

A Question of Intervention: American Policymaking in Sierra Leone and the Power of Institutional Agenda Setting

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Abstract: This article is an examination of American foreign policy towards Sierra Leone in 1999 and 2000. Hopefully it will contribute to the literature of Sierra Leone while shedding theoretical light on types of humanitarian intervention. It seeks to answer two questions about American policy: First, why did the Clinton White House become involved in this particular West African civil war? Secondly, what factors led the U.S. to give financial and logistical help but not military aid? These types of limited interventions have usually been ignored by American foreign policy scholars. To understand Sierra Leonean decision making, it examines four key policy decisions using primary interviews with Clinton officials and looking at internal documents from the White House, Defense and State Departments. I contend that a theory of international institutional agenda setting can best describe American policy. This argument explores how constructivist norms (i.e. human rights and sovereignty) are transmitted, magnified or mitigated by international institutions. By bringing neo-liberal institutional literature back into constructivism we can show how 'institutional identity' influences and shapes state policy preferences-- not only in decisions to intervene but in shaping the size and scope of UN peacekeeping mandates.

Introduction

The Revolutionary United Front (RUF) waged a decade long gruesome and terrifying campaign to unseat the Sierra Leonean government. Tens of thousands of people died, millions were displaced and the economy destroyed. Under international pressure the warring parties signed a peace agreement in Lome, Togo in July of 1999 which quickly collapsed. The RUF were finally defeated with a strengthened UN peacekeeping mission, West African military help, and key American and British aid. This article is an examination of the American decision-making in this conflict.

By using Sierra Leone as a case study we can hopefully expand two areas of the foreign policy literature concerning failed states and intervention: most treatments of Sierra Leone concentrate on the government in Freetown or the institution of the UN, not the decision making process in Washington. Secondly, and more substantively, I wish to examine the decision making process in what I define as limited interventions. To accomplish these goals we need to answer two questions about U.S. policy in Sierra Leone: first, why did the United States

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<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v10/v10i1a1.pdf>

become involved in the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL)? The Clinton Administration could have easily ignored the crisis. It was a low intensity civil war in a region with little strategic interest. Secondly, I try to answer why the U.S. chose to provide logistical and financial aid but not military help.

To answer these questions I will carefully look at American policy in Sierra Leone for 1999 and 2000 using internal memos from the National Security Council (NSC), Defense and State Departments, combined with elite interviews of key Clinton decision makers. This article will then break down Sierra Leone policymaking into four key decisions: first, the early 1999 decision to help end the conflict; second, the American dedication to the Lome Accords that culminated in July of 1999; third U.S. support for UNAMSIL; and finally the U.S. decision to save UNAMSIL as it seemed it was going to collapse in early 2000. We will then test these four observations against a structured focused comparison of two hypotheses of foreign policy making: neoclassical realism and what this article will develop as a hypothesis of institutional agenda setting based on constructivism and neo-liberal institutionalism. Since realism (in its many forms) is still considered the dominant paradigm of foreign policy scholarship it is essential we also discuss how it views intervention in Sierra Leone. These hypotheses will hopefully shed some theoretical light on how the Administration framed the questions of intervention and what guided their actions.

I contend that institutional commitments and UN legitimacy play a crucial role in American policy formulation for Sierra Leone. Nancy Soderberg, a member of President Clinton's NSC staff summarizes the power of international commitments, "Sierra Leone does not become an issue *on its own* throughout all this. The UN cannot technically place items on the NSC agenda -- but the UN is part of the NSC agenda."¹ Institutional agenda setting provides a robust look at how the Sierra Leonean crisis was framed by these international commitments and how they shaped the policy path that was eventually chosen.

Sierra Leone and the Concept Of Limited Intervention

What makes Sierra Leone a compelling case is the nature of American involvement. UN missions in Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and East Timor fall into a category of limited U.S. intervention. What is often missing in the literature of intervention and peacekeeping is a qualitative look at how decision makers understand peacekeeping as a question of degrees. There are levels of intervention. A limited intervention provides the financial and logistical support to other organizations and nations in humanitarian crises but does not reach the level of military intervention, or as policymakers say "boots on the ground." In fact, a large component of U.S. participation in UN peacekeeping is not providing military but critical logistical aid.

Yet the literature has been silent on this subject. Interventions are often seen as a simple dichotomy: you either intervene or not. There are also plenty of large 'n' quantitative works on "third party" and UN interventions. However, these studies have the UN as the focus of analysis and not Washington. A good example of this can be found in Mark J. Mullenbach's recent, "Deciding to Keep Peace: An Analysis of International Influences on the Establishment of Third-Party Peacekeeping Missions."² There has been an explosion of qualitative research in

places where the U.S. has actively intervened. For example, Ivo Daalder and Michael O'Hanlon of the Brookings Institute provide a descriptive policy analysis of the Bosnia and Kosovo conflicts.^[3] In the same vein, Ken Menkhous and Louis Ortmayer provide an exhaustive account of Somalia.^[4] American failure to intervene has also been widely explored from a normative perspective; for example: Samantha Powers, *A Problem from Hell*, and Philip Gourevitch's work on Rwanda.⁵

Sierra Leone has not garnered the same kind of academic scrutiny as some of these other humanitarian tragedies in the post cold war world. But these kinds of missions deserve special attention because they are qualitatively different than what happened in Somalia and Rwanda. By providing a rich deep look at Sierra Leone I hope to shed light on the concept of limited intervention while adding to the historical record of American policymaking in West Africa.

Theoretical Discussion of Complex Human Emergencies

In order to better understand why the U.S. intervened in Sierra Leone and how it chose the type of intervention we need to ground our discussion in the larger theoretical debate of intervention, peacekeeping, and foreign policy. Can theory help us explain American behavior?

Neoclassical Realism

Realism is the baseline in which to judge American policy. In the eyes of Washington's non-academic elites it is nothing more than creating policy that advances (or protects) American strategic interest. The real debate is how broadly we define interest. Peacekeeping sometimes advances these interests and sometimes not. However, one thing is certain for realists: the U.S. should only become involved in peacekeeping when American interests are threatened. The academic side of the realist debate is a bit more complicated but arrives at the same conclusion.

The power of realism is its parsimonious understanding of international relations. The world is understood as an anarchical system of nation states. The only difference between states is power. International relations occur in relation to the distribution of power. Realism has been silent about what to do in humanitarian crises and complex humanitarian emergencies for two reasons: first, because structural realism implicitly deals with a bigger picture and not specific cases. Secondly, that humanitarian tragedy is *a priori* outside of the national interest for most states. Kenneth Waltz for example seems to dismiss foreign policy outright in his work on structural neo-realism. Waltz cannot tell us how effectively (or even how) the units of a system (states) will respond to these pressures and possibilities of changes in the balance of power.⁶ Unless genocide or gross human rights abuses dramatically changes the balance of power then realism does not have much to say about peacekeeping. We find this same lack of understanding for the role of peacekeeping in the offensive and defensive variants of realism debated in the 1990s.⁷

Though this paper focuses on understanding American foreign policy, it is important to note that realism has traditionally been silent about the politics of Africa and the third world in general. As John F. Clark states: "Neo-realism provided a form of analysis that seemed well suited to the Great Power relations of the Cold War era, but it reveals little about international

politics on the periphery in the post-Cold War era.”⁸ Clark goes on to state: “The concept of [western inspired] national interest fails patently in Africa.”⁹ Clark, along with other African scholars, Sakah Mahmud, and Assis Malaquias, point out that various African nations are often peripherally connected to global power politics.¹⁰ Overall, peacekeeping in the developing world has remained outside the scholarly gaze of structural realism.

A more fruitful alternative for understanding American foreign policy is the school of neoclassical realism.¹¹ Neoclassical realists grapple with the foreign policy decisions that many structural realists ignore. The key to neoclassical realism is how policymakers perceive relative power. Gideon Rose explains: “Foreign policy choices are made by actual political leaders and elites, and so it is their perceptions of relative power that matter.”¹² This emphasis on perception as an intervening variable opens up the black box of domestic politics and lets the state back into the analysis.

So how does a realist explain humanitarian intervention and peacekeeping? A neo-classical realist would contend that the core of every peacekeeping operation is a sober analysis of national interest. Policymakers must perceive that something will be gained from participating in these kinds of international ventures. A successful mission might maintain or change the distribution of power but always to the benefit of the intervening nation. What kind of hypothesis could we derive from neoclassical theory (hereinafter realism) when it comes to Sierra Leone?

Hypothesis 1, Realism: The U.S. will intervene in Sierra Leone if policymakers perceive American strategic and economic interests are at stake. These interests may include regional stability. Conversely, the U.S. will not intervene if these specific criteria are not met

If this hypothesis is true we will find the Clinton Administration making choices to intervene or not based on explicit arguments of Sierra Leone’s importance to the stability of western Africa. These findings will be strengthened if we find evidence that top-decision makers made consistent and repeated references, in their comments to the media, minutes from official meetings, memoirs, government papers, reports, and personal interviews, to what were, if any, the geo-strategic and financial stakes Sierra Leone had to the United States.

Institutional Agenda Setting Hypothesis

The institutional agenda setting hypothesis explores how constructivist arguments of norms are transmitted, magnified or mitigated by international institutions. By bringing back institutions into the constructivist argument we can show how ‘institutional identity’ influences and shapes state preferences. States choose to cooperate in peacekeeping missions in areas of little strategic importance. However, there is a second part to the theory: since these institutions are meeting grounds they must mediate between international norms of human rights with member preferences of national interest. Organizations send mixed signals to policy-makers about its preferences. The end result is fluctuations over policies chosen – or limited interventions.

Constructivism provides an interesting avenue of research in the development of state norms and identity in complex human emergencies. Martha Finnemore’s *The Purpose of Intervention* best exemplifies this new research agenda.¹³ Finnemore sets out to explain why

states conduct military interventions; and how the rationalizations for such actions have changed over time. Intervention in the 19th century was strictly limited, and often tied to collecting international debts. By the 20th century, intervention to stop gross human rights abuses were not only discussed, but expected from the international community. In her earlier works, Finnemore (joined by Kathryn Sikkink) explore why states would accept these norms. They posit that states have a sense of appropriate behavior (and later Finnemore discusses the concept of felt obligations). In a process similar to peer pressure, policymakers accept these norms, “not out of conscious choice, but because they understand these behaviors to be appropriate.”¹⁴ State identity changes when enough critical states endorse the new norm.

Finnemore ends *The Purpose of Intervention* with a jumping off point for future research: “We lack good understandings of how law and institutions at the international level create these senses of felt obligation [towards the norms of humanitarian intervention for example] in individuals, much less states, that induce compliance...”¹⁵ What we can tease out of Finnemore’s work is that membership and participation in these institutions are the transmission belt for felt obligations. Finnemore’s constructivism leads us to institutional liberalism.

