

Are Economic Motives Relevant to Military Intervention in Africa?

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How Relevant are Economic Motives when States Decide to Intervene Militarily in Africa? An Example of Mind Triumphant over Matter

Introduction

Modern history is littered with examples of Western military interventions in Africa, and although Western governments cited humanitarian obligation as the driving force, the military actions often masked economic ambition. Many commentators, certainly the more cynical ones, believe economic motives underline every foreign intervention – the Iraq War being the prevalent example. In this essay I seek to illustrate how economic factors are inconsequential when two giant ideological philosophies clash on the world stage. Despite the détente, international politics of the 1970s were dominated by the Cold War. The relaxed tension between the United States (US) and the Soviet Union (USSR) was unable to repress their geopolitical ambitions when faced with new, non-aligned African nations. This ushered in a second ‘scramble for Africa’ in the form of ideological competition. Africa became an integral Cold War battleground. Greig (2007:1) in fact contends that if strategically positioned African states ‘fell into anti-Western hands, the West could not survive at all’. The pursuit of political support for the West and Communism painted a bulls-eye onto Southern and Eastern Africa – particularly the states recently released from the grip of colonial rule. Developing allies (and numbers) in this way was seen as crucial in a cold war, and goes some way to explaining US and USSR rationale when intervening militarily in Africa.

Their motives for intervention cannot be restricted to simply furthering their ideological cause. Significant global events contextualised every premeditated move made by the superpowers. American international prestige needed to be re-established following an embarrassing setback in Indochina and worrying developments in the Middle-East increased the importance of a strategic partner in the Horn of Africa. Cuban policy would suggest humanitarianism was a priority, and the importance of international prestige cannot be ignored. This essay will examine if these reasons outweigh the economic motivators to intervene.

What makes this research interesting is its test of socialist philosophy. It assesses if there is change in the fundamental ideological core of the system in the face of global competition. It is rational to assume more economic activity from the pro-capitalist interveners, and to assume a greater emphasis on spreading socialism from the socialist interveners. The study of a socialist intervention should offer more non-economic motivators compared to a study of a Western actor.

This comparative essay will examine Western and socialist competitive intervention between 1974 and 1978 using the cases of Angola and Ethiopia. The economic aspects will be analysed carefully, then their importance in the interventions will be measured against non-economic factors; specifically – the ideological battle between the US and USSR and the subsidiary aspects of this motivator – such as the military-strategic benefits and the effect intervention has on the global reputation of the two opposing movements. The time period is sufficient to cover the military interventions in both states. The cases were chosen as they each experienced civil conflict between capitalist and socialist movements – which received support politically, economically or militarily by either the US or the USSR, and

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because their different locations offer new strategic interests. In each case the essay will consider the main foreign policy objectives for the intervening superpowers, including both economic and other motivators, calculating their relevance when the decision was made to intervene. Firstly, this essay must clearly define the parameters of military intervention.

The Concepts

There are two theoretical concepts with which this essay will manage: military intervention and 'proxies'. The intricate connection between the two concepts demands careful understanding, and a multilateral definition that is rarely needed in intervention based research. This article asserts that the US and USSR undertook military interventions in Angola and Ethiopia, despite having minimal or no ground troops. Kane (2006) goes so far to say that there were never more than 100 US soldiers in Angola throughout the entire 20th century, and Nolutshungo (1985) claims 'the Soviet Union did not show the slightest willingness to take an active military involvement' in Southern Africa. The actions of the US and USSR in these cases do not mirror the more conventional (and renowned) military interventions in Africa in the 20th century – the British in Sierra Leone or the US in Somalia for example. Conventional interventions such as these can be satisfied by conventional definitions. Pearson's (1974) classification of military intervention as 'movement of troops or military forces by one independent country, or a group... across the border of another independent country', though a reasoned understanding, is not broad enough to encompass indirect interventions. More broadly, the Responsibility to Protect (2001) asserts that intervention is interference which impacts upon the 'internal affairs of a state'.

