Military intervention in theory and practice:
French policy in sub-Saharan Africa since 1960

Abstract

French military intervention in sub-Saharan Africa since 1960 has operated according to a bilateral dynamic independent of - although often influenced by and justified in terms of - global ideological or bloc alignments. It has been characterised by mechanical responses to perceived intervention stimuli. It has frequently disregarded international law and contradicted France’s self-image as homeland and promoter of human rights. It reached its nadir as a result of French support for the genocidal regime in Rwanda.

Accordingly, this study advances two principal arguments: French military intervention in sub-Saharan Africa has been driven by a unique French or Franco-African dynamic which has operated largely independently of global bloc politics and geostrategy; and the first failure of French intervention - in Rwanda from 1990 up to and including 1994 - marked a watershed in the practice, and the beginning of a military retreat from the continent more forced than voluntary.

International Relations intervention theory has typically disregarded the Franco-African interventionary system, although France acts in defence of its allies and interests as Realism tells us it will, in an interventionary sphere of influence comparable to that of the US in Latin America. This study considers France’s legitimisation for its interventions through claimed derogations from the non-intervention norm, and identifies France’s unique interventionary dynamic which arose from its regular activation of mechanical responses to perceived intervention stimuli.
The context for these responses may be found in France’s unique role in Africa since decolonisation. Throughout the Cold War, France was given carte blanche by the West to intervene in its exclusive African sphere, often in breach of those states’ sovereignty. This derogation from international norms was made possible by the French-controlled creation of the new states to emerge from decolonisation, the sovereignty of which was deliberately circumscribed by military accords so that intervention frequently became an automatic feature of interstate relations along the Franco-African axis.

This study’s empirical focus - the uniqueness of this axis in the international system - was demonstrated by the continuity of French interventionary behaviour in the early 1990s, with no immediate change correspondent to the global shift in the balance of power and in the use and justification of military intervention. A perceived need to rework the legitimisation of French intervention only came about in 1994, during preparation for Opération Turquoise in Rwanda, following the first failure of intervention (and the collapse of a French-backed army and regime) in France’s African sphere. Although the justificatory discourse of French military intervention was changed at this time to embrace a humanitarian agenda under a UN mandate, its practice changed - to a reluctant observance of the nonintervention norm - against France’s will, and only as a result of the transformation since 1994 of the political and military environment in central Africa.
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Preface

The focus of this project, military intervention as the most explicit manifestation of France’s enduring post-colonial involvement in Africa, was the result of numerous meetings and informal conversations with friends and colleagues at the University of Portsmouth, where I arrived with only the most general appreciation of Franco-African relations, and next to no knowledge of those states which, as the theatre of French interventions in Africa, were to be key aspects of this study. Research for this project, initially proposed in March 1994, was swiftly overtaken by Rwanda’s ‘dark Spring’ of that year and the controversy which surrounded France’s re-intervention there in June. Fieldwork in Rwanda in 1996 led me to question the relevance and value of doctoral research on military intervention in light of the scale of that country’s suffering and the urgency of its post-conflict crises. It was only the resultant Zaïrean war and overthrow of Mobutu Sese Seko which seemed to demonstrate that criticism of earlier interventions, from members of the academic community among others, could help forestall further inappropriate interventionary responses.

Many people have helped, in a variety of ways. Special thanks are due to (in Rwanda) M. Jean Carbonare, James-Bernard Bizimungu and family Froduald, Germaine, Mama Germaine and Frank (born 1995); Mr Denis Polisi, Secretary General and M. Vianney Ruyunbyana, Librarian, RPF secretariat Kigali; Mr Claude Dusaidi, Major-General Paul Kagame and his secretary Yvonne Karera at the Defence Ministry, Mr Tito Rutaramera and M. Jacques Bihozagara; staff and students of the Université Nationale du Rwanda and Faculté de Théologie Protestante de Butare, notably Philibert Kagabo and Elisée Munyamukweli; in Uganda, Hon. Grace Akello MP, Mr Dixon Kamukama and all colleagues in the Faculties of Arts and Law at Makerere University.
I would also like to express my gratitude to (in Nottingham), colleagues Dr Martin O'Shaughnessy and Professor Stephen Chan, and the libraries of the Universities of Nottingham and Nottingham Trent; Professor Richard Little of Bristol University and Professor Christopher Clapham at Lancaster; friends and colleagues at King's College London, notably Dr 'Funmi Olonisakin; Professor John Peel of SOAS and the African Studies Association of the UK; in Portsmouth, Professor Brian Jenkins, Dr Moussa Dieng, friends and colleagues; and above all Dr Tony Chafer, without whose guidance, support and saintly patience, this project would never have seen completion.

On a more personal note, I would like to express my love and thanks to my family and especially my wife Alexandra, who was most frequently exposed to the variable pressures on time and personality the prolonged completion of a thesis entails.

And for what it may be worth, I would like to dedicate this project to the Bizimungu and Munyakayanzi families of Nyamirambo, Kigali, and to those family-members, victims of their country's recent crises, whom I could not meet.

Declaration

The thesis, notably Chapters 4, 5 and 6, contains material which has already appeared in the following publications:

MILITARY INTERVENTION IN THEORY AND PRACTICE: 
FRENCH POLICY IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA SINCE 1960

Introduction

An abundant literature, including recent volumes of memoirs and interviews by former éminences grises of France’s African policy-making Guy Penne¹ and the late Jacques Foccart², allied with a shift in official discourse most apparent in the public pronouncements of Prime Minister Lionel Jospin³ and Foreign Minister Hubert Védrine, offer together an impression that France, in light of priorities transformed not least by the pace of European integration, is reworking its relationship with Africa. The passing of the generation represented by Foccart, former president Mitterrand, and key clients Houphouët-Boigny and Mobutu on the one hand, and the accession to power in France of a new, post-decolonisation generation of liberal technocrats – embodied by Jospin inter alia – on the other, have provided observers with apparent proof of an evolution in Franco-African relations. This most special north-south axis will henceforth, it is suggested, be characterised more by partnership than patronage, more by democracy than dictatorship.

A key element in this hypothesis, which links most recent retrospectives and reassessments, is that France’s apparent new objectivity in Africa, its attempted restructuring of relationships both military (reduction in strength of permanent garrisons, reluctance to intervene militarily) and economic (devaluation of the CFA franc) in its once jealously-guarded sphere of influence, is entirely voluntary. By this reckoning, the process results from new priorities in Paris,

³ See especially Lionel Jospin, ‘Evolution générale de la politique de défense de la France’, Défense nationale, November 1998, pp5-20
where Europe is seen as the natural amphitheatre for French *rayonnement* (exemplified, for example, by former Health- and Humanitarian Action minister Bernard Kouchner’s appointment in 1999 as UN administrator for Kosovo). Africa at one extreme is considered a burden to be shared with fellow-Europeans; at the other, it is boasted of as if by parents proud that the French-fostered states of the *pré carré* (now again taken to refer exclusively to France’s former colonies) have achieved a level of political and economic maturity and/or democracy sufficient to allow them to find their own way in the world. Some forty years since the beginning of formal decolonisation, France may now retire, satisfied at a job well done.

In contrast, it is intended here to offer a countervailing analysis, to the effect that France’s apparent disengagement from Africa, in its current limited form, is not a voluntary policy-shift, but is instead retreat, involuntary retreat, dictated by African circumstances – particularly the emergence of new regional powers – over which France has lost control. This loss of control and diminution of influence may be attributed to a number of factors. Within tropical Africa, the end of the Cold War part-inspired the rise of civil society and liberal parties opposed to ‘Big Men’ dictatorships and the institutionalised clientelism (what Jean-François Bayart has called *la politique du ventre*) of sclerotic regimes kept in power partly by external powers responding to perceived Cold War imperatives. The same decade since 1989 has seen the coming-of-age in tropical Africa of a new generation, better educated and travelled than their parents, who most importantly did not know colonial rule and did not serve in French uniform in defence of an unknown *mère-patrie*.

This loss of influence has been partly explained by the ‘Anglo-Saxon conspiracy’ theory of Franco-American rivalry in contemporary Africa, which has become

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common currency in much French thinking. However, the breakdown of traditional (and always inaccurate) labelling of African states as ‘francophone’ and ‘anglophone’ is hastened by the media and internet-fuelled dominance of English as a global vehicle of communication faute de mieux. And African attitudes to France have been profoundly affected by the growth of explicit racism and intolerance in France itself, demonstrated by the State during the forcible eviction in 1996 of hunger-striking Malian sans papiers from the Parisian church of St-Ambroise where they had sought sanctuary, and their subsequent expulsion on military planes.

It will be argued here that French interventionary practice from 1960 to 1990, including its first intervention in Rwanda, was driven primarily by a mechanical interventionary response, typically in tune with but operating independently of Cold War imperatives. As we shall see in Chapter 4, France was assisted and applauded by the US in its Chadian and Zairean interventions, which were perceived as key elements in Western containment of Soviet penetration and/or Libyan expansionism; but these interventions were driven in the first instance by French geo-strategic priorities and determined by the unique bilateral dynamic of Franco-African relations – here support for client regimes. Although they chimed with US interests at the time, they were not conducted at the Americans’ behest; the very idea would have been anathema in Paris. France, as its African policy-makers repeatedly insisted, understood Africa; and while it suited, this was accepted by the US and others as the Monroe Doctrine à la française. Indeed,
former US Assistant Secretary of State Herman Cohen told the Quilès Commission that he was: '[T]rès étonné de la théorie d’un complot anglo-saxon contre les intérêts de la France qui ne correspondait à aucune réalité... Les États-Unis ont toujours reconnu le “pré carré français” en Afrique comme un élément positif, que n’était pas contraire aux intérêts américains.'

However by 1990, although global geopolitics had changed, French policy in Africa had not. France under Mitterrand pursued an African policy indistinguishable from that of the previous three decades – to the extent that despite the efforts of some reformers, notably Mitterrand’s first cooperation minister Jean-Pierre Cot, Foccartian-style networks, particularly those developed by Mitterrand’s son and African policy advisor Jean-Christophe, again became key factors in the Franco-African equation. A key to understanding the failures of French African policy during the 1990s may be found in France’s own criteria – announced by the late President Mitterrand in his address to the 1990 Franco-African summit at La Baule – making aid conditional on progress towards democratisation. These conditions were never applied in practice, and by 1993, the notion of linking aid to political reform or human rights observance had been superseded by a more pragmatic discourse favouring ‘démocratisation à vitesse variable’. With Cold War security imperatives gone, French interventions no longer chimed with Western global geo-strategy, and many non-French observers failed to understand why France felt it necessary to intervene. By the mid-1990s, the US and others – Canada, Japan and Scandinavian countries – were no longer content to leave French economic influence unchallenged. At the same

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time, African commentators began writing of a second decolonisation, freed from the dead hand of Cold War-backed dictators, and inspired by successful insurgencies in Uganda, Ethiopia and Eritrea9, as well as by the example of largely peaceful regime transition in eastern Europe.

All of these factors have contributed to an involuntary diminution of France’s standing in Africa. But the key turning point, central to this study, was France’s failure in the mid-90s to recognise and respond to dramatically changed circumstances in those parts of the expanded pré carré it knew least well: the former Belgian territories of Zaire (a Belgian colony), Burundi and Rwanda (Belgian protectorates under League of Nations and latterly UN mandate). It was Rwanda which would become, by some assessments, France’s African Vietnam. France’s militarisation of and complicity with an extremist, sectarian regime even while that regime planned and implemented genocide, failed to prevent the overthrow of that regime – the first-ever defeat for a French-backed army and administration in Africa – and discredited French African policy domestically, in the region and internationally to the extent that its interventionary hands were tied in 1996 when, as it feared, the dominoes of the pré-carré began to fall to insurgents hostile to France. The effects of this have been multifold; most recently, following a military coup in the Comoros islands on 30 April 1999 which overthrew the administration of President Tadjidine Ben Said Massonde (installed following a French military intervention in 1995), a spokesperson at the Quai d’Orsay ‘ruled out’ intervention on that occasion.10

To summarise, it will be argued that French military intervention in sub-Saharan Africa since 1960 has operated according to a bilateral dynamic independent of -

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10 Paul Webster, ‘Army coup on Comoros islands’, *The Guardian* 1 May 1999
although often influenced by and justified in terms of global ideological or bloc alignments. It has been characterised by mechanical responses to perceived intervention stimuli. It has frequently disregarded international law and contradicted France's self-image as homeland and promoter of human rights. It reached its - logical and in many ways foreseeable - nadir as a result of its support for the genocidal regime in Rwanda.

Theoretical framework

It may be argued that IR intervention theory typically fails to account for the Franco-African interventionary system, although France acts in defence of its allies and interests as Realism tells us it will, in an interventionary sphere of influence comparable to that of the US in Latin America.\(^1\) It may be useful at this point to explain the tension suggested in this study's title between theory and practice of military intervention. One of the earliest volumes on the topic this century, Ellery Stowell's * Intervention in International Law* (1921), concluded in an Idealist age that: 'For generations it has been the custom of governments to justify their recourse to force before their nationals, and it will be no small guarantee of the observance of the law when governments understand that their explanations and excuses must stand the test of reason – by which is meant unprejudiced examination of the alleged grounds of action in all the states of the world'.\(^2\) This study will consider France's legitimisation and claimed derogations from the non-intervention norm, and identify the unique French

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\(^1\) Richard Little notes (in reference to JLS Girling, *America and the Third World: Revolution and Intervention*, London 1980) that: 'The United States has established a world-wide network of interlocking interests which are designed to promote American security and prosperity. As a consequence, the [US] has developed entangling patron-client relationships with a large number of governments around the world. The problem is that there is no “threshold” between involvement and intervention. Confronted by domestic instability in a client state, the [US] has found itself enmeshed in the task of securing a client’s survival.' Richard Little, 'Recent Literature on Intervention and Non-Intervention' in Ian Forbes & Mark Hoffman eds., *Political Theory, International Relations and the Ethics of Intervention*, Basingstoke: Macmillan 1993, p17

interventionary dynamic which arose from France’s regular activation of mechanical responses to perceived intervention stimuli in Africa.

Thereafter, it is intended to consider the perceived contemporary shift in intervention theory which has seen ‘humanitarian intervention’ move centre stage as a major dynamic of post-Cold War IR legitimisation. The purpose here will be to extract from the contemporary debate its essential argument regarding intervention. This argument comprises a growing acceptance of, and indeed demand for, intervention, facilitated by a decline of state sovereignty (and hence of the inviolability of frontiers) as an absolute concept, and by a corresponding erosion of the non-intervention norm. The key paradox here is that respect for state sovereignty, a core principle of international law, is incompatible with the right (and in the case of genocide, the obligation under the 1948 Genocide Convention) to intervene to defend human rights. The implication for future practice is that, if state sovereignty is no longer paramount, it is to be expected that there will be more frequent recourse to intervention. However, it will be argued that intervention in the 1990s has also been characterised by an attempt to marry the public demand and media-fuelled imperative for ostensibly humanitarian interventions (the ‘something must be done’ syndrome), with more traditional concerns for economic and strategic interests, the latter often dissimulated behind the former. (This will be discussed as a case study in Chapter 6, in the context of Opération Turquoise. The theoretical context will be the focus of Chapter 1.)

As a case study, however, French military intervention in Africa necessitates a consideration of the specific bipolar axis along which it operates. France’s regular activation of a mechanical response to a perceived intervention stimulus may be explained in light of France’s exceptional role in Africa since decolonisation. In his most recent collection of essays, Stanley Hoffman writes of the current
international system, ‘in which, long after decolonisation, the failure of the colonizers to prepare adequate state institutions for the peoples they had dominated, and the failure of many of the leaders of the newly emancipated peoples to build such structures, have led to violence and disintegration.’

However, it will be argued here that the emergence of weak, client states and dictatorships in francophone sub-Saharan Africa was not the result of the former colonists’ failure to prepare elites and institutions to govern in their image, but rather a deliberate policy – ‘withdraw the better to remain’ – to ensure those states would remain dependent on the colonial (or neo-colonial) power. Pierre Biarnès, in *Les Français en Afrique Noire, de Richelieu à Mitterrand* describes the deliberate retention of French influence in Africa, what he calls ‘la présence maintenue’, which is seen by Biarnès and the majority of French observers as an essential prerequisite for the stability of francophone African states which have seen massive demographic growth since independence (from 30 million to a projected 120 million at the turn of the century) unmatched by economic development. The infrastructure and basic services of those states, notably the payment of civil service salaries, has been possible only through massive and sustained French assistance in terms of aid and personnel (coopérants). From the early 1960s, there was consensus in the West that a French-managed bloc would be an efficient means, indeed the only obvious means, of retaining these new and potentially radical African states in the pro-Western (or at least not actively anti-Western) camp. Accordingly, France was given carte blanche throughout the Cold War to intervene in its exclusive African sphere, where the statist paradigm (which deemed sovereignty paramount and borders sacrosanct) did not apply. This derogation from international norms was made possible by the French-controlled creation of the new states to emerge from decolonisation,

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the sovereignty of which was circumscribed by military treaties and accords, and where intervention became an automatic feature of interstate relations along the Franco-African axis. The creation of this interventionary sphere will be discussed in Chapter 2.

Practice: Mechanics of French military intervention

Debate on French intervention within the political and military establishment has tended to focus on issues of practicality and power projection rather than on morality or intervention’s legal-political effect. Indeed, the initial raison d’être of recently-emerged pressure groups - notably the Observatoire permanent de la coopération française and Agir Ici/Survie - has been to provoke debate within France, amongst the public and parliamentarians, on the nature and effect of French power in Africa in its various manifestations, most obviously military. The commission chaired by Socialist deputy Paul Quilès in 1998, four years after the start of the Rwandan genocide, was the first such parliamentary consideration of French African policy, and we will conclude by considering whether this marks, as has been claimed, a new era in which parliamentary checks and balances will exert unprecedented control over policy-making on Africa. In Chapter 3, it is intended to consider the generality of French military interventions and the chain of cause and effect - from the intervention stimulus to the intervention response - which leads to the deployment of troops.

This study’s empirical focus - the uniqueness of the Franco-African axis in the international system - was demonstrated by the continuity of French interventionary behaviour in the early 1990s, with no immediate change correspondent to the global shift in the balance of power and in the use and justification of military intervention. A perceived need to rework the legitimisation of French intervention, it will be argued, only came about in 1994 -

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13 See for example Richard Hodder-Williams, An Introduction to the Politics of Tropical Africa, London:
Operation Turquoise in Rwanda - following the first failure of intervention in France's African sphere. Although the justificatory discourse of French military intervention was changed in 1994 to embrace a humanitarian agenda under a UN mandate, its practice - a reluctant observance of the non-intervention norm - was only altered (and against France's will) by a transformation of the political and military environment in central Africa.

Other studies of external military involvement in post-colonial Africa have focused on the Cold War as the context and rationale for the phenomenon. The only study which specifically considers external military intervention in Africa is Keith Somerville's Foreign Military Intervention in Africa (1990); the only significant work focusing on French power (as distinct from 'cooperation' and development aid) on the continent is John Chipman's French Power in Africa (1989). These volumes overlap by just one chapter each; Somerville only considers French involvement in his fourth chapter ('The war in Chad: France and Libya fight it out'), and Chipman deals with French military power only in his fifth. Both works were written in the last years of the Cold War, and since that time only two monographs have dealt specifically with French military intervention in Africa: Alain Rouvez's Disconsolate Empires (in which France is considered as one of three interventionary powers along with Belgium and Britain), and Inger Østerdahl's La France dans l'Afrique de l'après-guerre froide: Interventions et justifications (1997).

Considering the three decades from decolonisation to his time of writing (in the late 1980s), Somerville notes that: 'Many of the wars fought since 1960 have not just been between competing African states or rival movements within states,
they have also involved outside powers, whose presence has escalated, prolonged and frequently prevented the conclusion of the conflicts’. Inevitably, his overview is shaped by the Cold War, and he groups together interventions - by 'the Belgians, UN forces, the French, the British, the Cubans and the Israelis' - into conflicts which Christopher Clapham has since sought to classify separately as wars of decolonisation, secession, reform (internal opposition to dictators), and 'warlord' insurgencies. Indeed, Clapham’s 1996 monograph *Africa and the International System: The Politics of State Survival* and 1998 collection *African Guerrillas* offer a clear analysis of the key post-Cold War shift, whereby the legitimacy (and international tolerance) of African insurgencies has grown as the effectiveness of states has declined. Valuable here is Clapham's diagnosis of some common characteristics of insurgencies: they derive from blocked political aspirations, and are only likely to be undertaken in 'extreme political conditions'. This provides a useful foil to those commentators who deliberately confuse 'warlord' and 'reform' insurgencies in order to dismiss all African revolts as driven solely by a scramble for loot.

Chipman's chapter, 'French Military Power and Black Africa since 1960', draws on his influential 1985 Adelphi Paper, *French Military Policy and African Security*. In both, he supports the explanation of French African policy, common to much of the literature on the subject, that Africa has been an essential prerequisite of France's maintenance of medium power status on the superpower-dominated world stage:

[A] medium power must be able to exert control or influence in places where no other power can do quite the same. To compensate for an incapacity to exert influence in all parts of the globe, as would a superpower, a medium

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19 ibid
power, such as France, must try to preserve for itself a certain exclusive influence in a region.\textsuperscript{22}

Chipman concludes that French militarism is an essential underpinning of France's influence, and of French power, in Africa, without which France might soon be no more influential than the other former colonial powers, or its presumed arch-rival on the continent, the USA. By this logic, as we intend to argue, any diminution of French military power must also mark a reduction of French power generally, and if that decline may be shown to be involuntary, then the diminution of French power becomes retreat.

In conclusion, it will be argued that although IR intervention scholars have not used the Franco-African interventionary system for empirical support, it can serve as a useful case study for the following reasons: France acts in defence of its allies and interests as Realism tells us it will, but a consideration of France's legitimisation - its derogations from the non-intervention norm - allows us to identify a unique French interventionary dynamic which outlived the end of bipolarity, and was only altered by its failure in a changed African environment, shaped by newly-assertive regional powers, post-1994.

Chapter I: Theory of military intervention

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to consider the theory of military intervention. It is intended to proceed from definitions of intervention to an analysis of the non-intervention norm (as encapsulated by international law in Article 2 of the UN Charter), and derogations from that norm, i.e. the most frequent justifications offered by intervenors. These derogations typically include intervention with the consent of the target state and by invitation; intervention justified by treaty; counter-intervention; intervention in self-defence, including protection of the intervenor’s nationals; and humanitarian intervention, both ‘old style’ (which overlaps with self-defence to imply protection of the intervenor’s and its allies’ nationals) and ‘new style’, by which is understood intervention to protect a threatened population against its own government in cases of massive violations of human rights,\(^1\) and which, in a consideration of recent French practice, may be traced to the French-promoted concept of the droit d’ingérence\(^2\). A degree of overlapping is common in intervenors’ justifications of their interventions, and contrasts with the clarity with which intervention is prohibited by international law. Indeed, it has been argued that: ‘State practice is confused: at first sight, justifications properly concerning internal conflicts (such as consent) are usually intermingled with justifications typical of international conflicts (such as self-
defence or the protection of nationals abroad). 3

Intervention will be discussed as a general phenomenon in this chapter. Subsequently, Chapter 2 will explain the historical context and the geopolitical theatre of France’s interventionism, and Chapter 3 will, before we move on to specific case studies (Chad, Zaire and Rwanda), discuss the pattern of French interventionary practice over 30 years, from 1960 to 1990. It is intended here, therefore, to establish firstly the international norms prohibiting intervention, by which to identify the exceptionality of France’s African interventions. Secondly, through considering common derogations from these rules of nonintervention, it is hoped to establish a framework through which to consider the permissibility of intervention in general, and of French intervention in particular. The chapter will conclude with an assessment of the current debate on humanitarian intervention in light of post-Cold War attempts, including those of France, to reinvent military intervention as a manifestation of humanitarianism while creating a new role for the armed forces. 4

Definitions of intervention

International Relations generally characterises intervention as endemic and ubiquitous in world affairs, ‘the propensity displayed by states for intervening

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4 This structure is intended to mirror that of the concluding two chapters of this study, where France’s first two interventions in Rwanda (Opérations Noroît and Amaryllis) were justified by the full range of traditional or ‘old-style’ legitimisations, but were followed, subsequent to what will be termed the 1994 watershed in French interventionary legitimisation, by the adoption by France of new-style ‘humanitarian’ legitimisation for its third Rwandan intervention (Opération Turquoise).
in one another’s domestic affairs [being] a persistent feature of the international system; to the extent that intervention has been declared a ‘subject [which] is practically the same as that of international politics in general from the beginning of time to the present’.

Despite the phenomenon’s ubiquity, we may begin its identification from a familiar starting point, the dictionary definition which covers ‘any interference in the affairs of others, especially by one state in the affairs of another’, and which in the age of globalisation could be expanded to include practically all international interactions, political, economic, and cultural. It has therefore proved easy to confuse intervention as it is commonly understood – the Good Samaritan’s impulse to help one’s distressed neighbour – with intervention as used by states and state proxies (mercenaries, clients etc.) to further national interests. This confusion is often deliberately fomented by intervenors in an attempt to conceal prosaic economic, political or geostrategic interests in an altruistic wrapping of reluctant obligation or humanitarianism. It is the contention here that our case study – French military intervention in sub-Saharan Africa – fits this model. The authors and actors in France’s interventionary sphere have always claimed to act in defence of the distressed, the weak and the legitimate; while its interventions have invariably been driven by perceptions of French interests which, although they sometimes matched Western interests in general, were sufficient in themselves to trigger intervention. Despite multiple,


Martin Shaw, arguing the centrality of global society, suggests that states are so interlinked as to render the traditional concepts of sovereignty and nonintervention irrelevant: In terms of economy, culture and even politics..., the sovereignty of territorially-bounded nation-states is in crisis. When a state intervenes externally to its own territory, it enters society which in these more fundamental senses is already linked in a million ways to society within its own borders. When a state is intervened upon by other states, its society is already linked in all sorts of ways to society in the intervening state or states. Martin Shaw, ‘The Global
multi-layered justification, French intervention in Africa, it will be argued, has never been disinterested or altruistic, and has never benefited the people (as distinct from the elites) of the intervened state.

Our understanding of intervention therefore is that identified by Hedley Bull, for whom intervention was ‘dictatorial or coercive interference, by an outside party or parties, in the sphere of jurisdiction of a sovereign state’.9 Other common definitions are mutually reinforcing: ‘Forcible interference, short of declaring war, by one or more powers in the affairs of another power’; ‘Coercion short of war’.10 Intervention therefore is dictatorial or coercive interference, dictatorial because it is undertaken without the consent of (at least some of) the intervened, coercive because it is achieved through force, i.e. militarily. Hence for our purposes, intervention equals military intervention. Theorists concur that: ‘[T]here is a preference for restricting the concept to military activity. This move is often justified on the grounds that such a limitation is consistent with the manner in which the word is commonly used with reference to events in international politics’.11

The collection of essays edited by Hedley Bull from which this definition is drawn (and in which France enjoyed what its author, Dominique Moïsi, called the ‘dubious honour’ of being the only non-superpower to merit a chapter on its interventionism12) concludes that: ‘[I]ntervention in the sense of coercive interference by outside parties in the sphere of jurisdiction of a state is an

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State and the Politics of Intervention’, paper presented to the BISA annual conference, University of Warwick, 16 December 1993
endemic or built-in feature of our present international arrangements’.\textsuperscript{13} Theory of intervention has therefore been shaped by this sense of centrality, and also by a prevailing Realist - i.e. power-based - presumption that intervention has always been, and will continue to be, endemic in the absence of a world government able to enforce a prohibition on the practice. Indeed as early as 1921, when a generation of interwar Idealists sought to create such a government and a set of rules by which states would be bound, Ellery Stowell declared that: ‘No subject in the whole range of man’s relations merits a more careful consideration than does the question of the justice of international intervention’.\textsuperscript{14}

Most usefully for our purposes, Stowell starts with a rule governing interventionary behaviour, i.e. determining the only circumstances where intervention is permissible, by which to judge the actions and justifications of intervening states. From this legalist perspective, a simple and readily verifiable benchmark emerges: ‘Intervention in the relations between states is... the rightful use of force or the reliance thereon to constrain obedience to international law.’\textsuperscript{15} Accordingly, all other recourse to intervention is illegal: ‘[A]ll the other just grounds of intervention can be discovered and defined so that all states of good will may give heed to the law and cooperate to check the transgressions of the evil-doer’.\textsuperscript{16}

To the late twentieth century reader this formula seems pitifully naïve; but it does offer a useful starting point. It might have been assumed that Idealists would advocate unequivocal support for a ban on intervention. However, faced with breaches of international law or convention, Idealists could support a moral imperative to intervene (approving the US intervention in World War I, advocating intervention by Britain and France in the Spanish Civil War etc.).

\textsuperscript{13} Hedley Bull ed., \textit{Intervention in World Politics}, Oxford: OUP 1984, p181
\textsuperscript{14} Ellery C. Stowell, \textit{Intervention in International Law}, Washington DC: John Byrne & Co. 1921, p.v
\textsuperscript{15} Ellery C. Stowell, \textit{Intervention in International Law}, Washington DC: John Byrne & Co. 1921, p.vi
world war later, Idealists Eleanor Roosevelt and René Cassin sought to have this imperative enshrined, in response to the Holocaust, in the 1948 Genocide Convention’s obligation to intervene to prevent a recognised genocide. This Idealist belief in counter-intervention to defend democracy, or more recently, human rights - in 1930s Spain or 1990s Yugoslavia - often leads to a call for interventionary action from sources otherwise opposed to power politics. However, Stowell offered an important caveat: ‘[T]he decision as to the justice of the grounds of intervention or non-intervention in any particular instance must in a democracy be determined by the prevailing opinion of its citizens. Each citizen, therefore, bears his part of this supreme responsibility’.17

Certainly, intervention may be limited, constrained or abandoned as a result of popular will, generally understood to mean ‘public opinion’, itself shaped by media, party-political and pressure-group opinion-formers whose motives are not always disinterested. This is more apparent if the intervenor suffers casualties: the speed of the US and French withdrawal from Lebanon in the 1980s, of the US and others from Somalia in 1992, and of the first UN Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR I) in 1994 (following the murder of ten Belgian troops), testifies to the power of this ‘home front’ pressure.18 That intervention is not always cost-free for the intervenor was a lesson learnt by both of the Cold War’s superpowers. When by 1970 the Vietnam war turned definitively against the US as a result of media and public pressure at home coupled with stalemate on the battlefield, Urs Schwarz19 offered the following recipe for successful intervention; it should be:

...conceived as a strategy to limit the use of armed force and to keep events

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1 ibid
2 Ellery C. Stowell, Intervention in International Law, Washington DC: John Byrne & Co. 1921, p.63
3 Hence the quest for the ‘clean war’, i.e with no casualties for the intervenor; Mark Danner notes that ‘Kosovo represents the grail which American leaders have been seeking for decades: the politically cost-free war’. Mark Danner, ‘Kosovo: The Meaning of Victory’, The New York Review of Books XLVI:12, 15 July 1999, p54
under the control of the actor in its pursuit of its national goals. It involves an act by a powerful state in relation to one much weaker; it is intended by the intervenor to vindicate a rule or principle or pattern of politics, morality, or law; it is aimed at the structure of political authority in the target society which it seeks either to change or to protect against a change imposed by others; it represents a sharp break with the pre-existing attitudes and behavior of the intervenor; and it is limited in character, scale and time.20

But in the absence of significant casualties or irrefutable evidence of abuses by the intervenor (both factors instrumental in the West’s failure in Somalia), there is little evidence of popular will, as distinct from politicians’ caution, sufficient to prevent intervention. This factor is particularly relevant to our study of French policy, where thirty years of interventions in Africa provoked little public debate – or parliamentary scrutiny – until charges of French complicity through its interventions in the Rwandan genocide of 1994.

The decision to intervene, therefore, is one taken by rulers, not peoples, and intervention is conducted by states. For Clausewitz, resort to the military instrument by the state was a rational policy option, one deeply embedded in political judgements. For Morgenthau, politics is about the pursuit of power, and the use of the military instrument by the state is one means of developing that power. Accordingly, the study of military intervention is defined as ‘deeply rooted in the most traditional aspects of the study of international relations and security studies, connected with states, their motivations (national interests, the exercise of power and the development of security), and their relations (through balances of power)’.21 Realism argues that in a bipolar balance of power system, as obtained from 1945 to 1989, instability within the international system is minimised by the threat of war. But the balance of power is not equipped to contend with instability within a state; such instability undermines the power of

21 Stuart Croft & Adrian Treacher, ‘Aspects of intervention in the South’ in Andrew Dorman & Thomas Otte eds., Military Intervention: From Gunboat Diplomacy to Humanitarian Intervention, Aldershot:
that state and creates an area of uncertainty in the international system. If the unstable state falls within the sphere of influence of a hegemonic state, which perceives that the uncertainty is undermining security or stability within its sphere, then the hegemonic state will intervene. Similarly, and pertinent for any examination of Franco-African relations, Richard Little has stated that: ‘When there is a high level of interaction between two states, the decision-makers in one must respond to the emergence of civil war in the other’; France’s response to perceived crises in African states has invariably been interventionary (including, as we shall make clear, cases of deliberate nonintervention where intervention is expected). Intervention may also be used by strong states as punishment, in defence of perceived rights – to pride and prestige - which are in fact enjoyed only by those states, i.e. those strong enough to exercise military force with near-impunity against another state.

However while Realists would defend the right of powerful states to intervene in order to maintain the international balance of power, to assure the stability of a sphere of influence, or to safeguard other perceived strategic or economic interests, they would be quick to invoke sovereignty and international law to avoid unwanted interventionary commitments. By this logic, states do not intervene for ideological, sentimental, moral or other non-power reasons. If an actor fails to intervene, and retrospectively it can be shown that such a policy would have been advantageous, this apparent rectitude cannot be attributed to an acceptance of the non-intervention norm; states make reference to the norm only as a diplomatic device. Indeed, by June 1999 there had been no satisfactory...
explanation, except one of bald Realism, for the inconsistency whereby massive intervention in Yugoslavia (albeit at 15,000 feet) was justified to prevent violations of human rights in Kosovo, but had not been justified in Russia during that state’s war against secessionist Chechnya in the mid-1990s. It is evident therefore that strong powers, and especially nuclear powers, are not subject to intervention. Hence there could be no intervention in Chechnya, or Tibet, or indeed Northern Ireland, to protect those states’ populations against human rights abuses by their governments. As there can be no intervention by militarily weak powers in the affairs of a strong state should large-scale repression take place within the latter’s borders, especially if that state is one of the Security Council’s permanent five, it may be argued that there can be no consistent criteria for humanitarian intervention. Moreover, such intervention, to be legal (which NATO’s aerial bombardment of Yugoslavia was not) would require the mandate of the UN Security Council, on which each permanent member enjoys a right of veto. Accordingly, there could never be legally-sanctioned intervention, no matter how morally imperative, against one of the Security Council permanent five. By the same logic, in the absence of counterintervention by another strong state, there might appear to be few constraints on the same permanent five intervening at will in the affairs of other states.

Given the identifiable biases of the dominant Realist paradigm of power politics - a focus on northern hemisphere (or ‘Great Power’) relationships, and its statist ‘billiard ball’ model of international relations – Richard Little identified the central weakness of the Realist analysis of intervention: ‘From the power politician’s perspective, intervention is just another manifestation of the fact that "weak" states must submit to the power possessed by "strong" states. Intervention, therefore, does not warrant special attention; it is encompassed by a general theory of power.’24 Bull agrees that, by his own definition: ‘If intervention

is dictatorial interference by outside powers in the sphere of jurisdiction of a state or independent political community, and this is inherently something that is done by the strong to the weak, then it does indeed make sense to seek the chief illustrations of it in our times in the relations between the advanced industrial states... and the states of the so-called Third World. Should it be concluded from this that legal prohibitions on intervention have proved useless?; or simply that because such prohibitions can only be enforced by strong states, those strong states are only subject to these prohibitions de jure and not de facto?

It is important in this context to consider the variable nature of the state. If we agree that intervention only happens in weak states, we should also consider postcolonial states which by their nature are weak – economically, politically and militarily – and hence susceptible to intervention. Stanley Hoffman points out that: ‘Many of these [post-colonial] states are remote indeed from the model of unitary and rational players that realists... had described as the basic units of the international system... The new states were often states in name only and, within borders artificially drawn by colonial masters, certainly not nation-states’. For Hoffman, these states represent the ‘floor’ of unworkable states (the ceiling being developed states pooling their sovereignty through economic blocs (EU) and globalisation), and points out that: ‘[M]any of the formerly colonized, nonaligned or developing countries... remain suspicious even of collective interventions, both because of the prominent role played by the major powers, with their imperialist past, in promoting such enterprises and because most of the cases of

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2 Hedley Bull ed., Intervention in World Politics, Oxford: OUP 1984, p135. Earlier in the same volume, the central paradox was spelled out: that ‘...under the influence of Third World majorities in the political organs of the United Nations, legal prohibitions of intervention have multiplied; on the other hand, interventionary activity of one kind or another is so widespread that it is sometimes said to be endemic or ‘structural’ in nature.’ Ibid p5

intervention in domestic wars have occurred in Africa, Asia, or Latin America and affected small and poor states.\textsuperscript{28} Hence intervention is something that the strong do to the weak, and its application is therefore inconsistent.

Accordingly, it might be supposed that left-leaning ‘Development’ and ‘Dominance-and-Dependence’ theorists (eschewing the arguably inappropriate label ‘Marxist’ in the pre-industrial African context) would condemn all interventions as coercion of the weak by the strong. Such theory typically argues that: ‘The decline of the nineteenth century empires during the first two-thirds of the twentieth century was dramatic, but it did not imply that the processes of dominance and dependence had disappeared. In fact, it was possible to discern a distinctive process of “underdevelopment” which consolidated the continuing dominance of the centre at the expense of the periphery.’\textsuperscript{29} Anti-colonialist theorists have viewed issues of intervention along north-south (or even south-north) lines, perpendicular to the axes of ‘international institutions’ or the West-East balance of power upon which the perspectives of the northern hemisphere’s Idealists and Realists, respectively, have been centred. Moreover, if imperialism is the highest stage of capitalism as Lenin argued,\textsuperscript{30} then military intervention is inherent in a perceived neo-imperial world order; Bull notes that: ‘The Leninist or neo-Leninist theory of imperialism or dominance and dependence encourages us not merely to recognise a high incidence of intervention by the advanced capitalist states in the affairs of Third World countries but also to see intervention as systematic or structural in nature, a built-in feature of present arrangements.’\textsuperscript{31}

One of the anti-imperialist texts which most inspired the leaders of the 1980s-1990s ‘New African Political Order’ is Walter Rodney’s *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda has described Rodney’s influence on students at Dar es Salaam University in the late 1960s, many of whom were to become influential in African politics in subsequent decades:

> At Dar es Salaam University we found a very good political and intellectual atmosphere with a lot of modernist revolutionary thinkers such as Walter Rodney... We became exposed to new ideas and this gave us a very good chance to become familiar with pan-Africanist and anti-colonialist ideas, the most dramatic of which was the exposure to the role imperialism had played in distorting socio-economic development in Africa. This played a large part in focusing our own political outlook as far as internal and external issues were concerned. We had previously had a vague nationalist feeling but it now took definite shape because it was backed by a coherent ideological outlook.

The exposure to radical ideas of this generation was to prove key to events discussed throughout this study, and to their potential outcome. For many anti-imperialists, interventionary activity among ‘weak’ (i.e. developing) states - what might be termed ‘horizontal intervention’ (Tanzania’s intervention in Uganda, Vietnam’s in Cambodia, or even, arguably, the more recent Nigerian/ECOMOG intervention in Sierra Leone and Uganda-Rwanda’s in the former Zaire) - could be accepted and even applauded as morally imperative.

In a post-Cold War development of Bull’s theory, Croft and Treacher argue that ‘Intervention is important in understanding the security politics of the South but... this is only true if intervention is defined in a wide sense; it is not enough to

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explain the high levels of violence by applying Northern interpretations of intervention, as these only have a limited relevance in the South. They examine three ideal types of intervention in the South: Regional Power Intervention, Humanitarian Intervention and Internal Intervention. Interestingly, they treat intervention in the South as a phenomenon apart which cannot be adequately assessed through the distorting prism of Northern-centric intervention theory, which implies, as Bull does above, that intervention is primarily something that the North, the strong, does to the South, the weak. Seeking to broaden the use of the term, they argue that intervention in the South cannot be solely attributed to the action of state against state, but should also be taken to mean the intervention of military force into political discourse. Significantly, in suggesting that: ‘If intervention is to be a useful tool in a broader approach to Security Studies, especially in the South, its definition must move beyond the inter-state level, and consider intra-state dynamics,’ they venture the conclusion that ‘traditional patterns of conflict, although perhaps exacerbated or minimised by the effects of the Cold War, were not dependent on the East-West confrontation for their existence... [T]he Cold War and its termination has not been the vital variable in assessing military intervention in the South.’

And our case study – French policy in Africa – indicates that intervention does not represent a sharp break with pre-existing attitudes and behaviour (according to Schwarz’s ‘ideal intervention’ criteria above); rather it demonstrates a pattern of behaviour so well-established as to become mechanical, i.e. decided without consideration of the uniqueness of each case, or without the checks and balances

presumed normal in the decision-making processes of a democratic state. Mechanical intervention implies a singularity in the relationship between the intervenor and the intervened; rather than an extraordinary deviation from normal behaviour, intervention becomes a routine response to crisis, becomes, in the French term, ‘banalised’ (*banalisé*).

This is particularly pertinent to a consideration of French interventionary activity, where the supposed conceptual shift which has led to the current debate on humanitarian intervention was not apparent until France’s belated assumption of the humanitarian mantle in 1994. Moreover, this phenomenon seemed short-lived given the apparent reversion to type of French interventions after Rwanda, in the Comoros and the Central African Republic. Consideration of legitimisation is essential to allow this study’s subsequent assessment of the validity and effectiveness of French attempts to invoke humanitarianism to justify its own interventions, which were driven by a specifically French set of motives.

**Identifying intervention**

To establish a working definition of intervention, it will be useful to identify its principal characteristics, and to establish whether intervention may readily be recognised as such when it happens, or whether it is easily concealed. How then do we know an intervention is taking place? Is it simply when the armed forces of one state enter the territory of another? Frederic Pearson concludes that: ‘Foreign military intervention is defined as the movement of troops or military forces by one independent country... across the border of another independent country, or actions by troops already stationed in the target country’.³⁷ Similarly, Thomas Otte defines military intervention as ‘overt military activity, i.e. the
organised and systematic physical transgression of recognised state borders. Accordingly, Otte goes on to offer a seemingly definitive definition of the phenomenon:

Military intervention is the planned limited use of force for a transitory period by a state (or a group of states) against a weaker state in order to change or maintain the target state’s domestic structure or to change its external policies; it is the continuation of politics with the limited addition of means of military force in order to re-establish the normal pattern of bilateral relations by forcing the opponent into compliance. Military intervention is a rigid instrument that does not leave any room for concessions to be made to the intervened and that embraces the risk of escalation.

So the movement of troops from one state to another, say from France to Germany as part of NATO exercises, does not constitute intervention as it is by invitation, does not seek to influence the target state’s internal or foreign policies, takes place in the absence of internal conflict and is unopposed by any party within the host state (which can only be classed an ‘intervened’ state if such troop movement is coercive, i.e. opposed by a party to a conflict within that state; however in this example, the German Greens and anti-militarist groups might argue that such manoeuvres are in fact opposed by significant numbers of the host state’s citizens, and the presence of foreign troops and weapons, especially nuclear, does diminish their sovereignty and right to self-determination).

Accordingly, to be intervention as we understand it here, it must be coercive, and hence can only be something that the strong (or at the very least the stronger) do to the weak. Bull explains that: ‘A basic condition of any policy that can be called interventionary in this sense is that the intervener should be superior in power to the object of the intervention: it is only because the former is relatively strong

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and the latter relatively weak that the question arises of a form of interference that is dictatorial or coercive.\textsuperscript{40}

Hence movement of troops across a border and into another state’s territory becomes intervention when it is coercive. But, from certain legalist perspectives, such intervention only becomes ‘internationally relevant’ when it breaches international law; Antonio Tanca notes that:

[A]lthough the crossing of one State’s boundaries by the armed forces of another State is generally of international concern (and attracts the application of the rules on international conflicts), in cases of internal conflict, it is the status of the fighting factions and their alleged power to request an intervention which is considered to be relevant.\textsuperscript{41}

This implies an international legal prohibition on intervention, Vincent’s ‘legalist paradigm’. What is it, and what are its effects and implications? For some analysts, intervention is limited to cases when there is ‘blatant use of military force in another country’ but where resistance is not sufficient to constitute war. However, all analyses of intervention take as a starting point the theoretical notion that sovereignty is inviolate, equally applicable to all states weak or strong, and is the defining principle of the international order: what is known as ‘the nonintervention norm.’

**The nonintervention norm**

This concept, the focus of Little’s and Vincent’s mid-1970s studies, is based on state sovereignty, which is not inviolate.\textsuperscript{42} However, both authors suggest that

\textsuperscript{41} Antonio Tanca, *Foreign Armed Intervention in Internal Conflict*, Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff 1993, p9
\textsuperscript{42} Hoffman notes that: ‘The case against military intervention has a hard core: it is the defense of the norm of sovereignty, cornerstone of the interstate order since the seventeenth century… The sovereign state is deemed to be the protector of the security and property of its subjects, as in Hobbes’ *Leviathan*, or the guardian of their rights, as in John Locke and John Stuart Mill; or the expression of the collective will, as in Rousseau. Even if, in practice, the state is one that violates some of these rights, assaults the security and property of some of its subjects, and lacks a “general will” because of a clash of antagonistic group wills
actors in the international system will seek to re-establish the norm, either through restoration of the original system or through system transformation.\textsuperscript{43} The typical starting-place in the search for a norm of nonintervention is the Idealist catechism, which elevates international law as a means of determining norms of international relations. International law offers simple, some would argue simplistic codes of right and wrong by which to judge the actions of international actors, primarily states.\textsuperscript{44} Except for very select, special circumstances, not all of which are universally accepted by international legal experts, intervention by one state into the affairs of another state for the express purpose of changing the latter’s policies or conditions is flatly prohibited by international law. The cornerstone of this prohibition is Article 2, paragraph 4 of the United Nations Charter, which prohibits ‘direct, overt aggression capable of objective and persuasive proof’, and states that: ‘All members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations.’\textsuperscript{45} If we agree that intervention is ‘dictatorial or coercive interference, by an outside party or parties, in the sphere of jurisdiction of a sovereign state,’\textsuperscript{46} or ‘forcible interference, short of war, in the affairs of another power’,\textsuperscript{47} it is a violation of sovereignty, and therefore illegal. Belatchew Asrat, in his comprehensive studies of Article 2(4), emphasises that: ‘The Article interdicts not only war but also the illegal unilateral

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\textsuperscript{43} ‘The nonintervention norm is premised on the assumption that a clear distinction can be drawn between domestic and international politics. Its accompanying metanorm sustains this distinction, but indicates that the boundary of the nonintervention system must be redrawn in the event of civil war, changing the point of equilibrium in the system to include a third actor.’ Richard Little, \textit{Intervention: External Involvement in Civil Wars}, London: Martin Robertson 1975, p58

\textsuperscript{44} ‘The traditionalist literature has always acknowledged the complexity and ambiguity associated with intervention. To resolve the problem of definition, traditionalists have tended to rely on the formulation of intervention provided by international lawyers. It follows that intervention is seen in normative terms, representing a deviation from the norm of non-intervention.’ Richard Little, ‘Revisiting intervention: a survey of recent developments’, \textit{Review of International Studies} 13 (1987), p51

\textsuperscript{45} Article 2(4), \textit{Charter of the United Nations}, New York: UN Dept. of Public Information

threat and use of force by States in their relations.\textsuperscript{48}

Article 2(4) was subsequently reinforced by the UN Definition of Aggression enshrined in General Assembly Resolution 3314 (XXIX). Although this norm of nonintervention as expressed by the UN Charter initially appears of little value for assessing much interventionary activity - ‘objective and persuasive proof’ of ‘direct, overt aggression’ often proving elusive - it does, according to Christopher Joyner, entail ‘a minimum condition for public order and has come to be regarded as the core provision of the Charter with respect to the use of force’.\textsuperscript{49} It will be necessary to assess the validity of this norm applied universally, before using it to measure French interventionary activity, and thereby establish the uniqueness of the French case.

**Derogations from the nonintervention norm**

To what extent is Article 2(4) binding? It appears incontrovertible that a state’s violation of Article 2(4) through an act of intervention would constitute an act of aggression, unless legitimising circumstances could be convincingly demonstrated. Any breach of the prohibition on intervention would, by this analysis, depend on the ability of the intervenor to portray its actions as the exception to its normal behaviour in the international arena, and to claim legitimising circumstances to justify this deviation which might, if recurrent, form a code of accepted derogations from the nonintervention norm. The forms these derogations may take will be considered now, while bearing in mind two questions to be addressed in Chapters 2 and 3: did France’s African interventions 1960 to 1990 represent the exception or the rule of its behaviour along the Franco-

\textsuperscript{47} Martin Wight, *Power Politics*, Harmondsworth 1979, px


African axis?; and until 1994, was there any need or popular clamour for France to demonstrate legitimising circumstances for its frequent interventions, in France, internationally, or indeed to the intervened?

**Intervention by invitation**

Where there is consent by the intervened - as in cases of intervention by invitation - there is not coercion and hence no intervention according to the definitions we have considered. What remains unclear is who is in a position to give consent. In most cases where a strong patron state is invited to intervene by a weak client, the representative credentials of the client are at best questionable. Joyner allows for intervention ‘in response to an explicit, wilful invitation by the legitimate government of a state’; but what if the incumbent government is illegitimate and/or unable to exercise jurisdiction over all its territory? Need that state’s sovereignty be respected? To return to the essential criteria for military intervention offered earlier - troops crossing borders – Michael Walzer is swift to qualify his own assertion of the primacy of sovereignty - ‘the only way we have of establishing an arena within which freedom can be fought for and (sometimes) won’ - by questioning the inviolability of borders such sovereignty implies:

> [T]he ban on boundary crossings is not absolute - in part because of the arbitrary and accidental character of state boundaries, in part because of the ambiguous relation of the political community or communities within those boundaries to the government that defends them.... [I]t isn’t always clear when a community is in fact self-determining, when it qualifies, so to speak, for nonintervention.  

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50 UN Secretary General Kofi Annan has predicted that the UN would follow the example of the Organisation of African Unity which, at its July 1999 summit in Algiers, refused to accept military coup-leaders as legitimate heads-of-state; Reuters reported: 'Annan said [the OAU] "in a welcome change from an earlier era", insisted that governments which came to power through unconstitutional means "could no longer expect to be received as equals in an assembly of elected heads of state. I am sure the day will come when the General Assembly... will follow Africa's lead, and apply similarly stringent standards to all its members".' Anthony Goldman, 'Annan predicts UN will one day snub coup leaders', Reuters 30 September, 1999

However, Antonio Tanca argues that the intervenor is under an international obligation to all states (and not just to the potential intervened state) to recognise sovereignty as an objective principle:

[T]he very validity of the rule concerning the exclusive right of the incumbent government to express consent to a foreign intervention, and the claim that such an intervention is by definition outside the scope of Article 2(4) is in need of validation (...) The crossing of a State’s borders by the armed forces of another would suffice to breach the obligation toward the other members of the international community, since its object is simply to prohibit the use of armed force outside one’s own territory. The consent or invitation of the target State would certainly be capable of precluding the wrongfulness of the conduct of the “attacking” State, but only in their bilateral relations; that conduct would remain wrongful vis-à-vis all other members of the international community; for them, the consent given by the target State is irrelevant.52

And Asrat concludes that: ‘[Concerning] invitation which is alleged to justify the intervention and presence of foreign forces in another State, it is indicated that such an allegation is not valid where the inhabitants’ free exercise of political self-determination is thwarted by the intervention. This kind of invitation does not absolve the intervention from being an illegal use of force against the political independence of the particular State.’53 What if the government is one side of a bifurcated actor, and there is an alternative government claiming legitimacy? When two authorities exist within a state, which may legitimately call for external assistance and which may not? If one authority, or an identifiable section of civil society is opposed to the external interference, such interference becomes coercive and hence intervention.54

52 Antonio Tanca, Foreign Armed Intervention in Internal Conflict, Dordrecht: Nijhoff 1993, pp 10, 21
54 Although Stanley Hoffman argues in this regard that: “If the sovereignty and independence of a state begins to break down (internal instability), then other states can no longer rely on it to fulfil its obligations to international society. The effects of domestic instability may ‘spill over’ and destabilise the international system, and some form of change in established behaviour patterns may have to be sanctioned. In the case of civil war, the nonintervention norm is superseded by a metanorm of nonintervention which permits actors in the international system to acknowledge the existence of a second authority structure in the target state (...) Insofar as the phenomenon of failed, troubled, and murderous states is a disease of the Westphalian system, interventions can be interpreted as attempts at restoring a modified Westphalian state system –
Intervention to respect treaty obligations

Intervention may be deemed permissible in situations in which an existing treaty permits it. Joyner notes that:

Under certain conditions, acts of intervention may be granted through treaty arrangements made by one state with another state. Some states have, in fact, concluded special bilateral treaties of “friendship and cooperation” specifying the possibility of intervention by the protector state in certain discretionary circumstances. Under these special, bilaterally negotiated conditions, the acceptability of treaty rights clearly is viewed in international law as a legitimate exception to the norm of nonintervention. The precondition here, of course, is that the treaty must still be in force and duly respected by both governments at the time an intervention occurs.\(^55\)

To this precondition we might add, with particular reference to the Rwandan case study, that if there is to be intervention, the treaty must allow for direct military support on the ground for the state’s armed forces, and post hoc amendments to any existing treaty do not make earlier interventions retrospectively legal. Practice suggests that intervenors rarely abide by the letter of this derogation; the terms of treaties invoked to justify intervention are frequently disregarded once the intervention is underway. More recently, the same issue has arisen where the intervenor finds himself exceeding the terms of the mandate under which the intervention was originally deemed permissible, the Vietnam phenomenon which would resurface latterly in Somalia as ‘mission creep.’

As with the derogation claiming invitation, questions might also be asked about the legitimacy of those who negotiated the treaty: is a treaty signed by a dictator who seized power in a military coup legitimate and representative of the popular

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will? Similarly, the circumstances in which treaties are negotiated will always disfavour the weaker party to the negotiations, as was especially apparent when the leaders of Africa’s postcolonial states signed ‘cooperation’ agreements with the former colonial power. (The details of this process in the Franco-African context will be considered in Chapter 2.)

Counter-intervention

Taken to mean assisting a weak state against invasion and occupation or annexation by a strong one, John Stuart Mill supported this derogation, and wrote in 1867 that:

A people the most attracted to freedom, the most capable of defending and making good use of free institutions, may be unable to contend successfully for them against the military strength of another nation much more powerful. To assist a people thus kept down is not to disturb the balance of forces on which the permanent maintenance of freedom in a country depends, but to redress that balance when it is already unfairly and violently disturbed.56

Nonintervention by Western democracies during the 1930s, particularly in Spain (where counter-intervention would have been justified), demonstrate that self-interested but short-sighted Realism, and not Stowell’s and the League’s Idealism, was dominant.57 The question remains, however, of whether an externally-imposed solution can ever benefit a state’s people. Often counterintervention is used as a justification where the nature of the original intervention to be countered is deliberately distorted, often post hoc (i.e. after the counterintervention has already been launched); notable in light of our case studies Djibouti (Chapter 3) and Rwanda (Chapters 5 and 6), is the portrayal by the counterintervening power of its opponents as invaders, rather than (as was the case in these two examples), as militant exiles.

Walzer has argued that counterintervention must be more clearly defined: ‘A legitimate government is one that can fight its own internal wars. And external assistance in those wars is rightly called counter-intervention only when it balances, and does no more than balance, the prior intervention of another power, making it possible once again for the local forces to win or lose on their own. The outcome of civil wars should reflect not the relative strength of the intervening states, but the local alignment of forces.’ Incidences of unevenly balanced counterintervention may be identified throughout the postcolonial period, a phenomenon Aimé Césaire identified as neocolonial ‘collective hypocrisy, skilled at distorting problems all the better to legitimise the odious solutions which are provided’.58

**Intervention in self-defence (including protection of the intervenor’s and other foreign nationals)**

The right to intervene in self-defence is enshrined in UN Charter Article 51, and is also defined as protection of vital interests and overseas territories; Asrat notes that: ‘[The right to] self-defence constitutes the defence of the totality of the basic components of States, namely territory, people and government... [I]t is submitted that the forcible protection of nationals abroad... constitute[s] a legitimate exercise of the right of self-defence.’59 Parallel with the major plank of justificatory discourse identified above - honouring a treaty in defence of a friendly state against external aggression - is the equally frequent invocation of risk to French and other foreign (i.e. Western) civilians: thus Foccart, to justify the French intervention (or mobilisation of garrisonned troops) in the Central African Republic during April and May 1996, stated:

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57 Spain is of course one of Little’s case studies in *Intervention: External Involvement in Civil Wars*, London: Martin Robertson 1975
La justification de l'intervention de nos troupes étaient ailleurs: il s’agissait de défendre les ressortissants français menacés par les mutins et autres émeutiers. Hors cela, je vous rappelle que la doctrine a été définie à plusieurs reprises par le général de Gaulle, en des termes quasiment identiques, et qu’aucun de ses successeurs ne l’a remise en cause. C’est ainsi qu’il écrivait en janvier 1966, à propos des tensions ethniques qui se manifestaient alors en Mauritanie: “Nous appliquerons nos accords de défense s’il y a lieu, c’est-à-dire dans le cas d’une subversion visant à porter atteinte à la personne ou à la fonction du chef d’État, et dans le cas de l’attaque de la Mauritanie par un autre pays […]. En dehors de ces obligations, nous n’avons pas à prendre parti par les armes.”

However, Bruno Delaye, head of the Cellule africaine at the Elysée from 1992 until early 1995, underlined that the French military role would always exceed mere protection of French citizens: ‘A quoi servirait de maintenir une force de 10 000 hommes en Afrique si c’est seulement pour évacuer nos ressortissants?’ And François Mitterrand, while First Secretary of the Socialist Party in opposition in 1978, criticised the despatch of Legion paratroops to Kolwezi (discussed in Chapter 4), declaring that: ‘L’armée française y va pour assurer la sécurité de nos compatriotes, mais aussi pour atteindre d’autres objectifs que nous ne connaissons pas.’ Notably, in contradiction of France’s frequent classification of interventions to evacuate its nationals as ‘humanitarian’, Asrat points out that: ‘[A] distinction is drawn between intervention for the protection of nationals and humanitarian intervention; the latter term is reserved for cases that related to the protection of persons other than nationals of the intervening State.’

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Humanitarian intervention

‘I have never believed that foreign troops could restore peace.’

With the notable exception of Michael Walzer, questions of the morality of intervention - or nonintervention - although traceable to Grotius, rarely arose in the normative literature until the contemporary (i.e. post-Cold War) ‘humanitarian intervention’ debate. Or as Hoffman puts it: ‘[T]he just war doctrine traditionally tried to reconcile order and justice, whereas a theory of just intervention risks putting justice (to individuals and groups within a state) above order (which the states presumably ensure).’ Walzer added the following moral revisions of the legalist paradigm: states can be invaded and wars justly begun to assist secessionist movements; to balance the prior interventions of other powers; and to rescue peoples threatened with massacre. But in his search for ‘just intervention’, he also offered a moral critique of the practice, arguing along with John Stuart Mill that: ‘[F]oreign intervention, if it is a brief affair, cannot shift the domestic balance of power in any decisive way toward the forces of freedom, while if it is prolonged or intermittently resumed, it will itself pose the greatest possible threat to the success of those forces.’

As a doctrine, humanitarian intervention dates from as early as the 18th century, when military involvement by one state in the affairs of another was justified in terms of protecting the intervened state’s citizens. Indeed Stowell reached even further to quote the Vindicae Contra Tyrannos of 1579, published during the

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sixteenth century’s religious wars in France, which justified interference ‘in behalf of neighbouring peoples who are oppressed on account of adherence to the true religion or by any obvious tyranny’. In the course of his exemplary text, Stowell cites Grotius, Wheaton, Heiberg, Woolsey, Bluntschli and contemporaries Westlake and Borchard\(^6\) as authorities who, throughout modern history, have recognised the legality of humanitarian intervention. Little similarly invokes ‘the founding fathers of modern international law, such as Pufendorf and Grotius [who] conceived of individuals, not states, as the subjects of international law. Grotius argued that intervention to assist individuals in conflict with the state is perfectly legitimate provided the cause is just.’\(^6\)

Nigel White sounds a cautionary note, pointing out that: ‘It goes without saying that in this period [18th and 19th centuries] these actions were operated outside of any universal collective security system. Decisions were reached by governments and their allies to intervene, often with the intention of securing some wider political and military objective as well as protecting the lives of the population’.\(^7\)

And as early as 1860, Professor Montague Bernard expressed his concerns at the concept of humanitarian intervention in a pamphlet which might usefully be republished today: ‘[I]n fact, good is hardly ever done by it – good, I mean, in any degree commensurate with the evil. On the contrary, even when it dethrones a tyrant, puts an end to a ruinous anarchy, or staunches the effusion of blood in a

\(^6\) Prof. Edwin M. Borchard, *The Diplomatic Protection of Citizens Abroad*, New York 1915, p14: ‘[W]here a state under exceptional circumstances disregards certain rights of its own citizens, over whom presumably it has absolute sovereignty, the other states of the family of nations are authorized by international law to intervene on the grounds of humanity. When these “human” rights are habitually violated, one or more states may intervene in the name of the society of nations and may take such measures as to substitute at least temporarily, if not permanently, its own sovereignty for that of the state controlled’.


civil war, it has a direct tendency to produce mischief worse than it removes’.\textsuperscript{71} Similarly, in 1910 Antoine Rougier, a supporter of a legal right of humanitarian intervention, noted that: ‘It must be recognised that the ground of humanity is the most delicate of the causes which may be expected to justify the right of intervention and that it raises juridical difficulties in regard to the basis and extent of this right’.\textsuperscript{72}

Generally, the debate on humanitarian intervention was characterised by a preoccupation with questions of international law at the expense of broader political, social and cultural considerations, a concentration on the politico-military definition of humanitarian intervention to the exclusion of other dimensions of international action and concern, and an orientation in terms of a tension between rigid conceptions of ‘universal humanitarian principles’ (justice) and ‘state sovereignty’ (order). In 1921 Stowell offered the following definition: ‘Humanitarian intervention may be defined as the reliance upon force for the justifiable purpose of protecting the inhabitants of another state from treatment which is so arbitrary and persistently abusive as to exceed the limits of that authority within which the sovereign is presumed to act with reason and justice’. Indeed, this implies an apparently precocious circumscription of sovereignty to make its enjoyment conditional on human rights.

