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“Dharma is to protect the Needy”

Research Article on
CONFLUENCE OF GREED AND CONFLICT IN A WAR
ECONOMY- A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

The idea of clubbing war and economics seems absurd to think about. However, war has a tremendous effect on the economy of the parties involved in it and can have a ripple effect on the economic policies across the world. The two world wars nearly decimated the resources of the world and plunged the world financial chaos and instability. Due to its unpredictability with respect to duration and outcome, there have been several measures adopted to create a harmonious trade-relationship between the countries by the World Trade Organization. However, war transformed into a complex structure of oppressive tactics adopted by countries to fulfill the insatiable desires and greed. For example, developed nations like the U.S adopted a series of tactics to actively target and disintegrate the economies of the countries whose policies are not beneficial to them. The paper shall focus on various modes of war tactics applied by countries after the end of the Second World War. It includes strategies like disintegration of the ruling government, funding of separatist groups, scavenging of mineral resources and some of the emerging trends which have been applied in the recent years. The paper shall extensively analyze the application of these mechanisms by analyzing their effects on the target country. The paper shall conclude by dissecting the post-war situation in the target countries and the efficacy of the strategies utilized in those places.

Introduction

Conflict is often understood as the direct result of “need, creed and greed” in its combined form. Factors like poverty, economic disintegration, unemployment and polarization of identity may act as a catalyst in conflict, especially if they are resulting from the actions of the government. However, on a closer look, conflict requires the existence of a grievance, whether social, political and economic in order to sustain a territory. In addition to this, the availability of vast natural resources and resource completion play a vital role in creating and sustaining a conflict. They can act as a motive for military powers to make active efforts to seize control of their sources. Thus, resources incentivize the efforts of governments, insurgent groups and militias start a conflict, thereby completely changing the dynamics of the resource distribution in the particular area. In 2001, the Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars and International Peace Academy” held a conference that examined the intersectionality between economic reasons of conflict and the traditional factors that lead to a conflict. During the conference, a controversial study undertaken by the World Bank concluded that “greed” is the dominant factor behind any conflict. While some of the members quoted politics as the major factor for causing an outbreak. The conference concluded by posing two central questions. First, whether the acquisition of resources is undertaken to perpetuate a conflict. Second, the importance of economic factors over other factors in sustaining the conflict. A detailed Analysis of these questions shall be made in this paper by highlighting the real-life examples of conflicts post World War II.

Collapse of State Machinery: Afghanistan and Sierra Leone

The country has witnessed innumerable myriad conflicts and international coverage on the fundamentalist groups which influence the country in every aspect of life. Afghanistan witnessed a civil war in the 1970’s followed by anti-Soviet insurgency in the 1980’s, which finally culminated in the Taliban internal conflict whose activities continue to disrupt the harmony of the country till date.¹ In addition to the conflict, the country has witnessed various humanitarian violations and radical Islamic interpretations which form the crux of all the problems. Due to the volatile political environment, Afghanistan is home to innumerable warring factions which

¹ Erik Goepner, “War state, Trauma State- Why Afghanistan remains in conflict”, CATO Institute (Last accessed on 1st May, 2020)

continue to create conflicts in the name of resource competition. There are three key observations which could explain the position of Afghanistan. First, the civil conflict can be understood as an intersection of external and internal conflicts with an emphasis on the surrounding regions. Second, the Taliban formally does not yield the power but acts as an instrument for disempowering the citizens.² Three, Afghanistan is the site for widespread proxy wars by the external powers, who seek to appropriate the resources of the country while determining the Middle East political environment. Thus, the needs of the Afghans are always set aside as secondary by all the actors & influencers in the country.³

The anti-Soviet struggle and ensuing conflicts changed the outlook of the groups while recruiting fighters, capital and alliances in the country. Thus, conflicts in the modern day involving the Afghans have focused on exposing the various political umbrellas and organizations which are not interested in ending the wars for good. All this has been made possible due to the successive failure of the state machinery and democracy in the country. Due to such failure, rival groups were formed on ethnic, tribal and regional lines, thereby destroying the Afghan identity. There exists no national economy and no formal rights for the citizens to claim protection from their abuse of authority by the various political actors in the state. Conflict groups have a direct control right from the grassroots level affairs to deciding the foreign policy of the region. As a result, it is easy for private actors to exploit the regional weaknesses and to gain a foothold on the political dynamics of the country. Wars have further contributed to weakening the state frontiers and provide impetus to foreign groups that seek to exploit the nation through terrorism, ideological differences and narcotics trade.

