jean-Marc Rickli, *Surrogate Warfare: The Transformation of War in the Twenty-First Century* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2019); and Nick Turse, *Tomorrow's Battlefield: US Proxy Wars and Secret Ops in Africa* (Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2015).

[2] In one recent journal article, authors note the problems of sponsoring a proxy, arguing that "proxies may pursue divergent goals; divert resources according to their own preferences; engage in uncooperative behavior; devote suboptimal effort; or even switch sides and/or turn against their benefactors." Michel Wyss and Assaf Moghadam, "The Power of Proxies: Why Nonstate Actors Use Local Surrogates," *International Security* 44, no. 4 (Spring 2020): 127.

tive as an approach to a problem. Capitals have good reasons to restrain themselves from employing proxy activities more often, which means the academic literature may be inflating the chances of a new wave of ever-greater irresponsibility and lawless action by sovereign states. This idea of an increase may be a fallacy; world leaders will more likely face actions that will not exceed what the world knew during the Cold War. What follows is a survey of seven of the leading reasons for the self-restraint of states.

First, stronger states may have **larger concerns** preventing them from taking up a relationship with a violent proxy overseas. A challenging fact of foreign policy making is that any given state has numerous and competing concerns, many times including grounds for avoiding questionable proxy relationships. For instance, it must anger the Maoist New People's Army (NPA) in the Philippines, that China does not provide aid beyond perhaps quiet rhetorical support, which may be all Beijing allows. Now a half-century old, this Filipino insurgent army has been an overachiever in its self-assumed duty in protracted warfare against Manila. Yet, China is not exporting violent revolutionary ideas, due to having other plans.[3] Since the mid-1970s, Beijing's lead interest is in state-to-state relations, making support to revolutionaries a likely embarrassment and obstacle to other ends. If the Communist Party in China tenders any support to the NPA, it is certainly too little to prevent the Philippine Maoists from fading. Despite having a wide popular base, the group's numbers have fallen to perhaps 3,500 guerrillas, although the NPA's power could expand significantly even with limited

[3] Mao Zedong, Lin Biao, and other Beijing officials were once renowned for "exporting" revolutionary ideology to Third World countries through speeches, writings, and broad programs of training pro-Beijing activists and militants, from journalists to army officers. One of their political pilgrims, Abimael Guzman, founded the Peruvian Maoist group, Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path). For more, see Julia Lovell, *Maoism: A Global History* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 2019); and Christopher C. Harmon, "Book Review: *Maoism: A Global History* by Julia Lovell," Institute of World Politics, May 2021, audiocast.

material aid from China.[4] It is evident that Beijing's options include using the NPA as another pressure point while also pursuing Filipino sympathies, but China has declined to help the NPA substantively or arm it as a proxy. For analysts, this inaction should be revealing.

An older and no less fascinating example is the end of international Communist aid to the Greek guerrillas, terrorists, and party members, who held strong positions in the Greek countryside at the conclusion of World War II. They had approximately 23,000 armed guerrillas and a dash of legitimacy earned while fighting to expel the Axis occupation forces, but the initial strength of Soviet state sponsorship soon flagged. It appears multiple reasons may have led to this decision. First, Premier Joseph Stalin took seriously the "percentages agreement" made with Winston S. Churchill in Moscow in October 1944, which promised the West as much as 90 percent influence in Greece after the war. Second, Stalin decided that the Marshall Plan aid program for Greece was working. Third, the Communist bloc cross-border support to their Greek comrades drew more attention than any "covert" program should. Finally, some combination of these factors could have caused the Soviets to limit their support. Stalin irritated the Greek Communists by not providing generous aid, leaving that program mainly to the Yugoslavs. Then, Stalin also split with Josef Broz Tito of Yugoslavia, which led Tito to seal off his borders in July 1949.[5] Bulgaria might have saved the day but, not surprisingly, backed out as Stalin did, causing the Greek insurgents to dry up

[4] This assessment is the author's, based on study of the insurgents during years as a counterterrorism course director at the Daniel K. Inouye Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies, Honolulu (ending July 2018). My sources include visits to the Philippines, reading their newspapers and think-tank reports, consultations with Filipino officers who have fought NPA, and talks with American experts including Al Santoli. The figure of 3,500 is an estimate of armed fighters; many hundreds of thousands more persons are unarmed supporters of the NPA and/or its political fronts, the so-called mass base.