Typically, the pro-intervention lobby argues that the activity is wholly justified if it meets two key criteria: when it is undertaken to defend the rights of foreign subjects of an oppressive ruler; and when it is collectively authorised by the international community through an international organisation, general or regional, which today is understood to imply a UN mandate. These criteria


\textsuperscript{72} Antoine Rougier quoted in Ellery C. Stowell, \textit{Intervention in International Law, Washington DC: John Byrne & Co. 1921, p478
correspond to what Walzer categorises as revisions of the legalist (ie non-intervention) paradigm; and although he argues that: ‘Humanitarian intervention is justified when it is a response (with reasonable expectations of success) to acts “that shock the moral conscience of mankind”,’\textsuperscript{73} he insists that intervenors must legitimise their interventions in one of these ways, and ‘demonstrate that their own case is radically different from what we take to be the general run of cases.’\textsuperscript{74}

There are few workable definitions today of humanitarian intervention, a concept which some observers, given its apparent inapplicability, consider an unsustainable contradiction; notable among these is Edward Said who, asked if humanitarian intervention represents a step forward for humanity, replied unequivocally:

I hope when you use the phrase humanitarian intervention you’ve got inverted commas around it because I don’t regard it as such at all. This idea that this is a form of the new military humanism is absolute tommyrot and ought to be exposed for the barbaric lie that it is. You know military humanism is an oxymoron.\textsuperscript{75}

Nigel White, referring to ‘doubtful doctrine of humanitarian intervention’, notes that ‘the simple provision of humanitarian aid... does not normally include the use of troops, except in a consensual peacekeeping capacity’.\textsuperscript{76} And even former French defence minister Pierre Joxe pointed out that: ‘L’aide humanitaire suppose une attitude de stricte impartialité, alors qu’une opération militaire exige des objectifs clairement définis’.\textsuperscript{77} Given this apparent contradiction inherent in the term ‘humanitarian intervention’, wider definitions have become increasingly evident, including ‘non-forcible humanitarian intervention’, ‘NGO

\textsuperscript{73} Michael Walzer, \textit{Just and Unjust Wars}, London: Penguin 1980, p107
\textsuperscript{74} ibid
\textsuperscript{75} Professor Edward Said (Columbia University New York), on BBC Radio 4 ‘Analysis’, 9 August 1999
\textsuperscript{76} Nigel D. White, ‘Humanitarian Intervention’, \textit{International Law and Armed Conflict Commentary} 1:1, June 1994, p17
\textsuperscript{77} Pierre Joxe, interviewed in ‘Le mariage manqué du blindé et du sac de riz’, \textit{Le Nouvel Observateur} 18 November 1993, p37
humanitarian intervention’, and a whole range of cross-border activities in response to human suffering which, according to Oliver Ramsbotham ‘are difficult to classify. All of them play a significant role and should come under a framework for principled humanitarian intervention if it is to be comprehensive.78

Given the longevity of the debate, it should come as no surprise that arguments for and against a right or duty of humanitarian intervention should have re-emerged so prominently in the post-Cold War era. With the end of bipolarity, Western-centric analysts were freed from the rigid certainties through which the world’s conflicts could be interpreted. Suddenly intervention too was freed from the constricting spheres of influence within which it had been corseted, and could be exercised free of the stays of the rigid statist girdle. With the erosion of the statist model, apparent humanitarian and idealist aims, albeit tempered by realities of new global rivalries, moved intervention centre stage in IR debates; Richard Little stated in 1996 that: ‘Whether or not to intervene in civil wars seems to me to raise one of the most important issues confronting the contemporary international community.’79

The end of the Cold War brought about an apparent conceptual shift with regard to intervention, based on the interwar Idealists’ notion of sovereignty as it applies to people, and not just to territory and borders kept inviolate by the frozen superpower bipolarity. What value then is Cold War intervention theory in a transformed international system where failure to intervene sustains dictators in power or leaves aggressors unpunished? James Mayall pinpoints the dilemmas faced by the architects of the 1990s ‘New World Order’, where concepts of intervention and non-intervention are still based on disputes

79 Professor Richard Little, External Involvement in Civil Wars: The Intervention Paradox, inaugural
between states, and not, as has been most often the case since 1989, on disputes within states between peoples/nations/ethnicities or opposing political groups trapped within borders not of their making:

Wherever powerful and unassimilated national communities must coexist within a single polity, they are likely to use the institutions of democracy to gain preferential access to state power (and the patronage that goes with it) at the expense of their ethnic rivals. The competition to establish their respective national rights is likely to prove sufficiently ferocious to ensure that any commitment to uphold the merely human rights of all citizens will remain theoretical.80

Whereas the typical intervention situation during the Cold War was one of overassertive government, now ‘humanitarian intervention’ tends to take place in areas of intercommunal conflict, contested sovereignty or state collapse. Considering the changes in intervention theory and practice during the 1990s, Hoffman notes that since the Cold War: ‘[T]he emphasis has shifted from unilateral interventions – by the superpowers, by former colonial states like France or Belgium in their erstwhile colonies, or by countries such as [India in Bangladesh, Tanzania in Uganda, Vietnam in Cambodia, i.e. horizontal intervention], taking advantage of the paralysis of a Security Council plagued by East-West rivalry – to collective interventions, mainly by the UN, now that the Security Council is no longer the victim of this contest’.81 Nigel White clarifies the legal position, noting that:

[The] breach [of human rights] is not accepted by states as justifying military intervention. Enforcement of human rights laws must be undertaken by non-military methods if it is to remain lawful. (...) [T]he sole clearly legitimate humanitarian intervention is that authorised on a collective basis by the Security Council under Chapter VII of the UN Charter (...) [T]he trend is to move away from illegitimate unilateral or multilateral humanitarian

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intervention, to more genuine collective humanitarian intervention.\textsuperscript{82}

But in the optimism of the immediate post-Cold War, Hoffman notes that: ‘Traditional interpretations of international law and of the UN Charter that denied the legality of such forcible intrusions were declared obsolete, partly because of the salience of human rights, partly because the newly favored intrusions were presented as collective ones, authorized by the UN, rather than unilateral resorts to force’.\textsuperscript{83} And James Mayall, one of the principal exponents of a post-Cold War ‘new interventionism’, justified strong states’ intervention in the affairs of the weak by reinvoking Mill’s 1867 essay (‘to assist a people thus kept down is not to disturb the balance of forces on which the permanent maintenance of freedom in a country depends, but to redress that balance when it is already unfairly and violently disturbed’),\textsuperscript{84} and argued that Western intervention in Somalia in 1992 – Operation ‘Restore Hope’ – was evidence of the New World Order’s shift to disinterested, purely humanitarian intervention.\textsuperscript{85}

But is it plausible to argue that Idealism has come true and humanitarian intervention is motivated, in the mediatised West, by concern for human rights in states perceived as repressive? Terry Nardin, while advocating that states adopt a presumption against intervention in the affairs of another state, claims with Walzer and Joyner that, under certain circumstances, this presumption may be overridden to further human rights.\textsuperscript{86}

However, other voices suggest ‘Restore Hope’, and more recently NATO’s

\textsuperscript{82} Nigel D. White, ‘Humanitarian Intervention’, International Law and Armed Conflict Commentary I:1, June 1994, p22
intervention in Kosovo, were driven not so much by concern for those countries’ populations as by the need for short-term political gain at home. The volume of Western coverage of recent African crises is almost always in direct proportion to the scale of direct Western involvement (NGO or military interventions), or to the degree of clamour for such interventions (the ‘something must be done’ response). No Western troops or high-profile, publicity-hungry NGOs, means no media coverage. Mass murder far from the Western lens is small news (as a comparison of coverage of conflict in Israel and the Israeli-occupied territories on the one hand, and Algeria on the other, suggests). Mass epidemic (albeit in man-made circumstances), with the potential for Western intervention, is big news. In this light, the real exigencies of ‘humanitarian’ intervention were already apparent at the time of its post-Cold War reinvention, most clearly in the agenda for Operation Restore Hope. Gérard Prunier, East Africa specialist and sometime adviser to the French defence ministry, tells how he met Bruno Delaye, head of the cellule africaine in December 1992 while French troops were preparing to join the US-led operation; Delaye explained French involvement thus:

You see, it is soon going to be Christmas and it would be unthinkable to have the French public eat its Christmas dinner while seeing on TV all those starving kids. It would be politically disastrous ... But don’t worry, as soon as all this stuff blows over and TV cameras are trained in another direction, we will quietly tiptoe out. With luck it shouldn’t last more than three to four months and in the meantime we will try our best not to do anything foolish.  

Later, Médecins sans Frontières co-founder and Minister for Humanitarian Action Bernard Kouchner would be seen on French television shouldering a bag of rice with which he splashed ashore on a Somali beach. This manipulation of images has been well documented elsewhere; however, similar manipulation became a key determinant of the nature of the ‘humanitarian’ interventionary response to

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the Rwandan genocide.88

Accordingly, Hoffman has emphasised most recently that the failure of practice has led to a reassessment of theory:

In the earlier phase, the opponents of even a collective *droit d'ingérence* seemed to lose the debate with the enthusiasts. Now, the opposite appears to be the case. It is as if the motto “we should, therefore we must” had been replaced with “we can’t, therefore we ought not”; or as if the imperative of doing good had yielded to a far more pessimistic appraisal: “there is little good we can do, and some of the good we try to do produces more harm than good – so let us above all not do harm, even if it means caring less about doing good.”89

In the spirit of this new scepticism, commentators began to dismiss humanitarian intervention as nothing more than a cloak for the self-interest of states and some non-state actors; Jan Nedervenn Pieterse concludes that: ‘ “[H]umanitarian intervention” serves as a mirror of global politics as they really exist.’90

But even if the superpowers underwent a Damascene conversion in 1989, no conceptual shift was apparent in French interventionary practice until 1994, which arguably marked a watershed for French African policy, following the first failure of its old-style intervention on the continent. France’s subsequent conversion to the humanitarian intervention agenda seems all the more implausible given the apparent reversion to type of French interventions elsewhere since Rwanda (Comoros 1995; Central African Republic 1995-96). Practice did not change during this period, but the 1994 invocation of humanitarianism marked a shift in discourse, not least because it had rarely been felt necessary hitherto to offer public justification for interventions in Africa. Consideration of legitimisation is therefore key to any assessment of the validity

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and effectiveness of French attempts to invoke humanitarianism, on the international and particularly the US model, to justify interventions driven by a specifically French set of motives. Attempts by theorists to extrapolate forcible, i.e. military intervention justified as 'humanitarian', from straightforward, power politics military intervention, hint at the ambiguity inherent in France’s assumption of humanitarianism for one intervention (new-style legitimisation), and its continuation of traditional justifications (evacuating citizens, fulfilling treaty obligations, responding to an explicit invitation) for interventions elsewhere (old-style legitimisation). Ramsbotham points to this in his contention that: ‘To count as humanitarian intervention, forcible military action must come under the framework principles for humanitarian intervention as a whole. If this does not happen, forcible humanitarian intervention is not distinguished from forcible non-humanitarian intervention, and military actions are not integrated into the wider enterprises of which they should be part.’

Conclusion

Can such outside help be disinterested and genuinely humanitarian? Walzer concludes that: ‘[C]lear examples of what is called “humanitarian intervention” are very rare. Indeed, I have not found any, but only mixed cases where the humanitarian motive is one among several. States don’t send their soldiers into other states, it seems, only in order to save lives. The lives of foreigners don’t weigh that heavily in the scales of domestic decision-making.’

Hoffman quotes Lea Brilmayer, ‘[who] has argued that selectivity is ethically acceptable if there is a principle, or a set of principles, that explains and justifies choice. In reality, the cases of nonengagement risk being determined by purely political and pragmatic considerations, such as excessive scope of the crisis, insufficient media attention

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to prod states into action, disagreement among [UN] members, or a desire on their part to put what they deem their vital imperatives and preferences ahead of the more unselfish and long-term considerations that justify intervention in distant places."\(^{93}\)

Accepting this Realist and apparently unchanging fact, Walzer nonetheless leaves us with a pertinent moral formula to which to aspire: ‘People who initiate massacres lose their right to participate in the normal (even in the normally violent) processes of self-determination. Their military defeat is morally necessary.’\(^{94}\) But in the absence of a general political will to do so, the UN may find itself ‘licensing’ the powerful state most willing to intervene, for reasons of its own which do not necessarily correspond with those of the UN or fulfil the criteria of humanitarian intervention. Hoffman describes these as cases where the UN, ‘either in order not to lose face or because of its own limited resources, will endorse or license great power interventions... In some cases, this may be much better than inaction. In others, this may be no more than a fig leaf covering a classical case of great-power arbitrariness or neo-imperialism.’\(^{95}\)

A robust theory of intervention, then, should consider both motivation and outcomes in assessing the humanitarian character of such action. Croft and Treacher agree with Walzer that: ‘Often, military intervention, driven by other motives, has been “dressed-up” as humanitarian concern. Hence, the relief of physical suffering has been used as the pretext for the military intervention in one state by the forces of another as the latter pursues its own interests.’\(^{96}\) Most

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importantly, they conclude that: ‘Although Humanitarian Intervention exists as an ideal type, it is a theory without practice in the South.’

The root problem, as the US discovered in Somalia, is that intervenors are asked (or claim) to intervene non-politically (which is what humanitarian intervention implies) in intensely political arenas. However, no matter what their intentions, they are interpreted as partisan; delivering aid is seen to prolong the fighting, helping refugees is said to further ethnic cleansing, protection of threatened minorities to promote secession. Or as Richard Gott put it, in the context of NATO intervention in Kosovo: ‘[P]roviding assistance from outside is endlessly problematic. You cannot bomb people from the air with food parcels, you cannot shower them with gold, you cannot even provide them with water, without asking a whole series of questions, of which the most significant is who will benefit?’

This crisis of credibility and legitimisation caused by post-Cold War efforts to reclassify military intervention as ‘forcible humanitarian intervention’ is central to this study. The civil war, genocide and continuing instability in Rwanda are due in no small part to Western involvement, provoking a crisis which necessitated further Western interventions, latterly characterised as humanitarian. Jan Nederveen Pieterse sums up the paradox neatly: ‘H[umanitarian] I[ntervention] is a two-faced operation, idealism caught in the wheels of realism, realism outflanked by realities.’ Hoffman concludes that: ‘It may well be that none of the “currently leading moral theories inside the

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academic community can really help us decide when we should rescue... (and whom first), and how”.\textsuperscript{100}

It is intended in this study to discuss the applicability of criteria permitting humanitarian intervention to France’s \textit{Opération Turquoise}, particularly in light of that intervention’s elevation in much current IR literature as a model of the genre; a notable example is Hoffman, who cites Turquoise as an example of legitimate intervention because authorised by the UN, what he calls ‘the Security Council’s “licensing of France in Rwanda”’. Despite the apparent dominance of this view, the countervailing argument has appeared in recent assessments; Stephen Chan points out that: ‘Even in non-Chapter VII peacekeeping, as was originally the case in Rwanda, a powerful member of the Security Council, France, insisted upon a leading role – not least to protect its interests in an area it still saw in crude geopolitical terms’.\textsuperscript{101}

In the context of Franco-African relations since 1960, the French commitment to one side of a bifurcated actor (i.e. the ruling élite) was an integral part of the state’s creation; hence France’s relationship is inherently interventionary. According to the logic of this relationship, France always intervenes. This excludes the notion of the second actor’s choice between intervention and non-intervention: because of the interpersonal ‘networks’ and treaty-ratified support for the internal status quo which normally prevails, there is always an interventionary response to a threat to that status quo, even through non-intervention which represents a conscious choice to abandon a disappointing leader and (re)establish an acceptable internal order.\textsuperscript{102}

\textsuperscript{101} Stephen Chan, ‘And What Do Peacekeeping Troops Do Apart From Burying the Dead, Then?’, \textit{International Relations} XIII: 5, August 1997, p31
\textsuperscript{102} Such was the case, to be discussed in Chapter 3, with Presidents Fulbert Youlou in Congo-Brazzaville (1963) and Hamani-Diori of Niger (1974). Usually the justification for these non-actions was that
As NATO bombing of Yugoslavia reached its crescendo in May 1999, Richard Gott wrote that:

[T]here is nothing new about this project [Western intervention in Kosovo]. It is a throwback to the colonialism of the last century, when the imperial powers intervened at will in the affairs of independent states and peoples... [A] powerful imperial drive still survives in the British cultural make-up. Two significant historical strands in national life, the military and the missionary, are still very much to the fore... We want to tell foreigners who to worship and how to behave, and we still want to use our strong right hand to smash them into submission if they disobey. That is old-fashioned imperialism resurrected'.

It is intended in the chapters which follow to discuss the extent to which this assertion may be applied to French policy in sub-Saharan Africa since 1960.

intervention would exceed the terms of a military and technical assistance treaty, but with a clear subtext emphasising the lack of credibility of the deposed leader.

Chapter 2: Decolonisation and the creation of France’s interventionary sphere in Africa

‘Despite the legacy of conflicts and unresolved issues dominating the recent political scene, the years after 1940 must be seen as a heroic and creative time in francophone African politics. Nations were created, and took their place in a position of legal equality with the great world powers.’

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the essential context for one of this study’s principal arguments, i.e., that contemporary French African policy, underpinned by recourse to military intervention, operates according to a unique bilateral dynamic without parallel in Euro-African relations since formal decolonisation, and has been conducted independently of global balance-of-power politics (although occasionally caught up in larger issues of regional security, as during the Chad-Libya dispute).

Historically, the exceptionality of French involvement in Africa should be viewed in the context of a specifically French set of foreign policy motives which, although parts may resemble comparable imperialist motives elsewhere - the settling of inter-European (or even domestic) disputes on the African continent, and compensation for weakness, defeat or loss of territory at home - the sum, which includes the concepts of gloire, grandeur, rayonnement, mission civilisatrice and la plus grande France, gave French involvement in Africa such centrality and durability in France’s world view that it remained a keystone of French foreign policy, and France’s perceptions of its world status, until very recently.

The principal argument here will be that this post-1960 sphere of influence has been a deliberate French creation, in reaction to what preceded it. France was forced to abandon its colonial territories firstly in Indochina and then, amidst a trauma that

devasted Algeria and brought France itself to the brink of civil war, in North Africa. Partly as a result of this experience, France never relinquished total control of its empire south of the Sahara. In fact, as its self-appointed role as the gendarme of post-colonial Africa took shape, it sought to expand its influence to include Belgium’s former colonial territories. Its apparent decolonisation of its colonies in sub-Saharan Africa was characterised instead by what has been called une décolonisation ratée, a failed decolonisation, or what perhaps could be termed more appropriately a ‘pseudo-decolonisation’. Indeed, the ambiguity surrounding even the term ‘decolonisation’ in this context has been the subject of discussion, although perhaps primarily among non-French commentators, such as Swiss historian Albert Wirz who asked: ‘La décolonisation ne cacherait-elle pas en fait une victoire des colonisateurs?’

Samora Machel, first president of post-revolutionary Mozambique, offered the following definition of what decolonisation should be: ‘To decolonise a state means essentially to dismantle the political, administrative, cultural, financial, economic, educational, juridical and other systems which, as an integral part of the colonial state, were solely designed to impose foreign domination and the will of the exploiters on the masses.’ The diplomatic defeat and international discrediting of France in Algeria left de Gaulle with little option but to dismantle the French presence there to the extent of repatriating its settlers. However, by this same definition, there was no real decolonisation of France’s colonies in sub-Saharan Africa; there was instead a limited concession of autonomy to French-fostered élites, and the institutionalisation of patron-client relationships, whereby the patron’s influence hinged on the client’s survival, while the client’s survival often depended, as we shall see, on the patron’s protection. Christopher Clapham notes that: The complex of relationships between the francophone African states and France formed

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4 Samora Machel, Establishing the People’s Power to Serve the Masses, Dar es Salaam: Tanzania Publishing House 1980, p6
by far the most comprehensive set of mechanisms for maintaining African states and their rulers, and had no equivalent either among the other colonial powers, or in the clientele networks established by the United States and the Soviet Union'.

This chapter will discuss these relationships and mechanisms, and it is intended thereby: to establish the background to the decolonisation process in France’s African empire and to the bilateral military cooperation agreements which were made a condition of independence; to assess the forms these agreements took, from outright defence treaties to military technical assistance accords; and to consider the implications of this process for Franco-African military relations.

**Empire**

‘In size, population and resources, French Africa is one of the great achievements of modern times.’

Before considering the unique bilateral axis linking France to ‘francophone’ Africa - the former colonial territories of France and Belgium - it may be useful to discuss firstly the creation of France’s sub-Saharan African empire ~ Afrique Occidentale Française (AOF) and Afrique Equatoriale Française (AEF) - and examine the motives and justifications for empire as well as African responses to French imperialism.

If we accept, along with most European historians of French empire, that there was no masterplan or overarching strategy in its construction, can we argue accordingly that France’s retreat from empire, however circumscribed, was equally haphazard? Did it not instead result from a learning curve, whereby French policy-makers in general and Charles de Gaulle in particular, tempered by the experience of the loss of colonial territories in Indochina and North Africa, sought to ensure that there

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would be no actual loss of empire south of the Sahara, merely reform and repackaging?

The 1920s assertion that ‘In 1830 a new period of empire-building opened without aim or plan’ still prevails in the most recent accounts; Robert Aldrich wrote in 1996 that Paris had ‘no master plan’ for colonial acquisition:

However logical the territorial consolidation of the AOF and AEF might seem, there existed no grand plan for achieving it, and most land was acquired at the expense of armed forays, negotiations with African chieftains and great efforts to secure posts over which the French flag had tentatively been raised. Such endeavours took place in the face of persistent African resistance, hardships imposed by difficult terrain, tropical disease and inadequate supplies, and divided opinion at home about the value of expansion. Colonialism in sub-Saharan Africa was an incremental achievement made possible only by the determination of colonial promoters, explorers and military officers, the force of arms, an ideology of racial domination, and the fear that if France did not take over new territories, its rivals would step into the brink.

The processes, actors and perceived motives of French imperial expansion in sub-Saharan Africa have been extensively documented, the volume of this literature in itself reflecting the significance of empire and post-imperial world influence for French national identity. Images of Africa both during and after the period of formal empire also carry considerable resonance in French popular culture, most notably in cinema but also in the popularity of African music, art and food. In contrast, intolerance in France towards those originating from the former empire is on the increase, and is demonstrated not only in intimidation and violence, but in

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occasional demonstrations of violent racism and, of course, the electoral rise of the far right.

As the process of French imperial expansion was not continuous but extended over different periods of the late 19th century according to domestic needs (or perceived needs), contemporary historians and commentators could overlook the breaks in continuity and see the conquest as involving simply 'the visible entry of Africa into the empire of civilisation', 'the one barbarous continent parcelled out among the most civilised powers of Europe.' Most subsequent accounts by European historians (excepting Marseille) typically analyse France’s imperial motives in terms of the ‘Three Cs’: civilisation, christianisme, commerce. It may be argued that a fourth 'c' should be added, to better reflect the African perception of French imperialism: conquête; and by extension, that an appetite for conquest was an integral part of European capitalist development. It is important to bear in mind that this traditional historiographic focus on the three Cs not only implies African passivity faced with foreign invasion and subjugation, but also suggests that African peoples were in some way recipients - and hence beneficiaries - of the European values on offer.

There are countervailing arguments to these prevailing accounts of French imperial expansion - the ‘reluctant imperialists’ thesis - which argue instead that imperialism, which Lenin defined as the highest stage of capitalism, was an inevitable product of capitalist expansion in Europe. More critical analyses emphasised the influence of capitalists and their desire to maintain the rate of profit by finding lucrative and secure outlets for investment overseas. As demands for decolonisation grew during the 20th century, Eurocentric Marxist theory began to be superseded by the anti-imperialist writings of imperialism’s subjects. Interestingly, Aldrich’s otherwise comprehensive bibliographical essay fails to mention any African-authored accounts of the experience of colonisation by France; notable omissions are Joseph Ki-Zerbo’s

Histoire de l’Afrique Noire and Albert Adu Boahen’s *Africa under Colonial Domination 1880-1935*. Thomas Hodgkin emphasised the scant attention paid in Western accounts to imperialism as experienced by its victims (or in Hodgkin’s term, its ‘consumers’):

[Un]derstandably, third-world theorists have not in the main been deeply interested in that particular group of problems with which Western writers... have tended to be preoccupied: What... was the nature of the drives, or contradictions, or structural changes in the advanced capitalist countries, or within the Western world in general, which generated, or helped to generate, modern Western imperialism? (...) [T]hey have... asserted or assumed that these drives arose directly out of the interests of the ruling classes in the advanced countries, whether these were interests in loot, or raw materials, or markets, or investment outlets, or job opportunities for the bourgeoisie, or military glory for the officer class, or varying combinations of these at different historical moments.12

Hodgkin identifies where the third world overlapped with Marxist theory on questions of empire: the dehumanising effects of imperialism on the colonised societies and the reimportation of the ideas, attitudes, institutions and techniques which had been used by the bourgeoisie of the colonising countries to impose and maintain their domination over the colonised into the metropolitan societies for use against their own people. For Aimé Césaire (*Discours sur le colonialisme* 1972) and Franz Fanon (*Les Damnés de la Terre* 1960), ‘the idea of the terrible feedback effects of imperialism [had] a new and pivotal significance. Fascism and Nazism are essentially imperialism turned inwards. The Western bourgeois liberal who permits non-Western people to be treated as non-human by “his” imperialists is preparing the same eventual doom for himself.’13

Other themes to emerge from this discussion of France’s transition from empire to sphere of influence suggest that phenomena to be analysed in later chapters - the motivations and mechanics of French military interventions after 1960 - have their roots in the period of formal empire. Those characteristics - inter-French rivalry, inter-European (or later, inter-Western) rivalry political, economic and even linguistic (often characterised as ‘the Fashoda syndrome’) - and legitimisation of

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intervention through treaties or humanitarianism, are constants of French African policy which, it could be argued, may be traced not only from 1960, but from 1880 when France first consolidated its hold on sub-Saharan Africa. Certainly, with regard to justifying intervention, accounts of early colonialism strongly suggest that plus ça change; for example, Aldrich tells how in the 1880s, 'Using the pretext of danger to French residents and inventing an appeal from the sultan to justify their action, French troops occupied Fès.'14 Similarly, 'Incidents could usually be found to justify intervention: the pillaging of a French ship which had run aground in Djembering in 1864 provided an excuse to send in soldiers, occupy a village, levy a fine on its inhabitants, institute a head-tax, then sign a peace treaty.'15

Similarly, French responses to perceived crises in Africa after decolonisation were characterised by multipolar and uncoordinated decision-making to an extent reminiscent of France’s original imperial expansion. A.S. Kanya-Forstner, in his analysis of the myths and illusions that were decisive influences on France’s African policy, draws attention to ‘the way in which decisions were made by officials in Paris... the shared assumptions of policy makers... the activities of pressure groups and... the general lack of coordination and control exercised by the politicians.’16 Regarding the race to Tombouctou in 1893 which pitted Captain Bonnier against his compatriot Boiteux, Aldrich notes that this conquest ‘endowed France with a colony largely devoid of use except prestige.’17 Redolent of the back-channel decision-making which characterised much of French interventionary practice during the 1980s and 1990s, Kanya-Forstner also focuses on those ‘members of the French colonial army who had interests of their own which were often very different from those of their political masters [...] Professionally, military expansion offered them

13 Aime Césaire, Discours sur le colonialisme, 1972, p111
tempting prospects of rapid advancement in a peacetime army whose regular channels of promotion were hopelessly clogged by the rules of seniority.¹⁸

World War II watershed

Despite its mission civilisatrice and the inscription of ‘Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité’ on the public buildings of Algiers and Dakar, France was as rapacious an empire-builder as any of her European neighbours, and the cities of Bordeaux, Lyon and Marseille had grown rich from the guaranteed access to African raw materials and markets that empire provided. At its peak in the interwar years, France had the largest African empire of any of the European colonial powers, a source of prestige, wealth, influence and, in times of need, soldiers. All these factors contributed to the healing of French national amour propre and the wounds inflicted on civil and military pride by the loss of France’s first empire in North America, defeat by the Prussians in 1870, and the trauma of the First World War.

Africa proved essential to France again during the Second World War, both as a source of soldiers, and as French territory from which the Free French opposition to the Vichy regime could be rallied. Many commentators ascribe de Gaulle’s personal interest in African affairs to his wartime experience when Guyanese-born Félix Éboué, governor of Chad, was the first to rally to de Gaulle and the Free French. (De Gaulle subsequently appoint Éboué governor general of AEF in its entirety). Moreover, de Gaulle’s claim to legitimacy as leader of France in exile was declared in Algiers, on ‘French soil’.

Moreover, France used empire as a vehicle for self-redefinition after the Second World War, at a time when the trend of international events in the American-defined post-war order was towards the end of empire; and only in France did the process of decolonisation so intrude as to threaten the state and bring the ‘mother country’ to the brink of civil war. Unlike Europe’s other major colonial power Britain, the postwar agenda in France was set by soldiers, divided and embittered by the

combined traumas of defeat in 1940, occupation, collaboration and subsequent recrimination. The hierarchy of the post-war army survived remarkably intact from the Vichy period, and sought redemption through imperial glory, which, it was hoped, would unify and restore the French army, and regenerate France itself. However, the primacy given to militarism following the humiliation of 1940 led to demoralising counter-insurgency wars, further defeats, and direct military involvement in politics, to the extent that from 1944 to 1962, the French army would enjoy no more than a few weeks of true peace. Alfred Grosser points out the distorting effect of this period on French foreign policy-making:

[I]a fallu attendre, à part deux brefs intermèdes, 17 années supplémentaires [après la Libération] pour qu'aucun problème tragique n'obèrât plus la politique extérieure de la France... Pour comprendre les dirigeants et leurs difficultés, on doit tenir compte de la coupure qu'a consitué la fin de la guerre d'Algérie. Depuis 1962 seulement, la politique extérieure de la France n'est plus liée à du sang versé, ce qui a accordé à ses responsables sinon la liberté d'action, du moins la libération d'une hantise.19

Any assessment of French policy beyond the Hexagon also requires consideration of the international context, particularly in a post-war climate of bipolar strategic alignment antithetic to the maintenance of formal empire by the now second-rate European powers, and favourable to secure, superpower-led spheres of influence. This pattern - of superpower dominance and a rising anti-colonial tide - was already apparent in the period of postwar reconstruction preceding 1956. In the Franco-African context, many commentators take as their starting point the Brazzaville conference of February 1944, which sought to secure France's African empire through restyling the anti-democratic system of colonial governments-general (in Brazzaville, administrative centre of Afrique équatoriale française, and Dakar, seat of the governor-general of Afrique occidentale française), substituting an all-embracing Union française which, it was hoped, would bind France and its African colonies together in a demographically dominant nation of '100 million Frenchmen'. Anthony Clayton points out that:

The French nation [was seen] as one endowed with particular truths and wisdom, and also one entrusted with a mission to pass on these truths and wisdom to

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others, even if necessary by force. Behind all the differing policies pursued by France in different parts of her Empire lay, firmly rooted, this common mentality; France and French possessions must form an indivisible whole, and related to this, thinking on problems in absolute, rather than compromise, terms. Secession to the French mind was not an emancipation, it was a heresy.²⁰

However, Brazzaville and the *Union française* failed to take account of the educational, politicising and liberating effects of World War II on Africans, particularly those who had fought in regiments of the French army (notably the pan-West African *Tirailleurs sénégalais*), who, while not necessarily promised a land fit for heroes, had seen through the image of French invincibility; indeed, they had seen France defeated, occupied, divided and dependent on African and other external help for liberation. Cinema, and an epic poem by Senegalese poet-president Léopold Sédar Senghor, tell of the 1944 mutiny at Camp Thiaroye when demobilised *Tirailleurs sénégalais*, denied overdue back pay and equal treatment with French soldiers, rebelled and briefly took their French commanding officer hostage. The mutiny was suppressed by force and 35 soldiers killed.

Despite an international climate shaped by superpowers without formal empires, and the creation of the United Nations which gave voice to Third World and non-aligned nations, French policy sought to put a brake on the increasingly irresistible impetus for decolonisation. Basil Davidson points out that: ‘The tide of popular pressure was gathering strength elsewhere: time and again, the British and French were obliged to shorten the timetables with which they envisaged serious concessions to African demands.’²¹

**Contestation**

The final break-up of France’s African empire is normally placed between 1958 (the *Communauté française* referendum and Guinean independence) and 1962 (final independence of Algeria). Claude Wauthier suggests that, unlike the British, France

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had foreseen from the mid-1950s an organised, French-initiated transition through gradual reforms to full independence, grooming African leaders through including them in the French parliamentary system:

En Afrique française, la loi-cadre de Gaston Defferre de 1956, qui avait donné aux territoires africains d'outre-mer un régime de semi-autonomie, avec une Assemblée élue, puis la semi-independance accordée en 1958 dans le cadre de la Communauté, les avait également préparés à l’administration de leurs propres affaires. Le Parlement britannique n'avait jamais ouvert ses portes à des élus africains, alors que la Chambre des députés et le Sénat français en avaient accueilli dès 1946, quand l'Union française avait succédé à l'Empire français. Plusieurs d'entre eux avaient été ministres du gouvernement français, dont MM. Houphouët-Boigny et Léopold Senghor, futurs chefs d'Etat de la Côte d'Ivoire et du Sénégal. 22

However, the post-war decade and a half preceding this period was characterised by a series of political and ideological developments within both France's colonies and the colonised world generally, which would have a direct bearing on the timing and nature of the decolonisation process. Pressure for decolonisation in France's African empire came from three major sources: the colonised African subjects of French colonialism; the international community, both the postwar superpowers which had no formal empires, and by example from other imperial powers, notably Britain; and from critics of colonial rule at home on both right and left (from Cartier to Sartre), with countervailing pressure against decolonisation from the colonial/settler lobby (most notably in Algeria). French responses to this pressure, under the Fourth Republic and in the early years of the Fifth, took the form of limited legal reform, notably the 1956 loi cadre; an attempt to create dominions or a commonwealth (Union française, Communauté française); concession of independence (to Morocco and Tunisia); military suppression (Algeria); and neutralisation of African nationalism by ‘divide and rule’, balkanisation and treaties.

The return to power of Charles de Gaulle in June 1958 allowed for a unified, coherent French strategy towards the decolonisation process for the first time. The Cold War global system of bipolarity was hostile to nineteenth century empires, and with the worsening of the Algerian war, France's Western allies feared radical, anti-
Western decolonisation if the process were delayed. Given his personal and historical connections with Africa, de Gaulle realised that an evolution in strategic thinking, following logically from the precedent in 1956 of peaceful transition to independence in the former protectorates of Morocco and Tunisia, would be the only way for France to retreat from empire on its own terms - what Pierre Biarnès called 'un repli en bon ordre' - and shape postcolonial Africa in its own image. This conclusion was reinforced by the possibility that the French style of counter-insurgency war in Algeria had simply outlived its usefulness in the new international climate, where France could be embarrassed diplomatically at international fora; Michel Martin notes that the guerre algérienne strategy, '[I]n operation almost continuously from the end of the first half of the 19th century... lost its significance in the 1960s, though not through the erosion of its efficiency. The quasi-military victory on the field in Algeria would not have prevented France from ultimately losing this war.' Under the politico-military confusion of the Fourth Republic, French strategy in Algeria was a military success, but a political failure. De Gaulle's resolution of the war on terms not unfavourable to metropolitan France and over the heads of the pieds noirs and the Organisation de l'Armée Secrète (OAS) which sought to frustrate such a resolution, can be taken as the converse: a military failure - that is, an acceptance that the military could achieve no more - but a political triumph.

Another factor in de Gaulle's success was his ability to distinguish between local nationalism, and the Cold War bogeyman of international communist conspiracy. Many French military commanders in Algeria, who had lived through the army's humiliations in 1940 and at Dien Bien Phu in 1954, believed their fight in Algeria was in defence not just of Algérie française and French glory, but also against communist-inspired subversion which threatened France's southern flank. This point is emphasised by Anthony Clayton in reference to Alphonse Juin, the pied noir Chief of

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22 Claude Wauthier, 'Il y a trente ans: les indépendances africaines', Le Monde 23-23 December 1990
the Defence Staff in the immediate post-war period (1945-47): Many, notably Juin, held the view that nationalism in North Africa would and did equate with Soviet Communism, posing a direct strategic threat to France herself.\textsuperscript{25} This misinterpretation of the post-war anticolonial impulse led to a short-sighted belief in a domino theory of loss of empire: any concession or compromise to anti-colonial and nationalist movements would weaken France's imperial flanks and leave the métropole itself vulnerable to subversion. As Michel Martin notes in relation to his guerre algérienne model above, such Cold War paranoia led to confusion between local nationalisms and socialism and communism, between decolonisation and a threat to the free world, and as such rendered any compromise - the very objective for which it [the guerre algérienne strategy] was originally devised - impossible.\textsuperscript{26}

Instead of this failed politico-military tactic, De Gaulle was able, through identification and grooming of interlocuteurs valables, to ensure the transfer of power to a French-favoured élite, negotiating with them the removal of the obvious colonial apparatus while securing French strategic and economic interests and the isolation (in the short term at least) of more radical anti-colonial forces, be they Arab nationalists, pan-Africanists, communists or Islamists. This was not an entirely original tactic; de Gaulle would have been aware that it had been used with some success in Afrique occidentale française where French colonial administrators had, early in the century, identified Islamic brotherhoods in Senegal as a means of underpinning France's transition to a system of indirect rule. This shrewd identification of the powerful restraining influence of the marabouts on indigenous demands extended to French support for Islamic schools – in direct contradiction of the republican principle of secular schooling – which would create, in the words of the French lieutenant governor when the first such school was established in Mauritania in 1930, 'A Muslim intellectual foyer [which] will help maintain West

African Islam in its present mood which renders it much more malleable and open to our administrative action than in any other region with a Coranic influence.\textsuperscript{27} Mahmood Mamdani emphasises the significance of these religious intermediaries for the durability of French rule and influence in West Africa:

In the kaleidoscopic reality of Islam in Africa, it would be difficult to find many instances of a lips-and-teeth relationship between an occupying colonial power and an indigenous Islamic hierarchy... In the referendum of 1958, the marabouts campaigned against independence "with the help and encouragement of the French administration." The final vote, overwhelmingly in favour of the French Community, was popularly termed "the marabouts' Yes".\textsuperscript{28}

Nonetheless, events beyond France's African territories also added momentum to the anti-colonial tide. Kwame Nkrumah's anti-colonial agitation in neighbouring British colony the Gold Coast (post-independence Ghana) both inspired other West Africans, and fuelled further European fears of a communist conspiracy. The accession to power in 1954 of Gamel Abdel Nasser in Egypt offered a role model and material support to anti-colonial activists in France's north African possessions and, during the Suez crisis of 1956, a clear illustration of the new global power equation for the humiliated former imperial powers.

Parallel with and partly in response to these events was the development of anticolonialism in France, most notably amongst intellectuals, journalists and writers. The motives for this opposition to empire were not universal, but crossed the political spectrum from right (those who thought empire too costly) to left (those who considered it immoral). The former perspective is often labelled Cartierism, after Raymond Cartier, a journalist with \textit{Paris-Match} who in 1956 advocated that


\textsuperscript{27} Christopher Harrison, \textit{France and Islam in West Africa 1860-1960}, Cambridge: CUP 1988, p190. The colonial rulers' astute assimilation of local organised religion, the leaders of which had previously opposed their rule, is most strongly redolent to this author of the successful transformation of the Irish Catholic Church, following the establishment of Maynooth College in the late eighteenth century and Catholic emancipation in the early nineteenth, into a bulwark of the colonial status quo, with exclusive control over the education from elementary to university level of the island's 'aboriginals'. As Joyce would lament, 'Oh Ireland my first and only love, where Christ and Caesar are hand in glove!'

government spending prioritise underdeveloped and economically-depressed areas of France before considerations of empire. This sentiment gave rise to an isolationist anti-colonial lobby whose sentiments were encapsulated by the maxim: *la Corrèze plutôt que la Zamèze.*

However the major force for anticolonialism was on the left; during the Algerian war, some pro-FLN sympathisers even lent practical support to the movement, acting as a Fifth Column to the extent of hiding and transporting arms and explosives for the movement’s bombing campaign within France. Others formed an articulate anticolonial lobby which brought pressure to bear on the government and military both in specific terms of torture, aerial bombardments and other crimes which continued involvement in Algeria entailed, and in a general condemnation of France’s failure to decolonise in the immediate post-war period. In his celebrated preface to Albert Memmi’s *Portrait du colonisé*, Jean-Paul Sartre identified colonialism as a denial of human rights through force, poverty and ignorance, a negation of the values successive French republics claimed to represent: ‘En fait, le racisme est inscrit dans le système... Le colonialisme refuse les droits de l’homme à des hommes qu’il a soumis par la violence, qu’il maintient de force dans la misère et l’ignorance, donc, comme dirait Marx, en état de "sous-humanité"’.

Not all supported Sartre’s militant anti-colonial stance, most famously Albert Camus, born into a poor, *pied noir* Algerian family, who declared that he could not support the FLN and its attacks on white Algerians as he valued ‘his mother more than freedom’. Historian-of-record Charles-Robert Ageron went further, dismissing anti-colonial intellectuals as communist party dupes: ‘L’hégémonie intellectuelle du PCF... fut dans la décennie 1944-54 assez incontestée pour faire accepter par les écrivains "engagés" et les publicistes de gauche, une dénonciation globale du "colonialisme".’

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32 Charles-Robert Ageron, *La décolonisation française*, Paris: Armand Colin 1991, p109; Ageron is particularly contemptuous of Sartre, whom he lampoons as ‘le pape de l’anticolonialisme’ and dismisses as an ill-informed and subjective polemicist: ‘Sur le terrain colonial qu’il ne connaissait pas, Sartre ne fut pas un maître à penser,
colonsional intellectual movement was provided by Franz Fanon who, like Albert Memmi, was himself a colonial subject, from the French-ruled island of Martinique. In the most celebrated works of his short life Fanon, a psychiatrist by profession, offered a philosophical analysis of the effects of colonisation and, as one of its foremost advocates, of decolonisation:

Decolonisation never takes place unnoticed, for it influences individuals and modifies them fundamentally. It transforms spectators crushed with their inessentiality into privileged actors, with the grandiose glare of history’s floodlights upon them. It brings a natural rhythm into existence, introduced by new men, and with it a new language and a new humanity. Decolonisation is the veritable creation of new men. But this creation owes nothing of its legitimacy to any supernatural power; the “thing” which has been colonised becomes man during the same process by which it frees itself.33

But one could go further than Fanon and argue that, given the depths to which French society was riven by the decolonisation process, this transformation may be seen to have affected the coloniser as much as the colonised; decolonisation - the loss of its Asian and North African colonies - undermined French society to an extent unimaginable in Europe’s other colonial powers. Such a loss - forced and hasty retreat from empire - could not be sustained again.

Reform

Pierre-François Gonidec identified two stages in the evolution of African nationalism in the French empire: the contestation phase and the nationalism phase: 'Nationalism is most often preceded by a period of contestation, that is, a period during which the colonised strive to penetrate the colonial system to acquire situations to which, in their opinion, they are entitled. This is a struggle within the colonial system, but not against the system.'34

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Both the nature of resistance to colonisation, and French reaction to this resistance, were fundamentally different south of the Sahara. Was this because of the distance and barrier, both physical and psychological, provided by the Sahara itself? Was it because France had learned from Algeria, or because, unlike Algeria, there were few French settlers to impede any disengagement? Does the decolonisation process in the French empire south of the Sahara represent an evolution in French policy, or was it merely a combination of the facts that the demands on France in Algeria were too great, sub-Saharan Africa was less important politically, economically and strategically; and the change of régime in France facilitated a coordinated, unified politico-military strategy which was lacking in Algeria?

The unique circumstances of the end of formal French empire in sub-Saharan Africa resulted from a combination of factors suggested by these questions. The nature of anti-colonial pressure from below was shaped by the nature of French rule in the sub-continent since the Berlin Conference of 1884. Important for any understanding of the decolonisation process was the decision as early as 1854, under the West African governorship of Louis de Faidherbe, to abandon any thought of colonisation by settlement in the region. The principal reason for this contrast with later North African policy was highlighted by anglophone Ghanaian leader Kwame Nkrumah, who is said to have suggested upon independence of his country from Britain in 1957, that the newly-independent state build a commemorative statue to the Anopheles mosquito, as it, the bearer of malaria, had saved Ghana from white settlement. In her biography of Senghor, Janet Vaillant points out that the non-arrival of colonos in French West Africa was due similarly to tropical circumstances, not European qualms: The document announcing the decision not to pursue a policy of French settlement in Senegal contained the observation that the climate there, unlike that of Algeria, was too unhealthy for French settlers. It suggested that the land be left for native cultivation and that the French concentrate on controlling the lucrative import and export trade.35

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Despite the small European presence and notwithstanding the impression given by many Eurocentric accounts of the period, sub-Saharan Africa was not immune to the flowing tide of international affairs in the post-war period. In any case, despite a comparatively successful (for France) colonial system of indirect rule, acceptance of French jurisdiction in sub-Saharan Africa had never been total. As early as 1946, the Bamako congress, attended by delegations from most French African colonies, created the *Rassemblement démocratique africain* (RDA). The RDA, led by Félix Houphouët-Boigny of Côte d'Ivoire and Gabriel d'Arboussier of Sénégal, would dominate the politics of French West Africa for a decade which saw repeated French efforts to legitimise colonial rule, a period during which, as Patrick Manning puts it, 'a dizzying series of elections and electoral changes cascaded past the African voters.'

Meanwhile, throughout francophone sub-Saharan Africa, growing politicisation increased the pressure from below in response to insufficient change from above: in Côte d'Ivoire, where in 1949, French-educated *évolués* such as Houphouët-Boigny, a founder-member of the RDA and considered then a communist sympathiser, clashed with the reactionary colonial administration; in Cameroun, which saw growing challenges to French trusteeship by the *Union des Peuples du Cameroun* (UPC); in Guinea, where Sékou Touré developed the popular trade union base which brought him to prominence to create the anti-colonial grass-roots organisation of the *Parti démocratique de la Guinée*; and in Senegal where in Dakar, capital of *Afrique occidentale française*, Léopold Sedar Senghor's *Bloc démocratique sénégalais* propounded 'African socialism.'

This widespread and seemingly unstoppable clamour for change, from mere reform to total self-determination, led the colonial powers to conclude that change was imperative and, as John Hargreaves suggests, 'reinforced the warning that the dangers of rapid decolonisation might be less than those of excessive caution.'

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Limited legal reform: the loi-cadre

The culmination of this activity, electoral and extra-parliamentary, French or African initiated, was the 1956 loi-cadre ('enabling law'). The loi-cadre reforms provided for two broad categories of government services: territorial services and state services. By passing some important services to the territorial level, France's policy was cautious in avoiding African participation in areas essential to true independence, such as defence and external affairs. It came, however, as too little too late, and was denounced as a pretext for the continuation of French colonialism.

The journal Présence africaine, the forum in which much of the anti-colonial sentiment of the new generation of French-educated Africans was articulated, gave its analysis of the loi-cadre in early 1958 (i.e. before the collapse of the Fourth Republic and De Gaulle’s return to power). An editorial argued that the loi-cadre was: ‘un des signes que l’évolution vers l’indépendance est inévitable. Conçue et promulguée au moment où les événements du Maghreb parvenaient à un niveau de gravité exceptionnelle, elle signifie que l’opinion publique métropolitaine et celle des peuples africains intéressés ont obligé les gouvernements à franchir une étape nécessaire.’

The origins of this too-little-too-late colonial response were clearly spelt out:

Nul ne pouvait de bonne foi se faire des illusions sur l’œuvre de balkanisation entre les peuples, de division escomptée entre les masses et leurs ministres, ni sur le coût de cette nouvelle expérience [...]. La loi-cadre est dépassée par l’opinion publique africaine. Sous la pression des jeunes étudiants, des syndicalistes et des partis politiques, l’autorité même de la loi-cadre s’effrite pour laisser paraître l’autorité de peuples s’apprêtant à décider eux-mêmes de leur propre destin.

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38 ‘... one sign that evolution in the direction of independence is inevitable. Conceived and promoted at a time when events in the Maghreb were taking on an exceptional seriousness, it signifies that metropolitan [French] public opinion, and that of the African peoples concerned, have obliged government to take an essential step forward.’ Présence africaine 17-18, février-mai 1958, p68

39 ‘No-one could genuinely be taken in by this work of balkanisation between peoples, of division sown between the masses and their ministers, nor by the cost of this new experiment... [T]he loi-cadre has been overtaken by African public opinion. Under pressure from young students, trade unionists and political parties, the very authority of the loi-cadre is disintegrating, to reveal the authority of peoples preparing to decide themselves their own destiny...’: Présence africaine 17-18, février-mai 1958, p68
Its principal effect was the dismantling of the two governments-general in Dakar (Afrique occidentale française) and Brazzaville (Afrique équatoriale française) and the redistribution of power to the governments of the fourteen individual colonies. This dilution of power and balkanisation of the federations emerged four years later as the vehicle of sub-Saharan decolonisation, but paved the way for an only partial concession of independence by the imperial power. Addressing the National Assembly in Paris on 1 February 1957, Léopold Sedar Senghor protested the government was offering only ‘a semi-autonomy ... not the reality, but the appearances of power’; he also condemned the inadequacy of the proposed new status, in words with a prophetic ring even when the loi-cadre had indeed been overtaken:

Nous ne sommes plus les grands enfants qu'on s'est plus [sic] à voir en nous, et c'est pourquoi les joujoux et les sucettes ne nous intéressent pas. Sur les questions essentielles, comme le service des douanes, des postes, téléphones et télégraphes, la radiodiffusion, l'enseignement supérieur, les services interterritoriaux, le Gouvernement est resté sourd à nos arguments et n'a voulu faire aucune concession importante.40

Senghor's view did not enjoy unanimity among African deputies. In contrast, Félix Houphouët-Boigny declared in November 1956 that:

La loi-cadre concernant les TOM, due à la généreuse initiative de mon excellent ami Gaston Defferre, ministre des Territoires d'outre-mer avec qui j'ai le plus vif plaisir à collaborer, constitue dans son ensemble institutionnel, politique, économique et social, une réelle promotion pour l'Afrique.41

Algeria should not be forgotten in this context. The sheer scale of France’s commitment of men, money, material and political credibility during the Algerian war between 1954 and 1962 meant that it could not afford the opening of a second front. Such basic strategic considerations had had a direct bearing on the rapid

40 We are no longer the big children we were once taken to be, and that is why toys and lollipops do not interest us. On the essential questions like the customs, postal, telegraph and telephone service, radio transmission, higher education, interterritorial communications, the Government has remained deaf to our arguments and has not been prepared to make any important concession’. L.S. Senghor, Débats de l'Assemblée Nationale 1.2.57, in Présence africaine 17-18, février-mai 1958, Lés élus des T.O.M. et la loi-cadre’, p122

41 'The loi-cadre concerning the TOM (French overseas territories), due to the generous initiative of my excellent friend Gaston Defferre, Minister of Overseas Territories which whom I have the greatest pleasure in cooperating, constitutes in its institutional, political, economic and social entirety, real progress for Africa’. F.
concession of independence to Morocco and Tunisia. And, as John Hargreaves points out, the success, for France and for de Gaulle, of the sub-Saharan independences, was both necessitated by Algeria, and would subsequently make the Algeria settlement less traumatic:

The connection between events in Algeria and in AOF should not be forgotten. On the one hand, France’s readiness to accept the political reforms which led from the loi-cadre of 1956 to the independences of 1960 was clearly influenced by the need to avoid further military commitments on Algeria’s southern borders; but in turn the apparent initial success of this exercise in decolonisation made the prospect of Algerian independence less unthinkable.42

While African leaders tried unsuccessfully to solve some of the problems created by the loi-cadre reforms, a series of events brought down the Fourth Republic, mostly related to France’s conduct of its war in Algeria, notably the bombing of the Tunisian border village of Sakiet in February 1958. By 1960, with de Gaulle returned to power, the first round of Franco-FLN talks, UN recognition of Algeria’s right to self-determination (20 December 1960), and, despite OAS attacks, a situation of comparative political stability in France, pressure from within and from without for the dismantling of the rest of France’s African empire brought the sub-continent to centre stage.

Transition

The tendency of European (and therefore, almost invariably, Eurocentric commentators) is to attribute the dismantling of formal French empire in sub-Saharan Africa to one man, contributing in no small part to the African cult of de Gaulle, the architect of French decolonisation but also, it may be argued, of its neocolonialism. Alastair Horne notes that: ‘[B]y France’s non-white subjects he was... revered as the “man of Brazzaville” in memory of his historic speech there of January 1944, when he declared that it would be French policy “to lead each of the colonial peoples to a development that will permit them to administer themselves and, later,

to govern themselves..." He viewed "integrity of the French empire" as an adjunct - and therefore secondary - to the mystic grandeur of France, rather than something with any more practical value in itself.43

Similarly, John Chipman explains France's retention of control south of the Sahara from the same perspective: 'As France's individual position and strength in North Africa began to fade, French leaders, and particularly de Gaulle, saw in Black Africa the one area where France's military power could still be relevant, and where its acceptance would symbolise the retention of unique national influence (...) A special relationship could therefore be nurtured between de Gaulle, who was trying to preserve French greatness, and African leaders who knew that if they could share in the creation of a new France they would also have a part in her success.'44 And at a 1994 symposium commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Brazzaville conference, Edouard Bustin spoke of: The image of Charles de Gaulle...[as] a man endowed with a special empathy for Africa, capable of developing a privileged rapport with African leaders and masses, and symbolic of the best that France has to offer to mankind - her mission émancipatrice as well as her mission civilisatrice.'45

Accordingly, the preamble to the new constitution in 1958 included the declaration that: 'Le peuple français proclame solennellement son attachement aux Droits de l'Homme et aux principes de la souveraineté nationale tels qu'ils ont été définis par la Déclaration de 1789, confirmée et complétée par le préambule de la Constitution de 1946. En vertu de ces principes et de celui de la libre détermination des peuples, la République offre aux territoires d'outre-mer qui manifestent la volonté d'y adhérer, des institutions nouvelles fondées sur l'idéal commun de liberté, d'égalité et de fraternité et conçues en vue de leur évolution démocratique.'46 Chapter XII of the 1958 Constitution, with dealt with the Community's institutions, also allowed for the

45 Edouard Bustin, Une certaine idée de l'Afrique: De Gaulle's vision of Africa between mythology and pragmatism', paper presented to Brazzaville +40 conference, Boston University, 7-8 October 1994, p5
accession to independence of Community members via ‘un transfert de compétences communes’. This proviso allowed for transition to independence via a confederal-style community (approved by parliamentary vote in 1960) with which independent states could co-exist - a system approximating to dominion status - but to which only six states (the four former AEF states Gabon, Congo-Brazzaville, Chad and Oubangui-Chari (later CAR), along with Senegal and Madagascar) were prepared to associate themselves. This transitional communauté renouée was rejected by Côte d’Ivoire, Upper Volta (later Burkina Faso), Niger, Dahomey (later Benin), Mauritania and Mali (i.e. the state which emerged from the break-up of the Fédération du Mali which had been formed in 1959 by the French territories of Senegal and Soudan), and the project was abandoned officially in March 1961.47

Claude Wauthier notes that: [De Gaulle] confortait l’image d’une France généreuse et sans rancune envers ses anciennes possessions qui avaient choisi l’indépendance plutôt que de rester institutionnellement dans le giron de la métropole.48 None of this fits with de Gaulle’s vindictive treatment of Guinea at the 1958 referendum which offered a choice of immediate independence, or membership of a Franco-African federation, the Communauté française. Sekou Touré declared that Guinea preferred ‘poverty in liberty to wealth in slavery’, and alone in West Africa, the people of Guinea, politicised by Sekou Touré’s PDG, chose outright independence. This was followed by precipitate French disengagement and, as threatened, a merciless withdrawal of all French economic aid and infrastructure. In contrast, the transition to formal independence in 1960 of the remaining territories of the former French empire was an agreed process in which French control of the new states’ currency and (through military accords) defence and foreign policy was ensured. Indeed, the rulers of the new states reciprocated through withholding criticism of France’s policy in Algeria; Wauthier notes that:

Autant la rupture entre Paris et Conakry [capital of independent Guinea] avait été brutale..., autant le processus qui devait conduire finalement à la disparition de la

46 Assemblée nationale: Service de la communication, Constitution du 4 octobre 1958: Préambule, p5
47 Wauthier gives a brief account of the communauté renouée in ‘Il y a trente ans: les indépendances africaines’, Le Monde 23-23 December 1990
Communauté se déroula sans trop d’acrimonie: ceux qui choisirent l’indépendance en 1960 conclurent tous des accords de coopération avec la France et restèrent dans la zone franc. Bien plus, ils prirent pour la plupart le risque de ne pas désavouer la politique algérienne du général de Gaulle: échange de bons procédés avec le chef de l’Etat, qui leur avait précisément accordé ce qu’il avait refusé à Sékou Touré...49

Neutralisation of African nationalism, Balkanisation and the Plan raisonnable

De Gaulle’s blueprint for decolonisation à la française was the Plan raisonnable, which was characterised by three principal objectives: to guarantee the territorial integrity within colonial boundaries of the individual African states, ensuring they remained small and dependent on France; to secure in office the pro-French elites to which France would transfer power; and to integrate the bloc of newly independent states and their armies into France’s global geo-strategy, ensuring both a pro-French voting bloc at the United Nations and a French-managed sphere of influence in the sub-continent.

These objectives were put into effect without democratic consultation, and with little effort to conceal France’s true strategic motives; John Chipman notes that: The Plan raisonnable made clear that the establishment of African national armies and the reorganisation of France’s overseas defence were inseparable. In fact, the Plan was drawn up without any consultation with the emerging states of Africa.50 Similarly, Guy Martin explains the system of linkage whereby those to whom France transferred power were tied into allegiance to the ex-coloniser: The small francophone political élites... now unreservedly acquiesced to the new cooperation agreements in so far as these helped to sustain their own power base... Having a stake in the franco-African system, one understands why these particular élites generally opted for a gradual process of decolonisation rather than a radical break with the past.51 This was a mutually advantageous relationship, for France and for the French-fostered ruling elites; Martin also points out that: ‘Through the linkage

established between the accession to international sovereignty, the signing of model *accords de coopération*, and the wholesale adoption of the constitutional model of the Fifth Republic, France managed to institutionalise her political, economic, monetary and cultural pre-eminence over her former African colonies, which thereby remained excessively dependent on her.  

Richard Hodder-Williams points out that limited independence was accepted by many African leaders who, despite their nationalism, were still francophile, and could also foresee the extent to which their own position might depend on French support:

De Gaulle had no intention of weakening the bonds which tied [the] new states to France more than was absolutely necessary and the leaders of most of the new states, like [Malagasy leader Philibert] Tsiranana, realised the benefits that might accrue by establishing bilaterally economic, technical and military links with France. For some, and Houphouët-Boigny was perhaps the prime example, links with France were positively desired because emotional attachment remained strong.

The states which emerged from subdivisions of the former French colonial blocs were therefore mostly small, artificial and weak. Christopher Clapham notes the effectiveness of this reapplication of ‘divide and rule’: 'The fact that the francophone states of West Africa were all much smaller in population than the two large anglophone ones of Nigeria and Ghana can only have encouraged the great majority of them to have remained in close association with France.'

The new states were also highly centralised, on the model of the French Fifth Republic, and their governments were hidebound by effective French control of their economies, which denied them access to the basic political levers of the state.

52 ibid.
55 Richard Rathbone explains how de Gaulle modelled the newly independent states on his own, highly centralised republic led by a dominant president: 'The independence constitutions all seemed to have been run off on a copying machine that had been programmed very closely indeed by the French Fifth Republic. Like the
Many of the conflicts which have blighted the post-colonial development of Francophone Africa are the direct result of the realisation by disenfranchised and/or disadvantaged social groups, often trapped within states not of their making, that capture of the state was the key to altering what they considered the unfair distribution of wealth and opportunity in society.

The issue of sovereignty is central to this study’s discussion of the French military presence and use of military intervention after decolonisation, which will test Clapham’s suggestion that: ‘[T]he maintenance of a regime in power by external military forces could plausibly be regarded as a negation of national sovereignty.’

The argument here is that French policy has been to create and maintain a sphere of satellite or client states in a treaty-fastened federation not dissimilar to the short-lived Union française. Albert Wirz points to the deliberate circumscription of independence, where it is made conditional on acceptance of the colonist’s terms:

Une multitude d’accords de coopération et l’insertion dans la zone franc, promettant la stabilité, transformèrent, de facto, les nouveaux États en satellites de la métropole. Une fois les cérémonies terminées et les premiers crédits épuisés, les Africains se trouvaient à nouveau relégués à la deuxième place, souverains et malgré cela dépendants, suspendus à la bonne volonté de créditeurs étrangers.

To what extent were the new states of France’s African sphere independent? To what extent were they states? International law offers a definition: ‘The State as a person of international law should possess the following qualifications: a) a permanent population; b) a defined territory; c) a Government; and d) a capacity to enter into relations with other states.’

J.G. Starke identifies point (d) here as the most important; but although the states which emerged from France’s African empire may be seen to possess attributes a, b and c, Starke specifies with regard to d that: ‘A

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state must have a recognised capacity to maintain external relations with other states. This distinguishes states proper from lesser units such as members of a federation, or protectorates, which do not manage their own foreign affairs.\(^{59}\)

Revealing in this context are the following articles, representative of the bilateral accords signed here by France on the one hand, and the states which emerged from the former AEF:

**Article 3:** [L]a République centrafricaine, la République du Congo et la République du Tchad tiennent la République française informée des mesures générales ou particulières qu’elles se proposent de prendre en ce qui concerne la recherche, l’exploitation et le commerce extérieur des matières premières et produits stratégiques. [...]