Due to the weakening of the Afghani identity, it became difficult to differentiate between legitimate and illegitimate forms of foreign intervention, including the demarcation between licit and illicit trade in goods, capital and weaponry.⁴ The conflict began to take the shape of an inter-group and intra-group rivalry, largely due to the financial and political support offered by the international actors. Thus, the internal economic struggle was largely based on the financial

² Michael Rubin, "Who is responsible for Taliban", Middle East Review of International Affairs (Last accessed on 2nd May, 2020)

³ Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Encyclopedia Britannica (last accessed on 24th April, 2020)

⁴ Anthony H. Cordesman, "Afghan Narcotics: 2000-2018", Centre for Strategic and International Studies (last accessed on April 17th, 2020)

package offered by the foreign players seeking to gain a foothold in the region. Since 1980, war financing was considered as an overall investment in the country itself.⁵ Taliban initially viewed this investment as a right step in realizing the country's future prospects and sought to relieve the citizens from the influence of warlords. The warlords were considered as perpetrators of economic degradation and impoverishment of the citizens, who tied up with the local commanders to present a disillusioned idea of the Afghan cause. Post the 1990's, Taliban itself suffered from identity crisis as the leadership succumbed to profits accrued from the illicit trade in narcotics and human trafficking.⁶

Eventually, the country became dependent on the humanitarian assistance provided by the international agencies. Due to severe impoverishment and illiteracy, the country gave access to innumerable aid programs whose activities largely have a political undertone. For example, in the early 1990's, trade on poppy seeds was popular throughout the country.⁷ Due to the higher return on investment on poppy seeds, the crop became the bone of contention for Taliban and the international agencies. Taliban wanted to secure control over the production process, thereby forcing the humanitarian agencies to adhere to its demands and a share in the aid provided to the state. As a result, the foreign actors decided to support the cause of the Northern Alliance, a military group backed by the consortium of Iran, Russia, Turkey and Tajikistan led by a shadow support from the United States. The consortium wanted to replace the Taliban-led government with the Northern Alliance and curtail the growth of radical Islamic groups within the territory. However, the motives behind the support for Northern Alliance were revealed in 2001 where the United States waged a war against the Taliban forces and removed them from power. The leaders of the Northern Alliance dissolved the group and formed a democratically elected government, which is considered to be largely influenced by the United States.⁸

Thus, Afghanistan has been the epicenter of political experiments in the pursuit for economic prowess. A large number of relationships of the country with the Middle East members remains purely economic in nature. The resistance movements, arms trade, human trafficking and

⁵ "Financial Flows linked to the production of Afghan opiates", Financial Action Task Force report (last accessed on April 12th, 2020)

⁶ The Soviet Occupation of Afghanistan, PBS NewsHour (Last accessed on 20th April, 2020)

⁷ Craig Whitlock, "Overwhelmed by Opium", The Washington Post (last accessed on April 16th, 2020)

⁸ Abhinandan Choudhary, "India in Afghanistan", The Diplomat (last accessed on 25th April, 2020)

internal migration are subsets of a larger global economic politics that harshly leaves the Afghanis as mere victims of the game.

Sierra Leone

The primary examples of the harmful manifestation of greed in Sierra Leone can be attributed the insurgency quests of Revolutionary United Front (herein referred to as “RUF”).⁹ RUF is a case where greed led to the birth of a conflict. Sierra Leone is one of the few countries with vast reserves of alluvial diamonds. Due to the ineffective functioning of the government, RUF seized control of the mine and gained a foothold in the diamond trade business. Due to severe class discrimination in the Sierra Leonean society, the local community began to support the efforts of RUF in stopping the elite from accumulating and appropriating the wealth of the nation. In this pursuit, RUF took advantage of the “youth crisis” in the country by including the young, unemployed citizens in the name of a class revolution. Due to the rampant mismanagement by the authorities, Sierra Leone witnessed a systemic imbalance resulting in lack of infrastructural development, prolonged unemployment and rise of proxy wars. As a result, the mismanaged youth were easy targets for insurgent groups seeking to expand their support and cadre. This culminated in RUF gaining unprecedented access to diamond mines, thereby paving way for an autocratic rule where people were persecuted irrespective of their class and creed.

The rise of RUF also coincided with authorized increase in mining activities much beyond the capacity of the state. As a result, this changed the country from being resource surplus to a deficit position. Moreover, the proceeds earned from the sale of diamonds were hardly re-invested on the populace, which only aggravated the youth crisis in the country. Violence turned out to be a norm to secure economic ends, thus leaving the country in a position of perpetuated conflict.¹⁰

⁹ Se Young Jang, “The Causes of the Sierra Leone Civil War”, E-International Relations Students (last accessed on April 30th, 2020)

¹⁰ David H. Ucko, “When Intervention Works: The Instructive Case of Sierra Leone”, War on the Rocks (last accessed on April 21st, 2020)

Analysis

Afghanistan and Sierra Leone witnessed civil wars that were largely due to the rising frustration of the public over the administration of the government. However, these frustrations provided the insurgent groups with an economic impetus to seize control of the production facilities, poppy seeds and alluvial diamonds respectively, which altogether changed the dynamics of the regional politics in these countries. In Afghanistan, the weakening of the government saw the rise of Taliban and Northern Alliance eager to appropriate and dictate the economy of the country. This was done strategically by using violence as a tool to subdue the opposition in the state. Moreover, the seizure of the poppy seeds production facilities provided the Taliban the leverage to influence & set up trade relations with foreign actors. This enabled them to create a platform for a parallel economy used for illicit activities like human trafficking, weapons trade and narcotics. Thus, the country was customized into a black hole for all of the above mentioned activities.

