



**Calhoun: The NPS Institutional Archive**  
**DSpace Repository**

---

Faculty and Researchers

Faculty and Researchers' Publications

---

2010

State Security Policy and Proxy Wars in Africa  
Ultima Ratio Regum 1 : Remix or Redux?;  
Strategic Insights, v. 9, issue 1  
(Spring-Summer 2010) ; pp. 30-64.

Craig, Dylan

Monterey, California. Naval Postgraduate School

---

Strategic Insights, v.9, issue 1 (Spring-Summer 2010)  
<http://hdl.handle.net/10945/11512>

---

This publication is a work of the U.S. Government as defined in Title 17, United States Code, Section 101. Copyright protection is not available for this work in the United States.

*Downloaded from NPS Archive: Calhoun*



Calhoun is the Naval Postgraduate School's public access digital repository for research materials and institutional publications created by the NPS community. Calhoun is named for Professor of Mathematics Guy K. Calhoun, NPS's first appointed -- and published -- scholarly author.

**Dudley Knox Library / Naval Postgraduate School**  
**411 Dyer Road / 1 University Circle**  
**Monterey, California USA 93943**

<http://www.nps.edu/library>

## State Security Policy and Proxy Wars in Africa

### *Ultima Ratio Regum*<sup>[1]</sup>: Remix or Redux?

Dylan Craig

#### Introduction

In this article, I am concerned with wartime alliances between states and armed nonstate actors, particularly in Africa. Heterogeneous military partnerships of this kind occur throughout the historical record. Louis XIV of France, whose aphorism about war and the state provides the title of this article, was an enthusiastic user of his enemies' enemies;<sup>[2]</sup> but so was Medieval England with its Viking honor guard of 'Thingmen',<sup>[3]</sup> and so are the U.S. armed forces, whose Tribal Engagement Strategy in Afghanistan involves harnessing sub-state tribal actors to state-level reconstruction and security goals.<sup>[4]</sup>

Amidst this long history of states using nonstates in war, the practice seems to have found its fullest expression in independent Africa. 70 percent of all conflicts producing more than 25 annual battlefield deaths in Africa since 1946, and 100 percent of the conflicts producing more than 1,000 deaths, involved an alliance including one or more nonstate combatant factions.<sup>[5]</sup> These numbers have generated media outcries (such as those aimed at the Sudanese government's use of the *Janjaweed*), and a variety of tight-focus studies of *particular* partnerships at *specific* points of time,<sup>[6]</sup> but little in the way of synthetic work aimed at theorizing the phenomenon as a *category of war in itself*. Why is this?

Part of the blame must be attributed to our scholarly and professional inability to think our way out of the state-centered corner into which our understandings of war have painted us. By this, I mean that although we know very well how war came to be dominated by states,<sup>[7]</sup> we are less sure of what direction the reversal of this monopoly will take, or is taking.

A broad class of literature has grown up around the question, 'What will the wars of the future look like, once states are no longer the only ones fighting?' Mary Kaldor's 'New War' thesis<sup>[8]</sup> is a well-known member of the class, as are the cluster of works dealing with the 'Revolution in Military Affairs' (RMA). However; as I have discussed elsewhere,<sup>[9]</sup> while these models are fine as far as they go, they tend either to focus entirely on powerful, legally constituted evolving-state-at-war (in the case of RMA), or dispense with it entirely by focusing on wars in which the state is a blown-out shell inhabited by violent scavengers and warlords (New War).

Yet in Africa, and perhaps increasingly across the world, the empirical evidence seems to suggest continual rather than stark dipoles between states maintaining their monopoly on

violence by adapting its techniques, or losing their monopoly entirely: rather than learning to fight ‘smarter’ wars of sabotage and counter-sabotage (as called for in the ‘network war’/RMA doctrine), states sometimes outsource this work to non-states. And while the state patrons are often weaker relative to their allies than the superpowers were during the Cold War, perhaps even reaching the status of ‘failed states’, they are not helpless bystanders to war. Instead, they leverage what strengths they do have (such as access to the global market) to make themselves an attractive military partner for the non-states in question, and conduct war in that manner. I refer to these new configurations, to the transsovereign use of force involving states and non-state actors, as ‘heterogeneous military partnerships’ (HMPs).

The question thus becomes: how should we proceed when confronted with a form of war which seems to stretch across history, and which is widely represented in contemporary Africa, but which is not adequately covered by existing perspectives? In this article, I contribute to one necessary aspect of a broader plan of approach: the literature. I ask and answer four questions: (1) why is our current stock of literature on military partnerships including non-states insufficient to the task of explaining contemporary African conflicts, (2) which other branches of literature have attempted to interact with these conflicts, (3) which factors are common enough in these other branches, that an eventual theory of heterogeneous military partnerships would do well to consider them, and (4) are these beginnings of a theory of proxy war borne out by preliminary reference to case study data?

Answering these four questions is the first step in determining whether Louis XIV’s quote—that war is the ‘final argument of kings’—still applies in Africa. Has sovereign war through nonstates undergone a significant change in recent history—a ‘remix?’ Or is it the simply an age-old technique ‘redux’—that is to say, returned to use? I turn to this question below.

## 1. What is a Proxy War[10]?

During the Cold War, the term ‘proxy war’ was used to refer to the superpowers’ use of allied factions or states to pursue their global rivalry outside the strictures of Northern-Hemisphere nuclear deterrence. *Safire’s Political Dictionary* offers the following definition and etymology:

Great-power hostility expressed through client states. “The first case of a proxy war between China and the Soviet Union” was the way National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski described the fighting between Vietnam and Cambodia that resulted in a break in relations on New Year’s Eve of 1978. He cautioned that the two nations had a tradition of enmity, “but the larger international dimension of the conflict speaks for itself” ... The phrase may be rooted in proxy fight, an attempt to get control of a corporate management through a contest for stockholders’ proxy votes. Proxy war has also been taken to mean both “localized conflict” with outside sponsors and “brush-fire war” (a war likely to spread quickly unless put out).[11]

Works which deal with conflicts defined in this way, take the ‘what’ is proxy war largely for granted and focus on ‘why’ it occurs: for example, why did the United States fund the Nicaraguan *Contras*[12] or the Afghan *Mujahideen*[13], and why did Cuban forces willingly serve as a *de facto* Soviet expeditionary force in Libya, Ethiopia, Angola and elsewhere?[14]

In part, this focus is justifiable because of the uniform character of proxy warfare during the Cold War, i.e., the provision of military aid and advisors, by one or both superpower blocs, in support of local political entrepreneurs like Somalia’s Siad Barre or Angola’s Jonas Savimbi. The dominance of these patterns of superpower behavior on the study of proxy war was so complete that in his authoritative treatment of South Africa’s sponsorship of rebel groups in Angola and Mozambique, William Minter went so far as to propose using the term ‘*Contra* warfare’ (after the US-sponsored Nicaraguan *Contras*) for all forms of proxy war.[15]

However, despite the apparent clarity of this definition, there are two obstacles to its continued application in contemporary conflict studies: distinguishing proxy relationships from those alliance relationships in which one or more parties are stronger than others in the alliance, and accounting for the increasing role of nonstate groups in contemporary warfare.

### *Alliance Relationships*

In terms of the former challenge: any wartime alliance must, at some point, allocate the military, personnel, and material costs of the conflict between the partners. Indeed, when some alliance partners are stronger and/or more well-provisioned than others, only one of two outcomes can occur: either the stronger party takes the lead (a ‘Coalition of the Willing’ scenario), or it does not. If it does not, this may be because:

- (i) it is politically expedient to allocate some regions, operations or responsibilities to the militarily less powerful partners in the alliance (as occurred in the Allied forces during the closing years of World War Two),
- (ii) the geographic spread of the fighting is such that only some partners are proximal to the military tasks at hand, or
- (iii) of the comparative advantages in terms of troop availability versus war production capability suggest a commensurate division of troop vs. logistical support for joint actions.

What I believe these likely scenarios underscore, is the weakness of building a model of proxy wars purely based on the ‘why’ aspect of the alliances involved. To do so runs the risk of rendering the category analytically useless by expanding it to include *all* wars. World War One thus becomes a ‘proxy war’ in which a Russo-Austro-Hungarian conflict over Serbia draws in sponsoring forces from (among others) France, the United Kingdom, Germany and the United States. And this, in turn, provokes a category problem: while it is certainly legitimate to ask, ‘why did Germany support Austria-Hungary?’ in the much same way as we might ask, ‘Why did the United States support the Republic of Vietnam?’, [16] it is much harder to argue that World

War One belongs in the same category as the Vietnam war, the Angolan Civil War, and the Bay of Pigs invasion.

