Preserving Power after Empire:

The Credibility Trap and France's Intervention in Chad, 1968-72

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Abstract

France's 1968-72 intervention in Chad constitutes a forgotten turning point in the Fifth Republic's foreign relations. Inter-connected institutions and treaties gave France a disproportionate influence over its African ex-colonies. French security guarantees underscored this system, however, whereby francophone African leaders continued to accept French economic and political leadership. French leaders discovered in Chad, however, that they had fewer choices and needed to dedicate more resources to fulfilling these commitments than President Charles de Gaulle had intended. Prosperous ex-colonies' leaders judged French commitments' value according to how France responded to crises in its least valued ex-colonies. Thus, although French analysts viewed intervening in Chad as irrational from a cost/benefit perspective, they found themselves pressured into doing so by other African governments who let it be known that they would interpret failing to support Chadian President François Tombalbye as a sign that they too could not count on France. Entrapped by prior commitments, French policymakers developed a new approach to using force, which I term strategic satisficing, far different from traditional French counterinsurgency practices. The tightly-coupled application of force and diplomacy in pursuit of limited objectives enables France to intervene with the frequency needed to uphold its post-colonial order in Africa.

Introduction

France's role in Africa sets it apart from other states of its size. France is arguably the most politically potent foreign actor in Sub-Saharan Africa even though it is today a medium-sized European state with an economy that only occasionally ranks amongst the world's top half dozen. French firms occupy privileged positions in its former colonies' markets and France's Central Bank regulates their financial institutions. France also mobilizes francophone Africa's votes for its initiatives at the United Nations, and Francophile Africans, such as Senegal's Leopold Senghor and Tunisia's Habib Bourghiba, secured the French language's role continuing within international organizations.

Security ties are, however, the foundation of France's power in Africa. Decolonization's architects, particularly Charles de Gaulle and Jacques Foccart, calculated that individual ex-colonies would be too small to defend themselves. They therefore envisaged a two-tiered security system that would perpetuate French influence at a modest cost to France.

African armies would, in theory, ensure domestic order and constitute their states' first line of defense. French forces, some of which were permanently stationed in Africa, would deter and, if necessary, intervene in a short, sharp fashion should it prove necessary. French leaders embedded this architecture in the security treaties they concluded with their ex-colonies.

The insecurity that afflicted several ex-colonies soon challenged this blueprint for maintaining political authority at a reasonable price and risked entrapping France in open-ended conflicts. Several ex-colonies, particularly those land-locked or stretching across the Sahel, faced chronic governance problems. Rebellion became common in these poor, yet overly large and ethnically diverse states. These states' leaders, in turn, sought assistance to combat insurgents and courted other partners when France provided inadequate aid.

This article examines how policymakers reconciled their desire to maintain France's influence at minimal cost with the broader engagements that African leaders and their own armed forces urged them to undertake. To this end, I examine France's 1968-72 intervention in Chad, which constituted the first major challenge that France faced to its post-colonial order in Africa.[1] To preview my conclusions, French leaders felt compelled to intervene, despite their misgivings about Chad, because they feared that non-intervention would tarnish French security guarantees' value in the eyes of other African leaders.

Once involved, however, France's government pursued its objective of visibly honoring its treaty commitments in as economical a fashion as possible. French leaders resisted commanders' preferences for longer and more extensive counterinsurgencies and instead limited French aims to pacifying Chad's most productive regions. Authorities in Paris

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[1] This article draws on material from France's Service Historique de la Défense (SHD), diplomatic documents from *Documents Diplomatiques Français* (*DDF*), and the French military's internal study, *Les Interventions Militaires Françaises au Tchad* (*IMFT*).

empowered civilian officials, including Ambassador Fernand Wibaux and the leaders of France's Mission for Administrative Reform (MRA), to supervise the armed forces to this end.

I term the pattern that emerged during the 1968-72 Chadian intervention strategic satisficing—meaning the use of minimal force to produce satisfactory political outcomes—and suggest that it remains the leitmotif of French operations in Africa. Interventions of this variety enabled France to intervene with the frequency needed to preserve its African sphere of influence and convince African governments that it remained a reliable partner. The results, however, have been less salutary for France's African allies, since France's limited interventions and strategic satisficing have prolonged, rather than ended civil wars.

French Power in Post-Colonial Africa

France, more than other colonial powers, granted independence to its Sub-Saharan possessions in a matter calculated to perpetuate its power. Despite the many individuals who shaped French decolonization policy, they collectively laid the basis for France's "sphere of influence" or "*chasse gardé*" (hunting preserve). France's government, to this end, broke up France's colonial federations—French Equatorial African (AEF) and French West Africa (AOF)—into twelve states that would necessarily remain military dependent on France due to their reduced size. The Fifth Republic's founders then integrated France's colonies into French-dominated economic institutions as they granted them independence. A network of security agreements, which French leaders believed they could uphold at a minimum cost, guaranteed this system's solidity and incentivized states to adhere to it.

France's post-colonial order in Africa was not the product of a single architect, but was shaped by a host of actors during the transitional period between France's Fourth and Fifth Republics. Despite their diverse perspectives, French decolonization's architects viewed

granting independence as an inevitable, yet unfortunate development. They therefore explored a variety of formulas for rendering African states tributary to France in terms of their foreign relations and the marketization of their raw materials.

Charles de Gaulle pursued this objective systematically after returning to power in 1958. He himself did not consider Africa particularly strategic and certainly less so than Europe or Asia, but viewed France's dominion over 15 soon-to-be independent states as essential to its status. De Gaulle therefore seized upon a proposal by Félix Houphouët-Boigny to grant African states independence within a French-dominated "federation". Côte d'Ivoire's future president, Houphouët-Boigny, shaped French policy at this juncture thanks to his triple role as leader of the National Assembly's largest African political party, a French cabinet minister between 1956 and 1960, and one of the Fifth Republic's Constitution's authors.[2]

For de Gaulle, Houphouët-Boigny's federation could enable France to embrace decolonization while perpetuating France's control over its ex-colonies' foreign and economic policies through federal institutions.[3] De Gaulle's collaborators soon translated this initiative into the French Community project. The Community's first general secretary, Raymond Janot, designed the Community's institutions, such as an arbitration court and common financial institutions, to resolve disputes between the Community's members and ensure France's control over "strategic" natural resources.[4]

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[2] Frédéric Mel, "Félix Houphouët-Boigny: Le Ministre français qui est devenu chef d'état en Côte d'Ivoire," in Jean-Pierre Bat et al., *Jacques Foccart: archives ouvertes: La politique, l'Afrique et le monde* (Paris: PUPS, 2017), 65-77.

[3] Frédéric Turpin, *Jacques Foccart: Dans l'ombre de pouvoir* (Paris: CNRS, 2015), 129-37.

[4] Didier Maus, "La mise en oeuvre institutionnelle de la Communauté," in Philippe Oulmont and Maurice Vaïsse, eds., *De Gaulle et la décolonisation de l'Afrique subsaharienne* (Paris: Karthala, 2014), 43-69.

Dynamics in Africa soon, however, disillusioned de Gaulle about the Community. One colony, Guinea, voted against the Community in the 1958 referendum that de Gaulle organized to validate the project. Worse still, even those leaders who originally supported the Community decided to demand full independence once they witnessed the prestige that leaders of fully-sovereign states, such as Guinea's Sekou Touré and Ghana's Kwame Nkruma, enjoyed on the international stage. The presidents of Madagascar and Mali began militating for full independence in 1959, but soon even Houphouët-Boigny joined them.[5]

The Community's failure drove de Gaulle to seek other means for perpetuating French power. He consequently charged his Cooperation Minister, Jean Foyer, with negotiating accords with the leaders of France's soon-to-be-independent colonies between 1959 and 1963.[6] These agreements were unequal considering that African leaders reasonably feared that French authorities would replace them should they prove intractable. Most of the 15 colonies' small size and dearth of resources, following Paris' division of the two colonial federations into 12 states, furthermore, meant that African leaders desperately needed French assistance, regardless of the cost.[7]

At a multilateral level, Paris preserved France's colonial currency, the franc CFA, by incorporating representatives from its newly independent colonies into central banking

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[5] Turpin, 142-50.

[6] Sabine Jansen, "Jean Foyer, Artisan méconnu de la décolonisation," in Oulmont and Vaïsse, eds., 82.

[7] France granted independence to 15 states in 1958-60. Twelve were concentrated into two federations: AOF and AEF. Cameroon and Togo were administered separately under UN mandates and Madagascar was administered separately due to its remoteness. Electoral assemblies existed at both the level of AEF and AOF and the individual territories, and decolonization could have produced either federation-sized or territory-sized entities. Pascal Geneste, "Jacques Foccart ou la politique africaine de la France gaullienne," in Oulmont and Vaïsse, eds., 183-95.

institutions. Through this policy, punctuated by accords with West African states in 1962 and Central African states in 1972, France perpetuated francophone Africa's colonial monetary order up until the present day.[8] Monetary union, in turn, facilitated French investments and incentivized francophone states to trade with France rather than other industrialized states. De Gaulle's government further strengthened France's hold on African economies through financial instruments that guaranteed French corporate investments within the CFA zone.[9]

France's bilateral treaties, meanwhile, secured France's access to "strategic" military facilities and raw materials. Symbolic arrangements went hand-in-hand with these concrete dispositions. Francophone governments, for example, consented to recognizing French ambassadors as the honorific *doyens* (or deans) of the foreign diplomatic corps based in their states and francophone Africa usually voted alongside France at the United Nations. Most importantly, Francophone states implicitly accepted that France would remain their principal partner and they therefore refrained from developing significant ties with other powers.[10]

France's promise to continue providing security was, however, the *sine qua non* condition that led African governments to accept French leadership. France, indeed, signed military cooperation accords with all of its Sub-Saharan colonies, except Guinea.[11] These agreements' military assistance clauses specified how France would help build ex-colonies'

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[8] Olivier Feiertag, "La politique du franc CFA," in Bat et al., *Jacques Foccart: archives ouvertes*, 287-308.

[9] Laurence Badel, "Les enjeux de la 'francophonie économique'," in Bat et al., *Jacques Foccart: archives ouvertes*, 323-340.

[10] Pierre-Michel Durand, *L'Afrique et les relations franco-américaines des années 1960* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2009).

[11] Chester Crocker, "France's Changing Military Interests: Evolution of the 'most potent external military factor' in contemporary Africa," *Africa Report* (June 1968), 20.

national armies, including the provision of training and technical expertise. The defense clauses, meanwhile, established procedures for France to intervene on its ex-colonies' behalf.[12]

De Gaulle planned, however, for France to fulfil these security commitments with utmost economy. He intended to avoid being dragged into prolonged counterinsurgencies and told collaborators, "That's enough with colonial wars. We are having all the problems in the world extricating ourselves from the one in Algeria [1954-62] and I do not want to engage in a new one in black Africa."[13] De Gaulle therefore insisted that France's African treaties not specify any level of support that France would automatically provide, leaving France's President free to determine how to respond to each crisis.