**Article 4:** La République centrafricaine, la République du Congo et la République du Tchad réservent à la satisfaction des besoins de leur consommation intérieure les matières premières et produits stratégiques obtenus sur leur territoire. Elles accordent à la République française une préférence pour l’acquisition de surplus et s’approvisionnent par priorité auprès d’elle en ces matières et produits. Elles facilitent leur stockage pour les besoins de la défense commune et, lorsque les intérêts de cette défense l’exigent, elles prennent les mesures nécessaires pour limiter ou interdire leur exportation à destination d’autres pays.\(^{60}\)

Accordingly, the states in question do not manage their own foreign affairs, including defence policy, because in the post-colonial period, they have not yet achieved full statehood in the sense understood in international law. The main legal impediments to the achievement of this statehood are the bilateral treaties with France which were signed at the time of independence and since; and the principal manifestation of this lack of statehood is the French military presence and/or use (or threat) of military intervention.

**Military cooperation**

Underpinning the retention of control of these new states’ economies, currency, and of their foreign and defence policy, was a system of military cooperation. Military cooperation, in the strict sense, implies only the business of training, technical assistance and the supply of material aid. However, Franco-African military

cooperation has been the key to the maintenance of France's sphere of influence in Africa; it is based on a patron-client relationship, and means in effect a one-way transfer of funds, material, expertise and personnel. It thereby presupposes an asymmetrical relationship between donor and recipient.

The key legal safeguard for the former coloniser and its protégés was provided by French-drafted military agreements which, as Alain Rouvez notes, 'form the cornerstone of France’s military edifice in Africa and provide the legal basis for one of Africa’s most extensive and lasting security alliances with a foreign power'. The number and extent of these agreements means that the states of francophone Africa - the former colonies of France and Belgium - are militarily linked to a major ex-colonial power in a unique bilateral axis far surpassing any comparable north-south military pact. Moreover, the military cooperation accords signed by France and the African states concerned make provision for the stationing of French forces in some states and the maintenance, by the Mission Militaire de Coopération (formerly based at the Ministère de la Coopération, rue Monsieur) of a Mission d’Assistance Militaire attached to the French embassy. The accords are also invoked as one of the two most frequent justifications for direct military intervention.

The agreements take two basic forms: defence treaties (of which eight have been signed), and cooperation and military (or 'military technical') assistance accords (of which there are 26, including eight which operate in tandem with defence treaties). The former are concerned with French military power in Africa, the latter with the French army's creation and ongoing support of the armies of its African allies. The accords were drafted according to a standard model, and are as a result identical in most respects; as an example, of the Accord concernant l’assistance militaire technique entre la République française et la République centrafricaine, signed in Bangui on 13 August 1960, Annexe III, Paris: Journal officiel.

60 'Accord concernant l’assistance militaire technique entre la République française et la République centrafricaine', 13 août 1960, Annexe III, Paris: Journal officiel
62 Official updates on the Mission Militaire de Coopération were published in the bi-monthly publications La Lettre de la rue Monsieur and Frères d’Armes.
In eight cases, full defence treaties operate in tandem with military cooperation agreements such as the one examined above. For example, the Franco-Gabonese defence treaty of 17 August 1960 stipulates that: ‘Installations and emplacements determined by common accord are placed at the disposal of the French armed forces on the territory of the Republic of Gabon to permit them at all times and in all circumstances to prepare and carry out their common defence missions.’ More explicit is the 1961 Franco-Ivoirian defence accord, applicable to Dahomey (now Benin) and Niger, which states that the three new states: ‘place entirely at the disposal of the French Republic those military installations necessary for defence needs.’ Accordingly, French troops have been garrisoned in six states (Senegal, Central African Republic, Côte d’Ivoire, Gabon, Chad, Djibouti). Although troop numbers in these garrisons have diminished, their purpose - rapid response to threats to French nationals, interests, or clients posed by internal insurgency through power projection capacity (since the formation in 1983 of the army’s rapid-response Force d’Action Rapide); Chipman notes that: ‘[T]he existence of permanent French
garrisons increases the reach of the FAR and allows it to have at least some capacity to intervene in almost any African area of direct interest to France.64

In return: ‘The French Republic commits itself to provide the Republic of Côte d’Ivoire, the Republic of Dahomey and the Republic of Niger with the assistance necessary for the constitution of their armed forces.’ Under the terms of military technical assistance agreements, not only the states, but also their armies (including the gendarmerie), and by extension their overall military infrastructure, were to be French creations. Supplementary accords typically specified that: ‘At the request of the governement of [for example] the United Republic of Cameroon, the Government of the French Republic commits itself to supply, insofar as its means allow, assistance in military personnel to the Cameroonian armed forces.’ 65

This is significant, as the French military presence and interventions have been and continue to be justified in terms of the legality of interstate treaties signed between French governments and African ruling elites. In response to journalist Philippe Gaillard’s question on the future of French military intervention in Africa, Jacques Foccart revealed that little in his own perception or discourse had changed; he replied that an intervention would be legitimate: ‘Dans les cas couverts par les accords de défense, ce qui n’est pas nouveau et ce qui est très clair, c’est-à-dire pour défendre un pays ami contre une agression extérieure. Nous n’avons pas à prendre parti dans les luttes intestines, encore moins à y intervenir.’ 66 Except, Foccart specifies, if there is external support (i.e. from a neighbouring state) for an internal rebellion; that would ‘change everything.’ This was to be a key factor in French legitimisation of its interventions in the principal case studies to be considered, Chad, Zaire and Rwanda.

The framework for France’s permanent intervention was thereby established; the regular recourse to military intervention was as a result most often justified by a

65 Paris: Journal officiel
request from the incumbent African government or head of state, or to honour a bilateral treaty. Accordingly, France has intervened militarily over 30 times since 1960. The pattern of these interventions will be the focus of the next chapter.

Conclusion

Decolonisation south of the Sahara was in essence swifter, less violent, less traumatic for France, less damaging to France's international image, and less costly because it was less complete, and decided on French terms. One explanation for differences in approach, conduct and conclusion of French sub-Saharan decolonisation is that France, in the person of Charles de Gaulle, learned from the mistakes of Algeria and adapted, or evolved, his political and military strategy accordingly; France's sub-Saharan African territories would become independent, but it would be independence à la française. De Gaulle made this plain in an interview with L'Echo d'Oran in 1960: 'On dit que l'abbé Fulbert Youlou [first president of the newly-independent Congo-Brazzaville] est indépendant. Mais c'est moi qui paie sa solde. Alors, pour moi, l'abbé Fulbert Youlou n'est pas indépendant.'

Even when the post-decolonisation heads-of-state were cemented in power with French intervention and protected by French-trained armies, direct French intervention continued. Indeed, by the early 1970s, France's African sphere seemed an anachronism; Herbert Tint concludes:

If it is argued that the degree of dependence which the sub-Saharan and Malagasy republics exhibit in their relations with France is scarcely compatible with real independence, the answer must be that there is nothing to prevent any or all of the states concerned from successfully denouncing their ties with Paris at any time. But at the beginning of the 1970s the emotional dependence of France - quite apart from dependence in other fields - was still so great, that at least their governing elites seemed to be incapable of even contemplating the severance of ties.

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67 Charles de Gaulle, in an interview with Pierre Laffont of L'Echo d'Oran, November 1960, reported in Jean Lacouture, De Gaulle, tome 3, Le Souverain, p137

68 Herbert Tint, French Foreign Policy since the Second World War, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson 1972, pp202-203
This assessment may be debatable; but there is broad agreement on France’s motives for the maintenance of a French presence in sub-Saharan Africa 1960-1969: resource security as a source of strategic minerals; commerce, trade, and influence both economic and political in an arena of East-West ideological competition during the Cold War. All of these characteristics may be considered as mutually dependent, and it may be argued that France’s Africa policy is interventionary on many levels, and compromises the sovereignty which is the legal entitlement, according to the UN Charter, of independent states, and which is enshrined in France’s foremost legal document, its Constitution.69

The concept of a painful but valuable learning process is given considerable credence by Michel Martin who, in his 1989 analysis of France’s role in low-intensity wars including its wars of decolonisation, offers a second strategic model to replace the discredited guerre algérienne model cited above: the guerres africaines model - post-1960 engagements, affecting a more polymorphous pattern but restricted essentially to sub-Saharan Africa, and determined in form by the frozen bipolarity of the Cold War: ‘The now bi-polar international arena, under the umbrella of nuclear deterrence, had entered a period of ambiguous peace with peripheral confrontations from which most former colonial powers are abstaining, with the exception, paradoxically, of once more, France.’70 Africa was perceived as essential for French and particularly Gaullist world standing as the only part of the world still

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69 'La République française, fidèle à ses traditions, se conforme aux règles du droit public international. Elle n’entreprendra aucune guerre dans des vues de conquête et n’emploiera jamais ses forces contre la liberté d’aucun peuple.
La France forme avec les peuples d’outre-mer une Union fondée sur l’égalité des droits et des devoirs, sans distinction de race ni de religion.
L’Union française est composée de nations et de peuples qui mettent en commun ou coordonnent leurs ressources et leurs efforts pour développer leurs civilisations respectives, accroître leur bien-être et assurer leur sécurité.
Fidèle à sa mission traditionnelle, la France entend conduire les peuples dont elle a pris la charge à la liberté de s’administrer eux-mêmes et de gérer démocratiquement leurs propres affaires; écartant tout système de colonisation fondé sur l’arbitraire, elle garantit à tous l’égal accès aux fonctions publiques et l’exercice individuel ou collectif des droits et libertés proclamés ou confirmés ci-dessus.’
Assemblée nationale: Service de la communication, Constitution du 27 octobre 1946: Préambule

susceptible to French influence, where, with a few hundred men, France could change the course of history.

As we shall discuss in Chapters 3 and 4, the dynamic of French military intervention in Africa was driven by a specifically French set of motives; it occasionally chimed with broader Western geostrategic priorities - resistance to Soviet or Cuban influence, containment of Libya's regional ambitions, securing access to strategic minerals - and this was apparent in France's repeated interventions in Chad and Zaire. Nonetheless, the generality of French interventions were not driven by a Cold War imperative; there were few global geostrategic issues at stake in Cameroun, Gabon, Niger or the Central African Republic; the motives for those interventions were French. Accordingly, former US assistant secretary of state for Africa George Moose is sceptical about France's record as the gendarme of Africa; he points out that:

As with the official pronouncements made by all governments, French descriptions of its African policy have had a self-serving quality, and it has not always been easy to square the often altruistic and disinterested rhetoric with the actions taken. More importantly, the as yet incomplete historical record does not permit as definitive an answer as French officials might suggest to the question of whether French actions have in fact made a lasting contribution to peace and stability on the continent. What the record does attest to, however, is the level of French concern over stability and security in Africa, and the extent of French willingness to engage in the often murky international and intraregional politics of the continent.71

Unlike Zaire and Chad, no other power would have intervened in Cameroon, Gabon or Niger in France's stead. As we have discussed in this chapter, France's response to perceived crises in those states (even if such a crisis was exaggerated or manufactured by an insecure head-of-state) remained inherently interventionary, even (as we shall see in Chapter 3) where an anticipated intervention was withheld to allow an unsatisfactory head-of-state to be overthrown, and especially when France itself conducted the overthrow. The Realist school of International Relations has told us that strong states will intervene in the affairs of weak states when it is

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expedient to do so. However, it is important to note again that France’s interventionary response was mechanical and perceived as such, and hence interfered at all levels with the political development of the intervened states.

Questions remain about the durability of France’s interventionary sphere in Africa, primarily in the absence since 1990 of the cloak of Cold War justification. A submission to a French Defence Ministry seminar noted that: ‘La coopération militaire a longtemps constitué une forme privilégiée de soutien à des Etats étrangers, notamment africains... [L]a fin de la bipolarisation stratégique, l’extension du rôle de l’ONU et la responsabilité de membre permanent du Conseil de sécurité incitent la France à participer, le plus en amont possible, à la stabilisation de certains pays, afin d’éviter toute crise qui pourrait la conduire à de coûteuses interventions extérieures.’ In Chapter 6, we shall discuss the extent to which this strategy has been adopted, and what new legitimisation was found for France’s interventions in the changed climate of the ‘new world order’.

Chapter 3: French interventionary practice in the pré carré, 1960-90

Introduction

Louis de Guiringaud, first French ambassador to Ghana and subsequently Foreign Minister under President Giscard d’Estaing¹, stated that: ‘L’Afrique est le seul continent qui soit encore à la mesure de la France, à la portée de ses moyens. Le seul où elle peut encore, avec cinq cents hommes, changer le cours de l’histoire’.² Accordingly, France’s use of military intervention in sub-Saharan Africa from 1960 (‘the year of Africa’ or ‘the year of independence’ of most of its African colonies) to 1990 (France’s first intervention in Rwanda) has been used to assert its power and guarantee its access to strategic resources on the continent. But as a generation and four presidencies of intervention culminated in support for the pro-genocide regime in Rwanda, some voices in the press, NGO community and academia asked in apparent exasperation: ‘Est-ce la “vocation naturelle” de Paris d’intervenir, avec son réseau de bases et de forces prépositionnées, son dispositif d’accords de défense et de coopération technique militaires sans équivalent sur le continent qui l’ont déjà poussé, depuis 1962, à effectuer dix-huit opérations majeures sur le continent, certaines étalées sur plusieurs années, au Tchad, à Djibouti, au Rwanda?’³

These overt military operations - of which there were over thirty during the period under consideration, an average of one per year - are the most salient feature of Franco-African military cooperation, a system given legal personality

¹ De Guiringaud became Foreign Minister in 1976 in the first government of prime minister Raymond Barre.
² Quoted in Claude Wauthier, Quatre Presidents et l’Afrique, Paris: Seuil 1995, p363
through bilateral treaties although equally influenced by traditions, personal interests, networks, covert operations and ‘bad habits’. Guy Martin notes that:

Although camouflaged under the mantle of coopération, France’s African policy is, in fact, primarily motivated by a narrow conception of its national interests, and blatantly disregards African concerns and interests. As former President Valéry Giscard d’Estaing once bluntly declared, "I am dealing with African affairs, namely with France’s interests in Africa".

The resultant dynamic of French military intervention in Africa is based on a pyramid of militarism, built in the first instance, as we have seen, on the defence treaties and military assistance accords which were often a condition of independence, and which obtain between France and nearly half (26) of Africa’s 53 states. France is the only ex-colonial power which retains this number of military agreements and such a complex system of military cooperation with so many states. This baseline of exceptionality, dating from the very inception of the African states concerned, has provided a firm foundation for the other aspects of French militarism in Africa. France is the only country to station its own troops in Africa - constituting what has been called ‘a permanent intervention’ - despite an OAU resolution as early as 1978 condemning the existence of foreign military bases on the continent. France is the principal supplier of weaponry and military equipment to Africa and, since 1996, the leading arms merchant to the developing world as a whole and, after the US, the world’s largest arms

4 ‘En Afrique, la France n’a plus de politique, seulement des mauvaises habitudes’; Jean-Marie Kalfêche, L’Express 4 November 1988
7 Keith Somerville notes that: ‘At the Khartoum summit of the Organisation of African Unity in late July 1978, France came under very heavy attack for the role it had played in Zaire, Benin and Sao Tome… President Giscard d’Estaing’s calls for a pan-African military force (backed by France and other Western powers) was denounced by President Nyerere of Tanzania as “the height of arrogance”. He went on to say that “it is quite obvious, moreover, that those who seek to initiate such a force are not interested in the freedom of Africa. They are interested in the domination of Africa”. (…) Resolutions of the summit and of the earlier OAU Council of Ministers meeting in Tripoli denounced foreign military intervention in Africa and the use of mercenaries to overthrow or threaten governments.’ Keith Somerville, Foreign Military Intervention in Africa, London: Pinter Publishers & New York: St Martin’s Press 1990, p104
exporter. It is also the principal creator and instructor of African armies. This creation of military protégés on the French model is seen as a key aspect of Franco-African cooperation; Guy Martin notes that:

French leaders tend to link the concepts of security and development by arguing that their help in creating strong national armies has contributed to the stability and hence to the economic benefit of all concerned. In fact, the French government’s objective in creating African national armies at the time of independence was to build up units that could work closely with French units and effectively serve as branches of the French army overseas.

These familial relations between French and French-fostered African armies are demonstrated by annual or biennial joint military operations, and celebrated in the military association and monthly review Frères d’Armes.

Inextricably linked with these factors, dependent on them and, arguably, their logical result, is France’s frequent recourse to armed force in post-colonial Africa: military intervention, which we have defined in Chapter 1 as ‘coercive or dictatorial interference in the affairs of another state.’ Dominique Moïsi has referred to ‘a pattern of intervention in French foreign policy’; further to the historical context provided in Chapter 2, this chapter will consider this pattern, the means by which France has maintained a military presence on the continent, and the legitimisation and mechanics of the generality of French military interventions during the 1960-1990 period. We will proceed by considering the exceptionality of France’s role suggested by the factors above as a context for its interventions, with a view to providing a template against which to judge the

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8 Jacques Isnard, ‘Selon le Congrès américain, la France a été le deuxième exportateur d’armes en 1998’, Le Monde 10 September 1999
10 Frères d’Armes: Revue de liaisons des forces armées françaises, africaines et malgaches, published bi-monthly by CMIDOM Section Communication, Service Publications, Caserne d’Artois, 9, rue Edouard Lefèbvre, 78013 Versailles cédex
principal case studies – Chad, Zaire and Rwanda - which form the second half of this study and follow in Chapters 4 to 6.

As we shall see in Chapter 4, France was assisted and applauded by the US in its Chadian and Zairean interventions, which were in tune with Cold War imperatives and hence perceived as a key element in Western containment of Soviet penetration and/or Libyan expansionism. However in this chapter, it will be argued that these cases aside, the generality of interventions were undertaken for economic reasons, to support clients, and for grandeur. These varied according to case, but overall these interventions were driven by purely French motives and were not dressed up with Cold War imperatives (unlike Chad and Zaire in Chapter 4).12

It is also intended to demonstrate the pattern of interventions which allowed the dynamic of intervention to continue up to and including support for Rwanda’s genocidal regime, and to assess the factors, French, African and international, which have made this unique interventionary dynamic possible. For France in Africa, the nonintervention norm did not apply, except insofar as interventions were justified in terms of the traditional derogations from that norm. Instead, the norm was to intervene, and deliberate non-intervention (where intervention would have been expected) was simply another form of intervention. By way of conclusion here, it will be asked what evidence emerges, if any, of a learning curve. France’s interventions in Chad in the 1980s, and its Rwandan interventions of the early 1990s, suggest that France’s interventionary response had become over 30 years increasingly mechanical and less subject to debate or

12 These interventions chimed with US interests at the time, were materially supported by the US (indeed the second Zairean intervention in 1978 – ‘La Légion saute sur Kolwezi’ - would not have been possible without US C-111 transport aircraft), and were to this extent conducted at the Americans’ behest. Although the very idea of acting as ‘America’s Cuba’ (i.e. as a proxy intervenor) might have been anathema in Paris, it was perceived in these cases as essential for the preservation of an exclusively French pré carré. French planners saw that France had to intervene in its recognised sphere of influence when Cold War imperatives were at stake, or the US would do so in its stead.
public scrutiny. Regular interventions had, as we have suggested, become banalised.

**Generality of interventions**

Of the fourteen states to emerge from France’s colonial territories south of the Sahara, France retained (until the Jospin government’s reforms in 1997) permanent garrisons in five – Senegal, Central African Republic (CAR), Djibouti, Gabon, Côte d’Ivoire, and quasi-permanently in Chad – and intervened militarily in each of those countries, i.e. troops were deployed on the streets from the existing garrisons. It has also projected forces from those bases and from bases in France into the following states: Burkina Faso (Upper Volta), Cameroon, Congo-Brazzaville, Mauritania, Niger and Togo. France has also intervened in the former Belgian colony Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo), the former Belgian protectorate Rwanda, and supplied military aid and training for specific periods in the other former Belgian protectorate, Burundi. (Given the scale and significance of the French military interventions in Chad, Zaire and Rwanda, these will be discussed separately, in Chapters 4 to 6.)

It should be understood that ‘French military intervention’ here refers to unilateral operations at France’s initiative, which may or may not involve the support of the armies of the intervened states. Occasionally a French intervention may have taken place in tandem with interventions by other Western states, notably Belgium, to evacuate that state’s nationals, but it is notable that France’s interventions are often easily distinguished by their length, military capacity and effect. It is not intended here to consider multilateral operations with a UN mandate in which French forces participated but did not lead – as in Angola, Mozambique and Somalia – which are, however, often grouped (disingenuously,
it might be argued) with unilateral French interventions in official accounts of France’s military role in post-colonial Africa.\textsuperscript{13}

It is intended to consider a representative sample of interventions, and their official justification in light of the accepted derogations from the nonintervention norm discussed in Chapter 1. For an overview of the extent and variety of French military interventions during the period 1960 to 1990, a table may be useful:

### Figure 1: FRENCH MILITARY INTERVENTIONS IN FRENCH EX-COLONIAL STATES SINCE 1960

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Nature Of Intervention</th>
<th>Outcome Of Intervention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benin</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Intervention by French mercenaries led by Bob Denard</td>
<td>Failure: survival of regime of President Mathieu Kérékou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burkina Faso</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Nonintervention/clandestine support for coup leader Blaise Compaoré</td>
<td>Assassination of President Thomas Sankara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>1960-1964</td>
<td>Suppression of internal revolt (UPC)</td>
<td>‘Success’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAR</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Opération Barracuda: deposition of client</td>
<td>Overthrow of Emperor Bokassa, reinstallation of President David Dacko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chad</td>
<td>1960-1963, 1968</td>
<td>‘Law and order’, suppression of riots and repeated interventions to restore client</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1968</td>
<td>Opération Manta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1983-1987</td>
<td>Operation Epervier</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congo-Brazzaville</td>
<td>1960-1962</td>
<td>‘Law and order’, suppression of riots</td>
<td>Overthrow of President Fulbert Youlou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Support for President Omar Bongo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Djibouti</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Opérations Lovada and Saphir in support of Djibouti regime against ‘Somali irredentism’</td>
<td>Consolidation of President Hassan Gouled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Troops deployed along Ethiopian border to resist FRUD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gabon</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>‘Law and order’, suppression of riots and restoration of client</td>
<td>Reinstallation of President Léon M’Ba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauritanie</td>
<td>1961-1962</td>
<td>‘Law and order’, support for President Hamani Dior against military coup</td>
<td>Status quo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niger</td>
<td>1973-1978</td>
<td>Support for President Hamani Dior against military coup</td>
<td>Overthrow of Hamani Dior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>1960-1962</td>
<td>‘Law and order’, support for President Senghor following the break up of the Mali federation and attempted coup d’état</td>
<td>Status quo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Togo</td>
<td>1963, 1967</td>
<td>Non-intervention</td>
<td>Allowed assassination, although forewarned, of President Sylvanus Olympio, installation in 1967 of Col. Etienne (later Gnassingbé) Eyadéma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1986-1991</td>
<td>Suppression of internal revolt</td>
<td>Consolidation of regime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Non-intervention; French troops deployed in neighbouring Benin</td>
<td>Status quo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Chapter 1, we identified common derogations from the nonintervention norm, i.e. the most frequent justifications offered by intervenors: intervention with the consent of the target state and by invitation; intervention justified by treaty; counter-intervention; intervention in self-defence, including protection of the intervenor’s nationals; and humanitarian intervention. Accordingly, this chapter will proceed by considering broad categories of French military intervention according to theory (including their justifications legal and other), and practice (i.e. their conduct and effect). We can identify the following categories of interventionary practice: suppression of internal (civilian) revolt; restoration of client faced with a serious internal military threat and/or external threat; overthrow of client; and voluntary nonintervention. Each of these interventions was justified according to theory: most frequently in terms of legality (honouring treaties) and self-defence (evacuating nationals), but also in more general terms of invitation (at the request of the government of the intervened state), and the most nebulous category, humanitarianism both ‘old-style’, which overlaps with self-defence, i.e. protection of French and other Western nationals, and ‘new-style’, protection of the intervened state’s nationals. (‘New-style’ humanitarianism, although part of the justificatory discourse for earlier interventions, was not invoked as the sole justification until Opération Turquoise in 1994, to be discussed in Chapter 6.)

Some interventions might be included in more than one category, and for some, particularly those ‘suppression of internal revolt’ interventions which followed the creation of postcolonial states in the early 1960s, accessible documentation is insufficient to offer a thorough account. We shall therefore consider a number of case-types which fit the pattern described in this study of mechanical interventionary responses driven by the Franco-African interventionary dynamic, independent of Cold War imperatives; that is, such interventions would have taken place even had the Cold War not been the dominant
determinant of global geostrategy, and indeed they continued for at least seven years after the Cold War, arguably until 1996 and France’s first involuntary nonintervention (in the former Zaire).

Therefore, we shall consider examples of intervention in the following categories: suppression of internal revolt (Cameroon 1960-64); restoration of client facing internal threat (Gabon 1964); voluntary nonintervention (Congo 1963, Togo 1967, Burkina Faso 1987); counter-intervention or restoration of client facing external threat (Djibouti 1979, Mauritania 1977); and deposition of client (Central African Republic 1979). Only in the unique case of the CAR was defence of human rights invoked along with other, more traditional justifications. It is important to note that the absence of overt military intervention (since the early 1960s post-independence stabilisation/suppression of internal revolt missions) in other states of the pré carré – notably Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire – does not imply the absence of a French military role in those states’ politics. Although difficult to gauge, the benefit to a long-serving political incumbent – such as former President Senghor (of Senegal) or the late President Houphouët-Boigny (of Côte d'Ivoire) - of the ‘permanent intervention’ represented by the French garrisons in those countries should not be disregarded. It is noteworthy that at the 1978 Organisation of African Unity summit at which French militarism in Africa was condemned, those countries which housed French bases or whose leaders had been kept in power by French intervention – Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Togo, Gabon and Zaire - supported France’s military role, and President Houphouët-Boigny stated his belief that: '[E]uropeans have understood the absolute necessity to see to it that our development takes place in an atmosphere of absolute security.' Moreover, the threat or expectation of a French military intervention often had a direct influence of the direction of a political crisis; Guy Penne tells how in Burkina Faso (then Upper Volta), following the arrest of then prime minister
Thomas Sankara on 17 May 1983: ‘La rumeur complètement fallacieuse d’une 
éventuelle intervention des troupes françaises stationnées en Centrafrique se 
répand, et des manifestants, jeunes pour la plupart, défilent devant l’ambassade 
de France en cassant quelques vitres’.15

Principal primary sources used in this chapter, in addition to press reports, are 
France’s bilateral treaties with the intervened states; and the official account of 
the participation in interventions of one of the two branches of the French armed 
forces used for that purpose, the Troupes de Marine (‘les Marsouins’). There has 
not yet been published an official account of the role of that other branch of the 
French army used exclusively for overseas interventions, the Foreign Legion, and 
it has been necessary to rely on biographies and autobiographical accounts 
(allowing that the subjectivity of those sources often makes them of more 
anecdotal than historical value).16 Of decision-makers, the principal available 
memoirs and interviews used are those of Jacques Foccart, Presidents De Gaulle, 
Giscard d’Estaing and Mitterrand and, most recently, former presidential advisor 
on African affairs Guy Penne.

Context and motives

It may be useful firstly to consider the context in which these interventions could 
take place. What were France’s interests in the post-decolonisation period which 
caused it to maintain a costly policy of military involvement in its own and 
latterly Belgium’s former colonies, including expensive military bases, training 
programmes, arms transfers and most extravagantly, direct military 
interventions?

York: St Martin’s Press 1990, p104
15 Guy Penne, Mémoires d’Afrique, Paris: Fayard 1999, p89
16 Ironically, France’s Rwandan interventions (discussed in Chapters 5 & 6) have turned out to be the most 
thoroughly documented thanks in large part to the work of the Quilès Commission.
Since the fall of the Third Republic, Africa has been used for the reassertion of France and its army; former defence minister Arthur Conte notes that:

[I]l fallait apporter les preuves que la France n’est pas un pays décadent, qu’elle n’est pas recroquevillée sur elle-même, que le désastre de mai-juin 1940 n’a pas abîmé toutes ses énergies, que ses fils sont toujours capables, intellectuellement, moralement et au besoin avec intrépidité, de jouer un rôle mondial, dans la lumière de l’humanisme, au service des bonheurs et de la justice. La France continue à vivre dans l’esprit, dans l’espérance et dans l’audace... [C]omme le proclamait Georges Clemenceau un grand jour de gloire, “la France, hier soldat de Dieu, aujourd’hui soldat de l’Humanité, sera toujours le soldat de l’Idéal.”

France’s role in sub-Saharan Africa has been the focus of growing scholarly attention; the most comprehensive text in French this decade has been Wauthier's *Quatre Présidents et l’Afrique* (although there have been few major studies in English since Chipman’s 1989 *French Power in Africa*). There is a general consensus among scholars on the reasons, stated and unstated, for continued direct French military involvement in African affairs after formal decolonisation; Alain Rouvez suggests that: ‘France has... learned that steadfast intervention policies, though costly, can be rewarding if maintained over a sufficient period of time. These interventions are a dramatic demonstration of France’s commitment to an original and highly effective system of collective security which it has underwritten, often implicitly, with numerous African nations.” Similarly, in his co-edited volume *Political Reform in Francophone Africa*, David Gardinier points to:

...a remarkable continuity in French policy concerning Black Africa since at least the 1870s. France’s involvement in the sub-Saharan regions of the continent has resulted, above all, from a desire to maintain and increase its power and prestige in Europe and in the world... It is this persistent vision of Africa as an arena for advancing French power that has contributed to the

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maintenance of such a strong French presence on the continent throughout
the postcolonial era.19

In light of this repeated theme, Tony Chafer has pointed out that ‘reference to
continuity has become almost a cliché of surveys of French African policy’,20
French African policy-making ‘is not determined by imperatives that have
anything intrinsically to do with Africa, but by the way in which Africa is
supposed to contribute to France’s prestige and international status on the world
stage’.21 And in 1990, Robert Grey noted that:

While the presence and behaviour of Americans and Soviets are intrinsically
interesting, it is quite clear that France remains the most active and “weighty”
outside actor. No matter what indices are used – economic assistance,
technical advisers, military bases, even armed interventions – let alone such
unique phenomena as la zone franc and the annual conference between the
President of France and the Heads of State of francophone Africa, all show
the magnitude of the continuing French presence.22

French military policy in Africa has also been driven by interministerial and
intra-ministerial rivalry within the French polity. As we have seen in Chapter 2,
African affairs were retained under the Fifth Republic as one of the presidential
domaines réservés. Until its absorption into Foreign Affairs under the 1997 Jospin
administration, the Cooperation Ministry carried out the President’s directives
with regard to the technical and financial aspects of French military cooperation
in Africa.

Strictly speaking, military cooperation was carried out in fulfilment of the
military technical assistance accords only. The defence treaties are administered
directly by the Ministry of Defence. However, military cooperation is conducted
in practice by a number of competing poles of power and decision-making in

19 David E. Gardinier, ‘Historical Origins of Francophone Africa’ in John F. Clark & David E. Gardinier
21 ibid p39
Paris. These include the Prime Minister’s office (Matignon), the Foreign Ministry (Quai d’Orsay) and the military chiefs-of-staff (Secrétaire général de la Défense nationale - SGDN). Military intelligence (Direction générale de la sécurité extérieure - DGSE) is also directly involved in military cooperation missions in Africa (Missions d’assistance militaires based at the French army’s permanent bases or the French embassy in the African state), answerable in theory to the Defence Minister but often acting independently in the field to the extent of initiating military action, subsequently reported to Paris as a fait accompli. Jean-François Bayart notes that when considering ‘France’ as an actor: ‘ “[L]a France” ... consiste ... en une multiplicité de centres de décision que n’agissent point de concert ni même d’une façon particulièrement harmonieuse. Hormis les lignes de clivages internes à la classe politique, l’administration n’est pas une. Aux classiques rivalités entre les ministères concernés par les questions africaines s’ajoutent d’autres nuances plus subtiles, au sein de chaque département’. However, it is also important to note that until the Rwandan genocide, almost total bipartisanship prevailed in French political life concerning African policy; Guy Martin notes that the first two periods of cohabitation (under the premierships of Chirac 1986-88 and Balladur 1993-94) ‘revealed the broad agreement that exists across party lines on the substance of France’s African policy’. Indeed, despite domestic criticism of this policy since 1994, Africa has not emerged as an issue to trouble the current Chirac-Jospin cohabitation and the French government’s stated ‘nouvelle politique africaine’.

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23 On failures of military accountability, see especially Agir Ici/Survie, 4e “Dossier noir” de la politique africaine de la France: Présence militaire française en Afrique: dérives ..., Paris 1995
24 Jean-François Bayart, La politique africaine de François Mitterrand, Paris: Kathala 1984, p13
26 This term was coined shortly before the publication of the Quilès Commission’s report in December 1998. See Lionel Jospin, ‘Evolution générale de la politique de défense de la France’, Défense nationale, November 1998, pp5-20
INTERVENTIONARY CASES AND THEIR LEGITIMISATION

It will be useful to bear in mind Little’s definition of intervention and nonintervention: ‘Confronted by a bifurcated actor [i.e. civil war which splits the state’s authority, between president and army, for example, or where two competing authorities emerge and each asserts legitimacy], a second actor will have to modify the established dyadic pattern of interaction to take account of the bifurcation. The actor can either form a relationship with both units - a response defined as non-intervention; or establish a commitment with one side of the bifurcated actor - a response defined as intervention’.27 The outcome of this response, it is argued, will be the restoration of the original system, i.e. the former pattern of dyadic interaction, or a transformation of the relationship with the second actor’s [the intervenor’s, here France’s] commitment shifting to the side of the bifurcated actor which challenged the original system. Guy Martin has observed that: ‘According to the official French doctrine, military interventions in Africa are ad hoc, always conducted at the concerned government’s specific request, operated within the framework of an existing defence agreement, and designed to counter actual or potential external aggression.’28 In order to establish a template of interventionary activity, it is intended to consider examples of different styles of French intervention (practice), and the justification offered in official accounts for the breach of the nonintervention norm they represented (theory).

Suppression of internal revolt/stabilisation

In the years immediately following their assumption of power, the post-independence leaders of the states to emerge from French Africa were often beset by militant internal opposition, rivalries and displays of popular discontent.

Military cooperation policy as a whole was designed primarily to protect the incumbent president against internal opposition rather than external invasion; Alfred Grosser notes that:

La coopération militaire prévue dans les accords conclus avec les États consiste... davantage, au moins par moments, à défendre les hommes qui les dirigent contre leurs ennemis du dedans, plutôt qu'à protéger leur pays contre des attaques du dehors. Et ce n'est certes pas nécessairement parce que l'homme en place s'inspire mieux que les rebelles des principes de la démocratie pluraliste ou des droits de l'homme.  

In multiple cases - Senegal, Mauritania, Gabon, Congo and Chad - the leader was secured in office as a result of direct French military assistance. Indeed, in 1964 de Gaulle's information minister Alain Peyrefitte stated that: ‘It is not possible that a few gunmen be left free to capture at any time any presidential palace, and it is precisely because such a menace was foreseen that the new African states have concluded with France agreements to protect themselves against such risks.' Accordingly, Robin Luckham notes that after formal decolonisation: ‘The first [priority] was to guarantee the security of the African states themselves and of the group of leaders to whom France had transferred power.' Most of the 1960s interventions were justified in this context; France was obliged to intervene because of its treaty commitments with its African partners.

But such interventions were already ‘coercive interference in the affairs of a sovereign state’, and an intrusion into the internal affairs of African states, mostly in support of French-favoured rulers, in situations where other leaders might have emerged. Even the earliest works on international law draw attention to this phenomenon; Tanca quotes a 1924 study which argued: ‘Supposing [the intervention] to be directed against rebels, the fact that it has been necessary to

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30 Alain Peyrefitte, Minister of Information, Le Monde 28 February 1964
call in foreign help is enough to show that the issue of the conflict would without it be uncertain, and consequently that there is a doubt as to which side would ultimately establish itself as the legal representative of the State.32

French interventions in the early post-independence period were frequent and unsubtle. There was an obvious recognition that the new states' independence was severely circumscribed. Describing such interventions, Tanca points out that: ‘[T]he countries concerned still maintained a “special relationship” with the intervening States, which had administered them only a few years earlier. This factor is obviously not enough to assert that these States had a right to intervene, but it is certainly true that they kept a closer eye on the target States to ensure that these new countries, in their first years of independence, did not take a path too far from the one originally planned.’33 (Emphasis added) Similarly, Ernest Wamba dia Wamba wrote in 1987 of how: ‘Constraints linked to the existing state of oppression and exploitation are invoked to deny the masses of people... the right to demand broad democratic rights, to justify paternalist tendencies on the same basis as that of the balance sheet analysis used to support colonialism.34 A clear, but little documented, illustration of these tendencies were displayed in the suppression of internal opposition in Cameroon.

Repression of UPC rebellion in Cameroon 1960

France itself created the circumstances in newly independent Cameroon which necessitated a military intervention. In May 1955, one of Cameroon national leader Ruben Um Nyobé's collaborators, who had just returned from China, said at a public meeting that Um Nyobé, like Mao and Ho, had taken to the jungle to

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organise a revolution. De Gaulle’s first Fifth Republic prime minister Michel Debré tells in his memoirs how, given the state of insurrection among the Bamileké of Cameroon, he decided ‘to undertake a veritable reconquest.’ The intervention - or ‘pacification mission’ - was placed under the command of General Max Briand who deployed five battalions, an armoured platoon and a squadron of fighter-bombers. Debré recounts how, by late summer 1960, ‘General Briand could give me an account of his success: six months had sufficed for him.’

Wauthier points out laconically that, although unmentioned by de Gaulle in his memoirs, the number of Cameroonian killed is estimated at 3000, including Um Nyobé, who would remain a martyr-hero of Cameroonian nationalism: ‘Could the General... have considered the operation to reconquer the Bamileké region ordered by his Prime Minister as a digression which was not worth mentioning? Yet it was the first time - although not the last - that French troops would intervene in a former colony to save a regime in difficulty.’ François-Xavier Verschave also points out the continuity from colonial to post-colonial operations, even in terms of the troops used: ‘Les régiments français d’intervention “outre-mer” (Légion et Infanterie de Marine) sont passés sans transition des guerres d’Indochine et d’Algérie au maintien de l’ordre post-colonial.’ Thus might some of those regiments demoralised by Dien Bien Phu and the perceived sell-out in Algeria hope to regain military glory in the manner, and the military theatre, for which they were best prepared.

Nonetheless, this seminal intervention remains little-discussed, and is unlisted in most reference works; the otherwise comprehensive *Troupes de Marine* makes no

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37 ibid
mention of Cameroon, and the closest reference in the index of histories of the Legion is ‘Camerun’, the legendary 19th century battle in which a handful of Légionnaires overcame enormous odds and vastly superior numbers of Mexican troops. (‘Camerun day’, April 30, is still marked annually by Legionnaires present and former.) Michel Debré offers a favourable interpretation of this amnesia:

L'intervention militaire de la France au Cameroun est peu connue. L’attention des journalistes n’a pas été attirée par la décision que j’ai prise et son exécution qui se prolonge pendant plusieurs mois. Jusqu’à présent, les historiens ont fait preuve de la même discrétion. Cet oubli est sans doute dû au fait que cette intervention militaire s’est terminée par un succès.40

Nonetheless, as we shall see, other perceived 'successes', notably the 1978 intervention at Kolwezi in Zaire (to be discussed in Chapter 4), have featured prominently in official accounts and military historiography.

**Restoration of client**

*Gabon: Opération Libreville, February 1964*

The purpose of France’s 1964 intervention in the oil-rich state of Gabon was to restore President Léon M’Ba, who was faced early that year with popular revolt and the unhappy precedent of neighbouring Congo’s *trois glorieuses* which swept away that state’s unpopular first president Fulbert Youlou. Elikia M’Bokolo notes that: 'The invasion [in Gabon] was sufficiently effective to reassure France’s client presidents throughout the region that, although Paris had not intervened to protect the Congo government from revolution in 1963, it was able and willing to restore its friends to power when necessary'.41

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The situation in Gabon was significantly different due to that state's indispensability for French power in Africa; France's first ambassador there, Pierre Dabezies, concedes that in Gabon, France may have overstepped its official role of trading partner and economic and military advisor: 'Le Gabon, pour la France, c'est très important, parce qu'il y a l'uranium, parce qu'il y a du pétrole, parce qu'il y a du manganèse, parce que c'est une base stratégique, parce que tout ça, oui, là peut-être il y a [eu] des plans, des plans mal-formulés, mais il y a[vait] des raison très précises'. Among these reasons, according to some observers, was a long-standing fear of US economic encroachment in the mineral-rich state.

In contrast, Dabezies told a Bordeaux conference in 1979 that the generality of early, 'law and order' interventions were not 'mal-formulés' but appropriate to local political circumstances:

Des accords de maintien de l'ordre sont... passés sans faire l'objet de publication. A cet égard, la France paraît conserver un pouvoir discrétionnaire en matière d'intervention. Elle se porte au secours du Gabon, mais n'intervient ni au Congo ni au Dahomey [Bénin]: sa règle de conduite paraît être de prêter son concours aux mesures de protection de vies humaines, mais non aux mesure dirigées contre une opposition politique à fondement populaire.

This account is representative of official discourse concerning France's role as a force for stability in early post-colonial Africa. However, there was considerable

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42 Pierre Dabezies, interviewed at Université de Paris I, rue Malher, May 1996
43 M'Bokolo notes that: 'French fear of rivals dated back to their earliest trading settlements in the mid-nineteenth century and focused on an obsessive antagonism to the United States... When US Steel won the 1959 contract to build a Gabon railway, French fear of American encroachment increased yet further. It resurfaced again even more dramatically in the attempted 1964 Gabon coup d'état which French networks perceived as an American plot. American influence... was especially active in the economic sphere when the United States became the principal trading partner in oil. By 1990 more than 41 per cent of Gabon's petroleum exports went to the United States...' Elikia M'Bokolo, 'Comparisons and contrasts in equatorial Africa: Gabon, Congo and the Central African Republic' in David Birmingham & Phyllis M. Martin eds., History of Central Africa: The Contemporary Years, since 1960, London & New York: Longman 1998, p76
44 Quoted in Claude Wauthier, Quatre présidents et l'Afrique Paris: Seuil 1995, p215
scope in official accounts of the 1964 Gabon intervention for post-hoc justification. President Mba having been detained incommunicado by putchist generals, his vice-president was found available to request a French intervention which would, accordingly, be an ‘intervention by request’ in accordance with military accords; the Franco-Gabonese defense accord of 1960 states that: ‘La République gabonaise a la responsabilité de sa défense intérieure, mais elle peut demander à la République française une aide dans les conditions définies par les accords spéciaux’.45 (These latter accords are, unlike the defence agreement, unpublished.) Agir ici/Survie note that: ‘L’accord de Défense autorise aussi l’armée française à utiliser les infrastructures gabonaises, à faire usage des balisages nécessaires sur le territoire et dans les eaux territoriales de la République gabonaise, les postes et télécommunications locaux..., etc. L’armée française est pour ainsi dire chez elle au Gabon - comme dans tous les pays avec lesquels elle a des accords de Défense.’ (We have noted that eight such accords have been signed since 1960: with Côte d’Ivoire, Central African Republic, Djibouti, Gabon, Senegal, Cameroon, Comoros and Togo. Unlike military technical assistance agreements (of which there are 26), the defence accords give the French army a direct role in the signatory state’s internal as well as external security.)

_Troupes de Marine_ describes succinctly the intervention stimulus in Gabon, the rapid (i.e. mechanical) intervention response, and the operation’s motives:

[L]e vice-président de la République (gabonaise), qui a échappé au traquenard, fait appel au gouvernement français lié à la République gabonaise par des accords de défense et de coopération. La réaction de Paris est rapide: le 18 février au soir, le général Kergaravat, délégué pour la défense de la ZOM [Zone d’outre-mer] no.2 [regional military command post], en poste à Brazzaville [Congo], reçoit l’ordre de délivrer au plus vite le Président M’Ba et son gouvernement et de les aider à rétablir l’ordre légal. L’opération sera caractérisée par le souci d’agir vite pour éviter que le comité révolutionnaire ne s’organise et ne soit l’objet d’une éventuelle reconnaissance internationale.

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45 _Journal officiel_ (Paris), 21 November 1960
par certaines puissances étrangères ayant déjà montré leur intérêt pour les richesses minières du pays.46

Indeed Gabon was and remains a state central to French interests in Africa, and in recent years its president, Omar Bongo, has presided with French support over what Douglas Yates has qualified as Africa’s quintessential ‘rentier state’, its ruler and foreign companies thriving on the profit extracted from the state’s strategic mineral resources.47 Arthur Conte points out in this regard that: ‘[D]ans un... contexte de globalisation des intérêts vitaux, l’interdépendance des problèmes en jeu fait qu’un Etat ou un groupe d’Etats ne peut plus fixer les limites de sa sécurité à la région où il se trouve géographiquement. Sa sécurité implique la sécurité de ses approvisionnements en matières premières, et donc la sécurité de ses lignes de communications, surtout maritimes. Conséquence: il est vital que la France sache se doter de puissantes unités d’intervention rapide.’48

However, Urz Schwarz offers a sceptical account of France’s legitimisation of this operation:

Paris alleged that the military intervention was conducted under the terms of the treaty for mutual defence of May 19, 1961, and that the step had been taken unilaterally, yet within the treaty, because the president being prisoner had not been able to make the corresponding appeal for help. A few days later, when they discovered in Paris that there was a Vice-President of Gabon, a new and improved version was given to the effect that the Vice-President had invited the French intervention.49

Schwarz also quotes Union Africaine et Malgache secretary general Germain Mba who ‘hinted that, since Gabon is a source of manganese and uranium ore, the

intervention has served only France’s economic interests. France had not found it necessary to intervene in other less interesting instances, as for example when President Fulbert Youlou of Congo-Brazzaville appealed for help, or when President Hubert Maga of Dahomey [now Benin] was overthrown… [W]hen the pro-communist Mali President Modibo Keita was overthrown on November 20, 1968, nobody intervened in his favor’.50 Indeed, as we shall see, voluntary nonintervention where intervention is expected is much the same as intervention, in that it allows an unwary leader to be overthrown when anticipated French protection is withheld. Because intervention is the norm, local actors behave as if it would be forthcoming; how many opposition campaigns, where the local balance of power would favour a change of regime, have been abandoned for fear of the repression which would follow a French-backed restoration of the status quo ante?

Again in 1990, Gabon’s economic importance and the centrality of President Omar Bongo to the Franco-African family generated another mechanical interventionary response to a perceived crisis (the intervention stimulus) there; Elikia M’Bokolo notes that: ‘[P]arachute troops were again called on in 1990 to protect the government from the hostility of its own people and to protect French oil workers from an uprising in the installations at Port-Genti’.51 M’Bokolo goes on to conclude that: ‘In Gabon… those in power (i.e. President Bongo) had kept the military in check by using the threat of French military intervention’.52

Voluntary nonintervention

Togo

Togo was (like Cameroon) a German colony. Occupied by a Franco-British expeditionary force in 1914, it was placed under a joint League of Nations mandate after the First World War. Britain merged the western territory it controlled with the neighbouring British colony of Gold Coast (post-independence Ghana), leaving the east as an autonomous territory under French administration, granted a greater degree of autonomy earlier than the constituent states of AOF and AEF. As a result of nationalist and pan-Africanist agitation by Sylvanus Olympio and his Comité de l’Unité Togolaise (CUT), by 1956 France retained control only of currency, foreign affairs and defence, and in 1960 Togo became an independent state with Olympio as president.

In post-colonial Africa's first violent coup d'état, President Olympio was assassinated in Lomé on 13 January 1963. The military brought the pro-French former premier Nicolas Grunitzky back from exile in neighbouring Dahomey (later Benin) to replace the left-leaning and French-hostile Olympio. The assassin has never been identified, but observers agree that it was most probably the assassination's chief beneficiary, Sergeant (later General) Etienne (later Gnassingbé) Eyadéma of the French-trained Togolese army, who had served as sergeant-major in the French army in Indochina and Algeria, and who became Togolese army chief after Olympio's death. Pierre Biarnès offers the following observation:

Est-ce le sergent Eyadéma qui a tiré? En l'état actuel des témoignages dignes de foi qui sont fort peu nombreux, la chose ne peut être affirmée, même si de

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bonnes raisons donnent effectivement à penser que c'est bien l'actuel chef de l'Etat togolais qui a personnellement tué son prédécesseur.  

Claude Wauthier notes that: 'Plusieurs journalistes ont émis l'hypothèse que l'assassinat d'Olympio avait été sinon commandité, du moins téléguidé par Jacques Foccart'. (Foccart himself sheds no light on this suggestion). Wauthier also notes that: 'La nuit du meurtre, l'ambassadeur des Etats-Unis, Gaston Poullada, s'était vu conseiller la "plus grande prudence" par l'ambassadeur de France, Louis Mazoyer, qui avait été alerté par les officiers français de la gendarmerie togolaise du complot qui se tramait.

Eyadéma took power and named himself president on the fourth anniversary of the assassination in 1967. As president, Eyadéma (who, following the deaths of Mobutu and Hassan II, is now Africa's longest-serving autocrat), was received with full honours by President Georges Pompidou during the former's official visit to France in December 1971; the French President praised his Togolese counterpart for having brought order to his country through a single-party dictatorship:

Bannissant les luttes politiques, vous avez rassemblé dans un grand mouvement national toutes les énergies. Vous avez pu ainsi rapprocher des populations diverses et parfois opposées. Toutes vos forces ont tendu à abaisser la barrière qui faisaient obstacle à l'unification de votre pays.

Through his military consolidation of power, and his africanisation campaign, Eyadéma modelled his rule in Togo on that of Mobutu in Zaire; Agir ici/Survie note that: 'Le détournement de la rente... et la tenue militaro-milicienne du pays ont beaucoup de points communs avec le Zaïre. C'est pourquoi, malgré quelques

fâcheries superficielles, le Togo est un enfant chéri de la Françafrique’. Jean-François Bayart points out that the regime's suppression of opposition has been uncontested by Eyadéma's French backers; and as would be demonstrated in Rwanda, such support could contribute to the state's hardening, leading 'à coup sûr à la "haitisation" du Togo et de tous les pays africains dont les dirigeants autoritaires en mal de restauration n'hésitent pas à "macoutiser" leur pouvoir'.

Eyadéma, like Mobutu, has benefited from the services of former French army chief of staff Jeannou Lacaze, and Togo's sizeable army of 13,000 troops (one soldier for every 300 citizens) is trained at the French managed military academy in Pya, Eyadéma's home town. *La Croix* notes that: 'L'armée... sur laquelle s'appuie le régime pour entretenir la terreur et éradiquer toute forme d'opposition a été formée, aidée par la France qui a fourni du matériel et une soixantaine d'instructeurs et de conseillers militaires.'

In contrast to France's nonintervention which facilitated Eyadéma's seizure of power, there was direct intervention by several hundred French paratroops in September 1986 to protect him against a coup attempt. Wauthier offers the following account:

Le général Eyadéma n'en demande pas moins l'aide militaire de la France, et cinq Jaguar et deux cents parachutistes français débarquent dans les quarante-huit heures au Togo, d'où ils repartent neuf jours plus tard sans avoir tiré un coup de feu. [...] François Mitterrand... déclare avoir agi en vertu de l'accord de défense franco-togolais de 1963. C'est, dit-il, "une question d'honnêteté, de loyauté, d'amitié". Jacques Chirac et Jacques Foccart ont d'ailleurs approuvé l'envoi de troupes françaises, ce dernier faisant valoir que le Togo est menacé

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There was, however, a further example of deliberate non-intervention in 1991 (Opération Verdier), when President Eyadéma failed to implement the democratisation agreement drawn up by the National Conference earlier that year. Three hundred French troops were despatched to neighbouring Benin, but stopped short of intervening militarily to force Eyadéma to comply; Lacoste notes simply: 'Il lui a été reproché [à la France] de ne pas soutenir une démocratie menacée et de continuer à faire le jeu de la dictature d'Eyadéma'. Despite President Mitterrand's declaration of support for democratisation at La Baule, the networks and personal friendships developed by his African advisor - his son Jean-Christophe – militated against any intervention to constrain Eyadéma to comply; Wauthier points out that: 'Paris ne bouge pas davantage. Pour les opposants togolais, la France tient un "double langage"... d'autant plus vivement condamné au Togo que l'on y voit la main de Jean-Christophe Mitterrand, ancien correspondant de l'AFP à Lomé, notoirement en très bons termes avec Eyadéma'.

Despite a change of president and African advisors at the Élysée, and his well-documented human rights abuses, Eyadéma remains a close ally of France. On the eve of President Chirac's visit to Togo in July 1999, the Ligue béninoise pour la défense des droits de l'homme (LBDH) confirmed an earlier Amnesty report of extra-judicial executions by the Eyadéma regime; its investigations in coastal villages in Benin, according to reports, 'left little doubt that the more than 100 bodies found there, some headless, handcuffed or riddled with bullets, "were pushed from low-flying planes and helicopters coming during the night from Togo". [...] Mr Chirac's spokeswoman, Catherine Colonna... said: "Of course,
human rights will be high on the president’s agenda - although much of the evidence is confused”.  

Niger

In 1973, President Georges Pompidou authorised the despatch of 270 troops to Niger to help that state’s first president Hamani Diori, ‘l’un des alliés les plus fidèles de la France en Afrique et… l’un des architectes de la francophonie”, to maintain power at a time of severe drought and internal unrest. Keith Somerville notes that: 'The French were keen to help maintain stability in Niger because of concern [for] continued access to uranium deposits, [and] also wanted to give a clear message to Libya not to interfere in Niger’. However the following year, a few days after Pompidou’s death in April, Hamani Diori was overthrown in a coup led by Nigerien army chief Colonel Seyni Kountché, a former NCO of the French army and (like Eyadéma) a veteran of Indochina and Algeria. This time there was to be no mechanical interventionary response (which Hamani Diori might understandably have expected); Wauthier tells how:

Le coup d'Etat s'était produit pendant l'intérim à la présidence d'Alain Poher, qui convoqua plusieurs ministres et responsables militaires pour examiner l'éventualité d'une intervention, notamment de la garnison française cantonnée à Niamey [Niger]. Jacques Foccart et le ministre de la Défense, Robert Galley, étaient pour: Diori était un "ami loyal" de la France en faveur duquel il fallait faire jouer les accords de défense. Le Premier ministre Pierre Messmer et le général Maurin, chef de l'état-major, étaient contre, craignant de voir la France accusée de "néo-colonialisme": ils l'emportèrent et Diori fut "lâché" par Paris.  

Years of economic mismanagement by a president mistakenly confident of automatic French support may have sufficed to bring about his downfall; Lacoste observes simply that: 'Les famines provoquées par les sécheresses ne sont pas pas

65 Jon Henley, Massacres mar Chirac visit to Togo', The Guardian 21 July 1999
étrangères au renversement en 1974 de Diori...: la misère rendit insupportable la corruption de son entourage et le détournement de l'aide alimentaire'. 69

However, it is not insignificant that Diori had allied himself with radical and non-aligned regimes - Algeria and Sékou Touré's Guinea (the only 'francophone' African state to have rejected de Gaulle's Communauté française in 1958) - and had sought good relations with Colonel Gadaffi's Libya, with which Niger shares a vulnerable border. Diori may have been a victim of a Foccartian plot which sought his overthrow when suspected of pursuing an independent foreign policy which would distance his state from the francophone bloc; it seems likely that these concerns, rather than any fear of accusations of neo-colonialism, led to the deliberate nonintervention response on this occasion. Wauthier protests that France can thereby find itself in a no-win situation, damned if it does intervene, and damned if it does not:

La France - inquiète du rappochement avec la Libye - avait-elle joué un rôle dans le putsch, ne serait-ce qu'en laissant faire, ou avait-elle tenté, après coup, de l'enrayer? (...) Ainsi se trouvait une fois encore confirmée la règle, quasi générale lors des changements de régime en Afrique francophone, selon laquelle la France, quoi qu'elle ait fait et même si elle n'avait rien fait, était soupçonné d'avoir tout manigancé. 70

Congo-Brazzaville

Congolese independence in 1960 was, according to Ernest Wamba dia Wamba71, 'a well-prepared imperialist scheme of French neo-colonialism', 72 which installed former priest Fulbert Youlou as president. The importance of retaining the independent Congo within a French sphere of influence is readily apparent; Elikia M'Bokolo notes that: 'From the first discoveries of offshore petroleum in 1957, the growth of the industry turned the Congolese economy upside down. Between 1969 and 1984 petroleum rose from 5 per cent of export revenue to 90

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70 Claude Wauthier, Quatre Présidents et l'Afrique, Paris: Seuil 1995, p238
71 Wamba is former professor at the University of Kinshasa and currently leader of the Rassemblement Démocratique Congolais faction in the civil war in the Democratic Republic of Congo.
per cent [...] Oil companies, in particular, overshadowed the sovereignty of any state... In Congo the state apparently surrendered to international business'.

Youlou’s three year regime ‘pleased only former colonialists and neo-colonialists’; and even John Clark’s more restrained assessment suggests that: ‘The neocolonial Youlou regime is best described as mildly corrupt, directionless in domestic policy, and deferential to France.’ In a climate of trade union agitation and popular demands for the president’s overthrow, the regime claimed to have discovered a communist plot to destroy it, and responded to popular protest with censorship and a ban on rights of association, organisation and public assembly. During Congo’s *trois glorieuses* (13–15 August 1963), a civil insurgency involving a strike of 35,000 workers succeeded in forcing Youlou from power. Even though the president blamed international communism for his overthrow, Wamba notes the then unprecedented situation whereby:

Not even the French army, still stationed in Brazzaville, dared to intervene to save the pro-French neo-colonial regime, as the whole population seemed so determined and so united against it. Even neo-colonialists felt that such an intervention was likely to precipitate a civil war. The initiative to transform the character of the state, so it seemed clearly, belonged to these rebelling masses of people who unfortunately had no political revolutionary leading core.

Why did France not intervene to support Youlou? Foccart regretted that the regime had not been saved: ‘[J]e pense encore qu’il est dommage que nous

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n’ayons pas soutenu Fulbert Youlou... , et plus tard Hamani Diori, en 1974. But importantly, the leader to emerge from the popular revolt was, despite his espousal of ‘scientific socialism’, not hostile to France. Alphonse Massemba-Débat, was ‘seen as an honest politician...[but] [a]lready, French colonialists were quite satisfied with and relieved at the movement’s choice of the head of the new government’.78

Subsequently, the renamed People’s Republic of Congo was ruled under a one-party state system when Marien N’Gouabi, commander of the armed forces, became head of state in 1968. N’Gouabi’s regime was ‘widely respected by many ordinary Congolese for his intelligence, incorruptibility, and hard work’79, until his murder outside his residence in 1977. N’Gouabi’s successor Yhombi Opango was in turn ousted in a coup led by Denis Sassou Nguesso (current Congolese president) in February 1979.

Throughout this turbulent period and the despite the Congo’s apparently Marxist regimes, French influence continued uninterruptedly and, with the discovery of oil, became central to the country’s economy. Wamba emphasises that: ‘[N]o politico-ideological break took place, nor did any real curtailment of neo-colonialism come out of it. If anything, more imperialist capital started flowing in again, especially after the discovery of new oil deposits, and reliance on France for the regular payment of civil service salaries increased.’80 Clark corroborates this assessment:

80 ibid p110; Wamba also offers the following explanation for the Congo’s multiple coups and counter-coups during this period, pointing to the structure of the state inherited from colonialism as the source of any socialist experiment’s failure: ‘While the Marxist left inside the state still held to its objectives – at least at the level of intentions – of destroying the neo-colonial bureaucratic
Perhaps surprisingly, Congo retained relatively close relations with France throughout its twenty-eight-year socialist period (...) France... remained Congo’s largest trading partner and a far larger source of foreign aid [than other socialist states] throughout the whole period [1963-91]... [D]espite its anti-neocolonialist rhetoric, Congo allowed the French firm Elf-Aquitaine to become the chief exploiter of the country’s petroleum, the production and sale of which accounted for more than 90 percent of Congo’s foreign earnings during the 1980s.81

Is this a surprise? French intervention operated along a unique bilateral axis which transcended and outlived Cold War ideology. By this logic France, which emphasised elsewhere [as we shall see in Chapter 4] that it was the West’s gendarme in Africa, could intervene without contradiction in support of an avowedly Marxist leader in Congo, Denis Sassou-Nguesso, in 1987. Foccart offers a helpful insight into French thinking at the time: ‘[C]e pays dont l’étiquette marxiste-léniniste est avalisée par l’Union soviétique... s’accommoder très bien de la présence d’entreprises capitalistes et de la coopération avec la France. Et il n’est pas bien difficile à gérer en cette période [i.e. 14 years under Denis Sassou Nguesso, 1979-93]’.82 Or as Wamba, in describing the attempt to consolidate the revolution under the MNR, puts it: ‘French imperialism still controlled the economy... [A]ll [the Movement’s] decisions... were unable to offset radically the imperialist domination of the economy; the latter’s structures remained completely integrated into the French neo-colonial system’.83

With unfortunate timing, John Clark wrote in 1997 (shortly before the outbreak of civil war which returned Sassou Nguesso to power) that: ‘Congo has had to overcome an entrenched authoritarian regime and grapple with economic paralysis and ethnic confrontations; meanwhile, the French response to democratization in Congo has been ambivalent... [but] [p]erhaps Congo’s favourable social features make it a good candidate for membership in the small club of stable, durable African democracies’. But French nonintervention again in 1997 was dictated by radically changed circumstances, and was, it may be argued, involuntary nonintervention for the first time in a state which, unlike Rwanda, Burundi and the former Zaire, is a former French colony and hence an integral part of the original pré carré. This hints not so much at tumbling dominoes, but at the phenomenon of rollback, to be discussed in this study’s conclusion.

*Burkina Faso 1987*

It may also be worth mentioning in passing here the assassination on 15 October 1987 of ‘new generation’ President Thomas Sankara of Burkina Faso, a militant opponent of neo-colonialism out of step with his francophone African colleagues, and a frequent critic of France. In contradiction of practice throughout West Africa during François Mitterrand’s November 1986 tour, President Sankara used the opportunity of the French president’s visit to voice a wide-ranging attack on French African policy. *Le Monde* reported that during a diplomatic dinner, ‘le président de la République [Mitterrand] dut en effet écouter une étrange mise en cause, non pas de sa politique mais de celle de la France, dans des termes pour le moins inhabituels en ce genre de circonstance’. Mitterrand in turn abandoned diplomatic language to declare that: ‘Le capitaine Sankara est un homme dérangeant (...) Je n’ai pas à me mêler de votre politique intérieure

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85 Jacques Amalric, ‘Le “vieux sage” et le jeune impertinent…’, *Le Monde* 19 November 1986
même si] vous constituez une équipe jeune [Sankara was 37], dérangeante, insolente'.