A further complicating factor related to partnerships between the weak and strong has to do with the fact that it is not always easy to identify ‘who’ is fighting as whose ‘proxy.’ In his book on proxy warfare through military intervention, which features entire chapters devoted to typologies of intervention and levels of support, Bertil Dunér is forced to gloomily conclude that ‘it may also be that proxy interventions *have never happened*’ (my emphasis),<sup>[17]</sup> specifically because it is so hard to discount the buy-in of the weaker party in assessing why and how the war proceeded. This, in turn, makes the very idea that one party was a ‘client’ of another, hard to sustain.

### *Non-state Actors*

The difficulty of distinguishing a proxy relationship from a strong-weak alliance provides a considerable roadblock to studying proxy war *as such*. However, beyond this roadblock lies another: the problem of non-state actors. As outlined above, the sense of ‘proxy war’ which we derive from its Cold War depiction, has a strongly statist element. This was true even when some of the factions involved were non-state actors, e.g. the *Contras* or the *Mujahideen*, because in most of these conflicts the goal continued to be (eventual) control of the state. However, the role of non-state actors has changed, I would argue, not only in scope but also in nature since the end of the Cold War.<sup>[18]</sup> The root of this change can be seen in the transformations in sovereignty which have come with globalization.<sup>[19]</sup> Where revolutionaries (or, counter-revolutionaries) once struggled to capture the state, many contemporary non-state actors are content to simply evade or roll back the state. These quasi-sovereign political units leverage global communication networks and an open market for gray (or even completely illegal) goods, in order to translate their access to lootable resources and/or exploitable populations, into even more coercive power via the purchase of arms or the hiring of mercenaries.<sup>[20]</sup>

This evolution of the self-sufficient non-state has had several effects on the definition and study ‘proxy war.’ First, it complicates the notion of intra-state war, in that all civil wars can no longer necessarily be assumed to have *regime change* as an objective. The proxy warfare conducted between the United States, Soviet bloc, and China was primarily a king-making endeavor, i.e. aimed at establishing or obstructing the incumbency of local factions depending on the alignment they brought, or would bring upon taking power, to the state in question. In contrast, as mentioned above, modern non-state proxies may not have conventional agendas regarding the sovereign dispensations of the areas in which they operate. This means that to study modern proxy warfare, we have to be able to move beyond the Cold War scenario of ‘sponsoring power A ensures the incumbency of faction B,’ to a more nuanced one; and this, in turn, means that the literature to consult must be broadened. In the preliminary analysis of data, below, I will refer to the transsovereign use of force involving states and non-state actors, and to the ‘heterogeneous military partnerships’ mentioned in the introduction. I clarify my choice of relevant literature in terms of two central nodes: power and sovereignty as outlined below.

## 2. Applicable Fields of Literature for Studying Proxy Wars

As I have discussed above, despite the lack of a coherent baseline definition of proxy war,<sup>[21]</sup> certain contextual features of the Cold War geopolitical environment have left a significant imprint on our understanding of the category. Primarily, these imprints fall under two headings: first, the assumption that a *clear proxy-client gradient, based on power levels*, is apparent within the alliance responsible for the proxy war; and second, that the actors involved are either *superpowers, client states, or factions that wish to become client states*.

At the same time, I have presented an initial, non-empirical problematization of these assumptions; i.e., first, that *power relations between alliance partners* may not be a useful way of creating a coherent category for further study. Second, if and when *the dominant configuration of sovereign power in conflict areas* changes with globalization, so too may the goals and means of those at war: in particular, non-state actors. Taken together, these serve as an initial guide for a further search through a substantial body of conflict studies literature. In particular, the following seem central to the study of modern proxy war:

1. *Power*: This perhaps overly sketchy outline regarding power highlights: The further examination of proxy war requires an examination of the configurations of power in the sites of interest. What is power? What sets ‘powerful’ actors apart from less powerful ones? How do they project that power? How is this different from the Cold War standard? And how, then, might this affect the use of proxy war by the ‘contextually strong?’<sup>[22]</sup>
2. *Sovereignty*: The forms of sovereignty employed by the actors, how the diversification of sovereign forms affects the potential war aims of proxy war combatants.<sup>[23]</sup>

It is also worth noting that the empirical reality of the kinds of wars I am interested in also brings on board three other fields of literature in addition to power and sovereignty. The former will allow me to draw a clearer distinction between the relevant wars and others kinds of violence, while the study of power and sovereignty will serve as a theoretical frame for defining the object of study more precisely. Given the scope of the present article, I focus here on the literature that allows me to distinguish my object of study.

The following three fields of literature are proposed: studies that focus on *military interventions* and the factors which provoke or encourage them, studies focusing on *violent trans-border criminal networks* and the civil wars exploited by the corrupt governments of geographically contiguous states, and finally studies examining *those who fight*, with a focus on revolutionary ideologies such as pan-Africanism or pan-Arabism, and revolutionary figures such as Muammar al-Gaddafi and Che Guevara. Each of these fields of literature directly addresses, as I will show, issues of power (both concrete and social) and sovereignty, and each focuses on different aspects of the kind of event we wish to study as proxy wars.

### 2.1 Studies of military interventions

Proxy warfare and military intervention are closely related, and the literature on military interventions (MIs) confirms that issues of power projection and sovereignty are crucial for understanding the kinds of event upon which proxy war studies might also focus. Like a proxy war, military intervention involves the projection of forces belonging to one state (or to an intergovernmental organization, or ‘IGO’, like the United Nations), into the sovereign territory of another state.[24] When this occurs in the context of an ongoing conflict with visible factions or a range of combatant groups, such as a civil war, interveners may try to not pick sides; but just as often, they in fact *do* pick sides, or at least are widely suspected to have done so. In such cases, the boundary between intervention and the pursuit of military goals through a local intermediary (i.e. proxy war, loosely defined) becomes blurred. Examples of the latter kind of intervention-alliance in Africa are: the Rwandan intervention in Zaire during the First Congo War,[25] the Tanzanian invasion of Idi Amin’s Uganda,[26] and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) intervention in Liberia.[27] Examples of what may be termed ‘fair-minded interventions’ include the 1993 UN mission to Somalia (UNOSOM),[28] and the 1997 Southern African Development Community (SADC) intervention in Lesotho.[29]

There are several ways to define a military intervention *legalistically*, i.e. based on the plausibility of the intervening state’s claim that it serves a legitimate purpose. However, I am inclined to argue that it would be more useful to us as scholars to recognize MIs as, essentially, an exercise in *sovereignty creation or re-creation*. Interveners, whether they are states or IGOs, are bound to impose some form of *de facto* sovereignty (no matter how temporary, or insufficient to the task[30]) over the occupied territory or invaded country.[31] They may do this to circumvent the target state’s inability to see to the welfare of its citizens (e.g., humanitarian intervention after a natural disaster), they may do it to confront the state and prevent or halt some aspects of its domestic policies (e.g., peace-making operations, the defense of election monitors, or responses to genocide[32]), or—in the most extreme cases—they may do it to revoke an illegitimate regime’s authority (and hence its sovereignty) entirely, and depose its leaders.

All three of these forms of intervention involve an imposition of the kinds of benefits ideally attached to the social contract; in other words, the provision of the kinds of collective goods (infrastructure, common defense) usually provided by the state to its citizens. When these goods are provided by a group other than the government, such as the intervening force, it calls the state itself into question, and suggests that its sovereignty has been circumscribed; it is no coincidence that the creation of liberated zones, from which the state has been expelled, is a fundamental of classical revolutionary strategy.[33]

Given this consensus in the literature on military intervention, it seems clear that configurations of sovereignty, the attempt to legitimize power projection, and the forms of alliance chosen between interveners and local actors are all significant issues in studying those complex conflicts which we might *also* investigate as examples of heterogeneous military partnerships at war. However, MIs of this form all involve overt involvement, where many HMPs have a partially (or entirely) covert nature. To better understand the dynamics of covert and illegal intervention, I draw on the literature on violent criminal networks.

## 2.2 *Violent criminal networks*

Beyond the literature on MIs, there are many useful analyses of partnerships between states exterior to a particular war, and those factions (whether state or non-state) actually caught up in the fighting. Once again, this seems a similar kind of phenomenon to proxy warfare; and once again, issues of what constitutes power and sovereignty are highlighted as issues which a study of proxy warfare would have to take into account.