De Gaulle himself believed that France could uphold its commitments without expending significant military or political capital. He envisaged that African armies, trained by France, would comprise the first line of defense and that France would only dispatch forces should those forces prove inadequate. De Gaulle, therefore, ordered France's military to build-up African armies through the so-called "Raisonable" Plan.[14] De Gaulle anticipated that, when they occurred, French interventions would be short and that France would withdraw once the menace abated. De Gaulle was so confident of this that he ordered a massive redeployment of French military assets, reducing French forces in Sub-Saharan Africa from 60,000 personnel in 1960 to 6,600 in 1965.[15]

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[12] Robin Luckham, "Le militarisme francais en Afrique," *Politique africaine*, 2/9 (1982), 95-110

[13] Guia Migani, *La France et l'Afrique sub-saharienne, 1957-1963* (Brussels: PIE Peter Lang, 2008), 135.

[14] Moshé Ammi-Oz, "La formation des cadres africains lors de la mise sur pied des armées nationales," *Revue française d'études politiques aficaines*, 133 (1977), p. 84-97.

[15] Crocker, 24.

De Gaulle's view that Africa should serve as a tool for bolstering France's great power aspirations, yet was not a realm of geopolitical interest, is best exemplified by his decisions to centralize African policymaking within the Presidency, while neglecting Africa when it came to his personal diplomacy. De Gaulle, for example, personally undertook three voyages to francophone Africa in 1958-59, when France was negotiating its post-colonial role, yet never visited the region again during his remaining nine years in power. De Gaulle's neglect of Africa appears even starker given his penchant for high-profile personal diplomacy.[16]

While de Gaulle was less personally interested in Africa than other regions, he feared lest foreign powers undermine France's hold over its ex-colonies. He therefore appointed a close collaborator, Jacques Foccart, as his personal representative for Africa. Africa, within this context, occupied a unique position in French policymaking. Whereas France's Foreign Ministry piloted foreign policies towards other continents, Africa policy was unique in being steered by a secretariat subordinated directly to the Presidency. De Gaulle accomplished this institutionally by appointing Foccart director of the French Community's vestigial secretariat.

Although the Community's institutional structures fell into desuetude after 1959, they remained embedded in the Fifth Republic's Constitution. This meant that de Gaulle was still theoretically the Community's chief executive and could therefore form a secretariat to manage Community affairs.[17] Foccart, in this capacity, controlled a staff of 150 and further relied on his close ties with Maurice Robert, French intelligence's head of African affairs (Sector "N"

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[16] De Gaulle remained extremely dedicated to personal diplomacy after 1959, when he made his last voyage to francophone Africa. From 1960 until 1969 he made the following diplomatic voyages: Western European allies (four trips), North America (four), Warsaw Pact (three), Near East and Eastern Mediterranean (three), Asia/Oceania (one), and South America (one).

[17] Geneste, 190-194.

of the SDECE).[18] Foccart, furthermore, built extensive personal networks, hand-selecting France's ambassadors to ex-colonies and pressuring African presidents to appoint Foccart loyalists to oversee their security services.

Foccart's primary qualifications for this role were his status as one of de Gaulle's most trusted collaborators and his long-standing connection with France's secret services. During the Second World War, Foccart led a cell within France's Resistance and later served in an inter-allied commando unit.[19] Foccart thereafter dedicated himself to Gaullist politics, rising to become secretary general of the Gaullist Rassemblement du Peuple Français (RPF) in 1954. Upon assuming power as de Gaulle's "Monsieur Afrique" in 1960, Foccart held less formal power than other Gaullist political "barons", such as Michel Debré or Jacques Chaban-Delmas, but enjoyed more access to the President and met daily with de Gaulle.[20]

It, thus, fell upon Foccart to implement de Gaulle's vision for Africa. Foccart, initially, achieved this objective with remarkable economy. Foccart used French troops to ensure President Senghor's bloodless victory over Prime Minister Mamadou Dia during Senegal's post-independence struggle of 1960-62. He then sent paratroopers to restore Gabon's pro-French President Léon M'ba to power, at the cost of one French soldier killed, after M'ba was toppled by a military coup in 1964.[21] Although these initial interventions suggested that France could preserve its post-colonial order at little cost, other factors even then threatened to entrap France in costlier conflicts.

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[18] Roger Faligot et al., *Histoire politique des services secrets français de la Seconde Guerre mondiale à nos jours* (Paris: La Découverte, 2012), 225-42.

[19] Turpin, 39-76.

[20] Ibid, 185-226

[21] Ibid, 200-01.

The Entrapment *Problématique*

De Gaulle's vision of perpetuating French power at little cost encountered three dynamics that threatened to entrap it in costly counterinsurgencies. Firstly, his own and preceding governments' fragmentation of France's two colonial federations gave rise to questionably viable states. The Central African Republic, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger were all overly large, underpopulated and encompassed historically antagonistic ethnic groups. France then had difficulty avoiding entrapment in these states' troubles because France's more valuable ex-colonies viewed France's fulfilment of its security obligations to these states as a litmus test for how it would respond to their appeals. Much of France's officer corps, finally, believed in large-scale, long-term counterinsurgency operations—known as the *guerre revolutionnaire* doctrine—inimical to de Gaulle's preference for short, cheap interventions.

French policy between 1956 and 1960 broke up France's two colonial federations—the AEF and AOF—into twelve states. The motives that drove decision-makers to favor this outcome differed substantially. Houphouët-Boigny set France on this pathway, with the 1956 Framework Law, because he wanted to prevent revenues from his native and affluent Côte d'Ivoire from being used to subsidize AOF's poorer members.[22] De Gaulle and Foccart later further fragmented the federations, but their rationale was that smaller states would be more sensitive to French influence.[23]

Regardless of their motives, French leaders' division of the federations meant that certain francophone states were questionably viable. The Central African Republic, Chad,

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[22] Mel.

[23] Geneste.

Mali, Mauritania and Niger were all sparsely populated, economically underdeveloped and geographically large. These long-neglected possessions faced immense governance challenges. Amongst the world's least densely populated states, four faced the additional challenge of being landlocked, which further impeded their development.[24] Most also experienced fraught relations between such historically antagonist groups as nomads, pastoralists and farmers.[25] Ethnic and religious cleavages, including the trans-Saharan slave trade's legacy of Muslim/animist animosity, further destabilized them.

De Gaulle's confidence that the flexibility he had built into France's defense accords would enable him to avoid unprofitable entanglements likewise proved misplaced. The similarity of the agreements that France signed with its soon-to-be-independent colonies led the presidents of France's more valuable allies—Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Madagascar and Congo-Brazzaville—to scrutinize how France upheld its obligations to less-valuable territories. They reasoned that comparatively wealthy states could not count on France's security guarantees if France's government did not first demonstrate its credibility by honoring its commitments to poorer ex-colonies.[26] In other words, would France intervene on behalf of Madagascar if it did not do so for the Central African Republic?

Any refusal to intervene on behalf of an ex-colony would therefore undermine France's alliance system's overall solidity. De Gaulle and Foccart learned this lesson in 1963 when

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[24] Population densities ranged in 1965 from 0.8 inhabitants/km^2 (Mauritania) to 4.3 (Mali), contrasting poorly with the Sub-Saharan mean of 10.1. United Nations, *Population Division (2017): World Population Prospects* at: esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/DataQuery/ (accessed September 2017).

[25] Victor Azarya, *Nomads and the State in Africa* (Leiden: ASC, 1996), 69-88.

[26] On credible commitment challenges, see: Thomas Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1966), 35-91.

popular uprisings overthrew Conto-Brazzaville's pro-French President Fulbert Youlou.[27] France's failure to support Youlou during the three day revolt shocked African leaders.[28] Their discomfiture drove de Gaulle to dispatch troops to one of France's least valued ex-colonies, Mauritania, later that year to deter Morocco from pursuing irredentist claims.[29] Civil strife in francophone Africa would, in the future, pose even greater dilemmas for France: either intervene in states where the costs exceeded the benefits or refrain from intervening and risk devaluing France's alliance system.

French leaders, furthermore, found their ability to limit interventions' scope challenged by their military's doctrinal preferences. The French military had, over time, waged some of the world's most complex counterinsurgencies. French officers' collective experience with this form of warfare spurred the development of a uniquely French "school" of counterinsurgency beginning in the 1840s.[30] In its mid-20th century form, known as *guerre révolutionnaire*, the military's counterinsurgency approach distinguished itself from foreign counterparts by its emphasis on employing control measures to isolate populations from insurgents, while simultaneously exterminating guerrillas with a combination of semi-static *quadrillage* deployments and active sweeps by insurgent-hunting units. Although foreign observers lauded France's counterinsurgency school, the doctrine's resource intensiveness and political/military implications rendered it inimical to de Gaulle's Africa policy.[31]

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[27] Jean-Pierre Bat, *La fabrique des barbouzes: Histoire des réseaux Foccart en Afrique* (Paris: Nouveau Monde, 2015), 295-354.

[28] Ibid, 295-401.

[29] Crocker, 24.

[30] Benjamin Brower, *A Desert Named Peace: The Violence of France's Empire in the Algerian Sahara* (New York: Columbia UP, 2009), 27-89.

[31] Galula and Trinquier are the only non-UK/USA authors referenced in: *The U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 2007).

One of *guerre révolutionnaire's* tenets was that populations are apolitical and can be separated from insurgents through control measures and psychological manipulation. Counterinsurgency theorist David Galula best summarized this mechanistic view of populations, writing, "In any case, *whatever the cause*, there will be an active minority for the cause, a neutral majority, and an active minority against the cause. The technique of power consists of relying on the favorable minority in order to rally the neutral majority and to neutralize or eliminate the hostile minority."[32]

France's military had long nurtured a network of *bureaux arabes* for this purpose and created new institutions during the 1954-62 Algerian War to capitalize on insights drawn from applied crowd psychology and police states' social control techniques.[33] Roger Triquier, for example, designed the Urban Protection Dispositive (DPU) to compel Algerians to surveille one another.[34] Charles Lacheroy, meanwhile, spearheaded the creation of psychological warfare staffs (the *cinquièmes bureaux*) and training institutions (the Centre for Training and Preparation in Counter-Guerrilla Warfare [CIPCG]).[35]

While population-control institutions, such as these, limit insurgents' ability to draw resources from a population, they do not destroy guerrilla bands. Commanders considered this residual task to be an exceedingly resource intensive one that demanded both semi-static *quadrillage* troops and elite mobile forces. *Quadrillage* or "gridding" employs semi-static forces to protect transportation arteries and population centers, thereby restricting guerrillas'

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[32] Galula, 53.