Sankara’s independent stand, and perceived arrogance before the French president, could have been considered an encouragement to groups opposed to francophile heads-of-state throughout francophone Africa. Sankara’s murder and his administrations’s overthrow the following year provoked no overt response in Paris, and only muted expressions of regret. François-Xavier Verschave suggests that:

Ce n'est pas Foccart personnellement qu'affrontait Sankara: c'est cette Françafrique possessive - dont, bien sûr, Foccart palpait toutes les pulsions. Il n'a peut-être pas signé lui-même l'arrêt de mort de Sankara, mais deux au moins des féaux-clients-complices qu'il avait au téléphone plusieurs fois par semaine, Houphouët [Côte d'Ivoire] et Eyadéma [Togo], ont béni le complot meurtrier.

Counter-intervention

Djibouti

The French intervention in Djibouti is the only clear-cut case of counter-intervention driven by French interests alone (as opposed to French support for a key ally, as would be the case with Morocco in Western Sahara). However, such a counterinvention may be interpreted on another level, i.e. as intervention to counter or more precisely pre-empt an intervention by the US should France fail in its obligations as the gendarme of Africa.

The tiny Horn of Africa state of Djibouti is a unique case. It is physically cut off from the rest of the pré carré, and represents in many respects France’s Gibraltar, guarding the southern approaches to the Red Sea and Suez Canal. It is also the site of France’s largest overseas base, which has housed up to 5000 French troops in a state with a population of just 400,000. A majority of this population voted

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86 ibid
87 François-Xavier Verschave, La Françafrique, Le plus long scandale de la République, Paris: Fayard 1999, p176
for independence from France in May 1977, and the stated purpose of France's reinforcement of its garrison in that year was to resist Somali irredentism. George Moose notes that: it was feared [in the West] that the territory would become a microcosm of the growing tensions between Somalia and Ethiopia and that Somalia's assertion of its irredentist claims to Djibouti could provoke an Ethiopian move to take over the territory in order to protect its access to the port... Such a move, if successful, would give Ethiopia's Soviet backers a foothold on both sides of the narrow strait of Bab el-Mandeb, which controls the southern access to the Red Sea. Similarly, although its Cold War strategic value would seem to explain fully the maintenance of such a large and costly garrison there, it was justified primarily in terms of regional security in the volatile Horn; John Chipman noted that: 'The French presence there serves as much to keep a precarious balance between opposing states in the area as it may serve to support a purely Western interest'.

Moreover, the French garrison remained at full strength post-Cold War. It is the largest industry in Djibouti, representing half the state's gross domestic product and 41% of its resources; without the French army, the tiny oil-less state's quintessential dependency economy would be destitute. This is par excellence what Robin Luckham has called France's 'permanent intervention'. Christopher Clapham notes that such garrisons 'could also be taken as indicating tacit support for the government in power, since even if they were nominally there for other purposes, they constituted a deterrent to intervention by the army of the state concerned.' Troupes de Marine is noteworthy in light of this theory that the

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effects of the presence of pre-positioned troops on the domestic politics of the states concerned vary from outright interference in internal affairs, such as the protection of a president against his own citizens or army (as in the Central African Republic 1996-97), to a more subtle deterrence of opposition; the official regimental account lauds France’s defence of Djibouti during the first Ethiopian-Eritrean war as:

"...exemplaire par la démonstration éclatante du rôle de forces de présence comme celles de Djibouti qui ont su faire face instantanément à une crise locale majeure. Sans elles et dans le meilleur des cas celle-ci n’aurait pu être affronté qu’après un délai d’au moins 72 heures par des éléments d’intervention transportés par voie aérienne sur des milliers de kilomètres et que leur faible connaissance des forces en présence, du terrain et une acclimatation difficile n’auraient pas rendus instantanément disponibles; [et] exemplaire par la remarquable démonstration d’entente et de coopération entre les militaires français et djiboutiens habitués depuis longtemps à une vie commune et à une connaissance réciproque et à des exercices menés ensemble sur le terrain de l’engagement."  

‘Un avant-goût de Rwanda’

French Marines and Légionnaires in Djibouti were mobilised again in 1991. Although beyond the strict Cold War timeframe of this chapter, the 1991 intervention merits inclusion here in its role as a foretaste of the post-Cold War militaro-humanitarian justification for intervention. Troops from the French garrison in Djibouti were deployed this time along the border with Ethiopia, to resist incursions by exiled Djiboutian FRUD (Front pour la restauration de l’unité et de la démocratie) guerrillas based in that country. Agir ici/Survie quotes the following account:


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miraculeusement, alors que les conditions objectives qui avaient justifié sa mise en place n’ont pas cessé. Se produit alors une offensive de l’armée régulière qui, compte tenu de son renforcement, balaye la guérilla et la repousse vers l’Éthiopie.  

When the French counter-intervention (based on the premise that the FRUD constituted a foreign invasion, the same rationale used for France’s intervention in opposition to the RPF in Rwanda) was completed, the account tells how there ensued, ‘un véritable génocide tribal. Les gens sont massacrés par centaines, repoussés dans le meilleur des cas vers les frontières érythréennes, le régime dictatorial [du Président Hassan Gouled] ayant toujours prétendu que le FRUD n’était pas djiboutien. La répression est féroce: des témoignages de députés de la majorité attestent que les routes sont jonchées de cadavres. A travers cette opération militaire, on cherche à liquider une fois pour toutes l’opposition dans ce pays, et celle-ci étant en grande partie afar, à exterminer cette ethnie’. The French troops which had returned to their Djibouti garrison were not redeployed on this occasion.

Mauritania (Opération Lamantin 1977-1980)

In late 1973, having successfully renegotiated his country’s cooperation accords with France, President Moktar Ould Daddah of Mauritania stated that he believed those accords, signed in 1961, were ‘neo-colonial’, and that he did not believe in ‘la philanthropie érigée en système, surtout entre un Etat hier colonisé et un Etat hier colonisateur.’ He also declared that:

Je dirai que nos rapports avec la France n’ont jamais été excellents malgré les apparences et les formes. Il y a eu des tensions aiguës à propos de la guerre d’Algérie, des expériences nucléaires françaises au Sahara et de notre refus d’adhérer à l’Organisation commune des régions sahariennes. Désormais,

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94 ibid
nous ne voyons plus que des avantages à coopérer avec notre ex-colonisateur.95

President Daddah’s words were to prove prophetic, as four years later his country was attacked by Polisario columns fighting for the independence of the neighbouring Western Sahara and opposed, with Algerian support, to the October 1974 agreement (ratified by Spain and internationally approved in November 1975) between Mauritania and Morocco to divide the territory between them. The stated purpose of the resultant French intervention was to counter these incursions, although this dispute - labelled 'Querelle autour d’un "Etat fantôme"'96 - is primarily of interest to military historians as a demonstration of France’s adaptation of its power-projection capacities to fight low-intensity wars, and as a showcase of French weaponry; one account notes that:

The spearhead of the interventionary forces comprises ground forces and marine infantry units. The Navy and Air Force also play an important role. The Navy protects communications, provides transportation and, in certain cases, offers artillery and aero-naval support ... With its sophisticated and powerfully-armed tactical fleet (FATAC), with combat aircraft like the in-flight refuelable Jaguar and Mirage F1, the Air Force can be called in for long-range pin-pointed actions against concentrated forces, as against the Polisario forces in Western Sahara in 1977-78 ... [A]ir power is an intimate component of intervention, not only at the logistical level but also the operational level.97

President Giscard d’Estaing ordered the aerial bombardment of Polisario columns in June 1977 following the signing of a new military agreement with Mauritania, and again in 1978 following the retaliatory kidnapping by Polisario of a group of French mining engineers. However, as George Moose noted: ‘Despite French intervention and the rapid expansion of the Mauritanian military from three thousand men in 1975 to more than fifteen thousand by 1978,

95 Quoted in Claude Wauthier, Quatre Présidents et l’Afrique, Paris: Seuil 1995, pp243-244
Mauritania’s position continue[d] to worsen.68 Claude Wauthier emphasises that France’s support for the Moroccan-Mauritanian annexation of the Western Sahara provoked the worst crisis in Franco-Algerian relations since Algerian independence, with Algerian president Boumediene famously accusing President Giscard d’Estaing of having ‘revêtu la gandoura et la djebella dans lesquelles il cache un poignard marocain’.99 Certainly, the closeness of the military relationship between Paris and Rabat was to be demonstrated most clearly in the same year as the Western Saharan crisis, 1977, by Morocco’s despatch of several hundred troops in French military planes to spearhead the Zairean army’s defence of Shaba against Angolan-based anti-Mobutu insurgents (the first Shaba intervention, discussed in Chapter 4); France also supplied Morocco with a total of 49 French-built fighter aircraft (Mirage and Alpha-Jet) and a new air-defence system at the same period.100

Significantly, France’s support for Morocco - and by extension for its territorial claim in Western Sahara - was to set the direction of Western practice on the issue; George Moose notes that in 1979:

[T]he Carter administration brought its own position closely in line with that of the French by offering to sell OV-10 reconnaissance aircraft and helicopter gunships sought by the Moroccans for use in their fight against Polisario, but without endorsing Morocco’s territorial ambitions. The rationale for the decision, like that given by French officials in support of their military aid, was that... Morocco would come to the bargaining table only if it was assured of Western support and could do so from a position of relative strength.101

So in this case, instead of acting as the West’s policeman, France was able to direct Western policy through military intervening to support one side in an African conflict.

69 Quoted in Claude Wauther, Quatre Présidents et l’Afrique, Paris: Seuil 1995, p346
70 Claude Wauther, Quatre Présidents et l’Afrique, Paris: Seuil 1995, p347
This was one of the busiest periods (1977-78) for French militarism in Africa. François Mitterrand condemned President Giscard’s 'neocolonialism and condescending paternalism' in Africa, and his interventions as 'operations in catastrophe'; Jacques Chirac, following the 1978 interventions in Shaba, Chad and Mauritania, 'accused Giscard variously of souring the climate for the pursuit of important French political and commercial interests in Algeria and Libya, undermining Moroccan security by encouraging its involvement in Shaba, setting back de Gaulle's early efforts at détente with Moscow, and becoming "a scout for the Americans" in Africa'.

However, the rewards - for French influence and French-supported heads-of-state - of an interventionary policy in a number of conflicts simultaneously seemed to outweigh any domestic criticism or accusations of neo-colonialism from President Giscard's political opponents. These opponents would themselves adopt similar interventionary policies during their own subsequent presidencies.

**Deposition of client: Central African Republic (CAR)**

An overt French intervention to overthrow and replace a former client regime happened only once. (Such operations have been a more frequent feature of American military intervention in US client states, as in South Vietnam and Panama.) The 1979 *Opération Barracuda* in the Central African Republic (then entitled the Central African Empire) was one of the few military interventions of the Giscard presidency to provoke controversy, as it involved the deliberate removal of the head-of-state of a sovereign country, and his replacement by a candidate chosen by the intervenor. Even Foccart called it 'la dernière expédition coloniale'.

Dominique Moïsi underlined the singularity of this form of

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intervention: ‘Non-support to an endangered leader may sometimes take a more active form, as is the case of the Central African Republic where France, having supported the Bokassa regime, actually intervened to replace him, with the man Bokassa had himself deposed, Dacko.’

Central to French interests in the CAR were its reserves of uranium, essential to the French nuclear industry, which were estimated at 15,000 tons when extraction began in 1976, and the strategic location which the state’s name implies. From 1960 to 1997 France maintained two major military bases in the CAR, at Bouar and in the capital Bangui. These bases were essential for France’s power projection throughout central Africa, particularly for its repeated interventions in Chad and Rwanda, and the maintenance of this significant military presence has been at the heart of France’s often difficult relations with its former colony.

Jean-Bedel Bokassa came to power in 1966 when he overthrew the elected president David Dacko. He initially modelled his rule on that of Charles de Gaulle, but on 4 December 1977 he appointed himself emperor of the renamed Central African Empire (CAE). Bokassa became the Western media’s caricature grotesque of an African dictator (often with a subtext questioning the wisdom of decolonisation), but parallel with Bokassa’s self-aggrandisement was systematic repression of opposition; Amnesty reported his involvement in the massacre of over one hundred schoolchildren detained following demonstrations on 18 April 1979. A commission of African jurists set up to report on Bokassa’s human rights abuses corroborated reports of the Emperor’s involvement in the massacre, and criticised France for its military support and financial subventions which assured Bokassa’s grip on power. Faced with censure at home and abroad and unable to justify its continued support through external threat, Paris announced the

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104 Dominique Moisi, ‘Intervention in French Foreign Policy’ in Hedley Bull ed., *Intervention in World*
cessation of aid to the CAE, while President Giscard and his Africa advisors began to manoeuvre to find a replacement for Bokassa who would be more fréquentable. The now disfavoured Bokassa turned to Libya for financial and military help, which Colonel Gadaffi offered in exchange for access to the CAE’s uranium and permission to establish a Libyan military base; but when Bokassa went to Tripoli on 20 September 1979 to meet Gadaffi, the French seized the opportunity to install their chosen successor, former president David Dacko, who travelled to Bangui with the French intervention force in a military Transall. The intervention - codenamed Opération Barracuda - was unique in that an African head-of-state, was directly installed in power by the French army, although Dacko was widely considered weak and entirely dependent on French support. George Moose notes that: ‘[T]he French dropped all pretence of non-involvement after Dacko’s own statements acknowledging the French role in planning and executing the coup and reports that Dacko’s return to Bangui was simultaneous with the arrival of some four hundred French paratroopers.’

Apart from the predictable hostility of Libya, only Benin and Chad condemned the French action. Key among the stated justifications for Opération Barracuda were containment and humanitarianism. With regard to the former, Troupes de Marine tells how: ‘Libya and the Soviet Union ... had begun to put in place in Bangui aid, material and above all advisors, the quality and quantity of which had only little to do with the well understood needs of the country.’ Key participants in Opération Barracuda, Marine Colonels Mazza and Degenne, conclude that:

[L’]échec de notre tentative aurait entraîné une purge sanglante dans les milieux centrafricains, l’éviction de la France de tous les intérêts qu’elle pouvait avoir sur place et l’accélération de la manoeuvre tentée par l’Union

Politics, Oxford: OUP 1984, p73


Soviétique d’encercler l’Europe par le sud... Autre caractéristique d’exécution majeure, plus sérieuse, l’intervention doit être accomplie sans faire usage des armes, sauf en ultime recours. Notre arrivée en soutien du nouveau gouvernement d’un pays ami justifiait cette prescription, mais son application ne coulait pas de source. C’était vraiment le moment d’étaler vigoureusement sa force pour ne pas avoir à s’en servir. Il fallait quand même des troupes rudement disciplinées et un peu de chance pour que cela marche!107

Humanitarianism was invoked here on the basis that France claimed to have acted in response to the human rights report prepared by African jurists. Teson is sympathetic to this viewpoint, and concludes that:

The humanitarian motives of France can hardly be doubted. To be sure, the French determination to overthrow Bokassa arose out of a guilty conscience for having supported the tyrant in the past. But the course of events showed an unmistakable shift of policy by the French government. That shift was directly caused by the reports about Bokassa’s schoolchildren massacre and the generally atrocious nature of the emperor’s regime (...) Statements by French officials and President Dacko immediately after the coup confirm that humanitarian concerns were crucial to the French decision to overthrow Bokassa ... Moreover, the null cost in human lives makes the Central African case an instance of humanitarian intervention par excellence. French troops provided the necessary and proportionate help the Central African citizens needed to depose a dictator who had undoubtedly rendered himself guilty of the gravest crimes against humanity.108

In contrast, Foccart considered this most exceptional intervention to have been a step too far, a blatant interference condemned by the world which risked drawing attention to and revealing too much about France’s interventionary role in Africa:

On est allé chercher David Dacko pour le ramener à Bangui dans un avion militaire; on aurait pu choisir quelqu’un d’autre, cela n’aurait rien changé à la nature du coup d’État. Il s’agissait de renverser Bokassa en profitant de son absence. On m’a reproché mon néo-colonialisme, mais Barracuda ce n’est pas du néo-colonialisme, c’est du colonialisme, la dernière expédition coloniale! J’ai alors pensé que les initiateurs de cette opération avaient abîmé l’image de

la France en Afrique... [T]ous les ingrédients de ce qu’il fallait pour nous faire condamner par la communauté internationale étaient réunis: une expédition militaire dans un pays étranger, avec dans l’avion l’homme que nous voulions imposer.¹⁰⁹

Notable here is Foccart’s greatest concern: not the independence and self-determination of the CAR’s people, but the tarnishing of France’s international image. (This concern, a constant throughout the period under consideration, would re-emerge most recently with the internal French debate over a last-ditch intervention to save Mobutu in early 1997.) Hugo Sada supports Foccart’s conclusion, that: ‘[L’]opération Barracuda en Centrafrique suscita de fortes controverses et symbolisa la survivance de pratiques néo-coloniales très défavorablement perçues en France et dans le monde’.¹¹⁰ However, from an American perspective George Moose points out that: ‘In contrast to the uproar that followed the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and the overthrow of its government, which bore at least superficial similarities to the French action, there was no concerted attempt by the Africans to bring the matter before the United Nations or even to debate it seriously in the OAU.’¹¹¹ This most explicit demonstration of French military power in Africa, and an apparent breach of international norms, could nonetheless be considered normal within the context of French interventionary practice.

Conclusion

What do we mean by a mechanical interventionary response to an intervention stimulus? We mean, in sum, that intervention or the threat of intervention is

¹⁰⁹ Jacques Foccart, Foccart Parle 2, Paris; Fayard/Jeune Afrique 1997, p255
always a factor, directly influencing the domestic politics of the potentially intervened states.

Notable in this respect is France’s help to pro-French regimes regardless of their positioning on the Cold War left-right spectrum. Wauthier notes that military interventions to help both a pro-Western military dictator (Eyadéma in 1986) and a self-proclaimed Marxist (Sassou-Nguesso in 1987) by the same French administration is evidence of successful cohabitation in Paris:

Le fait que Sassou-Nguesso dirige un régime au moins théoriquement marxiste, tandis qu’Eyadéma se montre ouvertement pro-occidental, ne peut que conforter l’opinion que le "tandem" Mitterrand-Chirac fait passer l’amitié avec les pays du pré carré avant les querelles idéologiques, et qu’au moins pour l’Afrique la cohabitation fonctionne.\textsuperscript{112}

However, this apparent paradox may also be seen as a clear demonstration of the independence of France’s interventionary dynamic, which operated during the Cold War regardless of globally-defined ideologies.

Similarly, there was continuity in the use of military intervention over five presidencies and numerous governments despite apparent ideological differences on other policies. It is now well documented that the two terms as president of François Mitterrand, from 1981 to 1994, were the most interventionary; Dominique Moïsi pointed out that: ‘In Africa, Socialist France is caught between two contradictory objectives: the need to differentiate herself from Giscard d’Estaing’s policy with its neo-paternalistic taint, and the need to reassure all those countries [i.e. leaders] whose stability depends on French political, economic, and all too often military support, in what can be considered as the last French sphere of influence in the world’.\textsuperscript{113} And as late as November 1994, President Mitterrand reasserted the traditional importance of Africa for

\textsuperscript{112}Claude Wauthier,\textit{ Quatre Présidents et l’Afrique}, Paris: Seuil 1995, p524

\textsuperscript{113}Dominique Moïsi, ‘Intervention in French Foreign Policy’ in Hedley Bull ed.,\textit{ Intervention in World Politics}, Oxford: OUP 1984, p75-76
France: 'La France ne serait plus tout-à-fait elle-même aux yeux du monde si elle renonçait à être présente en Afrique'.

The cumulative effect has been the creation of an independent (and, until 1994, seemingly unstoppable) dynamic by means of which France acted militarily in Africa free from many of the constraints, domestic or international, which international law and France’s own constitution suggest should normally apply to relations between states in general, and between strong and weak states in particular. France has been a more prolific intervenor in Africa than the Cold War superpowers or the post-Cold War United States; one of the latter’s policymakers, former assistant secretary of state for African affairs George Moose, notes that: ‘The French... have given the appearance of being immune to either the domestic foibles or the international constraints that have led other Western nations to eschew an active military role in Africa.’ France’s response was always interventionary, even when, through deliberate withholding of intervention where expected, it allowed a regime’s opponents the time and space for a coup d’état (the very absence of the expected interventionary response sending a signal of French approval for the disfavoured leader’s eventual overthrow).

The generality of French interventionary practice from 1960 to 1990, including its first intervention in Rwanda (to be discussed in Chapter 5), was driven primarily by a mechanical interventionary response, operating independently of Cold War imperatives, except insofar as the Gaullist world vision saw influence in Africa as one means of standing up to both superpowers; Phil Cerny (in The Politics of Grandeur) pointed out that from the late 1950s, Gaullist foreign policy was ‘farsighted, in that it was built upon a vision of a post-cold war world, in which the

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114 François Mitterrand, quoted in Marie-Pierre Subtil, ‘François Mitterrand affirme que la France doit “refuser de réduire son ambition africaine”’, Le Monde 10 November 1994
mature nations of the old world and the newly independent states of the Third World would act to counterbalance the political, economic, technological and military hegemony of the two recently emerged "superpowers".\textsuperscript{116} And John Chipman, although placing France's interventions in Africa until the late 1980s firmly in their Cold War context, notes that: 'French policy has rarely been aimed overtly at keeping the Soviet menace at bay or at propagating a particular "Western" policy. The French have traditionally been reasonably relaxed about Soviet influence on the continent'.\textsuperscript{117} France's interventions were motivated in the first instance by French priorities and determined by the unique bilateral dynamic of Franco-African relations, primarily support for client regimes. France, as its policy-makers repeatedly insisted, understood Africa and could ensure stability where it could project its power; and this arrangement was accepted by the US and others as the Monroe Doctrine à la française which would retain those countries' links with the West. Patrick Manning emphasises that:

With the exception of civil wars in Zaire and Chad, the nations of francophone sub-Saharan Africa experienced less political disjuncture than most other areas of the continent.\textsuperscript{118}

We shall proceed in Chapter 4 by considering these exceptions.

\textsuperscript{115} George E. Moose, French Military Policy in Africa' in WJ Foltz & HS Bienen eds., Arms and the African, New Haven & London: Yale University Press 1985, p60
\textsuperscript{118} Patrick Manning, Francophone Sub-Saharan Africa 1880-1985, Cambridge: CUP 1988, p136
Chapter 4: Major interventions in the Cold War context

Introduction: ‘La France “gendarme de l’Occident”’

The purpose of this chapter is to consider France’s major interventions in post-colonial sub-Saharan Africa during the Cold War, i.e. during a period delimited by the ‘year of independence’ 1960, and the end of global bipolarity, 1990. We shall focus on France’s best known and most significant theatres of intervention, Chad (where France has intervened from 1969 to the present) and Zaire (where France intervened periodically from 1977 to 1997), as two contrasting examples, for the intervenor, of success – Chad is now a comparatively stable, territorially intact state governed, it may be argued, as a French protectorate – and failure: repeated French interventions in Zaire to support Mobutu, Africa’s longest-serving dictator, failed to ensure the long-term viability of his regime and led to its overthrow in 1997 when France’s capacity for overt intervention was newly curtailed.

Claude Wauthier notes that these interventions allowed France to play the role, and to be cast by the US, as the guardian of Western interests in Africa:

[T]outes ces opérations ont alimenté les critiques de ceux qui accusèrent la France... d’être le “gendarme de l’Occident” ou encore le “Cuba des États-Unis”... On ne faisait d’ailleurs guère mystère à Washington du rôle qu’on entendaît confier à la France: “Notre intérêt est de continuer à laisser les Français s’occuper du maintien de la paix et des ventes d’armes au Zaïre”

Similarly, George Moose notes that throughout the Cold War: [T]he United States, confronted by more serious and immediate security concerns in Europe, Asia and the Far East, was largely content to leave Africa to the ministrations of its European allies. However, this study will suggest that a distinction may be

1 Title of Chapter 7 in Claude Wauthier, Quatre Présidents et l’Afrique, Paris: Seuil 1995, p363
drawn between France's mechanical interventionary responses to perceived intervention stimuli within its pré carré – the dynamic which drove its interventions in Gabon, the Central African Republic and elsewhere (as we have seen in Chapter 3) – from those which were driven equally by Cold War imperatives of containment and superpower geostrategy. Some interventions would have happened with or without a Cold War backdrop; indeed, such interventions continued after the Cold War as we saw during the early and mid-1990s in the CAR, Djibouti, the Comoros Islands and of course Rwanda. But other interventions – the most militarily ambitious which often depended logistically on the support of another power (i.e. the US) – served a dual purpose: they defended France's interests in its only sphere of influence, but they also relieved the US of a perceived Cold War obligation to support pro-Western heads-of-state or contain presumed threats of Soviet/Cuban penetration or Libyan expansionism.

It may be useful therefore to discuss briefly the Cold War division of Africa into competing but immovable spheres of influence. If the US claims to have taken a back seat in much of the continent, the Soviet Union declared its policy in Africa to be implacably anti-imperial throughout the period of decolonisation and subsequently (until the collapse of the USSR in 1991; Africa has no apparent strategic significance today for the USSR's successor states). Soviet leaders took credit for the dismantling of formal empire in Africa; official Soviet discourse maintained that: ‘The process of decolonization was to a large extent expedited by the consistent and unwavering policy of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries which have always supported the struggle for national liberation.’ The same pamphlet quotes then US Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Brown, who said that:

New Haven & London: Yale University Press 1985, p60

The African continent merited being in the centre of constant attention, since the southern part of Africa has six very important minerals, including chrome, cobalt, industrial diamonds, manganese, platinum and vanadium, that are badly needed by modern industrially developed societies. The US economy... at present is greatly dependent on this source of raw materials, and besides, access to airfields and seaports and also to communications inside Africa and around it is of special importance in defence planning.5

As we shall see, US political and military support was provided on those occasions when France’s actions chimed with the US’ strategic or resource interests as identified here, at a time – throughout the 1970s and 1980s - when the Vietnam legacy and losses in Lebanon militated against direct US military intervention ‘out of area’. Peter Schraeder points out that:

Throughout the Cold War era, the White House expected its European allies – most notably France – to take the lead in their former colonial territories. As put succinctly by George Ball, undersecretary of state in the Kennedy administration, the United States recognized Africa as a “special European responsibility,” just as European nations were expected to recognize our [U.S.] particular responsibility in Latin America.” In short, the White House intended for its European allies to take responsibility for thwarting communist and other “radical” powers from exploiting instability in Africa.6

France, the ‘Gendarme of Africa’, would intervene where the US could not or would not. Official accounts emphasise that France, with its permanent garrisons of acclimatised troops, a support network of French-trained and armed local armies, and a knowledge and understanding of the African context unmatched in the West, was uniquely well-placed to conduct swift and effective military operations there; Troupes de Marine also highlights the historically amicable relations between French troops and local populations: Il y aussi que son passé colonial... la fait bénéficier d’un capital de confiance dans l’esprit et dans le coeur des ex-colonisés (...) [I]l convient de souligner aussi à quel point les “permanents” concourent au développement des contacts humains avec la

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6 Peter J. Schraeder, ‘African International Relations’ in April A. Gordon & Donald L. Gordon eds.,
population locale, jusqu'à tisser des liens avec elle, ce qui ne manque pas de frapper les observateurs.  

As we have seen in Chapter 3, during the 1960-90 period French interventionary practice took a variety of forms, including suppression of internal revolt (Cameroon 1960-64), restoration of client (Gabon 1964, Togo 1986), counter-intervention (Djibouti 1977), and deposition of client (Central African Republic 1979). Overall, these interventions were considered successes by France's army and policy-makers and, with the exception of Opération Barracuda in the CAR, generated little public interest or international concern, except insofar as they were understood to guarantee stability in Africa’s francophone bloc, considered (in France) to be the envy of the continent’s often troubled anglophone and lusophone states. Hugo Sada, journalist with Radio France Internationale (RFI) and Défense nationale’s Africa columnist, points out that:

La plupart des interventions militaires françaises en Afrique n’ont... suscité aucune réaction internationale négative d’ampleur significative et ont en général été, sur le plan militaire, couronnées de succès. Mis à part le Tchad, le bilan stratégique était plutôt positif. La zone francophone s’est révélée être plus stable que le reste du continent, alors que les pays concernés pouvaient maintenir leurs budgets militaires à un niveau peu élevé.

And throughout the Cold War, the contrast between the well-managed pré carré and poles of instability elsewhere was stark. By the early 1970s, following the attempted Biafran secession from Nigeria and the outbreak of armed liberation struggles in Portugal’s African colonies and minority-rulled Rhodesia and South Africa, the continent became, like south-east Asia in previous decades, a theatre of superpower confrontation by proxy. In this context, we need to ask whether there was a specific, authentic Cold War dynamic to French intervention policy.

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8 Hugo Sada, France-Afrique: Du Tchad au Rwanda, l’évolution des interventions militaires, Médias France Intercontinents/ Radio France Internationale ‘Politique-Diplomatie’ discussion paper no. 835 presented to
(i.e. containment of Soviet influence and discouragement of leftist regimes), or whether France was just as concerned to contain perceived American ambitions on the continent; Dominique Moïsi points out that at this period, 'The rationale for French intervention shifted from internal to external threats... When intervention by proxy of the Soviet Union took place in Africa [from 1975]... French action could be presented not as a remnant of colonialism... but as a responsible Western answer to Soviet imperialistic ambitions'. Such interventions proved easier to justify, particularly when presented for international consumption as a defence of NATO's vulnerable southern flank when faced with a Soviet policy of *contournement*; accordingly, a Cold War justification was applied to French interventions in Zaire in 1977 and 1978, and Chad from 1978 onwards.

**Chad**

The first presidential election by universal suffrage took place in Chad in June 1996 and confirmed President Idriss Déby in power. It was largely French-organised, and seemed to indicate that France’s open-ended investment of money, military might and political credibility in what often seemed Africa’s most untenable state might have borne fruits of reconciliation and stability. A countervailing interpretation is that Chad’s problems and inherent fragility as a state have been plastered over by a massive investment of French support for whichever leader seems likely to guarantee stability, regardless of that leader’s corruption and human rights abuses; and Yves Lacoste’s *Dictionnaire géopolitique des états* notes that: ‘Depuis un quart de siècle la confusion de guerres civiles à

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*Biarritz* Franco-African summit, 24 October 1994


See Thomas Sotinel, 'L’élection présidentielle au Tchad a été essentiellement organisée par la France', *Le Monde* 2-3 June 1996

The latter, anti-Déby analysis is expounded most effectively by Agir Ici/Survie in *Dossiers noirs de la politique africaine de la France* no. 8: *Tchad, Niger, Escroqueries à la démocratie*, Paris: L'Harmattan 1996
répétition et l’imbroglio des interventions militaires françaises ont passablement obscurci les problèmes d’un pays pauvre et enclavé, sans ressources d’exportation, et dont l’unité [est] beaucoup plus fictif que réelle.

The prolonged experience of French military intervention in Chad did not presage a ‘successful’ outcome for that country’s people. It is intended here to establish the extent to which France’s interventionary response to conflict in Chad was a product of the Cold War in France’s African sphere - driven by the perceived Cold War imperative to contain Soviet expansion into the sub-continent via Libya - or simply the result of continual French attempts to preserve the Chadian state, often against the will of its people, and to retain in power any leader likely to safeguard France’s interests in the country and the region of which it is the strategic centre.

French policy in Chad, it may be argued, thus offers a mirror image of that of Libya. According to Keith Somerville, Libya sought to support any faction and political arrangement which would hasten Chad’s break-up; France conversely sought to preserve Chadian unity at all costs, despite evidence that the state itself and its centralised structure were among the principal sources of conflict. William Foltz notes that: 'While, as elsewhere in Africa, colonization had the effect of accentuating, and indeed creating, ethnic group solidarity, the extraordinary pressures of the post-1965 conflicts in Chad more often broke

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13 Somerville notes that in the late 1970s, ‘Libya clearly was not interested in a final solution to the Chadian struggle that would result in a unified central government but was happy to see an unstable coalition in power that would be unlikely to last long and to challenge Libyan control of Aouzou. In late 1979, there were indications that Libya favoured a federal solution in Chad that would weaken central authority and create a Muslim entity in the north that could be effectively controlled by Libya’. Keith Somerville, Foreign Military Intervention in Africa, London: Pinter Publishers & New York: St Martin’s Press 1990, p65
solidarities down to lineage or family level, instead of promoting and sustaining cohesion of larger social groups'.

Hugo Sada has noted that by the late 1960s, following the successful ‘stabilisation’ of the post-colonial regimes in France’s sphere through interventions in Cameroon, Mauritania, Senegal, Congo and Gabon, it appeared that France’s job was done, and the tendency was towards a progressive French military disengagement from those countries. However, there was one state which was to prove the exception to this rule; for the next two decades, ‘la crise tchadienne... allait durablement marquer l’évolution de la politique de Paris en matière d’intervention.’ From an international lawyer’s perspective, Antonio Tanca notes that:

Taking only the main events from 1978 to 1983 into account, the country’s internal conflict had been practically continuous. During that period, Chad had suffered three different foreign interventions - two by France and one by Libya, each at the request of the “legitimate” government, i.e., the government that at that moment controlled the capital N’Djamena.... The French intervention of 1978 was justified by the need to protect French nationals and as a reaction against alleged Libyan involvement. In 1983, French intervention was again defended as a reaction to a previous Libyan attack. The Libyan intervention of 1980, which was also carried out at the request of the government (then led by the former chief of the rebels) while the civil war was still going on, was justified as technical and humanitarian aid and by the “fusion of the Chadian and Libyan peoples”. It seems clear that nobody had ever been fully in control of the country. Consequently, the intervening powers conferred legitimacy on the party that had invited them.

There have in fact been five direct French military interventions during the first four decades of Chadian independence, the latest of which, Opération Épervier, is still ongoing. The scale and frequency of interventions and changes of regime

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17 Antonio Tanca, Foreign Armed Intervention in Internal Conflict, Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff 1993, pp31-
during this period was such that René Lemarchand could point out that the foreign intervenors in the conflict 'have exchanged partners so many times that no single faction can claim to have received political or military support exclusively from France or Libya. Such is the irony of international clientelism in Chad that every faction or government, including the Tombalbaye government, had had at one time or another, though seldom simultaneously, either France or Libya as its external patron'. 18

By 1989, three years before the collapse of Somalia and five before the Rwandan genocide, Chad seemed to encapsulate all that was wrong with the African state; Basil Davidson quotes the observation that:

"[T]he vexatious feuds of the warlords have troubled the whole continent, embarrassed the Organisation of African Unity, burnt the fingers of all but the most resilient peace-makers, and provided endless opportunities for international mischief-makers to dabble to their hearts' content." Chad was now "a shell of a country"; yet this same Chad, "with its petty and violent political conflicts, its drought and its under-development, and its systematic self-handicapping, sometimes seems a paradigm of Africa's dilemma". 19

The root of Chad's tragedy is the state's artificiality, although in this respect it is far from unique. Richard Rathbone points out that: '[E]ach colonial state was a sum of pre-colonial parts, often crudely assembled on the basis of the dictates of the theodolite and imperial rivalry rather than the reality of pre-colonial political topography.' 20 Chad, however, is exceptionally heterogeneous. Fruit of the Franco-British conference of 1899 at which Britain sought to safeguard its interests in the area bounded by the Nile, the Niger, Sudan and Nigeria, Chad was the name given to the territory which remained, taken from the lake of the

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18 René Lemarchand, 'The Crisis in Chad' in GS Bender, JS Coleman & RL Sklar eds., African Crisis Areas and US Foreign Policy, Berkeley & LA: University of California Press 1985, p246
same name north of the modern capital N'Djamena (formerly Fort Lamy). The French occupation of Chad:

...corresponded to the grander design of linking together the two components of the new French colonial empire [AOF and French North Africa]... The extent of the French advance into Chad was governed by the 1898 Anglo-French Spheres of Influence Agreement which, according to the 1899 Declaration, divided Central Africa between the two countries along a line “which shall start from the point of intersection of the Tropic of Cancer with the 16th degree of longitude east of Greenwich... shall run thence south-east until it meets the 24th degree of longitude east of Greenwich.”

The seeds of one of Africa’s most enduring border disputes – over the Aozou Strip (Bande d’Aouzou) – and the source or pretext for the foreign interventions and counter-interventions Chad endured throughout the 1970s and 1980s, were sown at this time of colonial carve-up. George Joffé points out that: 'Libya has never accepted the 1919 line as its boundary with Chad, arguing instead that no boundary has ever been properly delimited and that the closest approach to such a delimitation is the 1935 Mussolini-Laval Treaty.' Libya’s claim to a large area of northern Chad has been based on *uti possidetis juris*, and on the argument that the French occupation of the northern desert Borkou-Ennedi-Tibesti (BET) region was never ‘effective’ in the sense that a permanent and effective administrative presence was established. Indeed, the post-independence Chadian state’s hold on the region was so tenuous that French military control of the BET ended only in 1964, four years after independence.

It has become commonplace in analyses of the state to refer to its ‘useful’ and ‘useless’ regions (*le Tchad utile* and *le Tchad inutile*). The former covers barely a third of Chad’s 1.28 million square kilometres in the relatively fertile south of the

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23 The International Court of Justice in The Hague ruled on 3 February 1994 that the Aouzou strip is part of Chad; Libya has accepted this decision. See ICJ Communiqué 94/4, ‘Case concerning Territorial Dispute
country, used primarily for the growing cotton and raising livestock. Three-quarters of Chad's six million people live in the South, and are generally characterised as French-speaking, Christian, settled and black. The north, an area larger than France, is principally sparsely-populated desert, with its inhabitants concentrated in oases or small settlements which have experienced economic decline in tandem with the decline in trans-Saharan trade. These people, made up of many ethnic groups, are usually given the shorthand labels of Arab (or arabisé), nomadic and Muslim. (The same bi-polar distinction has been drawn in recent studies of the Sudanese conflict.) Joffé notes that: 'What economic activity there is can be traced back directly to Chad's colonial past under French rule, as can the current political crisis that faces the country.' The creation of the state-owned Cotontchad was accompanied by an administrative decision to favour the south in educational terms, in order to create a native administration based on the Sara, while the Muslim regions of the country were left to stagnate through social and administrative neglect.

Throughout the 1950s, as a politicised generation of leaders emerged throughout France's African territories, politics in southern and northern Chad developed separately. The south was represented at the founding conference of Houphouët-Boigny's Rassemblement Démocratique Africain in 1951, and in 1952 the Parti Progressiste Tchadien (PTT), dominated by the southern Chadian Sara, was founded in N'Djamena by Gabriel Lisette, a Guadeloupian administrative official. Northern Chad was organised politically in the Mouvement Socialiste Africain, which was dominated by the Muslim elite of the old sultanates, who left in 1958 to form the Union Nationale Tchadienne (from which would emerge the Front pour la Libération Nationale du Tchad, FROLINAT). As a result, by the time of

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(Libyan Arab Jamahiriya/ Chad)

independence in 1960, the pre-colonial disposition of power inside the new state had been inverted; Joffé explains that:

Chad had become, as a result of the colonial experience, an embryonic unitary state, although it was far from being a nation as well... The simple fact was that the administrative structure of Chad failed to coincide with any other political or cultural reality... The outbreak of Chad’s first civil war was, in essence, an attempt to redress the geopolitical balance inside the country.26

Southerner François Tombalbaye was installed as president upon independence in 1960. The choice was not fortuitous; until his assassination in 1975, Tombalbaye was to conduct systematic discrimination and repression against Chad’s Muslims, whom he regarded as inherently disloyal.

French interests in Chad have been heavily conditioned by their historical origins, reinforced by Charles de Gaulle’s Second World War experience when the governor of AEF, Félix Éboué, declared for the Free French. *Troupes de Marine* states that: ‘L’attachement de la France au Tchad tient pour une bonne part au fait qu’il fut la base de départ du Général Leclerc lors de la conquête du Fezzan en novembre 1940;’27 and Robert Buijtenhuijs suggests that France’s major 1969–71 intervention was motivated in part by De Gaulle’s sentimental attachment: ‘Le Tchad, faisant partie intégrante de l’épopée de la France libre, ne pouvait pas être abandonné au “triste” sort que lui préparaient les insurgés du Frolinat’.28

More importantly, Chad is situated in the centre of trans-Saharan Africa, and hence is considered to be at the geostrategic heart of French power projection capacity on the continent. Military accounts note that: ‘[L]e Tchad occupe une situation stratégique qui en a fait longtemps la plaque tournante de nos

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interventions en Afrique (Paris est à 4.700km, Dakar à 3.800, Djibouti à 3.050 et Bangui à 900). Maintenance of a pro-French regime and French military influence in Chad allowed France to oversee events in the Middle East and north, west and central Africa, and secure its overall position in the region, while reassuring the leaders of nearby states Niger, Cameroon, Gabon, CAR and Côte d'Ivoire of the proximity of French support. By 1961, a network of bilateral cooperation agreements was complete, including the Franco-Chadian military technical assistance agreement, signed by Presidents de Gaulle and Tombalbaye. Such an agreement, although less than an outright defence treaty such as those signed with Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, CAR and Gabon (by which France retained responsibility for both external and internal security), nonetheless permitted the maintenance of large, permanent French garrisons. Moreover, such military technical assistance agreements, signed with Chad and twelve other African states in the early 1960s, guaranteed continued French military tutelage, with occasional deployment of expeditionary forces and permanent French advisers and instructors exercising exclusive control over the training and arming of the new states' armies and gendarmeries. Such agreements excluded any negotiation of military treaties with other partners by their African signatories, effectively neutering independent foreign policy initiatives by the new states.

French economic and particularly strategic mineral interests were served by the troops' presence, reinforcing the protection of important sources of uranium in Niger and Gabon which supply much of the demand of the French nuclear industry. In Chad itself, although there is little evidence for the claimed presence of significant mineral resources in the contested Aouzou strip, uranium has been found in the south-western prefecture of Mayo Kebbi and, following successful prospecting in the 1970s and 1980s, Chad was considered to have significant oil potential.

29 Comité national des traditions des Troupes de Marine, De Bizerte à Sarajevo: Les Troupes de Marine dans...
As a result, French military involvement in Chad has overshadowed other aspects of Franco-Chadian cooperation. John Chipman suggests that:

There seems, at least, to be “only one Chad” in Africa. In no other country could one have expected French troops to be deployed so often, in such numbers, on behalf of so many different leaders, for so long, and with so little ultimate effect on regional stability. The political commitment to Chad should be thought of as being separate and distinct from the commitment to other francophone African countries. Chad has a special claim on France and her own internal logic.30

A chronological summary of key developments may be useful at this point.

**Chronology of French interventions in Chad**

There was a brief dress rehearsal for France’s multiple interventions in Chad. In 1968, a mutiny of Toubou members of the nomad guard took place at the border post of Aouzou in the northern region of Borkou-Ennedi-Tibesti (BET). Many of the garrison were killed and the Chadian army could not restore order. President Tombalbaye appealed to France and a small force of French Foreign Legion paratroops lent logistical support to Chadian soldiers. The Legionnaires were withdrawn after a few weeks when the mutineers had been defeated.

The first major intervention, from 1969 to 1971, tackled the symptoms of instability but not the key problem: that without its foreign military prop, Chad would collapse.32 The French commander at this time was General Jeannou Lacaze, whose views on French military intervention merit consideration here:

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31 This section is based in part on one of the most succinct accounts of the subject, Robert Buijtenhuijs, ‘Les interventions militaires françaises: le cas du Tchad’ in Daniel Bach & Anthony Kirk-Greene eds., *États et sociétés en Afrique francophone*, Paris: Economica 1993
32 On the durability of this problem, see Bernard Lanne, ‘Chad: Regime Change, Increased Insecurity, and Blockage of Further Reforms’ in John F. Clark & David E. Gardinier eds., *Political Reform in Francophone Africa*
Le Tchad a fait jouer les accords de défense signés avec la France et a demandé l’intervention de nos soldats. Pierre Messmer [De Gaulle’s Defence Minister in 1969] m’a appelé, pour m’annoncer que le 2e REP [Régiment étranger parachutiste] avait été choisi pour cette mission. C’est la première fois que la Légion était envoyée sur un théâtre d’opération normalement réservé aux troupes coloniales... Nous étions en 1969, c’était la première intervention française au Tchad, la première mission proprement africaine pour le 2e REP, mais pas la dernière... Et pour moi, la première d’une longue série de missions sur ce continent.33

The justification for this, the opening episode of the French army’s ‘Chadian saga’, is described in conventional terms. Although the forces seeking to overthrow Tombalbaye were disparate and characterised by ‘un esprit tribal’, we are told that their attacks (real or imaginary) on French civilians and the French garrison in N’Djamena posed a sufficient threat to necessitate military intervention:

Ils [the Chadian rebels] parvenaient... à s’entendre pour des attaques conjointes contre les Français, des civils ou les quelques éléments des troupes de marine en poste avant notre arrivée.
Armés de vieux fusils et parfois de sagaies, quelques dizaines de rebelles attaquaient des petits détachements isolés de soldats tchadiens voire français, parvenaient à leur prendre leurs armes, et parfois leurs véhicules, et s’équipaient ainsi sur le dos de l’ennemi. L’intervention du 2e REP a donc été déterminante.34

Lacaze emphasises that it was an unequal contest; French troops had the most modern equipment, and the elite forces of a first world army were – almost naturally – superior to the ‘Africans’. But Lacaze is less forthcoming concerning the quagmire that Chad would represent for the French military:

Au début ce fut assez facile, militairement parlant, pour des troupes aussi entraînées que l’étaient les légionnaires... Notre armement nous donnait une suprématie importante, presque totale sur les Africains, dont certains en étaient restés à l’âge de fer. Nous n’avions pas de chars, peu d’hélicoptères,

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34 ibid
nous n’utilisions pas de bombes, mais l’armement classique en dotation dans les unités suffisait pour contrôler la situation.35

Between 1969 and 1971, the increasing success of the northern-based, anti-government guerrillas of FROLINAT (Front de Libération Nationale du Tchad) in east and central Chad meant that effective control of much of the country passed to the rebels, and further appeals were made to France by President Tombalbaye. Substantial number of French troops were committed (2,500 by January 1970), though conscripts were soon withdrawn in response to domestic political pressures; indeed, despite only limited military success, this bulk of the force was withdrawn in June 1971, leaving the N'Djamena garrison, and advisers to the Chadian army. It has been argued that domestic political pressure made the withdrawal premature, necessitating further interventions in the following years to ensure the survival of a sympathetic Chadian regime.

During the early 1970s, Franco-Chadian relations degenerated, with President Tombalbaye expressing resentment over the administrative reforms suggested by a France increasingly embarrassed by coverage of their favoured client’s anti-Muslim excesses. Following the assassination of Tombalbaye in April 1975, another Southerner, Félix Malloum came to power and pursued similarly sectarian policies. He elevated a local sous-préfet and former student at the Sorbonne, Hissène Habré, to the post of prime minister. Habré used the opportunity to enhance his reputation as ‘the strong man of Chad,’ an image due in no small part to his abduction in April 1974 of the French ethnologist Françoise Claustre (whom he held captive until January 1977), and to the assassination of Commandant Galopin, the French emissary sent to negotiate her release. This low point in Franco-Chadian relations resulted in the expulsion of all French personnel by 1975. However, new cooperation agreements were signed in 1976, leading to an increase in aid to FF40m, debt forgiveness, and re-

establishment of a budget subsidy, as well as restored military technical assistance.

It was under the terms of these agreements that troops were deployed in March 1978 after the Libyan-backed northern rebel forces of Goukouni Oueddei threatened to reach N'Djamena. This intervention force was an essential element of government victories at the battles of Ati and Djedaa, although from a political perspective the very intervention was an admission of the failure of earlier attempts to reinforce the Chadian government army, and to prevent external, primarily Libyan, assistance reaching FROLINAT. Despite their reservations about him, French support in 1978 brought Habré into the Conseil Supérieur Militaire (CSM) government with Malloum. Thereafter, French forces adopted a lower profile when fighting broke out between the Habré and Malloum factions in February 1979. This policy shift was made tangible in the replacement of General Raul Bredèche, the belligerent French commander who had wanted to advance against FROLINAT, by General Louis Forest, who signed the withdrawal pact (accord de dégagement) which later allowed Goukouni's forces into N'Djamena.

This change of personnel reflected a new French desire to bring Goukouni into the national government as a more acceptable leader than Habré, and to disengage from Chad, again in response to growing 'home front' pressure. Following the putsch which ousted Malloum in April 1979, there was press and public hostility to the continuance of the Chadian intervention, coupled with internal government disputes over the issue, and a daily cost of nearly $1m. There was also opposition from Nigeria, with which country France was searching for a new economic relationship beyond the boundaries of francophone Africa; the Lagos Commonwealth Conference in August 1979 passed a resolution that 'the continued presence of French troops in Chad is an
impediment to finding a peaceful reconciliation and solution to the Chadian question.\textsuperscript{36}

Joffé points out that the subsequent internal split in FROLINAT 'had been powerfully aided by the former colonial power, France... By the... 1970s, Chad had not only collapsed in civil war, it has also become the arena for a surrogate conflict between outside powers.'\textsuperscript{37} Most problematic was Libya, which was both an important source of oil supplies for France, and a large market for the French armaments industry. As early as March 1979, the French government had announced its intention to withdraw France's intervention forces, but the withdrawal was postponed in light of Libyan support for FROLINAT in the north and the latter's military success along the Aouzou strip on the Libya-Chad border. The withdrawal of the French intervention force finally began in September 1979, but was halted, ironically, following an appeal by Goukouni on behalf of the provisional Gouvernement d'Unité Nationale du Tchad (GUNT), which had detached itself from its Libyan backers and now sought the removal of all foreign troops from Chad. The final 1,100 French soldiers were withdrawn in May 1980, France having decided that the Libyan threat had been contained.

Of even greater significance than the withdrawal was French inaction five months later, in October 1980, when the Libyans relaunched their offensive in northern Chad. Observers concluded that Giscard's hand was stayed by the imminence of the presidential election, and by ongoing commercial negotiations over oil imports between Libya and Elf Aquitaine. Attention was also focused on an alleged secret Franco-Libyan deal which would partition Chad into a Libyan-controlled northern zone ('le Tchad inutile' although with possibly larger

\textsuperscript{36} Quoted in Roy May & Roger Charlton, Chad: France's "Fortuitous Success", Modern and Contemporary France 37 (1989), p8

\textsuperscript{37} George Joffé & Valérie Day-Viaud, World Bibliographical Series Vol.177: Chad, Oxford: ABC-Clio 1995, p.xxv
reserves of fossil fuels than anticipated), and a French-controlled southern zone (the cultivated and comparatively better-developed 'Tchad utile').

Many commentators view the French withdrawal in 1980, which left the field open for Libya, as capitulation; Roy May concluded that: 'It is certainly difficult to disagree with the view that at this stage France's vacillations and conspicuous diplomatic and military failures had transformed its image as the gendarme of Africa into that of a traffic warden waving the Libyan troops on.' French diplomatic efforts increased after the announcement in January 1981 of Colonel Gadafi's plans to merge Chad and Libya, and focused on Libyan withdrawal. Attempts both diplomatic and financial were made in an effort to introduce an Organisation of African Unity peacekeeping force into the Chadian equation, to replace the Libyans who were playing this role, de facto if not de jure.

The intervention of 1978 to 1980 was also used, in the run-up to the 1981 presidential election in France, to criticise the incumbent government, President Giscard in particular and Giscardian foreign policy in general. Presidential candidate François Mitterrand attacked the intervention as a 'return to the era of colonial expeditions'; and Mitterrand's electoral platform included the foreign policy statement that: 'French imperialism in Africa, which does not hesitate to have recourse to military means, has had its day'.

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38 There was also an ethnic element to this proposed partition: Colonel Gadaffi allegedly suggested that Giscard 'leave me my Muslims, and I will leave you your blacks'. See V. Thompson & R. Adloff, Conflict in Chad, London: Charles Hurst 1981, p140
39 Roy May & Roger Charlton, Chad: France's "Fortuitous Success", Modern and Contemporary France 37 (1989), p8
Operation Manta

However, there was little surprise when the Mitterrand administration began to plough the same interventionist furrow as its predecessors, often with greater energy; John Chipman notes how: ‘Despite early socialist rhetoric, the [new] government did much both to sustain and then to improve France’s capacity to bring military power to bear on the African continent... The level of security assistance to Africa offered by François Mitterrand was effectively even higher that that provided by France in the Giscard years.’

Ironically, this was the same administration which had been quick to tighten sanctions against South Africa, condemn UNITA/South African-backed attacks in Angola, and recognise, and sell arms to, the Sandinista government in Nicaragua. Only in France’s own sphere of influence, notably in Chad, was the Socialist government’s foreign policy agenda characterised more by continuity with its predecessor’s than change. This supports the contention that the Cold War was not an engine of French foreign policy; despite their fulfilment of a Cold War agenda, France’s Chadian interventions were driven primarily by French motives. In fact, it could be argued that it was the Cold War which was used to suit France’s purposes, and not vice versa as might more readily be supposed.

France quickly found itself drawn once again into the ‘Chadian trap’ which some domestic political opinion was already comparing with Algeria. Initially, acting Chadian president Goukouni received French political support and some military supplies, mainly of light arms. However, his refusal to concede to the Chad-Libya merger, continuing OAU hostility to this idea and domestic factors within Libya, notably Colonel Gaddafi’s wish to become OAU Chairman in 1982, led to the unexpectedly rapid withdrawal of Libyan troops in November 1981, before the French-inspired OAU force arrived. However, only three of the six

African countries originally named sent troops (Nigeria, Zaire and Senegal); the others (Algeria, Cameroon and Togo) had in the meantime concluded individual agreements not to intervene with Colonel Gaddafi. Moreover, there were differing expectations on the ground about the OAU troops’ role. Goukouni believed the OAU forces were there as the French had been previously: to support his government. He told *West Africa* in December 1981: ‘They [the OAU troops] should fight [against Habré or any other Chadian anti-government faction] otherwise their presence has no sense.’ On the other hand President Abdou Diouf of Sénégal, who had committed troops to the force, argued that they should not wage ‘war against any of Chad’s factions but... restore peace and maintain security.’ These opposing definitions muddied the waters around the OAU presence, and there is evidence that troops with the Zairean contingent favoured Habré’s advance against the Goukouni government, which eventually proved successful.

William Foltz notes that, although conflict had been a frequent element of local rivalries in colonial and pre-colonial Chad: ‘[B]y 1982 a full generation of civil war waged with artillery and automatic weapons had raised the level of social disruption to a point unknown since French conquest at the beginning of the twentieth century. War-weariness was a fact of life and to much of the population any sign of governmental stability and effectiveness was attractive.’ By 1983, Hissène Habré was in power in N’Djamena, and calling for French assistance to fight his old opponents and their Libyan backers.

The 1983 intervention, *Opération Manta*, was different from those of Giscard’s tenure as it clearly went beyond the terms of the Franco-Chadian military

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43 Quoted in Roy May & Roger Charlton, Chad: France’s “Fortuitous Success”, *Modern and Contemporary France* 37 (1989), p9
44 Quoted in Roy May & Roger Charlton, Chad: France’s “Fortuitous Success”, *Modern and Contemporary France* 37 (1989), p9
45 William J. Foltz, ‘Reconstructing the State of Chad’ in I. William Zartman ed., *Collapsed States: The*
technical assistance agreement. It was the largest overseas expedition launched by France since Algeria; almost 10,000 men completed a period of service during the first thirteen months. At the time, President Mitterrand justified the intervention as resulting from a request by the Chadian government in situ, which France regarded as legitimate. George Moose notes that: The deployment was described by Paris as "a warning to Colonel Qaddafi". French troops were to back up Chadian commando units, but not become directly involved in combat themselves."\(^{46}\) As the intervention endured, the legitimisation evolved; at the December 1984 Franco-African summit in Burundi, François Mitterrand stated that the intervention was launched because France 'believed it necessary to maintain a favourable balance of power in Central Africa.'\(^{47}\)

Offering a textbook ethnic north-versus-south explanation for Chad’s difficulties – and the perceived threat posed by Libya – the then commander of French forces General Jeannou Lacaze emphasises the purity of France’s motives: ‘Les populations du Nord ont d’ailleurs toujours pu compter sur l’appui de la Libye, alors que la politique de la France consistait à rechercher, dans le cadre des frontières héritées de la colonisation, un équilibre entre ces peuples et à les faire vivre en harmonie.’\(^{48}\) Indeed Lacaze, the most seasoned ‘old Africa hand’ of the French army until his retirement in 1985, is one of French military intervention’s most ardent proponents, arguing that such intervention is not only welcomed by the people of the intervened state, but is in fact beneficial for that state (and hence, it might logically be assumed, should become a permanent arrangement for that state’s greater good):

Pendant toute ma carrière, je suis souvent revenu au Tchad, au point de passer pour un "spécialiste" de ce pays. Et le même souvenir me revient sans cesse:


\(^{47}\) ibid.

celui d’une population africaine se réjouissant de nos interventions militaires, parce que pour elle cela signifiait la paix et la sécurité. Lorsque nos troupes étaient là-bas, nous ne demandions pas grand-chose aux autochtones. Nous payions (normalement, c’est-à-dire bien) ce que nous achetions, nous fournissions un minimum d’eau aux civils et nous les protégions des pillages effectués par les rebelles.49

Lacaze’s account of the periodic withdrawals of the French interventionary forces in Chad is couched in terms of abandonment; in traditional soldier’s style, he explains such withdrawals (as in Algeria) as the fruit of political manoeuvring, against the will of the local population which implored the French troops to stay as their only safeguard against starvation. The neo-colonial agenda is clear; Africans and African states (‘ces pays’) are unfit for self-government, and the French military presence is the only bulwark against chaos. It may be assumed that Lacaze, who occupied the supreme post as Chef d’état-major des armées from 1981 to 1985 and hence throughout Opération Manta, conveyed this impression forcefully to those in his command, and also to less experienced civilian decision-makers; the continuity of the intervention dynamic was assured not least by those entrusted with its implementation. Lacaze’s justification for French intervention is worth quoting at length:

Dans ces pays, la misère est tellement épouvantable que, si vous enlevez à ces gens le peu qu’ils possèdent..., il ne leur reste, au sens premier du terme, qu’à “crever de faim”. Voilà pourquoi ces populations voyaient avec plaisir et soulagement ces Blancs, nous les Français, “occuper” le pays. Et lorsque le retrait de nos troupes était annoncé et entamé, c’était chaque fois les mêmes scènes terribles et bouleversantes, qui m’ont fait penser à la fin de la guerre d’Algérie. Car ces hommes et ces femmes comprenaient que le départ de nos soldats allait les replacer dans un univers d’insécurité et de misère. Et ils voulaient tous partir avec nous.50

Lacaze makes clear that these Chadians were not ‘harkis’ as in Algeria, i.e. locals recruited to work for the French and fearful of reprisals after the latter’s departure; it was the population at large which, facing the loss of the economic

lifeline which the French military presence represented, was opposed to its removal:

Seule la peur de la misère, la probabilité de mourir de faim les poussaient à s’accrocher à nos camions... Ce sont des images affolantes. Les femmes et les enfants pleuraient; les hommes se hissaient par grappes dans nos véhicules. Nous leur laissions le maximum de vivres, d’aides, d’équipements. Mais que faire d’autre? Au gré de nos retraits, dus au rétablissement apparent de l’ordre public, à des considérations politiques ou à des accords intervenus avec le puissant voisin libyen, les soldats français au Tchad on vécu ces scènes en ayant un horrible sentiment d’impuissance, car leur rôle se reduisait à une goutte d’eau.

Lacaze explains France’s failure to contain Libyan irredentism and secure Chad in the short term as a failure of political will:

Longtemps, le rêve de Kadhafi a été de rétablir l’empire des Sables qui s’étendait, il y a plusieurs siècles, de l’Atlantique à la Mer Rouge, en commençant bien entendu par les régions nord du Tchad, voisines de la Libye. En soutenant financièrement et militairement les rebelles du Nord, voire en envoyant ses propres troupes occuper ces régions, Khadafi a largement contribué à maintenir le Tchad... dans cette situation de guerre civile. Certains ont cru pouvoir guérir le dictateur libyen de ce rêve fou; ce fut le cas de François Mitterrand lorsqu’il accepta de le rencontrer en Crète, pour concrétiser un accord de retrait simultané de nos troupes, alors que nos informations montraient clairement que les Libyens ne respectaient pas leurs engagements. Ce fut un échec réel de la diplomatie française.  

It has been suggested that: ‘Technically, Opération Manta itself was a success, since it prevented Libyan-supported forces of the GUNT [taking] over N’Djamena.’ However, over time it became apparent that swift, occasional interventions would not suffice to secure a vulnerable francophile president; French military support would become a long-term quasi-occupation, what Robin Luckham has called ‘a permanent intervention’. Lacaze acknowledges this – and the interventions’ failure to ‘restore order’, their stated purpose - but

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52 Michel Martin, ‘From Algiers to N’Djama: France’s Adaptation to Low-Intensity Wars 1830-1987’ in DA Charters & M. Tugwell eds., Armies in Low-Intensity Conflict: a Comparative Analysis, London:
explains this failure by the incompatible ethnic composition of the Chadian state, the survival of which, he seems to argue, it was France’s duty to support despite that state’s apparent untenability: ‘Le régiment au complet est resté un an sur place. L’ordre n’a donc pas été rétabli tout de suite. A vrai dire, il ne l’est toujours pas [in 1993]... Cela tient à la nature profonde de ce pays.’

*Opération Épervier*

It has been suggested that even before the 1993 Somalia débâcle, there was a US State Department dictum that it is no longer possible to buy an African state; they can only be rented by the day. This implies a continual investment of time, money and manpower, regardless of domestic disquiet, military fatigue and, often forgotten, the consequences for the population and stability of the state concerned. Anthony Clayton notes that the 1983 French intervention forces in Chad ‘brought with them some of France’s newest and most sophisticated anti-aircraft, anti-tank and electronic equipment for which Chad was to be a proving ground... [There was] a risk of open-ended military commitment, but one that nevertheless might have to be met if France’s military credibility was to be maintained in other more important African territories. In some of these any loss of credibility could have serious repercussions for French strategic and economic interests.’