Sierra Leone on the other hand was presented with a golden opportunity to build the nation around the diamond trade. Instead, as mentioned by Eric Schwartz earlier, the diamond reserve became the scourge of the country as the combination of youth mismanagement, improper education, unemployment and proxy wars plunged the nation into economic degradation.¹¹ The civil war in the country directly contributed to the economic exploitation of resources due to the presence of rebellion groups like RUF. Thus, the greed-based factors combined with the grievance-based factors like poverty and literacy rate to deprive the country of its economic riches. However, the situation in Afghanistan and Sierra Leone could have been avoided if the governments strictly adhere to the following prescriptions. First, legitimizing the governance by establishing a democratically elected government. Second, Diversification of the national economy through steady and consistent investment in different sectors. Third, increasing market competitiveness by opening the trade barriers to the international market. Fourth, inclusion of the civilians in peace treaty negotiations. Fifth, strengthening of laws and formulation of statutes that would bring discipline and address the public grievances.

¹¹ Eric Schwartz, "Analysis of the Sierra Leone Conflict", Council on Foreign Relations (last accessed on April 22nd, 2020)

Disputes over Settlements- Peru and Lebanon

The Peruvian conflict details a wider conflict that involves a fight to gain control over the amazon basin.¹² Peru is renowned for its Coca production, thereby attracting guerilla warfare groups who seek to appropriate the profits out of the mass-scale production. One group that has gained notoriety for guerilla tactics is Shining Path.¹³ Shining Path's objective is to utilize the coca leaves to produce cocaine, which would be illegally marketed and sold across the world for millions of dollars. As a result, the eastern slopes of Andes in Peru have been reserved largely for coca plantations. The minimum period for cultivating coca plant ranges between 6-18 months, wherein the elliptical leaves of the plant would be harvested. Due to the ideal soil and climate conditions in the Andes range, a hectare of mature coca plants can yield about one tonne of coca leaves in a span of one year. However, the active efforts of the narcotic department and the Drug Enforcement Administration of USA constrained the cultivation of coca to a few areas, which were kept under the surveillance of the agencies. Within the Andean region, there are two crucial disputes. First, there are questions raised by international agencies and organizations that seek to conserve the region over the legitimacy and motives of the states in assuming sovereign control over the Basin. Second, the international community is divided over the effectiveness of the states in tackling the drug crisis and the subsequent money laundering activities engaged by the parties in the drug trade.

However, there are several problems involved while dealing with the drug crisis. First, the Peruvian communities are dependent on coca production for their livelihood. Due to the high return on investment for coca, many communities entered into coca production, thereby creating a dangerous system of uniformity under the pretext of profits. Second, neighboring countries like Colombia, Bolivia and Brazil engaged in mass-scale land clearance.¹⁴ Moreover, the details of the investors in the production and owners of the land remain shrouded in secrecy, thereby making it difficult for the narcotics departments to track and identify the real culprits. Third, the period witnessed a sharp decline in the prices of cash crops like bananas and coffee, thus leaving coca as

¹² Michael Burch, "Natural Resources and Recurrent Conflict: The Case of Peru" University of Colorado (last accessed on April 30th, 2020)

¹³ Orin Starn, "Maoism in the Andes: The history of Shining Path", Duke University (last accessed on May 13th, 2020)

¹⁴ Maureen Taft-Morales, "Peru in Brief: Political and Economic Conditions and Relations with the United States" Congressional Research Service (last accessed on May 3rd, 2020)

the only alternative for the farmers to recuperate from the losses and break even in the market. Thus, the governments and international agencies would have to break through the social tensions within the community to achieve their objectives. Due to the resistance from the local communities, agencies would find it difficult to sensitize them about the hazard of cocaine consumption. Shining Path began to take advantage of these factors and began to exploit the social grievance of the natives to create a drug cartel within the occupied territories. This led to an aggressive campaign by then- president Alberto Fujimori who forcibly made the leaders of Shining path sign a peace treaty which officially ended their hegemony over the coca production. In curtailing the powers of the guerilla group, the Peruvian government understood the power of social exclusion as a dominant factor in gaining a labour force for mass production of coca. Moreover, the government was then forced to reflect on its agrarian policies by developing trade relations with countries that would provide a good rate for cash crops like bananas, coffee and asparagus.¹⁵

Lebanon

The Lebanon civil war is one of the oldest wars in the Mediterranean region, which can be traced to the days of the cold war in the 1960's. Lebanon conflict is largely due to the polarization of Christian-Muslim identity, thereby involving inter-community rivalries, ideologically based conflicts and a quest for securing sectarian alliances. Lebanon, in the post-war era, had witnessed numerous violent protests with a motive to disintegrate the economy of the region. Due to a weakened state authority, political influencers seized the opportunities to create a platform for protracted warfare.¹⁶ Leaders of various groups in the region took advantage of three important resources to validate their claims: Land, manpower and drugs.

