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CONFLICTS  
PERSPECTIVE PAPER



## Copenhagen Consensus 2008 Perspective Paper

### Conflicts

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### *Introduction*

Paul Collier, Lisa Chauvet and Havard Hegre (henceforth CCH) have produced an important, detailed and closely reasoned case for reducing the *recurrence* of political violence in post-conflict societies. Their paper focuses on this issue because—depending on definition and dataset—40% or more armed conflicts that stop, start again within a decade.

The paper also examines the drivers of military coups, drawing on data from sub-Saharan Africa, and ask what can be done to prevent them.

The authors' analysis proceeds first by determining the major risk factors for civil war and for military coups of which in both cases low GDP per capita and (relatedly) low economic levels of economic growth are critically important. From this it follows that increasing GDP per capita via economic growth should be an effective strategy for reducing the incidence of both civil wars and military coups.

The CCH paper seeks to determine the efficacy of two broad policy approaches to stabilizing post-conflict situations—one emphasising post-conflict economic assistance, the other military intervention—via three quite distinct policy instruments.

### *Post-Conflict Economic Assistance*

The CCH case for post-conflict economic assistance is directly related to their analysis of the causes of armed conflict. It builds on the immensely influential earlier work of Collier and Anke Hoeffler many of whose findings were replicated by the similarly influential work of James Fearon and David Laitin.<sup>1</sup>

The assumptions which underpin the policies that these scholars advocate are clear: increasing economic growth reduces the risk of armed conflict as does the higher level of income per capita that result from this growth. In post-conflict situations economic assistance increases growth and hence income, the combined effect of which reduces the risk that wars that have stopped will start again.

In the new study, CCH find that, with no economic growth, a typical post-conflict country has a 42% risk returning to conflicts within 10 years. With a 10% growth rate the risk declines to just 29%. Put another way (and assuming that the effect is linear) this means that, '...each

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, 'Greed and Grievance in Civil War', *Oxford Economic Papers*, Vol. 56, No. 4, 2004, and James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, 'Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War', *American Political Science Review*, vol, 97, no. 1, February 2003.

additional percentage point of growth brings down the decade risk of reversion to conflict by around 1.5 percentage point.’ For the typical post-conflict country this level of growth can be achieved by an annual provision of aid equivalent to two percentage points of GDP.

Given that development assistance increases economic growth in post-conflict situation, and given that growth, plus the resulting higher income levels, reduces the risk of wars restarting, it follows that post-conflict economic assistance is not simply a development policy—it is also an important security strategy.

CCH’s analysis of the cost-effectiveness of this approach, which echoes that of other studies, will be welcome news to donors and international organizations who are seeking to help countries falling back into conflict, but who have little idea of the relative efficacy of different policy options.

However, the methodology CCH use to establish the *average* risk of conflicts restarting over a period of 60 years, obscures highly significant recent changes in the ways in which conflicts come to an end. In the case of negotiated settlements these changes are associated with dramatically reduced risks of wars re-occurring.<sup>2</sup>

Understanding these changes requires disaggregating the data on terminations into three basic categories as shown in Figure 1. (Note these data come from a different terminations dataset to that used by CCH—one that includes minor as well as major conflicts.)

The three categories of terminations are: ‘Victories’, ‘Negotiated settlements’ and a category that, for want of a better word, Uppsala’s Conflict Data Program calls ‘Other’—i.e., those conflicts that simply peter out without either a victory or a peace agreement, or where the battle death toll falls below the 25 deaths a year threshold.

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<sup>2</sup> Note: the conflict data used Figure 1 come from the Uppsala/PRIO dataset that CCH use in the section on global conflict trends at the beginning of their paper. The Uppsala/PRIO conflict dataset contains more than 350 terminations—but a very large percentage of these are of conflicts that killed very few people and thus would not be expected to have much economic impact. CCH use the Correlates of War (CoW) dataset that only contains data on high-intensity wars. This is clearly more suitable for their purpose of determining the economic impact of armed conflict. The other difference between the two datasets is that CCH use a ten—year period to determine the risk of conflicts restarting, while the Uppsala terminations data in Figure 1 uses five years. We can’t be *sure* that the trends in different types of termination revealed in Figure 1 will be same for the smaller dataset that CCHS rely on, but since both are effected by the same external forces it is reasonable to assume that they will be similar.