[33] Martin Thomas, "Colonial States as Intelligence States," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 28/6 (2005), 1033-60.

[34] Roger Trinquier, *La guerre moderne* (Paris: Economica, 2008, orig. 1961), 40-43.

[35] Tramor Quemeneur, "'La discipline jusque dans l'indiscipline' La désobéissance de militaires français," In Mohammed Harbi & Benjamin Stora, eds., *La Guerre d'Algérie* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 2004), 173-76.

freedom of movement. France's Army employed conscripts in tens and hundreds of thousands to this end during the Rif (1921-26) and Algerian (1954-62) Wars. Indigenous paramilitaries, however, also proved essential because France's metropole never provided enough manpower.[36] France therefore raised bewildering varieties of local auxiliaries, including: spahis, goums, moghazenis, harkis, partisans, and GMPRs.[37]

Although *quadrillage* troops denied rebels access to critical targets, experience taught commanders that destroying mobile guerrilla bands is exceptionally difficult. They therefore developed lightweight, elite units—legionnaires, marines and paratroops—that employed cutting-edge means of transportation to pursue guerillas, including armored cars in Morocco, parachutes in Indochina, and helicopters in Algeria. These units acquired mythic reputations within France's Army. Describing Foreign Legionnaires during the Riff War, one observer portrayed forces as "spending their entire time in the field under an iron discipline."[38] Enunciating his vision of a paratroop unit, General Marcel Bigeard enthused about, "An agile, light, feline and maneuverable battalion that possesses an unshakeable faith."[39]

The *guerre révolutionnaire* doctrine was, in sum, the military establishment's response to successive counterinsurgencies. Most officers believed that this approach worked and had enabled Field Marshals Hubert Lyautey and Jospeh Gallieni to pacify restless colonies.[40] Many also felt that *guerre révolutionnaire* had succeeded in Algeria, defeating the Front de Libération

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[36] Paul Ely, "Enseignements de la Guerre d'Indochine," In *Rand Memorandum RM-5271-PR* (Santa Monica: Rand, 1967), 54-64.

[37] Christophe Cazorla, "Le concept d'emploi des supplétifs dans la guerre d'Algerie," *Revue historique des armées* 4 (2002), 69-82.

[38] H., "The Campaign in Morocco," *Foreign Affairs* 2/4 (1926).

[39] Marcel Bigeard, *Pour une parcelle de gloire* (Plon: Paris, 1975), 102.

[40] Jean Gottmann,"Bugeaud, Galliéni, Lyautey," in Edward Earle ed., *Makers of Modern Strategy: Military Thought from Machiavelli to Hitler* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1943), 234-259

Nationale (FLN), despite France's ultimate withdrawal. De Gaulle and other political leaders, however, regarded the doctrine as a threat to their control over interventions. *Guerre révolutionnaire,* first and foremost, was gourmand of resources and time. Troops were needed to spread a net of *quadrillage*, impose population controls, and hunt down guerrillas.

Even worse from political leaders' point of view were *guerre révolutionnaire*'s implications for civil-military relations. French theorists argued that counterinsurgencies demanded a sagacious combination of political and military measures. Gallieni, for instance, argued "pacification can best be achieved… through the combined impact of [military] force and political action."[41] Galula later built on Gallieni's hypothesis and calculated that, "A revolutionary war is 20 per cent military and 80 per cent political."[42] French counterinsurgency experts reasoned from this need for closely coordinated political and military measures that field commanders should assume broad political powers. Lyautey, the pacifier of Morocco, forcefully expressed this belief when he argued, "The first act of any commanding general operating at 3,000 leagues [from France] should be to cut the telegraph wire to free himself from the metropole's harassing instructions."[43]

This institutional norm of privileging commanders' authority over governmental instructions rendered civilian control of counterinsurgencies problematic.[44] The military's reticence to obey governments climaxed during the 1954-62 Algerian War when officers attempted coups on two occasions and sabotaged government policies on many others. *Guerre*

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[41] Joseph-Simon Gallieni, "Principes de Pacification et d'Organisation," In Maxime Gillet, *Principes de Pacification du Maréchal Lyautey* (Paris: Economica, 2010), 94.

[42] David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (Westport: Praeger, 2006, orig. 1964), 63.

[43] Gillet, 63.

[44] A.S. Kanya-Forstner, *The Conquest of the Western Sahara* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1969).

révolutionnaire theorists Antoine Argoud, Charles Lacheroy and Yves Godard played leading roles in this dissidence, leading de Gaulle to conclude that the doctrine itself undermined France's government's control over its military.[45] De Gaulle therefore set about marginalizing *guerre révolutionnaire*. He began, in 1960, by abolishing the CIPCG and went further after the failed 1961 coup by dismantling the *cinquièmes bureaux* and many elite insurgent-hunting units. He ultimately aimed to "return the [French] Army to the Rhine" as a force overwhelmingly comprised of conscripts and focused on conventional warfare.[46]

Guerre révolutionnaire remained deeply ingrained, nonetheless, in those units susceptible to intervene in Africa. Institutions like the Center for African and Asian Studies (CEAA), which Lacheroy directed prior to his downfall, taught a generation of officers that *guerre révolutionnaire* provided a template for victory.[47] Commanders then employed the doctrine's intellectual repertoire in Africa during the Fifth Republic's formative months. French forces, for example, drew on *guerre révolutionnaire*'s precepts to suppress Cameroon's Union des Populations du Cameroun (UPC) in 1955-62. They first imposed tight controls over Cameroon's population, then raised paramilitary forces for *quadrillage*, and finally extirpated the UPC's guerrilla bands.[48] The French-directed "Écouvillon" campaign in the Western

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[45] Pierre Abramovici, *Le Putsch des Généraux: De Gaulle contre l'armée* (Paris: Fayard, 2011), 72-88.

[46] Roger Belin, *Lorsqu'une République chasse l'autre* (Paris: Michalon, 1999), 113-17.

[47] Thomas Deltome et al., *Kamerun! Une guerre cachée aux origines de la Françafrique* (Paris: La Découverte, 2011), 152.

[48] Ibid, *passim*.

Saharan, which mobilized 14,000 French and Spanish soldiers in 1958, likewise emulated France's anti-guerrilla offensives in Algeria.[49]

De Gaulle's strategy for economically preserving France's influence in Africa thus generated entrapment risks that de Gaulle himself did not appreciate. At least five ex-colonies were structurally prone to internal conflicts, with few resources to govern vast territories filled with antagonistic groups. Wealthier ex-colonies' presidents' tendency to judge French commitments' value based on how France responded to crises in poorer ex-colonies made it difficult for France to avoid entrapment in civil wars. The *guerre révolutionnaire* doctrine, furthermore, complicated political leaders' efforts to manage their interventions.

Origins of the Chadian Quagmire

Chad's insurgency would, beginning in the mid-1960s, pose the first major challenge to France's post-colonial order in Africa. Chad, like certain other ex-colonies, had few economic endowments with which to govern immense, underpopulated territories. Chad's ethnic composition posed additional challenges due to the animus between southern Christian/animist and northern Muslim ethnic groups. Chad's first President, François Tombalbye, aggravated these problems through policies of ethnic favoritism towards his own Sara ethnic group. A vicious cycle of governmental repression and opposition mobilization ensued from 1963 onwards, bringing the government to the brink of collapse in 1968.

Although Chad first confronted French policymakers with the entrapment problématique, other ex-colonies might have posed this challenge sooner. Touareg tribesmen

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[49] Michel Catala, *La France, l'Espagne et l'indépendance du Maroc* (Paris: Indes Savants, 2015), 208-44.

from Kidal Province led the way in contesting a francophone government's sovereignty. They rejected the Malian government's authority in 1960 and President Modiba Keita's subsequent invasion of Kidal precipitated a short, yet bloody counterinsurgency in 1963-64.[50] Niger then experienced its own insurgency when partisans of the Sawaba movement embraced guerrilla warfare in 1964-65.[51] Neither of these rebellions, however, required France to intervene since national armies, equipped with French arms and directed by French advisors, quelled them.

It was Chad, therefore, that first generated the degree of strife necessary to entrap France. The competing French, Anglo-Egyptian and Italian imperialisms that gave rise to Chad's borders endowed the state with three distinct populations—Christian/animist farmers, Muslim farmers and Muslim nomads—each of which contains numerous tribes.[52] Each Chadian group also nurtures cross-border ties with neighboring states. The Christian/animist Sara of southern Chad, for example, are both Chad's largest group and are also prominent in the Central African Republic. Chad's second largest group, the Arabs of eastern Chad, are historically connected to co-ethnics in Sudan.[53] Finally, the Tubus that dominate northern Chad are linked to Libya's Fezzane Province.[54] Chad's ethnic groups' pre-colonial interactions were often antagonistic, with nomads raiding farmers and Muslims enslaving animists.

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[50] Mériadec Raffray, *Touaregs: La Révolte des Hommes Bleus, 1857-2013* (Paris: Economica, 2013), 36-49.

[51] Karen van Walraven, "Sawaba's Rebellion in Niger (1964-1965)," in J. Abbink et al., eds., *Rethinking Resistance* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 218-52.

[52] M. Denis, *Histoire militaire de l'Afrique Equatoriale Française* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1931), 245-437.

[53] René Lemarchand, "The Politics of Sara Ethnicity," *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* 80 (1980), 449-71; and Frederic Thomas, "The Juhaina Arabs of Chad," *Middle East Journal* 13/2 (1959), 142-155.

[54] Robert Buijtenhuijs, "The Chadian Tubu," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 71/1 (2001), 149-161.

Chad's meagre resources aggravated its ethnic dynamics by depriving its government of the wherewithal to build a modern state. French administrators had struggled to eke out funds from Chad and the colony's budget ran chronic deficits despite the use of forced labor to cultivate cotton. Although France's treasury covered these deficits while Chad was a colony, independence gave rise to an insolvent state. Chad's government, indeed, ran a deficit of 2.6 billion CFA for a budget of 6 billion CFA during Chad's first year of independence.[55] Chad's foremost exports, cotton (70% of exports) and cattle (15% of exports), were also of such a nature that the government could do little to swiftly expand their output.[56]

Chad's endowments' geographic distribution proved even more problematic than their absolute levels. France had concentrated its investments in cotton-producing southern provinces, building more schools and roads there than in Chad's northern two-thirds. Independence brought to power a scion of southern Chad's dominant Sara tribe, François Tombalbye. Tombalbye, in turn, exacerbated Chad's inequalities by favoring his ethnicity and province. He insisted, for example, on building Chad's largest meat-packing facility in his home province rather than the Sahelian regions that raised most Chadian cattle.[57] He also diverted European Economic Community funds allocated for improving central Chad's cattle stock to southern Chad's cotton sector.[58] Tombalbye, all-the-while, promoted Sara officers over their Muslim Hadjarai counterparts to better control the armed forces.[59]

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[55] Ahmat Yacoub, *Les Relations Franco-Tchadiennes dans les années soixante* (Paris: Publibook, 2003), 80.