[5] On Communist state relations to the Greek guerrilla army, see Robert B. Asprey, *War in the Shadows: The Guerrilla in History*, 2 vols. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975), 2:740–43; and Nicholas Gage, *Eleni* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1983), 156, 318–19. A short account may be found in Ian F. W. Beckett, *Encyclopedia of Guerrilla Warfare* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1999), 84–85. Asprey's volumes were ambitious to the point of daring and superb compendia of information. Four decades later, Max Boot made a similar broad effort, but he only included a few sentences on the Greek Civil War. See Boot, *Invisible Armies: An Epic History of Guerrilla Warfare from Ancient Times to the Present* (New York: Liveright Publishing, 2013).

instead of flowering. This result was a Western victory over an Eastern Bloc proxy strategy due to the success of a democratic internationalist enterprise that featured a Churchill visit to Athens during Christmas in 1944, American military aid to the Greek government after that, and robust economic and political support from the West.[6]

Fear of exposure is a second consideration that restrains proxy activity. A great state may count propriety of action as among its leading attributes. A small state clings to its pride in sovereignty. Substate actors, such as insurgents who take foreign aid, risk delegitimization. The latter's posture either has to be a loud and proud declaration justifying the foreign liaison or it has to be entirely covert. Trying to run down the middle of that gauntlet may leave ugly bruises, as in the case of the Ronald W. Reagan and White House aid to Nicaraguan Contras. It began in secret to the point that even today one has difficulty establishing which neighboring countries were helping Washington. It gradually became an open program that Congress debated and authorized before appropriating aid, although its members would refight over the same grounds each session. When Congress later barred aid once again, the executive branch continued covert efforts. The program never received universal support either in Congress or in the arena of public opinion. Each time another veil was yanked away, the administration's project looked increasingly suspect to some Americans.

At the same time, the Reagan administration executed different aid programs for Polish Solidarity and the Afghan mujahideen. Both of these had bold support for the policy ends of the foreign anti-Communist fighters and public votes in Congress, but the programs used covert means of delivery. Reagan, Secretary of State George Shultz, and some others were proficient at clandestine distribution and the recipients were

[6] Winston S. Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy*, vol. 6, *The Second World War* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1953), 247–83.

less controversial than armed Central Americans. Aid to such activists and freedom fighters helped Reagan win the Cold War.[7]

Concern about control is a regular and natural feature of practices of power, and a third factor in considerations of leaders. For any state, uncertainty that it will remain in control of a subordinate may cause them to approach proxy possibilities with restraint. Self-interest is powerful and even a weaker party may be exceptionally assertive or, at least, more active for its own interests than for those of the bigger player.[8] Said differently, everyone loves the idea of going to the humane society to bring home a needy dog, but the wise customer assesses whether they can control that dog. For a big, stubborn beast, the leash may merely become the way the feisty canine moves the "owner" about the street. Likewise, when a state is considering a proxy, it is hoping for an instrument it can command.

In counterinsurgencies, arming the population is one strategy for knocking down revolutionaries and their guerrilla forces, but what if populists with new weapons go rogue? This danger—not just lack of imagination or initiative—keeps governments from arming populations, even when counterinsurgency is a manpower-heavy enterprise. During the demanding French counterinsurgency war against the National Liberation Front (FLN) in Algeria in the 1950s and early 1960s, a commander

[7] Left-of-center analysts would disagree with the author's analysis here. For instance, see Beth A. Fischer, *The Myth of Triumphalism: Rethinking President Reagan's Cold War Legacy* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2020). For their part, some conservative analysts may be more cautious than the author about the favorable impact Reagan Doctrine aid to anti-Communist fighters had related to the Soviet Union. See Douglas E. Streusand, Norman A. Bailey, and Francis H. Marlo, eds., *The Grand Strategy that Won the Cold War: Architecture of Triumph* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2016), 108–9; and Francis H. Marlo, *Planning Reagan's War: Conservative Strategists and America's Cold War Victory* (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2012). Both books take a grand strategy approach and emphasize numerous factors in Reagan's success. In the latter, Dr. Marlo notes the "aggressive and largely successful use of covert action during the Reagan administration" with a good deal of credit to CIA director William Casey. Marlo, *Planning Reagan's War*, 158.