However in 1985 after the withdrawal of *Opération Manta*, René Lemarchand pointed out how ‘after completing their third military withdrawal since 1975, and after lending their grudging support to almost every contestant, from the late Tombalbaye to Malloum, from Malloum to Goukouni, and from Goukouni to Habré, the French are back to square one, desperately trying to shore up a

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client state on the shifting sands of factionalism and civil strife. Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.\textsuperscript{55}

This analysis was to prove prophetic the following year, when the threat of further Libyan incursions in northern Chad, and internal instability, provoked \textit{Opération Épervier}, with an initial deployment of 900 troops. \textit{Épervier} failed to bring stability, and the irreconcilable differences within Chad’s artificial boundaries led to a military coup in 1990, whereby Hissène Habré was ousted by current leader Lieutenant General Idriss Déby.

The 1996 election was organised more than five years after Déby’s seizure of power on 1 December 1990. \textit{Le Monde} reported how: ‘In a country twice the size of France, without roads, it was the planes of the French military detachment “Épervier”... which undertook the transportation of electoral material and the coordination of the count. Paris also took responsibility for printing the ballot papers and posters, as well as equipping the polling booths. In a country without electricity, 5,700 hurricane lamps were supplied. The total cost of French assistance during the referendum and presidential votes was 8.75 million francs.\textsuperscript{56}

\textit{Opération Épervier} continues despite Déby’s 1996 election victory, with on average 500 troops stationed in Chad, and many thousands on standby elsewhere in the region, and at the base of the \textit{Force d’Action Rapide} at Toulon. Chad, in which France has invested unprecedented military time, effort and credibility to ensure its survival at the heart of the Franco-African sphere, is now defined as a ‘quasi-state’ in IR parlance, with negligible infrastructure and little to


\textsuperscript{56} Thomas Sotinel, ‘L’élection présidentielle au Tchad a été essentiellement organisée par la France’, \textit{Le Monde} 2-3 June 1996
show for 36 years of independent statehood. The overall *bilan* of France’s military interventions in Chad, however, is favourable; Chad is intact, at peace and governed by a pro-French administration; indeed, an interesting historical link between Chad and the former Zaire, the two most important theatres of French military intervention in post-colonial Africa, was provided in 1998-99 when the Chadian government of President Idriss Déby sent troops to the Democratic Republic of Congo to support President Laurent-Désiré Kabila against the rebellion of the *Rassemblement Démocratique Congolais*, which was backed by Kabila’s erstwhile supporters Uganda and Rwanda. A BBC report noted:

> Chad was forced to admit it had troops in the Democratic Republic of Congo supporting President Kabila when they were ambushed by rebels in the north of the country. The government said two soldiers were killed but the rebels said they had killed at least 100. A senior opposition figure and former prime minister, Jean Alingue, has called on the government to withdraw. He said President Idriss Deby had not consulted parliament before deploying the troops. Chadian officials say Chad is showing gratitude for the support given by Kinshasa – under President Mobutu – to Chad during its war with Libya in the 1980s.57

We shall now consider the role of French military intervention in President Mobutu’s Zaire, the second key pillar of France’s Cold War role as gendarme of Africa.

**French intervention in Zaire**

The origins and duration of conflict in Zaire date from Fanon’s time, when the Congo was ‘the trigger of Africa’, the strategic linchpin of Western Cold War influence on the continent. Central to any examination of the longevity of conflict in Zaire is the issue of external involvement and intervention. It is intended here, having considered the role of external (i.e. non-African) players in creating Zaire and Mobutuism, to assess the role of France in sustaining it. These foreign powers, as one commentator observed: ‘so mismanaged Zaire’s affairs 35 years
ago as to exacerbate its civil war and eventually deliver the country into the hands of a man who established a militarised lootocracy that exceeded in corruption and waste all others in the continent.\textsuperscript{58}

Background: What was Zaire?
The first independent Congo, born June 30 1960, was the premature offspring of Belgian decolonisation, a process which, it is generally accepted, was precipitate and badly thought-out. As elsewhere on the continent, the end of formal empire was motivated not by the needs and aspirations of the colonised, but by the perceived threat, if the coloniser dragged its heels, of a radical anti-Western regime coming to power by force, presenting an appalling vista of nationalisation of the country's resources and, in the dominant Cold War environment, of Soviet penetration. However, unlike Africa's other major colonial powers Britain and France, Belgium had done little to promote a local elite to govern on its behalf and assume the reins of state power. As a result, there was not the smooth transition to Western-favoured regimes which largely characterised independence elsewhere; instead, the Congo began rapidly to implode, the new administration faced with mutiny and multiple secessions which foreign interests did much to foment.

None of the players in the resultant Congo crisis of 1960-63 - Belgium, the superpowers, the UN - emerges with much credit, and foreign complicity in the murder of the new state's first prime minister, Patrice Lumumba, was to set the tone for the country's fate for the next three decades. Attempts by the UN to prevent Katangese secession were sabotaged by Cold War politics, culminating in the death in September 1961 of UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld. Alan James, in a recent reappraisal of the crisis, places it and the subsequent creation of Zaire firmly in the Cold War context: 'The prevailing pardigm ... was

\textsuperscript{57} BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 11 March 1999
that of the Cold War. Willy-nilly, the Congo was to be pulled within it; James also points out the failure among Western policy-makers to examine ‘whether a Westward-leaning government would necessarily be a credit to its sponsors, or... exactly how it might be an asset to their cause. On the other hand, very close attention was given to the means whereby a government of the requisite political complexion might be installed and maintained... At an early stage the CIA is said to have decided that a man to back was... Mobutu.” 59 As chief-of-staff of the Belgian-created Congolese army, General Joseph Désiré Mobutu had long been identified as a reliable strongman to hold the ring against Congolese nationalism and/or communism; in 1963, President Kennedy told him, ‘General, if it hadn’t been for you, the whole thing would have collapsed and the Communists would have taken over.’ 60 He had also been in the pay of Belgian military intelligence since the start of his army career. 61 Backed by the Western states most concerned - the US, France and Belgium - Mobutu was chosen as a reliable client in a state which was key to Western Cold War strategy in Africa.

In his study of state collapse, I. William Zartman argues that: ‘[T]he Congo case is of... relevance for its lessons about state reconstitution. An international intervention to restore law and order, a strongman installed with foreign connivance: these were the means of restoring the state and the elements in its gradual collapse again two or three decades later’. 62 To which could be added in light of our discussion of intervention: the Congo case is key for what it reveals about foreign intervention, and the long-term effects of outside imposition and maintenance of dictatorship. By the time of his overthrow, Mobutu had failed for

59 Martin Woollacott, The Guardian 10 April 1997
60 Alan James, ‘The ex-Belgian Congo and the Cold War, 1960-63’, paper presented to the BISA annual conference, Durham University 1996, p6
too long to respond to easily satisfiable demands for change because he believed that his Western allies would always rally to his support. This belief was fostered by those allies in word and deed, and as late as December 1996, Mobutu had little reason to believe they would behave any differently.

For over two decades, Zaire’s principal military supporter had been France which, as the gendarme of Africa had by the mid-1970s assumed the patron’s mantle from the US, which itself had earlier assumed it from Belgium, discredited by the post-independence débâcle. President Valéry Giscard d’Estaing, aware of the possibilities - commercial, political and strategic - presented by Zaire, signed cooperation agreements in terms of aid, trade and cultural exchanges which marked the formal expansion of France’s African sphere of influence from its own former colonies to include the ex-Belgian territories - Rwanda, Burundi and Zaire - perceived as francophone and hence as natural inclusions in the Franco-African ‘family’. French companies were contracted for a number of prestige infrastructure projects - major contributory factors to Zaire’s national debt which would top $8 billion by 1996 - in exchange for guaranteed French protection for Mobutu, a former American client now seen as a key African friend of France. The complicity of France’s rulers with Mobutu would cast doubts on the declared motives – humanitarian or democratic – of French involvement in Zaire; François-Xavier Verschave points out that: ‘Tous ceux qui ont adoré Mobutu ou profité de ses largesses sont complices de son système de vases communicants. Cela inclut... tous les présidents de la République française depuis 20 ans, et leurs coteries – soit tout le spectre des “partis de gouvernement”.’63 Crucially, a military technical assistance agreement was signed in 1975, and Mobutu’s regime was saved with French military assistance on two separate occasions.

Shaba I: 'Opération Mazurka' 1977

In March 1977, anti-Mobutu Zairean dissidents (the former police and other exiles from the secessionist province of Katanga, who had formed themselves into the Front pour la Libération Nationale du Congo, FLNC) launched an attack from Angola across the border into Shaba province (formerly Katanga). The Mobutu regime, facing economic collapse and internal opposition, was vulnerable, and the pieces were in place for a potentially successful alliance between the exiled 'Katangese gendarmes' and militants of the internal Zairean opposition.64

Confused reports as to the nature and gravity of this attack led to a cautious Western response, and despite precedents to the contrary, there was no immediate intervention. Three weeks after the first attack, Mobutu's appeals for Western help in the face of what he characterised as a concerted Soviet-Cuban plot brought little more than a promise of speeded-up deliveries of previously-ordered military supplies. However the following month, with Mobutu's army routed and his regime nearing collapse, Moroccan King Hassan II, acting under French pressure, offered to send 1,500 troops. President Giscard announced that French military planes would be provided to transport the Moroccan soldiers and, in a televised address on April 23, he told the French people that the airlift demonstrated France's 'commitment to combat the subversion of friendly African countries'.65 By mid-May the FLNC had been driven back to Angola, although they promised to return.

Subsequent official French accounts are clear about the Cold War imperatives behind the Shaba interventions; Mobutu's opponents - the 'Katangese gendarmes' of the FLNC - were 'taken up in 1976 by the communist government

64 The militant internal opposition was led by Laurent-Désiré Kabila, a figure less 'obscure' than suggested by some accounts of the eventual overthrow of Mobutu twenty years later in 1997.
In Luanda. Once they were reorganised and trained by Cubans and East Germans, the Soviets, who were the powerbrokers in Angola, launched them into Shaba on 9 March 1977, against Mobutu’s Zaire.66 There has been little consensus about this view; Rouvez suggests the Cold War was a pretext used by Mobutu to quell internal opposition to his rule: ‘The popularity of the FLNC in Shaba was more than the result of ethnic links; it was also the expression of serious discontent with the behaviour of the Zairian authorities and the brutality of the armed forces, particularly in Shaba.’67

This French-instigated operation was a direct intervention in both the military and the historical sense. It was a direct and deliberate stemming of the flow of Zairean history, through which local and regional forces could have allied to overthrow Mobutu’s dictatorship a generation before a similar alliance could be formed to achieve this goal. But the Cold War, and Western mining interests, ensured as in 1963 that there could be no real self-determination for Zaire. Wauthier notes that France was responding to a shared imperative of the West (and some Western clients); as in Chad, its particular interests chimed with those of the West in general:

Si la France, “avec la bénéédiction”, selon Pierre Biarnès [author Les Français en Afrique noire. De Richelieu à Mitterrand], de Bruxelles, Washington, Abidjan, Dakar et quelques autres capitales, s’est lancée dans cette aventure, c’est que l’Occident est d’accord pour faire échec à une invasion qui lui paraît d’inspiration soviétique, et qu’il veut empêcher que le Zaïre, ou tout au moins le cuivre (et le cobalt) du Shaba, ne tombe aux mains de dangereux révolutionnaires marxistes, comme c’est le cas alors non seulement dans les ex-colonies portugaises, mais aussi en Éthiopie.68

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66 Le Monde, 24 April 1977
This was an exemplary operation for France: swift, effective, reinforcing French credibility with all its African clients, and providing a fine practical showcase for French military prowess and equipment; although Africa (in the person of Emperor Bokassa) was to contribute to his 1981 downfall, in the late 1970s Giscard was still enthusiastic about France’s role in Africa and his own reputation as ‘Giscard l’Africain’. Despite some critical voices on the French left questioning France’s true motives, Wauthier notes that: ‘Le président français est... plutôt content de ses soldats, que ce soit pour l’intervention des Jaguar en Mauritanie [discussed in Chapter 3] ou l’emploi des Transall au Zaïre. Dans un message de voeux aux armées en janvier 1978, il estime que ces actions et quelques autres “ont accru dans l’opinion nationale et internationale le prestige et le renom de nos armes”.69 Africa was to remain an indispensable theatre for the expression of French military grandeur throughout Giscard’s presidency.

Shaba II: ‘Opération Léopard’ 1978

France’s second Shaba intervention was to prove key for understanding the legitimisation process of France’s military interventions, as well as the importance of controlling information in the interventionary theatre. It is by far the best known French military intervention in modern Africa - celebrated in the book and film La Légion Saute sur Kolwezi as one of the Legion’s finest hours70 - and apparently fulfilled all the criteria permitting deviation from the nonintervention norm: the intervention was requested by the intervened state; it was necessitated by the urgent imperative to prevent the further massacre of French nationals and other Europeans; it was legal under the terms of a bilateral defence agreement; it was part of a multilateral effort; and it was brief and successful.

\[70\] The film, directed by Raoul Coutard, was based on the book of the same name by Legionnaire Pierre Sergent: La Légion Saute sur Kolwezi, Opération Léopard: Le 2e REP au Zaïre, mai-juin 1978, Paris:
A year after their first defeat the FLNC, as promised, launched a further incursion into Shaba, this time crossing from Zambia to take the key mining centre of Kolwezi. The stakes were higher and the Cold War imperatives were a key part of the justificatory discourse throughout. Wauthier notes that:

Le président Mobutu a brandi l’épouvantail du périssoviétique, en déclarant que “le continent africain est l’objet d’une véritable agression idéologique”, et le Premier ministre français, Raymond Barre, a surenchéri en affirmant qu’il faut situer ces événements dans le cadre général des “efforts de destabilisation” du continent. Giscard affirme, quant à lui, que “la France ne peut rester indifférente quand la sécurité de certains de ses amis est mise en cause”.71

Despite extensive arming and training by French advisors, the Zairean army again proved unequal for the contest, and Mobutu turned once more to France for protection, obtaining on this occasion a spectacular direct intervention by several hundred paratroops of the 2e REP (Régiment Etranger Parachutiste). Crucially, the US provided long-haul transport planes to allow the Legionnaires to be transported directly from their French bases; French military Transalls were only sufficient for operations within Africa.

Giscard tells in his memoirs Le Pouvoir et la Vie how he received news of the mission’s success, a defining moment in his life and one of the apparent crowning glories of his septennat:

Une seconde d’attente, de vertige, entre la mauvaise nouvelle à laquelle il faut que je sois prêt à faire face et la délivrance que serait une bonne nouvelle. “Monsieur le Président, ici le général Vanbremeersch [chef d’état-major des armées]… L’état-major des armées a reçu à 20h30 un message radio du colonel Gras [military attaché at the French embassy in Kinshasa] disant: ‘Premier largage effectué, opération réussie.’ La première vague a sauté entre 15h40 et 16 heures locales. Erulin [commander of the 2e REP paratroops at Kolwezi] a installé son PC [poste de commandement] au sol. Le choc est assez dur, mais il pense avoir la situation en main.” Ainsi tout s’est passé comme nous le voulions, comme nous l’espérons! Maintenant, connaissant la qualité des


This high-risk operation was justified in Paris as protection for French and other European nationals, an explanation largely accepted at the time. Wauthier, in his generally reliable work-of-reference Quatre Présidents et l’Afrique, notes that the situation in 1978 was ‘more serious’ (‘plus dramatique’) than the previous year: ‘Cette fois, en effet, les anciens gendarmes on pénétré plus avant au Shaba, jusqu’à Kolwezi, et surtout ils s’en prennent aux Européens qu’ils massacrent au hasard de leurs pillages. Plusieurs centaines d’entre eux périront avant que la France et la Belgique…ne repoussent les forces du FLNC.’ Similarly, one of the key texts used in the study of IR, Calvocoressi’s World Politics since 1945, offers the following figures: ‘One hundred and thirty Europeans were killed and in order to save further lives 700 French and 1,700 Belgian paratroopers were flown to Zaire in US aircraft’ (Italics mine). Wauthier concludes: ‘Le parachutage de la Légion sur Kolwezi a certainement contribué à sauver la vie de nombreux Européens.’

However, Zairean opposition leaders and Belgian journalist Colette Braeckman have queried these figures, and the presumed ‘humanitarian’ justification for the French operation which, Braeckman argues, was carried out ‘under a double pretext: to protect Zaire against the communist peril, and to intervene for humanitarian reasons in order to save Europeans in danger … What is less well known is that the humanitarian pretext was provided by Mobutu himself’. This ‘pretext’ appeared on 19 May, shortly before the paratroops’ intervention, when a massacre of thirty Europeans in Kolwezi was attributed to the FLNC. However,

74 Peter Calvocoressi, World Politics since 1945 4th edn., London: Longman 1982, p367  
75 Claude Wauthier, Quatre Présidents et l’Afrique, Paris: Seuil 1995, p368  
testimony from witnesses interviewed by Braeckman suggests that the Europeans were in fact killed by the Zairean army, as a deliberate tactic to ensure intervention (from an apparently hesitant France) in order to militarily reinforce the same army and protect Mobutu’s regime. Franҫois Mitterrand himself, in 1978 while First Secretary of the Socialist Party and still in opposition, criticised the despatch of the Legion to Kolwezi, declaring that: ‘The French army went there to assure the security of our compatriots, but also to achieve other objectives which we do not know’: namely, to defeat the FLNC, protect European mining interests and restore Mobutu.

Despite this low-key controversy – and the deaths of four paratroopers - Kolwezi was a textbook intervention. All the justificatory factors were present. The intervention was classed ‘humanitarian’ - in the guise of protecting French nationals and property - and legitimised as France’s duty under the terms of Franco-Zairean military cooperation, although the treaty specifying these terms (the military technical assistance accord of 1974) would only be published later that year. Rouvez notes that:

For France, it was militarily cost effective and politically rewarding. The French were credited for the full success of the operation and for chasing the rebels out of Zaire. The Belgian authorities... did not support the French idea of an intervention geared toward the rescue of the Mobutu regime (...) At all levels, France came out the winner in the Shaba operation. Mobutu congratulated the French for their zeal in coming to the rescue of his country and rapidly stabilizing the situation. France’s subsequent access to Zaire’s commercial and economic assets served to further French influence in the region.

France was already by this stage the principal arms supplier to Zaire, and had provided Mobutu’s armed forces with hardware including Mirage fighter

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aircraft, helicopters and transport planes. However, the worsening reputation of Mobutu, and the repression and profligacy of his regime, would subsequently tarnish Giscard’s triumph. Wauthier concludes: ‘En définitive, ce qui est le plus gênant pour le président de la République, c’est qu’il est de notoriété publique que le régime zaïrois est singulièrement corrompu et sinistrement répressif. Or, l’intervention militaire française a eu surtout pour résultat de le maintenir au pouvoir.’ Indeed; France’s interventions kept Mobutu in power, and created the time and space for his worst excesses, twenty years longer than might otherwise have been the case.

By the late 1980s, Jeannou Lacaze’s expertise was acknowledged throughout France’s African sphere, and in 1988 Mobutu asked the French government of then prime minister Jacques Chirac if Lacaze could come to Zaire to reevaluate its military capacity, supposedly to resist perceived regional security threats posed by Angola, Uganda, Sudan (by which one might understand the SPLA), and the Katangais, undefeated despite the repeated interventions to repulse them. Lacaze asks:

L’armée zairoise pouvait-elle s’opposer à tous ces dangers? J’ai donc dressé un plan et proposé à Mobutu de resserrer les structures de son armée autour de quelques points clés (installation de centres stratégiques dans les chefs-lieux de province), et de privilégier... les communications et les moyens de transport, c’est-à-dire la capacité de réaction face à ces situations belligènes. Le président Mobutu a accepté mes propositions, mais elles impliquaient un effort financier qu’il n’a pas pu faire parce que son pays était en voie d’écroulement sur le plan économique.

It is worth pointing out that Mobutu himself was not facing financial ruin; and the country’s destitution was directly attributable to its president’s world-class prosperity. But most importantly, Lacaze’s ‘evaluation’ of the Forces Armées Zairoises (FAZ) did more to protect Mobutu than to preserve regional security;

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from the late 1980s until Zaire’s collapse in 1997, the FAZ were deployed against the internal opposition and the population generally rather than to resist any invading army.

Significantly, although rioting by opposition supporters and looting by the army in 1991 provoked the intervention of several thousand French troops, officially to evacuate French and other Western nationals, subsequent requests by opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi, during further army rioting in 1992, for foreign intervention to protect the population and help topple Mobutu fell on deaf ears. The FAZ was simply learning the lesson that was to be their rulebook for the remaining years of the regime; in the absence of pay, they should ‘live off the land’ ("vivre sur le terrain"), i.e. through theft and extortion from the population. However, as Weiss points out, this was an opportunity missed: ‘[H]ad they wanted to, this was a moment when Belgium, France and the US could have ended the regime’s tenure of power with relative ease.”82 This key foreign failure is directly attributable to Mobutu’s shrewd reading of the runes of regional security; France (as we shall see in Chapters 5 and 6) still needed him.

In sum, it may be seen that throughout the Cold War, particularly during the 1970s when superpower rivalry was played out against the backdrop of Africa’s final decolonisations - in Angola, Mozambique and minority-ruled Rhodesia and South Africa - Mobutu made himself indispensable for his external patrons, through shrewd self-casting as an anti-communist bulwark bordering socialist and Soviet-supported Angola and Congo-Brazzaville, while occasionally threatening to turn to the Soviets himself if Western support was not forthcoming. And, in a vast country replete with strategic minerals - diamonds, gold, cobalt, copper, uranium, and oil - Mobutu could guarantee security of access for foreign mining interests. In this context, French support for Zaire fitted

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82 H. Weiss in I. William Zartman, Collapsed States: The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate
into a larger pattern of Cold War patron-client relations. Christopher Clapham notes that:

Mobutu’s capacity not merely to survive these pressures [for democratisation and human rights], in the course of which the French ambassador to Zaire was assassinated by his troops, but to emerge as co-chair of Mitterrand’s farewell Franco-African summit at Biarritz in November 1994, provided the clearest example of the way in which a skilful African leader could manipulate the francophone relationship to his own advantage.\(^{83}\)

**Conclusion**

The Cold War served as an occasional pretext to justify France’s own independent bilateral dynamic of Franco-African relations, a common thread of Franco-African policy throughout the period. France’s interests were almost always exclusively French, and France’s interests in Africa predated and survived the Cold War.

As we saw in Chapter 2, Africa was of special strategic importance to France (in the person of de Gaulle) during and immediately after the Second World War, as a source of troops and legitimacy before 1944, and as a key pillar of France’s world standing and independence of the superpowers after. The apparent shouldering of the West’s burden, faced with perceived Soviet/Cuban interference or Libyan irredentism, was incidental or accidental; in any case, it was not always well received at home, with either left or Gaullist right. Michel Martin points out that:

Interventions mounted under... Giscard faced... criticisms from... Gaullist, Communist and Socialist leaders [who] together supported the accusation that France was becoming NATO’s policeman, proxy power of the West, or even the ‘West’s Cuba’, to use François Mitterrand’s formula at the time... [T]he continuing concern of the French political leadership to demonstrate that such

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actions... are free of any Western entanglement [have] prevented these operations from becoming involved with East-West issues.\textsuperscript{84}

The Cold War, therefore, was a flag of convenience displayed purely for international perceptions. In considering two of France’s most significant theatres of intervention during the Cold War period, this chapter has sought to demonstrate that the net effect of these interventions - although perceived by decision-makers in Paris as successful in terms of safeguarding France’s interests – was to create an impression internationally that French intervention was not driven exclusively by French interests (and those of francophile African élites), but also by the imperatives of international geostrategy. Accordingly, these interventions would be unopposed by other Western powers and unchallenged in the UN Security Council from which, in any case, France would not seek approval for an African intervention until the changed circumstances of 1994 so dictated.

Chapter 5 - French military intervention in Rwanda I

Introduction

Observers of France's role in Rwanda - press, NGO and academic - are divided into two increasingly hostile camps, difficult to label but broadly defined by, on the one hand, criticism of France as the principal supporter of a regime which planned and implemented genocide, and on the other, support for France as the only state prepared to intervene to protect fleeing 'Hutus' thereby forestalling a second genocide. These arguments may be simplified as promoting a theory of genocide v. double genocide, the former demanding the 1994 genocide be recognised as a deliberate crime of unique proportions (in modern Africa and the post-1945 world), the latter alternately blaming the Rwandan Patriotic Front for provoking massive retribution against its natural support base, and portraying the 1994 genocide as just a point of detail in the long and ongoing history of 'Hutu-Tutsi' strife.¹

¹ An understanding of the hardening of the Rwandan state and its evolution - from hard state to weapons state to genocidal state - necessitates a rejection of ethnicity as the principal motor or major dynamic of conflict there. Instead, it is essential to view ethnicity in the African Great Lakes region, and the sectarianism of which it is the expression, as a symptom, not the cause of the region's wars. It is the product, indeed often the only product, of dictatorships for whom ethnic exclusion was often their sole means of holding power, and of justifying their monopoly of power to the population.

However, it is not easy to find an account of current events in the region which eschews ethnicity as an interpretive framework. Indeed, there is little consensus even on the basic dynamics of Rwandan history, and interpretations of that history have been coloured retrospectively by contemporary events. Just as there are competing frames of analysis of the current situation, so are there opposing historical schools, explaining conflict as the result either of ethnicity, or of neocolonialism.

Dominant in the West, even in the most 'enlightened' circles, is the interpretation enthusiastically promoted by the former Rwandan regime - organisers and perpetrators of the 1994 genocide - and which is reproduced with little question by most of the Western media: that the country's quarrels are centuries-old, ethnically-driven and inevitable. By this reckoning, it was a quirk of a cruel Fate which trapped Hutu and Tutsi within states - Rwanda and its unfortunate 'twin' Burundi - where they are predestined to massacre each other. It would be better by far to accept that they can never live together and (as was suggested in all seriousness by commentators during the Zairean war) to create a separate, ethnically-cleansed 'Hutuland' and 'Tutsiland' in the region, perhaps giving Rwanda to one group and Burundi to the other. By this analysis, the sclerosis of the hard state which led it to kill a million of its population was not the nadir, a crime which made imperative the regime's overthrow, but part of an ongoing process in an inevitable ethnic cat-and-dog struggle in which blame is universal, where perpetrators of genocide cannot be judged because,
It is important to note that France’s Rwandan interventions were exceptional, even in the context of 30 years of interventionary theory and practice, on a number of counts: all possible justifications were deployed – self-defence, invitation, treaty obligation, and counter-intervention; and by 1994, faced with the unprecedented failure of its earlier interventions, humanitarianism backed up by a UN Security Council mandate, became the leitmotif of a French intervention. All the contradictions and discrepancies between theory and practice were assembled within a short period 1990 to 1994, to a greater extent than in Chad, where intervention is ongoing and deemed a success, or in any of the other intervened states we have considered. Rwanda - particularly in light of the subsequent, resultant, unprecedented involuntary nonintervention response in Zaire in 1996 - provides us with a model case study of French interventionary activity in Africa.

The official account of events may be readily collated from political and military statements, reports in much contemporary press coverage, specialist - notably military - publications, interviews with planners and participants and, more recently, depositions to the Quilès Parliamentary Information Commission. Conversely, the practice (the conduct and effect) of those interventions is less well documented, and enquiries to official sources during 1996 solicited equivocal responses. Requests for interviews with some participants were refused without explanation. No comprehensive official account of the conduct of Opération Noroît is accessible.

Despite the constraints and distortions attendant on any study of what remains a sensitive and controversial topic, it is intended here to focus on France’s military

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as a growing revisionist lobby has it, everybody killed everybody, everybody is guilty, but because not everybody can be tried and imprisoned, everybody must be forgiven.

2 Terre Magazine; Armées d’Aujourd’hui; Défense Nationale; Frères d’Armes
role during the period identified in line with the following, broadly two-part structure. Firstly, following a background to French involvement in Rwanda, the theory of the early (what will later be categorised ‘old-model’ intervention) will be considered, in terms of the traditional justifications used: self-defence (i.e. protection of nationals); request of a legitimate government; fulfilment of treaty obligations; and counter-intervention. Subsequently, this intervention’s practice will be considered, in its broadly threefold manifestation: arming; training; and direct participation.

The chapter will conclude with a discussion of the effect of this intervention, and the mismatch between its purposes (declared and undeclared), and its result.

**Background to French involvement in Rwanda**

It is intended in this section to sketch the background to French military involvement in Rwanda, from that state’s inception and consolidation under a stable authoritarian regime (the ‘hard state’), to civil war and its rapid militarisation with French support, by means of which it became a militarised state (the ‘weapons state’). That state’s recourse to genocide, which led to its collapse and overthrow - and further French intervention - will be considered in Chapter 6.

**Origins of conflict in Rwanda**

Before the outbreak of the current Great Lakes crisis, its origins - in the colonial legacy of division and partition, and in the Belgian-sponsored creation in Rwanda of a sectarian, one-party regime which depended for its survival on the exclusion or elimination of its opponents - have been extensively (if not always
usefully) documented. It is not intended, therefore, to re-examine the sources of conflict in the region, but instead to consider the Rwandan civil war's longevity (over nearly four years) in light of overt external involvement until 1994. Suffice it to say here that characterisation of the crisis as ethnically-driven has been used, both deliberately and unwittingly, to downplay or conceal the colonial legacy suggested above, and the centrality of the role of external, i.e. extra-African forces, in fuelling, sustaining and prolonging the conflict. Accordingly, Western media coverage typically describe events there exclusively in terms of an ethnic or even 'tribal' conflict. Pieterse's recent article explains how: 'Ethnicity, although generally considered a cause of conflict, is not an explanation but rather that which is to be explained. The terminology of ethnicity is part of the conflict and cannot serve as a language of analysis. The core causes of conflict are authoritarian institutions and political cultures and the politics of hard sovereignty, while external influences play a significant role.'

Ethnicisation was singularly inappropriate, and particularly provocative, in Rwanda where, despite attempts by colonists and post-colonial sectarian regimes

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4 A countervailing analysis is possible. Although the societies of the Great Lakes were distinguished by separate castes in pre-colonial days, the current segregation into separate 'ethnicities' is a product of the colonial era - notably the Belgian census of 1934 which 'froze' a citizen's status by displaying his perceived ethnicity on his compulsory identity card, a process of 'ethnicisation' which was used effectively to divide and rule Rwanda's population. The country's 8 million inhabitants pre-1994 are categorised typically as Hutu (84%), Tutsi (15%) and Twa (1%). Rwandan independence in 1962 was achieved on the colonists' terms, via the Belgian-sponsored overthrow and exiling of those favoured (but, by 1959, anticolonial-minded) Tutsis who previously had administered on the colonists' behalf. The accession to power of the hitherto downtrodden Hutu majority only reinforced sectarian divisions, to the extent that the practice of compulsory identity cards displaying a citizen's ethnic group continued, a practice which greatly facilitated the work of the genocide's militias which sought to eliminate Rwanda's remaining Tutsis as an inherently disloyal national minority, along with opposition Hutus and indeed those of any ethnicity who opposed them.
to prove otherwise, there is only one ethnicity: Rwandan. In a timely interview in November 1996, social geographer Dominique Franche told *Le Monde* that, in contradiction of much of that newspaper’s own coverage: ‘The Hutus and Tutsis do not form two different ethnic groups. An ethnic group is defined by a unity of language, culture, religion or territory. The Tutsis, Hutus and Twas live together ... They speak the same language and share the same culture and religion. They used to specialise in certain areas of the economy, but not systematically... The conflict can’t be described as ethnic, since there’s only one ethnic group in Rwanda, and that’s Rwandan.’

However, Prunier points to a (foreign-authored) cultural mythology which, given the dominance of foreign influence in education and information, became reality: ‘[T]he social and political actors moved by degrees from their real world into the mythological script which had been written for them... In 1959 [sectarian pogroms marking the start of the Belgian-supported ‘social revolution’] the red seal of blood put a final label of historical unavoidability on this mythological construction, which from then on became a new real historical framework.’ The Rwandan conflict was exacerbated by the international media’s adoption of the false analysis which was in many ways at the root of the conflict: the original historical distortion became a script which the players acted out.

In response, the current Rwandan government is seeking to eradicate categorisation by ethnic grouping, and eschews the terms Hutu and Tutsi in its discourse. Government spokesman Colonel Wilson Rutayisire argues that: ‘The multiplicity of influences that led to genocide in Rwanda can only be understood

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if we trail a long journey into history ... The economic frustrations arising out of long years of colonial and post-colonial exploitation created objective conditions upon which the psychological needs and motivations [of] genocide were nurtured by successive governing groups... [I]t is the colonial plunder that reduced Banyarwanda [the people of Rwanda] to the status of sub-human beings susceptible to the ideologies of hate.9

This perspective argues that Rwanda’s ‘ethnic groups’, commonly perceived - most catastrophically by many within those groups - as mutually antagonistic throughout history, are instead ‘three strands of the same rope’, i.e. of one common Rwandan nationality (Banyarwanda) determined most obviously by a shared language, Kinyarwanda. By this reckoning, the constantly reiterated ‘ethnic’ division of this nation into Hutu, Tutsi and Twa was not inevitable, but was a deliberate policy of colonialism.10 Amaza states that:

[I]t was Belgian colonialism ... from 1919 to 1961 that laid the ground for the Rwandese problem as we know it today ... Indirect rule invariably amounts to “divide and rule” under colonialism, with the colonist using a section of the colonised people to do his dirty work such that the rest of the colonised people identify the section thus picked to do the colonist’s work, rather than the colonist himself, as the enemy.11

9 Major Wilson Rutayisire, Genocide in Rwanda: An overview of the causes, its systematic conception, planning and execution, unpublished paper, Kigali November 1995

10 Most social anthropology of the Great Lakes region supports this analysis. What pre-colonial divisions there were in Rwanda were common to most feudal societies. The king (mwami) was drawn from one clan, and this clan distributed favours to a privileged caste, in this case comparatively wealthy cattle-herders. The majority in the richly fertile interlacustrian territories were farmers (cultivators), whose status was that of serfs. However, acquisition of cattle allowed a farmer to become a herder, and benefit from the richer, meat-and-milk diet such an occupation allowed. Lowest in the social pecking-order were the ‘pygmies’, landless potters who were treated with the contempt borne by landless people everywhere. The translation of this caste system into opposing ethnic groups - complete with racist anthropology which cast the taller herdiers as Ethiopians or a ‘lost’ semitic tribe genetically superior to their classically negroid co-nationals - was an integral part of colonial expansion and self-justification. This interpretation argues further that division was imposed upon Rwanda -after Germany’s loss in 1919 of its colonies -by Belgians, themselves steeped in the sectarianism and division in their own country, and seeking to reproduce and by extension justify these divisions in their newly-acquired African territory as the natural order of things.

11 Ondoga ori Amaza (former Director of Publications for the Ugandan army -NRA), Rwanda and Uganda: Post-War Prospects for Regional Peace and Security, unpublished paper presented in Harare, 1995, p6. Belgium had neither the will nor the means to settle its African mandate territory of Ruanda-Urundi with
There was no indigenous historiography in Rwanda to allow its people to counter the colonist’s version of their history. Philip Gourevitch notes that: ‘[T]here is no reliable record of the precolonial state. Rwandans had no alphabet; their tradition was oral, therefore malleable; and because their society is fiercely hierarchical the stories they tell of their past tend to be dictated by those who hold power, either through the state or in opposition to it.’\(^{12}\) The effect of this manipulation of historiography, and the complicity of some historians, both Rwandan and European, in the perpetuation of sectarian mythology, is underlined by Mahmood Mamdani: ‘That much of what passed as historical fact in academic circles has to be considered as tentative – if not outright fictional – is becoming clear as post-genocidal sobriety compels a growing number of historians to take seriously the political uses to which their writings have been put, and their readers to question the certainty with which many a claim has been advanced.’\(^{13}\)

Alan Zarembo offered a useful if rare alternative to prevailing interpretations of the Rwandan conflict: ‘Colonial regimes taught Africans bad lessons in government. First, people came to believe that political power is the only source of wealth. The state dictates who prospers. Second, political entrepreneurs learned that manipulating ethnic identity is an effective way to stay in control.’\(^{14}\)

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\(^{12}\) Philip Gourevitch, *We wish to inform you that tomorrow we will be killed with our families*, London: Picador 1999, p48

\(^{13}\) Mahmood Mamdani quoted in Philip Gourevitch, *We wish to inform you that tomorrow we will be killed with our families*, London: Picador 1999, p48

The contention here is that swift, externally-sponsored militarisation reinforced a chronically hard state, creating a weapons state in which radical, sectarian, militant extremism could flourish.

‘Revolution’ and the First Republic

Independence did not free Rwanda from its colonially-distorted history. In fact, its crippling sectarianism was reinforced by the very nature of the Belgian-inspired - and supervised - ‘social revolution’ of 1959, which saw those Tutsi long-favoured as the colonists’ administrators abandoned by their masters when they displayed evidence of anti-colonial ideas above their station. The idea that the majority - Hutu - had been oppressed not by Belgium but somehow independently by Tutsi genetically predisposed to dominate was embraced enthusiastically by the Belgian-sponsored PARMEHUTU (Parti pour l’emancipation des Hutu), led by Grégoire Kayibanda, who would found the Rwandan First Republic and become its president. The sectarian pogrom that was the 1959-62 ‘social revolution’ - which saw the killing or exiling of over half a million Tutsi - was assisted by Belgian military personnel, who armed, trained and commanded the new Rwandan army.15 More precisely, the consolidation of PARMEHUTU and its seizure of power at the Belgians’ behest and to the detriment - indeed the physical exclusion - of their Tutsi fellow-citizens, was part of an ill-guided strategy in Brussels. The purpose of such a strategy was to forestall a radical, anti-European rebellion and maintain Belgian influence on the continent - in Ruanda-Urundi itself but more importantly in the vast Belgian Congo - by passing power to proxies and clients, as the French were to do in much of west and central Africa.16

15 Crucial here was the role of Colonel Guy Logiest, whose shaping of events he describes in his own account, Mission au Rwanda: Un Blanc dans la bagarre Tutsi-Hutu, Brussels: Didier Hatier 1988.

16 Prunier notes that: '[T]his was a very strange “revolution” indeed. The break between the Belgian authorities and their long-coddled Tutsi elite had come about only because the colonial administrators felt betrayed by their erstwhile protégés. They now considered them as a mixture of backward traditionalists and revolutionary communists, an unlikely combination which was not dissimilar from the way the British then regarded the Mau Mau movement in neighbouring Kenya. What would later be touted as a “social
Violent expulsions of Tutsi recurred during the 1960s and early 70s, and the exclusion of those remaining Tutsi from employment, public life, and political, economic or military power created a quasi-apartheid system of discrimination. The worst lessons learned from the colonist were put into practice; a citizen’s categorisation as Hutu, Tutsi or Twa continued, as in colonial days, to be displayed on his or her compulsory identity card. Kakwenzire and Kamukama, themselves of Rwandan exile stock in Uganda, describe how: ‘[T]he Batutsi in Rwanda became underdogs. One had to obtain a Muhutu patron in government in order to gain access to state jobs or economic assets ... The client-patron relations that existed [during the colonial and pre-colonial periods] were reproduced, but this time in reverse.’

The net effect was that inter-ethnic tension became the definer of the country’s problems, and sectarian prejudice and exclusion key features of the state because deemed essential to the state’s survival. Although historically fallacious, the ethnic division became real for those who perpetrated or suffered violence because of it. In light of these factors, the contention here is that ethnic conflict resembled more an ethnic transfer of power. (…) “The revolution is over,” declared Colonel Logiest in October 1960. This was an appropriate declaration, for inasmuch as the “revolution” had been a Belgian-sponsored administratively-controlled phenomenon, its end could be administratively proclaimed just as its beginning had been administratively made unavoidable.’ Gérard Prunier, The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide, London: Hurst 1995, pp50, 52.


18 Alex de Waal, co-author (with Rakiya Omaar) of the most comprehensive account of the Rwandan genocide to date, points out that: ‘Specialists on Rwanda protest in vain that Hutu and Tutsi are not separate ethnic groups. But sixty years of colonial and Tutsi rule, and thirty-five years of Hutu supremacy following the 1959 Revolution, which consigned half the Tutsi population to exile, have fundamentally changed the nature of the relationships between them. Political conflict, punctuated by intercommunal violence, has created distinct and mutually opposed Hutu and Tutsi identities, which, for all the hesitations of social scientists, are identifiably “ethnic”.’ He emphasises this point in reference to Tim Allen’s account of the creation of ethnicity on the Sudan-Uganda border: ‘To argue that the tribes thus manufactured are artificial is to miss the point. As Allen points out, it is impossible to interpret recent events without recourse to tribal labels, as they are the labels used by the people themselves. Above all, people kill each other because of them.’
became a reality for Rwandans, both perpetrators and victims, but that ethnicity was not the root cause. As the Rwandan state hardened, the institutionalised sectarianism upon which it was built became its dominant characteristic, and continued to be the most effective means by which a dictatorship could keep the population divided.

The Second Republic

Fearful of betrayal, President Kayibanda had surrounded himself with supporters and family members from southern Rwanda, distributing patronage disproportionately to those he felt he could trust. As a result, erstwhile PARMEHUTU supporters from the north and centre of the country grew isolated from the president and distant from the levers of political and economic power he controlled. Crucially, Kayibanda failed to retain control over the army, allowing his Chief-of-Staff Juvénal Habyarimana to build a power-base for family, friends and allies drawn from the latter’s home region in Gisenyi, north-western Rwanda. Claiming the president was unable to protect the country against attacks from without by inyenzi ('cockroaches') - small bands of exiles seeking his overthrow - or to guarantee peace and stability in the climate of sectarian revenge within, Habyarimana seized power in a military coup on 5 July 1973.19

Habyarimana recreated a one-party state, ensuring political, military and, by extension, economic, power was concentrated in his own hands and those of a

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19 The political tensions which led to the overthrow of Grégoire Kayibanda further weaken the argument that conflict in Rwanda is and always has been ethnically-driven. Kakwenzire and Kamukama point out that: ‘The political stance shifted from an “ethnic” to a regional basis of distribution [of patronage] and oppression. The result of this was the 1973 coup in which the northern and central Hutu conspired to topple the Kayibanda establishment. The coup... helps to demystify the long-standing perception of the Rwanda crisis as a result of “age-old hatred of the Hutu for the Tutsi”, since the 1973 coup exhibited a house divided against itself.’ Similarly, Amaza points out that Tutsi elites, those who had prospered as the colonist’s proxies, were not the only victims of the PARMEHUTU revolution: ‘The annihilation policy of the Kayibanda regime against the Tutsi political elites and the opposition political parties ... meant that the
close inner circle largely composed of family members: the akazu ('the little house'). His Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement (MRND) party published its manifesto on 5 July 1975, the second anniversary of the coup. Amidst pledges to work for its three stated aims of 'Unity, Peace and Development', the document contains several revelatory passages which hint at the regime's true nature:

The Movement recognises, as fundamental components of Rwandan society, the three ethnic groups Twa, Hutu and Tutsi. It wishes that ethnic differences will not be a cause of the disintegration of the Rwandan people, but a source of complementarity and enrichment in equal citizenship.

National unity and harmonious social relations will be pursued without respite and elements causing social disintegration with be combatted systematically.

Tranquility and peace will be the object of a constant preoccupation to protect citizens against those seeking to disturb social order.20

It is apparent that the regime would seek to shift blame for civil conflict through the scapegoating of unspecified troublemakers, an enemy within who were to be held responsible for any of the state's shortcomings. The manifesto also explains the Movement's universalism, which would allow it to cast itself after 1992, in response to principal patron France's loosely-applied democratisation criteria announced in 1990 at La Baule, as the Mouvement National Révolutionnaire pour le Développement et la Démocratie (MRNDD): 'Every Rwandan is a full member of the MRND. Every Rwandan who participates actively in the dissemination of the ideas and exhortations (mots d'ordre) of the Movement, and gives example through the carrying out of its decisions, is considered an activist (militant).21 Hence the party must be considered democratic, it would be argued,

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20 Mouvement révolutionnaire nationale pour le développement (MRND), Manifeste et Statut, Kigali July 1975
21 ibid.
as it represented the patriotic (i.e. Hutu) majority, an argument supported by François Mitterrand - patron and admirer of Habyarimana - in the early 1990s.

The exiles problem did not go away. Habyarimana and the party he founded insisted that ‘the glass was full’: densely populated, high birth-rate Rwanda, with a population of 8 million in 64,200 square kilometres, was too overcrowded to allow the exiles to return. The issues of under-used and unexploited land (including large areas of undrained swamp), and primitive agricultural practices, went unaddressed, despite the availability of studies advocating workable changes. Over 15 years, the tranquility, indeed introspection of this ‘little Switzerland of Africa’ concealed a gradual hardening of its arteries as it failed repeatedly to address the basic injustice upon which it was built: the forcible exclusion of up to 600,000 citizens on the basis of sectarian discrimination. On July 27, 1987, the Central Committee of the MRND announced, despite growing international pressure, that it would not allow the immigration of large numbers of exiles. Habyarimana thereby set the scene for a confrontation with the emerging, militant exiles’ movement, the Rwandan Patriotic Front, the principal, defining aim of which was the ‘right to return’ of the Rwandan diaspora. This was unsurprising given that the regime’s origins, survival and indeed its very reason for being were inextricably linked to the exclusion of its opponents, and of their natural support base: those Rwandans exiled by the regime, and those within the state excluded from full statehood, considered at best as second class citizens and at worst as an inherently disloyal Fifth Column.

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22 See for example Johan Pottier’s article, published a year before the war’s outbreak, ‘Three’s a crowd: knowledge, ignorance and power in the context of urban agriculture in Rwanda’, Africa 59:4 (1989), p461

23 Other pressures on the Habyarimana regime included a series of bad harvests, a drop in the international price of coffee (the country’s principal export), and an inability to address crucial issues of chronic poverty, shortages and land misuse. On September 7, 1990, Pope John Paul II visited fervently Catholic Rwanda, and although the Pontiff made no call for greater democracy or observance of human rights by his hosts, Habyarimana felt the unaccustomed glare of international attention merited a general amnesty for prisoners, excepting those charged with subversion or endangering state security. Such an act of magnanimity did, however, free up space in the jails for a new influx of political detainees later the same year.
The Rwandan Patriotic Front

In 1986, Rwandan refugees were in the vanguard of the successful campaign by Uganda’s National Resistance Movement (NRM) to overthrow President Milton Obote and put an end to a quarter-century of dictatorships, typical of the African post-colonial experience, but which had caused the deaths of over half a million Ugandans since 1962. The Rwandan exiles in Uganda were driven to support the rebellion in large numbers - eventually providing 3000 of the 14,000 troops of the National Resistance Army (NRA) - by Obote’s mistaken efforts in 1982 to force potentially disloyal Rwandans back into Habyarimana’s hostile Rwanda, inadvertently creating the phenomenon he was trying to pre-empt: organised opposition by the Rwandans to his regime. A disproportionate number of the NRA’s senior commanders were drawn from these Rwandans, notably Chief-of-Staff Fred Rwigyema, and Intelligence Chief, Paul Kagame. Rwigyema’s importance and his decisive role in the war to overthrow Milton Obote is acknowledged by NRM leader Yoweri Kaguta Museveni - now Ugandan president - in his autobiography. Indeed Museveni, of Ankole (southern Ugandan) origin, is classed ethnically as Bahima and was dismissed by some of his sectarian opponents as nearly Rwandan himself.

Militarily experienced and aware of growing resentment of the prominence - perceived as dominance - of Rwandans in the new Uganda’s army and administration, Rwigyema and Kagame represented a generation of exiles radicalised by combat and aware that, as Rwandans, they would always be stateless until their ‘right to return’ was granted or seized. Accordingly, the

24 ‘By the beginning of 1985 ... I felt we now had enough guns to open that long-awaited second front. Therefore I gave orders that we should open a new front line in the Rwenzori Mountains of western Uganda, and I detailed Fred Rwigyema, commander of the 11th Battalion, to lead the forces to the west ... Rwigyema left with his group on 30 March. It was a very long journey requiring much heroic perseverance ... We did not lose any people along the route, however, and that was in itself quite an achievement.’
Yoweri K. Museveni, Sowing the Mustard Seed, London/Kampala: Macmillan 1997, p164
Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) was founded in Kampala in December 1987. Recruited initially from Rwandan exiles in Uganda, the RPF also attracted support from the significant Rwandan diaspora in Tanzania, Burundi, and in Europe and North America. Like people of no property elsewhere, the Rwandan exiles had sought advancement through education, and many, prosperous professionals, were prepared to bankroll the new movement.

To what extent was the RPF a necessary and appropriate response to the Rwandan state? In an early assessment of the movement, Prunier suggests that the rebels sought to provoke the Habyarimana regime before it could make concessions, albeit reluctantly and at the insistence of its foreign backers. This would suggest that the regime’s hardening, its emergence as a weapons state and latterly genocidal state, was the result of provocation. By this reckoning, reform was inevitable, was already underway, and the RPF offensive of 1990 was precipitated by the fear that the regime’s imminent reforms would pre-empt the movement’s attack, diminish its grievances and undermine its support base, in the region and internationally. The RPF’s economic and diplomatic strength abroad, notably in Europe and North America, depended on the hard intransigence of the regime it opposed.

However, even if this were the case, there was abundant opportunity after the outbreak of war for the state to ‘soften’, to concede at least in part the principal demand of its opponents. This, an interpretation shared by the post-genocide Rwandan administration, argues that the RPF’s attack on Rwanda in 1990 was necessary and inevitable given the Habyarimana regime’s failure to reform. This supports the contention that the state was already hard and could only be changed or made to compromise through the use of force. When it began finally to relent, under overwhelming international pressure, it was a case of too little,
too late. The hard state, through the process of externally-backed arming, had created a weapons state and culture which could brook no compromise.\textsuperscript{26}

Remarkably, the Rwandan state and the inherent conflict which led to war in 1990 functioned entirely outside of the Cold War framework which had determined the context and distorted the nature of wars elsewhere on the continent. Rwanda was of strategic importance to no-one during or after the Cold War except, for its own unique reasons, for France. But unlike the bulk of the states which constitute France’s African sphere of influence, Rwanda is not a former French colony, and is only nominally francophone. France’s response betrayed a misunderstanding of the historical dynamic of the Rwandan conflict: - a single party government based on nepotism, clan loyalty, sectarianism and exclusion; and opposition to that regime composed primarily of highly motivated, educated and organised refugees, funded by a prosperous diaspora, led by militarily accomplished commanders, and enjoying at least tacit support from a neighbouring state.

Having considered the origins of Rwanda as a state based on sectarianism, exclusion and dictatorship, the questions remain why, how and with whose assistance did the hard state become a weapons state, and to what effect. This chapter will proceed by considering France’s military intervention in Rwanda


\textsuperscript{26} The late Ondoga ori Amaza, who as a senior Ugandan military man was an RPF supporter in the most literal sense, argued unequivocally that: ‘[N]otwithstanding the massacres... beginning April 1994, and notwithstanding the precarious security environment that was created during and after the war, not only was the war necessary, but it actually opened up possibilities for the democratic reordering of the Rwandese polity in a way few other approaches could have done... [I]t is our conviction that had the extremists in Rwanda not blocked the implementation of the Arusha Peace Accords,..., by the time Habyarimana’s plane was shot down (by the very forces he had created to hold the Rwandese people in subjugation), the RPF-RPA had created enough political space to bring about democratic transformations under conditions of peace.’ Ondoga ori Amaza, ‘Rwanda and Uganda: Post-War Prospects for Regional Peace and Security’, paper presented at the Pan African Movement seminar, \textit{Genocide in Rwanda: The Responsibility of Africa}, Harare 28 January 1995. Ondoga joined the NRA in 1982, served in the medical and political units, and was
from October 1990 to December 1993, *Opération Noroît*, in terms of its theory - i.e. its theoretical purpose, justification and legality as expressed in official discourse - and practice: its conduct and effect.

**French intervention in Rwanda: theory**

On 1 October 1990, the RPF launched its long-anticipated offensive against the Habyarimana regime, crossing into Rwanda from bases in Uganda. If the war had been left to run its course, the RPF would have triumphed quickly, given their numerical and material advantage. The Rwandan government army (*Forces Armées Rwandaises* - FAR) numbered 5,200 in 1990 against the RPF's estimated 7,000, and were by all accounts poorly trained and short of munitions. The original, core RPF (termed 'the Ugandans'), on the other hand, were well-trained, well-armed (both with and without President Museveni’s knowledge and approval), and highly motivated, with a hunger for land, nationality and reparations typical of dispossessed peoples.

The provenance of these well-armed troops reinforced Rwandan government claims of a 'Ugandan invasion'. The régime reacted by detaining 8,000 Tutsis, selected by ethnic head-count according to the ethnicity displayed on their identity card. This was followed by the first massacre of Tutsis at Kibirira. The hard state thereby ethnicised the war immediately - ethnicity was militarised - and its message to a frightened population was unambiguous: the conflict was not a result of the régime's failure to reform and include all Rwanda's ethnic groups; it was instead a foreign-backed invasion which would be supported by those the régime had excluded from power. These latter (all Tutsis and the régime's critics of any ethnic group), again constituted an inherently disloyal Fifth Column; hence loyalty to the State could most ably be demonstrated by

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later NRA director of publications until his death in 1995. His only book is Museveni's *Long March: from*
participation in the elimination of the disloyal. The logic and dynamic of the subsequent genocide were already apparent.

Faced with the application of the ‘Ugandan model’ of insurgency by his own exiled co-nationals, Habyarimana swiftly contacted his principal foreign backers, President Mitterrand and his son Jean-Christophe (then head of the Cellule africaine attached to the French presidency), and claimed Rwanda had been attacked by an expansionist Museveni. This appeal struck the right chord in Paris, and it produced the desired effect, a military intervention – codenamed Opération Noroit - and rapid militarisation of the Forces Armées Rwandaises (FAR). French troops were deployed in Kigali, initially to evacuate French citizens, but were to remain for three years. The controversy surrounding French intervention in Rwanda arises principally from these military aspects, including arms supplies, training and the role of advisors, as well as direct action by French troops.

France responded mechanically to a perceived intervention stimulus, as it would have done faced with secessionists in Chad or an army mutiny in the Central African Republic. The outbreak of civil war was characterised in much of the French media as an invasion of friendly, francophone Rwanda by hostile anglophone Uganda, with deliberate undertones of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Little attention was paid to the Habyarimana regime’s repeated denial of the ‘right to return’ for Rwanda’s refugees which was the RPF’s principal demand.

Opération Noroit was launched without specific operational guidelines or a time limit, and with quagmire potential, i.e. the involvement of ground troops, even in front line combat, in a guerrilla war in a mountainous tropical country, all of which directly contradicted the trend of the West’s post-Cold War interventions.
As we have seen, analysis of military intervention typically begins with a discussion of the international legal constraints - the nonintervention norm - and the corresponding derogations from this norm, legitimising circumstances which could constitute a code of permissibility of intervention.²⁷ The mechanical response to Habyarimana’s request for help was buttressed with textbook justification. The articles of this unofficial and often subjectively-interpreted code most often invoked by France are: intervention in response to an explicit, wilful invitation by the legitimate government of a state; intervention to protect French nationals in situations of violence or instability; and intervention in situations in which an existing treaty permits such intervention.

The first claim, of an invitation to intervene, is irrefutable. The immediate reaction in the centre of African policy-making in Paris - the Cellule africaine - typifies 30 years of France’s mechanical interventionary reaction to perceived intervention stimuli in Africa. We are fortunate to have an account from Gérard Prunier, who claims to have been present in Jean-Christophe Mitterrand’s office on 2 October 1990:

[T]he Rwandese head of state was sufficiently worried about the French attitude to call the Africa Unit .... from New York... In a brief conversation lasting no more than ten minutes, Jean-Christophe Mitterrand... gave a bland and reassuring answer to President Habyarimana, adding with a wink: “We are going to send him a few boys, old man Habyarimana. We are going to bail him out. In any case, the whole thing will be over in two or three months.” (...) On Thursday 4 October, a company (150 men) of the 2ème Régiment Etranger Parachutiste [2REP] stationed in the Central African Republic flew down from Bangui to Kigali, immediately taking up positions around the airport.²⁸

The second claim, self-defence (i.e. protecting nationals), although technically justified in international law,²⁹ is less easily sustained. Several accounts point out

that Belgium also sent troops to evacuate its nationals in October 1990, but withdrew them after a month. However, French troops were to remain for three years; their numbers never dropped below 250, and at one point - following the RPF offensive in February 1993 which was halted with French assistance - French military personnel officially numbered 680, when there were only 400 French civilians to protect. Belgium, with four times as many citizens resident in Rwanda, felt no need to send troops on this occasion. Similarly, as will be discussed below, French troops were active on the front line, some 50 to 60km north of Kigali (notably in Byumba préfecture) where no French or other Western citizens lived.

Given that the treaty justification is the principal claim to legality for France’s interventions in Rwanda 1990 to 1993, it may be useful then to consider the sources of this document [attached; see Appendices]. As we have seen in Chapter 4, the presidency of Valéry Giscard d’Estaing saw the signing of cooperation agreements in terms of aid, trade and cultural exchanges which marked the formal expansion of France’s African sphere from its own former colonies to include Belgium’s ex-colonial territories - Rwanda, Burundi and Zaire - states perceived in France as francophone and hence as natural inclusions in the Franco-African ‘family’. On safari in 1975 in the Akagera National Park in northeastern Rwanda at Habyarimana’s invitation, Giscard agreed to formalise Franco-Rwandan military cooperation in a military technical assistance accord.

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29 Max Hilaire reiterates usefully that: ‘Although the [UN] Charter does not specifically state that all forms of intervention are prohibited, given the broad language of Article 2(4), it is assumed that all forms of intervention except those in self-defense [i.e., in this case, protecting nationals abroad] are prohibited under the Charter. State practice in the post war era supports that view. The UN has also condemned all acts of intervention since 1945.’ Max Hilaire, International Law and the United States Military Intervention in the Western Hemisphere, The Hague/ London/Boston: Kluwer Law International 1997, p.viii

30 ‘L’envoi d’urgence de deux nouveaux contingents porte désormais à 600 le nombre de militaires français au Ruanda [sic]. Cela peut sembler beaucoup pour protéger (version officielle) les 400 Français qui vivent dans ce pays de 7 millions d’habitants, grand comme la Bretagne. Surtout lorsqu’on sait que le gouvernement belge, lui, n’a pas jugé nécessaire d’expédier de troupes pour protéger ses ressortissants, quatre fois plus nombreux, et que, jusqu’à présent, aucun étranger n’a été menacé.’ Jacques Girardon, ‘Le gendarme de Kigali’, L’Express (Paris) 25 February 1993
The Franco-Rwandan accord would be the twenty-second such document, and entailed an initially modest annual transfer of arms and military equipment from France to Rwanda worth about FF4m (£0.5m) per year. With regard to the deployment of French troops in the country, the accord states: ‘The government of the French Republic places at the disposal of the government of the Rwandese republic the French military personnel whose services are required for the organisation and instruction of the Rwandese national police’.

However, when it became apparent that Opération Noroit required the long-term support of Habyarimana’s weak and disorganized army, the accord was amended on 26 August 1992 to include the ‘Rwandese armed forces’ as eligible for French assistance. It is noteworthy that French justificatory discourse changed at this time; the intervention, by then approaching its second anniversary with official troop levels near 700, was no longer intended merely to protect French nationals, but, according to French ambassador Martres, ‘to prevent destabilisation of Rwanda’. 31

Uniquely, both sections of the Franco-Rwandan accord were classified, and did not appear alongside similar accords published in the Journal officiel. 32 The accord is only now in the public domain following its publication in the report of the Quilès Commission in December 1998. 33

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32 Unpublished in either the Journal officiel (Paris), or the Defence Ministry’s Bulletin officiel des armées, a copy of the Franco-Rwandan military technical assistance accord of 1975, with its 1992 amendment, was passed to the author by a French journalist, who recovered his copy from the Rwandan Defence Ministry in July 1994.

If we consider Joyner’s second derogation from the nonintervention norm in this light:

Under certain conditions, acts of intervention may be granted through treaty arrangements made by one state with another state. Some states have, in fact, concluded special bilateral treaties of “friendship and cooperation” specifying the possibility of intervention by the protector state in certain discretionary circumstances. Under these special, bilaterally negotiated conditions, the acceptability of treaty rights clearly is viewed in international law as a legitimate exception to the norm of nonintervention. The precondition here, of course, is that the treaty must still be in force and duly respected by both governments at the time an intervention occurs.34

To this precondition could be added, with reference to the Great Lakes region, that if there is to be intervention, the treaty must allow for direct military support on the ground for the state’s armed forces. Post hoc amendments to any existing treaty do not make earlier interventions retrospectively legal.

Before suggesting that French involvement far exceeded the terms even of France’s own accord, it may be useful here to recall the theoretical model by means of which to explain France’s open ended commitment - political and military - in Rwanda, and the implications for its subsequent claims (when the genocidal regime faced defeat in 1994) of humanitarian motives. Given the Franco-Rwandan patron-client relationship, France felt obliged to respond when the RPF launched its attack on the Habyarimana regime: ‘When there is a high level of interaction between two states, the decision-makers in one must respond to the emergence of civil war in the other.’35 The outcome of this response, it is argued, will be the restoration of the original system, i.e. the former pattern of dyadic interaction, or a transformation of the relationship with the second actor’s (here, France’s) commitment shifting to the side of the bifurcated actor which challenged the original system. In this case, France’s response was mechanical: a

restoration of the original system even at the price of a direct intervention. This mechanical response should be seen in the context suggested above, of Franco-African relations since 1960. The French commitment to one side of a bifurcated actor (i.e. the French-fostered or favoured ruling elite) was an integral part of the state's creation and/or survival; this excludes the notion of the second actor's choice between intervention and nonintervention. Because of France's interpersonal 'networks' and treaty-ratified support for the internal status quo in the states of its African sphere, its permanent bases and its peerless power projection capacity on the continent, Franco-African relations are inherently interventionary.