[56] Bichara Haggar, *François Tombalbye, 1960-1975* (Paris: l'Harmattan, 2007), 121.

[57] Ibid, 159.

[58] Ibid, 158.

[59] Marielle Debos, *Le métier des armes au Tchad* (Paris: Karthala, 2013), 62-71.

These discriminatory policies fostered an explosive political climate. Muslims within Tombalbye's political party publicly appealed to the President in March 1963 to remedy matters by forming an ethnically-inclusive cabinet. Tombalbye, however, felt threatened by this implied criticism and ordered his police to arrest the Muslim politicians.[60] Rumors that the government would soon arrest another prominent Muslim, Djibrine Kherallah, then catalyzed demonstrations around Kherallah's house. The crowd gathering around Kherallah alarmed Tombalbye, who ordered his security forces to disperse the protestors. The collision between Tombalbye's gendarmes and pro-Kherallah demonstrators on 16 September 1963 resulted in the deaths of over 20 demonstrators.[61]

Muslims' growing sense of oppression spurred them to plot. The climate of repression within Chad meant, however, that this scheming occurred amongst the diaspora. Chadian expatriates in Sudan, for example, formed the Mouvement National pour la Liberation du Tchad in 1963 and sent volunteers to Algeria for guerrilla warfare training.[62] The Cairo-based militant Ibrahim Abatcha, meanwhile, nurtured ties with North Vietnam and sent seven volunteers to North Korea for training. A third group, operating in the Central African Republic, also planned to send militants to Algeria, but instead improvised a training camp within Chad after the 1965 Algerian coup disrupted that project.[63]

It was not these plots, however, that tipped Chad into civil war, but rather Tombalbye's efforts to redress Chad's balance of payment problems. Tombalbye decided in late-1964 to

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[60] Netcho Abbo, *Mangalmé 1965* (Saint-Maur: Sepia, 1996), 16-18.

[61] Haggar, 206-07.

[62] Al Hadj Djarma, *Témoignage d'un militant du FROLINAT* (Paris: l'Harmattan, 2003), 30.

[63] Ibid, 45-46.

raise taxes to cover the government's operating expenses, while simultaneously extracting a mandatory loan to pay for development projects.[64] Despite Tombalbye's plan's apparent logic, the new financial burden exceeded communities' ability to pay. The government, for example, sought to collect 12 million CFA from Malgalmé District's Moubi tribe in 1965, compared to only 3 million CFA the previous year.[65] The Moubi, in this instance, refused to pay and Tombalbye dispatched his Interior Minister and gendarmes to extort the funds. Events in Mangalmé thereafter spiraled out of control, with gendarmes firing on protestors, who retaliated by massacring government officials.[66]

The revolt that started in Mangalmé spread as travelers carried word of the government's brutality.[67] To make matters worse, a sub-prefect's insolence towards the Tubus' leader, the Derdeï, soured relations between the government and northern Chad's nomads.[68] The foreign-based dissident groups recognized the opportunity these events provided and cooperated to transform Chad's anti-regime violence into a full-fledged insurgency. Their representatives converged on Kassal-Rou-Ouss in Darfur to create a joint command structure, form a guerrilla unit of 150 fighters, and found the Front de Liberation Nationale du Tchad (FROLINAT) as their umbrella group.[69]

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[64] Abbo, 26-27.

[65] Haggar, 224.

[66] Djarma, 36-44.

[67] Abbo, 33-78.

[68] SHD 11S130 Wibaux, Rapport de fin de mission, 31 March 1974.

[69] Djarma, 46-48.

FROLINAT's progressive and Muslim nature attracted support from Sudan, Egypt and Algeria once the organization began launching attacks in 1966.[70] FROLINAT consciously emulated Algerian and Vietnamese revolutionaries by assassinating government administrators.[71] Chad's 3,000 military personnel responded to this violence with scorched earth tactics, burning villages, slaughtering livestock and executing suspects. These exactions, however, drove more Chadians to join FROLINAT, igniting a cycle whereby rebellion prompted repression, which reinforced the rebellion.[72]

Tombalbye's regime lost control of rural central Chad in 1967. The Tubus then revolted as well, overthrowing public authority in northern Chad and besieging the government's base in Aozou.[73] By mid-1968 only Tombalbye's ethnic base in southern Chad remained loyal. The government's ability to hold even this remnant was, meanwhile, threatened by Chad's catastrophic finances. Chad's government spent more money because of the war, but collected fewer taxes because guerrillas disrupted the cotton harvest and controlled the countryside. Chad's trade deficit consequently skyrocketed from 7 billion CFA in 1965 to 18 billion in 1968.[74] Chad's government, in sum, was losing the countryside and going bankrupt.

Entrapment

French officials observed Chad's descent into anarchy with growing apprehension. Tombalbye's soldiers' brutality first elicited protests from France's intelligence director in

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[70] M.W. Daly, *Darfur's Sorrow: A History of Destruction and Genocide* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007), 200-206.

[71] C. Grégoire, *Tchad: Borkou-Ennedi-Tibesti, 1970-1972* (Paris: Mémoires d'Hommes, 2004), 64-65.

[72] SHD 11S130 Wibaux, Rapport de fin de mission, 31 March 1974.

[73] Grégoire, 66-75.

[74] Haggar, 124.

Chad, Major Mallet. Tombalbye, however, responded angrily to Mallet's criticism, driving the latter leave Chad.[75] Tombalbye subsequently began demanding increased assistance. French refusals to provide this aid, combined with French Ambassador Guy de Commines' private criticism of Tombalbye's policies further damaged relations between France's embassy and Chad.[76] Much of France's foreign policymaking bureaucracy agreed with Commines and regarded Tombalbye as unworthy of additional assistance.

Tombalbye retaliated for this French stinginess by openly threatening France's African sphere of influence.[77] He began by seeking other powers' assistance to demonstrate to French leaders that they should not take France's privileged position for granted. Tombalbye initially requested American aid in 1966. The United States, however, declined to supplant France and provided only $167,000.[78] American disinterest prompted Tombalbye to seek Soviet assistance.[79] Tombalbye's demarches to Moscow progressed from sending envoys to a state visit in June 1968, whose results were equally disappointing for Tombalbye, who received only promises of "cultural" cooperation.

The superpowers' disinterest led Tombalbye to court other partners. Congo-Kinshasa's President, Joseph-Désiré Mobutu, provided one such opportunity and Tombalbye joined with Mobutu in February 1968 to promote a Congolese-led Union of Central African States (UEAC) as an alternative to the pro-French Customs and Economic Union of Central Africa

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[75] Faligot et al., 240.

[76] Alphand à de Commines, 8 March 1968. In *DDF,* 1968-I, Document 172; and Yacoub, 57-76.

[77] Note de la DRAM, 24 April 1968, In *DDF,* 1968-I, Document 260.

[78] Yacoub, 124-25.

[79] Note de la DRAM, 25 January 1968. In *DDF,* 1968-I, Document 62.

(UDEAC).[80] De Gaulle's advisor for African affairs, Foccart, considered this UEAC proposal a threat to French interests and intrigued against it.[81] Tombalbye reinforced Foccart's apprehensions during his speech on UEAC by threatening to revoke the French ambassador's honorific role as the doyen of the diplomatic corps resident in Chad.[82]

France's success scuttling the UEAC failed, however, to discourage Tombalbye's quest for alternative alliances. Arab states' support for FROLINAT persuaded Tombalbye to ally with Israel. Tombalbye visited Israel in 1962 and 1965, and he supported Israel diplomatically at the United Nations following the 1967 Arab-Israeli War.[83] Israeli leaders did little, however, to reciprocate Tombalbye's gestures until June 1968, when Israel began arming Sudan's Anya-Nya guerrillas.[84] Mobutu encouraged these arms transfers, but limited Congo-Kinshasa's direct involvement.[85] Mobutu and the Israelis consequently proposed to Tombalbye that Israeli instructors, based in Congo-Kinshasa, would train and equip elite Chadian parachutist-commando units in exchange for Israel using Chadian territory to ship Anya-Nya arms.[86]

Tombalbye's acrimonious relations with France, combined with the deteriorating situation in Chad, alarmed those decision-makers who felt most invested in France's continuing

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[80] Jacques Foccart and Philippe Gaillard, *Foccart Parle: Tome 1* (Paris: Fayard, 1995), 291-300.

[81] Note de la DRAM, 28 March 1968. In *DDF,* 1968-I, Document 214.

[82] Note de la DRAM, 12 July 1968. In *DDF,* 1968-2, Document 21.

[83] Jacques Foccart, *Journal de l'Elysée – I: 1965-1967* (Paris: Fayard, 1997), 242-45; and Samuel Decalo, *Israel and Africa, 1956-1996* (Gainesville : Florida Academic, 1998), 49-66.

[84] Scopas Poggo, *The First Sudanese Civil War: Africans, Arabs, and Israelis* (New York: Palgrave, 2009), 154.

[85] Ibid, 161.

[86] SHD 11S130 Wibaux, Rapport de fin de mission, 31 March 1974; and Interview with Fernand Wibaux, February 18, 2005.

role in Africa. Francophone leaders were particularly concerned that France was providing Chad inadequate military assistance. Madagascar's President Philibert Tsiranana told Paris repeatedly that the credibility of France's security guarantees would suffer if it failed to aid Tombalbye.[87] Niger's President Hamani Diori, meanwhile, took it upon himself to mediate between Tombalbye and Paris.[88]

Foccart regarded these developments as a threat to France's international position. He began arguing in 1967 that, "Soon we will have to take responsibility for this situation [in Chad] if we want to prevent matters from becoming increasingly toxic."[89] Foccart predicted that African leaders would blame France and lose faith in its security guarantees if rebels defeated Tombalbye. Foccart regarded the alternative, of Tombalbye retaining power with other powers' assistance, as even bleaker since it would encourage ex-colonies to shift their allegiances. Foccart's mistaken belief that American policymakers actively encouraged Israel and Congo-Kinshasa heightened these concerns.[90]

Foccart was initially isolated within France's government in advocating for greater involvement. To build broader support, Foccart persuaded de Gaulle to send a military mission, led by General Coste, to evaluate whether Chad's insurgents benefitted from outside support. Coste's finding, that foreign powers were indeed subverting Chad, rendered non-intervention problematic since Franco-African defense accords specified that France would support its allies against external threats.[91] Foccart next, in January 1968, lobbied de Gaulle to appoint a special

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[87] Plantey à Couve de Murville, 8 January 1968. In *DDF,* 1968-I, Document 17.