Figure I: How war end, 1946–2005

Years	VICTORIES			NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENTS			OTHER			TOTAL TERMINATIONS		
	Total number	Number restarted in under 5 years	% restarted in under 5 years	Total number	Number restarted in under 5 years	% restarted in under 5 years	Total number	Number restarted in under 5 years	% restarted in under 5 years	Total number	Number restarted in under 5 years	% restarted in under 5 years
1946-49	13	1	7,7	3	0	0,0	7	0	0,0	23	1	4,3
1950-59	16	3	18,8	9	0	0,0	16	5	31,3	41	8	19,5
1960-69	23	2	8,7	11	1	9,1	16	3	18,8	50	6	12,0
1970-79	22	7	31,8	13	2	15,4	11	0	0,0	46	9	19,6
1980-89	20	3	15,0	8	1	12,5	26	15	57,7	54	19	35,2
1990-99	23	2	8,7	41	18	43,9	58	32	55,2	122	52	42,6
Total 1946-1999	117	18	15,4	85	22	25,9	134	55	41,0	336	95	28,3
2000-2005	5	1*	20,0	17	2*	11,8	21	14*	66,7	43	17*	39,5
Total 1946-2005	122	19	15,6	102	24	23,5	155	69	44,5	379	112	29,6

Source: UCDP/Human Security Report Project dataset, 2007

\*includes terminations for which it is too early to determine failure rate on a 5 year threshold (ie. terminations 2002 or later)

As Figure I shows, in every decade from the 1940s to the 1980s, there were many more victories than negotiated settlements. But in the 1990s, there was a dramatic change—there were almost twice as many negotiated settlements as victories.<sup>3</sup>

In the new millennium, 2000 to 2005, there were more than three times as many negotiated settlements as victories.

Both the reduction in the number of victories and the increase in the number of negotiated settlements reflect the sharp increase in what the UN calls ‘peacemaking’—the practice of seeking to end wars via negotiation rather than on the battlefield.

As CCH note in their paper, a major downside of negotiated settlements has been that they were far more likely to restart than conflicts that ended in victories. The Uppsala terminations dataset shows that recently as the 1990s, 44% of negotiated settlements broke down within five years, compared with just 9% of conflicts that ended in victory.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> This section draws on the findings of the *Human Security Brief, 2007*, Human Security Report Project, Simon Fraser University, 2008. The terminations data comes from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program at Uppsala University in Sweden.

<sup>4</sup> The 1990s were an exceptional decade, however. Between 1946-1999 15% of conflicts ending in victory restarted compared with 26% of negotiated settlements.

This long-established pattern changed in the new millennium. Negotiated settlements now appear to be the most stable form of settlement—with just 12% breaking down in the first six years of the decade. This is almost certainly because they are now receiving far more support from the international community than was the case in the past. Over the equivalent period in the last decade (1990 to 1995), almost 90% of negotiated settlements failed.

The least stable type of conflict termination is that which Uppsala designates as “Other”. This type of termination is inherently prone to breakdown for at least three reasons.

- They rarely attract the international support typically received by conflicts that end in mediated settlements.
- They don't involve a decisive defeat of one of the warring parties—as is the case in conflicts that end in victory. Thus there are no material restraints that prevent either side to start fighting again.
- Absent any sort of peace agreement the disputes that drove the violence in the first place will likely remain unresolved.

By the end of 2005, 67% of conflicts that had terminated in the ‘Other’ category had already broken down.

Clearly it is the conflicts that end in the ‘Other’ category that are the major problem with respect to wars restarting. Equally clearly there is an obvious policy measure that promises to reduce their number—namely ‘peacemaking’, a term that encompasses a variety of different, but related policy initiatives including—‘good offices’, conciliation, negotiation, conflict resolution and third party mediation.

More peacemaking would mean more negotiated settlements. And since negotiated settlements are now receiving far more support than was previously the case, there is every reason to assume that any new agreements that resulted from increased peacemaking activities would be less prone to a resumption of fighting than the consistently unstable ‘Other’ terminations.

The increased support to negotiated settlements includes the development aid that CCH stress, and which is critically important, but it also includes increased humanitarian assistance (up fivefold per capita since 1990), more and better managed DDR missions, security sector reform, the support of ‘Friends’ and ‘Contact’ groups—and of course peacekeeping.

There is huge scope for improvement in the international community's peacemaking capacity at minimal cost. The UN's Department of Political Affairs is modestly increasing its mediation capacity, but the resources devoted to peacemaking—at the UN and elsewhere—remain trivially small compared those devoted to peacekeeping and post-conflict reconstruction.

Increased resources for peacemaking was a major recommendation of the Secretary-General's influential High-Level Panel on Threats Challenges and Change in 2004 and the Outcome Document accepted by member states of the UN at the 2005 UN Summit.

Despite the fact increasing the resources devoted to peacemaking promises a high return on a very modest investment, despite compelling evidence from quantitative research by Barbara Walter<sup>5</sup>—which they themselves cite—that attests to effectiveness of peacemaking, CCH have little to say about it. Talking of the propensity of negotiated settlements to restart they note that:

...while a pessimistic prognosis is entirely reasonable on the historical data, an alternative optimistic interpretation would be that the new international political will to prevent civil war has decisively changed behaviour.