Practice of French involvement in Rwanda

Arming
Troops of Opération Noroit arrived in Rwanda on October 4, 1990. They brought with them 60-mm, 81-mm and 120-mm mortars and 105-mm light artillery guns.36 No official account of the total amount of arms supplied by France to Rwanda between 1990 and 1994 is available, but African Rights concludes that such supplies amounted to 'at least $6m worth in 1991-92, including mortars, light artillery, armoured cars and helicopters... France also supplied spare parts and technical assistance to maintain the vehicles of the FAR'.37

The authoritative account of the establishment of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda by Morris and Scharf cites a further expenditure of $6 million, stating that: 'The Rwandan authorities distributed six million dollars

worth of firearms provided by France to militia members and other supporters of President Habyarimana from 1992 to early 1994.\textsuperscript{38}

Direct shipments were not the only means of rapid militarisation used by Rwanda and its supporters. South Africa (pre-Mandela), the only major arms manufacturer on the continent, was well placed to sell material to Habyarimana, and arms acquisition was greatly facilitated by French financial aid to support the Rwandan war effort, which grew from a peacetime FF4m to FF55m per annum in 1993, a nearly fourteen-fold increase, placing wartime Rwanda sixth of the 26 African states which received such aid from France.\textsuperscript{39} Human Rights Watch’s 1993 annual report noted that:

France has consistently supported President Habyarimana over the years and continued this policy during 1993 despite evidence of human rights abuses by his regime. Just after the beginning of the war in 1990, France sent a contingent of troops “to protect French citizens and other expatriates” in Rwanda. After the RPF violated the cease-fire in February, France sent an additional 300 soldiers some of whom actively supported Rwandan troops in the combat zones. Some of the French troops were withdrawn after the March cease-fire, but others remained in Rwanda, in violation of accords which called for the departure of all foreign troops. France supplied Rwanda with arms and with political and propaganda support within the European Community.\textsuperscript{40}

Weapons were also supplied by France through third parties (notably Egypt). Goose and Smith, authors of Human Rights Watch’s report on arms supplies to Rwanda, note that:

A $6 million contract between Egypt and Rwanda in March 1992, with Rwanda’s payment guaranteed by a French bank [the state-owned Crédit Lyonnais], included 60-mm and 82-mm mortars, 16,000 mortar shells, 122-m D-30 howitzers, 3,000 artillery shells, rocket-propelled grenades, plastic

\textsuperscript{38} Morris & Scharf, The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, 1998 p52
\textsuperscript{40} Human Rights Watch World Report 1994 (events of 1993), New York: HRW December 1993, p38
explosives, antipersonnel land mines, and more than three million rounds of small arms ammunition.41

Mobutu's Zaire was key in this respect. At France's request, the late Marshal-President's Presidential Guard had been in the frontline in repelling the first RPF offensive; and Zaire remained an indispensable supply route for weapons up to, including and subsequent to the Rwandan weapons state's recourse to genocide. (Indeed, the significance of Mobutu's Zaire as a source of regional instability, comparable to that of apartheid South Africa, explains the subsequent imperative for post-genocide Rwanda and other threatened states to cooperate in its destruction in 1997.42)

A major UN-commissioned report on the international response to the Rwandan war concluded that: 'The influx of weapons from foreign sources to the Rwandese government as well as to the RPF contributed significantly to the civil war... as well as to the massacres in 1994.'43 Goose and Smith concur that 'Governments that supplied weapons and otherwise supported those forces [responsible for the genocide] bear some responsibility for needless civilian deaths.'44

41 Stephen D. Goose (Washington Director of the Human Rights Watch Arms Project) and Frank Smyth (author of the Arms Project's report 'Arming Rwanda'), 'Arming Genocide in Rwanda', Foreign Affairs September/October 1994
42 See Mel McNulty, 'The collapse of Zaire: implosion, revolution or external sabotage?', The Journal of Modern African Studies 37:1, March 1999
43 Steering Committee of Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda (JEEAR), The International Response to Conflict and Genocide: Lessons from the Rwanda Experience, JEEAR: Copenhagen March 1996
44 Goose and Smith in Foreign Affairs Sept/Oct 1994; they reinforce their point by describing how: 'In March 1993, following the release of a report detailing the massacre of several thousand unarmed Tutsi civilians between 1990 and 1993, Belgium withdrew its ambassador, Johan Swinnen, for two weeks to protest the abuses. In contrast, France apologized for them. Said French Ambassador Jean-Michel Marlaud, "There are violations by the Rwandan Army, more because of a lack of control by the government, rather than the will of the government." Hutu leaders got the message that they could get away with genocide facilitated by foreign arms.'
Training

For the duration of Opération Noroît, French personnel were directly responsible, through arming and training, for the exponential growth of the FAR, which swelled from 5,200-strong in 1990 to 35,000 in 1993. Eventually, the deputy military attaché at the French embassy, Lt.-Col. Chollet, was made special military advisor to the President and given overall command of operations. A Frenchman was thus the de facto chief-of-staff of the FAR.45 This extraordinary development of the FAR is comparable in modern history, in scale, expense and inefficiency, to the eventually fruitless American backing of the South Vietnamese Army.46

Security assistance - training of the gendarmerie - was the only aspect of French military support that did not breach the terms of France’s own military assistance agreement, although training of Rwandan military personnel and military intelligence operatives began in 1990, whereas the amendments to the 1975 agreement, extending France’s training remit to include the army, were not ratified until 1992, a largely symbolic post-hoc attempt to make legal a de facto-illegal - military intervention.

The Quilès Commission heard testimony from military personnel, supported by sometime advisor to the Defence Ministry Gérard Prunier, that despite accusations that French forces had colluded in the training of militias - and statements by FAR commander and leading génocidaire Colonel Théoneste Bagosora that he met regularly with a French military coopérant officer - this was not the case.

45 In its conclusion, the report of the Quilès Commission asks: ‘Comment la France a-t-elle pu en février-mars 1993 en arriver à ce point d’engagement qui conduit [un] certain militaire français à considérer qu’à travers la mission d’assistance opérationnelle qu’il mène il dirige et commande indirectement une armée, en l’occurrence celle d’un Etat étranger?’

Comme l’a souligné Gérard Prunier..., “il ne s’agissait pas de dire, comme on a pu le lire, que la France avait préparé le génocide et délibérément formé les miliciens pour leur permettre de tuer les Tutsis; en revanche, elle avait effectivement entraîné des miliciens qui ont participé au génocide sans avoir pris conscience, bêtise ou naïveté, de ce que représentait son action.” [...] Le Colonel Jean-Jacques Maurin [adjoint opérations de l’attaché de défense at the French embassy in Kigali, April 1992 to 14 April 1994] a confirmé de façon la plus catégorique que jamais au cours des réunions d’état-major auxquelles il avait assisté il n’avait été fait allusion devant lui à un équipement de milices.47

This defence - of naivety or simply ingenuousness - was possibly the weakest offered to defend French complicity in the training of génocidaires. In an article headlined ‘Militiaman claims France trained Rwanda’s killers’ - on the day French troops officially re-entered Rwanda under the terms of the Opération Turquoise ‘humanitarian’ mandate [See Chapter 6], Guardian journalist Mark Huband reported an interview with Janvier Africa, by then in hiding, in which it was claimed that: ‘French military advisers showed Hutu death squads how to throw knives and assemble guns supplied to the Rwandan government’. Africa, a journalist and son of a Rwandan diplomat (well-connected to the Akazu), was arrested in September 1992 after he wrote an article which claimed that death squads were responsible for assassinations. He told the Fédération Internationale des Ligues des Droits de l’Homme (FIDH) investigators how:

We had two French military who helped train the Interahamwe. A lot of other Interahamwe were sent for training in Egypt. The French military taught us how to catch people and tie them. It was at the Afficher Central base in the centre of Kigali. It’s where people were tortured. That’s where the French military office was.

At the camp I saw the French show Interahamwe how to throw knives and how to assemble and disassemble guns. It was the French who showed us how to do that - a French major - during a total of four months training for weeks at a time between February 1991 and January 1992.

The French also went with us Interahamwe to Mount Kigali, where they gave us training with guns. We didn’t know how to use the arms which had been brought from France.

In early 1992 we did our first killing. Around 70 of us went to Ruhengeri to kill Tutsis from the Bagogwe clan [sic]. We killed about 10,000 over one

month, from our base at the Mukamira military camp at Ruhengeri. Two weeks later we went to Bugosera, where we killed about 5,000 people.

This account of the massacre of the Bagogwe is corroborated by Jean Carbonare’s interview with Africa, broadcast on BBC Panorama in August 1995, by the International Commission of Enquiry (FIDH) 1993 report, and by Human Rights Watch. Amnesty’s 1992 report states: ‘Many extrajudicial executions reportedly followed the FPR’s brief occupation of Ruhengeri town in January. Hundreds of Tutsi, mostly members of the Bagogwe clan, were killed by government soldiers or Hutu assisting them. Government appeals to the civilian population to prevent FPR attacks appeared to be interpreted by some Hutu as a call to attack any Tutsi suspected of supporting the FPR.’

It is also alleged that summary executions were conducted at military camps where French personnel of the Mission militaire de coopération were based; Carbonare attested to having visited Bigogwe camp in north-western Rwanda, where: ‘...civilians were brought by the truckload. They were tortured and killed.’ The International Commission of Investigation’s report, published in March 1993, condemned ‘genocidal practices in Rwanda’ and ‘the responsibility of the Rwandan authorities to the highest level in massacres’. It also corroborated the testimony that French instructors were based at Bigogwe.

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50 Frenchman Jean Carbonare is a veteran human rights activist, one of the first to expose and denounce the use of torture by the French army during the Algerian war, and is co-founder of the Fédération Internationale des Ligues des Droits de l’Homme. Although now in his 70s, he has worked in Rwanda for CLADHO (Coalition des Ligues et Associations des Droits de l’Homme) since 1994, and is an advisor to Rwandan president Pasteur Bizimungu. In this latter role, his integrity has been attacked by several of his compatriots, and by Libération’s US-born Africa specialist Stephen Smith. Smith in turn has been criticised by Paris-based human rights organisations, notable Agir Ici/Survie, for his sometimes poorly-substantiated attacks on the current Rwandan government, and the comfort drawn from these attacks by the Former Government of Rwanda (FGOR) in exile and apologists for the ‘double genocide’ theory.
Participation

French troops were deployed in Kigali initially to evacuate French citizens, but remained for three years. During this time they maintained a visible presence in the city, manning checkpoints and carrying out joint patrols with the FAR. They also played a less visible support role at the front - overseeing artillery bombardments and, on at least one occasion discussed below, conducting a bombardment: at Byumba, far from where there were any French citizens to protect, in October 1990.

French officers also interrogated - or assisted in the interrogation of - RPF prisoners; at a time when French personnel were reported to be involved in 'strong-arm' interrogations of RPF prisoners and suspects. Amnesty International's 1992 report on conditions of detention and use of torture in Rwanda states: 'Torture, which was widespread in the aftermath of the mass arrests of October 1990, continued to be reported. Detainees held by the Service central de renseignements (SCR) ... and at the gendarmerie detention centres and the armed forces' headquarters, both in Kigali, were reportedly beaten with electric wire, hoe handles and other implements, given electric shocks and made to drink urine and eat vomit. Prisoners in military custody were also reportedly tied in a deliberately painful and sometimes permanently damaging position, with the arms tied tightly together above the elbows, behind the back. Political prisoners reportedly continued to be held in unlit cells (known as cachots noirs...) in Ruhengeri prison and in small, poorly lit punishment cells in Kigali Central Prison.'

The author was shown evidence by Carbonare of French personnel in the company of Rwandan militiamen; a photograph showing apparently French troops (i.e. military advisors) running alongside Interahamwe members was submitted by the Rwandan government to the Quilès Commission in 1998.

51 Interviews with eyewitnesses / genocide survivors, Kigali October 1996
52 By Survie, FIDH, and RFI journalist Christophe Boisbouvier (see Ch.6)
French personnel, involved with the FAR at every level at this period, could not have been unaware of these practices. Prunier supports these reports, while maintaining that French troops were not directly involved in combat; his account of the operational brief of Noroit’s personnel is as follows:

They were not directly involved in combat duties, but they performed a variety of tasks which not only freed Rwandese troops for frontline duty but also bolstered their morale and increased the efficiency of the FAR as a fighting machine. They took care of the airport guard and logistics (large amounts of weapons and equipment were being flown in), looked after the government’s helicopters and when necessary flew them, organised artillery positioning and ammunition supply, and ensured radio communications. In addition, they undertook rather more sinister duties such as supervising Rwandese military security operations (including the interrogation of detained suspects) and even manning roadblocks. For the men of “Noroît”, the point of their presence in Rwanda was clear: short of direct infantry combat, they had to help the Forces Armées Rwandaises in every possible way in winning the war they were fighting against the invading RPF.\(^{54}\)

Despite Prunier’s assertion, Radio France Internationale (RFI) journalist Christophe Boisbouvier told a London conference in May 1995, ‘Non seulement des officiers français vont former des soldats, des officiers, des artilleurs rwandais, les FAR mais - et c’est maintenant pratiquement avéré grâce à un certain nombre de recoupements, notamment de mes confrères - ils vont participer aux combats à Ruhengeri, à Byumba, entre octobre 1990 et février/mars 1993, à chaque offensive FPR.\(^{55}\)

Several sources now concur that French personnel directed and even conducted artillery bombardments; Prunier himself tells in a footnote how:

In June 1992, while on a research trip to the RPF-held area around Byumba, [I] was caught in a Rwandese government artillery bombardment. From inside the shelter, the RPF fighters could tune in on the FAR frequency and it was possible to follow quite clearly on the radio the orders given by the

\(^{54}\) Prunier 1995/1998 pp110-111

officer commanding the government battery. They were given in French, with an accent that could not conceivably have been that of a native African.\footnote{Gérard Prunier, \textit{The Rwanda Crisis}, London: Hurst 1995/1998, note 34, p110}

This account is supported by Colonel Marcel Gatsinzi (formerly of the FAR, integrated into and now deputy Chief-of-Staff of the \textit{Armée Patriotique Rwandaise}), and by Noroit personnel, who told how they had set up, loaded and aimed the artillery pieces, although ‘c’était quand-même eux qui appuyaient sur le bouton!’\footnote{Col. Marcel Gatsinzi, interview, Kigali November 1996; Noroit personnel, interviewed by Stephen Bradshaw \textit{, BBC Panorama ‘The Bloody Tricolour’}, August 1995}

The report of the Quilès commission accepts the testimony of the military personnel who were prepared to offer it their depositions - without cross-examination - that French troops did not participate in combat. However, despite their careful diplomatic language, it is clear the parliamentarians cannot avoid the conclusion that the FAR could not have conducted bombardments alone:

\begin{quote}
La Mission a reçu des informations selon lesquelles les militaires français étaient très fortement impliqués sur le terrain, qu’ils se disaient que l’ennemi, venu d’Ouganda, menaçait les ressortissants français et que, dans un tel contexte, étant donné la faible compétence de l’armée rwandaise, il n’est pas absurde de penser que certains aient pu aider à régler les tirs de certains armes d’artillerie comme les mortiers… […] Certaines de leurs missions ont dépassé… le cadre habituel des opérations d’aide et d’assistance à des forces armées étrangères.

\end{quote}
Guerre secrète

The role of military intelligence and special services is by its nature unclear, but Captain Paul Barril’s account below, of French personnel attacking the RPF from helicopters, does not sound implausible. Covert operations were facilitated by some creative accounting with troop numbers. Throughout the period 1990-92, official reports numbered French ‘support ground troops’ (i.e. in addition to advisors, trainers and airborne support personnel) at the 1990 figure of 600, although a serving colonel subsequently boasted how, by playing on the dates and rotation figures of various units, it was possible to keep up to 1,100 men in Rwanda while admitting only 600 to the press.59 During the February 1993 RPF offensive, France officially had 680 troops in Rwanda including paratroopers.

The role of Captain Paul Barril60, security advisor to Habyarimana (or more specifically, his wife Agathe, reputed power behind the throne, matriarch of the ‘clan de Madame’ and focus of the Akazu, who, with her family and other associates was evacuated by French troops of Opération Amaryllis a few days after her husband’s assassination), possibly from as early as 199061, is made unclear both by its covert nature, and by Barril’s penchant for hyperbole. However, his account of the use of French-piloted helicopter gunships to destroy RPF supply lines early in the campaign, redolent of *Apocalypse Now*, is supported by those on the receiving end.62 Barril gives an enthusiastic description of the role of France’s special military services:

> France’s official special services blocked in ‘90 the attack by the RPF terrorists and Uganda, a DGSE [*Direction générale de la Sécurité extérieure*, French military intelligence] job. A remarkable job which was a source of great pride in this first phase of the war. There were heros on the French side who will

60 Former commander of the Groupe d’Intervention de la Gendarmerie Nationale (GIGN), forced to resign in 1983 after the false arrests and evidence-tampering in the ‘Affaire des Irlandais de Vincennes’, subsequently proprietor of his own private security firm SECRETS.
62 Interviews: Tito Rutaremara, Major Sam Kaka, Major-General Paul Kagame, Kigali October-December 1996.
never be known, extraordinary stories of guys who took crazy initiatives, who went out and blasted all around them with just a few helicopters and a few guns. There is material for a book on the heroism of the Secret Services in Rwanda, against Uganda and the RPF... which explains their hatred for France.63

Similarly, the military fanzine Raids Magazine suggested that: ‘Francophonie has lost a battle, but not the war ...[I]n Rwanda France, without participating, was present at the seizure of power by the RPF, a rebellion which it had actively combatted from 1990 to 1993.’64 Tito Rutaramera, a leading RPF tactician, explained that the use by the FAR of French helicopters forced the RPF to abandon their conventional advance on Kigali from their northern stronghold around Byumba, and to adopt the tactics of the guerre mobile.65 This was most effectively demonstrated by the FPR’s successful capture and subsequent retreat from Ruhengeri in February 1993. Again it is apparent that French intervention prolonged and altered the nature of the war

Result

Creation of a counter-insurgent weapons state

Initially, the Rwandan case was not unique. Most analysts would agree with René Wadlow that the recurring causes of intrastate conflict on the African continent may be summarised as one or a combination of a struggle for political power, a struggle over basic resources, or a struggle for political participation in a multi-ethnic state. However, when the catalyst of militarisation is added to this

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63Captain Paul Barril, former head of the GIGN (Groupe d'intervention de la Gendarmerie nationale), and currently director of the ‘private security firm’ SECRETS (Société d'études, de conception et de réalisation d'équipements techniques et de sécurité), one of five constituent companies of Groupe Barril Sécurité, interviewed in Playboy (Paris), Dec. 1994
64Raids Magazine (Paris)101, Oct. 1994, p32. Raids, a militaria fanzine similar to Soldier of Fortune, cannot be said to reflect an official French military point of view; but its celebration of the combat role of French forces in Rwanda, and criticism of the perceived loss of the Rwandan war, is not unrepresentative of military thinking.
65Interview with the author, Kigali, October 1996
powder-keg, the situation becomes correspondingly explosive, and locked into a vicious circle. René Wadlow explains that: ‘Militarisation is part of a cycle which leads to the impoverishment of the state, to aggravated debt concerns, to an ever narrower political base requiring ever more violence to stay in power.’

The Rwandan hard state’s response to the problems of exclusion and reintegration it had itself created was unrelentingly military. Faced with a ceasefire and a negotiated settlement - under the terms of the externally-brokered Arusha accords - the regime sought instead, through propaganda, ethnicisation and preparations for genocide, to restore the status quo ante. There was no room for the political approach to counter-insurgency, as this would imply a political solution. The now militarised Rwandan weapons state, and those it used to exert its power, had become victims of the zero-sum situation they had created; their only course, it was felt, was outright ‘victory’ through destruction of all opposition.

France failed to apply the conditionality criteria which President Mitterrand himself had announced at the 1990 Franco-African summit at La Baule, which linked the continuation of bilateral aid, including military assistance, to progress by aid recipients towards democratisation. These criteria, however, failed to address the case of states where there was no consent over the natural electorate or the democratic unit, and where political power, as with that monopolised by Habyarimana since 1973, was dependent on the permanent disenfranchisement of refugees. That is, Habyarimana could count on the at least tacit support of the majority of Rwanda’s population, because he had excluded, killed or exiled any who might oppose him.

Second bifurcation

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It not surprising that many voices within Rwanda did not share this analysis. Demands for ‘democratisation’ from Western backers had not been well received by many of Habyarimana’s supporters including, it is suggested, those making positive-sounding announcements of reforms. Even the tentative move to multipartyism in 1991 was perceived as a sell-out. The sectarian hard core, adopting the ethnic label ‘Hutu Power’, used their inflammatory press, the airwaves and public meetings to demonise the RPF and the internal opposition, and incite violence. Léon Mugesera, MRND vice-president in Habyarimana’s home region of Gisenyi, told party militants in November 1992: ‘The opposition parties have plotted with the enemy [...] They have plotted to undermine our armed forces. [...] The law is quite clear on this point: “Any person who is guilty of acts aiming at sapping the morale of the armed forces will be condemned to death.” What are we waiting for? [...] The fatal mistake we made in 1959 was to let them [the Tutsi] get out. [...] They belong in Ethiopia and we are going to find them a shortcut to get there by throwing them into the Nyabarongo river. I must insist on this point. We have to act. Wipe them all out!’

The role of the Rwandan media - as propaganda organs which gave voice to and mirrored the hardening of the state and its capitulation to its extremes - was key in reinforcing sectarianism and promoting a sense of crisis and siege which in turn contributed to the sabotaging of the Arusha peace process, and damned compromise as surrender. This role has already been examined and documented in two excellent accounts. Suffice it to note here that a common theme invoked by all anti-RPF voices, locally and internationally, was that the movement was

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p.96


68 Quoted in ibid.; see also African Rights, Rwanda: Death, Despair and Defiance, London 1995

anti-democratic, driven by a thirst for revenge and, by implication, more likely to perpetrate acts of genocide than the state. These arguments were given credence in Rwandan ears by their repetition in the foreign press, creating a vicious circle of black propaganda. The very ethnic labelling of the RPF as ‘Tutsi’ was at source a disingenuous attempt to drive a wedge between the movement and its natural allies, the internal Rwandan opposition.

Extremism was organised into a political party - the Coalition pour la Défense de la République (CDR) - the inoffensive title of little relevance to its role as a pressure group against concession by the regime, and as a political platform for the organisation of paramilitary militias (milices). These were to be the footsoldiers of the genocide, organised country-wide and recruited primarily among unemployed, disaffected youth, and deliberately cultivating an image of machismo, violence and bigotry. Although operating as paramilitaries outside of official state control, the militias were coordinated and trained by senior military figures, drawn largely from the Presidential Guard (Garde présidentielle, GP), who had themselves been trained by the French military coopérants.

The principal and most infamous of the militias is the Interahamwe. African Rights’ account details the origins and consolidation of these Rwandan Tonton Macoutes: ‘The “professional interahamwe” - those who received training and uniforms - are divided into various sections. These included the AbaZulu, Inyange and Inkerakubanguka. The training was carried out by members of the Presidential Guard based at Kanombe barracks in Kigali, who had in turn been trained by the French. In early 1994 their numbers were estimated at about 1,700.’

Overall, the militias were estimated to number 50,000, approximately the strength of the combined regular armed forces (FAR, Gendarmerie and GP).

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They were armed with some AK-47s and a large number of grenades, but the principal weapons used were basic agricultural implements: machetes, known as *panga* in Kiswahili. As the war seemed lost, the militias' discipline collapsed, and they broke up into looting gangs. But during the key stages of the genocide, they were coordinated by the state through its tightly-organised local government hierarchy. Survivors have emphasised the key role of *préfets*, *bourgmestres* and local councillors, who received the orders from Kigali, mobilised the local Gendarmerie and Interahamwe, ordered the peasants to join in the manhunts and called for FAR support if the victims put up too much resistance.

It is important in passing to address another common misapprehension about the Rwandan conflict: that the genocide of April to June 1994 was in some way spontaneous. Its planning and, in early 1994, its imminence, were clearly signalled in advance, by both sides in the war, and by international observers. As early as August 1992 when, under international pressure, Habyarimana and his government agreed to a ceasefire with the RPF and consented to externally-brokered negotiations, the dynamic of the subsequent genocide was already apparent.

In February 1993, a lightning assault by the RPF likely to reach Kigali was halted only with the support of French troops. France subsequently reinforced its military deployment, and its military support for the régime continued unchecked. Prunier notes that:

> Paris found itself backing an ailing dictatorship in a tiny distant country producing only bananas and a declining coffee crop without even asking for political reform as a price for its support. This commitment was to have catastrophic consequences because, as the situation radicalised, the Rwandese leadership kept believing that *no matter what it did*, French support would always be forthcoming. And it had no valid reasons for believing otherwise.

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A new ceasefire was agreed in March 1993, and new negotiations began at Arusha. UN Security Council resolution 812 envisaged the interposition of an international peacekeeping force (UNAMIR I). The RPF demanded the withdrawal of all foreign (i.e. French) troops, and official French troop numbers were reduced from that summer. The ‘all military’ strategy gave way slowly to a politico-military strategy which sought to encourage the Rwandan regime to ‘democratise’, basing its legitimacy on its in-built ethnic majority and defeating or at least undermining the RPF’s claims via the ballot box. This could be seen to harmonise with an international strategy of reconciling the regime and the RPF in a power-sharing administration under the Arusha accords; or could alternatively be viewed as a disingenuous attempt to shore up the Habyarimana dictatorship through conferring on it a spurious legitimacy based on a sectarian headcount. By this logic, Habyarimana, Hutu, supported by the [ethnic] majority in the country, also Hutu, and - democracy being the will of the greater number - the Rwandan regime might be made to appear democratic.

On 4 August 1993, the signing of the Arusha accords seemed to herald the end of the Rwandan crisis. Most reassuring for Tutsis and opposition supporters was the agreement that a battalion of 200 RPF troops would be stationed in Kigali; the other terms of the accords were: a) a commitment to uphold human rights and rule of law; and b) an agreement on power sharing, which would bring the civilian opposition into government, with all government institutions - presidency, cabinet, national assembly, judiciary, civil service and security forces - to be reformed. Many powers were removed from the presidency, and the post of prime minister awarded, for a transitional period, to moderate opposition leader Faustin Twagiramungu. This, by any criteria, was a good deal for the RPF, but also seemed to be the only way the regime could, on the Mobutu model, be seen to be democratising while ensuring its hold on the key levers of power. However, the hard weapons state was already too sclerotic to compromise; it
was not long before Habyarimana dismissed the treaty he had signed at Arusha as ‘a useless scrap of paper.’

Christopher Clapham has identified the inherent flaw in the Arusha process; it was based on a Western-imposed model of peace-making, an ‘essentially mechanistic approach... which readily overlooked the need for any successful settlement to rest on a basic political formula which enjoyed the active support of the key parties which were needed to implement it, and which could where necessary be imposed on recalcitrants who might be tempted to disrupt it.’ Recalcitrants were to be found not only on the Rwandan side. *Le Monde* reported in early June 1994 that although the government of Prime Minister Michel Rocard, which was to lose power in 1993, supported negotiation and an agreed settlement between Habyarimana and the RPF - the tendency which supported the Arusha process - there were other actors who did not:

[L]: “establishment” militaire n’a pas suivi: les militaires français, qui étaient contre l’embargo sur les armes décrété par la France il y a un an, le sont d’ailleurs encore aujourd’hui. “Il existe deux écoles en France, explique-t-on dans un cabinet ministériel, d’un côté, il y a ceux qui veulent toujours qu’on réarme les Forces armées rwandaises, de l’autre, il y a tous ceux qui pensent que rien ne peut être réglé sans le FPR.”

The French military in Rwanda could operate largely free of political control, and ‘back-channel’ messages were passed from the Military Cooperation Mission at the French embassy, and from French military personnel assigned to the FAR, to senior Rwandan military and government figures, assuring them that, despite public pronouncements about UN sanctions, or about demilitarisation and further military aid being conditional on implementation of the Arusha accords, French military support would always be forthcoming. This military opposition to negotiation, official government policy by 1993, was reinforced by elements

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73 Marie-Pierre Subtil, ‘La France s’efface au Rwanda’, *Le Monde* 7 June 1994
within the Élysée and the Quai. Georges Martres, French ambassador to Kigali from 1989 to 1993 (and hence signatory of the 1992 additional protocols to the 1975 Franco-Rwandan military cooperation accord) was considered, like many French diplomats wooed and won by their African clients, to be as much Kigali’s ambassador to Paris; his telegrams to Paris offered unqualified support to Habyarimana and played down reports - including that of the International Commission of Enquiry - that the regime was committing gross violations of human rights. Martres was so appreciated by Habyarimana that he was honoured - Grand Officier de l’Ordre des Mille Collines - and a request that he be retained in post despite reaching retirement age was sent by the Rwandan president to Mitterrand. The request was unsuccessful, although Martres was replace by another inconditionnel du président Habyarimana, Ambassador Jean-Michel Marlaud, who closed the French embassy on 12 April 1994 having ensured the evacuation of Mme Agathe Habyarimana and key members of the Akazu, but leaving the embassy’s local staff to be killed by the militias.

Presidential advisor Paul Dijoud, who met the RPF negotiators Jacques Bihozagara (the RPF representative in Brussels) and Claude Dusaidi (RPF representative at the UN), told both men how France and the FAR would ‘casser les reins au FPR’, and that ‘France would never let the RPF take Kigali’.74 Dijoud’s submission to the Quilès Commission was more measured, telling how, in no small measure due to the personal relationship between Mitterrand and the Rwandan president (and their sons’ business dealings), support for Habyarimana continued despite the sounding of alarm bells. ‘[L]e président de la République française, son entourage immédiat [viz. la Cellule africaine], le ministre des affaires étrangères, ont toujours eu la conviction que “le président Habyarimana était un moindre mal et, dans une certaine mesure, le début d’un bien”.’75

74 Jacques Bihozagara, Ministère du Sport et de la Jeunesse, and Claude Dusaidi, advisor to the Vice-President and Minister of Defence, interviews, Kigali November 1996
75 Paul Dijoud, Rapport de la Mission Quilès 1998
There were no voices raised - with the possible exception of General Jean Varret\(^7\) - in opposition to French military support for the Rwanda regime, during and subsequent to Opération Noroît; and this despite the International Commission’s investigation and publicising of that regime’s gross human rights violations, despite Habyarimana’s dismissal of the Arusha process, despite the unconcealed training of militias and arming of the population, despite the alerting in early 1994 of preparations for genocide.

In sum, French-sponsored militarisation of Rwandan society contributed to the intransigence of its rulers. The failure to make continued support, especially military, conditional on human rights or anti-sectarian criteria, scuppered the Arusha peace process. The maintenance of French support for the regime despite Habyarimana’s subsequent dismissal of the Arusha accord convinced the regime’s extremists that French support would always be forthcoming. This belief in continued, unconditional French support was sustained by back-channel messages from Paris, particularly from military figures within the Mission militaire de coopération who had both professional and personal interests in defending the regime and their protégés in the FAR. Such unaccountability points to a larger failure of democratic checks and balances characteristic of French African policy. Asked what he thought of the role of French soldiers in Rwanda, former Prime Minster Michel Rocard made clear to whom he apportioned blame for the ‘dishonour’ arising from France’s involvement:

> Au-delà d’éventuelles bavures toujours possibles, il est évident qu’ils n’ont fait qu’appliquer les décisions du pouvoir civil [i.e. at the Elysée, as Matignon and presumably the Quai had been ‘short-circuited’ out or the decision-making process]. Or, comme les politiques ne veulent pas assumer leurs responsabilités, on va retomber sur les soldats. Il ne faut pas jouer à cela. Il ne

faut pas déshonorer l’armée pour le simple fait qu’elle a rempli les missions que lui étaient confiées par le pouvoir. Ce n’est pas l’armée française qui est en cause.\textsuperscript{77}

On 6 April 1994 Habyarimana, attending a regional summit in Dar-es-Salaam, seemed prepared under enormous international pressure to concede power-sharing with the RPF. Returning to Kigali on the night of April 6 in his personal jet (a gift from François Mitterrand), Habyarimana was killed along with passengers including his Burundian counterpart Cyprien Ntaryamira, and three French crew, when the plane was shot down as it came in to land. Although shrouded in conspiracy theories, most commentators now agree that Habyarimana was killed most probably by members of his own Presidential Guard, fearful of the betrayal which compromise represented for Hutu Power, and backed by its extremist exponents within the \textit{akazu} including, some argue, Habyarimana’s wife Agathe. Within an hour, \textit{Interahamwe} had erected roadblocks in Kigali; within a day, most major opposition politicians had been killed - including the prime minister designate Agathe Uwilingiyimana, and ten Belgian paratroops of UNAMIR charged with protecting her. The machinery of the long-planned genocide moved smoothly into gear.

There has as yet been no refutation of the damning reports in the post-genocide period 1994-96, quoted above, which pointed to external arming and other military support for the Habyarimana regime as a major contributory factor to the genocide. The outbreak of war in 1990 added a final catalyst to a pre-existing extremism, which was then harnessed by the state and used as a means of prosecuting the war. The consolidation of extremist forces, bolstered by the rapid militarisation of state and society, precluded a political or reformist reaction to insurgency. By the time Habyarimana signed the Arusha accords - which were to prove his death warrant - militarisation was too far advanced and the state was

\textsuperscript{77} Rocard in Libération 9 July 1998
too hard for reform to be possible. Habyarimana became a victim of his own propaganda; once he was seen to compromise, to bow under irresistible foreign pressure, he was eliminated by his own deliberately-cultivated hard-line inner circle and troops. Rich and Stubbs have identified this phenomenon in the counter-insurgent state: ‘[I]n many military-dominated regimes factional differences may emerge within the officer corps between hard-liners opposed to any concessions and reformers who urge that victory cannot be obtained by military means alone.’

Habyarimana was at best a reluctant reformer. He had believed, until shortly before his death, that he could have weapons without reform; and had been sustained in this belief by his French military advisors. Externally-sponsored militarisation of Rwanda was a key factor, some would argue the key factor in the intransigence of that state’s rulers. The failure to make continued support, especially military, conditional on human rights or anti-sectarian criteria scuppered the Arusha peace process. The maintenance of French support for the regime despite Habyarimana’s subsequent dismissal of the Arusha accord convinced the regime’s extremists that such support would always be forthcoming. Christopher Clapham describes this radicalisation of extremist regimes through external backing:

[A]n apparently inexhaustible supply of arms and aid from an all-powerful external patron encouraged rulers to suppose that their own hegemonic ambitions were ultimately unstoppable, and that they could therefore proceed with the establishment of a monopoly state which need take no account of internal opposition or the indigenous characteristics of the societies which they governed ... Ultimately, it was not the imported armaments which conferred power on the government, but the indigenous people who had to use them. When they failed, it failed.”

Habyarimana’s principal legacy, however, was the creation of the militias which thrived in the climate of state-sponsored terror, and prosecuted genocide with efficiency and zeal. Rapid militarisation - the creation of a weapons state - made a hard state even harder, to the extent that its leader was eclipsed - and assassinated - as a result of state-sponsored warlordism. The weapons state’s tactics were assassination and genocide; but once these very tactics led to the removal of the foreign props upon which the weapons state depended, its defeat was swift.

Conclusion

France’s first direct military intervention in Rwanda, *Opération Noroît* (1990-93), was justified as ‘intervention by invitation’, i.e. to honour a treaty obligation to an ally. However, the operation soon exceeded the terms even of France’s own military assistance accord with the Habyarimana regime. French support for the FAR stopped two major RPF offensives, in October 1990 and February 1993; *Opération Noroît* intervened in Rwandan history and changed the power balance in favour of the government, arming and training that government’s armed forces while the militarisation of Rwandan society proceeded apace. There was ample warning that the FAR was training militias and arming the population, while military and political actors - some known: Paul Barril, Paul Dijoud, Ambassador Georges Martres - assured that government that French support would never waver.

Any attempt to understand the failure of the international response (notably UN) to the crisis since 1990 in the African Great Lakes region must firstly identify, and then separate, the factors which created the conflict from those which sustained it. Analysis of the former often overshadows the latter, to the extent that the prolongation of a war is explained away in the same terms as its origins. Such an
approach may result in a failure to focus sufficient attention on the unilateral support role or active participation of a powerful external actor (which may not have been apparent when the conflict began), and a subsequent failure to expose the paradox whereby that same actor is expected to participate in peacemaking between the principal warring parties. The Rwandan civil war of 1990-94 demonstrates that external (i.e. extra-regional) support for one belligerent was a major contributory factor to the prolongation and exacerbation of the conflict, particularly when it became apparent that that belligerent believed the external support to be open-ended and unconditional.

The Rwandan war demands analysis as an intrastate conflict greatly exacerbated by the direct and sustained participation of a powerful external actor, not only through its support for one belligerent, but also through its own role as a combatant. The inability of international organisations to respond effectively to the Rwandan crisis, even when faced with the UN charter’s singular imperative demanding the prevention of genocide, can thereby be explained by a particular failure (or reluctance) to identify this external role, without which the conflict in Rwanda could have been briefer, less bloody and less destabilising for the entire region.

In identifying France as a key player in sustaining the conflict, it is not intended to suggest that France lit the fuse in Rwanda, but that it built the powder-keg, provided the powder, and increased supplies without quibble and with seeming disregard for the obvious shortening of the fuse. Prunier, in his deposition to the Quilès commission as in the conclusion of his book, stops short of condemning French complicity in the genocide but reiterates that French policy was characterised by stupidity and (most surprisingly) naïvety:

These hapless foreigners, for their own mythical reasons, contributed to poisoning further an already disastrous situation. But they did not cause it... However, what the French did was terrible mostly because it fitted like the last piece in the jigsaw puzzle of the Rwandese political madness. Military
and political pressures had combined to bring the Habyarimana regime to repentance. Arusha was an admission of defeat for Mme Habyarimana and her family, but there was one last card to play: blow it all to smithereens. And since at least some of the French had also seen Arusha as a defeat, they would support the cleaning up.80

Former Premier Michel Rocard, one of the few dissenting voices at the Quilès Commission, suggests, like Prunier, that French support was driven by Francophonie, albeit ‘une vision folle et dévastatrice de la francophonie’:

C’est le thème de l’agression extérieure: derrière le FPR, il y avait l’Ouganda anglophone et les Anglo-Saxons. Cette explication est totalement déséquilibrée. C’est un peu comme si l’on accusait la 2e DB de Leclerc d’avoir agressé la France, parce que, en 1944, elle était insérée dans un dispositif américain. Du point de vue de la moralité internationale, au Rwanda, on était en présence d’un régime oppresseur combattu par ceux qu’il persécutait, les Tutsis, et d’un nombre significatif de Hutus qui désapprouvaient ses méthodes. Pour la France, tout cela confine au déshonneur.81

External military support for the regime, in the form of arms supplies and sales, training, and direct military intervention, was perceived as open-ended and unconditional. This perception reinforced extremists to the extent that there was no room for the state to move from a military to a political counter-insurgency strategy; any form of compromise (such as that represented by the 1993 Arusha accords) was deemed betrayal by the state’s military and the unaccountable militias it had created. Accordingly, assassination of any potential agents of compromise, and the subsequent implementation of a long-planned genocide, were perceived by newly dominant warlords as appropriate and effective responses to their enemies’ political and military successes. Such a response was intended to eliminate all the state’s opponents of any ethnicity who could constitute a support base for opposition, by applying an extreme counter-insurgency strategy; genocide, inverting the Maoist principle, was an attempt to remove the water from the fish.

81 Michel Rocard, deposition to the Quilès Commission, quoted in Libération 9 July 1998
Rapid, externally-sponsored militarisation of an already authoritarian state (built on sectarianism, discrimination and enforced exiling or elimination of its opponents) acted as a catalyst for the hardening of the regime, and the state-sponsored emergence of extremist militias and assassination squads. The militias which largely implemented the genocide, though initially fostered by the regime, soon overtook its leader, President Juvenal Habyarimana, and became the principal source of organised violence. Genocide did not occur as result of a weak or collapsed state, but because the state was highly centralised, tightly controlled, and perceived as so strong by its extremists that, radicalised by rapid and seemingly unconditional militarisation, they believed that any means of which they were capable would be justified by the end: the restoration of the hard state. The Rwandan hard state collapsed when those very means - assassination and genocide - led to its abandonment by the external backers who had transformed it into a weapons state.

In our consideration of France’s subsequent reintervention in Rwanda in 1994, it will be argued that it resulted in a double discrediting: of France, the most prolific intervenor in post-colonial Africa and the external power most deeply implicated in the Great Lakes crisis; and of external military intervention itself as an appropriate response to inter-African conflict.
Chapter 6: French military intervention in Rwanda II: Opération Amaryllis, Opération Turquoise, 1994

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to consider France’s 1994 military interventions in Rwanda (Opérations Amaryllis and Turquoise) in light of: their theory, i.e. the shift of discourse and justification from old-style, mechanical intervention to new-style, ‘humanitarian’ intervention including the unprecedented seeking of a UN mandate to legitimise Turquoise; their practice, and the extent to which this complemented or contradicted the theory and justificatory discourse; and their effects and implications.

The Quai d’Orsay’s website (www.diplomatie.fr) offers the following on France’s role in Rwanda in its introductory synopsis of ‘la politique étrangère de la France’:

L’Afrique, continent sur lequel se déroule la plupart des crises, constitue une priorité. La France entretient des relations privilégiées avec de nombreux États africains (…) La France ne ménage pas ses efforts diplomatiques en vue de résoudre les conflits et les crises politiques qui affectent ces pays (…) A l’été 1994, elle s’est portée au secours des populations rwandaises menacées: elle a dépêché des forces chargées de créer une zone humanitaire sûre. L’opération Turquoise, autorisée par la résolution 929 du Conseil de sécurité, a ainsi permis de mettre des milliers de Rwandais à l’abri des combats et déclenché une mobilisation internationale.1

The perspective granted by even the few years since the genocide allows some of the key factors in this evolution to emerge from the misreporting, propaganda, accusation and counter-accusation which so distorted coverage of the Rwandan conflict. Tom Young’s introduction to his recent chapter on Mozambique may be applied with equal validity to an overview of events in Rwanda since 1990:
‘Much has been written... but much remains obscure. Worse, much has been deliberately obscured, not only by governments and political movements... but also by academics, commentators and experts of various stripes... This has meant that certain important questions have effectively been smothered either by ignoring them or by recycling hackneyed clichés in response to them.² Thus is coverage of and comment on events in Rwanda and its region most commonly couched in ethnic and quasi-racist terminology and frames of reference.³

It is intended here to consider France’s 1994 interventions not as factors external and unconnected to those events, but as key to the military and political evolution of the situation. The interventions were not, as often portrayed, belated and reluctant responses to humanitarian crises, but military support for one party to a conflict, decided with a clear geopolitical strategy in mind.

Context for reintervention

We have already considered the consolidation of political extremism in the Rwandan state between 1990 and 1994. By 1995, Belgian anthropologist Luc de Heusch could entitle his history of the country which witnessed one of the century’s three recognised genocides ‘A Republic Gone Mad’ (Une République

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³ We should also allow for the possibility of a deliberate agenda on the part of those with a vested interest in Western involvement in central Africa, at government, NGO or media level. One theory is that the Western media’s ethnicisation of the conflict justified Western intervention, and was perhaps so used deliberately. As a result, the following formula of cause and effect may be offered in response to prevalent interpretations of the media’s role in African conflict, and the ‘humanitarian intervention’ agenda: in response to a crisis, the media portrays the conflict as ethnic (i.e. a crisis not of our making, caused not by political or economic circumstances but by ancestral hatreds beyond our ken); a media focus on human suffering rather than its political causes provokes demands for a presumed apolitical response - to freeze the situation if not solve it - which equals forcible ‘humanitarian’ intervention; but intervention by a powerful state into a weak state (and particularly by European states in Africa) cannot be disinterested or free of the suspicion of neocolonialism. See Mel McNulty, ‘Media ethnicisation and the international response to war and genocide in Rwanda’ in T. Allen & J. Seaton eds., The Media of Conflict, London: Zed Books 1999
Devenue Folle); but are temporary national insanity or mass hysteria sufficient to explain the negative evolution of the Rwandan second republic? This was a sectarian, one-party, quasi-apartheid but largely stable regime, which in just three months killed a million of its own citizens. Prunier argues, in contradiction to the oxymoronic concept of 'genocidal anarchy', that: The genocide happened not because the state was weak, but on the contrary because it was so totalitarian and strong that it had the capacity to make its subjects obey absolutely any order, including one of mass slaughter.

Despite evidence which signalled the hardening of the regime, the eclipsing of Habyarimana by the akazu and the practical and ideological preparations for genocide, the policy and strategy of France – the most powerful and influential actor in the equation – continued to be driven by its opposition to an RPF victory. When the regime’s extremists - confident of continued French support allied with the indifference of the rest of the international community - still proved incapable of preventing their opponents’ victory through war or genocide, France’s strategy shifted: not to abandonment of those extremist allies, but to a new enthusiasm for implementation of the 1993 Arusha accords. However, a crucial factor in the unchecked hardening of the regime had been the failure of its principal sponsor, France, to make its continued support conditional on implementation of the power-sharing agreement; even when the late Rwandan president dismissed the accord as a ‘scrap of paper’, support did not waver.

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4 'Genocidal anarchy' and references to a central African 'heart of darkness' were common formulae in press coverage of events; see for example the Financial Times editorial on 29 July 1996, entitled 'Heart of Darkness', which warned: 'Once again the international community watches helplessly as an African state slides into genocidal anarchy... Two years ago in Rwanda the world was caught unawares by the sheer speed of the slaughter. That is one excuse we cannot give today in neighbouring Burundi'. [FT 29 July 1996]

Instead, a new smokescreen strategy was employed, a strategy which has proved successful to the extent that, without exception known to this author, histories of the Mitterrand presidency feature Rwanda as no more than a footnote; one otherwise useful assessment of Mitterrand’s foreign policy over his fourteen years in power concludes that, as far as Africa was concerned: ‘Mitterrand was probably not the right man to revolutionize affairs: he was content to fill a few gaps..., supporting shaky regimes put in place by newly-fledged democracies (such as in Gabon) [sic] or intervening on humanitarian grounds, as in Rwanda.’ Despite the volume and eloquence of criticism of France’s role, the notion that its intervention(s) in Rwanda was/were humanitarian is now, for many respected commentators, a matter of record.

This process of reinvention, moulded to fit events as 1994’s power-shift in central Africa became apparent, is now well-documented (thanks not least to the work of the Quilès Commission during 1998), and this chapter will proceed by assessing France’s 1994 interventions in Rwanda in terms of their theory and practice, with a view to supporting the conclusion that these interventions were rearguard actions, and that the new-style ‘humanitarian’ intervention Turquoise fits the pattern of attempts to determine the outcome of Rwanda’s four-year civil war through direct military support for one combatant, even while that combatant was in retreat. It will also be argued that contemporary international support for the concept of humanitarian intervention was used in an attempt to freeze the conflict at the point of its dénouement, and to force the victors and victims into an impossible power-sharing compromise with those very forces which had sought their annihilation.

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Amaryllis and post-Amaryllis, genocide

On 9 April 1994 - the third day of the genocide - over 500 troops of the 1er, 3ème and 8ème RPIMa (Régiment Parachutiste de l’Infanterie de Marine) - France’s permanent garrison in Africa - were flown to Rwanda from bases in the Central African Republic, Gabon and Chad. The troops were in place in Kigali within twelve hours of having been put on alert, highlighting, for the French army’s official journal *Terre Magazine*, ‘l’intérêt du prépositionnement des troupes françaises en Afrique pour une intervention rapide.’ They evacuated 1417 people, of whom 445 were French, to Bujumbura (Burundi) and Bangui (CAR). Cooperation Minister Michel Roussin stated: ‘Notre mission est une mission strictement humanitaire pour permettre aux ressortissants français de quitter le Rwanda.’ This textbook operation - codenamed *Amaryllis* - was a swift, effective military success, and the paratroopers left in under a week, on April 17th.

However, Amaryllis cannot be considered in isolation, particularly as it followed less than four months after the official conclusion of the three-year *Opération Noroît* in which many of the same troops of the African-garrisonned RPIMa had participated. The Marines’ official account, while seeking to cast France’s role as that of honest broker between warring tribes, concedes that this interpretation is not universal and betrays - through an interesting non sequitur and the imagery of a natural disaster - the regiment’s attempts to skim over this, one of its less glorious episodes: ‘Pour la France, accusée par la force des choses de soutenir le

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8 Quoted by Jean-Dominique Merchet in *Libération*, 2 February 1998
9 An official history of these regiments’ interventions may be found in Comité National des Traditions des Troupes de Marine, *De Bizerte à Sarajevo: Les Troupes de Marine dans les Interventions Extérieures de 1961 à 1995*, Paris: Lavauzelle 1995
gouvernement hutu, il s’agit d’abord d’évacuer de Kigali les ressortissants étrangers menacés par le vent de folie qui souffle sur la capitale rwandaise.\textsuperscript{11}

The justification is self-defence, i.e. evacuation of Western nationals facing the likelihood of massacre, and the \textit{bilan} is presented ungarnished: ‘Du 8 au 12 [avril], près de 1.500 personnes, dont 450 Français et un contingent important de Belges..., vont ainsi être sauvées d’un massacre probable et acheminées par voie aérienne soit sur Bangui..., soit sur Bujumbura.'\textsuperscript{12} But none of the accessible official accounts specifies the nationality of the non-French nationals evacuated. Morris and Scharf point out that: ‘[A] number of the Hutu hardliners, who were close associates of the late President Habyarimana and his wife, were reportedly evacuated to France with French government assistance.'\textsuperscript{13} Agir Ici/Survie are more forthright, quoting witnesses at the French embassy:

\begin{quote}
Tandis que l’on abandonnait aux massacreurs “des centaines de familles accrochées au portail de l’ambassade, auxquelles on refusait l’entrée”, on reconnaissait à l’intérieur “tous les dignitaires du régime et leur famille, ainsi que le directeur de la radio et ses subalternes connus pour leurs appels aux massacres.” A tout moment, ces dignitaires sortaient avec leurs escortes de militaires pour “circuler dans les quartiers en flammes et à leur tour tenaient des réunions à l’ambassade pour parler de l’évolution de la situation, dresser le bilan des victimes ou regretter que telle ou telle personne n’ait pas encore été tuée ou tel quartier pas encore nettoyé.\textsuperscript{14}
\end{quote}

Interestingly, \textit{Terre Magazine} highlights the evacuation of the Mesaka orphanage, without elaborating on the number of ‘nurses’ and other personnel who accompanied the orphans.\textsuperscript{15} Agir Ici/Survie offer the following clarification:

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{14}] Survie/Agir Ici, \textit{1er Dossier noir de la politique africaine de la France}, Paris: L’Harmattan 1994
\item[\textsuperscript{15}] \textit{Terre Magazine}’s description is representative of official accounts:
\textit{‘Si leur mission s’est soldée par un succès, les hommes du 3ème RPIMa n’en oublient pas pour autant les scènes dont ils ont été témoins. Ils sont parvenus à sauver une centaine d’orphelins rwandais, pour la plupart...'}
\end{itemize}
L’évacuation des quelque soixante enfants de l’orphelinat Saint-Agathe a permis aussi celle de trente-quatre “accompagnateurs” rwandais - dont beaucoup n’avaient pas l’air de nounous... Il s’agirait, selon certaines sources, de membres de l’ancien parti unique MRND.16

A background story supporting Libération’s coverage of the opening of the Quilès Commission in February 1998 condemned the limited mandate of the French troops - who were not empowered to stop the killings - emphasising that the Amaryllis mission was ‘un sauvetage sélectif par l’armée française’; a French paratrooper quoted by Jean-Dominique Merchet told how: ‘Il y avait des barrages tous les cinquante mètres. Des types nous saluaient avec leur machette, des cadavres à leurs pieds... Les militaires qui débarquaient au Rwanda étaient plutôt étonnés par la situation, mais ils faisaient leur boulot: sauver les expatriés.’17

While leading pro-genocide figures including President Habyarimana’s wife Agathe and leading Hutu Power ideologue Ferdinand Nahimana were evacuated, those most at risk in the first days of the genocide – educated non-MRNDD members of any ‘ethnic group’ who, it was assumed, were pro-democracy and hence possibly pro-RPF – were left unaided. The Rwandan staff of the French embassy and the French cultural centre, and the local employees of European-owned businesses, were not helped in any way. One account of deliberate non-assistance to persons in danger is offered by Jean-Damascène

16 Survie/Agir Ici, 1er Dossier noir de la politique africaine de la France, Paris: L’Harmattan 1994
Ndayambaje, Professor of Education at the National University of Rwanda at the
time:

A une autre occasion, ils [les militaires de l’Armée gouvernementale] sont de
nouveau venus pour nous fusiller. Les militaires français sont arrivés sur les
lieux et la question s’est compliquée. Les soldats gouvernementaux se
disayaient: “Ces professeurs seront certainement évacués par les militaires
français qui probablement les cacheront quelque part.” Les Français sont
venus. Le professeur Muswayire et moi-même nous sommes allés au-devant
deuxs et leur avons déclaré qu’on avait dit qu’ils nous emmèneraient avec eux.
“Non, sales nègres. Nous embarquons les expatriés uniquement. Nous ne
nous occupons pas de sales nègres.”
Muswayire est témoin. Il peut affirmer la même chose. Nous sommes restés là
tout malheureux.18

There are few press accounts, and no official acknowledgment, of the
indifference and casual racism of these French troops who, it should be
remembered, were part of France’s permanent, ‘acclimatized’ garrison in Africa;
although the racism of Canadian and Italian troops in Somalia has been
recognised as instrumental in the abuses and failures of Operation Restore Hope

In interviews and public statements throughout the summer of 1994, President
Mitterrand denied any French involvement in the Rwandan conflict, and instead
arrogated to France full credit for the Arusha accords: ‘La France a réussi une
négociation entre les deux clans.’19 He also noted that when the accords were in
place, France left Rwanda, satisfied at a job well done, and only returned when
begged (‘suppliés’) to save vulnerable Europeans (including UN troops) and
others – unspecified – who were at risk:

Cette négociation a abouti le 4 août 1993 (…) Et les Français sont partis
[décembre 1993]. Les Français sont partis plusieurs mois avant le

18 Testimony of Brother Jean-Damascène Ndayambaje, former Professor of Education at the Université
Nationale du Rwanda in Ruhengeri, interview in Butare July 1996, recorded by Amon Kayumba, translated
by Jean-Baptiste Karagire-Yaramba. Corroboration of Brother Ndayambaje’s account in this interview of
the persecution of academics under the Habyarimana regime may be found in Africa Watch, Academic
19 François Mitterrand, interview, TF1 14 July 1994: Présidence de la République, service de presse
déclenchement de ce génocide qui a suivi l’assassinat des Présidents du Rwanda et du Burundi. À ce moment-là, on nous a suppliés de revenir en nous disant: “sauvez les Casques Bleus, ramenez les Français, les Belges, les étrangers qui se trouvent au Rwanda”, ce que nous avons fait. Nous avons envoyé des avions, nous avons ramené dans d’autres pays, en particulier en Europe, des gens qui étaient menacés. Mais depuis les accords d’Arusha, nous ne sommes plus partie dans cette affaire. Donc, le génocide a eu lieu après. Nous étions déjà absents.20

In understandable contradiction, in an interview published in 1996, current Rwandan vice-president and defence minister Major-General Paul Kagame told how, in the months preceding the genocide: ‘[I]l était clair qu’il y avait une tentative de saboter le processus de paix. Mais nous [i.e. the RPF] n’étions pas sûrs de qui était derrière et quel était le rôle spécifique joué par chaque individu.’21

But what was French strategy faced with recourse to genocide by the faction at the heart of the regime to which it had so publicly offered unconditional military and political support? Denial of Rwandan government involvement in the killings could not be sustained; the Quilès Commission noted that the genocide was no ‘vent de folie’, but that: ‘Des massacres d’une telle ampleur ne pouvaient avoir lieu qu’avec une complicité, voire une participation des autorités politiques et administratives rwandaises.’22 The genocide, and concurrent collapse of the Rwandan army and regime, also raised urgent questions for French decision-makers, faced with the victory of those RPF forces they had long opposed, about France’s credibility with other allied African states should the Rwandan domino fall.

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20 Ibid
21 Interview in François Misser, Vers un nouveau Rwanda?: Entretiens avec Paul Kagame, Brussels: Editions Luc Pire 1996, p104
It is clear that French strategy was decided ad hoc, faced with the unprecedented situation of defeat for an army and regime it had supported. Attempts were made initially to consolidate the interim government, the installation of which (on the day following Habyarimana’s assassination) was overseen by the French embassy. Quilès notes that, faced with the evidence of ongoing genocide by that same government, this was perhaps a commitment too far for even the most virulent opponents of the RPF:

La France... multiplie, au cours de la période allant du 13 avril (départ d’Amaryllis) au 19 juin (présentation de l’opération Turquoise à l’ONU), les rencontres avec les différents acteurs et parmi eux les membres du Gouvernement intérimaire reçu le 27 avril à Paris par M. Bruno Delaye (...)

[C]ompte tenu du déroulement du génocide commandité par le Gouvernement intérimaire, la France a commis une erreur en considérant qu’elle pouvait accorder autant de crédit et autant de poids à tous les représentants des acteurs du conflit.23

However, despite nearly four years of supplies and training, the FAR was still incapable without direct French support of resisting the RPF advance. (Indeed, one recent assessment suggests that: ‘The FAR and militias were soon so busy killing unarmed civilians that by June [1994] the RPF was able to overrun the country’.24) It was clear, as indicated by the minutes of a meeting between the head of French military cooperation General Huchon, and Rwandan army lieutenant-colonel Ephrem Rwabalinda on May 17 (after six weeks of genocidal killings), that some in Paris, notably the military, felt that a new strategy was required, one which would both reinforce the genocidal regime while concealing its true nature.25 However, French attempts to present the interim government as an acceptable partner, or as part of the potential solution, were made impossible by the ongoing genocide. Quilès notes: ‘C’est en partie en raison de son attitude

par rapport au gouvernement intermédiaire qu’il lui fut difficile de faire accepter le caractère strictement humanitaire de l’opération Turquoise, puisque certains y voyaient une intention cachée de soutien au régime qui organisait le génocide.26

In seeking an explanation for the failure of strategy suggested here, we will consider the official version of events, and then assess that version in light of the unprecedented criticism France’s 1994 interventions generated.

Theory: Official discourse, legal justification

This section will proceed by considering the official discourse of both political and military sources - unrevised at the time of writing - which maintains that Opération Turquoise presents, in every respect, ‘un bilan très positif’;27 Admiral Jacques Lanxade, chef d’état-major (CEM) of the French army in 1994, lauds Turquoise as a model humanitarian operation which, through skilfully overcoming the logistical obstacles, meeting the imperatives of time and distance, and successfully fulfilling its stated aims, offers a model of action for the future:

Décidée et lancée dans une situation de crise complexe et dramatique, placée sous le signe de l’urgence, cette opération difficile et lointaine présente aujourd’hui un bilan très positif. L’analyse de cette intervention doit nous permettre de préciser et de renforcer, pour l’avenir, un concept d’opération adapté aux actions à but humanitaire.28


Foremost among the claims of official discourse on this re-intervention\(^\text{29}\) in Rwanda in June 1994 is that it stopped the genocide: ‘L’action de la force Turquoise a mis fin au génocide et a permis d’assurer la protection de la population dans la zone humanitaire sûre ainsi que la transition avec la Minuwar II [Mission des Nations Unies au Rwanda] dans de bonnes conditions.’\(^\text{30}\)

Secondly, it is claimed that re-intervention was necessary to allow humanitarian organisations to operate; indeed Lanxade tells how: ‘[A]vant l’arrivée du contingent français, aucune organisation internationale ou non gouvernementale n’avait pu s’implanter de façon significative dans la zone tenue par le FPR.’\(^\text{31}\) We are led to believe by implication that the RPF was anti-humanitarian; France’s humanitarian motive, in contrast, was paramount. (Indeed the word ‘humanitaire’ is used in almost every paragraph of Lanxade’s article).

Thirdly, we are told that France was strictly neutral: ‘L’opération Turquoise est une intervention à but humanitaire, visant à mettre fin aux massacres partout où cela était possible, éventuellement en utilisant la force, mais en observant une stricte neutralité dans le conflit opposant les FAR aux FPR.’\(^\text{32}\) It is noteworthy that Lanxade at no point concedes that the FAR, which his own troops had trained, supported and indeed commanded, were involved in the systematic execution of the genocide; the Admiral’s brief summary of the situation explains instead that in the FAR-controlled zone, ‘les bandes formées de civils ou de militaires hutus incontrôlés continuent le massacre des populations tutsies sans autre raison que l’excitation du moment ou les incitations à la “défense populaire” prodiguées par certains chefs de milice.’\(^\text{33}\)

\(^{29}\) However, official accounts do not describe Turquoise as a ‘re-intervention’; reference to the preceding interventions is judiciously avoided.


\(^{31}\) ibid

\(^{32}\) ibid

\(^{33}\) ibid
At no point is the imminence of the RPF’s victory, or of the FAR’s collapse, cited as a motive for Turquoise. Instead, France’s re-intervention is explained as a response to a triple imperative: a humanitarian impulse to stop the genocide, a display of logistical savoir-faire faced with UN inertia, and a popular response to traumatised public opinion: ‘Devant l’étendu de ces massacres, les lenteurs de la mise en place de la Minuwar II et l’impact de ces actes de violence sur l’opinion publique, la France décide d’intervenir au Rwanda.’

The official account of the French response to the genocide – supported by the Quilès Commission – maintains that the French government sought to reassert the primacy of the Arusha agreement and the imperative to install finally the power-sharing administration which Habyarimana – under pressure from the akazu though unpenalised by France, his principal supporter – had done so much to forestall; Quiles notes that: ‘Une note [de la Direction des affaires africaines du quai d’Orsay] du 9 mai indique que “sur le plan politique, tout en se prévalant de “l’esprit d’Arusha”, le FPR refuse les dispositions des accords relatifs au partage du pouvoir... Pour que la solution à la crise s’avère durable, il faudra que l’ensemble des forces politiques, y compris donc le MRND du Président Juvénal Habyarimana, y participent.”

However, the power-sharing agreement was by May 1994 rendered absurd by one party’s complicity in genocide. France’s insistence that the newly-victorious RPF share power with the former ruling MRNDD, members of which were actively implementing genocide against the former’s presumed support-base, was comparable, by some accounts, to asking European Jews to share power with Nazis.