Before the events of the world wars, Lebanon was renowned for the production and export of Hashish.¹⁷ The production was controlled and supervised by the Lebanese elites, who operated under the collusive direction of the political and judicial officers. The system would function under their aegis, with the elites being warned about the surveillance of any third parties in exchange for

¹⁵ "Peru Coca Cultivation Survey" United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (last accessed on May 7th, 2020)

¹⁶ Ghassan Dibeh, "The political economy of post-war reconstruction in Lebanon" Leibniz Information Centre for Economics (last accessed on April 19th, 2020)

¹⁷ Dr. Emanuele Ottolenghi, "State Sponsors of Terrorism: Examination of Iran's Global Terrorism Network", Center on Sanctions and Illicit Finance (last accessed on May 3rd, 2020)

monetary payments and share in the overall trade. Thus, the state resources were exploited to protect the trade from any foreign influence. The civil war changed the dynamics of drug trade as drugs became assets for the owners and a currency to pay militia groups, arms dealers and secure materials for defending their territories. Due to the indifferent attitude of the authorities, the drug mafia rose to expand their network beyond the international borders. Thus, the dismantlement of communal boundaries provided the greedy elites a larger platform to engage and dictate the illegal trade of drugs.¹⁸

There was also an emphasis on maintaining control over land, largely due to the economic value it possessed. Land helps in generating rental income and has often been one of the traditional sources of power for the elite class.¹⁹ The value of the land did not fade despite the ongoing civil war. Land acquisition paved the way for the elites to demarcate them into zones where outsiders would be charged transportation fees, custom duties and be governed by property laws designed by the elite. Due to the war, the public property was heavily privatized and enabled the benefactors to acquire new resources and supplies required to sustain the war. However, such control could not be achieved if the elite did not tap into manpower that was available for a meagre fee. The war created a wave of emigration, which enabled the militias to seize control through criminality and economic insecurity. As a result, the elite were able to create a system that was designed to work only in their favour. Thus, Lebanon is a stark example of war being exploited by the actors to dominate social and political mechanisms. The ultimate goal of this exploitation is to exploit the new economic opportunities through the control on drugs, manpower and land. Thus, the economy acquired a predatory nature where the actors were only concerned about appropriating the existing resources by subverting the law and establishing a new order that is based on raw power struggle.

Analysis


In both Peru and Lebanon, the ultimate objective was to prevent the ethnical minorities from witnessing economic and social development. As a result, the minority was forced to concede

¹⁸ "National Report on Drug Situation in Lebanon" Ministry of Public Health, Republic of Lebanon (last accessed on May 2nd, 2020)

¹⁹ "Captured by Captagon? Lebanon's evolving illicit drug economy" The Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (last accessed on May 1st, 2020)

to the demands of the elite by participating in economic activities like coca production and mercenaries that serve no real purpose in their overall development. As a result, groups like Shining Path gained prominence and further exploited the minorities under the pretext of collective representation. The Red Path faction continues on a similar path of inducing the public to support them in exchange for false promises of protection against the state.

In Lebanon, the conflict was deepened by including social and political institutions in the process of oppression, thereby creating a multi-layered system that left no space for reformative actions. Sectarian competition made it difficult for the community to reconcile and created a disintegrated society that could be exploited for private interests. Despite the interference of the United States and Syria in a proposal for consensual democracy, the countries refrained to resolve the sectarian competition, which till date carries a huge economic value in the international market.



Ideological Conflicts- Angola and Colombia

Angola

The Angolan conflict began as a war for liberation from the colonization of Portugal. In this war, the Angolan people were represented by three factions, namely, MPLA (Movimento Popular de Libertacao de Angola), FNLA (Frente Nacional de Libertacao de Angola) and UNITA (Uniao Nacional para a Independencia Total de Angola).²⁰ The factions arose in response to the incapability of the Salazar government to deal with the agrarian crisis, which began to result in resource depletion. Post the success of the independence struggle, the factions developed animosity between them and turned against each other. FNLA and UNITA formed forces with the support of international and domestic allies to stake their claim for governance of the country. Due to the participation of various international actors in varying degrees, the war resulted in a stalemate.²¹ The factions came together and signed a pact demarcating their territories and

²⁰ "Different Opportunities, Different Outcomes- Civil War and Rebel Groups in Angola and Mozambique" German Development Institute (last accessed on May 12th, 2020)

²¹ Alison Claire Smith, "The Angolan Civil War", University of Melbourne (last accessed on April 19th, 2020)

strongholds in the country. MPLA secured the control of the urban centers, coastlines and the offshore oil reserves. The alliance of FNLA and UNITA secured control of most of the central regions enriched with timber, gold mines and wildlife.²² The conclusion of the cold war led to the birth of new hostilities between the parties. The cold war provided great economic opportunities for the parties as both the U.S.A and U.S.S.R became the biggest importers of gold, timber and other resources which were largely traded in exchange for assisting in the proxy battles. Due to the conclusion of the war, Angola lost much of the international backing, resulting in escalated conflicts between the factions. As a result, the United Nations was forced to intervene in the matter by mediating two important treaties between the factions, namely, the Bicesse Accord in 1991 and the Lusaka Peace Accord in 1994. However, due to the escalating tensions, the peace accords were violated and the country faced the possibility of a violent civil war. The escalations were largely in part due to the intention of both the factions to tap into the wealth of the black market. FNLA, being in possession of the gold reserves, converted the mining business into a profit making machine, which was against the sanctions imposed upon by the U.S government.