[88] Note de la DRAM, 25 January 1968.

[89] Foccart, *Journal de l'Elysée – I*, 618.

[90] Foccart and Gaillard, 291-98.

[91] Ibid, 304.

ambassador.[92] Foccart's choice for this sensitive mission fell on his close collaborator, Fernand Wibaux. Wibaux, like Foccart, had joined the French Resistance early and he had already represented France in Mali during that state's repression of its Touareg minority. De Gaulle himself feared that Chadian instability could undermine France's position in Africa and counselled Wibaux that, "Chad constitutes a section of one wall in our [African] edifice. It is a rotten section of wall, but one that must be kept upright."[93]

The Tubus' siege of the Chadian Army post at Aozou was all-the-while posing an increasingly acute problem. Two Chadian Army expeditions to relieve the garrison failed and Tombalbye faced the imminent prospect of this force capitulating. Tombalbye therefore brought matters to a head on 25 August 1968 by invoking the 1960 Franco-Chadian Defense Treaty.[94] This request then sparked spirited debate in Paris.

Foccart emphatically claimed that non-intervention would undermine France's influence because "all of the African heads of state with whom we have accords are scrutinizing this case."[95] France's military and Finance Ministry, meanwhile, advanced arguments against intervening. Chief of Staff General Michel Fourquet warned that France's Army would fail to reestablish security because of Chad's size and ethnic composition.[96] Finance Minister Antoine Pinay, for his part, cautioned that intervening would cost France's budget dearly, while stabilizing Chad would bring France few economic benefits.[97]

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[92] Interview with Fernand Wibaux, November 12, 2004.

[93] Foccart and Gaillard, 306.

[94] Wibaux à Debré, 26 August 1968. In *DDF,* 1968-2, Document 142.

[95] Jacques Foccart, *Journal de l'Elysée – II: 1968-1969* (Paris: Fayard, 1998), 319.

[96] Foccart and Gaillard, 305.

[97] Interview with Fernand Wibaux, November 12, 2004.

It was de Gaulle who personally adjudicated between these recommendations. He decreed that France would intervene militarily, but limit its intervention to lifting the siege of Aozou. De Gaulle hoped that this short, sharp action would reverse Tombalbye's decline, just as prior small interventions had resolved crises in Mauritania (1962) and Gabon (1964). His instructions specified, "Our intervention will have a limited duration and we cannot envision stationing our forces permanently in Tibesti."[98] Foccart argued that such a small intervention would accomplish its objectives because, "It [the intervention] can have a deterrent effect on the rebels, not only in Tibesti, but also throughout other Chadian regions."[99]

De Gaulle's Aozou expedition initially fulfilled his expectations. France's Air Force airlifted two paratrooper companies and deployed attack aircraft to northern Chad. The return of the former colonizer's army intimidated the rebels, who never opposed their advance. Such swift action had immediate effects. Foccart observed that, "The promptitude with which we responded to his request had a considerable psychological effect on Mr. Tombalbye; he believes that our intervention will demoralize the rebellion."[100] Foccart further observed that, at the international level, the intervention, "received a lot of attention from the media…. Amongst our African friends, Mr. Tsiranana expressed his satisfaction to our ambassador."[101]

French satisfaction with the expedition proved short lived however. The Chadian garrison at Aozou abandoned their post as soon as they could physically leave after French paratroops had lifted the siege.[102] This act of military indiscipline emboldened rebels throughout Chad. Rebel ranks soon swelled to 2,330 personnel who launched 227 attacks

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[98] Note de la DRAM, 2 septembre 1968. In *DDF,* 1968-2, Document 173.

[99] Note de la DRAM, 10 septembre 1968. In *DDF,* 1968-2, Document 199.

[100] Note de la DRAM, 2 septembre 1968.

[101] Foccart, *Journal de l'Elysée – II*, 346.

[102] SHD 11S130 Wibaux, Rapport de fin de mission, 31 March 1974.

during the first half of 1969.[103] Rebel forces with soaring morale began defeating Chadian

forces in conventional engagements, repulsing the government's "Mokofi" offensive in

January 1969 and annihilating a quarter of Chad's gendarmerie in March.[104]

Chad's armed forces' disintegration in the aftermath of France's Aozou expedition

forced policymakers to contemplate a larger intervention. De Gaulle himself lamented that

"The inexistence of the Chadian Army is truly deplorable…. Are our military advisors doing

their job?"[105] General Frédéric Guinot, tasked by Foccart with assessing affairs in Chad, then

counselled in mid-October 1968 that "only a more generalized intervention by French forces

can resolve this situation."[106] Objections from both Yvon Bourges, France's Secretary of State

for Cooperation, and General Fourquet gave de Gaulle reason for pause however.[107] When de

Gaulle sought further advice from General Louis Dio, the Army's Inspector General, the latter

warned him that France "should never set foot in Chad again."[108]

The arguments against intervening were clear. Tombalbye's regime was collapsing due

to its own mismanagement and coming to its rescue could embroil France in a prolonged

conflict. It was, therefore, with considerable fatalism that de Gaulle ordered his government

to prepare a new, longer intervention. By this point, French intelligence was predicting that

Tombalbye would otherwise fall within several months.[109] De Gaulle reasoned that, "There is

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[103] SHD 11S133 Bulletin de Renseignements, 31 Aout 1969.

[104] *IMFT*, 221.

[105] Foccart, *Journal de l'Elysée – II*, 340.

[106] Note à l'Attention de Monsieur le Ministre, 16 October 1968. In *DDF,* 1968-2, Document 311.

[107] Note de la DRAM, 19 October 1968. In *DDF,* 1968-2, Document 317.

[108] *IMFT*, 222.

[109] Pour Lebel, DAAM, 13 March 1969. In *DDF,* 1969-1, Document 220.

no substitute for Tombalbye. Chad will break into two or several morsels if he disappears."[110]
De Gaulle, however, still hoped that France could swiftly redress the situation and predicted that, "We will thump them [the rebels] several times and this will create conditions for our civilian advisors to put Chad's administration back on its feet."[111]

It was, thus, on 18 March 1969 that de Gaulle committed French soldiers to battle for the last time in his career. For a nationalist, such as de Gaulle, to intervene in Chad was superficially irrational. France would deploy its military into a geographically harsh environment, where France had few economic interests. French leaders, however, were entrapped into intervening because non-intervention would have discredited France's post-colonial institutions in other African leaders' eyes. De Gaulle's last war thus became the first war fought on behalf of France's post-colonial sphere of influence.

The *Guerre Révolutionnaire* Redux

De Gaulle's decision to intervene committed France to restoring the Chadian government's authority over a country twice as large as France, where insurgents ruled over the hinterland. To make matters worse, Chad's rebels received sanctuary in two neighboring countries: Sudan and Libya. What then was the French government's plan and how large a commitment it was prepared to make to Chad? De Gaulle himself never resolved these issues and he left France's government rudderless, six weeks after agreeing to intervene, when he resigned the presidency on 28 April 1969.

De Gaulle's major contribution in shaping France's intervention was his determination that civilian leaders should manage the war. As the Army's internal study put it, "The [military]

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[110] Foccart, *Journal de l'Elysée – II*, 647.

[111] Focarrt and Gaillard, 306.

commander of the intervention was not… a proconsul in the way commanders in Hanoi and Algiers had been…. Although he retained some autonomy… it was nothing compared to that enjoyed by his predecessors during past wars."[112] De Gaulle achieved this objective by dividing authority between two bodies: combat forces under a Military Delegation (DM) and a civilian-run Mission for Administrative Reform (MRA). Although the DM controlled regular military units, the MRA had the broad remit of reforming rural governance, re-empowering traditional rulers and building paramilitary forces.[113] De Gaulle subordinated both the DM and MRA to Ambassador Wibaux, who became France's de facto proconsul.[114]

Reducing the military's institutional authority over the intervention was not enough and France's government also handpicked its commanders. One of France's most distinguished soldiers, General Marcel Bigeard, had already been promised command of African operations.[115] Foccart and his colleagues, however, considered Bigeard a liability because of his relationship with France's media, bordering on star power, and his close association with the *guerre révolutionnaire* doctrine.[116] France's cabinet, therefore, handpicked another officer, Brigadier-General Michel Arnaud. Although Arnaud had also imbibed *guerre révolutionnaire* during the Algerian War, his prior deference to authority and experience with France's colonial army led many to consider him ideal for Chad.

The government's solicitude about command arrangements was not, however, matched by an equivalent focus on strategy. France's Army, indeed, struggled to assemble personnel for the intervention because de Gaulle had abolished most of the Army's professional

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[112] *IMFT*, 362.

[113] SHD 11S140 Activité de la M.R.A., 16 June 1969.

[114] Interview with Fernand Wibaux, February 18, 2005.

[115] SHD 11S130 Mémoires (Cortadellas), 6-7.

[116] Foccart, *Journal de l'Elysée – II*, 647.

battalions, yet refused to employ conscripts in Chad. The French contingent therefore only reached 1,390 personnel by mid-1969, of which 260 professional Foreign Legion paratroops constituted Arnaud's strike force, while 290 French cadres trained and led Chadian soldiers.[117]

Arnaud initially deployed his two paratroop companies to Chad's rebel-controlled Guera province. The rebels, for their part, were unaccustomed to well-trained opponents and erred by attacking the legionnaires, who comprehensively defeated them between 24 and 29 April.[118] These victories chastened central Chad's insurgents, who began to eschew contact. The rebels' decision not to fight confronted Arnaud with a conundrum. While his Foreign Legion companies could defeat any rebels they found, these units could only control a zone with a radius of 100km. Arnaud's staff assembled a detailed appreciation of the insurgency, based on prisoner interrogations, and estimated the guerrillas' strength, exclusive of the Tubus, at 2,000.[119] These insurgents were numerous enough to control Chad's countryside so long as they shunned contact with French forces.

Arnaud drew on *guerre révolutionnaire*'s recipes to rectify this state-of-affairs. He requested that Paris triple the elite French infantry and increase the number of helicopters under his command.[120] This, Arnaud hoped, would provide him with the mobile forces needed to hunt guerrilla bands. Arnaud, meanwhile, demanded the right to raise paramilitary forces for the personnel-intensive practice of *quadrillage*.[121] Arnaud, third and finally, proposed to withdraw Chadian garrisons from two provinces—Ennedi and Tibesti—to use them to

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[117] SHD 2S61 Le Général DMT au général Fourquet, 29 May 1969.

[118] SHD 11S130 Compte Rendu du Général Magendie, 2-6 Juillet 1969.

[119] SHD 11S130 General Mitterrand, Compte-rendu de mission, 8 July 1969.