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36 See especially Mehdi Ba, Rwanda, un génocide français, Paris: L’esprit frappeur 1997
Creation of Turquoise

As the death toll rose by thousands daily and the genocide slowly came to international attention, French policy (not uninfluenced by military opposition to negotiation) and its Rwandan ally had painted France into an awkward corner; *Le Monde* reported that: ‘[L]a France, considérée comme “pro-hutue” en raison du soutien de l’Élysée au président rwandais assassiné..., est en fâcheuse posture.’ 37 Humanitarianism – perceived in many French minds as a modern form of the nineteenth century *mission civilisatrice*38 - had become by 1994 a major element of post-Cold War French and Western foreign policy discourse. The French state had in fact been trying to wrest control of its overseas crisis relief policy from NGOs - most notably *Médecins sans frontières* (MSF) and *Médecins du monde* - which had often been critical of the government and hostile to the military. Unique among its European partners, France under President Mitterrand boasted a Minister for Humanitarian Action, a post originally occupied by MSF co-founder Bernard Kouchner, who had inserted the concept of a ‘right to interfere’ (*droit d’ingérence*), interpreted in some NGO circles as a ‘duty to interfere’ (*devoir d’ingérence*), into French public discourse.39 Indeed in 1992, in the wake of the technologically-inferior French army’s perceived humiliation during the Gulf War, *Le Figaro* political correspondent Sophie Huet could write that France’s overseas military strategy was now driven by humanitarian concern, its politicians and soldiers acting as ‘humanitarian fighters’:

Pour un pays qui, depuis un tiers de siècle, n’est impliqué dans aucune guerre [i.e. since Algeria, by this account]..., l’action sur le terrain n’a plus pour objet de mener des batailles, mais de les prévenir ou d’en panser les

37 Marie-Pierre Subtil, ‘La France s’efface au Rwanda’, *Le Monde* 7 June 1994
39 See Bernard Kouchner, *Le malheur des autres*, Paris: Odile Jacob 1991; as noted in Chapter 1, Kouchner is currently UN administrator in Kosovo.
plaies. Les hommes politiques, quand ils sont engagés dans cette action, deviennent des combattants humanitaires qui portent secours aux peuples en conflit et les aident à y trouver une issue.  

This appropriation of the humanitarian agenda had been identified by one French observer who wrote in 1993 that: 'More than ever, military participation is the continuation of diplomatic action. In this strategy, the “right to interfere” seems to be a means to enable France to appear as a great power, not only through her military capabilities, but also through her contribution to the “progress of humanity”.'

This theme has been the subject of an extensive literature since the end of the Cold War, but the concept that military intervention could be motivated by something other than national political, economic or strategic self-interest has long been debated by scholars of international relations and international law. We have discussed this in Chapter 1; suffice it to say here that the invocation of humanitarianism by France in Rwanda was a masterstroke, the authorship of which may be attributed at least in part to the climate of intense political competition within the centres of decision-making in Paris in mid-1994. Inter-ministerial and inter-party rivalry was sharpened by the second period of cohabitation of the Mitterrand presidency, and the imminence of the 1995 presidential elections. Prunier points out that: '[G]iven the divided nature of French politics in that summer of 1994, the decision [to re-intervene] was bound to be taken in a climate of careful mutual watchfulness (...) Rwanda and its chopped-up babies now looked as if they could give good political mileage in terms of public opinion ratings.'

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40 Sophie Huet, Quand ils faisaient la guerre, Paris: Pion 1993, p10
Playing to this constituency and a media-fuelled public clamour for action as the Rwandan genocide neared completion in mid-1994, President Mitterrand told a conference on development at UNESCO (in Paris) on June 18 that: ‘France was ready, without waiting for the arrival of a United Nations force, to send along with any of its European or African partners who wished, a humanitarian protection force designed to assure the safety of those civilian populations which have escaped extermination. This is being prepared. It is now a matter of hours and days... I repeat: every hour counts.’ Accordingly, a joint communiqué was issued by the Elysée and Matignon the same day, June 18. The emphasis, as in all official accounts, is on purity of motive, legality, consultation and humanitarianism:

La France souhaite que soit mise sur pied au Rwanda une operation internationale à but humanitaire destinée à sauver des vies humaines et à mettre fin aux massacres qui sont perpetrés dans ce pays. (...) Cette operation, dont le but est strictement humanitaire, sera menée sur la base d’un mandat qui sera demandé aux Nations unies et en liaison avec toutes les organisations internationales et toutes les parties intéressées.

To prepare the ground for the forthcoming reintervention, the Elysée also issued an unusually vehement rebuttal of the December 1993 *Fédération Internationale des Ligues des Droits de l'Homme* (FIDH) report’s criticisms of France’s role since 1990. The communiqué concluded:

Que reproche-t-on à la France? De n’avoir pas laissé se perpétuer une action déstabilisante contre un pays ami? D’avoir pesé de tout son poids pour pousser les adversaires à négocier et à s’entendre? D’avoir alerté la communauté internationale pour qu’elle relaye ses propres efforts? Est-ce bien là la “politique détestable” que l’on fustige? Et si cette politique était

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44 ‘[C]’est désormais une affaire d’heures et de jours. [...] Quoiqu’il en soit, nous le ferons. Je le répète: chaque heure compte.’ Original quote from Présidence de la République, Service de Presse, Paris 18 June 1994
45 Communiqué conjoint de l’Elysée et de Matignon, Présidence de la République, Service de Presse, Paris 18 June 1994
détestable, quelle était la politique de rechange, assurément sympathique et efficace, qu’il convenait de mener? Quel pays l’a préconisée? Qui s’est proposé d’en assumer la responsabilité? L’émotion légitime que suscite le spectacle de l’horreur au Rwanda ne justifie pas que l’on instruise des procès sommaires, au mépris de la simple vérité.47

By late June 1994, this statement was representative of the increasingly aggressive, ‘never apologise, never explain’ tone of official political and military accounts of France’s interventions in Rwanda. President Mitterrand was adamant that France’s motives were beyond question; visiting South Africa in July 1994, he used the opportunity of a joint press conference with President Mandela to refute all criticisms of France’s role in Rwanda:

Nous ne sommes pas partie prenante, nous Français. Nous n’avons pas à choisir un camp, nous avons simplement à choisir la défense de ceux qui souffrent, qui ont souffert... d’un véritable génocide. (...) Nous avons été quasiment les seuls... à tenter de mettre un terme à ce génocide par une action qui est humanitaire et qui doit le rester. Cette action consiste à protéger les populations, quelles qu’elles soient, contre les effets de la guerre et surtout de la vengeance entre ethnies. Les forces françaises ont déjà sauvegardé des milliers de vies humaines, sauvé beaucoup d’enfants, et souhaitent pouvoir continuer (...) Mais il ne faut pas..., comme j’en ai eu l’impression à la lecture de la presse de ce matin [5 July 1994], considérer que la France est dans la guerre. Elle ne le veut pas. Doit-elle pour autant abandonner la tâche entreprise qu’elle est la seule ou presque seule à entreprendre? Cela nous a paru inadmissible.48

No cracks would appear in the official discourse until some of the underlying personal and political tensions were exposed during the oral hearings of the Quilès Commission four years later.49

Practice

47 Communiqué de Presse de l’Elysée, quoted in Marchés Tropicaux 24 June 1994, ‘Rwanda: La France prépare une intervention armée à but humanitaire’
48 Présidence de la République, Service de Presse: Conférence de presse conjointe de François Mitterrand et Nelson Mandela, Cape Town, 5 July 1994
49 See the testimony to the Quilès Commission of former prime minister Michel Rocard, and former chef de la mission militaire de la coopération General Jean Varret, in appendices.
Overall, despite the frequency with which the humanitarian motive of French re-intervention in Rwanda was invoked, the traditional humanitarian actors in the NGO community were marginalised and excluded from the decision-making process. Significantly, some leading voices from this constituency had been raised in sceptical opposition to the proposed operation. *Médecins du Monde* president Bernard Granjon declared that: ‘Une intervention militaire de la France serait folie furieuse... [L]a France doit se racheter, condamner les responsables qu’elle a naguère soutenu.’50 And following a visit to Rwanda in early July 1994, Bernard Kouchner (although supportive of Turquoise as a perceived demonstration of the droit d’ingérence he had advocated for a decade) told how: ‘Dans le flot des réfugiés chassés par la guerre et par l’avance du Front patriotique rwandais, ces miliciens sont là, profitant tout à la fois de la protection provisoire des soldats français et de l’aide humanitaire. Ils bénéficient d’un sursis avant que ne se tienne, comme je le souhaite, un tribunal international sur les crimes contre l’humanité.’51

Although unacknowledged at the time, the intervention’s role in facilitating the escape of those responsible for the genocide is now a matter of record. In their authoritative study of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, Virginia Morris and Michael Scharf note that:

Ironically, while the Security Council... proved unwilling or unable to stop the massacres of the Tutsis, it did take action to safeguard the Hutus who began to flee to southwest Rwanda in large numbers in the face of the advancing RPF forces. On 22 June 1994, the Security Council authorized France to send its troops to establish a “humanitarian protected zone” in southwest Rwanda by adopting Resolution 929. This French-led operation became known as “Operation Turquoise”. The Hutu government, the Rwandan armed forces, and the militia reportedly took advantage of this operation in order to exert their control over the vast population that was quartered in the “safe zone”. The Hutu government even moved its radio station into the zone where it

50 Quoted in *Marchés Tropicaux* 24 June 1994, ‘Rwanda: La France prépare une intervention armée à but humanitaire’
continued without interference to incite the Hutu people to kill Tutsis in its broadcasts.52

Given the extent of France’s support for the Habyarimana regime and now for the genocidal Sindikubwabo interim government, France of all countries seemed least qualified to organise any peacekeeping or ‘humanitarian’ intervention. The logic of this unprecedentedly brief, UN-mandated, ‘new-style’ intervention would seem to have been dictated by the impossibility of an open-ended commitment, in a mountainous country and against a highly-motivated guerrilla army. The precedent of the Chadian ‘saga’ was familiar to French planners, and the Somali débâcle apparent to all. Colette Braeckman pointed out that: ‘Les observateurs ne peuvent s’empêcher de songer à l’enlisement des Américains en Somalie, et à l’ampleur qu’avait prise l’opération Manta au Tchad, passée de 100 à 4000 hommes en août 1983.’53

Awareness of these facts in Paris led to an unprecedented interest in African affairs among decision-makers outside the Elysée. Indeed, Turquoise would be the first time that responsibility for France’s response to an African crisis was removed from the exclusive control of the Presidency. The reasons personal and political for this are manifold, although the two most obvious seem the most likely: Mitterrand was so partisan he could not be left in charge, for fear that he would, as some suggested he wanted, send paras to take Kigali à la Kolwezi 197854; and that the President was in any case terminally ill and unfit to make such decisions. Prime Minister Edouard Balladur, a would-be presidential candidate, announced to the National Assembly on June 19 the conditions which he felt should apply to any further French intervention in Rwanda: it should have a UN mandate, a strictly limited duration, French forces should not

advance deep into Rwanda, the operation should be strictly humanitarian with no exclusively military component, and it should be multinational, with the involvement of allied troops so France would not be acting alone.

We are fortunate to have an account of the preparations in Paris for the intervention from Gérard Prunier, who was called on to advise defence minister François Léotard in June 1994. Prunier tells how the French troops' point of entry from Zaire into Rwanda was determined partly by the need, nearly three months after the genocide started, for there still to be massacres to end and populations to protect in keeping with their UN mandate:

The first draft of the intervention plan ... was entirely based on the supposition that the French troops would enter the country through Gisenyi [in north-western Rwanda] ... Since the official purpose of the mission was humanitarian, there was precious little to do at that level in Gisenyi and Ruhengeri préfectures. As a local Hutu trader was later to remark to a French journalist, "We never had many Tutsi here and we killed them all at the beginning without much of a fuss." The French forces would find absolutely no-one left alive to be paraded in front of TV cameras as a justification for the intervention.55

It was agreed subsequently that the French troops would enter Rwanda from the south-west (at Cyangugu); indeed they crossed the border from Bukavu in Zaire before their UN mandate had been approved, according to RPF commander Tito Rutaremera.56 But the reinsertion of the French military into a conflict which it had done much to fuel, and where it had close professional and personal relationships with one side, seemed like folly in many African eyes. The Organisation of African Unity opposed the intervention, on the basis that one of the conflict's principal combatants, the RPF, was understandably opposed to it. Colette Braeckman was one of the few journalists who recognised the cards being played, what she called a high-risk gamble ('un pari à haut risque'): 'Faire

croire à l’opinion française, internationale et au Front patriotique en la sincérité de son revirement, après un soutien trop longtemps accordé aux commanditaires du génocide. Dans l’immédiat, ce sont encore les doutes et les critiques qui l’emportent."57

Resolution 929

Of Prime Minister Balladur’s five conditions above, only two can be said to have been observed: a strictly limited duration (two months) and a UN mandate. It was unprecedented for France to seek UN sanction for a military intervention in Africa; but this happened on June 21, 1994, when the UN Security Council (by 10 votes - including France and the Rwandan ancien régime - but with 5 abstentions) passed the French-drafted Resolution 929 [attached; see Appendices], the stated goals of which were to end the massacres, to protect populations in the areas still controlled by the Rwandan government army (FAR), and to hand over to UNAMIR II (United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda) after two months. Placed within the scope of UN Charter Chapter VII, the mandate allowed the use of force to defend troops and protect refugees, but ruled out any interpositionary role. It was also intended to be a French-led multinational force, with the gradual incorporation of troops from a number of African states.

Significantly, a Reuters report of June 24 mentions opposition to the operation in the Security Council - and the unprecedented five abstentions - only in terms of certain members’ doubts that Turquoise’s 10-week mandate would be enough: ‘[C]ertains observateurs ont avoué que cette opération serait vaine si elle n’excédait pas deux mois. C’est dans cette optique que cinq nations se sont absentes de voter au sein du Conseil de Sécurité des Nations Unies pour ratifier l’intervention française. Il s’agit de la Nouvelle-Zélande, de la Chine, du Brésil,

56 Cdt Tito Rutaremera, interview Kigali October 1996
du Nigéria et du Pakistan, qui ont argumenté qu’ils doutaient de l’efficacité d’une telle opération.58

However, the report failed to contextualise the RPF’s opposition and influence on the five abstainers, mentioning only that: ‘Le représentant du FPR à Bruxelles, Jacques Bihozagara a renouvelé l’hostilité de son mouvement au déploiement français, affirmant que celui-ci “risquerait de compliquer la situation et d’embraser toute la région”’. Bihozagara’s opposition was in fact more comprehensive that this report suggests; he was swift to label the French troops ‘aggressors’.59 Moreover, the RPF representative at the UN Claude Dusaidi (currently advisor to Rwandan vice-president Paul Kagame), was directly responsible for convincing China, Brazil, Nigeria and Pakistan to abstain in the vote; he also notes he had little problem convincing the New Zealand ambassador (less than 10 years after the Greenpeace affair) of a possible French hidden agenda.60

Colette Braeckman was again one of the few to point out the incongruity of the ‘humanitarian’ intervention force’s vast material superiority to all local combatants and to the RPF in particular: ‘[L]es 2500 militaires français déployés au Rwanda jouissent d’une forte supériorité matérielle; ils sont dotés, notamment, de blindés légers Sagaie, et bénéficient de la couverture aérienne d’une dizaine de Jaguar et de Mirage 1.’ 61 The degree of support from France’s African allies, meanwhile, was far from uniform; Senegal and Chad sent 243 and 130 men respectively, Congo and Niger around 40, and Mauritania just four doctors and six nurses.62 A purely African intervention force might have been

58 Reuters, 24 June 1994
59 Jacques Bihozagara, interview Kigali November 1996
60 Claude Dusaidi, interview Kigali November 1996
62 Frères d’Armes (September 1994) offers a laudatory feature on ‘les Africains de Turquoise’ in apparent disproportion to their actual role. There has since been evidence, however, that France’s African allies may now have become the new interventionary model of intervention by proxy.
acceptable, but this option was not discussed in France or at the UN. Rwandan vice-president and defence minister Paul Kagame, military commander of the RPF during the war, explained the movement’s criticism of an operation which, it was commonly reported, fulfilled an international mandate and saved thousands of lives:

Quand vous parlez des millions de personnes sauvées, vous devez savoir combien exactement et comparer ce nombre avec celui des gens qui ont été tués au cours de processus. Si vous sauviez 5000 personnes sur un total d’un million, on peut se demander d’abord pourquoi on n’en a sauvé que 5000 et non davantage.

Deuxièmement, même quand vous parlez du mandat, cela n’impressionne personne. On a sollicité un mandat pour faire la mauvaise tâche alors que la communauté internationale, qui avait été incapable d’arrêter le génocide, était prête à autoriser n’importe quoi en désespoir de cause. Cela ne justifie pas le fait que les Français soient venus ici d’une façon unilatérale. A la lumière de leur implication dans le conflit, je pense qu’ils auraient dû choisir plus sagement de rester en dehors de tout cela et peut-être de soutenir d’autres forces. Il avait été question que des forces africaines fussent déployées sur le terrain. Mais elles étaient dépouvues d’équipement et de financements. C’est pourquoi la chose la plus facile à faire aurait été de les équiper.63

On the ground, the problem was not Somalia-style ‘mission creep’, but the peculiarities of French military experience and expectations in Africa, where intervention was always in support of one party, usually those in power, and against another, typically labelled ‘rebels’. However, by July 1994, the RPF which France had done so much to oppose had seized the levers of power in the capital, controlled most of the country, and had stopped the genocide. The ‘rebels’ were now France’s former allies: the ex-FAR, the genocidal militias and the ‘Hutu Power’ faction of government (a coalition of forces concisely labelled the Former Government of Rwanda - FGOR).64

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63 Paul Kagame, interview in François Misser, Vers un nouveau Rwanda?: Entretiens avec Paul Kagame, Brussels: Editions Luc Pire 1996, p104
64 The useful term Former Government of Rwanda (FGOR) to describe these forces was coined by William Cyrus Reed in Christopher Clapham ed., African Guerrillas, London: James Currey 1998
There was also the remarkable situation whereby troops of a UN-mandated humanitarian force had, less than a year previously, been occasional but direct participants in the conflict. Many soldiers interpreted their *Turquoise* brief to imply a rearguard action in support of their beleaguered Rwandan allies, to allow them to retreat in good order and regroup; and there was a widespread belief among both Rwandan and French troops that Paris would never allow the ‘Anglo-Saxon’ RPF to take control.65

Many French troops half-expected to be sent into combat against the RPF, as indeed happened from July 3 when the French army and the now victorious RPF clashed; on one occasion the RPF captured a number of French troops, but released them without fuss the same day. Significantly, this confrontation seems to have convinced French military strategists that any attempt to bolster the crumbling FAR would be futile; and any further attempt to halt this RPF advance, made urgent by the ongoing genocide, would necessitate a major engagement on the ground. Reuters’ account notes the juxtaposition of events: ‘4 juillet [1994]: au lendemain d’un accrochage entre soldats français et rebelles et après la prise de Butare et Kigali par le FPR, la France crée une zone humanitaire sûre dans le sud-ouest du Rwanda...’66 This interpretation is supported by Rwandan journalist Vénuste Nshimiyimana, who suggested that France’s limitation of its operations to this new, unmandated ‘Safe Humanitarian Zone’ (SHZ) was the result of negotiations with a now unstoppable RPF.

Nshimiyimana notes:

> Certains prétendent que M. Mitterrand aurait souhaité que les paras français dépêchés à Kigali le 9 avril 1994 pour évacuer les ressortissants français puissent également aider les forces gouvernementales, ce qui est contraire à l’accord de coopération militaire signé entre les deux pays en 1975. Des

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65 See for example *Raids Magazine* no. 101, October 1994, ‘Avec les marsouins face au FPR’ etc. A militaria fanzine not unlike *Soldier of Fortune, Raids* (published monthly by the Association ‘Histoire et Collections’, 19, avenue de la République, 75011 Paris) is nonetheless useful as a barometer of military thinking on certain operations.

The 'Safe Humanitarian Zone'

The establishment of the SHZ now appears to have been a deliberate attempt to legitimise this, the most controversial aspect of the Operation, by linking it in the public mind with the UN-imposed ‘no-fly zone’ in northern Iraq, while at the same time bracketing the RPF with Saddam Hussein. France’s Security Council representative Jean-Bernard Mérimée concluded in his report on Turquoise to the Council that the sole purpose of the operation, and of the creation of the SHZ (simultaneous with the RPF’s seizure of Kigali), was to facilitate (by force) humanitarian assistance; significantly, Mérimée emphasises that a key priority was to make a convincing case for France’s neutrality:

L’opération “Turquoise a été menée avec un succès certain, compte tenu des circonstances délicates de son déclenchement. Il s’agissait de permettre, par l’emploi de la force, le rétablissement d’une situation favorisant la reprise des activités humanitaires. Dans cette opération, engagée dans une phase de conflit entre le FPR et les anciennes forces gouvernementales rwandaises, l’observation de la plus stricte neutralité a été déterminante. La mise en pratique du concept de zone humanitaire sûre a permis de mettre les populations à l’abri des combats et a facilité le déploiement des organisations humanitaires.

Dans cette ZHS, il a fallu d’abord convaincre du bien-fondé de l’impartialité de l’intervention militaire.68

However, although advertised as protection for refugees fleeing the RPF advance, the Zone’s principal effect was to provide a secure retreat for the FGOR including the perpetrators of the genocide, military, militia and civilian.

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Moreover (and contrary to Morris and Scharf’s reference above to a Security Council-mandated ‘humanitarian protection zone’), it was not part of the UN mandate under Resolution 929. Analysts concur that in modern UN peacekeeping practice, four types of protective zone may be created: preventive zones, intended to reduce the movement of refugees in times of distress, with a view to avoiding catastrophes associated with massive movements of population; UN protected zones, created in armed conflict situations, whereby territory is brought under UN protection with the intention of protecting the population from the effects of conflict; security zones, in which all military activity is forbidden in all or part of a state, and from which, according to Mario Bettati, the state’s armed forces should be evacuated and replaced by a corresponding deployment of international troops; and no-fly zones, intended to protect civilians and humanitarian operations from aerial bombardment.

The protective zone is therefore a legal institution, allowed for and legitimised by international law, notably Chapter VII of the UN Charter. The question here concerns the legality of the zone established by the French army in south-western Rwanda in July and August 1994, which was of the third type, a security zone. France’s Security Council representative Jean-Bernard Mérimée stated that France would put the SHZ in place even without UN authorisation. But of the powers mandated under Resolution 929, nowhere is there any mention of safe humanitarian zones. Indeed, the sentence which would normally refer to such zones is truncated, so that the Resolution’s second point notes only that the

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69 See Mario Bettati, Le droit d'ingérence, Paris: Odile Jacob 1996
70 Security zones had already been established in the former Yugoslavia where, for example, Srebrenica was made a security zone by Resolution 819 of 17 April 1993, and six Muslim security zones were created in Bosnia-Herzegovina by Resolution 824 of 6 May 1993.
operation was intended to contribute to ‘the security and protection of displaced persons, refugees and endangered civilians in Rwanda.’

There may therefore by a *prima facie* case that the UNSC had not given France the power to establish such a zone, not least because France went back to the Council to seek its authorisation. After three days, the Council agreed to ‘note’ the French proposal to create a SHZ, but there was no resolution to this effect. In fact this parallels the situation at the time of the imposition of no-fly zones by Western powers over northern and southern Iraq in March 1991 and August 1992, an initiative which was not authorised by the Security Council, although Western leader stated that their imposition was necessary to make earlier UNSC resolutions effective. The precedent thus created, which was exploited to the full by France in 1994, meant that powerful intervenors could re-interpret their UN mandates to suit their own purposes. Nigel White points out that:

> If such an approach to UN resolutions is accepted... then it would be possible for states wishing to undertake humanitarian intervention of a greater or lesser extent in another state, to obtain implicit authorization from the Security Council by securing a resolution which, while finding a threat to the peace under Chapter VII, does not itself impose and authorise

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71 UN Security Council Resolution 929 (1994), 22 June 1994: The Security Council: (...) 2. Welcomes also the offer by Member States to cooperate with the Secretary-General in order to achieve the objectives of the United Nations in Rwanda through the establishment of a temporary operation under national command and control aimed at contributing, in an impartial way, to the security and protection of displaced persons, refugees and civilians at risk in Rwanda, on the understanding that the costs of implementing the offer will be borne by the Member States concerned; 3. Acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, authorizes the Member States cooperating with the Secretary-General to conduct the operation referred to in paragraph 2 above using all necessary means to achieve the humanitarian objectives laid out in paragraphs 4 (a) and (b) or resolution 925 (1994). S/RES/929 (1994), 22 June 1994, The United Nations Blue Book Series Vol.X, The United Nations and Rwanda 1993-1996, New York: UN Dept. of Public Information 1996, p308.

72 It should be noted that although making no explicit provision for SHZs, Resolution 929 states in point 3 that member states cooperating with the Secretary General can employ all necessary means to ‘achieve the humanitarian objectives laid out in sections a and b of paragraph 4 of resolution 925 (1994). According to Antoine Mindua [‘Sur la légalité de la zone Turquoise au Rwanda’, *Revue Africaine du Droit International et Comparé* (RADIC) 6 (1994) pp643-652] this shows that Jean-Bernard Merimée was right that France did not need the Council’s express approval in order to establish SHZs.
enforcement action. States could then argue that military action is necessary to enforce that finding by the Security Council.\(^\text{73}\)

After the zone was established, the president of the UNSC Jamsheed K.A. Marker stated that the Council ‘reaffirms the humanitarian nature of the secure area in the south-west of Rwanda and demands that all concerned fully respect this.’\(^\text{74}\) Antoine Mindua suggests that because the UNSC did not question it, the zone’s establishment was legitimate (‘… la France était en droit de la créer.’)\(^\text{75}\) However, failure to criticise after the event does not automatically equal approval; and Mindua concludes that a hesitant, distrustful Security Council decided in the end not to make a decision on the SHZ. As with all operations of this nature, he suggests, the UN is caught in its inherent double bind: ‘[L’]ONU qui a le pouvoir d’agir en vertu du chapitre VII n’a pas les moyens nécessaires et les Etats qui ont les moyens n’ont pas le droit au regard du droit international d’entreprendre une ingérence humanitaire unilatérale encore qu’ils refusent de mettre leurs troupes sous commandement et contrôle onusiens.’\(^\text{76}\)

Moreover, for a SHZ to fulfil its definition, military personnel within it should be disarmed and all military activity stopped. Once the zone was established and presented to the UNSC as a \textit{fait accompli}, and although Russia insisted that the militias and civilians within the zone should be disarmed, no attempt was made by the French forces to do so. Indeed, it was strongly suspected that some French military commanders in the field sought to use the SHZ to enable the FAR to regroup, rearm and launch a counter-offensive against the RPF, thereby violating a key principle of the non-intervention norm (UN General Assembly Resolution 2625 (XXV), according to which a people is supposed to exercise its right to self-

\(^{\text{73}}\) Nigel D. White, ‘Humanitarian Intervention’, \textit{International Law and Armed Conflict Commentary I:1, June 1994, p18}
\(^{\text{75}}\) 6 RADIC 1994 pp643-652
\(^{\text{76}}\) Mindua, 6 RADIC 1994 p651
determination in total sovereignty). French commanders also stated that because of their mandate’s limitations, they had no power to make any arrests within the French-controlled zone, even of individuals clearly identified as war criminals by journalists and NGOs. Neither, it was stated, could they prevent looting, or dismantle RTLM’s FM transmitter broadcasting pro-genocide propaganda from within the zone, and encouraging the refugees, and the population of neighbouring Burundi, to pursue the elimination of all the ex-regime’s opponents to its logical conclusion.

In this light and in view of subsequent events, it was the Safe Humanitarian Zone which was to prove the most damaging element of Opération Turquoise for peace and reconciliation in Rwanda, and most threatening to the stability of the entire region. Colette Braeckman had suggested that Turquoise could only succeed if France managed to dissipate suspicions of its hidden agenda: “[R]enforcer les troupes gouvernementales, rehabiliter l’habile Mobutu, bloquer la victoire du FPR...” But most significantly, the operation in fact failed to fulfil either its hidden or its declared agenda. It did not achieve its ‘true’ (i.e. undeclared) aims as identified by Braeckman; by June 1994 it was too late, and France too compromised, to save the FAR and stop the RPF; and the rehabilitation of Mobutu was to prove short-lived. And Turquoise also failed even to fulfil its overt mission, under the terms of its UN mandate. It observed the limitation of time and was over in two months as scheduled; but the questions of whether it was ‘strictly neutral’, ‘purely humanitarian’, or actually ‘stopped the massacres’, remain without satisfactory answer.

Bisesero

In a recent study, London-based human rights group African Rights documents the failure by French troops to fulfil their mandate under Resolution 929 at

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77 Colette Braeckman, ‘Le pari français: sauver et convaincre les Tutsis’, Le Soir (Brussels) 24 June 1994
Bisesero, Kibuye préfecture, in June 1994, where the threatened population had hidden from the genocidal militias. One of the refugees sheltering in caves and in the bush on the hills around Bisesero heard by radio of the arrival of French forces, and on June 26 French reconnaissance troops could be seen in the area. African Rights recorded the following testimony:

Siméon: We all emerged from our hiding place. Eric, who could speak French, explained who we were. The French took photos of us. The militia were there with them, carrying their weapons. The soldiers then left and said that they would be returning. When the French had gone, the militia came back to kill. They killed a lot of us that day because many people had come out of their hiding places when they had seen the French soldiers.\(^7^8\)

African Rights notes that: ‘In the days before the French soldiers’ return [four days later], at least 1,000 refugees were murdered, half the number that had survived.’ Another interviewee, Vincent Kayigema, told how:

The day French soldiers arrived, we were called out. We saw cars with flags; all the Tutsis in hiding came out. The French assembled us on a hill. The militia men, with their machetes, were on the other side. After we had been gathered together, the French left straightaway. The militia came. They killed more than half the Tutsis who were there. Fortunately, I escaped.\(^7^9\)

African Rights’ ‘J’accuse’ is unambiguous: ‘The decision of the French soldiers to leave 2000 terrified people – begging for their help – was inexcusable. Rwanda is a small country; the soldiers had vehicles, communication equipment and most important of all, they had arms. Having been informed of the gravity of the situation, it is difficult to understand why they did not leave some soldiers to protect the refugees while they sought reinforcements, or indeed to imagine why it took them three days to return.’\(^8^0\)

Subsequently, the survivors witnessed the French troops cooperating with those who had coordinated the attack on Bisesero – notably Alfred Musema – and they

\(^{79}\) ibid p62
\(^{80}\) ibid p62
testified to the French soldiers’ hostility when the survivors expressed their preference to seek security in RPF-controlled territory; survivor Philimon Nshimiyimana told how: ‘After three weeks, we expressed our wish to join Kivumu, the zone controlled by the RPF soldiers. This decision provoked the anger of the French soldiers, so much so that they stopped giving us food.’\(^{81}\) Survivor Maurice stated that the French ‘asked us who we liked more, the French or the Inkotanyi [RPF]. Of course we replied in their favour. When we said that we wanted to join the Inkotanyi, they would refuse biscuits for the whole day.’\(^{82}\)

But the Quilès Commission report, the only official acknowledgement of the incident and the only accessible quasi-official response to the accusations, concludes as follows:

> Il a été reproché au Capitaine de frégate Marin Gillier… d’être arrivé en reconnaissance dans la zone relevant de sa responsabilité (Bisesero), puis d’en être reparti immédiatement pour ne revenir sur place que trois jours plus tard, laissant ainsi le champ libre aux Hutus de la région pour poursuivre les massacres des derniers 50 000 Tutsis qui s’y trouvaient encore. (...) De la confrontation des éléments contenus dans le rapport d’African Rights, du témoignage envoyé par le Capitaine de frégate Marin Gillier à la Mission et du compte rendu de l’audition particulière du reporter Michel Peyrard [of Paris Match], il apparaît que rien ne vient sérieusement à l’appui de ces accusations. Si trois jours se sont effectivement écoulés entre le moment où le groupement du Capitaine de frégate Marin Gillier a procédé le 27 juillet à une reconnaissance de la zone de Bisesero et le moment où il est intervenu, le 30 juillet, pour protéger et sauver les populations du lieu-dit Bisesero, ce délai n’apparaît pas intentionnel.\(^{83}\)

On August 22, observing the letter of Resolution 929, *Opération Turquoise* was wound up, and the French handed over to a reluctant, ill-defined and soon

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\(^{81}\) ibid p63

\(^{82}\) ibid p64

superfluous UNAMIR II, little-respected following the precipitate retreat of its predecessor (UNAMIR I) as the genocide began.

Effects and implications

But by late August 1994, with the RPF in control in the rest of Rwanda and the massacres stopped, nearly two million people fled or were driven out, under the command of the FAR and the militias, to the subsequently cholera-infested refugee camps at Goma and Bukavu. These camps were, as the FGOR (ex-FAR and militias) intended, to be used as bases for regrouping and training, to prosecute the war for a further two years. There is no admission of this in official French discourse; Admiral Lanxade maintains that Turquoise contributed in its own small way to a process of universal accountability: ‘Certes, l’opération Turquoise n’a pu ramener la paix ni rétablir des conditions normales de vie au Rwanda, mais dans le temps très court de son mandat elle aura permis l’arrêt d’un génocide, évité une catastrophe sanitaire et contribué, sinon à faire progresser les droits de l’homme en Afrique, du moins à en faire condamner les violations systématiques.84

Similarly, Jean-Bernard Mérimée’s final report on Turquoise for the Security Council reiterates official claims that the operation fulfilled its mandate, stopped the genocide and helped bring its perpetrators to justice:

L’action de la force “Turquoise” a mis fin aux massacres perpétrés au Rwanda et a permis d’assurer la protection de la population dans la zone humanitaire sûre, ainsi que la transition avec la MINUAR II dans de bonnes conditions (...) [L]a présence du dispositif “Turquoise” en ZHS a facilité le recueil des témoignages sur les exactions commises à l’encontre des populations. Ces témoignages ont été transmis aux instances compétentes des Nations Unies.85

However Morris and Scharf point out that France was one of the countries sheltering genocide suspects, and thereby contributing to the climate of impunity and resultant exacerbation of instability in post-genocide Rwanda86; while a Reuters report notes that: ‘Meanwhile, the victims of Rwanda’s genocide initiated criminal proceedings in Belgium and France in order to force the authorities in those countries to prosecute persons responsible for the Rwandan genocide who had taken refuge there.’87

Christophe Boisbouvier, a French journalist who covered Rwanda in 1994 for Radio France Internationale (RFI) describes the role of France in Rwanda as: ‘un sujet de polémique, comme en témoigne le nombre d’écrits parus, surtout dans la presse anglo-saxonne’. Does this imply that the press of English-speaking countries is party to the Anglo-Saxon conspiracy, or that the French-language press has been conspicuously negligent of the story? Already, the politico-linguistic battlelines are drawn in this French journalist’s account; there were, however, dissenting voices even within RFI, notably Philippe Leymarie, who wrote in November 1994 that: 'La conduite de l’opération "Noroit"... avait démontré également à quel point cette France ne craignait pas de recourir, comme par le passé, au prétexte de la protection de ses ressortissants pour satisfaire des intérêts d’ordre géopolitique (...) Le basculement du nouveau régime rwandais dans la zone d’influence anglo-saxonne... est cependant le signe le plus spectaculaire de la désagrégation de l’ancienne "chasse gardée" française sur le continent noir, de plus en plus séduite par le parrain américain’.88

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Boisbouvier distinguishes two periods in French involvement in Rwanda, before April 6 1994 and after. The first period was characterised by ‘une stratégie française d’endiguement, d’abord militaire et ensuite politique.’ Paris, it is suggested, sought to oppose three perceived political phenomena: Ugandan expansionism, Anglo-Saxon perfidy and CIA penetration of the region via the Trojan horse of the RPF, ‘car dans l’esprit de beaucoup de militaires français, le FPR est entraîné et armé par celle-ci’: ‘On est en fait en plein complexe de Fachoda: il faut endiguer l’avancée des anglophones. C’est d’autant plus fort chez les Français que le FPR est hostile au système de relations privilégiées entre les pays d’Afrique francophone et la France, qui a survécu à la décolonisation. Le FPR, lui, a une vision beaucoup plus “tous azimuts” des relations internationales.’

Boisbouvier concludes that France’s débâcle in Rwanda was the logical outcome of its African policy, and its failure to understand Rwanda:

[L]a France n’a pas mené au Rwanda une politique différente que celle qu’elle mène ailleurs en Afrique. Elle a voulu soutenir un régime en place contre une rébellion venue de l’étranger et c’est là sans doute son erreur fondamentale: elle n’a pas compris que le Rwanda était différent d’un certain nombre d’autres pays en Afrique.... En fait, elle n’a pas su adapter sa politique à la situation rwandaise. Son manque de lucidité s’est révélé notamment entre 1991 et 1994 au moment où elle n’a pas conditionné son aide à une vraie démocratisation. On s’est contenté d’une démocratisation de façade sans vouloir considérer la militarisation du régime, la radicalisation de la société civile et des médias.

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Of the principal accusations of French complicity in the genocide, the following were addressed by the Quilès Commission. French diplomatic and military personnel in Rwanda were partisans of the ‘Hutu Power’ faction in the Rwandan government, and considered the RPF as an enemy; French military support for the FAR in its war against the RPF ‘bordered on direct engagement’ (est ‘allée jusqu’au limites de l’engagement direct’); there was a secret dimension to Franco-Rwandan military cooperation; French support for the Habyarimana regime was never questioned despite the numerous human rights abuses which preceded the genocide; France had foreseen the risks of genocide from as early as 1990 and was aware of the implication of the most senior figures of the Rwandan regime in its preparation; a high-level meeting took place in May 1994 between the FAR and the head of the Mission militaire de Coopération at the Ministère de la Coopération in Paris even while the same FAR was overseeing the genocide in Rwanda; France maintained diplomatic relations until July 1994 with the interim government which carried out the genocide; and the ‘Safe Humanitarian Zone’ created during Opération Turquoise facilitated the escape of the génocidaires.

These findings were significant, particularly in light of the official account of France’s interventions in Rwanda which has never conceded that these were anything less than honourable and successful:

La prise en compte du facteur humanitaire a été l’élément fondamental de l’opération Turquoise. La création de la ZHS a évité un exode massif de plus de deux millions de personnes vers le Zaïre et le Burundi. Elle a permis de réaliser les conditions de protection et de sécurité recherchées et de favoriser le développement d’une action humanitaire en liaison avec les ONG et les agences... S’inscrivant harmonieusement dans la manœuvre politique, militaire et médiatique, l’action humanitaire entreprise a donné une forte crédibilité à l’opération.

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92 This non-exhaustive list was suggested by Mehdi Ba (author Rwanda, un Génocide français, Paris: L’Esprit frappeur 1997) in his commentary on the Quilès Commission’s report, ‘Rwanda, encore un effort’, Le Nouvel Afrique-Asie 113, February 1999
However the conclusion of the Quilès Commission’s four-volume *Enquête sur la tragédie rwandaise* in this regard – that France was at worst ill-informed and insufficiently prepared for the scale of the Rwandan ‘tragedy’ (even the choice of this term implying an unforeseeable, unavoidable calamity) – falls short of that suggested by the body of evidence it presented. Critics of French African policy argue that the Quilès Commission’s report should not be taken as the last word on France’s role in Rwanda. Indeed, some commentators consider Quilès a ‘counter-offensive by the public authorities’ against the relentless criticism of French policy in Rwanda in particular, in Africa in general, and increasingly of the unaccountability and lack of transparency of much of French external policy.

While the Commission’s caution, faced with the most catastrophic failure of French overseas policy since the Algerian war (which caused the death of an estimated one million Algerians) is understandable, it is important to emphasise that despite the unprecedented access to documents (otherwise subject to at least thirty years of secret défense) which the Commission enjoyed, it failed in a number of key respects: firstly, by its very status. The Commission was no more than a ‘Mission d’information’; requests for the establishment of a formal parliamentary inquiry were rejected. As such, the Commission could only request the cooperation of those it invited to testify; and there was not, and could not have been, cross-examination of those witnesses, some of whom (particularly military personnel directly involved in supporting the FAR) expressed surprise at the lack of any questioning of their at best partial and selective accounts.⁹⁶

Secondly, no effort was made to assess the impact of ‘parallel diplomacy’, i.e. the support offered by unaccountable actors - military, diplomats and intelligence

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⁹⁵ Mehdi Ba, ‘Rwanda, encore un effort’, *Le Nouvel Afrique-Asie* 113, February 1999
services – to the former Rwandan regime, often in contradiction of public pronouncements of support for the full text of the Arusha accords, the genuine implementation of which, it should be remembered, would have necessitated the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Rwanda.

And thirdly, related to this, is the role of one of the key actors in French overt and covert support for the regime, former Captain of Gendarmerie Paul Barril. Although retaining his military rank, he claims to have been in Rwanda in a private capacity, and hence could be seen in Kigali after December 1993, when French forces were supposed to have been withdrawn under the terms of the August 1993 Arusha Accords. Instrumental in the putting into effect of the long-planned genocide was the accusation that the RPF had shot down the president’s plane, a version of events promoted ‘most vigorously by Mme Habyarimana and her controversial special adviser’. Barril appeared on French television news in June 1994, claiming the presidential jet had been shot down by the RPF and displaying a piece of equipment he claimed was the plane’s ‘black box’ flight recorder. Prunier notes: ‘It was a strange performance. The former captain seemed in a great state of excitement, and he insisted that the massacres being carried out in Rwanda at the time were ‘only disinformation’, an astonishing claim to make in late June 1994.’ Barril’s claims were easily refuted; the Garde Présidentielle (GP) and not the RPF controlled the hill from which the missiles were fired, and Agir Ici/Survie point out that a genuine ‘black box’ is in fact orange, and was optional on private aircraft. Prunier concludes:

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96 See Le Monde, Libération 17, 18 December 1998
97 Gérard Prunier, himself a sometime advisor to the French defence ministry, reminds us that: ‘In the early 1980s this career gendarme had been the head of the crack French anti-terrorist unit GIGN [Groupe d’intervention de la gendarmerie nationale] which operated in close cooperation with the anti-terrorist unit in the President’s office led by his friend and mentor Major Christian Prouteau [disgraced and dismissed - one of the scapegoats along with Defence Minister Charles Hernu - during the Greenpeace affair]. These connections helped to develop in him a disturbing tendency to place himself above the law.’ Gérard Prunier, The Rwanda Crisis, London: Charles Hurst 1995, p216
98 ibid p216
99 ibid p217
The question remains: why should Paul Barril have deliberately uttered inaccurate statements on TV...? (...) The former head of GIGN works in the shadowy business of “security” where many of his contacts are former regular military men turned soldiers of fortune. If we remember the testimonies about white men on Masaka hill being sighted on the evening of 6 April, and that firing anti-aircraft missiles is a relatively specialised trade, it is possible that Paul Barril could have known the men who had shot down the plane and on whose behalf they had acted. His unproven accusations against the RPF could have been made for the purpose of shifting attention away from other persons, known to him, capable of recruiting experienced white mercenaries for a hit contract on President Habyarimana.

Barril’s testimony - sworn in before a public enquiry if such had been created - would have been key to unlocking the conspiracy which set the genocide in motion, and the degree of French complicity, official or unofficial, therein. However, the Commission waited until 9 December 1998 - six days before the publication of their report on the 15th - before summoning Barril, who at the time was in the US. This tardiness is at odds with the comprehensive documentation published as appendices to the report, which included eight damning documents detailing Barril’s involvement in an arms shipment to the FAR during the genocide and after the UN embargo of May 17th. As special security advisor to Habyarimana (or, some have argued, to his wife, the driving force of the akazu), and as a mercenary and recruiter of mercenaries who, at the very least, knows more about the preparations for genocide and the assassination of Habyarimana than he has revealed, Barril’s testimony under cross-examination would have been crucial.

Indeed, it may be argued that there can be no closing of the Franco-Rwandan dossier until all this information is in the public domain, which may necessitate, as some in Kigali now argue, an expansion of the remit of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda to permit the arrest and indictment of key French players. But as France, a permanent member of the UN Security Council, was one of the progenitors of the Tribunal, and as France, alone with the US, opposed the universal jurisdiction of the proposed International Criminal Court, it may be concluded that the instigation of legal proceedings against French nationals is unlikely.
Conclusion

Rwanda may prove to have far-reaching implications for the making of African policy in France. Michel Rocard, prime minister from May 1988 to May 1991, told the Quilès Commission that he had ‘never heard of Rwanda’ during his premiership. Interviewed by Jean-Dominique Merchet in Libération (in an article bearing the unprecedented headline ‘Rocard: “Le déshonneur” de la France au Rwanda’) on the day the Commission concluded its hearings (9 July 1998), Rocard stated that he had been excluded from decision-making - ‘totally short-circuited’ - by the Elysée, and had learned of France’s first intervention in Rwanda - Opération Noroît - from the media:


Rocard, with Prunier, identifies ‘francophonie’ as the determining factor in French support for the Habyarimana régime and its immediate successor, the genocidal interim government of April 7 to July 4 1994. In his written deposition to the Parliamentary Commission, Rocard states that ‘we were wrong in supporting for too long the unworthy, which became the monstrous, regime of President Habyarimana’; his explanation evokes the intervention stimulus which the Fashoda syndrome represented:

Libération: Selon vous, pourquoi l’avons-nous fait [soutenu le régime .... de Habyarimana]?

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Rocard: A cause d’une vision folle et dévastatrice de la francophonie. Le critère linguistique, c’est-à-dire le fait que l’élite rwandaise parlait français, a permis d’occulter les pratiques de ce régime.  

The irony here is that, if this were the principal motivation for French backing of the regime up to and including its recourse to genocide, the francophone motive was specious. At best eight per cent of Rwandans could speak French; even the most basic textbooks emphasise that ‘...these territories [of ‘francophone’ Africa] were French-speaking only at the elite and administrative levels during much of the past century, because the colonial regimes kept education and political participation at a minimum.’

A rejection of these ethnocentric and Eurocentric interpretations demands a plausible alternative; this attempt to frame such an alternative has argued firstly that in order to establish a context for the crisis - the Rwandan civil war and its spillover into Zaire - it is necessary to consider it not as ethnic/tribal conflict or ‘anglophone plot’, but as one product of the failure of French military intervention; and secondly, that France’s interventions - Operations Noroit, Amaryllis, and Turquoise - do not present ‘a very positive balance sheet,’ as French official discourse still maintains. If intended as a humanitarian response to genocide, Turquoise, organised with apparent urgency, came three months too late, occurring only when the genocide was all but completed; on at least one occasion (at Bisesero), French troops failed to rescue or protect, within the Safe Humanitarian Zone, a community threatened by genocide and subsequently killed. Elite combat troops and heavy military equipment were deployed, more suited, by the French army’s own admission, to a textbook ‘restoration of client’ intervention. And Mobutu’s Zaire, rather than (anglophone) Tanzania or (RPF-sympathetic) Burundi, was used as the French base. (Two French emissaries had

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103 ibid
earlier cleared the ground by flying to Zaire to obtain the right to use the east Zairean airports at Goma, Bukavu and Kisangani for French planes).

Its legacy was instead a prolongation of the Rwandan civil war from 1990 to 1993, a militarisation and radicalisation of a sectarian regime which allowed it room for the preparation and implementation of genocide, followed by an extension of the Rwandan war to eastern Zaire, and the subsequent escalation of that war.
Conclusion

A double discrediting

The parliamentary commission chaired by socialist deputy Paul Quilès, which examined France’s military interventions in Rwanda, marked the first attempt by the French legislature to make the executive, its advisors and the army it commands accountable for military operations overseas. Earlier non-accountability and lack of public and parliamentary scrutiny are now considered key factors in permitting 30 years of interventionary policy which culminated in France’s support both overt and covert for Rwanda’s extremist regime, even while that regime prepared and conducted genocide.¹

It is obvious that despite some notable cracks in the official discourse, most revealingly in statements to the Quilès Commission by former premier Michel Rocard, the political and military shapers of French African policy have sought to draw a line under the Rwandan débâcle. Given the international indifference to Rwanda’s war, genocide and post-genocide trauma, pressure to keep Rwanda on France’s agenda can only come now from within France, a point not lost on elements of that country’s NGO sector (most notably Survie and its president, François-Xavier Verschave); three volumes to emerge from this constituency during 1998 offer some counterweight to the prevalence in historiography and public discourse of ‘la nouvelle politique africaine de la France’,² (a doctrine which has been declared without any acknowledgement by policy-makers of

¹ The alleged complicity by French military personnel in the training of genocidal militias also points to a failure to implement reforms of the military security apparatus promised a decade earlier in the wake of the Greenpeace affair; see Douglas Porch, The French Secret Services, Oxford: OUP 1995, p466
errors in ‘l’ancienne politique africaine...’). However, current attempts by a new generation of French parliamentarians - of the long quiescent Defence and Foreign Affairs committees in the National Assembly elected in June 1997 - to make overseas military policy transparent and accountable may prove futile without a fundamental reform of the institutions of the French Fifth Republic.

As a case study of external military intervention by a strong state in weak states, the African experience of French military intervention since 1960, and France's justification for these interventions, raise the question of whether external military intervention can ever be disinterested and genuinely humanitarian. Post-Cold War efforts to reclassify military intervention as 'forcible humanitarian intervention' or 'military humanism' have been categorically dismissed by commentators from weak states (notably Edward Said and Sayeman Bula-Bula3) as oxymorons. As discussed in this study, the prolonged civil war and genocide in Rwanda were due in no small part to French involvement, as intervention exacerbated a crisis which necessitated further interventions, latterly characterised as humanitarian. Civil war in Rwanda was met with military intervention by France, intervention which through arming, training and directly supporting one party to the conflict copper-fastened that party's hold on power, legitimised its intransigence and sabotaged negotiated compromise. This was the foreseeable reductio ad absurdum of thirty years of mechanical interventionary response to crises of the African post-colonial state, crises perceived as naturally recurring and hence requiring only an automatic response.

As a result of this and the failure or qualified success of other high-profile interventions (in Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo and East Timor), there has been an apparent shift in diplomatic and academic discourse since late 1996 away from

3 See especially Sayeman Bula-Bula (Professor of Law at the University of Kinshasa), 'L'idée d'ingérence à la lumière du nouvel ordre mondial', Revue Africaine du Droit International et Comparé (RADIC) 6 (1994), pp14-44, and 'La Doctrine d'ingérence humanitaire revisitée', RADIC 7 (1997), pp600-638
the 'right' or even 'duty to intervene' in African conflicts, to the validity of a nonintervention response. This shift, it may be argued, is attributable to the failure of earlier, interventionary responses, the resultant absence of a credible, disinterested intervenor and, in France’s African sphere of influence, of a new military assertiveness by emerging regional powers.

Significantly for the Great Lakes region and subsequently much of central Africa, the use by France in 1990 and again in 1994 of bases in eastern Zaire for its Rwandan interventions had entailed the rehabilitation of Mobutu Sese Seko, for several years previously persona non grata in Paris. By November 1994 Mobutu could attend and co-chair the Franco-African summit at Biarritz, from which the new, RPF-led Rwandan government was excluded.

However, at the Biarritz summit’s opening session, François Mitterrand declared a switch of emphasis in military cooperation: ‘Moins de milices ou de commandos parachutistes, mais des forces de gendarmerie ou de police, respectueuses des principes républicains, rendraient sans doute à la stabilité de vos États de meilleurs services.’4 In response, the newly-formed Observatoire permanent de la coopération française observed that: ‘Despite the fundamental revision of France’s politico-military objectives spelled out in the Defence White Paper of February 1994, despite new policy orientations favouring the training of police and gendarmerie, and despite the official declarations of the last Franco-African summit, military cooperation remains the most visible sign of France’s will to retain its world power status.’5

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Indeed, Philippe Leymarie’s 1994 article, ‘L’adieu au “pré carré” africain’, was contradicted the next year, following the election in May of President Jacques Chirac, by a report entitled: ‘La France entend maintenir son "champ" africain’. Following France’s May 1996 intervention in the Central African Republic to support President Ange-Félix Patassé, Stephen Smith could ask in Libération, ‘La France peut-elle quitter l’Afrique?’, and offer the tentative conclusion that it could not:

Ex-puissance coloniale, la France voudrait se retirer du continent africain et le mouvement est déjà bien amorcé. Mais il y a toujours un fil à la patte pour la retenir. A Bangui, c’était la communauté française sur place, la présence de 1.400 soldats français "prépositionnés" et surtout, la mise en doute de la crédibilité de la "première puissance africaine". Bien que cette crédibilité soit fortement écornée..., elle reste le ciment de la présence française sur le continent. Bref, sans le sauvetage de la Centrafrique, Paris perdrait le vote automatique des 14 "pays amis" aux Nations unies et son droit de préemption, notamment sur le pétrole et les télécoms, dans ses anciennes colonies.

But by August 1997, Foreign Minister Hubert Védrine stated that France sought to ‘adapt [its] policy to today’s African realities’. Africa and African attitudes to French military intervention were changing. Most notably in the African Great Lakes region, a new military assertiveness emerged in the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide which, in reaction to external ineffectiveness and self-interest, seized the initiative for preventive and punitive action and, by pre-empting a foreign response while applying the West’s own Realpolitik tactics, has transformed the political and strategic map of eastern and central Africa.

The longer-term significance of 1994 for French interventionary practice in Africa, in light of France’s non-intervention in Zaïre in 1996, supports this study’s argument that France’s Rwandan interventions mark a turning point in

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7 ‘La France entend maintenir son "champ" africain’, Le Monde 5 July 1995
both the theory and the practice of French military intervention. All the contradictions of over 30 years of French intervention in Africa were brought together in 1994, a year which would come to represent a watershed in French military policy on the continent. Having considered the validity of French claims to have reworked the motives and practice of its intervention strategy in keeping with post-Cold War trends and demands for humanitarian intervention, one might ask why, if France’s first ‘militaro-humanitarian’ intervention Opération Turquoise was such a success, did France hesitate and again demand a cloak of international support when faced, in eastern Zaire in late 1996, with an apparent recreation of the 1990 intervention stimulus: a perceived ‘invasion’ of a friendly, francophone state by an army of hostile neighbouring anglophones?

Attacks by the FGOR (ex-Rwandan army and militias) on the rwandophone populations of eastern Zaire (the Banyamulenge) in late 1996, accompanied by Mobutu’s revocation of those populations’ Zairean citizenship, sparked the rebellion which was to lead to his overthrow; and for the first time in its African sphere, France’s interventionary hands were tied. Following the RPF’s overthrow of a French-backed, pro-genocide regime in Rwanda, and with the cloak of Cold War legitimisation no longer available, France’s pré carré could no longer be an exclusive sphere of influence into which it could intervene with impunity and automatic approval from the ‘international community’. By the time France sought in vain to intervene in 1996 to save Mobutu once more, even the cloak of multilateral and ‘humanitarian’ intervention clashed with this new regional and international environment.

There was little international enthusiasm for France’s demands for intervention; after a visit to Zaire by the then Dutch cooperation minister Jan Pronk in December 1996, a Dutch official accused Paris of denying reality in its efforts to persuade the international community to let it halt the rebel advances: ‘The
French want to discuss a situation that doesn’t exist. They refuse to allow any talk of the Zairean conflict as internal. Paris only wants it discussed in terms of a foreign invasion. That way it can justify foreign intervention to prop up what it sees as a pro-French government.\textsuperscript{10}

Similarly, US ambassador to Kinshasa Daniel Simpson reacted sharply to French foreign minister Hervé de Charette’s criticism of the slowness of the international community (i.e. the US) to support its plan for intervention, telling the local press: ‘France can no longer impose its will in Africa ... Such neocolonialism is no longer acceptable. The French attitude does not reflect the reality of the situation... There is no longer any question of supporting dictators because they are pro-Western’.\textsuperscript{11}

So with Cold War justification consigned to history, and ‘humanitarian intervention’ severely compromised by France’s failures in Rwanda and the former Zaire between 1994 and 1997, what future could there be for France as a unilateral intervener outside Europe?

Indeed, the overall record of interventions by Western powers our of area during the 1990s may suggest that, in the absence of a permanent, neutral battalion of UN-commanded troops mandated by the General Assembly (and commanded by a reformed Security Council), only regional solutions are appropriate. The model for peacekeeping may be that of regional powers (such as Tanzania in Uganda, Vietnam in Cambodia, Italy in Albania and even Nigeria in Sierra Leone), where at least the intervenor’s interests - primarily regional security - are stated and clear. French intervention in Africa may take place clandestinely, or by proxy (mercenaries or African allies), or even under a cloak of UN-sanctioned

\textsuperscript{10} Wm Cyrus Reed, ‘Guerrillas in the Midst’ in Christopher Clapham, ed., \textit{African Guerrillas}, Oxford: James Currey 1998, p139

\textsuperscript{11} Quoted in \textit{Le Canard enchaîné}, 4 December 1996
multilateralism; but the days of the mechanical intervention response – of *La Légion saute sur Kolwezi* or ‘We’ll send him a few boys, old man Habyarimana’ – are over. And crucially, this development has been driven by African, not French, imperatives.

French African policy has been changed, although not on France’s terms, by these events; as the AFDL approached Kinshasa in 1997, Jean-François Bayart offered the following summary:

La France est malade de l’Afrique. Nous avons été complices, au Rwanda, de la préparation d’un génocide. Nous avons organisé, voire financé, l’envoi au Zaire de criminels de guerre serbes comme mercenaires, pour défendre une des dictatures les plus consternantes de la guerre froide. Tout indique, en outre, que le désastre de notre politique dans les Grands Lacs et au Zaire, et les graves exactions qui ont accompagnée à Kisangani, resteront sans sanction. (...) Il est à craindre que la crédibilité de la France ne soit pour longtemps ruinée par la débâcle de sa politique en Afrique centrale.12

In the wake of Rwanda-Zaire, French African policy-makers have now begun speaking of a policy of ‘ni ingérence, ni indifférence’13: what might be called engaged nonintervention. The professionalisation of the French army will be complete by 2002; its troop numbers in Africa have been reduced from 8350 in 1997 to 5000 today14; its permanent bases in the Central African Republic at Bouar and Bangui, key strategic springboards for French interventions across the continent since 1960, were closed at the end of 199715; and by late 1999 it was decided that the number of military cooperation personnel would be reduced by a quarter.16

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12 Jean-François Bayart, interview in *Le Monde*, 29 April 1997
It has been argued here that the principal long-term effect of Opération Turquoise has been to discredit French intervention in Africa, while seriously damaging the very concept of humanitarian intervention. The net result is what might be called a double discrediting: of France’s role in the Great Lakes region and now throughout central Africa; and of external military intervention, ‘humanitarian’ or otherwise, as a contribution to conflict resolution there. The failure of French military intervention in Rwanda, and subsequent involuntary nonintervention in the former Zaire, also marks the initiation of a period of rollback of French influence in Africa and the reduction of overt military support for France’s allies and interests there. However, the possible use of other African states as proxy intervenors where an overt French intervention would now be politically impossible (notably Chad in the current Congolese war) may suggest that the process of rollback may not be as swift or as inevitable as the evidence of the period 1994 to 1997 suggested. Nonetheless, there is an appetite, a public demand in France, a country where the droit d’ingérence has exercised public and academic debate to an extent unparalleled elsewhere, for a reinterpretation of the colonial ‘civilising mission’ to create a workable humanitarian framework for France’s role in the developing world. Arthur Conte refers to the need for a Europeanisation of military intervention in Africa:

[I]l est beau, noble et précieux que nous intervenions sur des théâtres lointains pour sauver des vies humaines ou servir des causes internationales sous bénéédiction de l’ONU, mais il n’est pas possible que la France seule prenne les plus lourds risques. De fait, elle est énorme, la liste de nos interventions outre-mer depuis trente ans. N’est-ce pas une charge excessive? Ne faudrait-il pas déplacer la responsabilité au niveau européen? On a de plus en plus le sentiment que non seulement il nous faudrait une très importante force nationale d’intervention rapide, mais qu’il nous faudrait plus encore une force européenne de même genre. Il faut savoir penser dans l’avenir, si on ne veut pas s’exposer aux pires déconvenues.17

17 Arthur Conte (Ancien Ministre, Ancien PDG de l’ORTF, Historien, Auteur de “l’Épopée Coloniale de la France”), Préface, Comité National des Traditions de Troupes de Marine, De Bizerte à Sarajévo; Les
France has been Europe's most prolific intervenor; if it seeks a role in promoting regional security following the failure of its interventionary activity in Africa, it can only be through turning its experience to advantage and applying its unmatched power-projection and logistical skills on the continent to the creation and professionalisation of an African-led and staffed regional security apparatus. Quite apart from offering a new positive, creative role to the professional French soldier, it may also act as a catharsis and a healing of the wounds in the Franco-African relationship, and began to restore France's image in a continent where it still has the power to do good.

Stanley Hoffman asks: 'Can one expect France – especially under its present, activist president – to refrain from interfering in its former African colonies' affairs, should some of these become failed or troubled states; or even into an Algerian civil war, if it created vast flows of refugees and threatened French lives and property in Algeria on a large scale?'18 The answer here can only be a tentative 'yes'; France will refrain, albeit involuntarily, from the type of overt military intervention which observers might have expected hitherto, as a result of its discrediting – internationally, among important sections of domestic opinion-formers and, perhaps most importantly, among the intervened.

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France

Mme Sharon Courtoux, Survie
M. Pierre Dabezies, professeur émérite, Université de Paris I, former Ambassador of France to Gabon
M. Antoine Glaser, Directeur de la rédaction, La Lettre du Continent (Indigo Publications)
Prof. Richard Joseph, Department of Political Science, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Prof. William J. Foltz, HJ Heinz Professor of African Studies and Political Science, Yale University
M. Roland Marchal, Senior Research Fellow, Centre d’études et de relations internationales/ Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, Paris
M. Gérard Prunier, Centre national de recherche scientifique (author The Rwanda Crisis, London: Charles Hurst 1995)
M. Pascal Richard, Rédacteur en Chef, Théopresse, Paris
M. Modeste Rutabayiru, Premier Conseiller, Ambassade de la République rwandaise à Paris
M. Stephen Smith, Libération

UK

M. Emery Brusset, Steering Committee, Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda
Lieutenant Colonel Bertrand Binnendijk, French Army Liaison Officer (1996), British Army Staff College, Camberley
Col. Guy Panaget, French Liaison Officer (1996), Directorate General Development and Doctrine, British Army Staff College, Camberley
Lillian Wong, Africa Research Group, Research Analysts Department, Foreign & Commonwealth Office, London

Uganda

Hon. Grace Akello MP, Presidential Commission for Teso
Mr Dixon Kamukama, Department of History, Makerere University (author The Rwandan Conflict, Its Roots and Regional Implications, Kampala: Fountain 1993)
Hon. Brig. Matayo Kyaligonza MP Buhaguzi Constituency
M. Christian de Ville d’Avray, Premier Secrétaire, Ambassade de France, Kampala

Rwanda

Dr Jacques Bihozagara, Ministre de la Jeunesse et du Mouvement Associatif
M. Jean Carbonare, Coordination des ligues et associations de défense des droits de l’homme (CLADHO)
Mr Claude Dusaidi, Special Advisor to the Vice-President
Colonel Marcel Gatsinzi, Chef d’Etat-Major Adjoint, Armée Patriotique Rwandaise (APR)
Major-General Paul Kagame, Minister of Defence and Vice-President
M. Placide Muhigana, journalist, La Nouvelle Relève
M. Faustin Musare, Secrétaire particulier et Conseiller du Président
M. Elie Mpayimana, journalist, L’ère de Liberté
Col. M. Ndengeyinka, APR
M. Denis Polisi, Secretary General, Bureau politique, Rwandan Patriotic Front
Commandant Tito Rutaremara, APR
Major Wilson (Shaban) Rutayisire, Office rwandais d’information (ORINFOR)

By correspondence

Dr John Chipman, International Institute for Strategic Studies, London
M. Pascal Chaigneau, Administrateur Général, Centre d’études diplomatiques et stratégiques (CEDS), Paris
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**Sénégal**

**Tchad**
- Depuis 1986, la France intervient avec des troupes de l'opération Epervier, avec la participation de 900 hommes.
- Depuis 1992, 120 personnes médicales sont envoyées dans le cadre de l'opération Bioforce.