We believe that there is considerable evidence to support this latter claim—though the trend is too short-lived to be confident that it will necessarily continue.

It is perhaps no accident that CCH pay so little attention to peacemaking. Mediation, which is what peacemaking is about, focuses on addressing, and seeking to resolve or reduce, grievances. CCH do not, however, believe that grievances are what drives armed conflict—their focus (see below) is on reducing the *feasibility* of war. If grievances aren't important drivers of conflict then peacemaking initiatives that seek to address are not a cost-effective means of conflict reduction.

The claim that grievance is not an important driver of conflict is spelled out in detail in Collier and Hoeffler's (henceforth CH) hugely influential 'Greed Versus Grievance' paper published in 2004.<sup>6</sup> The authors note that the grievances associated with intense political conflicts are ubiquitous—indeed they are found in all societies—but civil wars are rare events. The implication is clear—if grievances really were a major driver of political violence, the world would be suffering far more armed conflicts.<sup>7</sup>

Because feelings of grievance are emotions, and because none of the datasets that CH relied on can measure emotions directly, they use 'proxy' indicators for grievance that *can* be measured. The use of proxies in this way is common practice in quantitative studies of armed conflict.

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<sup>5</sup> Barbara F. Walter, *Committing to Peace*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2001.

<sup>6</sup> Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, 'Greed and Grievance in Civil War', *Oxford Economic Papers*, Vol. 56, No. 4, 2004

<sup>7</sup> This argument is, in itself, not particularly persuasive since clearly minor grievances will not lead to civil war, but particularly intense grievances may well do so.

The authors took a large cross-national, time-series, dataset and used multiple regression analysis to determine if there were any significant associations between the grievance proxies and war onsets. There were none. From this they conclude that grievance does not matter.

The dismissal of political and economic grievances as drivers of civil war is one of the most contentious findings to emerge from quantitative research on armed conflicts. Critics of CH have argued that the proxy measures used are inappropriate, that a number of other assumptions are problematic, and that other quantitative studies, plus a mass of case study evidence, demonstrate that grievances are indeed important risk factors for armed conflict.

But there is a more profound reason for contesting the claim that grievances don't matter in explaining the onset of civil wars—one cannot be rebutted by creating more appropriate proxy measures, better cross-national data, or using different statistical significance tests.<sup>8</sup>

All the variables that Collier/Hoeffler rely on as proxies for grievance use *nationwide* data—this is also true of James Fearon and David Laitin equally influential research. The proxies are intended to measure *average* levels of grievance for whole populations. *But whole populations don't start wars.*

The outbreaks of conflict that the authors are seeking to explain only involve, initially at least, a tiny fraction of the population of the countries in question. It is the motivations and behaviour of these latter individuals that matter in determining what drives civil war onsets, *not* the grievances of the rest of society.

So even if the proxy indicators on which Collier/Hoeffler rely on *were* appropriate measures of *societal* grievance, they would still tell us nothing about any grievances harboured by the relatively small number of individuals who actually start rebellions. As Fearon and Laitin point out, '... civil war may only require a small number [of rebels] with intense grievances to get going'.<sup>9</sup>

Collier and Hoeffler appear to be making the same point at the end of their 'Greed and Grievance' article when they note that, 'the grievances that motivate rebels may be substantially disconnected from the large social concerns of inequality, political rights, and ethnic or religious identity'.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Collier concedes that he and his co-author 'may not be measuring objective grievances well enough'. See Paul Collier, 'Economic Causes of Civil Conflict and Their Implications for Policy' in Chester A Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson and Pamela All, *Leashing the Dogs of War: Conflict Management in a Divided World*, United States Institute of Peace Press, Washington, D.C., 2007. p. 203.

<sup>9</sup> Fearon and Laitin, 'Ethnicity, Insurgency and Civil War'. p. 76

<sup>10</sup> Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, 'Greed and Grievance in Civil War', *Oxford Economic Papers*, Vol. 56, No. 4, 2004: p. 589.

There is a second reason why grievances matter—one of particular relevance to the risk of conflicts restarting. Wars increase poverty and weaken already fragile states still further—in other words they exacerbate the very conditions that caused them to start in the first place. But warfare—and the atrocities that so often accompany it—also generates new grievances.

Both Collier/Hoeffler and Fearon/Laitin agree that this is the case. Indeed in a recent paper Professor Collier argues that if these grievances aren't addressed the risk of new wars will increase. 'The construction of sustainable peace in postconflict societies *will have to address the subjective grievances of the parties to the conflict.*'<sup>11</sup>

Fearon and Laitin make essentially the same point when they note that, although they find little evidence that civil war is predicted by broadly held grievances, '... it seems quite clear that intense grievances *are produced by civil war...*'<sup>12</sup>

It follows that seeking negotiated settlements, which almost by definition seek to address grievances, should be an important part of preventing wars that have stopped from restarting again.