This essay focuses on the use of 'proxies' as intervening actors, in addition to the 'base' states of the US and USSR. The Soviet Union invariably relied on Cuba to act as a proxy, and the United States' military interests were represented by South Africa, or unofficially via CIA operations. Herein lies the challenge of setting boundaries for what constitutes a 'military intervention'.

It could be argued that military intervention is a quantifiable measure, and should be defined on an incremental scale. Dunér (1983) recognises the different 'levels of involvement' in foreign military intervention, and suggests a range of five 'echelons' of involvement – the 'lowest' involvement (5) being 'direct supporting activities' (military warnings, transport), and the 'highest' level of involvement (1) being 'direct combat' (direct invasion). This scope of definition is vital for considering the Cold War in Africa. On Dunér's scale, two central echelons of involvement best reflect the actions of the US and USSR – direct para-combat involvement (3) and indirect combat involvement (2).

Direct para-combat involvement comprises advisory support and arms supply (*US in Ethiopia*). Indirect combat involvement implies 'irregular invasion' (*US in Angola, USSR in Angola and Ethiopia*). 'Irregular invasion' stipulates the same technical criteria as regular invasion (number of troops present, numbers of arms etc;), but undertaken by auxiliary forces.

Dunér (1983) attaches quantities to act as minimums to his guidelines – a military intervention can only have occurred if all minimum levels are equalled. As Dunér's multilateral definition is being used as the conceptual background to this essay, it is essential that his conditions for military intervention are met before the case studies are considered.

Table 1 clearly presents the amounts required and the amounts present. To constitute 'irregular invasion', 800 troops are necessary. Dunér (1981) notes there were over 10,000 Cuban troops present in Angola in 1977, while Greig (1977) suggests 2,000 South African troops were present. Secondly, Dunér demands a minimum of \$4million of arms supply. Laidi (1990) states amounts totalling \$550million were sent to Angola, and \$1.9billion sent to Ethiopia. The US General Accounting Office values US arms trade to Ethiopia at \$160million[1]. The minimums that constitute military intervention are therefore met.

Dunér's minimum amounts to constitute intervention

United States

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Soviet Union

(2) Irregular Invasion

800 troops

(in Angola) ~ approx. **2,000** South African troops

(in Angola) ~ more than **10,000** Cuban troops

(in Ethiopia) ~ approx. **18,000** Cuban troops

(3) Direct para-combat involvement (arms supply) (*between 1975 and 1980*)

\$4,000,000

(in Ethiopia) ~ approx. **\$160,000,000**

(in Angola) ~ approx. **\$550,000,000**

(in Ethiopia) ~ approx. **\$1,900,000,000**

Table 1

The next conceptual issue that demands consideration is the label 'proxy' when discussing Cuba, South Africa and other examples. Proxy forces were useful for the superpowers. It offered them political protection for not sending their own troops to a distant battlefield, whilst shielding the superpowers from potential international condemnation (Towle 1980). The term proxy is contentious because it suggests subservience. Vanneman and James (1976) expand to mention the Soviet ability to call on another nation to act as a military force, and Millar (1980) further subscribes to the notion of 'service' by branding Cuba 'mercenaries' in Angola. This essay does not subscribe to the philosophy that Cuba acts automatically in accordance with Soviet wishes. It asserts that, particularly in Angola, Cuba has its own motivators and objectives for intervention. Nevertheless, even academic literature that acknowledges Cuba's independent decision-making process (Connell-Smith 1979), cannot offer an alternative.

With terms defined and the presence of military intervention certified using Dunér's criteria, in addition to an understanding of the proxy relationship in this case, the content analysis can begin.