In studies of violent criminal networks, what is most at stake in the decision to support a faction fighting in some foreign war is the potential monetary benefit the sponsoring state is able to derive from illegal trade with that faction. This process can be depicted as follows: first, a nonstate actor (who is party to none of the prohibition regimes states may be signatories to)[[34](#)] conducts some kind of illegal activity such as the harvesting of ivory or alluvial diamonds. The plunderers now have a cache of illegal goods, while states have the capacity both to inject these goods onto the world markets, and to forge or fake registration certificates, statements of provenance, and end-user certificates so that the goods can go from being illegal, to being semi- or fully legal commodities.[[35](#)]

The trade between the sponsor state and the proxy group can thus proceed on the following terms: the proxies receive whatever goods and services the sponsoring state is willing to part with (such as weapons diverted from national armories, kickbacks from the sales themselves, or other rewards), while the sponsor gets foreign exchange from selling the commodities; both parties are assured of a profitable outcome—as long as the proxy’s access to illegal goods is ensured. However, in helping the proxy group maintain this access, the sponsor often becomes an accessory to state failure or civil war. This happens when the plunderers compete with the target state for access to the resources in question (e.g., the diamond fields), and this competition develops into civil violence or war.[[36](#)] It is for this reason that states like Uganda and Guinea, who show willingness to process black-market goods derived from ongoing conflicts throughout Africa, have repeatedly been accused of perpetuating and exacerbating civil wars and political repression by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or IGOs. As long as these states provide a market for conflict goods stemming from rebel groups, the reasoning goes, they give those parties a stake in avoiding a peace settlement.[[37](#)]

It is also worth noting that this kind of foreign involvement has at times provoked retaliation by the targeted state. Angola, for instance, intervened in both Zaire and the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville) in order to topple regimes which had been selling diamonds on behalf of the Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) rebels it was fighting.[[38](#)] Wars connected to criminal enterprise therefore pose a serious threat to regional peace, both for the targeted state and the sponsoring state, should the target state decide to retaliate. Studies of such wars also show many points of potential contact with the study of proxy warfare. Certainly, they confirm that power (primarily, here, economic power) is an important dimension for understanding the illegal transborder projection of force-by-proxy. Furthermore, because control of resources requires (depending on the resource) various configurations of sovereign power by the local

faction or proxy, they reaffirm the importance of examining the use of sovereign space in conflicts. However, these studies fail to directly address the role of ideology in sustaining some wars where no profit motive is apparent. In order to address this shortfall, another branch of applicable literature is required.

### *2.3 Those who fight: revolutionary ideologies*

The third applicable perspective to the delineation of a distinct category, or object of study: proxy wars involve the study of revolutionary ideologies and violent networks. These kinds of study are concerned with *those who fight*, i.e. those who constitute the ground troops of the conflicts we might study as proxy wars, what motivates them and their commanders, and where they come from. This, in turn, connects to the study of proxy wars by explaining how the many and varied alternatives to state armies (e.g. mercenaries, militarized traditional communities, and armed refugees) come into existence and become available to serve the purposes of sponsoring states.

I include under this heading (a) studies of the propagation of transnational revolutionary ideologies; (b) studies within the subfield of transitional justice and peace building, which focus on the effective demobilization, disarmament, and re-integration (DDR) of ex-combatants; and (c) studies of mercenarism. However, in the interests of brevity, I only examine revolutionary ideology in this article.

Revolutionary ideology has proven a powerful force in provoking, and shaping the eventual form of, some of the most significant mass-violence events of recent years. In the Middle East, we have the example of Iraq, in which a significant transsovereign jihadist insurgency took root soon after the fall of the Ba'athist regime. In Africa, prominent historical examples include the support given to the African National Congress (ANC)[[39](#)] by the Frontline states between 1961 and 1994,[[40](#)] the dissemination of insurgents throughout Africa from the late 1970s under Muammar al-Gaddafi's 'Third Universal Principle',[[41](#)] and the Islamicist support given to foreign *Mujahideen* operating in Somalia and Ethiopia from the 1980s onwards.[[42](#)]

Two recurrent themes characterize studies of these events. *First*, it appears that states choose to support such revolutionary ideologies as a result of processes on the domestic and international levels alike. For example, Zambia's adoption of a strongly supportive stance towards the outlawed ANC was the result of pressure on the (generally moderate) Kenneth Kaunda from the Organization of African Unity, his fellow southern African heads of state, and the militant Zambian student movement. To some extent, Kaunda courted this pressure, but some of it was unanticipated, and Kaunda merely reacted to its application.[[43](#)] Any analysis of this commitment should thus be conducted *both* in foreign and domestic policy terms, and in a way which assesses the extent to which the state *controlled* discourse in these fora. [[44](#)]

*Second*, it is clear that joining a revolutionary transnational cause gives states a rich opportunity for self-narration via the performative act of aligning oneself with the cause in question. This is

even more so when the ‘call to arms’ is couched in transcendent and/or originary terms (e.g. religious or civil-religious ideologies),<sup>[45]</sup> because participating in such a narration pins the state’s legitimacy to a higher cause and insulates it from specific forms of criticism.<sup>[46]</sup> This is not the same as the domestic or international pressure mentioned above; and without getting into a discussion of whether it is the state, the nation, or the regime which is being narrated through the act of joining a cause, the salience of the ideological dimension in this aspect of proxy war is nonetheless clear.

Studies of revolutionary ideology clearly have much to say on the themes of power and sovereignty. Primarily, they lay bare the social dimension of power, and the potency of ideology as a cause and constraint to war; secondly, because of their generally transnational and/or transsovereign character, they highlight the importance of these non- or post-state dimensions in explaining the relationships which produce modern proxy war.

#### *2.4 Drawing the threads together*

The purpose of the review conducted above was to show the points of reference provided to a study of heterogeneous military partnerships, by the related studies of MIs, criminal networks, and revolutionary ideologies. These three bodies of literature, although they approach the conflicts from different directions, all highlight the crucial interplay between power and sovereignty in the causes, course and outcomes of these complex conflicts. The reader should recall, too, that power and sovereignty also formed a component of the existing literature on ‘proxy war’ (see p. 8). Although the creation of a true model of African conflict lies beyond the scope of this article, we can therefore consider power and sovereignty as useful tools <sup>[47]</sup> with which to approach data from wars of interest.

### **3. A Preliminary Sweep through the Data**

A variety of forms of data are available on proxy war. However, because of the lack of a exhaustive and generally agreed-on definition of the concept, the list of possible cases generated by the data sources is not uniform. For example, although it does not strictly discuss ‘proxy war,’ the UCDP data set lists 20 African civil wars which involved an external intervening power.<sup>[48]</sup> This is a good start; however, it is also less than half the number of incidents that *could* be discussed as proxy wars, according to my initial review of secondary literature.<sup>[49]</sup> Furthermore, few of the significant African conflicts now being discussed in terms of proxy war, are represented in the UCDP data.<sup>[50]</sup> It therefore appears that until the concept of proxy war is more clearly operationalized (a task which this article is intended to contribute to), the study of proxy war must proceed on a ‘best example’ basis. Consequently, I have chosen to limit my study to post-independence African states in general, and South Africa in particular.

#### *3.1 The Unit of Analysis*

South Africa between 1960 and 1994, with an in-depth focus on the years between 1975 and 1988, is an appropriate *formal unit* of analysis[51] because its repeated use of proxy warfare from the early 1970s onwards occurred *despite* its ready access to other ways of waging war. Specifically: throughout the 1970s and 80s, South Africa had a large, increasingly well-equipped, and appropriately configured state apparatus with which to conduct war, but instead of relying only on this, it also chose to employ non-state actors for proxy warfare.

South Africa was also, at the time (a) not a global power, (b) operating under a mix of strategic advantages (well funded, modern army) and limitations (high casualty sensitivity), (c) possessed of a ruling regime with a strong interest in ideological manipulation and propaganda.[52] As a formal unit for a case study method, South Africa thus seems fitting example, specifically in regards to those elements of the non-Cold War proxy war discussed in 2. and 3. above.[53]

### 3.2. South Africa's 'Border War': States and Nonstates mix in an Extrasovereign Space

In its search for regional and domestic security, the South African *Apartheid* regime and its security forces, along with various nonstate allies, conducted both internal and external military/paramilitary joint operations from the early 1960s right up to the democratic transition of 1994.[54] Although these operations grew from and fed into one another, sharing both personnel and practices, the largest and possibly most significant of them all was the 1975 invasion, and subsequent partial occupation, of Angola. This operation, code-named SAVANNAH, was intended to displace the pro-Soviet Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) faction from its dominant position on the eve of Angolan independence and replace them with a pro-Western (and, by extension, pro-South African) coalition composed of União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA) and the Central Intelligence Agency-backed National Liberation Front of Angola (FNLA).[55] In failing to achieve this goal, Operation SAVANNAH precipitated a hardline takeover within the South African security forces, and committed the South African Defence Force (SADF) to fifteen years of occupation and illegal military activity in and around the nebulous border region.