International regimes are systems of norms and rules agreed upon by states to govern.¹⁶ The primary goal of institutionalism was to demonstrate that even in anarchy structured cooperation was still possible.¹⁷ Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, two of the most prominent architects of institutionalism contend: “in the long run, one may even see changes in how governments define their own self-interest in directions that conform to the rules of the regime.”¹⁸ Keohane and Nye seem to suggest a constructivist argument. Over time institutions can change the behavior (and identity) of member states. The wall of fixed identity (so important to neo-liberalism) is now broken.

Jennifer Sterling-Folker concisely sums up the theoretical connections between liberal institutionalism and constructivism and how they are “birds of a feather,”

Actor expectations in a given issue-area [peacekeeping] converge around principles, norms, rules, and decision making procedures which have relevance because they are the social practices in which elites are already engaged when the regime analysis begins. This neo-liberal institutionalism already recognizes what [Alexander] Wendt labels the fundamental principles of constructivist social theory... that people act towards objects, including other actors, on the basis of the meanings that the objects have for them.¹⁹

This connection between liberal institutionalism and constructivism is where I want to develop my hypothesis of institutional agenda setting in limited interventions.

Institutional Agenda Setting: Transmission

The UN plays an important role in transmitting ideas of peacekeeping to elite policymakers of member states. Ending gross human rights abuses is enshrined in the UN Charter (found in Chapters VI and VII). Over time, nations make UN peacekeeping part of their agendas even if it is not always consistent with a strict understanding of national interest.²⁰ States learn to see multilateral action as the best way to end gross human rights abuses even in the face of institutional weakness in the UN Department of Peacekeeping. Keohane argues in *After*

Hegemony that states are loath to scrap these international regimes because they embody sunk costs. They “persist even when all members would prefer somewhat different mixtures of principals, rules, and institutions.”²¹ Institutions have staying power and once established become difficult to remove and hard to change.

Institutional Agenda Setting: The Importance of Feedback Loops

When it comes to complex human emergencies policymakers take their cues from international organizations. But agenda setting is a two way street. Institutions may be difficult to remove or change but they are open to influence from states. Stephen Krasner contends iterated cooperation within an institutional framework leads to a reinforcing feedback loop. The more states cooperate the more this reinforces the institutions of cooperation. However, that loop is more complex than just reaffirming legitimacy. ²² If institutions push on states it is reasonable to assume that states push back. That is why constructivists are partially correct. UN identity is not fixed but a dynamic interaction with its members. States bring to the UN different interests, and capabilities. There are competing norms in the international sphere. Finnemore is correct to say that modern norms of intervention seem to trump sovereignty in military interventions. But it would be incorrect to assume that sovereignty, defined here as protecting national interest has no power in these organizations. The ideas of sovereignty and non-intervention are just as entrenched at the international level as stopping gross human rights abuses.

Nicholas Wheeler examines how the ideas of sovereignty cut both ways in the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia in 1978. The Vietnamese initially argued it was defending itself from an invasion by Kampuchea (a sovereignty argument). Many states, including China, saw it as aggression. What was initially left unsaid by the international society was the benefit of removing the Khmer Rouge. Wheeler challenges us to think of competing norms: “How should we morally judge a society of states that condemns the practice of humanitarian intervention on the twin grounds that such a right will be abused and set a dangerous precedent?”²³ The norms of sovereignty are still strong. The U.S. chose to avoid the UN all together in Kosovo, opting for military action through NATO because of what preemptive war means to sovereignty and the expected Chinese and Russian opposition on the Security Council.

Institutions mediate the effects of the competing strategic and material interests of member nations with the norms of human rights. But states are active participants in the feedback process. In the example of peacekeeping: member state feedback to a proposed mission may be negative, thus tending to reduce the possibility of intervention; or positive, thus increasing the likelihood of multilateral engagement. But one thing is clear the size, scope and breadth of peacekeeping missions are partially reflection of the international consensus. This institutional agenda setting hypothesis not only allows us to understand why states choose to intervene but can try to predict the kind of intervention that will occur. Here is our hypothesis for Sierra Leone:

Hypothesis 2: Institutional Agenda Setting: The U.S. will intervene in Sierra Leone if key U.S. policymakers feel that Sierra Leone is important to the agenda of international institutions

like the United Nations and other regional organizations. The institutional agenda (and its intensity) will dictate the size and scope of the American role.

If hypothesis 2 is correct we will find the Clinton White House acknowledging the importance, taking into account, and making choices of intervention based on their assessments and perceptions of 'pressures' from international organizations such as the United Nations. This hypothesis also postulates that the debate on intervention would be framed within the context of the UN. The findings will be strengthened if we see evidence that top decision-makers were explicitly concerned about international organizations from their comments to the media, minutes from official meetings, memoirs, government papers, reports, and personal interviews.

BACKGROUND TO THE SIERRA LEONE CRISIS

In 1991, President Joseph Momoh planned to hold free elections after many years of one party rule. However, the country broke out into civil war before that election could happen. A group calling themselves the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) crossed into Sierra Leone from Liberia that March with the goal of ending Momoh's grip on power. Where did the RUF come from? During the 1980s, Libya had trained individual revolutionaries. This group of men included Charles Taylor of Liberia and Foday Sankoh, a former Sierra Leonean Army officer. The roots of the RUF may have started in Libya but they grew into maturity during the Liberian civil war. In 1989, Charles Taylor, helped by Sankoh, launched a rebel insurgency against Samuel Doe's Liberian government. Taylor returned the favor by helping bring war to Sierra Leone.

It is hard to describe what the RUF really stood for. They played themselves off as a political movement for a better Sierra Leone, but in reality the RUF were no more than common thugs who killed, raped, looted and wanted the precious diamond mines. They conducted military operations like: "Operation Pay Yourself" or "Operation No Living Thing."²⁴ According to Ibrahim Abdullah and Patrick Muana:

The RUF has defied all available typologies on guerilla movements. It neither a separatist uprising rooted in a specific demand, as in the case of Eritrea, or a reformist movement with a radical agenda superior to the regime it sought to overthrow. Nor does it possess the kind of leadership that would be necessary to designate it as warlord insurgency. The RUF has made history; it is a peculiar guerilla movement without any significant national following or ethnic support.²⁵

Ryan Lizza of New Republic reported: "Typically RUF troops would enter a village and round up the children: Girls as young as ten would be raped. Boys would be forced to execute village elders and sometimes even their own parents. Once the past was cut off from the children they are hooked on speed."²⁶ Sankoh often tried to target certain ethnic groups to rip apart the fabric of the nation and cause mayhem. By 1992, the RUF had captured most of the eastern part of the country and created a refugee crisis. People fled into the capital of Freetown and into other neighboring countries.

President Momoh quickly doubled the size of the army with whoever wanted to sign up. But the Sierra Leonean government did not have the money or resources to conduct a long term civil war. The army was underpaid, overworked and ultimately demoralized. They eventually

overthrew Momoh under Captain Valentine Strasser, chair of the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC). But the Strasser regime now faced international pressure, as well as the civil war. The UN, the Organization of African Unity and The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) worked to negotiate a political settlement to return the country to civilian rule. In January of 1996, the settlement came when Strasser was himself deposed in a coup. The new government promised and delivered free elections within two months.

Ahmad Kabbah was elected President. But he soon realized his government was too weak to avoid further bloodshed so he entered into negotiations with the RUF that culminated in the Abidjan Accords in November, 1996. The Accords called for a cease-fire, disarmament, demobilization, and a National Commission for the Consolidation of Peace to be established. The cease fire did not last and fighting broke out by the end of the year leading to a coup of Kabbah by pro-RUF elements in the military in 1997. Coup leader Johnny Paul Koroma invited the RUF to join the government.

International pressure and sanctions worked effectively to force the coup leaders to the negotiating table but ultimately the situation was solved militarily when ECOMOG forces (the monitoring group of ECOWAS) combined with local anti-junta Sierra Leonean militias launched an offensive in February of 1998.²⁷ The following month Kabbah was reinstated. Over the next several months ECOMOG forces were able to establish control over roughly two-thirds of the country. Alongside ECOMOG, the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) was established in July 1998 to monitor the military and security situation. However, these organizations were not able to maintain the momentum. Another brutal RUF offensive toppled Kabbah in early 1999 and seized Freetown.

Key Decision One: Getting Involved in Sierra Leone

The first decision I want to examine is Clinton's policy during the early chaotic months of 1999. Our hypotheses need to answer the fundamental question: Why get involved in Sierra Leone? It is important to note that the U.S. at this juncture could have chosen to ignore the conflict. Our realist hypothesis (hypothesis one) would suggest that if the U.S. had strategic interests in the region it would intervene to protect them. Conversely, the lack of interest would signal American non-involvement. Institutional agenda setting (hypothesis two) presents a different scenario: American policymakers understood that the UN is the dominant institution in setting the American agenda for gross human rights abuses absent broader national interests. While realism does have something to say about American interests and West African regional stability, the institutional agenda setting hypothesis presents us with a more robust picture of the actual policy path chosen.

The Clinton Administration had been closely monitoring the Sierra Leonean civil war. They applauded the election of Ahmad Kabbah in 1996, and supported the Nigerians and the other West African states of ECOWAS in reinforcing the civilian government. However, it was during the 1998-99 RUF offensives that the NSC started to seriously consider policy options. A Presidential Decision Directive-25 analysis (PDD-25 is an internal review to vet peacekeeping missions) was prepared and shared with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Administration officials did not think that Sierra Leone met the criteria for American action. The question of military intervention was moot.²⁸

Throughout the winter and spring of 1999, the Clinton White house was swamped with other international and domestic problems: the Kosovo crisis, UN missions were being planned in the Congo and East Timor, and the White House was dealing with the impeachment trial. According to internal memos, the NSC and the State Department were content to create an expanded UNOMSIL and a strengthened Nigerian-led ECOMOG as the best way to deal with the situation.²⁹ The White House was not blind to the challenges UNOMSIL would face-- including the failure of the RUF to turn over the diamond mines, corruption, continued fighting, lack of revenues, and the weakness of ECOMOG capabilities when compared to the RUF.

The ideal solution for American policymakers was a UN Mission that would eventually work in conjunction with a comprehensive peace settlement and the Nigerian-led ECOMOG providing the military support.³⁰ Such an agreement would not only end the fighting, but provide a vehicle for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of the RUF back into Sierra Leonean society.³¹ According to Ryan Lizza, the diplomatic process started when the State Department and Howard Jeter got RUF Ambassador Omrie Golley to speak on the phone to President Kabbah, eventually leading to negotiations that led to Lome. After the breakthrough phone call, American officials were dispatched to follow up on the conversation and build the foundation for what would become the Lome Accords.³²

Can a realist explain the policy decisions of the Clinton White House in the early months of 1999? Since the U.S. never contemplated sending troops, realism would seem a viable theory in lieu of national interests. However, realism needs to explain the kind of involvement the U.S. would take. Some of these answers lie within an understanding of regional stability in West Africa. American policy was no longer a question of Sierra Leone or the brutality of the RUF but of greater regional security. West African concerns included: containing Charles Taylor in Liberia, and strengthening regional governments especially the democratic regime in Nigeria. Today Nigeria is one the top oil exporters to the United States.