Angola

Background

Following the Carnation Revolution in Portugal in April 1974, Angola was set an independence date of 11th November 1975. This created a 19 month period of political stasis leaving control of Angola 'up for grabs'. The race for governance inspired three liberation movements to seek power – the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). The FNLA and UNITA, both with centre-right ideologies, received support for the West. In response, the USSR and Cuba lent their assistance to the MPLA, a social democratic organisation that transformed its ideology to Marxism-Leninism at the first Angolan congress in 1977 (Poddar 2008). The MPLA were supported by just over 15,000 Cuban soldiers with heavy machine guns, anti-personnel mines, T55 tanks and armoured vehicles. UNITA and the FNLA, on the other hand, had the support of just 2,000 South African troops with substandard weaponry and field equipment (Greig 1977:228-234). Cuban infantry overwhelmed the Western-backed

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movements, and the 11th November 1975 saw the inauguration of Agostinho Necho, leader of the MPLA.

Angola is approximately 4400 miles from Moscow, and 6600 miles from Washington DC – so what caused both these superpowers to commit significant time and money to the Angolan war for independence?

Economic Factors

It is imperative to note the link between economic and strategic motivators in this instance. Many of the economic incentives of a US-controlled Angola come simply from its geographic position in Africa. Southern Africa as a whole was a crucial source of trade and business for the US, so easy import/export was essential. The ports in Luanda and Lobito were integral to US foreign policy[3], and Angola is vital for most pan-African trade routes. Angola was a hub for trade and any business operation in Southern Africa – and the US had ample business interests in Angola pre-1975. Heavy direct investment in the region (\$3 billion) coupled with the high value of trade with Southern Africa (\$6 billion) gave the US an economic stake that needed protection[2]. The 'cheap labour' and high 'annual rate of return on direct investment which varied between 17 and 19 percent' were also financial advantages that the US risked losing[4]. Angola's proximity to South Africa, the US' principle trade partner in Southern Africa, takes on new significance. Not only the US government, but many US corporations had economic interests in Southern Africa and Angola. The presence of the African branches of major US corporations in the region (General Motors and IBM for example) attracted large military and scientific contracts (IBM supplied computers to the South African Department of Defence and the South African and Namibian GM plants were 'specifically designed for conversion to military production'[5]). US corporations in this unstable region increased both security fears and pressure on the US government to act in the face of the Communist threat.

It could be argued that the most important motivator for US intervention in Angola was oil. Oil in Angola was first discovered in 1955, and production was at approximately 7791 kilotonnes in 1975, a significant amount likely to attract the attention of the US and the USSR (not to mention the potential of the Angolan oil fields – 2011 production was approximately 73000 kilotonnes and Angola is now a member of OPEC)[6]. Chevron, among other large US corporations, have dominated oil reserves in the Cabinda province for over fifty years[7]. Continuous exploitation of Angolan coastlines have led to today's reputation as a major petroleum exporter. Yet in the 1970s, its potential was still in the process of being discovered. If anything, this makes a strong relationship even more pertinent. Establishing a trade partnership at the very start of this boom would, if successfully maintained, prove a highly profitable venture – more profitable than a trade agreement with Angola at the peak of its production. It could be argued that 'losing' the Angolan war cost the US oil rights in the future. Greig (1977) notes that in 1974 the US obtained almost half of the oil produced in Angola, whereas today the US receives a quarter of the oil, compared to China's 45 percent. Although this may be explained by China's financial 'muscle', perhaps Angola aligning itself with socialist principles initiated a shift towards non-capitalist trading partners.

A stake of almost 50 percent of north Angolan oil was an incentive for US intervention. Greig (1977) notes that 'these wells were producing 180,000 barrels of oil a day'. A steady flow of oil, combined with the generous concessions offered to the US by Portugal[8], made Angola an ideal trade partner (Portugal also offered concessions to US corporations that explored for minerals). Finally, considering the 1973 oil crisis, the necessity to diversify its petroleum sources was paramount, highlighting again Angola's central role in US energy policy.