After SAVANNAH, UNITA forces (backed by the SADF) held a broad strip along the Angolan-South African border, which was designated '1 Military Region.' This was a space from which Angolan sovereignty, in its de facto sense, had been pushed back—*without* the explicit introduction of South African sovereignty (whether juridical or empirical) to replace it. Being neither 'Angola' nor 'South Africa,' these regions thus constituted an extra-sovereign space in which South Africa and its proxies could operate (mostly) as they wished.

My initial survey of the data suggests that similar extra-sovereign spaces were created through military action in the 'self-governing homelands,' in Mozambique, and even to some extent in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe. These were regions controlled and patrolled not only by the proxy forces themselves, but also by SADF special forces, paramilitarized police forces (like the infamous 'Koevoet'), tribal auxiliaries (such as those based out of the SADF's 'Bushman town' of Camp Omega),[56] denationalized Angolan rebels operating under the SADF banner in the so-called

‘Buffalo Battalion,’ and poaching squads connected to a state-sponsored gray market in ivory and diamonds.[57]

At the same time as these extrasovereign spaces were being created outside its borders, the Apartheid state was strongly resisting their development within South Africa. Most specifically, this meant reacting to a growing insecurity in some border regions, which had driven landowners to the cities and left their border farms unoccupied. It was feared that these unsupervised farms, often large ranches directly abutting the border, would become points of infiltration for ANC guerrillas and arms smugglers. As early as 1979, the South African Deputy Minister of Defence warned that, “[if] there is no physical presence of our people, if our flag does not fly there, it is an indication of our inability to maintain ourselves there.”[58] The resulting Promotion of the Density of Population in Designated Areas Bill implemented subsidies for land purchase in border areas, and militarized returning farmers to turn them into a ‘first line of defence’ for the regular armed forces.[59]

As this mix of official and unofficial ‘agents of the state’ did their work on either side of the South African border, the Apartheid military planners were busily attending to the war’s ideological front. Domestically, the white electorate had to be convinced that the war was worth fighting (i.e., tied to domestic issues), and that it was winnable; internationally, the conflict had to be legitimised as being in the best interests of (a) the region, and/or (b) the Western world as a whole.[60]

In addition, far from being treated as a dirty secret, UNITA was being built up as a worthwhile ally whose continued existence was crucial to regional stability. UNITA’s illegality was glossed over entirely in official forums: instead, the South African press asked “How close is UNITA to getting power?,”[61] and provided a forum in which UNITA’s leaders could claim that their victories had taken place without South African assistance.[62]

However much South Africa’s nonstate allies may have wished to deny or minimise South African support; however, this support was both considerable and crucial to the continued existence of factions such as UNITA and the Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO).

William Minter’s analysis of ‘Apartheid’s *Contras*’ reveals a pattern of military and material aid which clearly display South Africa’s commitment to its proxy wars. Of the two organizations, RENAMO was run relatively cheaply;[63] but UNITA received nothing less than the best, with SADF funds and stocks being used to outfit UNITA troops, establish and maintain Savimbi’s extensive headquarters at Jamba, and even run UNITA’s propaganda radio station, The Voice of the Resistance of the Black Cockerel (VORGAN).[64] South Africa also provided Special Forces, air, armor and artillery support to UNITA operations,[65] especially in the later 1980s when they faced not only Angolan government troops but elements of the Cuban expeditionary force.[66]

### 3.3 Drawing Conclusions from the Data on South Africa’s Proxy Wars

The proxy wars conducted by South Africa in Mozambique and Angola serve to confirm, albeit in a tentative and preliminary way, the three areas of interest, which I have indicated as the way forward for studies of proxy war. In terms of power and alliances, South Africa's capacity for material support and occasional direct strikes against the enemies of its chosen faction, clearly served to constitute much of its power in the proxy relationship. On the other hand, various constraints on the war are also visible; the SADF could not simply fund its proxies directly, but rather had to assist them in setting up illegal transnational trades in ivory and diamonds for the purposes of supplementary funding.

In terms of sovereignty and sovereign space, we see the South African regime shoring up sovereign control of its own hinterlands while intentionally subverting its foes' ability to do the same; and exploiting the resulting extrasovereign spaces to conduct its war. Lastly, in terms of ideology, we see that far from attempting to hide its proxy war, the South African regime was actively involved in trying to manage its reception both domestically and abroad.

#### **4. Conclusion: The Ultima Ratio Regum, Remix or Redux?**

In this article, I have examined the phenomenon of proxy warfare from its origins as a subcategory of Cold War, superpower hostility. Furthermore, I have attempted to delineate a category for study by examining different forms of violence under three rubrics: military alliances, criminal networks and revolutionary ideologies. I have taken note of the importance of power and changing forms of sovereignty as framing the object of study. I have argued that the kinds of transsovereign uses of force which it seems sensible to call proxy wars are well represented (a) in the historical record, and (b) in policy and journalistic analyses of conflicts in Africa and elsewhere. However, at this stage of the analysis we have little basis on which to base a new, reinvigorated definition of proxy war such that we are able to reconcile (a) and (b), or at least ensure that they are talking about the same thing.

One way to resolve this deadlock is to gather information on several representative proxy wars, or at least episodes of violence we suspect might be proxy wars, and analyze them for common characteristics.

My own initial sweep through the data, with South Africa as the focus, indicate that eventually broadening the study to include data from a range of cases, will provide a much clearer picture of what 'proxy war' entails. There is an opportunity to provide a foundation on which causal analyses, dataset-building, or modeling of proxy wars could take place. And *this* highlights an exciting possibility for the future study of African proxy war: moving it out of the cul-de-sac of area studies and into the more general discussion of warfare and politics. In illustrating how this might be possible, I return to this article's title and the phrase, *ultima ratio regum*.

*What a clearer model of proxy wars might mean for African conflict studies*

Louis XIV, the ‘Sun King,’ was no stranger to the exercise of mass violence by the state. During his 72-year reign (1643-1715), France fought wars both unilaterally and in alliances, on continental and global scales, and against enemies ranging from Dutch rebels to the Great Powers of Europe. These wars featured a striking diversity within the French forces. For example, during the War of the Grand Alliance (or Nine Years’ War, 1688-1697), Louis and his ministers deployed not only their own professional soldiery,[67] but also provided financial and material support to armed non-state actors in Scotland and Ireland, militarized North American tribes as agents with which to attack English settlements, and maintained an extensive network of privateers for use as commerce raiders in the Atlantic and elsewhere.[68]

For these reasons, we must suppose that when Louis ordered his cannon engraved with the Latin phrase *ultima ratio regum*, which means ‘the final argument of kings’, he did not mean that war could only be fought, feudal-style, *by and between* kings and their official designees. Instead, the phrase should be taken to mean that regardless of who bears the tool of war, it is the degree to which the ensuing violence *serves the sovereign* which makes it the ultimate, the conclusive, and the final argument of kings. It was the outcome of war, not the constitution of its forces, to which Louis was referring in his slogan.

For approximately the two centuries between Napoleon and *glasnost*, we have existed in a world in which the formal war-making instruments of the state, i.e. the formal armed forces, have exercised a more-or-less complete monopoly over the exercise of grand warfare. Driven by modernizing states’ search for efficiency, the heterogeneous panoply of kings like Louis gave way to the homogenous Napoleonic *levee en masse*; because they could not be controlled, the privateers were first leashed, then outlawed altogether. The Louisian epoch of war, which focuses on the sovereign prerogative, gave way to an era in which war was a product of the state itself, rather than something in which the state was a patron that employed many clients. In this era, war both derived from and fed into the national and international evolution of the state,[69] and in its most high-profile incarnations it was waged in a symmetrical and legally constrained manner between like forces.[70]

However, history continues to march, and as the era of state monopoly (in a variety of realms) has given way via globalization to the more fluid current dispensation; we once again find that war seems to have changed along with it. Terms like “new war”[71] or “post-heroic warfare”[72] are used to describe the current face of war; historians and political scientists alike discuss war in terms of its “transformation”[73] or a “revolution”[74] in military affairs. In Africa as elsewhere, the question might, however, not one of transformation but reversion: having never experienced the Clausewitzian epoch of state war monopoly, Africa’s wars may reflect the original and utilitarian view (from the sovereign’s perspective, anyway) of war embodied by Louis’s engraving.