Throughout internal documents we find evidence of the importance of regional stability to planning a U.S. response in Sierra Leone. One of the key questions that guided Clinton policy after the Somalia debacle: "Does UN involvement advance U.S. interests?" Policymakers were confident that it did by helping "regional instability..."³³ They repeatedly talked about stability and communicated that to Congress. Former Deputy to the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations and one-time Director of Global and Multilateral Affairs at the National Security Council Robert C. Orr states, "The U.S. does have real interest in West Africa, not just on the humanitarian side, but in terms of hard national interests: oil, and the stability of major key regional states. Sierra Leone provided a huge challenge to the struggling democratic leadership in Nigeria."³⁴

But even if we establish that Sierra Leone had importance to American interests can realism explain the degree of participation? The choice to work through the UN and the limited response could be a reflection of the value U.S. policymakers put on that stability. West Africa would be of secondary or tertiary importance to the White House. The strength of ECOWAS could guarantee the U.S. not having to put large amounts of boots on the ground to remedy

various crises situations.³⁵ But as we will explore later, if the continued conflict in Sierra Leone proved to be too much a strain on Nigeria and these other regional powers then what would the U.S. do? At this juncture realism has a limited explanatory power.

However, we can find a more robust explanation of American policy in the institutional agenda setting hypothesis. The documents and interviews also reveal a White House agenda based on human rights, and a need to stop the violence, but more importantly UN legitimacy. As Finnemore points out, institutions at the international level create a sense of felt obligation for intervention. In the early months of 1999 American and UN policymakers realized a more aggressive policy was needed in light of the revelations of gross atrocities the RUF were committing. The sacking of Freetown transformed the crisis from a localized West African conflict with little political value to a question of international norms and human rights that threatened the legitimacy of the United Nations. Nancy Soderberg, Clinton's Alternate U.S. Representative for Special Political Affairs at the UN Mission and former Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs on the NSC, contends that Sierra Leone entered the American agenda when "the RUF started to reach the capital, and horrific pictures emerged of chopping off of hands."³⁶ Eric Schwartz, Special Assistant to President Clinton and Senior Director for Multinational and Humanitarian Affairs for the NSC, points out the importance of the UN to policy discussion at the NSC: "There was awareness at the senior level of government that the credibility of UN peacekeeping was at stake and the lives of thousands of people were at stake."³⁷ UN Ambassador Richard Holbrooke viewed Sierra Leone, as well as the Congo, as a testing ground for UN peacekeeping, and suggested that if the UN failed in Africa, it failed in general.³⁸

Both Soderberg and Schwartz suggest that the RUF had crossed a line with its seizure of the capitol. The RUF behavior was no longer acceptable within the changing norms of war. But the line crossed was not one of American interest. Internal discussions show that stopping the RUF and the legitimacy of the UN occurred side by side. Our hypothesis can now extrapolate into possible policy options. First, that any kind of mission would be conducted by the UN. Second, stopping the RUF had institutional limitations (both logistical and financial) within the UN. These limitations stem from a general lack of enthusiasm from the rest of the world. At this stage, there was not going to be a muscular UN response beyond the ECOMOG forces already present.

Key Decision Two: The Lome Accords and UNAMSIL

In key decision two we will explore why the U.S. opted to pursue a comprehensive peace plan between the Government of Sierra Leone and the RUF to end the conflict. At this juncture a peace plan was not the only option. The accords culminated in the creation of UNAMSIL. Realists (hypothesis one) would predict that the Lome Accords would advance American interests and protect the stability of West Africa. Whereas, institutional agenda setting (hypothesis two) predicts that the Lome negotiations are guided by the need to stop the suffering but tempered with a realization of the limitations of ECOMOG and the UN to use force. We find that in decision two realism, struggles with predicting the outcome of the Lome Accords. Once again the agenda setting hypothesis provides a more compelling explanation.

Throughout the first half of 1999, special envoy Jesse Jackson, and other State Department officials worked with Charles Taylor in Liberia, the RUF, and President Kabbah to sit down and negotiate a comprehensive peace plan. In May, serious talks began in Lome, Togo. A cease fire was signed on May 18 and on July 7 the Sierra Leone government and the RUF officially signed the agreement.³⁹ The White House hoped that a minimal UN investment was needed for its implementation.⁴⁰ On May 7, the Administration informed Congress that if a peace agreement were negotiated the U.S. would support a stronger UN mission.⁴¹ A month later the White House notified Congress that the Lome Accords “represent Sierra Leone’s best chance to end a terrible war”⁴²

The Administration was honest that Lome was far from perfect. Officials told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee they would not push for a war crimes tribunal. The White House also told the Senate there were doubts about ECOMOG’s ability to stay and possible RUF resistance. The U.S. did not have faith in the Kabbah regime. However, Administration officials felt that the people of Sierra Leone’s views on the peace agreement were more important than seeking justice.⁴³

Officially, the Lome peace agreement ended hostilities, formed a new government of national unity, and requested, as planned, an expanded role for ECOMOG and UNOMSIL. Under the agreement, the RUF would become a political party and some members of the RUF would be incorporated into the government until the next general elections in early 2001. All former combatants, including the RUF, members of the former military who led a 1997 coup against the government, and the pro-government civil defense forces were required to assemble for disarmament and demobilization. Eventually the World Bank, working with the Sierra Leone government would invest in long-term development projects to reintegrate ex-combatants into the civilian economy.⁴⁴

But the agreement was flawed. Leonard Hawley, the former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of International Organization Affairs states: “Lome was a screwed up agreement largely because it was put together by diplomats who wanted to get a solution to the fighting because it was pretty bleak. They wanted to open the door so they could get something in there... not really appreciating the military and other aspects of it.” Hawley describes some of the problems the U.S. faced in implementing Lome:

When I finally got a shot at the draft of the Lome agreement I sent out some immediate [corrections to the settlement.] There was no way disarmament was going to happen within sixty days of the signing. There are no mechanisms within the agreement that stated the RUF had to come to a joint Lome commission, or that they have to abide by the decisions of something like a joint commission and several other implementation mechanisms that we had learned were tried and true to implement deals.⁴⁵

But why back a poor agreement? Hawley contends that Kabbah was interested in a deal, and as for the RUF: “...they would sign just about anything.” It was Kabbah that gave Sankoh amnesty, diamonds, and a government position which was essentially his primary goal. To not deal with the RUF was to ignore the reality on the ground. As one Defense Department official put it, “the inherent weakness of Kabbah government meant that it probably could not survive on its own and Kabbah did not have control of the diamonds.”⁴⁶ If the Nigerians and ECOMOG withdrew, the RUF would have realistically defeated Kabbah.

With Lome signed the UN needed a new mandate to replace UNOMSIL to enforce the Accords. Officials were cognizant that proposals in the UN needed to be carefully vetted to match resources with mission objectives.⁴⁷ As sporadic fighting continued in Sierra Leone, an internal memo on June 17 mapped out the outstanding questions about a possible mission: there was a fear of the RUF reneging on their Lome promises. Thus anyone sent to peace-keep in Sierra Leone must be able to defend themselves and a Chapter VII peace-enforcement mandate was considered crucial.

On July 16, the State Department prepared a new PDD-25 analysis for the expanded UN Sierra Leone mission for NSC consideration. The undersecretaries (the Deputies) wondered if the proposed operation had adequate means to carry out its mission in the face of potential rebel resistance. Would the RUF really disarm and give up the diamonds?⁴⁸ Problems still remained concerning the international funding and the financing of ECOMOG.⁴⁹ The analysis asked this crucial question, "Does UN involvement advance U.S. interests, and is there an international community of interest in dealing with the problem on a multilateral basis?" The first part of the question was yes: Lome would promote a peaceful settlement, reduce regional instability, and alleviate humanitarian crises. The second question on international support seems to have been a bit more qualified. Outside of West Africa and Great Britain there was not much interest in Sierra Leone.⁵⁰ Because of the lack of international support Sierra Leone was going to have to be a Chapter VI (peace-keeping) mission that would make allowances for self defense. The mission had to avoid open ended commitments, clear exit strategies, setting down reasonable objectives for reconciliation and conducting elections, the professionalization of the Sierra Leone army and police, and building accountability and responsibility into the government. But even with these considerable shortfalls the NSC Deputies Committee decided to officially support the expanded mission on August 5.

The White House officially informed Congress of its intentions to vote for an expanded UN observer mission to Sierra Leone later that month. The letter states: "Because we believe that the prompt expansion of UNOMSIL is an important factor in maintaining the momentum of... [the] peace process which could be jeopardized by delay."⁵¹ The letter made sure to note that the UN did not request U.S. military participation in UNOMSIL. American involvement would be limited to civilian specialists that would help build public support for the integration of ex-combatants, document human right abuses for a possible Truth and Reconciliation Committee, and help the Sierra Leone government devise a strategic framework to coordinate peacekeeping humanitarian relief and development activities alongside financial aid.⁵²

The culmination of this behind the scenes work produced UNSC Resolution 1260, an interim measure designed to be implemented in accordance with Lome. The Resolution called for the expansion of UNOMSIL. The U.S. voted in favor of it on August 20, 1999. With ECOMOG providing the security, the Resolution authorized the provisional expansion of the mission (political, civil affairs, information, human rights, and child protection elements) along with necessary equipment and administrative and medical support. The role of UNOMSIL was to strengthen and assist the Lome agreement. Military observers would have a mandate to conduct disarmament, with ECOMOG providing initial demobilization activities. UNOMSIL also pledged further bilateral financial and logistical support to ECOMOG. The mission would hopefully terminate with the constitutionally mandated elections tentatively set for early in

2001. Madeline Albright was dispatched to meet with Kabbah and show support for the peace process

In October, administration officials told the Senate that the outlook for the peace process looked favorable.⁵³ Responding to Senatorial questions, the White House expressed guarded optimism, the cease fire was still holding and there were significant improvement in the delivery of aid. In further Congressional meetings that year Senators were concerned about funding and whether the UN had issued an appropriate mandate. Money, however, not humanitarian concern remained a key issue with Congress.⁵⁴ White House officials stressed that there was a broad interdepartmental understanding that this was the best mission possible at the time.

Resolution 1260 was meant to be a temporary bridge to move the peace process forward quickly while the UN made better plans. The Deputies Committee decided the U.S. would vote to authorize an even stronger permanent peacekeeping operation to replace it in October.⁵⁵ A stronger mandate that required getting UN peacekeepers to replace the exhausted West African ECOMOG troops already there. The notification letter to Congress stated: "We are notifying you that the United States intends to support [a new] mission that would subsume the current United Nations observer mission now deployed to Sierra Leone."⁵⁶ It pledged that: "no U.S. military personnel will participate in this mission, nor do we anticipate the U.S. armed forces will provide support to the new mission called United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL)."⁵⁷

In deciding for the diplomatic track at Lome, and laying the groundwork for the UNAMSIL mission, the White House reassured Congress that this was helping promote American interests. We find evidence for realism in the repeated references to reducing regional instability and indirectly helping Nigeria. But realism struggles in explaining decision two and the Lome Accords. If the stability of the region was within the realm of American security why was Lome flawed? The accord was written in such a way that many critics say it rewarded the RUF for violence.⁵⁸ The risk of the RUF renegeing on the deal was high. If the Nigerians withdrew, the RUF would have defeated Kabbah. Policymakers did not suffer from a lack of information or perception gap. Why would a realist choose a policy with a high rate of failure?