The importance of a non-Arab energy partner was accentuated by the 1973 oil crisis. Capitalist stock exchanges were shaken and the fragility of the West's position in the energy market was exposed. In addition to having their prestige and reputation tainted, the US was forced to acknowledge their vulnerable relationship with the OPEC countries (Horton). Establishing themselves in a new geographical region in order to secure energy interests was a crucial cause for intervention. Fikreyuses (2012:43) adds that 1973 was also the year Angola officially became a major oil producer.

In addition to Zambia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique, Angola formed a 'buffer' around Western-leaning South Africa and the other mineral states – again increasingly its strategic/economic value. It was in the US' best interests to shield South Africa and Zimbabwe as between them they dominated key mineral industries (Laidi 1990:91). The US

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were highly dependent on Southern Africa for supplies of Chromium, Manganese, Platinum and Vanadium. Laidi (1990:90) claims these metals are strategically significant for several reasons:

- Their role in civil and military industry,
- The lack of domestic production, and lack of production in the country of any major ally,
- The only alternative suppliers are members of the communist bloc.

This vulnerability could be exploited if USSR managed to gain a strategic foothold in the region. That the US' main economic policy objectives for Angola may have been more to protect their interests rather than to gain new ones is an interesting thought – certainly one that would invite itself to scepticism today.

It is rare to see two competing nations intervene in the same nation as part of a war. It could be presumed that the USSR would intervene for the same economic reasons. This essay claims that USSR had economic interests in mind when intervening. It also asserts that their main economic objective was not to compete with the US for the financial benefits of Angolan partnership – but primarily to counter the US economic policy. USSR had a wealth of natural resources, so they simply did not need Angola's – but if there was the opportunity to disrupt the US oil flow or to stop them obtaining the precious metals in South Africa, they would not hesitate. Barrett (1981:12) claims:

'Moscow [was] well aware of the extent and value of these resources, and it would be a very surprising if the Soviets did not have an interest in the question of who has access to them'.

He expands to reveal Soviet ambitions to 'deny supply to the West' or to gain a powerful 'bargaining' chip, however he also states the lack of interest amongst top Soviet policy makers to take proactive steps to combat Western economic exploitation. Soviet economic policy towards Angola, he concludes, is weak. Where they could strike a blow to US economic interests in the region, they instead focus on disrupting trade routes and shipping lanes (Barrett 1981:14).

Cuba had different economic incentives. A clear economic benefit for their intervention was the strengthening of their relationship with USSR, securing their own oil flow [9]. Additionally, Cuban presence in Angola during the 1970s earned them lucrative construction projects – which contributed greatly to their foreign exchange trade (Hammett 2004:21). These exclusive advantages for Cuba further distance it from a proxy relationship with the USSR.

Non-Economic Factors

Whereas the economic motivators diverge between the two superpowers, other factors appeal to both.

1. Ideological Factors

The Cold War was a battle over ideas. The conflicting ideologies of the two superpowers led to a search for political support, creating allies and bolstering international support. The contrast in ideologies led to fear: socialism became anathema in the US. The objective of preventing the spread of communism became a key foreign policy goal – this is the reason to intervene that the US public were most likely to identify with. During détente, when more aggressive actions were being kept in check, spreading their ideologies and cementing their influence in an important geopolitical region was the main way of strengthening their position in the contest. So it was normal that competition for non-aligned states intensified during the détente. Both superpowers took advantage of civil conflict in Angola. Offering military and economic support to the sparring factions strong-armed the movements into adopting their philosophies. This is demonstrated well by the MPLA – who, after 'winning' the conflict and seizing political control of Angola, declared themselves Marxist-Leninist (Poddar 2008). As it could be argued that the ideological element of the interventions in Africa was seen (publicly at least) as the primary objective, whoever won the conflict became increasingly significant. This goes some way to justifying the sums spent on aid and assistance by both the US and USSR.