The Angolan conflict is the manifestation of political de-legitimization of the ruling groups through unaccountable revenue generated from resource exploitation.²³ The fight between MPLA and UNITA was in pursuit for economic supremacy. The oil fields along with the diamond reserves opened the doors for widespread conflicts between the warring groups. As a result, the militant groups gained the leverage to seize state control, which culminated in various international actors to ally with a side, thereby resulting in an arms race which only enriched the elite and leaders factions. Moreover, the oil oligarchy led by MPLA based in Luanda, consisting of the elite and business families, developed a new mechanism to collect private rents and duty from oil exports. The public budget was largely based on the economic interests of these elites and focused heavily on oil concessions to multinational companies and the respective income from bonuses offered by them. Thus, this led to the creation of a shadow economy that would dictate every aspect and policy of the government. Thus, any ideas or campaign to liberalize the economy were stifled by the oil mafia through the ceiling of agricultural lands and militia brutality. This not only reduced

²² Philippe Le Billon, "A Land Cursed By Its Wealth" World Institute for Development Economics Research (last accessed on May 2nd, 2020)

²³ Christophe R. Cook, "Diamonds, Oil and the American Media" University of Pittsburgh (last accessed on May 3rd, 2020)

the scope for a liberal government but also questioned the legitimacy of UNITA to govern the people. Diamond reserves, being supervised by UNITA and MPLA officials, drew the attention of the international community due to its trade value in the market. Between 1992 and 2000, diamond production in Angola was valued at \$4 billion dollars, making UNITA of the most powerful players in the international market.²⁴ Due to its growing influence, UNITA developed trade partnerships with many countries and mining corporations to create a well-functioning network of buyers who would encourage the expansion of mining activities. Despite innumerable sanctions imposed by the United Nations to curb the growth of these factions, including the appointment of a specialized panel to investigate the illegal mining activities in the country, UNITA continues to hold its reign over the diamond mines and profit from it.²⁵

Thus, the vast resources of Angola have proven to be a boon and bane for the country. Resource proliferation became the bone of contention between the militia groups and the civilians. Both the parties have recognized the need for reaching out to the international market through trade is vital for the development of the country. This opportunism provided the leverage to the factions to claim legitimacy to form the government. However, the lack of efficient resource management and fiscal policies plunged the country into a civil war. Due to extreme hostility between the parties, the ruling faction resorted to black market trade, thereby alienating the people from the economic benefits accrued through the trade. Thus, the conflict has demonstrated the need for a liberalized economy and a democratic government, both of which are mutually inclusive.

Colombia

The Colombian civil war is one of the longest and deadliest conflicts that continue to remain unresolved till date. Violence in Colombia can be traced back to the 1940's during the inception of "La Violencia".²⁶ The partisan movement began due to the class conflict between the peasant community and the estate-holding elite. "La Violencia" began the process of creating legitimacy through violence as Colombia was broken down into warring factions which stood to gain at the

²⁴"Creating Markets in Angola" World Bank Group (last accessed on May 2nd, 2020)

²⁵Ana Leao "Different Opportunities, Different Outcomes- Civil War in Angola" German Development Institute (last accessed on April 10th, 2020)

²⁶Rodrigo Uprimny, "Countries at CrossRoads- Colombia" University of Bogota (last accessed on May 11th, 2020)

expense of each other.²⁷ As a result, the demarcation between criminality and political violence was erased, paving the way for the narcotics trade to flourish. Due to the “normalization” of violence, narcotic groups quickly established their zones and tapped into the international market in pursuit of profit maximization. In this process, the country witnessed the rise of three main factions, namely, Armed Revolutionary Forces of Colombia (FARC), National Liberation Army (ELN) and United Self Defense forces of Colombia (AUC). These groups utilized new tactics by combining violence with trade to secure hegemony over their territories.²⁸

There are two main factors that contributed to the rise of the faction groups in the country. First, the Colombian state was considered too weak to assert its authority over the nation. The rule of law failed to reach the rural areas, where people were only accustomed to being the peripheries of drug cartels. Moreover, the rural poor and the elites have seen the rise of faction groups as a viable alternative to achieve their needs. The cartels would heavily incentivize the villages for cooperation in the drug manufacturing process. Due to the location of the drugs being near the village areas, the villagers served as valuable allies for the cartels to maintain the plantations and alert the leaders about the surveillance operations undertaken by the government. The elite class provided financial and political backing for the cartels in exchange for protection of their properties. For instance, the AUC recruited its members from the village population and was financially backed by the landowning elite groups. Thus, the civil society exploited the opportunities presented by the drug cartels and further weakened the legitimacy of the government to impose rule of law over the territory. Second, the rise of drug trafficking, money laundering and political violence played a huge role in shaping the power dynamics of the country. All of FARC, AUC and ELN were heavily dependent on narcotics trafficking and money laundering. Due to the rise in demand for cocaine and marijuana coupled with Colombia being a preferred safe zone for laundering money, the international actors turned towards the factions to carry out these transactions to escape from the surveillance of the law enforcement agencies in their home countries.²⁹