Some of the measures that CCH, and CH before them prescribe for reducing the risks of conflicts restarting—increasing economic growth for example—may help reduce grievances. But are many other grievance-reducing strategies that they do not consider—truth and reconciliation commissions, power-sharing and autonomy provisions for rebels that have been pursuing separatist agendas, for example.

Note that this critique of CH/CCH's rejection of grievance-based explanations of war onsets, is *not* a critique of their account of *some* of the determinants of conflict onsets, which focus on the *feasibility* of, and *opportunities* for, rebellion.<sup>13</sup> Here the focus is not on the *motives* of the would-be rebels but on *the conditions that favour insurgency*, that make the creation of—mostly small—illegal, military organizations *feasible*.

According to opportunity/feasibility thesis, most wars take place in poor countries, not because people are poor and consequently aggrieved, but because low per capita income means that governments will tend to be weak and weak governments simply lack the capacity to detect and crush rebels—or buy off political opposition.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Paul Collier, 'Economic Causes of Civil Conflict and Their Implications for Policy' in Chester A. Crocker et al, *Leashing the Dogs of War*, United States Institute for Peace Press, Washington D.C., 1007 p.211. Italics added.

<sup>12</sup> Fearon and Laitin, 'Ethnicity, Insurgency and Civil War' p. 88. Italics in original.

<sup>13</sup> Collier, 'Economic Causes of Civil Conflict', p.200.

<sup>14</sup> Income per capita is used as a measure of state capacity because there are no widely available direct measures. Fearon and Laitin are most closely associated with this interpretation of the significance of low per capita income.

Poverty also affects the risk of war by reducing the opportunity costs of joining insurgent groups for marginalized young males living on the edge of subsistence.

One obvious implication of the Collier/Hoeffler and Fearon/Laitin findings is that conflict prevention, including stopping wars from restarting in post-conflict situations, should focus on reducing the *feasibility* of rebellion.<sup>15</sup>

This assumption leads logically to the stress that CCH place on economic growth and raising income levels. As incomes rise the opportunity costs of joining rebellions for impoverished young males joining rebellions increase and the state gets stronger and thus better able to crush resistance or buy off challengers.

The stress on feasibility/opportunity as risk factors for rebellion is an extremely important contribution to the debate on the causes of war, but it complements, rather than contradicts, grievance-based explanations.

### ***Military Interventions: Peacekeeping and ‘Over the Horizon’ (OTH) Security Guarantees***

CCH make a strong case for the utility of military-related interventions as means of reducing the risks of civil war and coups.

They consider three mechanisms: limits to the defence outlays of post-conflict governments, peacekeeping operations and ‘over-the-horizon’ security guarantees.

The fact that the number of peace operations has increased dramatically since the early 1990s is an important part of the reason for the net decline in the number of armed conflicts since the early 1990s.

Since peace operations are deployed *after* wars stop, the claim that they may play a role in stopping them may seem somewhat odd. But peace operations contribute to peace in two ways. First, a commitment to deploy a peace operation is often a necessary condition to get warring parties in a civil war to agree to a peace settlement. Second, peace operations can play a critical role in preventing wars starting again.

The claim that peace operations reduce the risk that negotiated settlements will breakdown is well supported in the literature, where CCH prescriptions diverge from current peacemaking

<sup>15</sup> The economic theories of rebellion that Collier and Hoeffler cite are closely associated with economic theories of crime. Strategies of ‘opportunity reduction’ that are related to these theories have a long and successful history in crime prevention. Here the aim is not so much to address the motives that drive individuals to commit criminal acts but rather to pursue changes that make crime less attractive. This is precisely the type of opportunity-reducing strategy that Collier/Hoeffler and Fearon/Laitin are advocating to make war less attractive to would-be rebels. See, Ronald V. Clarke, *Situational Crime Prevention*

practice is in their suggestion for a new interventionary force. This 'fully international instrument ... under the auspices of the UN or a regional organization...' would automatically provide forces to support democratically elected governments against threats of rebellion and coups d'états.

In a second departure from current practice, CCH argue for the creation of an 'Over the Horizon' (OTH) positive security guarantee to the post-conflict country for a period after the peacekeeping force had been withdrawn. There would, in other words, be an international commitment to dispatch a military force to the country concerned in the event of renewed fighting. This, argue CCH, would be militarily efficacious since it would also provide a deterrent against rebels seeking to restart wars. It would also be cost-effective because it is cheaper to keep troops at home than to deploy them overseas.