In addition to the short term goals of having more allies in Africa, Russian commentators note the long-term benefits

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of converting these non-aligned states to socialism. Greig (1977:42) considers Lenin's belief that the Western need to expand and create new markets and acquire more raw materials. Lenin concluded that this method of growth and development was 'vital for the continued existence of democracies', and if states could be protected from Western influence, presence and markets – it would strike a 'mortal blow' to the capitalist system, leading to the 'ultimate victory of Communism'.

2. Strategic factors

The strategic advantages have already been considered from an economic perspective. More interesting conclusions can be drawn from a military perspective. It is important to consider that Southern Africa was considered a Western stronghold and USSR had very little presence in the region. Barrett (1981:8) states the 'overriding objective of the Soviet Union is to...assert itself as a global power'. Global competition requires presence in all corners of the world. In addition to the symbolic power, position in a new continent opens up many military possibilities. The national intelligence council feared it would give USSR the capability to 'monitor US naval activities' and 'protect Soviet fishing and merchant marine fleets' in the Atlantic ocean[10]. The military posturing also extended to 'denying Western access to military bases' and 'securing access or transit for Soviet forces to be deployed worldwide'. Enhanced military strike capability is a prominent feature in Soviet foreign policy, and was an even more attractive benefit for a country in the middle of a war. Barrett (1981:8) considers the benefits of having another location for nuclear capability. Missile sites in Southern Africa would alter the military landscape in the region, and would force a change in US foreign policy, challenging them in a way they have not been challenged before in this corner of the world. This would be seen as a strong statement of intent by the Soviet Union. However there is also the possibility that the US could have taken greater military advantage of the location. Either superpower could have established new bases in Angola, and greatly improve their logistical operations[11]. An aggressive act of militarisation would have shifted the dynamic of the cold war in Africa, and would have also reinforced international leadership credentials.

The strategic goals of the superpowers are not unique to Angola. Similar approaches to protection of South African interests can be seen in Mozambique. The militarisation of this 'buffer' zone builds a strong Soviet presence in the region and restricts South African economic and logistical ability.

3. Humanitarian Factors

Cuba's commitment to humanitarian engagement is widely renowned (Dunér 1981:355). It is not far-fetched to claim that Cuba's intervention in Angola had genuine humanitarian objectives. The intervention was labelled in Cuba a 'people's war', with approximately 5 percent of the Cuban population playing a role in the 16 year intervention (George 2007:150). George argues that 'internationalist service in Angola represented the highest ideal of the Cuban revolution'. These idealistic objectives are reflected in Cuba's socio-economic policies for Angolan development. The significant 'civilian presence in the fields of public health, construction, education and agriculture' demonstrate Cuba's commitment to humanitarian engagement, and also to aiding in the recovery process following a bloody conflict[12]. In spite of modern day cynicism, it would be unfair to ignore Cuba's historic affection with humanitarianism when understanding their reasons for intervening – especially if we reflect on the wide range of benefits it included for Angola.

Almer (2011:44) notes that Cuba sent humanitarian aid to 17 countries in Africa during the 1960s, so suggestions that Cuba were only intervening in Angola for economic or proxy reasons are unfounded. On an emotional level, Hammett (2004:21) contends Cuba's motivation to be humanitarially active in Africa stems from a 'moral guilt' felt due to their role in the slave trade.

Angola's oil reserves, raw materials and key logistical location on the west coast highlight the economic incentive for intervention. Angola offers important strategic advantages, particularly in regards to Southern Africa as a whole, and Cuba's humanitarian goals, whilst distancing itself from the label of proxy, are another motivator.