²⁷ Adam Turel, “Colombia’s La Violencia and its impact on the Country’s Political System” E-International Relations Students (last accessed on May 10th, 2020)

²⁸ Sasha Ingber, “Former FARC Rebels announce New Stage of Fighting” National Public Radio (last accessed on May 4th, 2020)

²⁹ Michelle Jacome Jaramillo, “The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the development of Narco-Submarines” Journal of Strategic Security (last accessed on May 6th, 2020)

In the modern era, FARC remains the only cartel that continues to maintain its strongholds within the country.³⁰ FARC participated aggressively in the legislative process, thus maintaining its relevance in the modern day democracy.³¹ ELN and AUC almost vanquished from the political and economic spheres due to the rapid implementation of the government's DDR programmes. The political economy of the country was drastically changed post the intervention of the U.S.A. The American intervention provided impetus to the right-wing ideologies that the activities of insurgent groups can be controlled and systemically ended. The Colombian army was directly supported by the U.S government in adopting violent strategies to end the hegemony of local cartels. For instance, the Colombian government created a plan for a peaceful exit for the cartels through state pardons and renunciation of guerilla warfare. However, post the 9/11 attacks, the government initiated a new strategy called "Plan Colombia " where the civil society would be manipulated into turning their back against the cartels. In doing so, the Colombian government unintentionally created a platform for AUC to take over as the most powerful faction in the country.³² AUC adopted a sharp political outlook by advocating for international trade and foreign investment into the country. As a result, there was a huge boost in its ranks; the strength of its military increased from 5000 to 15000 foot soldiers from 1995 to 2002. AUC began to infiltrate the strongholds of FARC and ELN, thereby taking possession of their weaponry, armed forces and trade networks. As a result, it became the dominant trade actor within the Colombia-Panama smuggling route. A calculated estimate placed the annual income of AUC at \$80 million in 2000. As a result, due to unprecedented growth in power and influence for AUC, Colombia witnessed a three way stalemate which made it immensely difficult for any conflict resolution mechanisms to operate. The solution to this problem, which involves extending the state control through negotiated agreements, indirectly sets in motion a chain of events that directly lead to the rise of an insurgent group.

³⁰ Abbey Steele, "Democracy and Civil War: the case of Colombia" London School of Economics and Political Science (last accessed on May 14th, 2020)

³¹ "An Overview of Conflict in Colombia" International Center for Transitional Justice (last accessed on May 10th, 2020)

³² Daneil Mejia, "Plan Colombia: An Analysis of Effectiveness and Costs" Center for Security and Intelligence (last accessed on April 29th, 2020)

Analysis

The conflict in Angola and Colombia can be understood to be a conflict over distribution of resources and the benefits that are attached to them. Both the countries face the downside of grievance being the primary factor behind the conflict. The grievances could be in the form of repressive actions on part of the state, lack of proper land reforms and legitimacy of the dominant force to dictate the law in the country. This is aggravated by the greed associated with the elite classes in choosing a side that would largely be favourable to them. This culminated in the utilization of violence as an important tool to impose legitimacy throughout the country. The resource-based conflict largely occurs in the initial stage. However, it slowly evolved into a social problem where the illicit trade would be facilitated and operated through minors and the young population of the country. Thus, the civil society eventually plunges into chaos and the country would fall under the concocted layer of humanitarian aid and charitable donations from the international actors.³³

In order to reduce the impact of the war and violence on the economy, the following steps must be carefully implemented. First, a democratic government must be established through a fair and just electoral process. This is crucial for the legitimately elected government to create an accountable system that puts in check all the different sections of the society. Second, the government must make an active attempt in identifying and destroying the drug supply hotspots across the country. In doing so, the cartels would be unable to meet the rising demand and would have to relinquish the illicit trade. In doing so, it would become financially impossible for them to carry out their operations and provide the government with the leverage to negotiate an exit. Third, the incident of violence can be curbed by upholding rule of law through an effective legal system. The implementation of strict laws would additionally serve as a deterrent for the public to refrain from using violence in any forms.³⁴

³³ "Illicit Financial Flows & Colombia" Global Financial Integrity (last accessed on May 14th, 2020)

³⁴ Violence, Crime and Illegal Arms Trafficking in Colombia" United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (last accessed on April 28th, 2020)