[8] Ilich Ramírez Sánchez (a.k.a. Carlos the Jackal) is an example of an agent challenging to control. Sánchez spent much time in Moscow and Eastern Europe, as well as Middle Eastern states with Soviet Bloc connections, such as Yemen and Libya. A Stasi document from May 1979 shows he was a frequent if "difficult" guest for East German authorities. Indeed, everything known about the man in the 1970s indicates he was impulsive, arrogant, and violent. The Soviet Bloc found him highly useful, however. Today, he is in a Paris jail.

in the rival Algerian National Movement (MNA) named Mohammed Bellounis emerged as a power player. As the French worked with him, including lavishly supplying his forces with military equipment, he came to lead some 2,000 locals in the fight against the FLN. Eventually, Bellounis became uncontrollable as his power swelled, and he turned against the French. Events surrounding his demise remain somewhat mysterious; a leading theory is that his end came at the hands of the French rather than his Algerian enemies. The tale of Bellounis had recalled all the anxieties of the story of Frankenstein, writes historian Alistair Horne.[9]

Decades later, in Peru, the pattern played out more favorably for its national government. *Sendero Luminoso* (Shining Path), a Maoist organization there, had achieved control of some one-third of the countryside by the early 1980s. In response, debates ensued in Lima about whether the government should arm some local populations, including what types of weapons, what training was required, and who might run the program. In the end, the government armed many peasants eager to fight back against the *Sendero* forces. Their new shotguns were valued and effective, in part due to the Shining Path's columns usually having limited and poor weapons. American journalists and scholars have hardly noticed the program, but it combined the best aspects of "people's war," popular psychology, and democratic idealism versus brutal insurgents inspired by a Maoist doctrine foreign to Peru, its culture, and its Catholicism. The peasant militias on the government side, called *rondas*, helped defeat revolutionaries who had killed tens of thousands.[10]

A fourth factor is weighing proxy options in **costs**. The costs for owning or leasing a proxy are inevitable. They often escalate. And the length

[9] Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria, 1954–1962* (New York: Viking Press, 1977), 222, 258. Horne also tells of another Algerian commander on the French side. Horne, *A Savage War of Peace*, 223–25. Tens of thousands of Algerians—*harkis*—fought beside the French. With defeat in 1962, they were massacred or driven into exile by their FLN countrymen.

[10] The best English-language treatment of such programs in Peru is a work based on field research: Mario Fumerton, *From Victims to Heroes: Peasant Counter-Rebellion and Civil War in Ayacucho, Peru, 1980–2000* (Amsterdam, Netherlands: Rozenberg, 2002). An even more important factor than self-defense militias in the defeat of Shining Path was the capture of their leader in 1992 by local police, a rare case of successful decapitation, often discussed in the author's public lectures, beginning in 2003, on "How Terrorist Groups End."

of the commitment to a proxy can devolve into an endless stream of requests for more money and resources. This is often at the expense of other accounts or priorities of the nation that is supporting the proxy.

Hezbollah's costs are huge, from maintaining continuous social services to managing Al-Manar television facilities. Lebanese Shia, who initially called themselves "the oppressed," cannot pay even half of those bills, let alone the full cost. Iran pays, but it is under severe long-term sanctions, tightened in April 2019 by the Donald J. Trump administration.[11] The *Washington Post* then reported that salaries to Hezbollah members and their expense accounts suffered cuts.[12] This result is why so many cabinet officials, including the secretaries of State and Treasury, willingly implemented multiple rounds of new economic sanctions, including some at low tactical levels, a fine-grained approach that named individuals. In the last two decades, executive branch sanctions have become a commonplace tool of American foreign policy.[13] No matter their party, U.S. officials see the utility, as well as the good public relations, in using this means as opposed to other parts of the grand strategy model, such as violence or imposing sweeping blockades that make civilians suffer.