[120] SHD 11S130 Compte Rendu du Général Magendie, 2-6 Juillet 1969.

[121] SHD 2S61 La participation des populations à la pacification, 4 June 1969.

reestablish control of central Chad.[122] Arnaud cautioned, even as he made these proposals, that he would need five years to suppress Chad's insurgency.

Arnaud's demands sent shockwaves through both Paris and Chad's capital, Fort-Lamy. Arnaud's prediction of a large, prolonged war alarmed French policymakers, who had hoped to unobtrusively wrap up the intervention. France's Defense Minister therefore dispatched another General, Edmond Magendie, to provide a second opinion.[123] Arnaud's plans, meanwhile, generated additional controversy in Fort-Lamy. Tombalbye opposed any withdrawal of garrisons.[124] Pierre Lami, the MRA's director, argued meanwhile that paramilitary forces should remain within his purview, rather than being assigned to the DM.[125]

The controversy surrounding Arnaud's plans dominated the summer of 1969. Magendie's inquest, conducted in July, found in favor of Arnaud. Arnaud's unilateral decision to withdraw the garrison of Ounianga Kébir, as a first step towards withdrawing the garrisons from Ennedi and Tibesti, then outraged Tombalbye.[126] Relations between Arnaud and Tombalbye thenceforth deteriorated, with Arnaud also opposing Chadian officers' exactions, such as burning rebel villages, which Tombalbye had sanctioned. Matters came to a head in August 1969 when Tombalbye advocated massacring 15,000 pro-FROLINAT villagers, provoking Arnaud into upbraiding him in front of his officers.[127]

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[122] Wibaux à Schumann, 2 April 1970. In *DDF,* 1970-1, Document 166.

[123] Ibid.

[124] Pierre de Tonquédec, *Face au Darfour* (Paris: Lavauzelle, 2010), 11.

[125] SHD 11S140 Activité de la M.R.A., 16 June 1969.

[126] de Tonquédec.

[127] SHD 2S61 Arnaud, Rapport de Fin de Mission, n.d.

France's new President, Georges Pompidou, chose to relieve Arnaud on 8 August 1969.[128] Arnaud's advocacy of a lengthy counterinsurgency worried policymakers in Paris and his acrimonious relationships with his colleagues in Fort-Lamy made his retention problematic. Arnaud's recommendations, however, were consistent with both France's counterinsurgency doctrine and the intelligence at his disposal. The armed forces' investigation concluded as much, finding Arnaud's judgement irreproachable.[129] Arnaud was thus relieved not because he had failed to develop a suitable plan, but because political leaders refused to provide Arnaud with the means or the authority to implement it.

Fighting and Negotiating

France's government appointed Brigadier-General Edouard Cortadellas to succeed Arnaud in September 1969. Cortadellas, like Arnaud, had extensive colonial experience and had commanded troops in Indochina, Morocco, Senegal and Algeria.[130] Although Cortadellas was known for being forthright, bordering on abrasive, he was chastened by the conditions of his appointment. Since Arnaud had been undone by his advocacy of a prolonged effort and his turf battles with the MRA, Cortadellas sought to avoid such problems. This meant, in practice, that Cortadellas limited his goals to degrading Chad's insurgency to whatever degree French policymakers considered consistent with their political objectives.

Cortadellas sought to distinguish his approach from both his predecessor's and from earlier counterinsurgencies. His first order banned the use of terms borrowed from prior campaigns, such as *fellaghas*, *ratissage* and the *bled*.[131] With this act, Cortadellas symbolically

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[128] SHD 2S61 Ministre de la Défense au Général Fourquet, 8 August 1969.

[129] SHD 11S130 Compte Rendu du Général Magendie, 27-29 Août 1969.

[130] de Tonquédec, 23-28.

[131] SHD 11S130 Mémoires (Cortadellas).

differentiated operations in Chad from the Algerian War and the *guerre révolutionnaire* doctrine. Cortadellas also proposed creating two institutions: a civil-military general staff to promote cooperation between the DM and MRA and a Franco-Chadian General Staff to improve inter-military collaboration.[132] Cortadellas hoped these bodies would mitigate the inter-organizational discord that had plagued Arnaud's tenure.

While Cortadellas sought to avoid Arnaud's mistakes, he faced the same structural challenges. French and Chadian forces were too small to pacify a meaningful portion of Chad. Cortadellas, therefore, echoed his predecessor's reinforcement requests. Wibaux, however, now agreed with Cortadellas' assessment and urged Foccart to fulfill his requirements.[133] France's government therefore, albeit reluctantly, provided reinforcements. French forces in Chad consequently doubled, reaching 2,851 personnel with 34 aircraft by late-1969.[134] France, meanwhile, also provided money and equipment to expand Chad's army from 1,900 to 4,300 personnel.[135] Wibaux and Cortadellas replaced Chadian commanders, whom they considered unqualified, with 610 French cadres, sending the Chadians to a two-year training program.[136]

Providing these additional troops forced France's government to revisit a core post-Algeria policy. De Gaulle had championed restructuring the Army into a conscript-based force focused on deterring the Soviet Union and he consequently dissolved professional infantry units, with the exception of a handful of Foreign Legion battalions. Now the Chadian War was overstretching these meager forces. The Defense Ministry, therefore, ordered the Army in late-

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[132] SHD 2S61 Le Secrétaire d'Etat à Ambassadeur Wibaux, 16 April 1970.

[133] Jacques Foccart, *Journal de l'Elysée – III: 1969-1971* (Paris: Fayard, 1999), 116-19.

[134] *IMFT*, 243-44.

[135] SHD 11S141 Reorganisation des Forces Tchadiennes, 4 December 1969.

[136] SHD 11S141 Fiche à l'attention du Sous-Chef d'Etat-Major, 4 December 1969.

1969 to professionalize two 3rd Marine Infantry Regiment (RIMa) companies and a paratroop company already stationed in Africa.[137] Cortadellas' demands for more troops led the Ministry to expand this professionalization drive in March 1970 to include the entire 3rd RIMa.[138]

Cortadellas' employment of his expanding forces differed little from Arnaud's concept. Simply put, French forces would clear an area of insurgents, after which Chadian forces would deploy and the MRA would establish paramilitary militias. These lower-quality *quadrillage* forces would then prevent insurgents from returning to the area while the MRA reinstalled traditional rulers and reformed local administration. French authorities hoped to pacify Chadian regions one-by-one in this way, starting with economically-productive regions near Fort-Lamy and then shifting to more peripheral regions.[139]

Cortadellas began by launching offensives in Guera, Chari Baguirmi, Ouaddaï and Salamat provinces between October 1969 and June 1970.[140] Even though Cortadellas lacked authority over paramilitary forces, he achieved a high enough degree of cooperation with the MRA that the latter established 60 militias and reinstalled the Sultans of Ouaddaï and Sila in Cortadellas' offensives' wake.[141] Having distributed 2,410 firearms to paramilitary forces, more Chadians were now fighting with the French than against them.[142] As soon as paramilitary forces detected rebels, horse-mounted paramilitaries and motorized Chadian units

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[137] Jean-Marie Lemoine et al., *De Bizerte a Sarajevo: Les Troupes de Marine dans les Interventions Exterieures* (Paris: Lavauzelle, 1995), 85.

[138] *IMFT*, 246-48.

[139] SHD 11S130 Mémoires (Cortadellas), 76-78.

[140] SHD 11S141 Conception pour les opérations, 7 November 1969; and SHD 11S130 Mémoires (Cortadellas).

[141] SHD 2S61 Rapport relative au concours apporté par la M.R.A., 26 January 1970.

[142] SHD 11S130 Mémoires (Cortadellas), 101.

converged on them. Franco-Chadian forces decimated one rebel band after another in this manner, tentatively pacifying central Chad by July 1970.[143]

Pompidou's government welcomed Cortadellas' achievements as a means for extricating France from Chad. Secretary of State Bourges announced on 26 May 1970 that France would complete Chad's pacification and withdraw by July 1971.[144] This declaration assuaged France's increasingly skeptical public. Jacques Isnard's editorials in *le Monde* had criticized France's intervention since September 1969 and Socialist politician François Mitterrand condemned the intervention from the Senate's floor in November.[145] France's government's eagerness to disengage outpaced, however, its accomplishments on the ground. This became apparent as Cortadellas' efforts shifted northwards, where Tubu insurgents benefitted from better weaponry and rougher geography.

Cortadellas confronted the Tubu rebellion in March 1970 when he ordered French paratroops to reoccupy Ounianga Kébir. Tombalbye remained bitter over Arnaud's withdrawal from this post and Wibaux hoped that retaking it would bolster Tombalbye's faith in France.[146] It was, thus, political, rather than military, factors that drove the operation. The Tubu guerrillas, for their part, fled when French forces advanced on 23 March. The ease of re-taking this post did not, however, mean that France had cowed the Tubus. The rebels, instead, organized ambushes along roads surrounding the outpost. French paratroops then blundered into three engagements between 25 and 30 March. The paratroops' ability to radio for attack aircraft

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[143] Ibid, 100.

[144] Note de la DRAM, 2 October 1970. In *DDF,* 1970-2, Document 151.

[145] Jacques Isnard, "Le Pari de la France," *le Monde*, 25 September 1969; and "Deux Questions de M. Mitterand," *le Monde*, 3 November 1969.

[146] Wibaux à Schumann, 2 April 1970; and *IMFT*, 316.

gave them the edge each time, but the Tubus inflicted more casualties—7 dead and 10 wounded—than France had hitherto suffered.[147]

The rebels' comparative success around Ounianga Kébir emboldened Muammar Gaddafi's new regime to escalate Libya's involvement during the summer of 1970. He began by arming 150 Chadian expatriates whom he had compelled to join FROLINAT and then, more importantly, obliged 600 Tubu veterans of Libya's recently-abolished Royal Guard to join their kinsmen in Chad.[148] Gaddafi's infusions of fresh blood and armaments transformed the struggle in northern Chad, which was previously limited to 400 poorly-armed rebels.[149]

The emboldened Tubus then launched four offensives, against Fada, Zoui, Bedo and Zouar. While the Tubus failed at Zoui and Fada, they won psychological victories at Zouar and Bedo. Rebels defeated a Chadian unit near Zouar in June and then blockaded Zouar in September.[150] Slightly thereafter, on 11 October, another Tubu band ambushed French paratroops, killing 12 and wounding 15.[151] Coming in quick succession, these reverses stunned French policymakers. Cortadellas admitted that, "The situation is entirely new and extremely grave. I no longer possess either the numeric superiority, firepower advantage or mobility to deal with more than one trouble spot…. I have lost the initiative and can only react."[152]

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[147] *IMFT*, 316-20.

[148] Grégoire, 171-74.

[149] SHD 11S133 Bulletin de renseignements, 31 August 1969.