Origin of Separatist Conflicts- Eurasia and Democratic Republic of Congo

Eurasia

The Eurasian conflicts cannot be simply viewed as economic or political acts of vendetta and retribution. It signals the underlying regional differences among the public and their desire to create their own sovereign boundaries.³⁵ The conflicts in Moldova, Ossetia-Abkhazia ended due to rapid devastation caused by the wars throughout the 1990s. Moreover, the conflicts were short lived and did not receive the attention of the public at large, thus reducing the impact of the campaigns. However, the notions of “cold” and “lackluster” that were associated with these conflicts diverts the attention from the vast economic benefits gained by the benefactors during the timeline of the conflict. For instance, the closure of the war had led to the evolution of the conflict groups into a well-functioning state.³⁶ This included the creation of new currency, passports, education systems, weapons and newly-trained forces- all of which are essential to a state. The disintegration of the Soviet Union presented opportunities for innumerable regions to proclaim their desire for a separate state. Moldova, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Belarus and Ukraine are some of the countries which claimed their own territories recognition from the international communities.³⁷

Unfortunately, the economic reasons far outweighed the local sentiments and struggles in the process of creating a sovereign region. The intention of the separatists has been to secure unchallenged monopoly over the economic resources of the country. Abkhazia is one among the group which till date struggles to maintain its individual identity and depend on Russia to gain access to the international market. The Abkhaz population relates its ethnicity to the Circassia community of North Caucasus.³⁸ Abkhaz people were initially part of Georgia and often suffered due to the cultural hegemony maintained by the Georgian elite.³⁹ This was one of the main reasons

³⁵ Michael Jonsson, “The Political Economy of Conflict in Eurasia” University of Pennsylvania Press (last accessed on April 16th, 2020)

³⁶ P. Terrence Hopmann, “Building Security in Post-Cold War Eurasia” United States Institute of Peace (last accessed on May 11th, 2020)

³⁷ “The Frozen Conflicts of EU’s Eastern Neighbourhood” Directorate General for External Policies, European Parliament (last accessed on April 18th, 2020)

³⁸ Thomas Grant, “Frozen Conflicts and International Law” Lauterpacht Centre for International Law, University of Cambridge (last accessed on May 7th, 2020)

³⁹ Anatol Gudim, “Transnistria: Conflicts and Pragmatism of the Economy” Centre for Strategic Studies and Reform (last accessed on April 17th, 2020)

behind the creation of a new state of Abkhazia. However, the promise of a new state and the economic opportunities evaporated due to the international isolation suffered by the country. As a result, the country is heavily reliant on aid and investment from Russia. Tourism remains to be the biggest economic activity that is not in association with the Russian government. Thus, it remains to be one of the few countries which the separatist fervor was let down by the political realities in the region.

The Transnistrian conflict is one of the few cases where the conflict ended in a favourable position to all the concerned parties.⁴⁰ The conflict began due to the linguistic differences created by the Popular Front of Moldova, a pro-Moldova group that believed in the need to establish supremacy over the minority groups in the country. As a result, the Transnistrian group, which largely consisted of ethnic Russians, broke away from Moldova to create a separate state. The separatist struggle was largely armed and funded by volunteers from Russia, leading to a ceasefire agreement signed in 1992.

The Eurasian conflict is a prime example of opportunism that arises with a war. The conflict, which began as a movement for restoring the pride of the ethnic minorities in a country, resulted in the fragmentation of the USSR. The fragmentation enabled the separatists to create their own sovereign territories and provided an economic interest to all the separatist groups in Eurasia. The rise of the new states paved the way for the development of black market trade. Businessmen in the new states took advantage of the inexperience in the newly-formed governments to deal in illicit trade of women, drugs and weaponry. The creation of the Chechen mafia can be treated as the drawback of creating a state through a separatist movement.⁴¹ The Chechen mafia is the biggest ethnic organized crime syndicate in the Eurasian region. It was started in the early 1980's by gangster Nikolay Suleimanov, who was a Chechnya sympathizer and renowned for his tax-evasion business tactics. The mafia played an important role in the first Chechen war, leading to the formation of the Chechen republic in 1993.⁴² The mafia is infamous for controlling the narcotics trade in Russia and Central Asia. Along with narcotics, the Chechen mafia is also responsible for tapping oil lines and human trafficking. The mafia gained prominence during the Chechen wars,

⁴⁰ "Transnistrian Issue: Moving Beyond the Status-Quo" Directorate General for External Policies, European Parliament (last accessed on May 14th, 2020)

⁴¹ Witold Rodkiewicz, "Transnistrian Conflict after 20 years" Centre for Eastern Studies (last accessed on May 15th, 2020)

⁴² Latife Bulur, "Chechnya: Human Rights Issues" Review Digest- Human Rights & the War on Terror (last accessed on May 12th, 2020)

which were largely sponsored by them. As a result, the mafia was able to secure political leverage to prevent the Chechen government from interfering in their trade. This involved the inclusion of government officials, police officials and media houses in their pay-roll. This helped them to establish their dominance over the illicit trade market and gave them the political mileage to veto the policies of the Chechen government which were not favourable for their operations. Thus, the separatist conflicts have largely yielded in states which are unable to impose a democratic rule over the region. The after-math of the war created an effective form of mobilization of the ethnic groups but also marked a failure in the transition process from a separatist struggle to an efficient system of a state.⁴³