Fear of being entrapped or bogged down is a fifth concern prompting sage considerations in world capitals. The fear may lead a state to act alone, find overt credible partners, or do nothing, but no matter the situation, they regularly avoid proxy relationships. It is well known that the United States worried about becoming bogged down in Indochina—Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia—after the French withdrawal in 1954, but it eventually found itself in a multitheater war that always

[11] Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, Special Envoy Brian Hook, and Counterterrorism Coordinator Nathan A. Sales, "Secretary of State Pompeo New Briefing," C-SPAN, 15 April 2019, video, 28:30. Christopher C. Harmon, "Iran as Competitor: Measured, Violent, Relentless," Brute Krulak Center for Innovation and Future Warfare, 6 May 2019.

[12] Liz Sly and Suzan Haidamous, "Trump's Sanctions on Iran Are Hitting Hezbollah, and It Hurts," *Washington Post*, 19 May 2019.

[13] Juan C. Zarate, *Treasury's War: The Unleashing of a New Era of Financial Warfare* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2013). Zarate has served in relevant federal bureaucracies—specifically the National Security Council, the Department of Treasury, and the Department of Justice—and both witnessed and took part in some of these changes.

seemed to escalate and demand more soldiers, more bombs, and more money. Within that larger picture, U.S. decision makers had an important corner of proxy war. Over time, American special forces and intelligence agents in Laos made strong bonds with the Hmong people through security agreements, official liaisons, and personal friendships. The Hmong tended to share American distaste for Communism and opposed hosting the North Vietnamese troops Hanoi poured into their country as did many Laotians.[14] Yet, the relationship, while politically and militarily useful, brought the United States a significant problem. As allied military efforts collapsed in 1975, all three Indochinese nations became Communist, leaving America with a major question about their Hmong proxies. In departing the region, Americans could have little doubt about the impending humanitarian crisis. Their withdrawal resulted in large numbers of the Hmong community fleeing to Thailand—a manageable but difficult situation—and leaving behind numberless local victims among the Hmong.

Sixth, **legal and moral restraints** hold back many but not all capitals. If a state is truly great—not just powerful—it will be protective of its own virtue and wary of enterprises that could ruin its reputation.

At the height of the Reagan Doctrine and its aid to anti-Communist fighters overseas in the mid-1980s, the author learned firsthand the place of moral restraint as a congressional staffer for James A. Courter (R-NJ). With newspaper clippings, research reports, and "Dear Colleague" letters by other representatives handed to his boss on the House floor accumulated on the author's desk, the staffer found himself in a position to make a moral and prudential choice. Courter's office supported anti-Communist guerrillas in Afghanistan, Nicaragua, and Angola. Many

[14] As many as 70,000 North Vietnamese fought in Laos at the height of the war, while the U.S. covert operation aided some 30,000 indigenous tribal Laotians resisting these invaders. William Colby, with James McCargar, *Lost Victory: A Firsthand Account of America's Sixteen-Year Involvement in Vietnam* (Chicago, IL: Contemporary Books, 1989), 193–204.

activists supporting Reagan and this agenda wanted to expand the American umbrella to protect and help the RENAMO rebels in Mozambique.[15]

Members of Congress and foreign affairs staffers throughout the House office buildings were getting invested, especially because the standing government in Mozambique was a Soviet Bloc proxy and wholly undesirable to many in Mozambique.[16] Almost as if by laws of physics, a U.S. official who committed to helping Angolan freedom fighters could strengthen their position by investing in Mozambiquans fighting the same Communist masters, but these Americans faced a considerable barrier—human rights. RENAMO guerrillas had the worst record of any insurgency the author studied at that time. They constantly and openly broke the codes of the Geneva Convention whereas others taking U.S. aid at least advertised to the outside world a commitment to international law, avoiding civilian targets. RENAMO seemed to the staffer (the author) to be brawlers, not an army, and if Washington were to extend assistance, even nonlethal aid, then the United States inherited all of RENAMO's baggage. The staffer finally made his choice and submitted a modest policy memo to Representative Courter, advising him to "stay out of this one." Courter did indeed stay clear of aiding RENAMO, disappointing some of his congressional allies, but the decision seemed defensible and was probably right.[17] Yet, the U.S. government's refusal to aid RENAMO meant that Mozambique remained under Communist control. And this stance potentially undercut U.S. efforts in Angola to protect Jonas Savimbi and UNITA, which eventually lost their fight. If taking a proxy has a cost, not taking one may also have costs.