Douglas Lemke has remarked that, despite appearing to be a ‘zone of peace’ because of its low incidence of interstate wars, independent Africa actually has its fair share of violent conflicts between rival states:[75] however, data problems result in these wars evading enumeration in

conventional interstate terms. Like faulty smoke detectors, our analytic tools are inappropriately configured to detect the signs of such conflicts, or to assess their extent.[76] Scholars of African war have consequently tended towards the neologism in their work: instead of war *as such*, we study “resource wars,”[77] “regional conflict complexes,”[78] “state collapse,”[79] “heterodyadicity,”[80] or “polywars.”[81] What all these terms and their accompanying analyses have in common, is that they avoid the problems of studying African states at war, by moving their lens *above or below* the state. A movement above the state looks at global and structural forces as motivators for mass violence; a movement below the state looks at local dynamics, culture, and geography.

These different perspectives are all interesting and have generated good work on African wars. However, if we are successful in re-invigorating the study of ‘proxy warfare’ through a more apt definition, we will be able to take a different route in our study of a large number of African wars. Rather than going above or below the state in the study of African war, we would be able to assess where war *continues to be a form of rational state policy*,[82] albeit via more or less covert and out-sourced means in a series of proxy wars. Such an understanding will enrich the debate about whether it still makes sense to define war—the final argument of kings—as a primarily political act, in Africa and elsewhere.[83]

## References

1. Latin: ‘The final argument of kings’.
2. William H. McNeill, *The Pursuit of Power. Technology, Armed Force, and Society since AD 1000* (University of Chicago Press, 1982), 117-143; also George Kohn, *Dictionary of Wars, Revised Edition* (Checkmark Books, 1999). Entries on ‘The Nine Years War’, ‘King William’s War’, and ‘The Jacobite Uprisings.’
3. ‘Thingmen’, at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thingmen>.
4. Major Jim. Gant, ‘One Tribe At a Time: A Strategy for Success in Afghanistan,’ at [http://rohrabacher.house.gov/UploadedFiles/one\\_tribe\\_at\\_a\\_time.pdf](http://rohrabacher.house.gov/UploadedFiles/one_tribe_at_a_time.pdf).
5. See Appendix A.
6. See for instance John Turner, *Continent Ablaze: The Insurgency Wars in Africa 1960 to Present* (Jonathan Ball, 1998); Joseph Hanlon, *Apartheid’s Second Front: South Africa’s War Against Its Neighbors* (Penguin, 1987).
7. Janice E. Thomson, *Mercenaries, Pirates and Sovereigns: State-Building and Extraterritorial Violence in Early Modern Europe* (Princeton University Press, 1995).

8. Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era* (Stanford University Press, 2007).
9. Dylan Craig, 'Other People's Wars: The African Proxy War in Theory and Practice,' International Studies Association (ISA) convention, New Orleans, LA, Feb 2010.
10. While part of my concern in this article is in broadening our understanding of 'proxy war' away from its Cold War routes, and indeed questioning the wisdom of calling these events 'proxy' wars at all, the term's prevalence makes it hard to avoid. For now, I will simply point out that while all proxy wars involve heterogeneous military partnerships, it may not be technically correct to refer to all HMPs as proxy wars. I cover this in detail in the literature review below.
11. William Safire, *Safire's Political Dictionary* (Oxford University Press, 2008), 584.
12. See for instance Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Imperial Presidency* (Houghton Mifflin, 2004), or William Bloom's *Killing Hope: U. S. Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II* (Courage Press, 1995).
13. Applicable literature is reviewed in Andrew Harder, "Make Them Bleed:" Shortcomings of US Covert Operations in Afghanistan, 1980-1989', *Swords and Ploughshares* 15, No. 2 (Spring 2006).
14. Piero Gleijeses, 'Moscow's Proxy? Cuba and Africa 1975—1988,' *Journal of Cold War Studies* 8, No. 4 (Fall 2006), and Edward George, *The Cuban Intervention in Angola, 1965-1991: From Che Guevara to Cuito Cuanavale* (Frank Cass, 2005).
15. William Minter, *Apartheid's Contras: An Inquiry into the Roots of War in Angola and Mozambique* (BookSurge, 2008), 172.
16. Stephen Walt, 'Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power,' *International Security* 9, No. 4 (1985).
17. Bertil Dunér, *Military Intervention in Civil Wars: The 1970s* (Gower, 1985), 144.
18. Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era* (Stanford University Press, 2007).
19. Since writing this article I have encountered the work of John Agnew on sovereignty regimes, and in my last paper on this topic I have expanded my intuition regarding sovereignty considerably. See Craig, 'Other People's Wars: The African Proxy War in Theory and Practice', Paper Presented at the International Studies Association Conference, New Orleans, LA, February 2010.

20. Martha Crenshaw and Maryann Cusimano Love, 'Networked Terror', in Cusimano-Love (ed.) *Beyond Sovereignty, Third Edition* (Thomson/Wadsworth, 2007).

21. I.e. Great power hostility expressed through client states.

22. I use Nye's expanded definition of power: 'The basic concept of power is the ability to influence others to get them to do what you want. There are three major ways to do that: one is to threaten them with sticks; the second is to pay them with carrots; the third is to attract them or co-opt them, so that they want what you want. If you can get others to be attracted, to want what you want, it costs you much less in carrots and sticks.' Joseph S. Nye, 'Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics', Address to the Carnegie Council, April 13 2004. Transcript available at <http://www.cceia.org/resources/transcripts/4466.html>.

23. Although African sovereignty has been the focus of many interesting works in political science and international relations alike, political geographer John Agnew makes the following crucial distinction: 'All forms of polity ... occupy some sort of space ... [but all] political authority is not necessarily predicated on and defined by strict and fixed territorial boundaries.' This goes to the heart of his differentiation between territory and space. The territory of a state is the area which it has *territorialized*, i.e. 'used for political, social and economic ends.' Territory, therefore, always bears the imprint of the state's power structures, whether these are despotic (charismatic), institutional (bureaucratic), or a blend of the two. Consequently, 'territory' may be smaller, larger, or the same as the physical *space* which the state occupies; it can also exist either as a demarcatable geographic block (when the power structures are centralized), *or* as a network linked by space-spanning flows of influence (when the power structures are diffuse), or both. Quoting Spruyt, Agnew argues that not only is it not necessary that the state's space and territory coincide, it is in fact rare: what made the 19th-20th century nation-state so unlike other forms of polity throughout human history, is that it briefly succeeded in making its territory and space synonymous.' See John Agnew, 'Sovereignty Regimes: Territoriality and State Authority in Contemporary World Politics,' *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 95, No. 2, 2005, 437-461. See also Agnew, *Globalization and Sovereignty*, 47-96.

24. This definition is far from the last word, as might be imagined given the ongoing debates around where and when global norms trump sovereignty, as in the ongoing crisis in Darfur. For a brief treatment of the terms of this debate, see Sean Murphy, *Humanitarian Intervention: The United Nations in an Evolving World* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), 11-18, and especially the footnotes on 11.

25. John Pomfret, 'Rwandans Led Revolt In Congo,' *Washington Post*, July 9 1997. Possibly alarmed at the world's response to his bellicose statements of Rwandan martial prowess during this interview ('[people] thought of Mobutu as a big monster who wouldn't be defeated, with his big hat and his big stick. They thought little Rwanda and big Zaire,' Kagame said with a smile. "Only when we started did they look at the map and see the possibilities."'), Kagame issued a corrective a week later in which he downplayed Rwanda's role, giving most of the credit to the

'Congolese liberators' of Kabila's AFDL. See IRIN Emergency Update No. 212 on the Great Lakes (Wednesday 16 July 1997), accessed online at <http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Hornet/irin212.html>>. See also Asteris Huliaras, '(Non)policies and (Mis)perceptions: The United States, France, and the Crisis in Zaire,' in Howard Adelman, Govind C. Rao (eds.), *War and peace in Zaire-Congo: analyzing and evaluating intervention, 1996-1997* (Africa World Press, 2003), especially 283-286.

26. Simon Chesterman, *Just War or Just Peace: Humanitarian Intervention and International Law* (Oxford University Press, 2003), 77-79.

27. Wentworth Ofuatey-Kodjoe, 'Regional Organisations and the Resolution of Internal Conflict: The ECOWAS Intervention in Liberia', *International Peacekeeping* 1, No. 3 (Autumn 1994), 263.

28. 'United Nations Operation in Somalia I (UNOSOM I)', United Nations Department of Peacekeeping (March 1997). Accessed online at <http://www.un.org/Depts/DPKO/Missions/unosomi.htm>>.