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

The conflict in Congo is neither a separatist movement nor a civil war outbreak due to the failure of the state's machinery.⁴⁴ The war was the result of three complex, intertwined conflicts. First, the local dispute in the region of Kivu located in Eastern Congo. Second, the forefront national conflict between the Congolese factions and President Kabila. Third, a regional conflict that involved numerous Central African countries. The vast mineral resources in the country incentivized the rebels and various dissident groups to wage a war against the Congolese government. As per a geological survey report of the United States Geological survey, Congo was estimated to hold \$24 trillion of untapped mineral deposits, including large reserves of cobalt and lithium.⁴⁵

The Province of Kivu had numerous conflicts and a full-fledged war in the form of the first Congo war in 1993. The discovery of the vast natural resources aiding in creating a hostile atmosphere in the country. Kivu has been the epicenter of various wars and coups, most notably conflict between the Congolese rebels and President Laurent Kabila in 1998. The Kivu region is largely dominated by mining activities, with over 3/4th of the population employed in various mining activities. The north Kivu region consists mainly of cassiterite extraction, which accounts for about 70% of all

⁴³ Dmitri V. Trenin, "The Forgotten War: Chechnya and Russia's Future" Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (last accessed on May 13th, 2020)

⁴⁴ Sagaren Naidoo, "The War Economy in the Democratic Republic of Congo" Institute for Global Dialogue (last accessed on May 10th, 2020)

⁴⁵ Cornelia Cone, "Analysis of Economic Dimensions of Conflict in Congo" University of Pretoria (last accessed on May 9th, 2020)

the mining activities. South Kivu contains enormous reserves of gold and coltan. The mineral riches of the region could help a faction to establish international trade networks with the western countries, which were dependent on these minerals as raw materials to run their industries. Thus, the first Kivu conflict began in 2004 where the military forces of Congo fought with the Hutu power group in a quest for supremacy over the entire Kivu region. The war, which till date has been continuing in the region. In addition to resource exploitation, the region had witnessed numerous human rights violations and destruction of the agricultural industry. Forced labour became the norm as militia activities plundered the wealth of the villages, resulting in the rapid increase of the poverty rate.⁴⁶

The internal crisis in Congo created a wave of opportunities for multinational companies and countries like Rwanda, Uganda and South Africa to appropriate the benefits of the mining activities. The takeover of Goma city by the M23 rebels paved the way for the neighboring countries to negotiate deals with the factions in the countries.⁴⁷ For instance, the M23 rebel insurgency has been accused of maintaining close ties with the Rwandan government, thereby increasing the hostilities between the countries. The United Nations group of experts in Congo published a report containing incriminating evidence of collusion between Rwanda and Uganda to finance the military activities of the M23 group.⁴⁸ This included reinforcements from those states along with creation of a political branch for the insurgent group to legitimately form a democratic government in the country. This led to the involvement of the African Union and the signing of a peace treaty between the rebels and the Congolese government in 2013.

Analysis

The conflicts in Congo and Eurasia were due to the combination of the greed and grievance based factors, which made it difficult for the neutral parties and the United Nations to devise a peace treaty that would be honored over the years. The conflict in Congo was largely a result of the unrest among the minority sections of the population and eventually evolved into a long-standing feud

⁴⁶Koen Vlassenroot, "South Kivu: Identity, territory and power in Eastern Congo" London School of Economics And Political Science (last accessed on April 17th, 2020)

⁴⁷ Ben Shepherd, "Congo M23 Case Study" (last accessed on April 14th, 2020)

⁴⁸ "Democratic Republic of Congo: Conflict in the Eastern Regions" Geneva Academy War Report (last accessed on April 25th, 2020)

between the parties. The ability of the minority groups to dictate the politics of the country is a fairly new phenomenon across the world.

The Chechnya and Eurasian conflicts can be understood as development of organized violence, which culminated in the fragmentation of the USSR. The collapse of the communist ideologies and the discovery of abundant natural resources of the individual regions paved the way for the secession of the country into small territories, which in turn were largely dominated or ruled by the mafia syndicates. The mafia were responsible for the expansion of the black market trade and incentivized the syndicate to sophisticate the illicit trade of narcotics, women and weaponry. Thus, the conflict transformed into a social and national resistance against the newly formed governments. The governments were accused of colluding with the mafia by undertaking policies to protect the illicit trade from being exposed by the international media. Thus, the presence of organized crime restarted the cycle of violence and suppression of ethnic rights and signaled the defeat of the separatist fervor in creating a democratic institution.

CONCLUSION

War economies across the world have experienced the worst consequences of conflict being merged with greed. In most cases, the conflicts are exploited to justify a war that is merely used as a façade to cover up the atrocities committed upon the citizens of the country. The addition of greed as a motive only creates further incentives for the benefactors to create a hostile atmosphere and divert the attention of the public from the real issue. Countries like Colombia and Congo have witnessed popular civilian uprisings which were focused solely on the problems and aspirations of the people about governance and economic growth. Thus, it is crucial for any civilian movement to identify the elements of greed and conflict in order to attract the attention of the global audience in securing their right for good governance. War economies can cease to exist if there is ample support from the international actors to create a democratic values and policies in the affected communities.