**Djibouti**

**Somalie**
- 1992. Opération Onyx, avec 2 100 hommes dans le cadre de l'ONUCF.
- 1993. 1 100 hommes dans le cadre de l'ONUCOM II.

**Zaire**

**Angola**

**République centrafricaine**

**Gabon**
- Mai à juin 1990. Opération Requin, avec 2 000 hommes, pour la protection des ressortissants après les émeutes de Libreville.

**Togo**
- 1986. 150 hommes sont sur place.
- Opération de soutien au président Eyadema lors d'une tentative de coup d'État.

**Comores**

**Zambie**

**Cameroun**

**Benin**
Voies ferrées
Forêt équatoriale
LES SOLDATS FRANÇAIS NE TÉNIAIENT PAS
LES MACHETES...

... et en plus,
on regardait ailleurs...
POUR MÉMOIRE.

ACCORD DE COOPERATION militaire technique entre la République française et la République togolaise (ensemble un échange de lettres).

Du 23 mars 1976 (A).

(A) Approuvé par la loi n° 78-693 du 6 juillet 1978 (JO du 7, p. 2695).

Nota. — Ce texte sera inséré dans le présent ouvrage dès la parution du décret de publication.
ACCORD DE COOPERATION MILITAIRE TECHNIQUE

entre le Gouvernement de la République française et le Gouvernement de la République togolaise (ensemble un Echange de lettres).

Le Gouvernement de la République française, d'une part, le Gouvernement de la République togolaise, d'autre part, sont convenus des dispositions ci-après :

TITRE I°
Des personnels militaires français.

Article I°.
A la demande du Gouvernement de la République togolaise, le Gouvernement de la République française s'engage à apporter dans la mesure de ses moyens, une assistance en personnels militaires français pour l'organisation et l'instruction des forces armées togolaises.

Article III.
Le Gouvernement de la République togolaise détermine chaque année et communique au Gouvernement de la République française la liste des postes à pourvoir, la description des emplois, les qualifications requises et les lieux d'affectation des personnels à mettre en place.

Le Gouvernement de la République française fait connaître au Gouvernement de la République togolaise les postes qu'il est en mesure d'honorer.

Article III.
Les personnels français sont désignés par le Gouvernement français après accord avec le Gouvernement de la République togolaise pour une durée fixée conformément à la réglementation française sur les séjours à l'extérieur ; cette durée peut être augmentée ou réduite d'un commun accord entre les Gouvernements.

Tout changement d'affectation en cours de séjour est arrêté après consultation des autorités compétentes de la République française et des autorités compétentes de la République togolaise.

Le Gouvernement de la République togolaise et le Gouvernement de la République française peuvent l'un et l'autre, après concertation, prendre l'initiative de la relève d'un assistant militaire technique en cours de séjour.

Article IV.
Les personnels militaires français servent dans les forces armées togolaises avec le grade de la hiérarchie de ces forces armées correspondant à celui dont ils sont titulaires dans les forces armées françaises ; ils revêtent l'uniforme togolais ou la tenue civile suivant les instructions de l'autorité militaire togolaise.

Ils sont tenus de se conformer aux règlements et directives en vigueur dans les forces armées togolaises.

Ils se prêteront, en aucun cas, prendre part à l'execution d'opérations de guerre ni de maintien ou de rétablissement de l'ordre ou de la légalité.
Article V.

Les personnels militaires français conservent le statut qui est le leur dans la réglementation française.

A ce titre, ils sont affectés à une formation dite Bureau d'aide militaire qui relève de l'Ambassade de France et qui est placé sous l'autorité de l'officier français le plus ancien dans le grade le plus élevé mis à la disposition de la République togolaise.

Les appréciations portées par les autorités togolaises sur la manière de servir des intéressés sont adressées au Gouvernement français; en cas d'indiscipline ou de faute professionnelle, ils n'ont que de la part du Gouvernement togolais d'autre sanction que la remise motivée à la disposition du Gouvernement français, assortie s'il y a lieu d'une demande de sanction. Les dispositions du présent alinéa ne font pas obstacle à la mise en jeu par les autorités françaises des procédures disciplinaires prévues par le statut des intéressés. Le Gouvernement français est tenu de faire connaître aux autorités togolaises la suite donnée auxdites procédures.

Toutes les décisions du commandement togolais les concernant sont portées à la connaissance de l'Ambassade de France en République togolaise; de même toutes dispositions les concernant prises par les autorités françaises sont portées à la connaissance des autorités togolaises.

L'examen des problèmes concernant la situation des personnels militaires français au regard de leur statut peut faire l'objet de missions des autorités françaises. Les conditions dans lesquelles s'accomplissent ces missions sont fixées par entente entre les deux Gouvernements.

Article VI.

Dans l'exercice de leur fonction, les personnels militaires français mis à la disposition du Gouvernement de la République togolaise reçoivent de ce Gouvernement l'aide et la protection qu'il accorde aux personnels de ses propres forces armées.

Ils jouissent des droits et garanties dont bénéficient les experts internationaux pour leurs actes, paroles et écrits de qualité dans l'exercice ou à l'occasion de l'exercice de leurs fonctions.

Article VII.

Le Gouvernement de la République togolaise prend à sa charge la réparation des dommages causés par les personnels militaires français dans l'exercice de leurs fonctions. En cas d'action judiciaire intentée à l'occasion de tels dommages, le Gouvernement de la République togolaise se substitue dans l'instance aux personnels militaires français mis en cause.

Au cas où le dommage résulterait d'une faute personnelle, le Gouvernement de la République togolaise pourra en demander réparation au Gouvernement de la République française.

En cas de dommages subis dans le service ou à l'occasion du service par des militaires français, hormis le cas de faute personnelle, le Gouvernement de la République togolaise versera des indemnités équitables. Les demandes d'indemnité seront transmises au Gouvernement de la République togolaise à la diligence du Gouvernement de la République française.

Article VIII.

Les juridictions togolaises sont compétentes pour connaître des infractions commises par les personnels militaires français placés sous le commandement togolais.
Cependant, en cas d'infraction aux lois togolaises commises par les personnels militaires français dans le service ou à l'occasion du service, les auteurs desdites infractions sont remis immédiate-ment à l'Ambassade de France en République togolaise qui procède à leur rapatriement en France où seront engagées à leur encontre toutes poursuites utiles.

Le Gouvernement de la République française est tenu d'infor-
mer le Gouvernement de la République togolaise des suites judiciaires données à l'infraction.

En cas d'infraction aux lois togolaises passible d'une peine d'emprisonnement ou d'une peine plus grave commise en dehors du service par les personnels militaires français et les membres de leur famille, les auteurs détenus devant une juridiction togolaise et dont la détention est jugée nécessaire, sont assignés à résidence dans un lieu fixé d'un commun accord entre les autorités togolaises et les autorités françaises en vue de leur comparution devant les autorités judiciaires togolaises compétentes.

Les personnels militaires français ou les membres de leur famille condamnés à des peines d'emprisonnement par les juridi-
dictions togolaises sont remis à l'Ambassade de France aux fins de rapatriement et purgeront leur peine dans les locaux pénitentiaires français. Le Gouvernement de la République française est tenu d'informer le Gouvernement de la République togolaise des lieux et conditions d'exécution des peines.

Sont décidées selon la législation française sur l'avis du parquet établi près la juridiction togolaise qui a prononcé la condamna-
tion, les commutations, réductions et remises gracieuses, libé-
rations conditionnelles et autres modalités d'exécution des peines. Les décisions sont notifiées par le Gouvernement français au parquet établi près la juridiction togolaise ayant prononcé la condamnation.

Article IX.

Le Gouvernement de la République française prend à sa charge les droits acquis par les personnels militaires français : soldes et accessoires, primes diverses, frais de transport de France à Lomé et retour.

Les frais de déplacement prévus par la réglementation françai-
se et résultant de l'exécution de missions de service sont à la charge du Gouvernement togolais.

Article X.

Le Gouvernement de la République française prend à sa charge le logement des personnels militaires français ; le Gou-
vernement de la République togolaise verse à titre de contribution aux dépenses supportées par le Gouvernement de la République française une allocation pour chaque assistant militaire technique dont le montant et les modalités de versement sont déterminés d'un commun accord par échange de lettres entre les deux Gou-
vernements.

Le Gouvernement de la République togolaise assure à ces personnels et à leurs familles les soins médicaux et hospitaliers au même titre et dans les mêmes conditions qu'aux membres des forces armées togolaises.

Article XI.

Les personnels visés par le présent Accord peuvent importer en franchise leurs effets personnels qui doivent correspondre à leur rang social ; ils peuvent importer ou acquérir sous le régime de l'admission temporaire du mobilier et un véhicule privé à leur usage personnel. Ils peuvent le réexporter dans les mêmes conditions à leur départ définitif.
Les personnels de l'assistance militaire technique sont redevables au Togo de la taxe progressive sur les traitements et salaires dans les conditions prévues à l'article 12 de l'Accord général de coopération technique.

TITRE II
De la formation en France des cadres des forces armées togolaises.

Article XIII
Le Gouvernement de la République togolaise peut s'adresser pour la formation des cadres de ses forces armées à la République française qui lui apporte à cet égard son concours dans la mesure de ses moyens.
Les nationaux togolais sont admis dans les grandes écoles et établissements militaires français soit par concours dans les mêmes conditions que les nationaux français, soit dans les limites d'un contingent particulier comportant l'aménagement de ces conditions.
Des nationaux togolais désignés par le Gouvernement, en accord avec le Gouvernement français, peuvent être admis comme stagiaires dans les écoles et établissements français.

Article XIV
Le Gouvernement de la République française prend à sa charge les frais de transport et d'instruction des élèves et stagiaires togolais admis dans les écoles et établissements militaires français.
Le Gouvernement de la République togolaise prend à sa charge les dépenses de solde et les frais d'entretien (alimentation, logement, sécurité sociale) de ses stagiaires.
Le Gouvernement de la République française assure aux stagiaires togolais et à leur famille en France les soins médicaux et hospitaliers au même titre et dans les mêmes conditions qu'aux membres des Forces armées françaises.

Article XV
Les stagiaires togolais en France sont justiciables des dispositions analogues à celles prévues aux articles 7, 8 et 11 pour les assistants militaires techniques français en service au Togo.

TITRE III
De la fourniture de matériel et d'équipement militaire.

Article XVI
Le Gouvernement de la République togolaise peut s'adresser au Gouvernement de la République française pour l'entretien et la fourniture à titre gratuit ou onéreux de matériels et d'équipements militaires.
Les forces armées togolaises peuvent faire appel pour le soutien logistique au concours des forces armées françaises qui leur est accordé dans la limite de leurs possibilités.
TITRE IV
Des facilités de transit et d’escale.

Article XVII
Le Gouvernement togolais peut autoriser le transit terrestre et aérien sur son territoire au personnel et matériel des forces armées françaises.
L’autorisation ne peut être accordée que sur la demande du Gouvernement français comportant entre autres indications, l’origine et la nature, la destination, l’itinéraire dans le pays de transit du personnel et du matériel militaire français.
Elle n’est Valable que pour une seule opération ; exceptionnellement elle peut être délivrée à titre permanent et couvrir plusieurs opérations de transit échelonnées dans le temps. Dans ce cas la demande du Gouvernement français doit être accompagnée d’un plan de transit portant sur toutes ces opérations.

Article XVIII
Le survol de l’espace aérien togolais par des aéronefs militaires français et les escales de ces appareils sont soumis à autorisation préalable cas par cas ; toutefois les liaisons régulières ou périodiques font l’objet d’autorisations annuelles et renouvelables.
Ces autorisations peuvent être suspendues par le Gouvernement togolais si celui-ci estime que ces liaisons sont de nature à porter atteinte à la souveraineté de l’Etat togolais.

Article XIX
Le Gouvernement togolais s’engage à apporter le concours de ses services pour faciliter les opérations de transit et d’aéral sur son territoire au profit des forces armées françaises.

Article XX
Les dispositions prévues aux articles XVII, XVIII et XIX ci-dessus sont également applicables aux forces armées togolaises par le Gouvernement de la République française.

Article XXX
Le présent Accord remplace et abroge les Accords de coopération militaire des 30 et 30 octobre 1962.
Il est conclu pour une durée de deux ans renouvelable par tacite reconduction sauf dénonciation par une des Parties contractantes.
La dénonciation devra être notifiée par la voie diplomatique au moins six mois à l’avance.
Le présent Accord entrera en vigueur le premier jour du deuxième mois suivant l’échange des Instruments constatant l’accomplissement des procédures requises à cet effet dans chacun des deux Etats.
Cet échange aura lieu à Paris aussi tôt que faire se pourra.
Fait à Lomé, le 23 mars 1976, en deux exemplaires originaux.

Pour le Gouvernement de la République française :
JEAN DE LIOKOWEI,
Ministre de la Coopération.

Pour le Gouvernement de la République togolaise :
AYI BOUNTEND BONGUDE,
Ministre des Affaires étrangères.
Lomé, le 23 mars, 1976.

A Son Excellence, Monsieur Ayi Houenou Hunlede,
Ministre des Affaires étrangères de la République togolaise.

Monsieur le Ministre,

L'article 10, alinéa 1°, de l'Accord de coopération militaire technique prévoit le versement par le Gouvernement togolais, à titre de contribution aux dépenses supportées par le Gouvernement français, d'une allocation pour chaque assistant militaire technique dont le montant et les modalités de versement sont déterminés d'un commun accord entre les deux Gouvernements.

A la suite des échanges de vues qui ont eu lieu entre nos deux délégations, les taux mensuels suivants ont été retenus pour cette allocation qui comprend :

— une indemnité de logement de :
  40 000 F C. F. A. pour un célibataire ;
  45 000 F C. F. A. pour un ménage sans enfant,
auxquels il convient d'ajouter 5 000 F C. F. A. par enfant, le plafond étant fixé à 60 000 F C. F. A. ;
— une indemnité forfaitaire de 10 000 F C. F. A. pour tenir compte des servitudes spécifiques.

L'allocation est due pour chacun des assistants militaires techniques pour la totalité du séjour au Togo, y compris la durée de congé réglementaire pour les cadres qui, exceptionnellement, y font deux séjours consécutifs.

Le Gouvernement de la République togolaise mettra un agent qualifié à la disposition du Bureau d'aide militaire pour l'aider à gérer les logements des assistants militaires techniques.

Un titre de recette, établi sur la base des effectifs constatés au 1er janvier, comprenant le personnel en service ou en congé réglementaire, sera émis par le Gouvernement de la République française et couvrira la période du 1er janvier au 30 novembre.

Le montant de ce titre de recette sera versé par le Gouvernement de la République togolaise avant le 1er décembre.

Le titre de recette du mois de décembre sera un titre de régularisation pour tenir compte de la situation des effectifs réels entre le 1er janvier et le 30 novembre.

Le titre de recette du mois de décembre sera réglé avant le 31 mars de l'année suivante.

Les dispositions prévues ci-dessus pourront être réexaminées à la demande de l'une ou l'autre des Parties.

J'ai l'honneur de vous prier de bien vouloir me confirmer l'accord de votre Gouvernement sur les dispositions qui précèdent.

Veuillez agréer, Monsieur le Ministre, les assurances de ma haute considération.

JEAN DE LEPKOWSKI,
Ministre de la Coopération
de la République française.
Lomé, le 23 mars 1976

A Son Excellence, Monsieur Jean de Lipkowsky,
Ministre de la Coopération de la République française.

Monsieur le Ministre,

Vous avez bien voulu, en date de ce jour, m'adresser la lettre dont la teneur suit :

« L'article 10, alinéa 1°, de l'Accord de coopération militaire technique prévoit le versement par le Gouvernement togolais, à titre de contribution aux dépenses supportées par le Gouvernement français, d'une allocation pour chaque assistant militaire technique dont le montant et les modalités de versement sont déterminés d'un commun accord entre les deux Gouvernements.

« A la suite des échanges de vues qui ont eu lieu entre nos deux délégations, les taux mensuels suivants ont été retenus pour cette allocation qui comprend :

« — une indemnité de logement :

« 40 000 F C. F. A. pour un célibataire ;

« 45 000 F C. F. A. pour un ménage sans enfant ;

« sur lesquels il convient d'ajouter 5 000 F C F.A. par enfant, le plafond étant fixé à 60 000 F C. F. A. ;

« — une indemnité forfaitaire de 10 000 F C. F. A pour tenir compte des servitudes spécifiques.

« L'allocation est due pour chacun des assistants militaires techniques pour la totalité du séjour au Togo, y compris la durée de congé réglementaire pour les cadres qui, exceptionnellement, y font deux séjours consécutifs.

« Le Gouvernement de la République togolaise mettra un agent qualifié à la disposition du Bureau d'aide militaire pour l'aider à gérer les logements des assistants militaires techniques.

« Un titre de recette, établi sur la base des effectifs constatés au 1er janvier, comprenant le personnel en service ou en congé réglementaire, sera émis par le Gouvernement de la République française et couvrira la période s'étendant du 1er janvier au 30 novembre.

« Le montant de ce titre de recette sera versé par le Gouvernement de la République togolaise avant le 1er décembre.

« Le titre de recette du mois de décembre sera un titre de régularisation pour tenir compte de la situation des effectifs réels entre le 1er janvier et le 30 novembre.

« Le titre de recette du mois de décembre sera réglé avant le 31 mars de l'année suivante.

« Les dispositions prévues ci-dessus pourront être réexaminées à la demande de l'une ou l'autre des Parties.

« J'ai l'honneur de vous prier de bien vouloir me confirmer l'accord de votre Gouvernement sur les dispositions qui précèdent. »

J'ai l'honneur de vous faire savoir que les dispositions contenues dans cette lettre recueillent l'agrément du Gouvernement togolais.

Je vous prie d'agréer, Monsieur le Ministre, les assurances de ma haute considération.

AYI HOUENO HOUNGBOZI,
Ministre des affaires étrangères
de la République togolaise.

Monsieur le Ministre,

L'article 10, alinéa 1er, de l'Accord de coopération militaire technique prévoit le versement par le gouvernement togolais, à titre de contribution aux dépenses supportées par le gouvernement français, d'une allocation pour chaque assistant militaire technique dont le montant et les modalités de versement sont déterminés d'un commun accord entre les deux gouvernements.

A la suite des échanges de vues qui ont eu lieu entre nos deux délégations, les taux mensuels suivants ont été retenus pour cette allocation qui comprend :

- une indemnité de logement de :
  40 000 F CFA, pour un célibataire,
  45 000 F CFA, pour un ménage sans enfant, auxquels il convient d'ajouter 5 000 F CFA par enfant, le plafond étant fixé à 60 000 F CFA.

- une indemnité forfaitaire de 10 000 F CFA pour tenir compte des servitudes spécifiques.

.../...
L'allocation est due pour chacun des assistants militaires techniques pour la totalité du séjour au Togo, y compris la durée de congé réglementaire pour les cadres qui exceptionnellement y font deux séjours consécutifs.

Le gouvernement de la République togolaise mettra à disposition un agent qualifié à la disposition du Bureau d'Aide Militaire pour l'aider à gérer les logements des assistants militaires techniques.

Un titre de recette, établi sur la base des effectifs constatés au 1er janvier, comprenant le personnel en service ou en congé réglementaire, sera émis par le gouvernement de la République française et couvrira la période du 1er janvier au 30 novembre.

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Le titre de recette du mois de décembre sera réglé avant le 31 mars de l'année suivante.

Les dispositions prévues ci-dessus pourront être réexaminées à la demande de l'une ou l'autre des Parties.

.../...
J'ai l'honneur de vous prier de bien vouloir me confirmer l'accord de votre gouvernement sur les dispositions qui précèdent.

Veuillez agréer, Monsieur le Ministre,
les assurances de ma haute considération.

"Copie certifiée conforme à l'original"
à Lomé, le 23 mars 1976

Jean de LIPKOWSKI
Ministre de la Coopération
de la République française
LOI n° 78-694 du 6 juillet 1978 autorisant l'approbation de la convention judiciaire entre le Gouvernement de la République française et le Gouvernement de la République togolaise, signée à Lomé le 23 mars 1976 (1).

L'Assemblée nationale et le Sénat ont adopté,
Le Président de la République promulgue la loi dont la teneur suit :

Article unique. — Est autorisée l'approbation de la convention judiciaire entre le Gouvernement de la République française et le Gouvernement de la République togolaise, signée à Lomé le 23 mars 1976, dont le texte est annexé à la présente loi (2).

La présente loi sera exécutée comme loi de l'Etat.
Fait à Paris, le 6 juillet 1978.

VALÉRY GISCARD D'ESTAING.

Par le Président de la République :
Le Premier ministre,
RAYMOND BARRE.

Le ministre des affaires étrangères,
LOUIS DE GUIRINDAU.

(1) TRAVAUX PREPARATOIRES (1)

Sénat :

Projet de loi n° 258 (1977-1978) :
Rapport de M. Jacques Geroin, au nom de la commission des affaires étrangères, n° 310 (1977-1978) ;
Discussion et adoption le 20 avril 1978.

Assemblée nationale :

Projet de loi, adopté par le Sénat (n° 129) :
Rapport de M. Bautmal, au nom de la commission des affaires étrangères (n° 240) ;
Discussion et adoption le 29 juin 1978.

(2) Il sera publié ultérieurement au Journal officiel.

LOI n° 78-695 du 6 juillet 1978 autorisant l'approbation de l'accord de coopération en matière d'information entre le Gouvernement de la République française et le Gouvernement de la République togolaise, signée à Lomé le 23 mars 1976 (1).

L'Assemblée nationale et le Sénat ont adopté,
Le Président de la République promulgue la loi dont la teneur suit :

Article unique. — Est autorisée l'approbation de l'accord de coopération en matière d'information entre le Gouvernement de la République française et le Gouvernement de la République togolaise, signée à Lomé le 23 mars 1976, dont le texte est annexé à la présente loi (2).

La présente loi sera exécutée comme loi de l'Etat.
Fait à Paris, le 6 juillet 1978.

VALÉRY GISCARD D'ESTAING.

Par le Président de la République :
Le Premier ministre,
RAYMOND BARRE.

Le ministre des affaires étrangères,
LOUIS DE GUIRINDAU.

(1) TRAVAUX PREPARATOIRES (1)

Sénat :

Projet de loi n° 256 (1977-1978) :
Rapport de M. Jacques Geroin, au nom de la commission des affaires étrangères, n° 308 (1977-1978) ;
Discussion et adoption le 20 avril 1978.

Assemblée nationale :

Projet de loi, adopté par le Sénat (n° 128) :
Rapport de M. Bautmal, au nom de la commission des affaires étrangères (n° 241) ;
Discussion et adoption le 29 juin 1978.

(2) Il sera publié ultérieurement au Journal officiel.

LOI n° 78-696 du 6 juillet 1978 autorisant l'approbation de l'accord de coopération militaire technique entre le Gouvernement de la République française et le Gouvernement de la République togolaise, ensemble un échange de lettres signés à Lomé le 23 mars 1976 (1).

L'Assemblée nationale et le Sénat ont adopté,
Le Président de la République promulgue la loi dont la teneur suit :

Article unique. — Est autorisée l'approbation de l'accord de coopération militaire technique entre le Gouvernement de la République française et le Gouvernement de la République togolaise, ensemble un échange de lettres signés à Lomé le 23 mars 1976, et dont les textes sont annexés à la présente loi (2).

La présente loi sera exécutée comme loi de l'Etat.
Fait à Paris, le 6 juillet 1978.

VALÉRY GISCARD D'ESTAING.

Par le Président de la République :
Le Premier ministre,
RAYMOND BARRE.

Le ministre des affaires étrangères,
LOUIS DE GUIRINDAU.

(1) TRAVAUX PREPARATOIRES (1)

Sénat :

Projet de loi n° 257 (1977-1978) :
Rapport de M. Jacques Geroin, au nom de la commission des affaires étrangères, n° 309 (1977-1978) ;
Discussion et adoption le 20 avril 1978.

Assemblée nationale :

Projet de loi, adopté par le Sénat (n° 125) :
Rapport de M. Bautmal, au nom de la commission des affaires étrangères (n° 240) ;
Discussion et adoption le 29 juin 1978.

(2) Il sera publié ultérieurement au Journal officiel.

LOI n° 78-697 du 6 juillet 1978 autorisant l'approbation de l'accord de coopération dans le domaine maritime entre le Gouvernement de la République française et le Gouvernement de la République togolaise, ensemble un échange de lettres signés à Lomé le 23 mars 1976 (1).

L'Assemblée nationale et le Sénat ont adopté,
Le Président de la République promulgue la loi dont la teneur suit :

Article unique. — Est autorisée l'approbation de l'accord de coopération dans le domaine maritime entre le Gouvernement de la République française et le Gouvernement de la République togolaise, ensemble un échange de lettres signés à Lomé le 23 mars 1976, et dont les textes sont annexés à la présente loi (2).

La présente loi sera exécutée comme loi de l'Etat.
Fait à Paris, le 6 juillet 1978.

VALÉRY GISCARD D'ESTAING.

Par le Président de la République :
Le Premier ministre,
RAYMOND BARRE.

Le ministre des affaires étrangères,
LOUIS DE GUIRINDAU.

(1) TRAVAUX PREPARATOIRES (1)

Sénat :

Projet de loi n° 255 (1977-1978) :
Rapport de M. Jacques Geroin, au nom de la commission des affaires étrangères, n° 307 (1977-1978) ;
Discussion et adoption le 20 avril 1978.

Assemblée nationale :

Projet de loi, adopté par le Sénat (n° 127) :
Rapport de M. Bautmal, au nom de la commission des affaires étrangères (n° 242) ;
Discussion et adoption le 29 juin 1978.

(2) Ils seront publiés ultérieurement au Journal officiel.
ACCORD de coopération militaire technique entre le gouvernement de la République française et le gouvernement de la République du Tchad.

Du 6 mars 1976 (A) (B).

Annexe et modèle d'imprimé : Une annexe.

Textes abrogés :
Voir l'article 21.

Art. 1er. A la demande du gouvernement de la République française, d'une part, et du gouvernement de la République du Tchad, d'autre part,

Sont convenus des dispositions suivantes :

TITRE PREMIER.

DES PERSONNELS MILITAIRES FRANÇAIS.

Art. 2. Le gouvernement de la République française, au titre de l'article 3 ci-après, se réserve, en cas de doute ou de non-conformité avec les dispositions de l'article 4 ci-après, un droit de consultation avec le gouvernement de la République du Tchad.

Le gouvernement de la République française, au titre de l'article 3 ci-après, se réserve, en cas de doute ou de non-conformité avec les dispositions de l'article 4 ci-après, un droit de consultation avec le gouvernement de la République du Tchad.

Art. 3. Les personnels militaires français sont désignés par le gouvernement de la République du Tchad, pour une durée fixée conformément à la réglementation française sur les séjours à l'extérieur ; cette durée peut être prolongée ou réduite d'un commun accord entre les deux gouvernements.

Tout changement d'affectation ou de lieu de résidence en cours de séjour est arrêté après consultation entre les autorités compétentes de la République française et de la République du Tchad.

Art. 4. Les personnels militaires français servent dans les forces armées françaises avec leur grade. Ils revêtent l'uniforme français ou la tenue civile suivant les instructions de l'autorité militaire française.

Les personnels militaires français sont soumis aux règles de discipline et de discipline militaires françaises, en vigueur dans les forces armées françaises, sous réserve des dispositions du présent accord.

Art. 5. Les personnels militaires français conservent les statuts qui sont les leurs dans la réglementation française.

Art. 6. Dans l'exercice de leurs fonctions, les personnels militaires français mis à la disposition du gouvernement de la République du Tchad reçoivent de ce gouvernement l'aide et la protection qu'il accorde aux personnels de ses propres forces armées.
Art. 7. Le gouvernement de la République du Tchad prend à sa charge la réparation des dommages causés par les personnels militaires français dans l'exercice ou à l'occasion de l'exercice de leurs fonctions. En cas d'action judiciaire intentée à l'occasion de tels dommages le gouvernement de la République du Tchad se substitue dans l'instance aux personnels militaires français mis en cause.

Au cas où le dommage résulterait d'une faute personnelle le gouvernement de la République du Tchad pourra en demander réparation au gouvernement de la République française.

Art. 8. Les personnels militaires français mis à la disposition de la République du Tchad demeurent sous juridiction française pour les infractions commises dans le service ou à l'occasion du service et sont placés sous juridiction tchadienne pour les infractions commises en dehors du service.

Pour les infractions commises dans le service ou à l'occasion du service, les auteurs desdites infractions sont remis immédiatement à l'ambassade de France en vue de leur rapatriement pour présentation devant les juridictions françaises compétentes, le gouvernement français étant tenu d'informer le gouvernement de la République du Tchad des suites judiciaires données à l'affaire.

Pour les infractions commises en dehors du service, la République du Tchad accepte, si les autorités françaises en font la demande :
— que les auteurs soient, si les circonstances l'exigent, astreints à résidence, sous surveillance, en un lieu fixé en territoire tchadien, d'un commun accord entre les autorités tchadiennes et les autorités françaises en vue de leur comparution devant la juridiction tchadienne compétente ;
— que les peines soient infligées par les juridictions françaises, en faveur des infractions commises dans les établissements pénitentiaires tchadiens.

Sont décidées, selon la législation française sur l'avis du parquet établi près la juridiction tchadienne qui a prononcé la condamnation, les commutations, réductions et remises gracieuses, libérations conditionnelles et autres modalités d'exécution des peines. Les décisions sont notifiées par le gouvernement français au parquet établi près la juridiction tchadienne ayant prononcé la condamnation.

Les dispositions relatives aux infractions commises en dehors du service, sont applicables aux membres de la famille du militaire français résidant avec lui au Tchad.

Le rapatriement d'un membre de sa famille entraîne celui du coopérant militaire technique français.

Art. 9. Le gouvernement de la République française prend à sa charge les droits acquis par les personnels militaires français — solde et accessoires, primes diverses — frais de transport de France à N'Djamena et retour.

Art. 10. Le gouvernement de la République du Tchad fournit gratuitement aux coopérants militaires techniques français les logements meublés et équipés qui leur sont nécessaires pour eux-mêmes et pour leurs familles. Ces logements doivent correspondre à leur grade.

Les personnels de la coopération militaire technique française et leurs familles, d'une part, les militaires tchadiens et leurs familles, d'autre part, jouissent des organismes communs (mess, cercles, clubs, etc.), sous réserve du respect de la réglementation propre à ces organismes.

Le gouvernement de la République du Tchad dispense, dans la mesure de ses moyens, les soins médicaux et hospitaliers dont peuvent avoir besoin les personnels de la coopération militaire technique et leurs familles.

Art. 11. Les personnels visés par le présent accord peuvent importer en franchise de tous droits et taxes de douanes leurs effets et objets personnels, à l'exclusion des véhicules à usage privé, sous réserve que ces effets et objets soient en cours d'usage et que leur importation ait lieu dans un délai de six mois après leur arrivée au Tchad. Ils peuvent les réexporter dans les mêmes conditions de franchise à leur départ définitif.

Ils jouissent du droit de transférer librement sur la France le montant des économies réalisées sur les remunerations et indemnités afférentes à leur emploi et, lors de leur rapatriement définitif, le produit de la vente éventuelle en République du Tchad de leurs véhicules, biens mobiliers et effets personnels après acquittement des droits de douane y afférents.

Art. 12. Le régime fiscal du personnel militaire de coopération technique est celui défini par l'article 17 de la convention relative au concours en personnel apporté par la République française au fonctionnement des services publics de la République du Tchad, et par le protocole relatif au régime fiscal applicable au personnel de la coopération française au Tchad, à l'exclusion de son article 2, qui est remplacé par les dispositions de l'alinéa suivant :

Le montant brut imposable comprend, à l'exclusion de tout supplément, majoration ou allocation de caractère familial et déduction faite des retenues ou versements obligatoires à la charge de l'intéressé pour constitution de retraite ou sécurité sociale, la rémunération versée à l'intéressé au titre de la période de présence au Tchad.

TITRE II.

DE LA FORMATION EN FRANCE DES PERSONNELS DES FORCES ARMÉES TCHADIENNES.

Art. 13. Le gouvernement de la République française assure, dans la mesure de ses moyens et sur la demande du gouvernement de la République du Tchad, la formation et le perfectionnement des personnels des forces armées tchadiennes.
Les nationaux tchadiens sont admis dans les écoles et établissements militaires français, soit par concours dans les mêmes conditions que les nationaux français, soit dans la limite d’un contingent spécial fixé annuellement et comportant aménagement de ces conditions.

En outre, certains besoins exceptionnels peuvent faire l'objet de conventions particulières qui seront étudiées cas par cas.


Le gouvernement de la République du Tchad prend à sa charge les dépenses de solde et les frais d'entretien de ses stagiaires.

Les dispositions de l'article 10, alinéa 3, du présent accord sont applicables aux stagiaires tchadiens et à leurs familles en France.

Art. 15. Les stagiaires tchadiens en France sont justiciables de dispositions analogues à celles prévues aux articles 7 et 8 pour les coopérateurs militaires techniques français en service au Tchad.

**TITRE III.**

DE LA FOURNITURE DE MATÉRIEL ET D'ÉQUIPEMENT MILITAIRE.

Art. 16. Le gouvernement de la République du Tchad peut s'adresser au gouvernement de la République française pour la fourniture et l'entretien, à titre gratuit ou onéreux, de matériels et d'équipements militaires.

Le gouvernement de la République du Tchad peut demander le concours de la République française au soutien logistique des forces armées tchadiennes, qui est fourni dans des conditions fixées par une convention particulière.

**TITRE IV.**

DES FACILITÉS DE TRANSIT ET D'ESCALE ACCORDEES PAR LA RÉPUBLIQUE DU TCHAD À LA RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE.

Art. 17. Le gouvernement de la République du Tchad autorise le transit dans son espace aérien avec ou sans escale du personnel et du matériel des forces armées françaises transportés par aéronefs civils ou militaires.

L'autorisation est accordée sur la demande du gouvernement français comportant entre autres indications le point de départ, la destination, la mission, la nature du chargement et éventuellement l'escale demandée.

Art. 18. Le survol de l'espace aérien tchadien par des aéronefs militaires français et les escales de ces appareils sont soumis à autorisation préalable ; les liaisons régulières font l'objet d'autorisations permanentes valables pour une durée de six mois.

Art. 19. Le gouvernement de la République du Tchad apporte, dans la mesure de ses moyens, le concours de ses services pour faciliter les opérations d'escale et de ravitaillement sur son territoire des aéronefs des forces armées françaises. Le cas échéant, il autorise la venue d'une équipe de dépannage.

**TITRE V.**

DISPOSITIONS DIVERSES.

Art. 20. En matière de coopération militaire technique (personnels, formation, fournitures de matériels et équipements, facilités de transit et d'escale...), l'ambassade de France auprès de la République du Tchad est l'interlocuteur du gouvernement de la République du Tchad.

Art. 21. Le présent accord remplace et abroge, dans les relations entre les deux parties contractantes, l'accord de défense signé le 15 août 1960 (1) ainsi que ses annexes et l'accord d'assistance militaire technique signé le 19 mai 1964. Toutes dispositions contraires au présent accord sont annulées.

Il est conclu pour une durée de deux ans renouvelable par tacite reconduction, sauf dénonciation par l'une des parties contractantes. La dénonciation doit être notifiée par voie diplomatique au moins six mois à l'avance.

Le présent accord entrera en vigueur le premier jour du deuxième mois suivant l'échange des instruments d'approbation, lequel aura lieu aussitôt que faire se pourra.

Chacune des parties contractantes peut demander à tout moment la modification d'une ou plusieurs dispositions du présent accord et l'ouverture de négociations à cet effet.

Fait à N'Djaména, le 6 mars 1976, en double exemplaire original en langue française.

Pour le gouvernement de la République française :

Le Premier ministre,

Jacques CHIRAC.

Pour le gouvernement de la République du Tchad :

Le président du conseil supérieur militaire, chef de l'État,

Général Félix MALLLOUM NGAKOUTOU BEY-NDI.

(1) Publié par décret n° 60-1230 du 23 novembre 1960 (n.i. BO : JO du 24, p. 10459).
ANNEXE (1).

A L’ACCORD DE COOPERATION MILITAIRE TECHNIQUE RELATIVE AU FONCTIONNEMENT DE L’HOPITAL MILITAIRE DE N’DJAMENA.

Le gouvernement de la République française d’une part,
Le gouvernement de la République du Tchad d’autre part,
Considérant les liens d’amitié et de coopération qui existent entre les deux États;
Considérant les accords de coopération entre les deux États en date du 6 mars 1976,

Sont convenus de ce qui suit:

Art. 1er. Le gouvernement de la République du Tchad apporte les locaux nécessaires au support de cette formation, assure son fonctionnement et son entretien, fournit dans la mesure du possible le personnel médical et paramédical nécessaire, et assure son approvisionnement en médicaments et équipements sanitaires.

Art. 2. Le gouvernement de la République française participe au fonctionnement de cette formation. Il contribue à son approvisionnement en médicaments et équipements sanitaires, met à la disposition de la République du Tchad les personnels dont le nombre et la qualification sont définis chaque année par le gouvernement de la République du Tchad.

Art. 3. Le personnel militaire français affecté à cet hôpital sert au titre de la coopération militaire technique française et est soumis aux dispositions prêtes par l’accord de coopération militaire technique du 6 mars 1976. Le personnel sanitaire civil français affecté à cette formation sert au titre de l’accord de coopération technique du 6 mars 1976.

Art. 4. L’hôpital militaire assure des services de consultation, d’examen paraclinique et d’hospitalisation. Les malades y sont admis par prescriptions exclusives des organismes médicaux publics civils et militaires de consultation et d’hospitalisation du premier degré, après accord du directeur du service de santé des forces armées tchadiennes.

Art. 5. La définition des bénéficiaires des prestations de cette formation sera l’objet d’une instruction du ministre de la défense nationale et des anciens combattants de la République du Tchad.

Art. 6. Afin de permettre l’atténuation des charges afférentes à ses activités, cet établissement militaire tchadien est habilité à percevoir auprès des malades ou de leurs employeurs les frais médicaux et d’hospitalisation engagés à leur profit.

Art. 7. Le gouvernement de la République du Tchad communiquera au gouvernement de la République française l’ensemble des dispositions réglementaires concernant le fonctionnement de cette formation.

Art. 8. La présente annexe est établie dans le cadre de l’année civile pour une durée de trois ans renouvelable par tacite reconduction.

Art. 9. Chacune des parties contractantes notifiera à l’autre l’accomplissement des procédures requises pour sa mise en vigueur qui prendra effet à la date de la notification.

N’Djaména, le 19 juin 1976.

Pour le gouvernement de la République française :

L’ambassadeur de France auprès de la République du Tchad,

Louis DALLIER.

Pour le gouvernement de la République du Tchad :

Le ministre des affaires étrangères de la coopération,

Kamougue WADAL ABDELKADER.

(1) Cette annexe est entrée en vigueur le 27 janvier 1978.
CONVENTION entre le gouvernement de la République française et le gouvernement de la République du Tchad fixant les règles et conditions du concours de la République française au soutien logistique des forces armées de la République du Tchad.

Du 6 mars 1976 (A) (B).

Le gouvernement de la République française, d'une part,

Le gouvernement de la République du Tchad, d'autre part,

Dans le cadre des dispositions générales prévues par l'accord de coopération militaire technique,

Sont convenus de ce qui suit :

Article premier.

Objet de la convention.

A la demande du gouvernement de la République du Tchad le concours de la République française au soutien logistique des forces armées de la République du Tchad est fourni dans les conditions ci-après :

Article 2.

Principe du soutien.

La République du Tchad est responsable du soutien logistique de ses unités et en assume normalement la charge financière.

La République française apporte son concours, à titre onéreux ou exceptionnellement à titre gratuit, à ce soutien par des cessions de matériels et équipements.

Article 3.

Modalités du soutien.

Les cessions ne concernent en principe que les matériels et fournitures nécessaires aux forces armées de la République du Tchad.

Ne sont pas inclus dans les cessions ci-dessus les matériels dont la fourniture fait l'objet d'accords particuliers.


(B) Cette convention est entrée en vigueur le 1er mars 1978.
Cessions faites au titre de la D.G.A. annuelle :
Une première facture provisoire est adressée par la délégation ministérielle pour l'armement au gouvernement de la République du Tchad sous couvert du ministère de la coopération. Les délais de livraison des matériels sont précisés dans une annexe.

Au vu de cette facture, le gouvernement de la République du Tchad verse une provision égale à 30 p. 100 des sommes facturées.

Deux cas sont alors à distinguer :

a) Les matériels sont livrés à partir des approvisionnements de l'armée française.

Dans ce cas, le transitaire est aussitôt avisé que les matériels sont tenus à sa disposition.

b) Les matériels sont à fabriquer.

Dans ce cas, la commande est passée immédiatement à la direction intéressée et le transitaire est avisé en temps utile de la disponibilité des matériels.

Après arrêt définitif du montant de la cession et achèvement de la livraison, le solde fait l'objet d'une seconde facture transmise au gouvernement de la République du Tchad par les mêmes voies que précédemment. Cette facture est réglée dans les mêmes conditions que la première.

Cessions exceptionnelles :
Les cessions correspondant à des demandes exceptionnelles sont soumises aux mêmes règles que ci-dessus. Les prix de cession font l'objet d'une évaluation qui est proposée à l'accord du gouvernement de la République du Tchad préalablement à toute commande ferme au service livrancier. Toutefois les commandes exceptionnelles très urgentes prévues à l'article 4 ci-dessus peuvent faire l'objet d'une livraison immédiate.

Article 7.

Durée de la convention.

La présente convention remplace et abroge la convention de soutien logistique du 6 février 1965 ; elle est établie dans le cadre de l'année civile pour une durée d'un an et renouvelable par tacite reconduction, sauf dénonciation par l'une des parties contractantes. La dénonciation doit être notifiée par voie diplomatique au moins six mois à l'avance.

La présente convention entrera en vigueur le premier jour du deuxième mois suivant l'échange des instruments d'approbation, lequel aura lieu aussitôt que faire se pourra.

Chacune des parties contractantes peut demander à tout moment la modification d'une ou plusieurs dispositions de la présente convention et l'ouverture de négociations à cet effet.

Fait à N'Djaména, le 6 mars 1976, en double exemplaire original en langue française.

Pour le gouvernement de la République française :

Le Premier ministre,
Jacques CHIRAC.

Pour le gouvernement de la République du Tchad :

Le président du conseil supérieur militaire, chef de l'État,
Général Félix MALLOUM NGAKOUTOU BEY-NDI.
Article 1.

a) Le Gouvernement de la République Française met à la disposition dans la mesure de ses moyens, du Gouvernement de la République Rwandaise les personnels militaires français dont le concours lui est nécessaire pour l'instruction et l'entraînement des Forces Armées Rwandaises.

b) Le Gouvernement de la République Rwandaise prend à sa charge la réparation des dommages causés par les personnels militaires français dans l'exercice et à l'occasion de l'exercice de leurs fonctions. En cas d'action judiciaire intentée à l'occasion de tels dommages, le Gouvernement de la République Rwandaise se substitue dans l'instance aux personnels militaires français mis en cause. Au cas où le dommage résulterait d'une faute personnelle, le Gouvernement de la République Rwandaise pourra en demander réparatif au Gouvernement de la République Française. En cas de dommage subi dans le service ou à l'occasion du service, les militaires sont couverts par leur statut.

c) Le Gouvernement Français accepte de loger ses ressortissants militaires se trouvant au RWANDA. Dans la mesure où la République Française voudrait construire des logements sur le territoire de la République Rwandaise, le Gouvernement Rwandais lui facilitera l'acquisition des terrains nécessaires et toutes les formalités légales y relatives.

d) Pendant la durée de la période de service, le Gouvernement de la République Rwandaise assure aux personnels et à leurs familles : gratuité des médicaments, appareils d'orthopédie et de prothèse, prothèses dentaires exceptées. Les soins médicaux, chirurgicaux, obstétricaux et hospitaliers sont donnés gratuitement dans le cadre de la législation rwandaise et sont dispensés au RWANDA. Le transfert d'un malade dans les hôpitaux étrangers est supporté par la partie française.
e) Le Gouvernement de la République Rwandaise exonère de tous les droits de douane ou autres taxes, à l'importation ou à l'exportation ainsi que de toute autre espèce de charges fiscales, les meubles, véhicules et effets personnels introduits sur son territoire dans le respect de la législation douanière de la République Rwandaise par les personnels militaires désignés au présent article ainsi que par les membres de leurs familles et destinés à leur usage exclusif. Ces personnels sont exemptés au RWANDA, de tous les impôts sur leur traitement versé par le Gouvernement Français.

f) Ces personnels jouissent du droit de transférer librement sur la FRANCE le montant des économies réalisées sur les rémunérations et indemnités afférentes à leur emploi et lors de leur rapatriement définitif, le produit de la vente éventuelle au RWANDA de leur véhicule, biens mobiliers et effets personnels après acquittement des droits de douane afférents.

Article 2.

Les personnels militaires français mis à la disposition du Gouvernement de la République Rwandaise sont désignés par le Gouvernement de la République Française après accord du Gouvernement de la République Rwandaise. Les intéressés sont affectés à une formation dénommée "MISSION D'ASSISTANCE MILITAIRE".

La durée de service est de deux ans renouvelables avec possibilité pour chaque Gouvernement de procéder après consultation avec l'autre partie au retrait de l'agrément dans l'intérêt du service. Tout changement d'affectation en cours de séjour est arrêté après consultation des autorités compétentes de la République Française et des autorités compétentes de la République Rwandaise.

Article 3.

Les personnels français de la Mission d'Assistance Militaire sont placés sous l'autorité d'un Officier Français désigné à cet effet par le Gouvernement Français après avis favorables du Gouvernement Rwandais. Le Chef de la Mission d'Assistance Militaire joue en outre le rôle d'intermédiaire entre les autorités militaires rwandaises et les autorités françaises concernées par la coopération militaire.

Outre ses responsabilités à l'égard des personnels militaires français, le Chef de la Mission d'Assistance Militaire relève de l'Ambassadeur de FRANCE, et sous son autorité, il est le représentant du Chef de la Mission Militaire de Coopération auprès du Ministre de la Défense Nationale. Le Chef de la Mission d'Assistance Militaire a le statut diplomatique et sort sous l'uniforme français.

.../...
En cas d'absence ou d'indisponibilité, il est remplacé dans son rôle de Chef de la Mission d'Assistance Militaire, par l'Officier le PLUS ANCIEN dans le grade le PLUS élevé présent au RWANDA.

**Article 4.**

a) Les personnels militaires français mis à la disposition du Gouvernement de la République Rwandaise demeurent sous juridiction française. Ces personnels servent sous l'uniforme rwandais avec le grade dont ils sont titulaires ou le cas échéant, son équivalent au sein des Forces Armées Rwandaises. Leur qualité d'Assistants Techniques Militaires est mise en évidence par un badge spécifique "COOPERATION MILITAIRE" porté sur la manche gauche de l'uniforme à la hauteur de l'épaule. Ils ne peuvent en aucun cas être associés à la préparation ou à l'exécution d'opération de guerre, de maintien ou de rétablissement de l'ordre ou de la légalité.

b) Les personnels militaires français en service dans les Forces Armées Rwandaises sont employés par le Commandement Rwandais selon les règles traditionnelles de leur Armée ou Service. Toutes les décisions les concernant sont portées à la connaissance de l'Ambassade de FRANCE en République Rwandaise; de même toutes dispositions les concernant prises par les autorités françaises sont portées à la connaissance des autorités rwandaises.

c) Ils sont soumis aux règles de la discipline générale en vigueur dans les Forces Armées Rwandaises sous réserve des dispositions inhérentes au statut qui est le leur dans la réglementation française.

**Article 5.**

Les peines disciplinaires éventuellement encourues par les personnels militaires français sont prononcées par le Chef de la Mission d'Assistance Militaire, soit de son propre chef, soit à la demande des autorités rwandaises.

**Article 6.**

a) Les infractions commises par les personnels militaires français sont de la compétence des autorités judiciaires rwandaises, à l'exception de celles de ces infractions qui ont été commises en service ou à l'occasion du service. Dans ces derniers cas, les auteurs des dites infractions sont remis à l'Ambassade de FRANCE aux fins de rapatriement.
b) Les personnels militaires français déférés devant les juridictions rwandaises et dont la détention est jugée nécessaire sont assignés à résidence par les soins et sous la responsabilité de l'Ambassade de FRANCE qui les fait comparaître à la demande des autorités judiciaires compétentes.

c) Les personnels militaires français, condamnés par les juridictions rwandaises sont remis à la disposition de l'Ambassade de FRANCE pour être rapatriés; ils ne peuvent en aucun cas faire l'objet d'une mesure de détention au RWANDA. Les peines éventuellement prononcées seront subies dans un établissement pénitentiaire français.

d) Les dispositions des deux derniers paragraphes sont applicables aux membres de la famille du personnel militaire qui résident avec lui au RWANDA.

Article 7.

Le Chef de Mission d'Assistance militaire peut autoriser ses personnels à prendre les permission en cours de séjour sous réserve de l'accord des autorités rwandaises d'emploi.

Article 8.

Le Gouvernement de la République Française assure dans la limite de ses moyens la formation et le perfectionnement de cadres des Forces Armées Rwandaises dans ses écoles militaires et prend à sa charge les frais résultant du transport du RWANDA en FRANCE et retour et l'instruction des élèves stagiaires, y compris le logement, les divers frais d'entretien (bourse, soins de santé, ...).

Les stagiaires rwandais en FRANCE sont justiciables des dispositions analogues à celles prévues à l'article 6 et aux paragraphes "b", "e", et "f" de l'article 1 pour les Assistants Militaires Techniques en service au RWANDA.

Article 9.

Le Gouvernement de la République Rwandaise peut faire appel en tant que de besoin et dans des conditions définies d'un commun accord au Gouvernement de la République Française pour l'entretien et la fourniture à titre gratuit ou onéreux de matériels et d'équipements militaires.
Dans des conditions établies d'un commun accord et dans la limite de ses possibilités, la République Française pourra contribuer au soutien logistique des Forces Armées de la République Rwandaise.
Les matériels fournis à titre gratuit par la FRANCE ne pourront pas être réexportés.

.../...
Article 10.

En vue d'assurer la meilleure application des présentes dispositions, les parties contractantes ou leurs représentants procéderont à des échanges de vues réguliers.
L'examen des problèmes concernant la situation des personnels militaires français au regard de leur statut peut faire l'objet de missions des autorités françaises. Les conditions dans lesquelles s'accomplissent ces missions sont fixées par entente entre les deux Gouvernements.

En outre pour permettre la coordination dans l'exécution des projets en cours, une commission technique peut être mise sur pied soit à PARIS, soit à KIGALI à la demande de l'une ou de l'autre partie contractante. Cette commission technique se compose des techniciens français désignés par les autorités françaises compétentes et des techniciens rwandais désignés par le Ministre Rwandais de la Défense Nationale.
Les procès-verbaux de ces commissions sont chaquefois portés à la connaissance des parties contractantes.

Article 11.

Le présent accord entre en vigueur le..................
Il est conclu pour une période indéterminée.

Chacune des parties peut le dénoncer ou proposer sa révision à tout moment en prévenant l'autre partie de son intention trois mois à l'avance.

Le présent accord abroge et remplace l'accord particulier d'Assistance Militaire du 18 Juillet 1975.

- Pour le Gouvernement de la République Française
- Pour le Gouvernement de la République Rwandaise
Avenant à l'accord particulier d'assistance militaire
entre le gouvernement de la République rwandaise et le gouvernement de la République française signé à Kigali
le 18 juillet 1975

Le Gouvernement de la République rwandaise, d'une part
et
Le Gouvernement de la République française, d'autre part,

Désireux de renforcer davantage les relations d'amitié et de coopération qui existent entre les deux pays, plus particulièrement dans le domaine de la coopération militaire,

CONVIENT d'amender comme suit l'accord particulier d'assistance militaire signé à Kigali, le 18 juillet 1975:

Article premier

A l'article 1er, alinéa 1 de l'accord particulier d'assistance,

l'expression "Les Forces Armées Rwandaises" remplace "La Gendarmerie Nationale".

A l'article 6, l'expression "Des Forces Armées Rwandaises" remplace "De la Gendarmerie Rwandaise".

Article 2

Les autres termes et conditions dudit accord restent inchangées.

Article 3

Le présent avenant entre en vigueur à sa signature. Il demeurera en vigueur aussi longtemps que l'accord particulier d'assistance militaire du 18 juillet demeurera en vigueur.

Fait à Kigali, le 26 aoû 1992

En deux exemplaires originaux en français.

POUR LE GOUVERNEMENT DE
LA REPUBLIQUE RWANDAISE

NGULINGIRA Boniface
Ministre des Affaires Étrangères
et de la Coopération

POUR LE GOUVERNEMENT DE
LA REPUBLIQUE FRANCAISE

Georges MANTZES
Ambassadeur
DOCUMENT N° 1
(fourni par Colette Braeckman)

GITARA'A, le 16 Mai 1994

Au Ministre de la Défense
Au Chef E. AR

OBJET : Rapport de mission

J'ai l'honneur de vous faire parvenir ci-joint le rapport de visite que j'ai effectuée auprès de la Mission militaire de coopération française à Paris du 09 au 13 Mai 94.

Les promoteurs à court et à long terme contenues dans le document sont à poursuivre activement.

[Signature]

Rwandalinda Ephrem
Lt.Col BE:
Conseiller du Chef E. AR
Il s'est réuni au bureau du Général HUGO tard le 19 mai 1974 à 1700 heures.

La veille de l'entretien, je lui ai fait le tour d'horizon sur la situation politique-militaire de l'Afrique du Sud en insistant sur la répression des hostilités initiées par le F.R.A., hostilités qui ont alimenté violemment les affrontements interethniques par l'intermédiaire de l'armée et des milices qui, sous l'étiquette "le national" ont repris le contrôle sur le territoire de l'Afrique du Sud. En outre, il a été convenu de procéder au recrutement de 10 000 soldats de la ville de Durban, dont 5 000 pour les armes et unités terrestres qui le F.R.A. agissait sur toute liberté en préparation de l'offensive générale qu'il mijotait.

3. Les priorités suivantes ont été accordées:
   a. La soutien du Rwanda par la France et sur le plan de la politique internationale.
   b. La présence des militaires français au Rwanda ou tout au moins, d'un contingent d'effectifs faibles pour les actions de coup de main en dehors du cadre de la coopération.
   c. L'utilisation indirecte des troupes étrangères régulières ou non.
   d. Recours aux armes:
      - Attirage pour la D.D. 105mm (2 000 coups au moins).
      - Collecte des munitions par les troupes individuelles au bocage ou par les pays voisins, en campagne.
      - Recrutement - abattage de transmissions.
   e. Participation aux enquetes visant à faire la lumière sur le sort tragique du Président de la République rwandaise et celui du Durandi.

4. Avis et considérations du Général HUGO:

   a. Il faut immédiatement fournir à l'état-major de la France, qui réunit le bureau, de façon à retourner l'opinion internationale en faveur du Rwanda et pouvoir reprendre la coopération bilatérale. En outre, le maître des armes de coopération fera part des actions de secours à tenir à notre faute.
   b. Le Général de L'ARMÉE, président du Conseil MINISTÈRE et du GÉNÉRAL HUGO, en avance sur une aide de l'armée (cannonier) par un tissu pouvant à être assuré par l'AFD. On peut soumettre 11 à 15 fréquences chacun ont été éventuellement envoyées pour faciliter les communications entre les unités de la ville de N'GOR. Une partie de tonnerre, c'est-là l'œuvre. Il s'agit d'éviter une autre source de tension avec la France, qui est beaucoup plus tardive, à prendre seuls les opérations à condition de donner un coup de main aux ascenseurs qui circulent aux alentours de cet aéroport.
   c. Le pas ne saurait être négligé qui aujourdh'hui dispose de grands moyens. Tenir en paix de nos alliés prétendus.
   d. Finition le contexte de cette guerre dans le temps, la guerre sera longue.

   e. Lors des entretiens suivants au cours duquel j'ai insisté sur les actions immédiates et à moyen terme, éventuellement de la France, le Général HUGO m'a clairement fait comprendre que les militaires français ont les mains et les pieds liés pour faire une intervention quelconque en notre faveur à cause de l'opinion des médias qui sont la voix sensible pilote. Il vaut mieux faire pour retourner l'opinion du pays à l'extérieur les responsables militaires et politiques du Rwanda seront tenus responsables des menaces courus au Rwanda.

    .../...
Il est revenu sur ce point plusieurs fois. Le gouvernement Français, a-t-il conclu n'échapper pas d'autre moyen de soutenir les gens que l'opinion internationale condamne et qui ne se defendent pas. Le sort des réfugiés constitue une urgence. Il conditionne d'autres opérations ultérieures. Dès que le contact téléphonique protégé sera établi, une appréciation des problèmes relatés au point 3 ci-dessus sera affinée et concrétisée en tenant compte de la position du gouvernement français sur la côte du Rwanda.

5. Conclusions:

a. Ces contacts m'ont permis de sonder combien la coopération militaire française est gênée de nous expliquer sa retenue en matière d'intervention direct par souci de solidarité à l'opinion politique Européenne et Américaine.

b. Les essais de relance de médiation fait à Paris par la cellule du Col MAHORALI que j'ai enrichie par les articles ci-annexés sont à stimuler et renforcer. A ce sujet, il urge d'y déployer un attaché de presse à la hauteur de la situation. Soigner davantage l'image du pays à l'extérieur constitue une des priorités à NE PAS perdre de vue.

c. Les 2 appareillages téléphoniques que j'apporte devraient nous aider à sortir de l'isolement vis à vis de l'étranger.

d. Le comité consultatif de crise devrait épauler davantage l'autorité politico-militaire par des propositions concertées allant même au délai du court terme.

e. Les amis contactés nous conseillent de faire un effort pour mettre à l'œuvre des équipes aux effectifs réduits pour saboter les arrières de l'Eni et briser ainsi son élan.

f. Il est à remarquer tant du côté Belge que du côté de la France, l'hésitation d'envoyer tous les stagiaires au Rwanda même ceux pour qui les cours prenaient fin au début de juillet 94.

g. Une visite de haut niveau politique pourrait mieux cadrer les orientations et les actions attendues.

RWABALINDA Ephrem
Lt Col EEM
Document 71

Security Council resolution, invoking Chapter VII of the Charter, authorizing Member States to conduct a multinational operation for humanitarian purposes in Rwanda until UNAMIR is brought up to strength


The Security Council,

Reaffirming all its previous resolutions on the situation in Rwanda, in particular its resolutions 912 (1994) of 21 April 1994, 918 (1994) of 17 May 1994 and 925 (1994) of 8 June 1994, which set out the mandate and force level of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda,

Determined to contribute to the resumption of the process of political settlement under the Arusha Peace Agreement, 1/ and encouraging the Secretary-General and his Special Representative for Rwanda to continue and redouble their efforts at the national, regional and international levels to promote these objectives,

Stressing the importance of the cooperation of all parties for the fulfilment of the objectives of the United Nations in Rwanda,

Having considered the letter from the Secretary-General dated 19 June 1994, 2/

Taking into account the time needed to gather the necessary resources for the effective deployment of the Mission, as expanded in resolutions 918 (1994) and 925 (1994),

Noting the offer by Member States to cooperate with the Secretary-General towards the fulfilment of the objectives of the United Nations in Rwanda, 3/ and stressing the strictly humanitarian character of this operation, which shall be conducted in an impartial and neutral fashion and shall not constitute an interposition force between the parties,

Welcoming the cooperation between the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity and neighbouring States to bring peace to Rwanda,

Deeply concerned by the continuation of systematic and widespread killings of the civilian population in Rwanda,

Recognizing that the current situation in Rwanda constitutes a unique case which demands an urgent response by the international community,

Determining that the magnitude of the humanitarian crisis in Rwanda constitutes a threat to peace and security in the region,

1. Welcomes the letter dated 19 June 1994 from the Secretary-General, 2/ and agrees that a multinational operation may be set up for humanitarian purposes in

Rwanda until the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda is brought up to the necessary strength;

2. Welcomes also the offer by Member States to cooperate with the Secretary-General in order to achieve the objectives of the United Nations in Rwanda through the establishment of a temporary operation under international command and control aimed at contributing, impartially, to the security and protection of displaced persons, refugees and civilians at risk in Rwanda, or understanding that the costs of implementing the offer will be borne by the Member States concerned;

3. Acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, authorizes the Member States cooperating with the Secretary-General to conduct the operation referred to in paragraph 2 above using all necessary means to achieve the humanitarian objectives set out in paragraphs 4 (a) and (b) of resolution 925 (1994);

4. Decides that the mission of Member States operating with the Secretary-General will be limited to a period of two months following the adoption of the present resolution, unless the Secretary-General determines at an earlier date that the expanded United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda is able to carry out its mandate;

5. Commends the offers already made by Member States of troops for the expanded Mission;

6. Calls upon all Member States to respond generously to the Secretary-General's request for resources, including logistical support, in order to enable the expanded Mission to fulfil its mandate effectively as possible, and requests the Secretary-General to coordinate the supply of the essential equipment required by troops committed to the expanded Mission;

7. Welcomes, in this respect, the offers made by Member States of equipment for troop contributors to the Mission, and calls on other Member States