Ethiopia[13]

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Background

The Horn of Africa also experienced a regime shift following the ousting of Haile Selassie in September 1974 by a 'socialist-leaning military junta' (Makinda 1987:91). As in Angola, this internal unrest left Ethiopia vulnerable to superpower exploitation. For a long period it was considered the US' 'outpost' in the region (Ogunbadejo 1980:321). Since the second world war the US had experienced an excellent relationship with Ethiopia. 1953 saw the signing of two military agreements which offered, amongst other things, extensive US access to Ethiopian land and promises that allowed for development of US military capability. This was the start of a long security relationship. Commentators have since labelled the US' behaviour towards Ethiopia 'complacent'. Years of economic and military assistance were 'shattered' by the revolution (Shraeder 1994:136). Despite the regime change, from 1974 to 1975 the US gave up to \$58 million of military assistance – still seeking to maintain their strategic advantage in the Horn of Africa. The USSR on the other hand had an ally in neighbouring Somalia. These domestic developments in Ethiopia presented the USSR with a more attractive opportunity, the chance of a more valuable strategic ally in the Horn of Africa. In 1977 tensions were high regarding the Ogaden region of Ethiopia. The threat of war between the USSR's main allies in the region forced them to pick sides – ultimately sending 1,000 military advisors, and Cuba contributing a further 17,000 troops[14]. Although Ethiopia did not host a proxy war between the superpowers, both sides spent heavily in a bid to win Ethiopian support in their global war.

Ethiopia's geographic position is an attractive prospect for the superpowers. It offers new perspectives to the intervention in Angola, especially in terms of military and economic strategy. Its proximity to the Persian gulf defined its global significance, and for the most part shaped the superpower's foreign policy in the Horn of Africa.

Economic Factors

Unlike Angola, Ethiopia has few natural resources that would appeal to either the US or the USSR (only fishing opportunities in the Red Sea[15]). The economy relies on agriculture, which contributes almost 84% of Ethiopian exported goods. It is noted that 'during the 1970s, coffee exports accounted for 50-60 percent of the total value of all exports'[16]. Coffee is not a reason to intervene. Investment in Ethiopia was low and there were few US corporations present at the time (Halliday 1977:14). Ethiopia alone is not economically valuable, its place in the region however would provide an ideal location to protect wider economic interests.

The proximity to the Persian Gulf is a motivating factor that cannot be underestimated. The Middle-East is the largest oil producer, and was a key trading partner for the US before the 1973 oil crisis. The oil crisis shocked the US, and it publicised the fragility of the US' oil flow. The Middle-Eastern countries flexing their political muscles in this way underlines the necessity to keep a watchful eye on the region. US military presence in Ethiopia would have acted as a strong deterrent to more sudden changes in oil policy. In addition, in 1977 the US received an 'average of 28 percent of its oil imports from Persian Gulf countries' (Richman 1985). This accentuates the importance of acting as a 'guardian' to the Persian Gulf (the number of US interventions in the Persian Gulf from 1977 to 2012 suggests they have continued this role).

Makinda (1987:78) contends that the USSR saw the regime change in Ethiopia as an opportunity to reach economic parity with the US. Fukuyama (1981:21) claims that 'Moscow's dependence on the Gulf will not begin to approach that of the West any time soon'. This suggests that, as in Angola, the USSR's main objective was not to steal the oil from the US, but just to prevent them from attaining it.

Non-economic Factors

1. Strategic Factors

Makinda (1987:78) asserts the US' main interest was to 'reinforce its containment policies in the Middle East'. The 'Middle East' could be extended to Northern Africa and the entire Arab world. The propensity for these Islamic states to share ideals and cooperate increases the relevance of either good relationships or strong regional political influence. Military bases, especially US bases, in Islamic states is a sensitive issue. Although Arab elites identify with

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a capitalist system, large parts of the general public in these nations resented the US' links with Israel and shared the Soviet anti-Western philosophy. A US-influenced Ethiopia is close enough to act as a deterrent should the Middle East decide to withhold oil from the US, without infringing on Islamic sovereignty.