29. Sehoai Santho, 'Lesotho: Lessons and Challenges after a SADC Intervention, 1998' in Diane Philander (ed.) *Institute for Security Studies Monograph No 50. Franco-South African Dialogue: Sustainable Security in Africa*, August 2000. Accessed online at <http://www.iss.co.za/Pubs/Monographs/No50/Chap8.html>>.

30. John Hillen, 'Picking Up U.N. Peacekeeping's Pieces: Knowing When to Say When', *Foreign Affairs* (July/August 1998). Retrieved online at <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/54228/john-hillen/picking-up-u-n-peacekeeping-s-pieces-knowing-when-to-say-when>.

31. See Jarat Chopra, 'The UN's Kingdom of East Timor', *Survival* 42, No. 3 (Autumn 2000), 27-39, for a somewhat pessimistic view of the UN's efforts at governing an entire country.

32. See the R2P protocol at <http://www.responsibilitytoprotect.org/index.php/pages/2>.

33. Tse-Tung, Mao. *Mao Tse-Tung on Guerrilla Warfare*. Translation and introduction by Brigadier General Samuel B Griffith (Praeger 1962).

34. Such as CITES, the prohibition on the hunting of endangered species. CITES' membership criteria can be found on its website at <http://www.cites.org/eng/disc/parties/index.shtml>>. For more on the concept of the prohibition regime, see Ethan A. Nadelmann, 'Global Prohibition Regimes: The Evolution of Norms in International Society,' *International Organization* 44, No. 4 (1990).

35. Ian Smillie, 'Criminality and the Global Diamond Trade: A Methodological Case Study,' in Willem van Schendel and Itty Abraham (eds.) *Illicit Flows and Criminal Things* (Indiana University Press, 2005).

36. The choice is for the plunderers is generally 'compete violently or be excluded,' as governments that *can* exert monopolies over easy-to-harvest goods like alluvial diamonds, tend to show little compunction in exercising deadly force in doing so. For a report on how the Zimbabwean security forces killed over 100 illegal miners during 'Operation You Would Never Go Back to the Diamond Fields,' see David Farira, 'Eerie Silence at Zimbabwe mine', *BBC News (Africa)*, 4 December 2008. Retrieved online at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7761268.stm>. Even Namibia, peaceful as it is, has a *Sperrgebiet* ('Forbidden Zone') covering its coastal Diamond Area 1, within which travel without a permit, and unsanctioned prospecting, is strictly prohibited.

37. For a collection of reports on this type of behavior by combatants in the DRC, see Global Witness, 'Natural Resources in Conflict', accessed online at [http://www.globalwitness.org/pages/en/natural\\_resources\\_in\\_conflict.html](http://www.globalwitness.org/pages/en/natural_resources_in_conflict.html).

38. Assis Malaquias, 'Diamonds are a guerrilla's best friend: the impact of illicit wealth on insurgency strategy,' *Third World Quarterly* 22, No. 3 (2001), 311-325.

39. And the ANC's armed wing, *Umkhonto We Sizwe* ('The Spear of the Nation').

40. Chris Maritz, 'Pretoria's Reaction to the Role of Moscow and Peking in Southern Africa,' *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 25, No. 2 (June 1987), 321-344, especially 326-330.

41. Oye Ogunbadejo, 'Qaddafi and Africa's International Relations,' *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 24, No. 1 (1986), 33-68.

42. 'Foreign fighters 'driving Somali violence'', *The Guardian*, 15 May 2009. Retrieved online at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/may/15/somalia-foreign-fighters-coup>. See also Matt Bryden, 'No quick fixes: Coming to terms with terrorism, Islam and statelessness in Somalia', *The Journal of Conflict Studies* 23, No. 2 (Fall 2003), 24-56, for a more long-term view of the phenomenon.

43. See Ackson M. Kanduza, 'The Frontline States Against Apartheid: The Case of Zambia,' Paper Presented to an International Conference on a Decade of Freedom: Celebrating the Role of the Anti-Apartheid Movement in South Africa's Freedom Struggle, 10-13th October 2004, University of Kwazulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa. Retrieved online at <http://www.anc.org.za/un/conference/amkanduza.html>.

44. An examination of this type is conducted in Catherine Boone, *Political Topographies of the African State: Territorial Authority and Institutional Choice* (Cambridge University Press, 2003).

45. One Somali *Mujahid*, quoting the Koran, put this call as follows: ‘The plan for the next stage with the permission of Allah most high is to be prepared for a major battle at any time... and also to direct a call to our brother Muslims throughout the world to share in this Jihad with us, and to help their brothers in this mission: “And if they seek your succour in the *Deen* [pious duty], it is your duty to give succour.”’ See ‘Nida’ul Islam Interviews The spokesman for the Islamic Union of the Mujahideen of Ogadin,’ retrieved from the website of the Federation of American Scientists (FAS.org) at <<http://www.fas.org/irp/world/para/docs/somal2.htm>>.

46. Returning to the example above, the recent decision by the Somali parliament to adopt *sharia* Islamic law is thought to have been an attempt to undercut the religious appeal of the state’s *Mujahideen* opponents. See ‘Somali cabinet votes to implement sharia law’, *Reuters*, Mar 10, 2009. Retrieved online at <<http://www.reuters.com/article/africaCrisis/idUSLA575453>>.

47. John Gerring, ‘What is a Case Study and What is It Good for?’ *American Political Science Review* 9, No. 2 (May 2004).

48. Nils Petter Gleditsch,, Peter Wallensteen, Mikael Eriksson, Margareta Sollenberg, and Håvard Strand, ‘Armed Conflict 1946-2001: A New Dataset.’ *Journal of Peace Research* 39, No. 5, 2002.

49. See Appendix A.

50. Some recent uses of ‘proxy war,’ by various kinds of commentators on African conflict:

‘Somalia’s Civil War: Just a Glimmer of Hope,’ in *The Economist*,  
[http://www.economist.com/background/displaystory.cfm?story\\_id=13185216](http://www.economist.com/background/displaystory.cfm?story_id=13185216).

‘Update: Proxy War Reignites between Nasty Neighbors Sudan and Chad,’ *The Enough Project*, <http://www.enoughproject.org/blogs/proxy-war-reignites-between-nasty-neighbors-sudan-and-chad>.

‘The Return of the Proxy War,’ *Global Dashboard*,  
<http://www.globaldashboard.org/2008/08/21/return-of-the-proxy-war/>

‘Ethiopia-Eritrea Proxy War Risks Broader Regional Conflict, Warns New Council Report’, *All Africa News*, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200610230046.html> (a news periodical).

‘Proxy War in Africa’s Horn,’ *The Council on Foreign Relations*,  
[http://www.cfr.org/publication/12225/proxy\\_war\\_in\\_africas\\_horn.html](http://www.cfr.org/publication/12225/proxy_war_in_africas_horn.html).

‘UN envoy warns neighbours against using Somalia as theatre for proxy war’, *UN New Center*, <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=20523&Cr=somali&Cr1>.

‘Global jihad’s new front in Africa,’ *Christian Science Monitor*,  
<http://www.csmonitor.com/2006/1212/p01s02-woaf.html>.

51. Gerring ‘What is a Case Study and What is It Good for?’ 344: ‘The formal unit is the unit chosen for intensive analysis ... Informal units consists of all other units that are brought into the analysis ... they are always more superficially surveyed that the formal unit under study’.

52. Dylan Craig, ‘Total Justification’: Ideological Manipulation and South Africa's Border War,’ in Gary Baines and Peter Vale (eds.), *Beyond the border war. New perspectives on Southern Africa’s late-Cold War conflicts* (UNISA Press, 2008).

53. In the ongoing research project for my PhD Dissertation, from which this article is drawn, I use several other African wars as informal units of study. These are the ‘Shifita War’ 1963-1967 (Somalia, Kenya); the ‘Ogaden War’ 1977-1991 (Somalia, Ethiopia); the civil war in Sierra Leone, 1989-99 (Liberia, Sierra Leone); and Rwanda’s involvement in the First and Second Congo War (Rwanda, Zaire/Democratic Republic of the Congo). However, this data is not yet ready for presentation.

54. Stephen Ellis, ‘The Historical Significance of South Africa's Third Force,’ *Journal of Southern African Studies* 24, No. 2 (June 1998), 261-299.

55. Jannie Geldenhuys, *At The Front: A General’s Account of South Africa’s Border War* (Jonathan Ball, 2009); Philip Frankel, *Pretoria’s Praetorians: Civil-military relations in South Africa* (Cambridge: CUP, 1984), 72; John Turner, *A Continent Ablaze: The Insurgency Wars in Africa, 1960 to the Present* (Jonathan Ball, 1998), 102-110; and Hilton Hamann, *Days of the Generals: The untold story of South Africa’s apartheid-era military generals* (RSA: Zebra Press, 2001), 90-92.