The paper uses two examples to support its contention that highly professional armed forces and OTH guarantees can help prevent civil wars starting—or resuming. The first is the deployment of British forces in Sierra Leone, the second, French post-colonial security policy in Francophone Africa.

The authors are surely correct to point to the highly positive role of the British in Sierra Leone in maintaining the peace, but the assumption that this is a practice that will necessarily work elsewhere is questionable.

The model presupposes that a relatively small number of highly professional forces can achieve what the UN's more numerous, but often under-trained and under-equipped, forces cannot. In the case of Sierra Leone this was clearly true. UK forces stabilized the security situation then withdrew leaving behind a skeletal force that could be rapidly reinforced if necessary—the OTH guarantee. But consider another case where Western armed forces were inserted into another African conflict zone with disastrous consequences.

The US force that was engaged in the 'Blackhawk Down' debacle in Somalia in October 2003 was every bit as professional as the British force in Sierra Leone, but the US intervention was a failure. Some 18 Americans were killed in a firefight with Somali warlord forces and the US pulled out. Context is critical. As Sambanis and Doyle point out in their classic recent study of peace operations—what works in one context may fail miserably in another.<sup>16</sup>

Well aware of the inappropriateness of generalizing from a single case, CCH sought cross-national quantitative data to support their peacekeeping, plus OTH security guarantee proposal. Comparing the incidence of wars in Francophone Africa with that in other African states they find that 'the French informal quasi-security guarantee' to France's former

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<sup>16</sup> Michael W. Doyle and Nicholas Sambanis, *Making War and Building Peace: United Nations Peace Operations*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2006.

colonies, 'backed by a chain of military bases around the region' was associated with a substantially lower risk of conflict than that experienced by Africa's non-Francophone states.

The authors do not, however, establish that was the OTH guarantees that were the critical factor in lessening the incidence of conflict in Francophone Africa. France didn't just have a military presence in Africa, it also had a huge, neo-colonial political apparatus run by the notorious Jacques Foccart and supported by a lavish foreign aid program. This politico-economic presence provides an equally, if not more, plausible explanation for the relative peacefulness of the France's former African colonies than does the French military presence.

CCH suggest that part of the explanation for the violent political unrest in the Cote D'Ivoire over the past four years is the *absence* of the French OTH guarantee. In fact France retains a considerable military presence in the country—and there are French military deployments in Senegal, the Cote d'Ivoire, Togo, Gabon, Chad, the CAR and Djibouti. Indeed there are more than 5000 French troops currently involved in peace operations in Africa.<sup>17</sup> Yet this continuing presence, plus direct French military involvement in the Cote d'Ivoire, Chad, the CAR and the DRC does not appear to have been very effective in stemming political violence in Francophone Africa.

Even if we accept the argument that the *in principle* an international or regional force, plus the OTH security guarantee for post-conflict situations, would contribute to a lessening of armed conflict, it doesn't follow that this is a politically feasible option for the international community to follow.

In the case of Francophone Africa, the French quasi-security guarantee reflected perceived French national interests. The nations of the international community do not have a comparable common interest in providing the type of international force that CCH envisage. There are good military and logistical arguments for such an initiative—one that has been advocated for many years by proponents of a permanent UN Standing Rapid Deployment Force.

A unified UN force would, in principle, suffer none of the debilitating problems that today's multinational UN peace operations face. These include lack of interoperability and radically different levels of training and equipment of the national armed forces that commit troops to UN peacekeeping missions, and desperately slow deployment times.

None of the proposals for such a UN force has ever come near to fruition. The US opposes the idea in principle because it sees it as giving too much power to the UN; the G-77 countries reject it because they argue—correctly—that such a force would only ever be used against them.

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<sup>17</sup> Andrew Hansen, 'The French Military in Africa', *Council on Foreign Relations Backgrounder*, Council on Foreign Relations, New York. February 8, 2008. <http://www.cfr.org/publication/12578/#3>

The international force that CCH envisage is inspired by the type of forces that the UK committed to Sierra Leone. They would need, in other words, to be highly trained, well-equipped, deployable within a very short time, and prepared for a peace enforcement—as against a peacekeeping—mission. Since Russia and China are non-starters for such missions, any such a force would almost certainly have to come from the OECD countries. But therein lies the problem.

The industrialised nations do put their forces into conflict and post-conflict environments, but only where they perceive major political or geo-strategic interests at stake—Afghanistan (the US and Europe), Lebanon (Europe) the Balkans (Europe), Timor Leste (Australia), etc. But, with few exceptions (France and the UK), they have been reluctant to deploy in Africa which, until recently, was the world's most conflict-prone region.