Herein is the problem with realism: If the stability of West Africa relied on Sierra Leone, one could reasonably assume the White House would have forced a tougher accord on the RUF. There are two other possible options for realism: First, that Sierra Leone was not of importance. But if we accept that answer then realism fails to explain any U.S. action at all. Secondly, we could claim that Lome was a failure of the liberal Clinton Administration. But inaction and regional instability are insufficient answers to describe the Lome negotiations.

Maybe the talk of national interest was more rhetoric than real. We find ample evidence that the U.S. did not have regional stability in mind during the negotiations of the accord. Nancy Soderberg states: "While [Lome] now looks like a bad agreement because the RUF reneged, at the time, the Sierra Leone people wanted peace so we backed it." Wanting peace and ending conflict are different than just protecting interests. Leonard Hawley speaks for the entire Administration when he states, "I think the RUF are the most despicable people on the planet." Hawley continues that Lome was built on a realistic appraisal of the capacities of Kabbah and the RUF: "[the U.S. recognized] that you needed to be very careful, that if you put

on rose colored glasses [about the peace process] you could say that things are going to be great but you always had to have plan B ready to go." Administration officials were not confident in Kabbah's regime. There is no mention of the RUF/Charles Taylor dominoes falling. No mention of Nigeria being drawn into a wider regional conflict.

The institutional agenda setting hypothesis does a better job of explaining U.S. policy. The Lome agreement fits in with the concept that institutions help transmit norms of intervention and values like ending gross humanity. As Soderberg contends the people wanted peace. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Susan Rice contends: "The Lome agreement, like many others before it, was a calculated risk that did not play out as the people of Sierra Leone, the international community, or the U.S. would have hoped." She noted, "Some may second guess the inclusion of the rebels in any kind of peace process, given their grisly record, but this would not be realistic given the circumstances." According to Rice's testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the Lome accord:

was a peace agreement widely welcomed by the people of Sierra Leone. It was an agreement freely negotiated by the Sierra Leonean parties themselves... As many members of Sierra Leonean civil society stressed to Secretary Albright a year ago, the people of Sierra Leone were desperate for peace-- even if it meant justice were to be deferred.⁵⁹

Why were the Lome Accords lacking muscle? The key to our institutional agenda setting hypothesis is the lack of international interest outside of Great Britain and the other West African states. The UN did not request U.S. military participation in UNAMSIL. This lack of interest transforms a possible strong Chapter VII mandate into a poorly funded Chapter VI mission. The tragedy requires some sort of international action (felt obligations) but the lack of interest weakens the possible responses.

Key Decision Three: UNAMSIL and Implementing Lome

U.S. efforts to help Sierra Leone did not end with Lome. The Accords called for a beefed up United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone and the transferring of peacekeeping duties from the Nigerian led ECOMOG to UN authority. The U.S. played an integral role in planning, implementing and ultimately ensuring a smooth transition from ECOMOG to UNAMSIL. Here is the key question: Why did the U.S. put the effort into locating, and supplying other foreign troops for a mission with limited American security interests? Hypothesis one suggests that the stability of West Africa was a question of relative gains for the U.S. But if realism is correct then we must find evidence that UNAMSIL promotes or helps offset the costs of American security. Our second hypothesis (institutional agenda setting) predicts that U.S. participation in building UNAMSIL is due to its responsibilities in the UN. A successful mission would not only alleviate suffering but strengthen the institution as a whole. As a member nation the U.S. has an interest in seeing the UN succeed, even in places where it does not always explicitly advance American strategic goals.

Leonard Hawley contends that American policy assumed that ECOMOG and Nigeria would continue to be the key players in the mission through the summer and fall of 1999. "We thought that the Nigerians were going to stay and American policy was built on the premise the U.S. would be contributing something like 20-30 million a year to keep ECOMOG going. I did

not think a UN operation would have the power [outside of ECOMOG] to be able to do this." While the U.S. understood the West African exhaustion, they overestimated its inability to indefinitely continue supplying troops. The ECOWAS countries had hoped Lome meant they could leave. Nigeria faced domestic pressure to bring the troops home. Non American troops had to come from somewhere.

On October 22, 1999, the U.S. voted in favor of UNSC Resolution 1270 that established The United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) under Chapter VI of the UN Charter.⁶⁰ The resolutions called for, "ensuring the security and freedom of movement of UN personnel; monitor adherence to the Lome cease fire agreements; encourage the parties to create and implement confidence building mechanisms; and facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance." The United Nations vowed to periodically review the status of the peace process and security situations so that troop levels could be adjusted as appropriate.⁶¹ But where was the UN going to find the troops necessary for UNAMSIL?

American policy hinged on convincing ECOMOG to stay. A State Department memo to the NSC Deputies Committee stated, "US policy must keep ECOMOG and the Nigerians involved."⁶² In March of 1999, Ambassador A. Peter Berly was quick to thank the ECOMOG troops and in particular, Nigeria which carried a disproportionate share of the burden. He added that, "Now, more than ever, ECOMOG needs our support."⁶³ Nancy Soderberg states, "If ECOMOG left there would be a problem because the UN lacked the resources and means to confront the RUF on its own." UN forces in 1999 were not trained and equipped to fight.⁶⁴

However, the Administration also realized that ECOMOG forces had limited capacities. Without international aid they would be forced to remove their troops. The Nigerians were tiring of a war with no end in sight, spending at least a million dollars a day in Sierra Leone, while at the same time trying to democratize at home.⁶⁵ The new civilian government in Nigeria was afraid that officers were enriching themselves and the soldiers were picking up bad habits in the lawless sections of the Sierra Leone. There was a fear that poor and disgruntled soldiers would wreak havoc and destabilize Nigeria when they returned.⁶⁶

With the signing of the Lome peace accord, Nigeria had quickly announced a phased withdrawal of its estimated 12,000 troops. On December 23, 1999, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan informed the Security Council of the Nigerian need to repatriate its soldiers. Washington was still discussing how to send supplies and equipment to ECOMOG.⁶⁷ The U.S. hoped to convince them to leave some troops behind. The NSC Deputies meetings were clear: "We need to support ECOMOG." In the final UNAMSIL plan, the United States settled on having the UN pay for two Nigerian battalions to temporarily remain in Sierra Leone to bridge the troop gap until a full UNAMSIL deployment of international peacekeepers arrived. Nancy Soderberg put it: "the issue was more whether we could get the Nigerians in there quickly [and to stay]. The U.S. ended up training seven Nigerian Battalions."

Policymakers were convinced that any viable Sierra Leone policy must have a strong ECOMOG presence at its core. The U.S. would concurrently work to increase UN force capabilities from other nations to deal with RUF resistance. The U.S. pledged nine million and asked all current prospective donors to consider making similar contributions to ECOMOG through the UN Trust Fund or bilaterally.⁶⁸ When Susan Rice appeared before the House Committee on International Relations' Subcommittee on Africa she put ECOMOG in the

forefront of American policy: “We are working to increase international support for [them]. Second we are helping regional leaders coordinate their diplomatic efforts to seek a negotiated settlement, as well as actively encouraging a swift and lasting resolution by promoting high level dialogue with all the key players.”⁶⁹

The support for the Nigerians should have come as no surprise. Throughout the 1990s, American policy towards peacekeeping has drifted to support for a regional state approach. This approach was a global response to problems within the UN Department of Peacekeeping and a steep learning curve within the White House over the collapse and confusion of the Bosnian and Somalian UN missions. Those missions were marred by ineffective mandates and inadequate communication between New York and Washington. Clinton’s 1994 intervention in Haiti would become the blueprint for future American humanitarian missions: find a nation with the strongest stake in the crisis and allow them to form a fighting force with UN blessing (but not part of the UN) to do the heavy lifting. Regional states due to the proximity and interest can project their power faster, quicker, with more resolve and theoretically with better results than sending U.S. troops to non-vital areas. In 1999 we saw both the United States intervene in Kosovo, and an Australian force lead the mission in East Timor.

The use of the ECOWAS organization was an example of this regional approach. Sierra Leone directly affected the nations of West Africa. The ECOWAS mission was organized to help foster trade and better relations for the region. It should only be natural that they assembled a group willing to help President Kabbah maintain democracy and fight the RUF. As one State Department official stated: “Having a regional power willing to step up to the plate like Nigeria enabled the U.S. to provide trainers for Nigeria, Ghana, and Senegal and made the mission stronger.”⁷⁰ ECOMOG troops, primarily from Nigeria, but also from Guinea, Mali and Ghana, made substantial contributions to restoring Sierra Leone’s democratic government and forcing the warring factions to the negotiating table. Without them the RUF would have been victorious. American policy revolved around how best to help ECOMOG accomplish their goals of stabilizing the crisis.

Replacing ECOMOG proved to be difficult. The UN was afraid of not meeting its manpower goals for UNAMSIL. The Resolution had anticipated many of the UNAMSIL troops would roll over from the ECOMOG mission. The UN mission would probably collapse without ECOMOG. Leonard Hawley states: “I do not know where they [the UN] got all the troops [UNAMSIL] from because I tried to get troops to go there to make an initial push [in 1999] and just got ‘slam dunked’ by the rest of the world.” Hawley contends that the international community was hesitant to go because European troops were deployed to other missions, like Eritrea and Ethiopia. The other concern was costs. Often U.S. policymakers heard that potential donor nations did not have the money to participate. No one was going to Sierra Leone. Hawley states, “It would take a tremendous effort to get India, Bangladesh and some others to go.” The U.S. ended up playing an aggressive role in helping the UN raise the necessary troops.