[150] Gérard Vuitteney, *Trente-deux ans d'aventures parachutistes et coloniales* (Paris: Mémoires d'Hommes, 2006), 120-24.

[151] *IMFT*, 321-23.

[152] SHD 2S61 Cortadellas à Fourquet, 15 October 1970.

These reverses revived questions about France's conduct of the war. Cortadellas launched the debate by appealing for more soldiers and helicopters.[153] Wibaux supported Cortadellas, but aimed to accomplish the limited objective of coercing the Tubu into negotiating, rather than achieving victory.[154] Other decision-makers, however, pressed for an earlier withdrawal. Foreign Minister Maurice Schumann argued that greater efforts would only mire France in Chad's quagmire.[155] Prime Minister Chaban-Delmas, meanwhile, claimed that France had supported Tombalbye long enough and should disengage. Foccart parried these arguments by claiming that Tombalbye's fall, following France's withdrawal, would drive Niger and Cameroon to abrogate their treaties with France. President Pompidou sided with Foccart and ordered his government to dispatch reinforcements.[156]

French reinforcements consequently streamed into Chad for two months in preparation for France's largest offensive yet, code-named Bison. Cortadellas planned to use 1,250 soldiers (900 French and 350 Chadian), 150 vehicles, 18 helicopters, eight attack aircraft and 1,600,000 liters of fuel to crush the Tubus beginning on 10 January 1971.[157] Operation Bison's very size backfired, however, by convincing the rebels to hide rather than fight, which denied France any notable accomplishments. During the offensive's first phase (Bison Alpha), the targeted band (150 combatants) escaped detection. During the next phase (Bison Bravo), French forces located 20 rebels, but suffered two dead and five wounded in their haste to engage them.[158]

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[153] SHD 11S140 Fourquet au Ministre de la Défense, 13 October 1970.

[154] SHD 11S130 Wibaux, Rapport de fin de mission, 31 March 1974.

[155] Foccart, *Journal de l'Elysée – III*, 469.

[156] Ibid, 461-71.

[157] SHD 11S140 Opération Bison: Ebauche de conception, 19 December 1970.

[158] SHD 11S140 Opération Bison, 4 February 1971.

The Tubu's leader, the Derdeï, then sowed dissention amongst French policymakers by offering to negotiate provided that France agree to a ceasefire. Cortadellas emphatically opposed this proposition, arguing that he would defeat the Tubus if given more time. Wibaux supported Cortadellas because he feared that the Derdeï's offer was a ruse.[159] Schumann and Bourges, however, urged Pompidou to accept the proposal, which the latter did by decreeing a negotiating pause on 12 February.[160]

Subsequent events proved Cortadellas and Wibaux correct. The Derdeï dragged talks out to enable his rebels to flee into the mountains and then broke negotiations off once they were safe. French forces then failed to locate any rebels when they renewed their offensive.[161] France's largest offensive consequently failed after neutralizing only 16 Tubu rebels out of a thousand.[162] France's heavy consumption of materiel—including 2,400,000 liters of fuel and motor vehicles worn until they needed replacement—meanwhile left French forces unable to conduct high intensity operations.[163]

Worse than the offensive's material effects was the consternation it sowed amongst French policymakers. Bourges' announcement in May 1970 that France would withdraw fourteen months hence, having accomplished its mission, rang hollow after France's setbacks in late-1970 and early-1971. This raised, once again, the question of how to terminate an unpopular intervention.

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[159] SHD 11S130 Wibaux, Rapport de fin de mission, 31 March 1974.

[160] Foccart, *Journal de l'Elysée – III*, 585-625; and Interview with Fernand Wibaux, February 18, 2005.

[161] *IMFT*, 329-36.

[162] SHD 11S140 Presentation de l'Opération Bison, 15 June 1971.

[163] Jackie Neau, *L'Intervention de la France dans le conflit tchadien* (Paris: Mémoires d'Hommes, 2006), 89-90.

Strategic Satisficing

The Tubu attacks of late-1970 and France's failure to quell them in early-1971 posed a dilemma. Pompidou had committed to withdrawing from Chad in July 1971, but disengaging after military setbacks would convey the impression that France had failed. Prime Minister Chaban-Delmas and Foreign Minister Schumann nevertheless argued for withdrawing on schedule.[164] Neither thought that intervening had been worthwhile in the first place and both feared the publicity that came with the uptake in losses. Wibaux contended, from Fort-Lamy, that Tombalbye would fall if France withdrew precipitously. Foccart, in Paris, added that African leaders would then blame France for failing to uphold its commitments. Pompidou hesitated and then decreed that he would prolong France's intervention until August 1972, and then withdraw before campaigning began for France's March 1973 legislative elections.[165]

This governmental decision forced Wibaux and Cortadellas to rethink their strategy. They understood that France could neither comprehensively defeat Chad's insurgents nor extend the government's control over Chad's territory in the allotted time. They also nurtured few illusions, as previously the case, about coercing the Derdeï into ending the Tubu rebellion. Victory, in other words, was no longer an option. They therefore focused on achieving France's minimal objectives within the time remaining. To draw an economic analogy, Wibaux's and Cortadellas' paradigm shifted from optimizing to satisficing.

Strategic satisficing, within Chad's context, meant creating a state-of-affairs whereby Chad's rebels could not swiftly conquer power after France's withdrawal. Wibaux and Cortadellas consequently focused on consolidating Tombalbye's control over the territories

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[164] Jacques Foccart and Philippe Gaillard, *Foccart Parle, Tome 2* (Paris: Fayard, 1997), 137.

[165] Gustave Jourden, "La Fin du Regime du President Tombalbye," CHEAAM (1988), 31.

they termed *la tchad utile* (useful Chad).[166] Wibaux had concluded, after months of observing Cortadellas' operations, that northern Chad was economically valueless and its inhabitants unconquerable.[167] He therefore persuaded Cortadellas to abandon northern Chad, with the exception of four symbolic garrisons.

Wibaux calculated that Tombalbye could afford to relinquish northern Chad, but needed to retain central Chad, which was much more populous and productive. Intelligence, moreover, indicated that Libya planned to reinvigorate the rebellion in central Chad. Wibaux consequently redeployed the DM's and the MRA's resources to this region. He and Cortadellas thereafter focused on how to crush FROLINAT's anticipated offensive and deprive central Chad's insurgents of their sanctuaries in Sudan.

The MRA secured the central Chadian peasantry's neutrality by drilling 146 village wells and building 21 schools.[168] The MRA went further in supportive locales, establishing 100 militias by late-1971.[169] France's combination of attractive development projects and dissuasive military power convinced 400 rebels of the Moubi ethnic group to change sides.[170] France's Air Force, meanwhile, flew nocturnally along Chad's border with Sudan to detect guerrilla incursions.[171] France's entire military contingent and Chad's best units deployed behind the MRA's screen of village militias, poised to destroy rebel bands upon their detection.

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[166] SHD 11S130 Wibaux, Rapport de fin de mission, 31 March 1974.

[167] Grégoire, 44-47.

[168] Neau, 93.

[169] SHD 11S130 Mémoires (Cortadellas), 183.

[170] Samuel Decalo, "Chad: The Roots of Centre-Periphery Strife," *African Affairs* 79/317 (1980), 503.

[171] Foccart and Gaillard, *Foccart Parle, Tome 2* , 136.

French policymakers sought all-the-while to deprive FROLINAT of its Sudanese sanctuary. French diplomats led the way in persuading Sudanese dictator Jaafar Numayri to crack down on FROLINAT. Numayri responded favorably to France's demarches and offered to evict the rebels in August 1971 in exchange for Tombalbye severing relations with Israel.[172] Tombalbye, however, resisted Numayri's proposal and entertained an Israeli counterproposal to send increased aid to Sudanese rebels via Chad.[173] Cortadellas compensated for Tombalbye's intransigence by building outposts along the Sudanese border, whose commanders developed cordial relations with their Sudanese counterparts. At least once, in mid-1971, Cortadellas exploited fresh intelligence to attack a rebel base 2km within Sudan.[174]

Reports on rebels' preparations spurred Wibaux and Cortadellas on. Gaddafi poured arms and equipment into FROLINAT's Sudanese bases and Radio Tripoli's transmitters broadcast FROLINAT's message throughout Chad.[175] Libya's largess attracted guerrillas and recruits to FROLINAT's bases. Guerrilla numbers in Sudan consequently swelled from 300 in August 1971 to 1,000 by January 1972.[176] FROLINAT's leadership divided this force into four columns, each of which would escort camel caravans loaded with armaments into distinct sectors of central Chad where they would liberate zones and recruit guerrillas.[177]

The French, however, completed their preparations before FROLINAT launched its offensive in February 1972. Better intelligence—from Sudanese sources, reconnaissance aircraft and militias—detected all four rebel columns before they reached their objectives.

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[172] Baldit à Schumann, 4 August 1971. In *DDF*, 1971-2, Document 58.

[173] Note de la DRAM, 31 August 1971. In *DDF,* 1971-2, Document 88.

[174] de Tonquédec, 89-92.

[175] SHD 11S130 Mémoires (Cortadellas), 181-98.

[176] Baldit à Schumann, 4 August 1971; and *IMFT*, 345-49.

[177] Ibid

Cortadellas then directed French heliborne infantry and attack aircraft to shatter the columns one-by-one between 18 February and 9 March.[178] The columns' defeat, however, only signaled a debut to the rebels' suffering. Pro-government militias slaughtered residual rebel groups whenever they sought supplies from villages. France and its Chadian allies thus eliminated 60 percent (600 rebels) of FROLINAT's Sudan-based guerrillas in this short campaign.[179]

French diplomacy consolidated the victories achieved by French and Chadian arms. Pompidou's state visit, during his first presidential voyage to Africa, persuaded Tombalbye to sever his ties with Israel in February 1972. This, in turn, convinced Numayri to extirpate FROLINAT's Sudanese bases. He ordered his army to assault FROLINAT's bases in April 1972, where they massacred 400 insurgents.[180] Without its Sudanese sanctuaries, FROLINAT could not reignite the war in central Chad. In a final diplomatic triumph, Foccart, through Niger's President Diori, convinced Gaddafi to cease supporting Chad's rebels in exchange for de facto control over the Aozou strip along the Chado-Libyan border.[181]

France's destruction of central Chad's rebels together with Sudan's crack down on FROLINAT's sanctuary met Pompidou's requirement of creating acceptable conditions for France's withdrawal. France therefore evacuated its expeditionary force between June and August 1972.[182] France's African allies regarded its intervention as a success. France had reestablished the Chadian government's authority over the productive regions of central Chad and confined the rebellion to desert zones.[183] The Franco-Chadian counterinsurgency,

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[178] *IMFT*, 347-53.

[179] SHD 11S130 Mémoires (Cortadellas), 195-203.

