Hedging for Oil:

Foreign Energy Investments and Military Intervention Strategies in Civil Wars

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Introduction

In August 1969, the British High Commissioner in Lagos, Nigeria sent an urgent telegram to the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) in London. The civil war between the Nigerian Federal Military Government (FMG) and the secessionist Biafran opposition forces, which began in 1967, now threatened Shell-BP's most important oil installations in Eastern Nigeria, which supplied the United Kingdom with 10% of its domestic oil needs. "The stakes are very high," the telegram warned, "a

successful attack [by the Biafrans] would bring all exports by Shell/BP to a standstill."[1] FMG troops deployed to defend the installations with British anti-aircraft weapons struggled to operate them, and the High Commissioner implored London to reconsider "our existing policy on [military personnel]," suggesting active military involvement in the air war might be required.[2]

Following deliberations, Prime Minister Harold Wilson and the Ministry of Defence (MoD) concluded that deploying troops and thus deviating from existing policy, which restricted British military support to the supply of outdated weapons and equipment, would be unwise.[3] Instead, they suggested FMG General Gowon seek "professional advice" from two visiting Royal Air Force (RAF) officers about how to enhance the prosecution of the air war with existing capabilities. The MoD's careful instructions for the visiting officers included direct orders not to visit Biafran territory or Shell-BP's installations, to fly commercially, to dress inconspicuously, and to limit the duration of the visit. They were to avoid media attention at any cost and, if asked, portray their visit as diplomatic with "no special significance."[4] This convoluted plan would also do little to solve the pressing issue regarding British oil imports from Nigeria.

Conventional wisdom from popular literature,[5] the media,[6] and scholarly work suggests oil importers are more inclined to go "all in," like deploying troops, in foreign

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[1] Telegram no. 1629 from the British High Commission in Lagos to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 6 August 1969. FCO 65/436, folio 139. British National Archives.
[2] FCO 65/436, folio 139.
[3] Prime Minister's Notes (PM/69/59) titled "Military Aid and Assistance for Nigeria," 4 August 1969. FCO 65/436, folio 135. British National Archives.
[4] Telegram no. 1182 from the foreign and Commonwealth Office to the British High Commission in Lagos, 6 August 1969. FCO 65/436, folio 144. British National Archives.
[5] See John Foster, *Oil and World Politics: The Real Story of Today's Conflict Zones: Iraq, Afghanistan, Venezuela, Ukraine and More* (James Lorimer & Company, 2018); Michael Klare, Resource Wars: The New Landscape of Global Conflict (New York: Owl Books, 2002); Michael Klare, Blood and Oil: The Dangers and Consequences of America's Growing Dependency on Imported Petroleum (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2004); Michael Klare, *Rising Powers, Shrinking Planet: The New Geopolitics of Energy* (Henry & Holt Company Inc., 2008); Michael Klare, *The Race for What's Left: The Global Scramble for the World's Last Resources* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2012); Garry Leech, *Crude Interventions: The United States Oil, and the New World (Dis)order* (Zed Books, 2006).
[6] See Antonia Juhasz, "Why the War in Iraq Was Fought for Big Oil," *CNN News,* 15 April 2013, https://www.cnn.com/2013/03/19/opinion/iraq-war-oil-juhasz/index.html.

conflicts when oil supplies are at stake.[7] Yet, despite being the largest importer of Nigerian oil and facing severe domestic shortages during the 1967 Arab oil embargo, the British instead chose to maintain a limited approach of supplying unsophisticated weapons, and outdated equipment, and providing some training strictly outside of Nigeria. By doing so, the British contributed to a protracted war which led to the death of thousands of people while doing little to resume the flow of oil. Meanwhile, other countries without oil interests in Nigeria, like Egypt and Portugal, supplied the FMG with combat pilots for air raids.[8] In its final telegram on the matter, the FCO justified the decision by warning the deployment of troops would constitute a *step down the slippery slope towards direct intervention*, emphasizing the need to avoid provoking additional equipment and weapon requests from the FMG, while reducing the risk of giving the Biafrans the perception of direct British involvement.[9] How can we explain this limited intervention strategy when endangered interests would lead us to expect a less restrained approach? Moreover, why were the British so concerned about how the Biafrans would perceive direct military involvement when the supply of weapons and other equipment was already publicly known?