The UN decided to address troop concerns with expanding the UNAMSIL mandate. The White House notified Congress: “Now that ECOMOG has decided to repatriate its troops, an expansion of UNAMSIL is considered vital in order to keep the peace process in Sierra Leone on track.”⁷¹ Leonard Hawley contends “the warning flags went up all over the place” [when Nigeria decided to withdraw most of its troops] and American policymakers had to ask, ‘what

are we going to do?" The U.S. "vigorously worked to get the Jordanians and the Indians and a few other people who could carry a rifle." Through American efforts UNAMSIL reached its greatest strength of 17,368 troops in March of 2002. The U.S. provided the logistical support and eventually helped deploy troops from Bangladesh, Bolivia, China, Croatia, Egypt, Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Guinea, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Malawi, Malaysia, Nepal, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Sweden, Tanzania, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Uruguay and Zambia.⁷² By 2000, it had become one of the largest UN peacekeeping missions in the world. India was chosen as the lead nation for UNAMSIL. One State Department official noted that India performed well during the mission. He added: "The troops were fantastic. When I visited [India] I made sure to tell the deputy foreign minister they were outstanding."⁷³

In early December, the Clinton Administration told the Senate: "The peace process was at a crucial moment: We will work closely with the UN."⁷⁴ Washington was still afraid of a weak, disorganized UN force. One of the key failures of Somalia was the question of mission creep in a failing state. Mandates needed to have clear goals. Feeding the Somali people was one mandate, but ending the civil war (that caused the famine) was another. Disarming the RUF, for example, should not resemble disarming the warlords in Somalia. Now Sierra Leone is not Somalia, President Kabbah enjoyed far greater legitimacy than the warlords. But what should be pointed out is how quickly the 1993 UN disarmament mission evolved and outpaced the mandate that had been formulated. UNAMSIL faced the same troubling issues: if disarmament failed, mission creep would set in and the UN would be under fire.⁷⁵

US policymakers were not blind to this reality but felt they had an obligation to "ensure a smooth transition of peacekeeping responsibilities from ECOMOG to UNAMSIL."⁷⁶ There remained questions about whether the mission had adequate forces, funding, and an appropriate mandate as well as whether the proposed UN troops from donor nations were properly trained and equipped to adequately carry out the peacekeeping tasks at hand. But complete inaction was seen as unacceptable.

Why did the U.S. put the effort into locating, and supplying other foreign troops? This question becomes relevant in light of the fact that a RUF victory would not substantially change our interests in the region. The U.S. could have easily let the Lome Accords die a natural death and retrench its West African policies elsewhere. After all, President Clinton left strategically important Somalia. The dominoes theory of West African stability stumbles on the reality of ECOMOG's situation in late 1999. The West African nations no longer thought of Sierra Leone as a strategic linchpin. They were more than happy to pass the baton of peacekeeping. In fact, some Nigerians felt that the ECOMOG mission was actually undermining Nigeria. U.S. policy was to "keep ECOMOG and the Nigerians involved." However, from a realist viewpoint that is an ironic statement: to ostensibly protect Nigerian security by stopping the Nigerians from leaving. The empirical evidence also suggests that stability was no longer a policy motivator. We find less discussion of stability in the internal documents. When it comes to understanding policies actually chosen realism as an explanatory theory seems to fail.

Overall the institutional agenda setting model is a better fit for decision three. Policymakers felt that UNAMSIL was the only viable international solution considering the lack of domestic and international will. The Clinton White House felt an obligation, not a strategic imperative, to

ensure a smooth transition between ECOMOG and UNAMSIL. These obligations stem from the commitments of institutional membership. U.S. support for a limited mission could hopefully accomplish several goals: to end the suffering, and, just as importantly, to strengthen UN peacekeeping in Africa. Would the U.S. have been sucked into Sierra Leone if UNAMSIL failed? There was never a substantive internal dialogue about sending troops. The answer is no. The UN, not the U.S. had to do something. Policymakers understood Sierra Leone as a UN problem.

Key Decision Four: Saving UNAMSIL

In decision four, American policymakers had to decide whether to save the UNAMSIL mission in the spring of 2000 or possibly pull the plug in fear of mission failure. The Lome Accords looked like they were about to collapse. The RUF were on the verge of re-starting the civil war. There were serious questions whether the UNAMSIL mission could shift to a peace enforcement mandate. What do our hypotheses predict for American action? Realism (hypothesis one) must be able to explain how propping up the UNAMSIL mission in the wake of failure advances American goals. One of the key things to look for is whether UN and U.S. legitimacy become conflated. Does the U.S. look weak if the UN leaves? In institutional agenda setting (hypothesis two) one prediction is clear: U.S. policymakers are concerned with protecting UN legitimacy.

One of the driving questions in Washington about the future of peacekeeping concerned the “blue vs. green helmets.” It was only after ECOMOG exhaustion that the United States reluctantly committed itself to the blue helmets: men from Jordan, Kenya, Zambia and India to name a few of the donor nations. However, there was a real fear that these troops were not tough enough to handle the possibility of RUF intransigence. As UNAMSIL proceeded with the disarming of combatants under Lome, there were a series of challenges to its authority in the spring of 2000.

The RUF were probing and searching for international weakness. First, they stopped UN convoys, and seized weapons in areas they controlled. These actions led to a chain of events that put the UN mission in a disaster mode reminiscent of Somalia. Leonard Hawley elaborates that some of the problems stemmed from how the UN was deployed on the ground. To disarm you have to spread yourself out, “like a spider. You have to send people out and collect them and bring them into central areas for disarmament and demobilization.” The RUF took advantage of the UN posture on May 2 - 3 and attacked. Fighting resulted in the deaths of four Kenyan peacekeepers and in ensuing confrontations the RUF detained over 500 UN personnel. UNAMSIL was in disarray: Lome seemed dead, disarmament was only half complete, and the rebels were still firmly entrenched in the key diamond-mining areas. The White House placed “the highest priority on stabilizing a secure situation and gaining the release of the detainees.”⁷⁷ The Security Council issued two statements in May condemning the seizure of peacekeepers, and calling for their release. In response, the UN wanted to expand the UNAMSIL mandate to handle the situation and the U.S. agreed.

RUF leader Foday Sankoh rejected the UN charges that his men were to blame for the clashes. In an interview with CNN, Sankoh stated that the UN made “a small mistake. They tried to disarm these [the RUF] men forcefully.” UN spokesman Philip Winslow however felt

differently: "Their [peacekeepers] detention is unlawful." Winslow went on to note that the general amnesty included in the Lome peace accord would not extend to crimes committed after the deal was signed. Sankoh responded to growing world condemnation: "The people who have done this will be held accountable for their actions." He demanded his rebels release any hostages, but added, "The situation... was not from our side." And more cryptically: "The U.N. peacekeepers are not detained, but are missing because they don't know the terrain."⁷⁸ One State Department official understood (but did not condone) Sankoh's actions, "The UN pushed the RUF, a little bit too hard, too fast if anybody can say that, at least from the RUF point of view."⁷⁹ UNAMSIL nations started to augment their troop contingents.

So how did the Clinton Administration respond to this crisis? One gets a sense of the problems the White House faced in a range of Defense Department memos to the Executive Branch from May 5 to May 11.⁸⁰ The Administration supported putting more teeth into the UN mission. But they remained leery of mission failure. The Lome Accords were going to remain the only policy option. The Administration notified Congress: "[of a] resolution in the UN Security Council that will increase the authorized force level ... for force protection purposes... We are going to make a substantial investment in efforts to return peace and stability to Sierra Leone and to the West African sub-region..."⁸¹ In their briefings before the Senate and House staff on May 16, Leonard Hawley and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Howard Jeter discussed: "this is a very difficult security challenge and the U.S. is considering a wide range of policy options for subsequent steps in Sierra Leone."⁸²

One of the best options was the entry of a muscular United Kingdom commitment into the conflict. The U.K. had a natural interest in Sierra Leone, a Commonwealth Nation and former British colony. With American logistical help, the British put the men on the ground and trained a professional Sierra Leonean army. The NSC wanted to support the U.K. intervention "as much as they could."⁸³ According to one participant to the Deputy NSC policy meetings:

On Sierra Leone there were plenty of internal discussions. I think there was broad acceptance that we wanted to support the British in their efforts. Where the difference started was on the question of how to support the British? Did that mean money, did that mean technical support, did that mean lift, and did that mean U.S. ships floating off the coast so the British could point at a U.S. ship and tell everyone on the ground, see that's the U.S.?⁸⁴

While British forces were small they played an instrumental role in a post- ECOMOG UNAMSIL. In May 2000, British paratroopers were sent to evacuate British citizens and secure the airport for the UN. In July, they participated alongside the Indians, Ghanaians and Nigerians in rescuing Indian peacekeepers that were under siege by the RUF. British forces mounted other military operations to rescue U.K. hostages. Leonard Hawley claims the British response should not be underestimated: "The RUF made the mistake of capturing some British troops. The British freed the hostages with minimal loss of life. The British also conducted other military operations against the RUF. The RUF started seeing the message that the UN operation was here to stay."

The RUF military resolve collapsed further with the capture of Sankoh by Sierra Leonean government troops in May 2000. Sankoh was arrested and imprisoned after his bodyguards' sprayed bullets at unarmed demonstrators.⁸⁵ The arrest of the RUF founder Sankoh was a blow to the loosely knit rebel group. What little legitimacy the RUF enjoyed came through him.

According to official UNAMSIL documents the RUF resistance in the spring and summer 2000 evaporated: “the international community put pressure on the rebels to obey the ceasefire and slapped sanctions against RUF sponsors. Subsequently, UNAMSIL launched new mediation efforts and brought the two adversaries back to the negotiation table.”⁸⁶

So much of realism has depended on an understanding of West African regional stability. We still find reference to it in a May 2000 State Department letter to Congress: “[The mission was designed] to return peace and stability to Sierra Leone and to the West African sub-region...”⁸⁷ But is this rhetoric for domestic consumption? Possibly, there is only a limited ECOMOG presence and one cannot realistically present a dominoes falling across Africa scenario. In its place stood India and other nations with limited or little stake in this particular African civil war. Can realism shed light on American actions at the UN?

Three possible realist explanations come to mind. First, realists are not opposed to multilateral institutions as long as they serve the interests of the state. Second, that Sierra Leonean policy was now about helping the United Kingdom. As one policymaker stated: policy became how best to help the British. The U.K. angle provides an interesting story to our understanding of limited interventions. In both of these scenarios West Africa represents a long term (or secondary) threat to American interests. The U.S. was more than happy to help others do the heavy lifting of peacekeeping to achieve its goals. If Nigeria was gone the U.S. could support another nation to take its place. We find limited evidence for this possibility, more so in interviews than in the primary documents. It can also explain why the U.S. kept up its commitments to saving Lome.

Another realist possibility is that letting the RUF win might do damage to American, British, or Nigerian reputations. The U.S., in this scenario had to prop up the UN mission because of the sunk costs of prestige. The U.S. worked hard to forge the Lome Accords and to keep the Nigerians. Letting the RUF win would send a message to other rebel group in Africa that the U.S. was not a serious negotiator. This concept of “reputation” remains a hard concept to empirically define, but neo-classical realists realize that it impacts perceptions of power.⁸⁸ However, one must ask: whose reputation? Ultimately the U.S. did not commit its reputation on Lome or reigning in the RUF. Internal documents and interviews also do not bear this argument out. However, the reputation that was at stake was the UN and the challenge of peacekeeping in nations with little strategic importance.

Our institutional liberal hypothesis presents a stronger explanation to American actions in Sierra Leone than realism. First, U.S. actions were designed to protect the credibility of the UN. Second, the final major decision sheds some light on the feedback loop between global institutions and states.