A further and seventh reason for which a state may restrain its desire to take on a proxy is the great **physical risk for the sponsor**. Vio-

[15] The FRELIMO party and Soviet sponsors ran Mozambique's government and Alfonso Dhlakama and RENAMO challenged it. This fighting resulted in anarchy in parts of the country and "atrocities on both sides." *Foreign Report* (London: *The Economist*), 6 November 1986, 6–7.
[16] See chap. 4 on the U.S. debates on southern Africa, as well as Neil A. Lewis, "Bid to Have U.S. Back Mozambique Rebels Halted," *New York Times*, 16 March 1987, and two features on Mozambique in the *Journal of Defense & Diplomacy* (November 1986).
[17] For some of James A. Courter's work on national security issues, including the Reagan Doctrine, see Courter, *Defending Democracy*, ed. Marc Lipsitz (Washington, DC: American Studies Center, 1986).

lence at arm's length may seem safer. But sponsoring a guerrilla army or terror group could lead an offended state to respond with anything from launching punitive raids to declaring outright war.

Perhaps because it is a rival to Colombia and certainly due to its socialist politics, the government of Venezuela has permitted refuge to the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). After 2002, three linked FARC fronts used the neighboring country to train, hide out, and work on logistical issues. Such safe haven is an incalculable advantage to an insurgency and a great burden for the sovereign state under attack. To allow sanctuary to a violent group is, of course, contrary to traditional international law, and President Hugo Chavez was bringing grave danger to his country. In 2008, Colombian forces executed a raid on a FARC camp in Ecuador that resulted in the capture of priceless computer files proving direct linkages between the FARC and Venezuela's Chavez government as well as FARC movements and drug trafficking that could only go on with Venezuelan security forces' assistance. In short, both bordering countries exposed themselves by accepting the FARC's presence, suffering some punishment when Bogota made well-directed strikes into the two nations in response. Many other nations fumed about the violence.[18] In Bogota, authorities saw the strikes as corrective to insurgent violence and reaffirmation of international law against substate aggression. Bogota was not being reckless and lawless; it was restoring a sense of law and boundaries.

The United States, under President Franklin D. Roosevelt, passed Neutrality Acts that elaborated on this principle of traditional international law. These pieces of legislation did not allow a group of private citizens to make war abroad. It is a duty inherent in state sovereignty to restrain that behavior by its citizens. Similarly, a core principle of the Geneva Conventions is that martial activity is supposed to be under prop-

[18] Jeremy McDermott, "Foreign Exchange: The FARC and Venezuela," *Jane's Intelligence Review* (October 2011), 20–24. Reaction was strong in Venezuela and Ecuador, as examples, while Nicaragua threatened to break relations with Colombia. Diplomats termed this a *crisis* for several days. See also the discussions at the Organization of American States, "Colombia-Ecuador Situation: Insulza Says Crisis Should Be Resolved on the Basis of Governing Coexistence Principles," press release, 3 March 2008.

er authority, which would not often include substate actors. The United States has accordingly jailed various right-wing Cubans for committing violence against Communists on the island. Anti-Castro groups, such as Alpha 66 and Omega 7, have had members serving behind bars for serious sentences in the United States. On the same principle, Havana fiercely criticized U.S. authorities for failing to take action against Cuban exile Luis Posada Carriles, who was the prime suspect of a hideous airline bombing that killed 73 innocent Cuban citizens in 1976 and admitted to the 1997 bombings of Cuban hotels intended to dissuade tourism from aiding that economy. Havana held Washington responsible for Carriles's terrorism, claiming that he was a long-time U.S. intelligence asset. He was an infinite source of bilateral tensions between the two capitals before his death in May 2018. While Carriles served several years in a Texas jail, he never received the lengthy federal sentence that authorities in Cuba demanded.[19]

A CLOSING WORD

This volume yields several conceptions worthy of the attention of general readers as well as military professionals. This study explores both warfare in peacetime and the use of proxies in such warfare. Both have been common, as illustrated by the case studies here. The Kurdish fighters who have battled the Islamic State would make another good example, especially because they have a spotty relationship with the United States as a sponsor and have faced outright hostility from Turkey, an increasingly atypical member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Interested scholars should also consider the Taliban as a topic for future study. These self-described "students" of a Sunni extremism that was rarely characteristic of Afghanistan previously came to rule most of that country by the late 1990s. Taliban rule returned in 2021. Their strategy for attaining power both times was one of relentless warfare in military, political, religious, and cultural arenas. Yet, publicly, they employed a traditional approach to guerrilla war—fighting a protracted war while