The USSR on the other hand had no existing relationship with the Middle East. Ogunbadejo (1980:320) claims the USSR was 'forced to find allies in areas peripheral to the central arena of Middle Eastern politics following diplomatic reversals in Egypt'. As seen in Angola, a key objective is to establish their authority on a new geopolitical region, and to support popular revolution. Makinda (1987:79) conveys Soviet desire to 'defeat the US containment policies' in the Middle East and to 'outflank the US Middle East defence structure'. These security goals would have been greatly facilitated by a cooperative ally in the Horn of Africa. Regarding long-term objectives, should the states of concern in the Middle East require more severe action, military bases in Ethiopia would aid rapid response teams.

David (1979:69) notes an interesting logistical benefit to the USSR. Influence in the Red Sea and an extended role in the Middle East offers more control over the Suez Canal. This allows for the preservation of 'sea links between its east and western coasts and to its allies'. This could be an attractive prospect to an empire that suffers in fields of communication and logistics due to its size.

Conversely, Makinda (1987:58) remarks the importance of a US strategic communications station named Kagnew. Located in Asmara, Eritrea, the station was uniquely positioned between the tropics close to the equator, forever eliminating 'numerous frequency changes' that are experienced by US based stations (due to its proximity to the north pole). Kagnew was designed to play a key role in the US' global defence system. It was a crucial strategic interest in the Horn of Africa that required protection.

Despite the US clearly losing the battle for influence in Ethiopia, in 1977 they were still providing aid to the Marxist controlled Dergue[17]. There were two focal reasons for this. Firstly, there were fears that if funding to the Dergue ceased 'Eritrea would become independent and aligned with the Arab world, so would give Arab states total control over the Bab al-Mandeb' (Halliday 1977:15). The ramifications could prove disastrous to US interests in the Gulf, and to the US' main ally in the region, Israel. If the US, and Israeli, ships became subject to Arab approval it could be a catalyst for an international incident. Secondly, perception. The US needed to be seen 'competing' in the Cold War on all fronts. Any other response creates the image of the West backing down to socialism. As Somalia was firmly in step with the Soviets, Ethiopia was the only logical 'opposition' that could be supported by the US (ibid:15).

2. Prestige

The importance of spreading ideology has been discussed. However this essay asserts that in a Cold War full of posturing, perception and symbolism – Ethiopia has added magnitude. Ethiopia has an international reputation for retaining its sovereignty, after having repelled advances during the scramble for Africa, then driving Italian forces from Addis Ababa (Barker 1971:136). This 'unconquerable' reputation gives a stronger incentive to gain influence. The symbolic power that would be acquired would reverberate around the international stage, and signal a significant victory for the victorious ideology.

3. Intervention by Proxy

Cuba had responsibilities in Ethiopia. In the Ogaden War, Cuba provided 18,000 troops in support of Ethiopia (Tareke 2000:656). This essay has not devoted the same attention to the Cuban role in Ethiopia than in Angola because the ways in which Cuban intervention motivators diverged from the Soviet objectives in Angola are not evident in Ethiopia. Rochlin (1980:37) notes the increased co-ordination between the USSR and Cuba, hinting at a proxy relationship unlike the one examined in Angola. He continues to claim the Soviet's took advantage of Cuba's renowned relationship with the third world, suggesting Cuba would attract positive PR whereas the USSR would be seen as meddlers. Dunér (1981:355) claims that there are indeed differences in the interests between Cuba and USSR. This essay however does not consider the minor disparities to be sufficient enough to claim that a proxy relationship does not exist, as we concluded in Angola. When assessing motivators for intervention it is easy to focus on the beneficial motivators. In this instance, Cuba's main rationale for intervention was the USSR. They acted

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militarily at the behest of the 'base' country, not because of their commitment to the humanitarian engagement which was so well illustrated in Angola.

Conclusion

The 'proxy wars' in Africa during the 1970s are unique forms of military intervention. The heightened significance of ideology was reflected in the main foreign policy objectives. The analysis of Angola illustrates the allure of raw materials, but also highlights the strategic advantages and Cuba's humanitarian commitment. Ethiopia however makes for a less profitable venture, but the benefits of proximity to the Middle Eastern economic hub are not to be undervalued.