What is clear is that American credibility was never at stake. There is plenty of evidence that UN credibility was on the minds of U.S. policymakers. We have previously noted Schwartz’s statement that credibility in UN peacekeeping was at stake. Richard Holbrooke speaking in front of the General Assembly declared: “The crisis in peacekeeping was most apparent last May [200⁰] when Sierra Leone served as an exclamation point for the overall crisis in peacekeeping.”⁸⁹ The official UNAMSIL webpage discusses the impact of the kidnapped peacekeepers: “endangered the credibility of UN peacekeeping.” Kofi Annan admitted that RUF actions represented a challenge to UN credibility.⁹⁰

American policymakers saw support for UNAMSIL as support for international organizations. A sampling of the international press conducted by Global Security.org shows how the world understood Sierra Leone as a UN mission. The People's Daily in China argued: The tragedy is also tarnishing the image and affecting the credibility of the United Nations." The London Financial Times, stated "...is likely to prove a seminal event for the UN." The Toronto Star reported: "has become an urgent test of United Nations resolve..."⁹¹

Secondly, Sierra Leone also hints at the feedback loop present in institutional agenda setting. The UN is not static and issues can move to the forefront of the international agenda or move down. In May 2000, Sierra Leone faced a crucial moment. The mission seemed to be on the verge of defeat. One could speculate that if there had been a lack of will in New York, the blue helmets would have left and it would have moved down the list of international priorities. However, this did not happen. British Ambassador to the UN, Jeremy Greenstock hints at the importance of international consensus: "I think it shows that when a UN peacekeeping operation has the right mandate, [and it] has to do something, and has the will to do something, it can do it."⁹² As Leonard Hawley contends the UN operation was here to stay.

This new found strength in UNAMSIL can partly be credited to British resolve and continued American support. Both had an interest in protecting the UN and ending the suffering. This mutual understanding between allies smoothed the wheels of bureaucracy at UN headquarters. When the British became actively involved, it strengthened the "positive" feedback loop to the UN and UNAMSIL remained globally important. The U.S. and U.K. worked together to write mandates, and marshal financial and military resources for the mission. The UN provided the framework in which the U.S. and U.K. could communicate. It is doubtful that without the UN either one of these nations would have solved the collective action problem of ending the civil war.

THEORETICAL DISCUSSION FOR SIERRA LEONEAN DECISION MAKING

Neoclassical Realism

In each of these four major decisions, we presented evidence that policymakers considered power (defined by regional stability) in West Africa and especially in relation to Nigeria. Joseph Grieco points out that realists are not opposed to cooperation within international institutions as long as they protect national interests.⁹³ Types of intervention are then chosen by levels of interest. The U.S. could engage multilateral organizations to achieve U.S. goals in secondary and tertiary interests. Policymakers use the UN to lower the costs of unilateral action. This realism argument fits into a broader understanding of American policy towards Africa in the post cold war. According to James Jude Hentz, Clinton's African policy concentrated on identifying and supporting key pivotal states or "big emerging markets."⁹⁴ Nigeria is a pivotal state both militarily and economically. Sierra Leone and Liberia are not American security interests in their own right, but these conflicts could eventually undermine Nigeria.

How does realism explain the type of mission chosen? Neoclassical realism struggles with the question of limited intervention. Realists would argue that flawed policies stem from incomplete information that is distorted by domestic institutions and psychology. But it is hard to argue that decision makers had distorted information about RUF intentions. Realism struggles to explain why Lome and UNAMSIL were chosen as the vehicles to protect West African stability. If stability were truly riding on the success of the Lome Accords it should have been a stronger agreement.

Realism: Perception and Identity the Slippery Slope of Interest

Furthermore, the discussion of what is a strategic interest leads to methodological problems. The neo-classical research agenda ends up discussing policymaker's perception of power and not power itself. This sleight of hand may open up analysis of foreign policy but removes the parsimony of realism and moves the discussion towards identity construction (and constructivism). Measuring power is different than measuring peoples perceptions of power. Jeffrey Legro and Andrew Moravcsik critique realism: "if exogenous shifts in relative power, domestic preferences, and perceptions and information problems can all influence state behavior, what remains theoretically distinct about realism?"⁹⁵ West Africa becomes a challenging case about defining a clear strategic objective beyond vague notions of stability. Nigeria is important to American thinking and that is clear. But it is hard to fathom how American policymakers determined Sierra Leone was more important to Nigeria than the Nigerians. Secondly, all American policymakers talk in interest. Rwandan inaction was framed as a lack of strategic interest. President Clinton was careful to couch his foreign policy in the language of national security. Was this rhetoric merely for domestic consumption?

Ultimately, realism is an indeterminate theory to explain humanitarian intervention and peacekeeping. There are global threats to national security which realism can illuminate, but complex human emergencies and peacekeeping pose a problem. Many cases revolve around the dominoes falling in the future. But every crisis can be painted as a long term threat to national security. Famines, droughts, and diseases can lead to long term state failure that could threaten American interests. For example, in 2001 it was revealed that the RUF were connected to both Al Qaeda and Hezbollah.⁹⁶ But the further we project into the future, the further we leave realism and the harder it is to define a threat. So even though we can make an argument that the U.S. used the UN to achieve its strategic goals on the cheap in West Africa. It is just as easier to say that the UN had an influence on the shaping of these policies.

Another Realist Cut: Explaining Nigerian Policy

This article has highlighted the weakness of neoclassical realism in understanding Great Power peacekeeping on the periphery. However, as we noted earlier, realism struggles to understand Africa and the third world in general. John F. Clark states that while the end of the Cold War has brought peace to the northern hemisphere interstate war in Africa has been on the rise.⁹⁷ Realism has been eerily silent in predicting or explaining this phenomenon. According to Hentz, American foreign policy makers privilege the Westphalian model of the

homogenous state.⁹⁸ However, African states do not resemble the Westphalian ideal of homogeneity: they are heterogeneous with little traditional measures of economic and military power.

But African leaders understand the rules of Westphalian sovereignty and become willing patrons to superpower politics.⁹⁹ This participation was not a desire to advance the larger ideological or material goals of the hegemonic powers but to generate the necessary revenue streams to pursue regime consolidation. The power imperative of an African leader is to seek security from both external and internal threats: military coups, insurgencies, ethnic unrest and foreign intervention. Clark states, "Such a conception of the behavior of African rulers applies to both their domestic and their external behavior, obviating the need for any artificial division of domestic and 'international' politics."¹⁰⁰ Was Nigerian policy in Sierra Leone realist? By removing the structural underpinnings of balance of power and national interest, African autonomy emerges from the shadows of Great Power politics. In Africa, all politics is local.

Thus Nigerian policies in Sierra Leone were being pursued for rational but albeit different reasons than the balance of power in West Africa. Nigerian involvement may have been tied to the survival of General Sani Abacha's government. Sakah Mahmud points out that Nigeria was under international sanctions for canceling the results of the June 1993 elections.¹⁰¹ The sanctions were meant to compel a return to democracy by crippling the economic capacity of the military regime. However, Abacha was not only able to survive the sanctions but seemed to grow stronger in the face of them. Mahmud posits two ways Abacha was able to overcome being an international pariah and maintain his control. First, was the use of rhetoric to frame the sanctions regime as bad for Africans not just him. He centered the discussion around the complexity of imperialism, colonialism and the North-South struggle. Secondly, and more importantly, Mahmud suggests that Abacha went about becoming a West African leader. Nigeria aggressively pushed for ECOWAS involvement in regional conflicts (Abacha was organization's the Chair).

By the late 1990s, the General was able to reinvent himself as a statesman. This move allowed him to shift the global discussion from thwarting democracy inside Nigeria to one of protecting democracy in West Africa. His actions in Sierra Leone to end the civil war seemed noble compared to western foot dragging. Mahmud claims that Abacha effectively accomplished a diplomatic coup that forced the U.S. and U.K. to back off the sanctions for a policy of accommodation with the military government: "Nigeria's regional efforts and role [in Sierra Leone] accepted by other Africans enabled the country to avoid international isolation."¹⁰² Nigerian policy was quite possibly a ploy to maintain Abacha's legitimacy within his own country and not rooted in power politics; or necessarily a humanitarian desire to end the suffering. By opening up the black box of structural realism, we have a better picture of Nigerian interests in ECOMOG.

Institutional Agenda Setting

A more fruitful look at Sierra Leonean policy was provided by the institutional agenda setting hypothesis. Both constructivists and liberal institutionalism contend that institutions can shape state preference. Keohane and Nye suggest that institutions can alter the way

policymakers can see cause and effect: “The principles and norms of regimes may be internalized by important groups and thus become part of the belief systems which filter information.”¹⁰³ The UN as the proper vehicle for multilateral peacekeeping in areas of non-strategic importance has been ingrained in American policymakers for quite some time. The Presidential Decision Directive states: “Does UN involvement advance U.S. interests, and is there an international community of interest in dealing with the problem on a multilateral basis?” After the Cold War, these policymakers had the chance to implement these norms.

Nancy Soderberg stated: “Sierra Leone does not become an issue on [the American agenda]... the UN is part of the NSC agenda.” American policymakers wanted the mission to succeed for the Sierra Leonean people and to strengthen UN legitimacy. We have seen various policymakers (Holbrooke, and Schwartz) contend the UN could not sustain another failed mission in peacekeeping. UNAMSIL had to succeed. The norms of membership subtly pressure the U.S. to work within the UN for some kind of solution. But how did American policymakers arrive at the type of limited intervention for Sierra Leone? The shape, size and scope of the UNAMSIL reflect the lack of international support. Instead of a well-funded muscular Chapter VII mandate it was watered down to a fiscally strapped Chapter VI (peace-keeping) mission.

Alternative Liberal Hypotheses: Ideas not Institutions

Overall, this article presents institutional agenda setting as a more powerful explanation of American policy. But there is an alternative story for liberalism – ideals instead of institutions. The core tenets of Wilsonian idealism center on the promotion of democracy and human rights as an American interest. Wilsonian policymakers are committed to working with multilateral organizations to find peace. President Clinton intervened in Sierra Leone to promote these ideals because he was already predisposed to working with the UN. It is difficult to assess in what directions the causal arrows point. When it comes to the relationship between the U.S. and the UN who influences whom?

But Wilsonian liberalism also struggles with the concept of limited intervention and in the end it is indeterminate as well. If liberal values truly motivated the President then why did the U.S. do so little (Where realism might ask why they did so much)? Clinton was attacked for doing too much in foreign policy. The White House was criticized for setting up costly utopian policies that drained the American coffers while weakening our credibility abroad. Michael Mandelbaum chastised President Clinton for conducting foreign policy like misguided social work.¹⁰⁴ Somalia became the case in point of promoting multilateral operations at the expense of hard American interests.¹⁰⁵ But ironically Clinton was also attacked for doing too little: Senator Judd Gregg of New Hampshire was angered about how U.S. policy was favoring the RUF at the expense of innocent lives. Ryan Lizza of the *New Republic* wrote: “Sierra Leone: The Last Clinton Betrayal.” Belief in Wilsonian liberalism becomes hard to measure. Eric Schwartz addresses the general criticism of the Administration’s peacekeeping record: “For people on the outside to make these [critical] post-op judgments it is very easy, they don’t have the responsibility of power, they don’t have the responsibility of office and they write with limited appreciation of how those constraints work.”