[19] A detailed obituary on Carriles appeared as "Luisa Posada Carriles, Who Waged Quest to Oust Castro, Dies at 90," *New York Times*, 23 May 2018.

enticing and engaging U.S. negotiators in peace talks throughout 2020 and 2021. Additionally, the Taliban acts, by degrees, as the proxy of the neighboring state of Pakistan.

In contemporary terms, these types of conflicts are now sometimes labeled the *gray zone*. The varying contests, struggles, and fights studied here are each to be found on the spectrum between war and peace, usually somewhere between open and veiled violence. For democratic statesmen and military decision makers, this reality is a clash between what they see in the world and the vision they have for a future where peace is the norm and fighting the exception. This struggle between idealism and reality is very old. In the thirteenth century, Italian friar and philosopher Thomas Aquinas systematized the idea of just war principles, combining Aristotelianism with Roman Catholicism and underscoring the difference between war and peace. Swiss lawyer Emer de Vattel further emphasized the difference in his treatise *The Law of Nations* in 1758.[20] The Geneva Summit of June 2021 freshened everyone's sense of tension between ideals and realities. As the parlay ended, President Joseph R. Biden Jr. spoke at length about his conversation with Russian leader Vladimir Putin, emphasizing the norms of international behavior. Skeptical members of the American press, however, kept asking Biden whether Russian behavior would change, on which he declined to promise an outcome. Similarly, they queried what the United States would do about Russia's pattern of breaching international norms, through its part in assassinations, making irregular war, and committing cyberattacks. The dictator declines to adhere to international norms, though he knows them.

American Marines have been hearing a subtle new theme discussed at the edges of their military doctrine. It does not reject just war theory, Western tradition, or the aspiration for peace. Instead, it emphasizes that practitioners, especially great power rivals like contemporary China and Russia, often draw no firm line between war and peace. They are constantly fighting subtle forms of warfare, often via proxies. For instance,

[20] Emer de Vattel, *The Law of Nations*, LF ed. (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 1797).

a semicivilian merchant marine, taking military direction from authorities in Beijing, presses for gains at the forward edge in the South China Sea at the expense of Vietnam, the Philippines, and indeed any state that respects traditional international law. Likewise, ambiguous "little green men" working for Moscow erode what remains of the sovereignty of eastern Ukraine while Crimea in the west was wholly lost in 2014. Groping for a new approach, the U.S. Defense Department has issued two new doctrinal papers meant to prompt new thoughts and initiate new kinds of planning and expectations.

While the Marines do have before them a new manual released in 2020, a short "Doctrine Note" from the Joint Chiefs of Staff first distributed in 2019 provides a stronger sense of the new line of thinking.[21] It describes a world not so much bifurcated into peace or war but instead showing "a mixture of cooperation, competition below armed conflict, and armed conflict." That competition below the level of open war tends to be protracted with more indirect actions. Although such means may not get quick results, American officers may use them to gain a competitive edge and, whether or not they do, professionals should expect belligerents and rivals of the United States to employ such methods. Therefore, war, competition, and even deterrence are upon a continuum as explored in chapter one. The ensuing combinations can come in any number:

> Mixed armed conflict occurs when parts of the conflict are international in character, while other parts are non-international in character. An example would be an armed conflict where a state is simultaneously engaged in hostilities with a rebel or resistance movement and with another state supporting that movement.[22]

[21] For more on the manual, see *Competing*, Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 1-4 (Washington, DC: Headquarters Marine Corps, 2020).
[22] *Competition Continuum*, Joint Doctrine Note 1-19 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, 2019), 3.

A very different case, in the spirit of contemporary U.S. discussions about Russia in some forums, might be a relationship consisting of general competition, including even military contacts, alongside the preservation of aspects of cooperation. Authors of the doctrinal note recall the difficulties of U.S.–USSR relations in the latter years of World War II, during which deep differences and even antagonism were balanced by open cooperation against the forces of fascism. That brief practical alliance between Moscow and Washington might raise a query as to whether any new grounds of limited cooperation might be found now, to balance the evident and dangerous competitive spirit of the present, and to strengthen the U.S. hand against the larger threat of Beijing.