Despite the uniqueness of the Cold War scenario, contemporary examples can be found that parallel the African interventions. Western states such as Great Britain and France intervened in Libya in 2011 in support of the Libyan rebels. It was thought that regime change in Libya would bring a more liberal regime that was more likely to align itself politically and economically with the West. However, the bilateral intervention in Iraq in 2003 fostered a worldwide sense of cynicism regarding liberation intervention. The veiled oil agenda attracted negative media attention, and changed the way humanitarian interventions are perceived.

In the introduction I challenged socialism to stay true to its core principles, ignoring economic benefits in favour of spreading Soviet ideology and championing revolution. The analysis reflects this. In both case studies the Soviet policy priorities when intervening were not economic. Strategy and international influence played a much larger role in their rationale. As expected, the capitalist-driven US placed less value on humanitarian and ideological factors. Lawson (2007) concurs that US foreign policy towards Africa 'had little to do with Africa'. Although there were other motivators for the US, it is difficult to envision costly interventions in either Angola or Ethiopia if no oil was present.

It is impossible to definitely state that money and economic potential was not the principle motivation. However – if we look at other examples of proxy wars in Africa, Mozambique for example, we can see that battle between US backed government troops and USSR backed rebels raged on despite (then there being) little or no indication of natural gas deposits or significant mining potential. This suggests a bigger battle was being fought, where support and status were the main objectives.

The initial question must be answered in two parts – how relevant were economic factors in the Cold War, and how relevant are they now. Firstly, the Cold War created a unique geopolitical environment in which both superpowers placed focus on spreading their influence. Economic motivators were overlooked in favour of strategy to an extent in the US, and almost completely in the USSR. Secondly, capitalism won the Cold War. It is therefore no surprise that greater emphasis is now placed on economic motives and profitability when states intervene militarily. The lack of Cold War mentality amongst intervening governments and their publics means costly foreign interventions may not be tolerated unless there is some material benefit for the intervening state.

Despite there no longer being a Cold War, research in this domain may yet prove useful. The rise of China is shifting the global political landscape, and disagreements in conflict zones such as Syria suggests another two-sided military intervention may yet prove inevitable[18]. For a period of ten violent and bloody years Africa was transformed into a high school playground where the two biggest, opposing bullies dragged in innocent bystanders into their feud. However instead of throwing rocks and hurling insults, the bullies armed their cliques with bullets and missiles – and an already scarred and scared people were thrust into unwanted turmoil once more. To conclude I leave you the thoughts of Polish journalist Ryszard Kapuściński that lingered bitterly in the back of my mind when researching this essay[19]:

'the Cold War in Africa is one of the darkest, most disgraceful pages in contemporary history, and everybody ought to be ashamed'.

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[1] <http://www.gao.gov/assets/130/122045.pdf> – General Accounting Office military aid statistics

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[3] *ibid* p147

[4] *ibid* p148

[5] *ibid* p149

[6] Oil figures from ESDS

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[7] <http://www.chevron.com/documents/pdf/angolafactsheet.pdf>

[8] *ibid* – Portugal also offered concessions to US corporations that explored for minerals

[9] National Intelligence Report – ‘Soviet Policy and Africa’ p2

[10] *ibid* p2

[11] *ibid* p2

[12] *ibid* p8

[13] It must be noted that at this point Eritrea formed part of Ethiopia.

[14] <http://countrystudies.us/ethiopia/137.htm>

[15] http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/1861/13/13_chapter6.pdf

[16] [http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+et0104\)](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+et0104)) – Ethiopian economy

[17] The committee that ruled Ethiopia between 1975 and 1987, when it formed the People’s Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

[18] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/jul/19/russia-china-syria-sanction-veto>

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