However, the problem of causal arrows brings up a more substantive methodological flaw with institutional agenda setting and constructivism: where do norms originate? Hikaru Hayashi critiques constructivism on this very set of questions: "What is the exact mechanism of the norms to change? In addition, lack of testing on large samples and lack of rigorous formal modeling weaken the constructivists' approach."¹⁰⁶ These are relevant questions to ponder and explore in the continuing dialogue of methodology. But when it comes to the question of explaining peacekeeping every approach has methodological problems. We have already discussed that even the definition of 'interest' is open to debate. Realism is no closer to understanding the phenomena of humanitarianism.

Conclusions

This article hopefully adds to the literature of the Sierra Leonean crisis. The record will show that the conflict came to a peaceful end. It took a strengthened UN peacekeeping mission, West African military help, and key American and British financial aid to end the conflict. UNAMSIL completed its mission: overall it cost 2.8 billion dollars and 192 UN personnel were killed in their peacekeeping duties. However, by early 2002, the UN could boast having disarmed and demobilized more than 75,000 ex-fighters. It also helped return hundreds of thousands of displaced refugees and set up a truth and reconciliation commission.¹⁰⁷ ECOWAS and the African Union joined UNAMSIL and the Sierra Leonean government in holding its first free and peaceful elections in many years. The Revolutionary United Front Party struggled. In 2002, the party won 2.2 % of popular votes and did not win any seats in the Sierra Leonean legislature.¹⁰⁸ According to UNAMSIL, the May 2002 presidential and parliamentary elections and the subsequent local government elections in 2004 "marked important milestones... Since then, the UN peacekeeping mission has worked alongside the new government to establish its authority throughout the country."¹⁰⁹ Though UNAMSIL struggled at times, it successfully left Sierra Leone in December 31, 2005 with its mission accomplished.

So let us return to the original question: why did the U.S. become involved in Sierra Leone? Why did the U.S. choose to pursue a path of limited intervention? There were no real strategic interests that demanded immediate military action. Eric Schwartz provides his analysis of American policy:

I think the post-op analysis of Lome has to be looked at with a great deal of scrutiny because if you are the Assistant Secretary of State for African affairs and you are dealing with a conflict that is clearly of secondary importance to decision makers and in a world with competing resources, you are just not able to muster the interest and attention for this issue that addressing it would require and people are at risk of having their hands, legs and arms chopped off with the international community basically standing by and those are the cards that you are dealt. You are then offered the prospect of supporting an agreement between the protagonists and antagonists that offered some prospect of ending the conflict. What is the moral course to take? You could stand on your high horse and oppose it and then be unable to garner the resources that would be necessary to promote an alternative vision, where you try to work as best you can to get to a settlement and I think that was the choice that faced U.S. officials in many respects in the context of Lome. I'm saying is this was a far closer issue than

some of the post-op analysis seems to suggest. [Did] U.S. diplomats... desire to see the RUF take over Sierra Leone? No, they were motivated by a desire to bring peace.

However, a more theoretical understanding can be found by bringing institutions back into the constructivist argument. We can show how 'institutional identity' influences and shapes state preferences, not only in decisions to intervene but in shaping the size and scope of the UNAMSIL mission. As Schwartz points out, Sierra Leone is of secondary importance and a multilateral response was the best possible forum to stop the suffering. When there is a general lack of enthusiasm in the international community limited intervention is the policy outcome.

There are limitations to examining institutional agenda setting with one case during one presidential administration. But it is the hope that a deep and rich analysis of American policymaking in Sierra Leone can provide a jumping off point for future research in both limited interventions and the role of institutions in humanitarian crises. Would these findings hold true for President George W. Bush? Could institutional agenda setting explain global muddling in the Darfur crisis?

Notes:

1. Nancy Soderberg, Interview by email, e-mail correspondence, July 15, 2002
2. Mark J. Mullenbach, "Deciding to Keep Peace: An Analysis of International Influences on the Establishment of Third-Party Peacekeeping Missions." *International Studies Quarterly* 49, no. 3, (2005): pp. 529-556.
3. See Daalder Ivo. *Getting to Dayton: The Making of America's Bosnia Policy*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 2000. and O'Hanlon, Michael and Ivo Daalder. *Winning Ugly*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 2001.
4. See Menkhaus, Ken and Louis Ortmayer. *Key Decisions in the Somalia Intervention: Case #464*. Washington D.C.: Georgetown Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, 1995.
5. See Power, Samantha. *A Problem from Hell: American and the Age of Genocide*. New York: Basic Books, 2002; Gourevitch Phillip. *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families: Stories from Rwanda*. New York: Picador, 1998.
6. Waltz, Kenneth N. "International Politics Is Not Foreign Policy," *Security Studies* 6, autumn, 1996: pp. 54-55. Also Waltz, Kenneth N. *Theory of International Politics*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1979: pp. 71-72.
7. Both schools of thought hold true to the realist conception of anarchy and structure. However, they differ on what signals the system sends to states. For offensive realists security is scarce and states try to achieve it by maximizing their relative advantage. For defensive realists the system is not as hostile. States are defensive in nature, they seek to balance against potential threats and only respond to external threats. For more see Mearsheimer, John. "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War," in Brown, Michael E. et al., ed. *The Perils of Anarchy: Contemporary Realism and International Security*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995.
8. Clark, John F. "Realism, Neo-Realism and Africa's International relations in the Post Cold War Era." In *Africa's Challenge to International Relations Theory*, ed. Kevin C.

- Dunn and Timothy M. Shaw (New York: Palgrave, 2001) p. 86. But also see Ayoob, Mohammed. "Subaltern Realism: International Relation Theory Meets the Third World" in Stephanie G. Neuman (ed.), *International Relations Theory and the Third World*. New York: St. Martins Press.
9. Clark, John F. "Realism, Neo-Realism and Africa's International relations in the Post Cold War Era." p. 91
 10. See Sakah Mahmud, "Controlling African States' Behavior: International Relations Theory and International Sanctions Against Libya and Nigeria." In *Africa's Challenge to International Relations Theory*, ed. Kevin C. Dunn and Timothy M. Shaw (New York: Palgrave, 2001); and Assis Malaquias "Reformulating International Relations Theory: African Insights and Challenges." In *Africa's Challenge to International Relations Theory*, ed. Kevin C. Dunn and Timothy M. Shaw (New York: Palgrave, 2001).
 11. For more of the neoclassical school see Brown, Michael E. et al., ed. *The Perils of Anarchy: Contemporary Realism and International Security*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995; Schweller, Randall L. *Deadly Imbalances: Tripolarity and Hitler's Strategy of World Conquest*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998; and Wohlforth, William. *The Elusive Balance: Power and Perceptions during the Cold War*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1993.
 12. Rose Gideon. "Neoclassical realism and theories of foreign policy" *World Politics* 51, no. 1, (1998): pp. 144-172.
 13. Finnemore, Martha. *The Purpose of Intervention: Changing Beliefs About the Use of Force*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell, 2003.
 14. Finnemore, Martha. *National Interests in International Society*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996: p. 29.
 15. Finnemore, Martha and Kathryn Sikkink, "International Norm Dynamics and Political Change," *International Organization* 52, no. 4: p. 160.
 16. See Keohane, Robert O. and Lisa L. Martin. "The Promise of Institutional Theory", *International Security* 20, no. 1, (1995): pp. 39-51; and Rittberger Volker, (ed.) *Regime Theory and International Relations*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995.
 17. Drezner Daniel, "Regime Proliferation and World Politics: Is there Viscosity in Global Governance?" Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Philadelphia, PA, September 2006.
 18. Keohane Robert O. and Joseph S. Nye, *Power and Interdependence*, Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman, 1989: p. 259.
 19. Folker, Jennifer Sterling. "Competing Paradigms or Birds of a Feather? Constructivism and Neo-liberal Institutionalism Compared," *International Studies Quarterly* 44, no. 1, (2000): p. 111.
 20. Keohane and Nye (1989): p. 266.
 21. *Ibid*, p. 55. Also see Keohane, Robert O. *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, p. 102.
 22. For learning see: Krasner, Stephen ed. *International Regimes*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983.

23. Wheeler, Nicholas J. *Saving Stranger: Humanitarian Intervention in International Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 109.
24. Hawley, Caroline, "A Country Torn by Conflict," BBC Online, January 12, 1999, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/special_report/1999/01/99/sierra_leone/251377.stm> (Accessed March 25, 2004).
25. Ibrahim Abdullah and Patrick Muana, "The Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone," in *African Guerrillas*, Christopher Clapham, ed. (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1998): pp. 172-193.
26. Lizza, Ryan. "Sierra Leone: The Last Clinton Betrayal, Where Angels Fear to Tread," *The New Republic*, 24 July 2000.
27. UN Resolution 1132 authorized an international embargo on oil and arms. See United Nations Security Council Resolution 1132, UN Doc. S/RES/1132, October 8, 1997.
28. U.S. Department of State, Round the World Briefing for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, January 29, 1999 in documents collected for the United States General Accounting Office. Report to Congressional Requesters: UN Peacekeeping- Executive Branch Consultation With Congress Did Not Fully Meet Expectations in 1999-2000. GAO-01-917. Washington, D.C.: GAO, September 2001.
29. U.S. Department of State, Round the World Briefing for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, February 5, 1999 in documents collected for the General Accounting Office, UN Peacekeeping- Executive Branch Consultation
30. The State Department also made it clear that the Nigerians must be kept involved as a bridge until a comprehensive peace settlement was worked out and a larger and more robust UN force could be installed.
31. U.S. Department of State, Discussion Paper for NSC Peacekeeping Core Group, March 1, 1999 in documents collected for the General Accounting Office, UN Peacekeeping- Executive Branch Consultation.
32. Lizza, "Where Angels Fear To Tread."
33. PDD-25 Analysis, July 16, 1999. In documents collected for the General Accounting Office, UN Peacekeeping- Executive Branch Consultation.
34. Robert C. Orr, Interview by Author, tape recording.
35. Ibid.
36. Nancy Soderberg, Interview by email, e-mail correspondence, July 15, 2002.
37. Eric Schwartz, Interview by author, tape recording, May 27, 2002.
38. Michelle Seif, "The Lome Peace Accords: The View from Washington," *Crimes of War Project*, February 2001, <<http://www.crimesofwar.org/archive/archive-lomepeace.html>> (Accessed March 25, 2004).
39. United Nations Peace Agreement signed in Lome, UN Doc. S/1999/777.
40. Accordingly, they decided to support an extension of the UNOMSIL mandate when it came up for a vote in the Security Council.
41. U.S. Department of State, Round the World Briefing for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, May 7, 1999, in documents collected for the General Accounting Office, UN Peacekeeping- Executive Branch Consultation.