Peacekeeping deployments to the region that is currently the most conflict-prone—South and Central Asia—are constrained for different reasons. Here the obstacle is not so much the reluctance of OECD countries to send troops (Afghanistan is *sui generis*), but the reluctance of regional states to accept them.

The CCH proposal has something in common with other initiatives to create multilateral military forces that are less radical than the UN force idea, but which still seek to help prevent or stop conflicts—or to prevent them from re-starting. These include the UN's Standby Arrangements System, the Standby High-Readiness Brigade, and the African Union's plans for a Rapid Response Force.

None of these has proven successful thus far. The most egregious failure came in 1994, when UN Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros Ghali pleaded with countries in the UN Standby Arrangements System to provide troops to stop the genocide in Rwanda. Not one government volunteered. The stand-by forces lived up to their name—they stood by while 800,000 Rwandans were butchered.

The Canadian 'Responsibility to Protect' ('R2P') report, which was in large part a response to the failures to prevent genocide in Rwanda and Srebrenica, called for the international community to be prepared to act—with force if necessary—to stop gross violations of human rights that national governments either could not, or would not stop themselves. 'R2P' was accepted, albeit in somewhat diluted form, at the UN Leaders Summit in 2005.

The leaders assembled at the UN agreed that the international community would be:

... prepared to take collective action, in a timely and decisive manner, through the Security Council, in accordance with the Charter, including Chapter VII, *on a case-by-case basis* .... should peaceful means be inadequate and national authorities

manifestly fail to protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.<sup>18</sup>

Notwithstanding these sentiments, ‘war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity’ continued to be perpetrated on the people of Darfur—and nothing happened. Today the ‘international community’ is even balking at providing desperately needed helicopters for the new UN/AU force in Darfur.

The lack of any real international commitment to embrace ‘collective action’ in response to war crimes and other gross violations of human rights is evident in the reference in the General Assembly declaration cite above to the Council responding to such cases on a ‘case by case basis’. This classic let-out clause was deliberately inserted so that the Council would not be *required* to respond forcefully to gross violations of human rights.

There is no way that the Council will ever accept CCH’s proposal that there should be an ‘*automatic* provision of powerful peacekeeping forces to protect governments that came to power democratically from the threat of rebellion...’

This doesn’t mean that nothing can be done. And, somewhat ironically, France may prove to be the major player. Over the past decade French policy in Africa has been evolving. The ‘special relationships’ with repressive regimes like Chad haven’t disappeared, but there is now a new emphasis on:

... military cooperation with international forces and African regional bodies. France’s permanent bases are in the process of being ‘Europeanized’ ... as France invites other European countries to commit forces to the bases.<sup>19</sup>

The case of Operation Artemis, the largely successful, French-led, UN-mandated, EU mission to the DRC in 2003,<sup>20</sup> and the French/UK proposals for EU ‘battlegroups’ for peace operations suggest that a modest version of the CCH proposal may evolve over time.

But with each ‘rapid reaction’ battlegroup having a force level of just 1500, major peace enforcement operations would be ruled out, deployments would no sense be automatic and the composition of the battle groups would be multinational not truly international.

<sup>18</sup> *World Summit Outcome*, United Nations, General Assembly, United Nations, New York, October 25, 2005. p.30. Emphasis added. <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/UN/UNPAN021752.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> Andrew Hansen, ‘The French Military in Africa’, *Council on Foreign Relations Backgrounder*, Council on Foreign Relations, New York. February 8, 2008. <http://www.cfr.org/publication/12578/#3>

<sup>20</sup> Kees Homan, ‘Operation Artemis in the Democratic Republic of Congo’ Clingendael, Netherlands Institute of International Relations, 2007. [www.clingendael.nl/publications/2007/20070531\\_cscp\\_chapter\\_homan.pdf](http://www.clingendael.nl/publications/2007/20070531_cscp_chapter_homan.pdf).

These sorts of proposal will likely gain some traction in the decade ahead. While they won't provide the same benefits as CCH's more ambitious proposal, they offer something that doesn't currently exist—the ability to deploy highly professional forces with minimum delay to post-conflict or other crisis zones to help maintain stability until the main UN peacekeeping force arrives.

Such force could, in principle, also provide a modified version of the Over-the-Horizon-Security guarantee that CCH envisage—one that would come into effect in the aftermath of a peacekeeping operation. The critical advantage of the sort of force that the Europeans envisage is that it could deploy in a few weeks—getting a new UN-mandated peacekeeping mission approved and funded, persuading governments to contribute troops, and finally deploying them takes many months—sometimes longer.

### *Military Coups<sup>21</sup>*

CCH argue that coups are important, 'because they either usher in or prolong military rule' and because they reduce economic growth—which in turn increases the risk of future coups—and rebellions. From an analysis of military coups in Africa from 1956 to 2003, they argue that a successful coup d'état, '...typically generates economic costs of the order of 10% of one year's GDP. In part this is due to losses in output, and in part due to the diversion of output to economically useless military spending.'