56. See Robert Gordon, ‘Bushman Banditry in twentieth-Century Namibia’, in Donald Crummley (ed.) *Banditry, Rebellion and Social Protest in Africa* (James Currey, 1986) for more detail on Camp Omega.

57. See JoAnn McGregor, ‘Violence and Social Change in a Border Economy: War in the Maputo Hinterland, 1984-1992’, *Journal of Southern African Studies* 24, No. 1, Special Issue on Mozambique (Mar., 1998), 37-60, Peter Stiff, *The Silent War: South African Recce Operations 1969—1994* (Galago Publishing, 1999), 234-38; Jan Breytenbach, *The Plunderers* (Covos Day, 2001), L.J. Bothma, *Buffalo Battalion: South Africa’s 32 Battalion, A Tale of Sacrifice* (self

published, 2009); and Joseph Hanlon, *Apartheid's Second Front: South Africa's War Against Its Neighbors* (Penguin, 1987).

58. *Cape Times*, 'Measures to repopulate SA borders outlined', April 9 1979.

59. Parliamentary Debates, June 6 1979.

60. A solid review of the 'Infogate' scandal, in which the existence of a \$75m slush fund intended for the financing of pro-South African propaganda abroad between 1974 and 1977 was leaked to the South African and international press, can be found in Elaine Windrich, 'South Africa's Propaganda War,' *Africa Today*, First Quarter, 1989, 51-60. Windrich's review goes on to detail just how far the South African propaganda went, mostly via a network of professional lobbyists arranging all-expenses-paid 'fact finding trips' for prominent US senators and business leaders, but also including pamphlets, books and ads in Western media. I even found one of these books on the shelves in American University's Davenport Coffee Lounge in 2005.

61. *The Citizen*, 'How Close is Unita to getting power?', 21 December 1981.

62. *The Citizen*, 'Unita denies [South African Air Force] part in capture of Cangamba', 20 August 1983.

63. RENAMO cadres were only lightly equipped. This meant that they were forced to depend on arms diverted to them by the SADF from captured MPLA or ANC caches, or purchased on the international black market. In keeping with this thrifty approach to its provisioning, RENAMO's orders from South Africa focused less on territorial acquisition than simple destabilization and sabotage. Attacks were primarily made against economically sensitive targets, such as foreign aid projects, railway routes, and the Cahora Bassa hydroelectric project, and were intended to cripple the Mozambican economy; when attacks were made against the civilian population, these were intended not to revolutionize but to demoralise them. As one Mozambican civilian put it: 'The *bandidos* like to scatter little antipersonnel mines around on paths in the villages at night, so the first person to come along in the morning stands on one ... [that's] Renamo's way of telling the *povo* [people] that Frelimo cannot protect them.' See Walter Finnegan, *A Complicated War*, 97.

64. Minter, *Apartheid's Contras*, 172-203.

65. *The Cape Times*, 'Tanks Used in Cuito battles', 4 May 1988.

66. Stiff, *Silent War*.

67. William H. McNeill, *The Pursuit of Power. Technology, Armed Force, and Society since AD 1000* (University of Chicago Press, 1982), 117-143.

68. George Kohn, *Dictionary of Wars, Revised Edition* (Checkmark Books, 1999). Entries on 'The Nine Years War', 'King William's War', and 'The Jacobite Uprisings'.
69. Peter Paret, *Clausewitz and the State: The Man, his theories, and his time* (Princeton University Press, 1985).
70. Robert O'Connell, *Of Arms and Men. A History of War, Weapons and Aggression* (Oxford University Press, 1999).
71. Kaldor, *New Wars and Old Wars*.
72. Edward Luttwak, 'Towards Post-Heroic Warfare' *Foreign Affairs* 74:3 (May-June, 1995), 109-122.
73. Martin van Creveld, *The Transformation of War* (The Free Press, 1991).
74. Isabelle Duyvesteyn and Jan Angstrom (eds.), *Rethinking the Nature of War* (Frank Cass, 2005).
75. Douglas Lemke, *Regions of War and Peace* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 167.
76. Douglas Lemke, 'African Lessons For International Relations Research,' *World Politics* 56 (October 2003), 114-38.
77. Michael E. Ross, 'What Do We Know about Natural Resources and Civil War?' *Journal of Peace Research* 41, No. 3 (2004), 337-356.
78. Peter Wallensteen and Margareta Sollenberg, 'Armed Conflict and Regional Conflict Complexes, 1989-97,' *Journal of Peace Research* 35, No. 5 (1998), 621-634.
79. I. William Zartman (Ed.) *Collapsed states: the disintegration and restoration of legitimate authority* (Lynne Rienner, 1995).
80. Dylan Craig, 'Heterodyadicity and System Data in Modern Conflict', paper prepared for the International Studies Association conference, May 2008.
81. Dan Fahey, 'Explaining Uganda's Involvement in the DR Congo, 1996-2008,' paper prepared for the International Studies Association conference, New York, February 2009.
82. To say this is neither to be oblivious to the significant interpenetration of the African state by private interests (see Jean-Francois Bayart, Steven Ellis and Beatrice Hibou. *The Criminalization of the State in Africa* (Indiana University Press, 1999)), nor to the potential for war to be rational only in bounded and local terms rather than global ones (see Stephen Ellis, *The Mask of*

*Anarchy: The Destruction of Liberia and the Religious Dimension of an African civil war* (New York University Press, 2007)).

83. This debate is well summarized in Duyvesteyn and Angstrom (eds.), *Rethinking the Nature of War* (Frank Cass, 2005), but the preeminent works which can be considered to have inaugurated the debate are Mary Kaldor's *New Wars and Old Wars*, and Martin van Creveldt's *The Transformation of War*.

84. Project homepage: <http://www.prio.no/CSCW/Datasets/Armed-Conflict/UCDP-PRIO/>.

85. These revised datasets are available on request.

86. Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, 'A Revised List of Wars Between and Within Independent States, 1816-2002', *International Interactions* 30 (2004), 231-262.

87. Entries with an asterisk indicate instances of military support not found in the UCDP-PRIO dataset. In most cases, these are actors who evade UCDP-PRIO inclusion because they did not provide actual troops to the conflict. In others, they are covert combatants whose presence is widely suspected (and hence is reflected in other data sources) but who never directly acknowledged their presence.

88. Available online at: <http://www.doj.gov.za/trc/report/index.htm>.

89. *TRC Final Report*, Volume 2, Chapter 2, 42.

90. Available online at:  
[http://www.nelsonmandela.org/index.php/news/article/kathrada\\_collection\\_grows\\_at\\_mayibuye\\_archives/](http://www.nelsonmandela.org/index.php/news/article/kathrada_collection_grows_at_mayibuye_archives/).

91. Available online at: <http://www.uovs.ac.za/faculties/index.php?FCODE=12&DCODE=431>.

92. Available online at: <http://www.lib.uct.ac.za/>.

93. Available online at: <http://arca.uovs.ac.za/> (currently not operational, but the institute is featured on the UFS website at <http://www.uovs.ac.za/faculties/index.php?FCODE=12&DCODE=431>).

## Appendix A: African Proxy War-type Events

I used a multi-stage process to identify a population of proxy wars in Africa.

I began with the 2009 release of the Uppsala Conflict Database Project's Armed Conflict Dataset.<sup>[84]</sup> This global dataset includes 260 conflicts split up into 1957 dyad-year observations between 1946 and 2008. A dyad is included if at least 25 battle deaths resulted from fighting between the actors involved in that year. Dyads are clustered together in discrete 'conflicts' based on the *casus belli*. Because of the UCDP-PRIO Dataset's coding rules, at least one of the actors in any dyad (the government of the affected territory) is always a state. Restricting the dataset to only those conflicts occurring in Africa, reduced the dataset to 576 dyad-year observations of 80 conflicts.<sup>[85]</sup>

I then further reduced the dataset to only wars involving three or more actors, regardless of whether these were states or non-states (e.g. rebel groups). The UCDP dataset distinguishes between the following kinds of actors: the government of the territory at war (Column A), those fighting alongside the government (Column A2, which I call 'incumbent support'), the main opposition to the government (Column B), and those fighting alongside the opposition (Column B2, which I call 'opposition support'). The opposition between A and B is the basis of each observed conflict dyad years (CDY). To meet my criteria for inclusion, a conflict had to feature either (a) at least one dyad in which an actor appeared in Column A2 or B2, or (b) multiple actors in Column B (which I call 'opposition alliance'). This step excluded 35 wars, accounting for 81 CDY, from the sample. The remaining dataset included 45 wars, accounting for 495 CDY.

