



Swedish Defence University

Strategy of Intervention

The Dynamics of External Use of Force in Civil war

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Abstract

The aim of this dissertation is to unpack military intervention processes. I do this by making explicit the various strategic dynamics through which external interference attempts to shape the overall trajectory of a civil war. Over the past decade, almost half of all civil wars have seen active involvement from foreign troops, highlighting the importance of studying military interventions. Existing analyses of military intervention emphasize the strategic dynamics of these activities and implicitly or explicitly rely on various strategic concepts to make sense of them. However, most of the battlefield activities where strategy is put into practice are systematically black-boxed, and mainly used to explain the various macro-level correlations between military intervention and different civil war outcomes. To understand how military intervention affects the battlefield dynamics of civil war I argue that it is necessary to study intervention strategy as a distinct activity within intervention processes. This dissertation is comprised of four essays that analyses three different cases of military intervention by major actors against governments fighting different rebels. I use both qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze the cases. In Essays I and II, I analyze how the airstrikes conducted during the NATO-led *Operation Unified Protector* affected the ability of the Libyan government to take and hold territory during the 2011 Libyan Civil War. Essay III explores the strategic logic behind the Georgian government's decision to escalate its effort to reintegrate the South Ossetian separatist republic in August 2008, despite overt Russian threats of intervention. Lastly, Essay IV introduces a novel conceptual framework with illustrations from the intervention in the Kosovo War (1998-99). In sum, the essays highlight in different ways the complex battlefield dynamics associated with conducting and responding to intervention. Understanding how an external actor's use of military force affects the conduct and trajectory of a civil war is thus intimately linked to theorizing and analyzing intervention strategy as a dynamic activity.

Keywords Military intervention, strategy, Libya, South Ossetia, Kosovo