In a detailed 2005 paper on coups d'états Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler argue that. 'A common core of economic factors underpins proneness to coups and rebellions: low income and a lack of growth.'<sup>22</sup> They also find that a past history of coups increases the risk of future coups.

The finding that income and growth levels are critical determinants of coup risk—leads CH to argue that '...Africa looks more likely to be saved from the menace of coups if it could achieve economic growth than by further political reform.'<sup>23</sup>

In the long term the evidence certainly supports the claim that increasing economic growth will reduce the risk of coups. But it's a painfully slow process and cannot explain the 36 percent decline in the average number of coups per year in sub-Saharan Africa between 1980 and 2006.

<sup>21</sup> This section draws on the *Human Security Brief 2007*, Human Security Report Project, Simon Fraser University, 2008

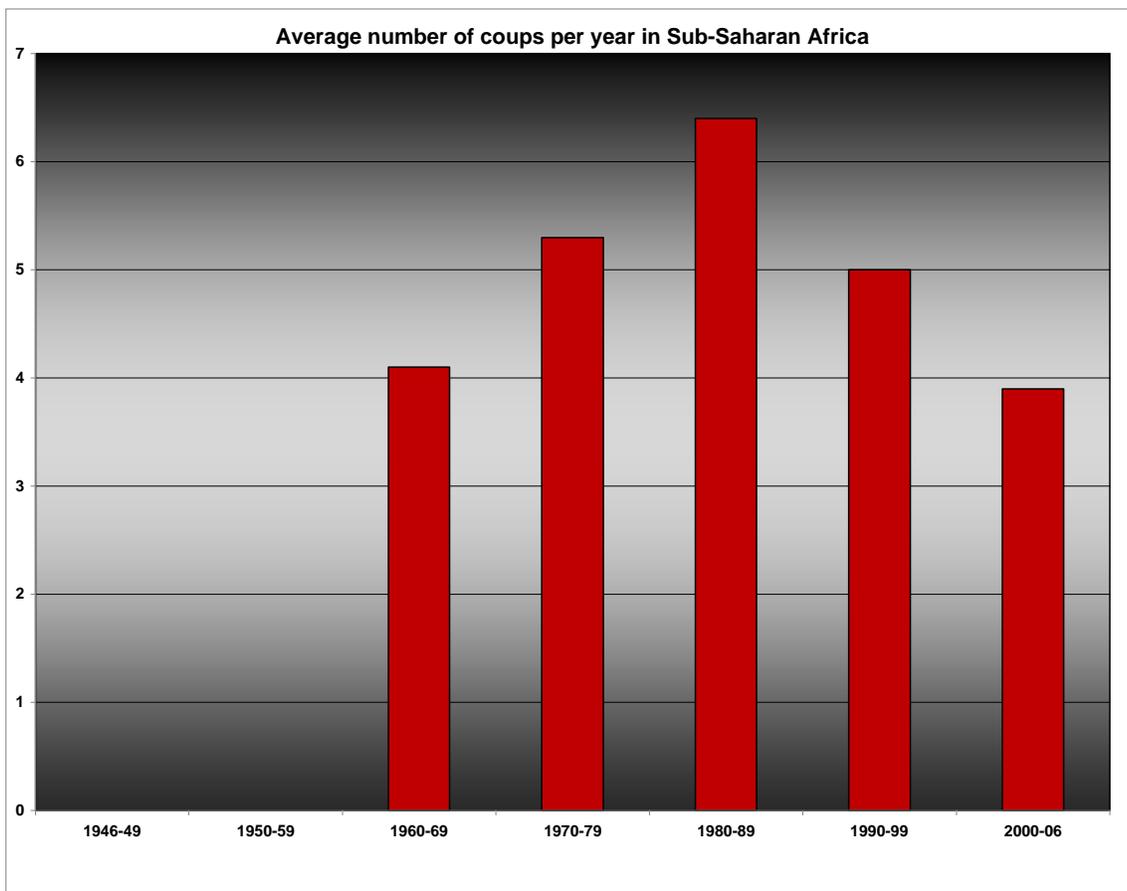
<sup>22</sup> Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, 'Coup Traps: Why Does Africa Have So Many Coups de'Etat?', Centre for the Study of African Economies, Draft, August 2005.

<sup>23</sup> Collier and Hoeffler, 'Coup Traps'.

Figure 1 shows the average number of coups per year by decade from 1946 to 2006. The data comes from the University of Heidelberg's *Conflict Barometer*, a different, but more up-to-date dataset from that drawn on by CH.