The doctrinal note prudently warns that this competition continuum brings challenges for understanding as well as problems for applying the law of war as published in the manuals. Operators may be directed to take actions to "degrade" an enemy whereas the person receiving such an order might be more comfortable with actions meant to "defeat" the enemy. A strategist may be urged to "manage" a problem that in fact might seem best avoided or solved. It also exhorts all professionals to think in terms of competition and marginal gains: "In enduring competitions, the joint force does not win or lose but is in the process of winning or losing."[23] Such language was anathema to some generations of warriors. Supposedly, the lesson of Vietnam was "no half measures" and Secretary of Defense Caspar W. Weinberger's "Six Principles" of 1986 captured that spirit, ordaining that if any deployment is made it must be done "wholeheartedly and with the clear intention of winning."[24] Regardless of his argument, Weinberger followed most of Reagan's policies and strategy that focused on degrading Soviet strength and political prestige with support of protracted foreign guerrilla wars, which eventually became a successful U.S. strategy, despite losses it brought to allied or proxy forces. In the wake of the Soviet defeat, U.S. doctrine for *Military*

[23] *Competition Continuum*, 3.
[24] "The Uses of Military Force," Frontline, PBS Television, n.d.

Operations Other Than War briefly highlighted "support to insurgency" as one of the many possible missions that American forces might be given.[25]

In the case studies explored here, some parties committed half-heartedly to proxy relationships while others go as far as using foreign partners or proxies instead of citizen soldiers. These seven case studies include many an actor that was committed to less than victory, usually resulting in them parlaying, or even withdrawing, when the price of the fight seemed too high. In the language of Carl von Clausewitz, these studies have been about "limited war." These conflicts consist of a different character than "unlimited" war, which, in turn, falls far short of the Prussian's abstract idea of "absolute war" where, at the same moment, both belligerents throw everything they have at one another. Limited war by proxy is no tame animal and may grow into a larger and uglier beast. But limited wars are more common—thankfully—than the others, and they are often kept limited by rational managers who are as wary of risk as they are desirous of gain.

[25] *Joint Doctrine for Military Operations Other than War*, Joint Publication 3-07 (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1995), III-15.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Christopher C. Harmon studied history at Seattle University and went on to Claremont Graduate School to pursue international relations and political philosophy. Years of service as a legislative aide for foreign policy to a member of the U.S. House Armed Services Committee were followed by four years on the strategy and policy faculty of the Naval War College, Newport, RI. Dr. Harmon became a professor of international relations at Marine Corps University, later holding three of its academic chairs: the Adamson on insurgency and terrorism (2005–7); the Horner on military theory (2010–14); and the Bren on great power competition (2018–21). He is lead author or editor of seven previous books, including *The Citizen's Guide to Terrorism & Counterterrorism* (2d ed. 2021). Dr. Harmon has written essays or articles for the *Marine Corps University Journal* (now the *Journal of Advanced Military Studies*), the *Fletcher Forum of World Affairs, Orbis, Strategic Studies Quarterly, Oxford Bibliographies*, and Cambridge University Press. He is on the board of academic advisors to the International Churchill Societies and serves on editorial boards for two terrorism journals. Uniquely, Harmon has directed graduate-level counterterrorism studies at both the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies (Germany) and the Daniel K. Inouye Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies (Hawaii). He is a distinguished fellow of the Brute Krulak Center for Innovation and Future Warfare in Quantico, VA, and a professor at the Institute of World Politics in Washington, DC.

Dr. Christopher C. Harmon's *Warfare in Peacetime*: *Proxies and State Powers* discusses low-intensity conflicts and the use of proxies by nations that wish to advance their interests during eras of relative peace. Harmon explores Cold War-era proxies, such as the USSR and Cuba, to more contemporary topics like India and the Tamil Tigers. Other areas of research include Iran and Hezbollah, the Reagan Doctrine and Nicaragua, and thought-provoking topics on proxy wars. *Warfare in Peacetime* will serve as an illuminating book on the ever-present subject of proxy wars.

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