[180] SHD 11S130 Wibaux, Rapport de fin de mission, March 1974; and Jourden, 29-30.

[181] Claude Faure, *Aux Services de la République* (Paris: Fayard, 2004), 586-87.

[182] Jourden, 31.

[183] Grégoire, 297-98.

meanwhile, decimated the rebellion, inflicting 5,100 casualties in exchange for 39 French killed and 102 wounded, and 629 Chadian military casualties.[184]

French policymakers knew, even as they withdrew, that Chad's prospects were bleak. France's withdrawal conceded northern Chad to the Tubus, whose strength would only grow with time.[185] Foccart, meanwhile, predicted that Gaddafi would renege on his commitment to cease interfering in Chad and would soon again fuel Chad's strife with infusions of weaponry. Chad's Army was still unprepared for such an eventuality. Helicopters had been central to 70 percent of Franco-Chadian forces' successes and France's withdrawal of its helicopter force deprived Chad's government of this key capability.[186] Falling world cotton prices further aggravated Chad's financial difficulties at this time.[187]

French leaders, in other words, proclaimed victory even as they knew that Chad's civil war would continue. Frustrated officers eventually assassinated Tombalbye in 1975, but even the ensuing military regime failed to staunch the rebellion. The Derdeï's son, Goukouni Oueddei, conquered Chad's capital in 1979, precipitating an even bloodier civil war and three further French interventions. France's 1968-72 military intervention thus achieved its goal of ostentatiously demonstrating France's alliance commitments' credibility, but failed in its nominal purpose of pacifying Chad.

Conclusion

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[184] *IMFT*, 358-59.

[185] Grégoire, 297-334.

[186] SHD 11S130 Wibaux, Rapport de fin de mission, 31 March 1974.

[187] Haggar, 124-32.

France's 1968-72 intervention constitutes a forgotten turning point in the Fifth Republic's foreign relations. De Gaulle personally committed soldiers to battle for the last time when he ordered the 1969 Chadian intervention. The ensuing operations represented both France's first counterinsurgency following the Algeria War and its first intervention in response to an African leader's invocation of bilateral accords. The Chadian War, finally, posed the first serious threat to France's post-colonial order and France's response tested the Gaullist policy repertoire for maintaining France's *chasse gardé*. Coming at such critical junctures, the 1968-72 Chad intervention helped redefine both France's relationship with Africa and with its own armed forces.

France's 1968-72 Chadian intervention revealed the Gaullist post-colonial order's strengths and drawbacks. Inter-connected institutions and treaties gave France a disproportionate influence over its ex-colonies. French security guarantees underscored this system, whereby francophone African leaders continued to accept French economic and political leadership. French leaders discovered in Chad, however, that they had fewer choices and needed to dedicate more resources to fulfilling these commitments than de Gaulle had intended. Chad's civil war, within this context, put paid to de Gaulle's original concept that French leaders would freely decide when and where to intervene and would be able to resolve most crises with short, sharp interventions.

Policymakers instead discovered that civil wars generated entrapment risks. Prosperous ex-colonies' leaders judged French security commitments' value according to how France responded to crises in less valued ex-colonies. Thus, although French analysts viewed intervening in Chad as irrational from a cost/benefit perspective, they found themselves pressured into intervening by other francophone governments—particularly Madagascar, Niger and Cameroon—that let it be known that they would interpret failing to support Tombalbye as a sign that they too could not count on France.

This dynamic, first revealed in Chad, ironically compels French leaders to intervene most frequently in their least valuable ex-colonies. France has, indeed, intervened 16 times in African civil wars since 1965.[188] Fully 62 percent of these interventions occurred in four ex-colonies—Chad, Mali, Mauritania and the Central African Republic—whose vast territories and economic poverty generate chronic governance problems. Foccart declared retrospectively about France's entrapment problem that, "Francophone Africa is like a single garment that, if you allow someone to tug on a single thread, will eventually unravel in its entirety."[189]

France's entrapment in African wars challenged, in turn, de Gaulle's post-Algeria design for France's military. Whereas de Gaulle intended to reconfigure France's Army as a conscript-based force focused on Europe, interventions in Africa demanded lightweight, professional units. The 1968-72 intervention alone forced de Gaulle's successors to begin revisiting his blueprint. De Gaulle's objective of stationing no more than 6,600 personnel in Africa succumbed to the need to deploy 2,851 to Chad alone. France's government then professionalized infantry units to provide the 4,000 personnel who rotated through Chad during this intervention.[190] Subsequent interventions forced Paris to deploy more forces to Africa and professionalize additional units.

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[188] Subsequent interventions include operations: Verveine (Zaire, 1977), Lamantin (Mauritania, 1977-80), Bonite (Zaire, 1978), Tacaud (Chad, 1978-82), Manta (Chad, 1983-84), Epervier (Chad, 1986-2014), Noroît (Rwanda, 1990-1994), Turquoise (Rwanda, 1994), Almandin (CAR, 1996), Iroko (Guinea-Bissau, 1998-99), Licorne (Ivory Coast, 2002-15), Boali (CAR, 2002-2013), Serval (Mali, 2013-14), Sangaris (CAR, 2013-14), and Barkhane (Mali, 2014-present).

[189] Foccart and Gaillard, *Foccart Parle, Tome 2* , 137.

[190] de Tonquédec, 9.

French forces in Africa never dropped below 7,900 until the Cold War's end and swelled to 14,000 on occasion.[191] Deploying forces of this size obliged France's Defense Ministry to professionalize more units, progressing from the 3rd RIMa in 1969-70 to two full divisions by the late-1970s.[192] France's expanding professional units changed, in turn, the Army's character. Rather than becoming the homogenous Europe-focused force that de Gaulle desired, the Army evolved into a two-tiered force redolent of the 19th century, when France possessed a conscript-based mass army for Europe and a professional colonial army. As in the late-19th century, the professional units attracted France's best officer cadets, who rose to dominate the Army.[193] This meant that, contrary to other European armies that professionalized after the Cold War, officers experienced in overseas interventions already controlled France's Army before its government professionalized the armed forces in 1996.

While de Gaulle's successors modified his force structure, they upheld his civil-military legacy. De Gaulle regarded field commanders' excessive authority as a primary reason why governments lost control of earlier colonial wars. De Gaulle therefore deliberately "civilianized" decision-making in Chad by appointing Ambassador Wibaux to supervise the intervention and by establishing the civilian-run MRA to manage the intervention's non-military components. One commander, Arnaud, was sacked because he opposed these arrangements and his successor, Cortadellas, learned to work within them. Subsequent French presidents built upon this legacy and exploited new technologies to better control operations,

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[191] Pierre Lellouche and Dominique Moisi, "French Policy in Africa: A Lonely Battle Against Destabilization," *International Security* 3/4 (1979), 108-133.

[192] Jérôme de Lespinois, *L'Armée de Terre Française: de la défense du sactuaire à la projection, Tome 2* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2001), 520-86.

[193] Jean-Louis Dufour, *Les Vraies Guerres* (Lyon: Manufacture, 1990), 11-13.

such as when President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing personally authorized each airstrike in Mauretania by mobile telephone in 1978.

In addition to altering *who* controlled interventions, the Fifth Republic also transformed *how* France conducted military operations. By empowering civilians, the new institutions ensured that civilian, rather than military, preferences prevailed. Whereas military commanders previously pursued comprehensive victories through lengthy counterinsurgencies, civilian leaders now imposed a more limited and tightly regulated form of warfare. Strategic satisficing—meaning the use of minimal force to produce satisfactory outcomes—became French operations' new leitmotif. Officers adapted to this changing reality by ceasing to advocate for lengthy *guerre revolutionnaire* campaigns and instead championing professionalism's virtues for limited *opérations extérieures*, or *OpEx* as they became known.

Governments' ability to limit the scope and length of their operations lowered, in turn, the political costs of intervening. France consequently intervened more frequently in Sub-Saharan Africa than any other power and is credited with mounting 135 distinct operations since 1945.[194] Although many were small, consisting of expatriate evacuations and disaster relief, France launched 16 major interventions since 1965 in response to intra-state wars. African perceptions of France as a reliable partner encouraged governments to seek cooperation agreements with it. France's 1968-72 Chadian intervention, for example, persuaded Belgium's ex-colonies—Burundi (1969), Congo-Zaire (1974) and Rwanda (1975)—to sign military accords with France.[195] France's continuing willingness to intervene

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[194] *Opérations militaires: de 1945 à nos jours* at: http://jgrattepanche.free.fr/ (consulted August 2017).

[195] Bruno Charbonneau, *France and the New Imperialism: Security Policy in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 62.

later won it the sobriquet of "Africa's gendarme" and enticed Anglophone states, including the Seychelles (1979), Malawi (1980) and Zimbabwe (1992), to also bind themselves to it.[196]

Although satisficing enables France to intervene with the frequency needed to preserve its *chasse gardé*, these interventions can generate less salutary outcomes for France's African partners. Strategic satisficing, by definition, involves employing only enough force to achieve minimal objectives, which are often limited to upholding pre-existing French commitments. The results of France's limited interventions ought, within this context, to be judged against the alternatives of France either refusing to intervene or its intervening with decisive force.

In the case of France's 1968-72 Chadian intervention, the final outcome was arguably worse than either of these alternatives. FROLINAT could have ended the war by seizing power in the early-1970s. Likewise, a French commitment to decisively defeating the rebellion— deploying more forces for a longer period of time—might have vanquished northern Chad's rebels and returned the country to a state of peace. France's actual, limited intervention was pernicious compared to both of these alternatives since by degrading, but not destroying Chad's rebellion, France inadvertently prolonged that civil war until 1979.

France's later interventions in Chad—Operations Tacaud, Manta and Epervier— superficially fit the same pattern. France deployed enough force each time to prevent Libyan-backed insurgents from seizing Chad's capital, but never enough to end the conflict. France's interventions in the Central African Republic, likewise, temporarily saved the regimes of Presidents Ange-Félix Patassé and François Bozizé, yet arguably prolonged civil wars and failed to arrest the state's gradual collapse. Although it would be going too far to argue that French interventions' net impact was negative, the available evidence suggests that they rarely

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[196] Ibid.

ended conflicts as France re-intervened, within five years of its departure, in 58 percent of the states where it intervened.[197]

In short, strategic satisficing—an approach far different from traditional French counterinsurgency practices—facilitates the Fifth Republic's interventionism. The tightly-coupled application of military force and diplomacy in pursuit of limited objectives enables an otherwise medium-sized state, France, to serve as Africa's gendarme, intervening in intra-state conflicts and upholding security agreements. It is doubtful, however, that France's particular style of intervention serves African interests as well as French ones, since France's limited interventions and strategic satisficing prolongs, rather than ends civil wars.

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[197] See footnote 188.