The most striking features of the trend data are first, the complete absence of coups from 1946 to 1959, reflecting the fact that most of the region was under colonial rule in this period, and second, the decline in coup numbers over the past fifteen years—a decline that parallels the sharp decrease in armed conflicts over the same period.

Figure 1



The downward trend in coups numbers in described in Figure 1 presents a puzzle for the CH/CCH explanation of the causes of coups. African economies stagnated in the 1980s and early 1990s. Only since the mid-1990s has the region managed an average rate of growth of around five percent. With a growth rate of 5 percent a year it would take more than 14 years

for a country to double its income, but this would reduce the risk of a coup by only 14.3 percent.<sup>24</sup>

So there have to be another explanation for the decline in the number of coups. There is, but is an explanation that owes more to political factors than economic change. Writing a decade ago, Morton Halperin and Kristen Lomasney, suggest that the answer may lie in a shift in global norms and political practices:

In recent years, the international community has decisively intervened on a number of occasions, through sanctions and other means, to restore to power democratically elected officials who have been either prevented from taking office or removed from office by force.<sup>25</sup>

During the Cold War years, military coups tended to be treated by the international community, including regional institutions like the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), as issues that lay within the domestic jurisdiction of member states. The principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of member states was rarely challenged.

In sub-Saharan Africa, the African Union (AU), which was created in 2002 as the OAU's successor organization, has taken a very different stance. Article 30 of the AU's *Constitutive Act of the Union* stipulates that, 'Governments which shall come to power through unconstitutional means shall not be allowed to participate in the activities of the Union'. Since 2002, the AU has intervened on several occasions in an effort to reverse coups and restore elected governments.<sup>26</sup>

Major donor states have also taken a strong—though not always consistent—line against coups. And they often have considerable leverage. Given that a major incentive for staging a coup is to gain control over the 'rents' that development assistance provides, any perception that donors will deny victorious coup leaders this prize may serve as a deterrent to future military adventurism.

The US, which is the world's largest single aid donor, is a major player here. Section 508 of the *Foreign Assistance Act* prohibits most forms of U.S. economic and military assistance to countries whose elected head of state is deposed by a military coup. Since the end of the Cold War, the US has invoked section 508 against the Central African Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, Comoros, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, and Niger.

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<sup>24</sup> Collier and Hoeffler, 'Coup Traps'. p.13

<sup>25</sup> Morton H. Halperin and Kristen Lomasney, "Guaranteeing Democracy: A Review of the Record", *Journal of Democracy* 9.2 (1998) 134-147.

<sup>26</sup> Princeton Lyman, 'Prepared Testimony Before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations Subcommittee on African Affairs', Washington D.C., United States Congress, July 17 2007. [www.cfr.org/publication/13950/](http://www.cfr.org/publication/13950/). Accessed Feb 19 2007

This upsurge of international activism provides a better explanation for the decline in the number of coups and attempted coups in Africa than does changes in income levels or economic growth.

The threat of sanctions presents would-be coup leaders with *externally* generated disincentives to overthrow governments. By contrast Collier and Hoeffler's policy prescription focuses on reducing the risk of coups by promoting *internal* changes to the at-risk countries—namely maximizing economic growth.

But while very different, the two approaches are in no sense contradictory—one is long-term and focuses on economic determinants, the other more immediate and focuses on political initiatives. Over time they are likely to be mutually reinforcing.

### *Conclusion*

The analysis above suggests, first that the risk that wars will start up again in post-conflict environments will be reduced if peacemaking were to be accorded far more prominence than the CCH paper suggests. The argument for so doing is simple. Because peacemaking is now creating negotiated settlements that are *much* more stable (i.e., less likely to breakdown) increasing peacemaking efforts will mean more conflicts ending in stable peace agreements and fewer in the highly unstable 'Other' category of terminations.

Although estimating costs is beyond the scope of this paper it is clear that peacemaking is a very low cost exercise compared with peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

Second, the assumptions that underpin the CCH paper about the causes of war lead them to systematically ignore policy initiatives that address grievances as a means of reducing the incidents of war restarts. These include not just mediation, but all other attempts at conflict resolution—from power-sharing to regional autonomy (in the case of separatist conflicts), as well as peace and reconciliation commissions. This paper argues that the rejection of grievance is unwarranted, not least because Paul Collier has himself argued that grievances can be an important cause of the resumption of conflict in post-conflict settings.

With respect to military coups this paper does not challenge the CCH finding that income levels and growth are important determinants of the risk of coups. But it argues that explanations that rely on these factors cannot account for the decline in coup numbers over the past decade and a half. A more compelling explanation is found in the sharp, though by no means consistent, increase in international political activism devoted to deterring coups and seeking to reverse those that have taken place.