42. U.S. Department of State, Round the World Briefing for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, June 11, 1999, in documents collected for the General Accounting Office, UN Peacekeeping- Executive Branch Consultation.
43. Also there were unsure of a general amnesty. U.S. Department of State, Round the World Briefing for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, July 16, 1999, in documents collected for the General Accounting Office, UN Peacekeeping- Executive Branch Consultation.
44. U.S. Department of State, PDD-25 Analysis: Expanded UNOMSIL Mission in Sierra Leone [DRAFT], July 16, 1999, in documents collected for the General Accounting Office, UN Peacekeeping- Executive Branch Consultation.
45. Leonard Hawley, interview by author, tape recording, May 28, 2002.
46. James Schear, interview by author, tape recording, May 15, 2002.
47. U.S. Department of State, Info Memo for NSC Peacekeeping Core Group, June 7, 1999, in documents collected for the General Accounting Office, UN Peacekeeping- Executive Branch Consultation.
48. U.S. Department of State, PDD-25 Analysis for NSC Deputies Committee, September 30, 1999, in documents collected for the General Accounting Office, UN Peacekeeping- Executive Branch Consultation.
49. U.S. Department of Defense, Decision memo to NSC Peacekeeping Core Group, October 1, 1999; and U.S. Department of Defense, Decision Memo to NSC Peacekeeping Core Group, October 18, 1999, in documents collected for the General Accounting Office, UN Peacekeeping- Executive Branch Consultation.
50. PDD-25 Analysis, July 16, 1999.
51. U.S. Department of State, Notification Letter for Senate Foreign Relations Committee, August 5, 1999, in documents collected for the General Accounting Office, UN Peacekeeping- Executive Branch Consultation.
52. The letter went on to state that the US had a national interest in supporting the democratically-elected government of Sierra Leone, stabilizing the troubled West African sub-region and alleviating Sierra Leone's immense suffering while encouraging ECOMOG's continued efforts in regional peacekeeping and peace enforcement. See U.S. Department of Defense, Decision Memo for NSC Peacekeeping Core Group, October 13, 1999; and U.S. Department of State, Memo to NSC Peacekeeping Core Group, October 14, 1999 in documents collected for the General Accounting Office, UN Peacekeeping- Executive Branch Consultation.
53. U.S. Department of State, Round the World Briefing for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, October 18, 1999, in documents collected for the General Accounting Office, UN Peacekeeping- Executive Branch Consultation.
54. U.S. Department of State, Round the World Briefing for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, December 3, 1999, in documents collected for the General Accounting Office, UN Peacekeeping- Executive Branch Consultation.
55. The Deputies Committee of the National Security Council is comprised of the undersecretaries to the primaries and other ad hoc actors.

56. U.S. Department of State, Notification Letter for Senate Foreign Relations Committee, October 8, 1999, in documents collected for the General Accounting Office, UN Peacekeeping- Executive Branch Consultation.
57. U.S. Department of State, Notification Letter for Senate Foreign Relations Committee, October 8, 1999
58. See Lizza, "Where Angles Fear to Tread."
59. Ibid, p. 23.
60. United Nations Security Council. Resolution 1270, S/RES/1270. October 22, 1999. Key elements of the mandate: authorize up to 6,000 UN peacekeeping troops, 260 military observers and 6 civilian police. Establish a presence at key locations throughout Sierra Leone and cooperate with the government and the other parties in implementing the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration plans.
61. On February 7, the United States voted in favor of UNSC Resolution 1289 which expanded UNAMSIL further. The expanded UNAMSIL's mandate included providing security to key installations in Freetown, its environs, facilitating the free flow of people, goods and humanitarian assistance along specified roads, safeguarding and disposing of arms collected from ex-combatants, assisting Sierra Leone's law enforcement authorities with the maintenance of law and order. UNAMSIL was not expected to conduct peace enforcement activities and it was hoped that it would provide the neutral peacekeeping force requested in the Lome Agreement. The UN wanted to be clear that the primary responsibility for the mission rested with the people of Sierra Leone. The mission would terminate with conclusion of the constitutionally mandated elections in early 2001.
62. U.S. Department of State, Decision Memo for NSC Deputies Committee, August 24, 1999, in documents collected for the General Accounting Office, UN Peacekeeping- Executive Branch Consultation.
63. U.S. Mission to the UN, Ambassador A. Peter Berly, Charge d'Affairs of the United States to the United Nations, "Statement on explanation of vote on Sierra Leone in the Security Council," Thursday, March 11, 1999.
64. U.S. Department of State, Decision Memo for NSC Deputies Committee, August 24, 1999, in documents collected for the General Accounting Office, UN Peacekeeping- Executive Branch Consultation.
65. BBC News Online Network, World: Africa, "Nigerian troops announce Sierra Leone pullout" <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/481734.stm>> (Accessed January 28, 2007).
66. See McGreal, Chris, "Sierra Leone peace force accused of sabotage," *The Guardian*, 9 September 2000; and Africa Studies Center, University of Pennsylvania, "IRIN Special report on Nigeria and Peacekeeping 19990712," <http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Newsletters/irinw_71299.html> (Accessed November 5, 2006)
67. The memo also reminded the NSC that the UN needed to be clear whether this mission was peacekeeping or peace enforcement. U.S. Department of Defense, Decision Memo to NSC Peacekeeping Core, January 14, 2000, in documents collected for the General Accounting Office, UN Peacekeeping- Executive Branch Consultation.

68. U.S. Department of State, Round the World Briefing for Senate Foreign Relations Committee, March 12, 1999, in documents collected for the General Accounting Office, UN Peacekeeping- Executive Branch Consultation.
69. U.S. Congress, House, International Relations Committee, Subcommittee on Africa, Testimony of Assistant Secretary of State, Susan Rice, "Prospects for Peace in Sierra Leone," March 23, 1999, 106th Cong. 1st Session, (Washington, D.C.: State Department, 1999).
70. Confidential Interview.
71. U.S. Department of State, Notification Letter for Senate Foreign Relations Committee, January 24, 2000, in documents collected for the General Accounting Office, UN Peacekeeping- Executive Branch Consultation.
72. U.S. Department of Defense, Info Memo to NSC Peacekeeping Core Group, March 21, 2000, in documents collected for the General Accounting Office, UN Peacekeeping- Executive Branch Consultation. And The United Nations, Department of Peacekeeping, "Sierra Leone, UNAMSIL Fact and Figures" <<http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/unamsil/facts.html>> (Accessed February 7, 2007).
73. By May 17, UNAMSIL's troops stood at 9,251The UNAMSIL mission was due to reach its full troop strength of 11,100
74. U.S. Department of State, Round the World Briefing for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, December 3, 1999, in documents collected for the General Accounting Office, UN Peacekeeping- Executive Branch Consultation.
75. See Beech, Michael F., 'Mission Creep': A Case Study in U.S. Involvement in Somalia. Fort Lawrence, Kansas: Army Command and General Staff College, May 1996.
76. U.S. Department of State, Notification Letter for Senate Foreign Relations Committee, January 24, 2000, in documents collected for the General Accounting Office, UN Peacekeeping- Executive Branch Consultation.
77. U.S. Department of State, Notification Letter for Senate Foreign Relations Committee, May 18, 2000, in documents collected for the General Accounting Office, UN Peacekeeping- Executive Branch Consultation.
78. CNN, "More U.N. personnel taken hostage in Sierra Leone: Security Council holding closed-door meeting," May 4, 2000, <<http://www.cnn.com/2000/WORLD/africa/05/04/un.sierra.leone/>> (Accessed March 25, 2004).
79. Confidential Interview with State Department Official.
80. Defense wanted the USUN mission to ask the UNDPKO tough questions: Was this the best way to support the West African states and the British? Was the force going to be the UN or a multinational force? Defense once again preferred the green helmet approach. Furthermore, who was going to pay for all this? There were also concerns over Congress, and whether they could support the mission. U.S. Department of Defense, Info Memo for NSC Deputies Committee, May 5, 2000; U.S. Department of Defense, Info Memo for NSC Deputies Committee May 7, 2000; U.S. Department of Defense, Decision Memo for Principals Committee, May 8, 2000. U.S. Department of

- Defense, Info Memo for Deputies Committee, May 11, 2000, in documents collected for the General Accounting Office, UN Peacekeeping- Executive Branch Consultation.
81. U.S. Department of State, Notification Letter for Senate Foreign Relations Committee, May 18, 2000, in documents collected for the General Accounting Office, UN Peacekeeping- Executive Branch Consultation.
 82. Ibid.
 83. U.S. Department of State, Discussion Paper for NSC Peacekeeping Core group, October 14, 1999, in documents collected for the General Accounting Office, UN Peacekeeping- Executive Branch Consultation.
 84. Robert C. Orr, Interview by Author, tape recording.
 85. BBC News, "Sankoh barred from poll." 28 March 2002.
<<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/1899239.stm>> Accessed March 13, 2003.
 86. The United Nations, Department of Peacekeeping, UN Mission in Sierra Leone, "Overview," <<http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/unamsil/Overview.pdf>> (Accessed February 7, 2007).
 87. U.S. Department of State, Notification Letter for Senate Foreign Relations Committee, May 18, 2000, in documents collected for the General Accounting Office, UN Peacekeeping- Executive Branch Consultation.
 88. See Callahan, Patrick. "Realism, Injustice, and War" Review of Justice and the Genesis of War by David A. Welch, in *Mershon International Studies Review* 38, no. 2 (Oct., 1994): pp. 271-273.
 89. U.S. Department of State, Mission to the UN. Ambassador Richard C. Holbrooke, United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations. "Statement in the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly on the UN Peacekeeping Scale of Assessments," October 3, 2000.
 90. The United Nations, Department of Peacekeeping, UN Mission in Sierra Leone, Overview.
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<<http://www.tribuneindia.com/2000/20000510/world.htm#1>> (Accessed January 17, 2007); People's Daily, "UN Peace Efforts in Africa Threatened in Sierra Leone," May 11, 2000 <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/english/200005/11/eng20000511_40600.html> (Accessed January 17, 2007); and Global Security.org, "Africa: Sierra Leone Poses 'Seminal Event' For UN" Peacekeeping,
<<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2000/05/www00m12.htm>> (Accessed January 17, 2006).
 92. CNN.com, World, "Officials praise U.N. action to free Sierra Leone peacekeepers," <<http://archives.cnn.com/2000/WORLD/africa/07/17/leone.peacekeepers.02/index.html>> (Accessed January 17, 2007).
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94. Hentz, James Jude, "Reconceptualizing US Foreign Policy: Regionalism, Economic development and Instability in Southern Africa." In *Africa's Challenge to International Relations Theory*, ed. Kevin C. Dunn and Timothy M. Shaw (New York: Palgrave, 2001): p. 185
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98. Hentz, James Jude, "Reconceptualizing US Foreign Policy: Regionalism, Economic development and Instability in Southern Africa." In *Africa's Challenge to International Relations Theory*, ed. Kevin C. Dunn and Timothy M. Shaw (New York: Palgrave, 2001)
99. Clark, p. 91.
100. Ibid. pp. 94-95.
101. Mahmud, Sakah, "IR Theory and International Sanctions." In *Africa's Challenge to International Relations Theory*, ed. Kevin C. Dunn and Timothy M. Shaw (New York: Palgrave, 2001).
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