Following this, I used a modified version of the Correlates of War dataset<sup>[86]</sup> to sort the remaining conflicts by intensity, i.e. highest level of annual fatality reached. I distinguished those wars with 1000 battle deaths in any single year during their entire duration, from those which never reached this level of fatality. This split the dataset into 25 high-intensity multi-actor wars accounting for 406 CDY, and 20 low-intensity multi-actor wars accounting for 89 CDY. Eyeballing the data at this point suggested that this step had also served to sort long-duration conflicts from shorter ones, i.e. that intensity and duration are positively correlated (although this has not been tested). This, in turn, suggested that the 25 high-intensity multi-actor wars are the most significant ones for the study of warfare in Africa in general. Having excluded 55 of Africa's 80 violent conflicts since 1946, the fact that the remaining 25 conflicts account not only for the majority (70 percent) of observed CDY, but also the most high-fatality ones, argues in favor of demarcating the remaining 25 conflicts as the population for the proposed study.

**Table 1: Population of African Wars for Case Selection**

| Location               | Primary Actor | Incumbent Support                                | Opposition Organization                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Opposition Support              | Start | End  | CDY |
|------------------------|---------------|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------|------|-----|
| Algeria                | France        |                                                  | FLN, MNA                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Morocco*<br><a href="#">87]</a> | 1954  | 1961 | 9   |
| Angola                 | Portugal      | South Africa*                                    | MPLA, FNLA, UNITA                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                 | 1961  | 1974 | 14  |
| Ethiopia               | Ethiopia      |                                                  | Military faction (forces of Mengistu Neway), EPRP, TPLF, EDU, EPDM, Military faction (forces of Amsha Desta and Merid Negusie)                                                                                                                                 |                                 | 1960  | 1991 | 17  |
| Ethiopia               | Ethiopia      |                                                  | ELF, EPLF, ELF-PLF                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                 | 1964  | 1991 | 28  |
| DRC/Zaire              | DRC/Zaire     | Morocco, France, Angola, Chad, Namibia, Zimbabwe | CNL, Opposition militias, FLNC, AFDL, MLC, RCD, RCD-ML, CNDP                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Angola, Rwanda, Uganda          | 1964  | 2008 | 14  |
| Mozambique             | Portugal      | South Africa*                                    | Frelimo                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                 | 1964  | 1974 | 11  |
| Burundi                | Burundi       |                                                  | Military faction (forces loyal to Gervais Nyangoma), Palipehutu, CNDD, Frolina, Palipehutu-FNL                                                                                                                                                                 |                                 | 1965  | 2008 | 17  |
| Chad                   | Chad          | France, Libya                                    | Frolinat, First Liberation Army, Second Liberation Army, FAN, FAP, FAT, GUNT, CDR, Islamic Legion, Revolutionary Forces of 1 April, MPS, MDD, CNR, CSNPD, FNT, MDD, FARF, MDJT, FUCD, RAFD, UFDD, AN, MOSANAT, Military faction (forces of Maldoum Bada Abbas) | Libya                           | 1966  | 2008 | 34  |
| South Africa (Namibia) | South Africa  | Portugal*                                        | SWAPO                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Zambia, Angola*                 | 1966  | 1988 | 23  |
| Nigeria                | Nigeria       | Egypt*                                           | Republic of Biafra                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | France*                         | 1967  | 1970 | 4   |
| Sudan                  | Sudan         | Chad                                             | Sudanese Communist                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Chad*                           | 1971  | 2008 | 28  |

|                     |                     |                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                         |      |      |    |
|---------------------|---------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|------|------|----|
|                     |                     |                        | Party, Islamic Charter Front, SPLM/A, SAF, NDA, JEM, SLM/A, NRF, SLM/A - MM, SLM/A - Unity                                                                                                                                     |                         |      |      |    |
| Uganda              | Uganda              | Libya, Tanzania, Sudan | Military faction (forces of Idi Amin), Kikosi Maalum, Military faction (forces of Charles Arube), Military faction (Mbarara-based troops), Fronasa, UNLA, FUNA, NRA, UNRF, HSM, UPDA, UPA, Lord's Army, LRA, ADF, WNB, UNRF II | Tanzania                | 1971 | 2007 | 32 |
| Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) | Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) | South Africa*          | ZAPU, ZANU, PF                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                         | 1967 | 1979 | 9  |
| Angola              | Angola              | Cuba, Namibia          | FNLA, UNITA, Military faction (forces of Nito Alves & José van Dumen)                                                                                                                                                          | DRC/Zaire, South Africa | 1975 | 2002 | 26 |
| Ethiopia            | Ethiopia            | Cuba                   | WSLF, ONLF/ONLA*                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Somalia                 | 1976 | 2008 | 19 |
| Mozambique          | Mozambique          | Zimbabwe (Rhodesia)    | Renamo                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | South Africa*           | 1977 | 1992 | 16 |
| Somalia             | Somalia             | Ethiopia               | Military faction (forces of Abdulaahi Yusuf), SSDF, SNM, SPM, USC, USC/SNA, SRRC, ARS/UIC, Al-Shabaab, Harakat Ras Kamboni                                                                                                     | Ethiopia*               | 1978 | 2008 | 20 |
| Liberia             | Liberia             |                        | Military faction (forces of Samuel Doe), NPFL, INPFL, LURD, MODEL                                                                                                                                                              | Guinea*                 | 1980 | 2003 | 12 |
| Cameroon            | Cameroon            | France                 | UPC                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                         | 1960 | 1960 | 1  |
| Chad, Libya         | Chad                | France*                | Libya                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                         | 1987 | 1987 | 1  |
| Rwanda              | Rwanda              | DRC/Zaire              | FPR, FDLR                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                         | 1990 | 2002 | 11 |
| Sierra Leone        | Sierra Leone        | United Kingdom         | RUF, AFRC, Kamajors, RUF, WSB                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Liberia*                | 1991 | 2000 | 10 |
| Algeria             | Algeria             | Chad, Mali, Niger      | Takfir wa'l Hijra, AIS, GIA, AQIM                                                                                                                                                                                              |                         | 1991 | 2008 | 18 |
| Congo               | Congo               | Angola, Chad           | Cobras, Cocoyes, Ninjas, Ntsiloulous                                                                                                                                                                                           | Angola, Chad            | 1993 | 2002 | 6  |
| Ethiopia            | Ethiopia            | Somalia*               | OLF                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Somalia*, Eritrea*      | 1977 | 2008 | 26 |

## Appendix B: Data Sources

I used the following data sources to investigate South Africa's proxy wars.

1. **South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), Final Report.**<sup>[88]</sup> The TRC reports contain primary (i.e. eyewitness) 'evidence ... gathered of violations committed by South African security forces or their agents and/or surrogates in nine regional states—Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Tanzania, and the Seychelles—and in Western Europe—in the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Scandinavia.'<sup>[89]</sup>
2. **Mayibuye Archives of the Robben Island Museum at the University of the Western Cape.** The Mayibuye archives contain the 'largest anti-apartheid archives in the world. The Archives consist of hundreds of thousands of documents, films, pieces of art, videos, and photographs ... key collections in the Archives include those of the African National Congress, the International Defence and Aid Fund, the Irish Anti-Apartheid Movement, the United Women's Congress, the South African Congress of Trade Unions and personal collections of [various important liberation movement figures].'<sup>[90]</sup> My preliminary work in the Mayibuye Archives in June 2009 focused on reports on parliamentary debates, news clippings from banned newspapers, and press releases from NGOs and IGOs all dealing with South Africa's undeclared war on its neighbors.
3. **SAMEDIA, the South Africa Media Institute, University of the Free State.** The SAMEDIA archive contains newspaper clippings from regional newspapers dealing with South Africa's war and proxy agents in neighbouring states.<sup>[91]</sup> Running the full gamut from pro-regime, to centrist, to anti-Apartheid, reports from these newspapers provided me both with details of battles, and with an insight into how the war was perceived domestically.
4. ***Kommando (1949 - 1970), continued as Paratus (1970 - 1994), the official magazine of the South African Defence Force***, housed in the Government Publications Section of the University of Cape Town's library.<sup>[92]</sup> This monthly magazine, printed on government presses and featuring frequent op-eds by politicians and ministers, provided me with insight into the South African armed forces' interaction with its proxy wars and co-combatants.
5. **Archive of *Die Instituut vir Eietydsgeskiedenis (Institute for Contemporary History), University of the Free State.***<sup>[93]</sup> Contains personal letters, draft speeches, and notes belonging to prominent members of the Apartheid regime, including State President P.W. Botha and Chief of the Army, General Magnus Malan.