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[7] Vincenzo Bove, Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, and Petros G. Sekeris, "'Oil Above Water': Economic Interdependence and Third-Party Intervention," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 60, no. 7 (2016): pp. 1251-1277. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002714567952; Rosemary Kelanic, "The Petroleum Paradox: Oil, Coercive Vulnerability, and Great Power Behavior," *Security Studies* 25, no. 2 (2016): pp. 181-213. https://doi.org/10.1080/09636412.2016.1171966; Rosemary Kelanic, *Black Gold and Blackmail: Oil and Great Power Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2020); Inwook Kim, "A Crude Bargain: Great Powers, Oil States, and Petro-Alignment," *Security Studies* 28, no. 5 (2019): pp.833-869. https://doi.org/10.1080/09636412.2019.1662478; Michael Klare and Daniel Volman, "The African 'Oil Rush' and US National Security," *Third World Quarterly* 27, no. 4 (2006): pp.609-628. https://doi.org/10.1080/01436590600720835; Kamil Christoph Klosek, "Military Interventions in Civil Wars: Protecting Foreign Direct Investments and the Defence Industry," *Civil Wars* 22, no. 1 (2020); Szymon M. Stojek and Mwita Chacha, "Adding Trade to the Equation: Multilevel Modeling of Biased Civil War Interventions," *Journal of Peace Research* 52, no. 2 (2015): 228-242. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343314561406; Doug Stokes, "Blood for Oil? Global Capital, Counter-Insurgency and the Dual Logic of American Energy Security," *Review of International Studies* 33, no. 2 (2007): 245-264. doi:10.1017/S0260210507007498; Jungmoo Woo, "Oil Export, External Prewar Support for the Government, and Civil Conflict Onset," *Journal of Peace Research* 54, no. 4 (2017): pp. 513-526. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343317697369.

[8] John J. Stremlau, *The International Politics of the Nigerian Civil War, 1967-1979* (Princeton University Press, 1977), p., 333.

[9] FCO 65/436, folio 135.

I argue an underexplored factor linking oil to military support strategies in civil wars is foreign energy investments. As suggested by scholars, oil importers are more likely to use force by deploying troops to resolve civil conflicts, resume the flow of resources and minimize disruptions to the international oil market.[10] However, if conflicts cannot be resolved quickly, liberal international market structures offer alternative import sources.[11] On the other hand, foreign investments to explore and extract oil, such as Shell-BP's installations in Nigeria, are geographically fixed and immovable, forcing invested external supporters to weigh the short- and long-term risks of their involvement in the conflict. The primary risk is that civil war combatants may take offence to foreign military assistance by retaliating against these investments, such as destroying or looting infrastructure, seizing assets, taking employees hostage, revoking licenses, embargoing shipments, threatening nationalization, or expropriating firms. This risk is heightened in civil wars because outcomes are unpredictable, so external supporters cannot know if they are betting on a losing side.

Drawing from international relations theories of hedging and conflict escalation control, I argue external supporters with foreign energy investments are aware of the short- and long-term risks to their investments of "*betting it all* on the wrong side. To mitigate these risks, invested supporters will *hedge their bets* by using their military support strategies to communicate with civil war combatants. By favouring a middle-ground approach through the use of indirect military support strategies like supplying weapons, intelligence, or training, over direct military support strategies like deploying troops, invested supporters can more convincingly convey two distinct messages: (1) they can demonstrate commitment to the supported side through a willingness to assume the

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[10] Bove et al., "'Oil Above Water';" Philippe Le Billon, *Fuelling War: Natural Resources and Armed Conflicts* (London: Routledge, 2005). https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315019529; Klare and Volman, "The African 'Oil Rush' and US National Security;" Macartan Humphreys, "Natural Resources: Conflict, and Conflict Resolution: Uncovering the Mechanisms," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49, no. 4 (2005): pp, 508-537. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002705277545; Jenny R. Kehl, "Oil, Water, Blood and Diamonds: International Intervention in Resource Disputes," *International Negotiation* 15, (2010): pp. 391-412. https://doi.org/10.1163/157180610X529609; Kim, "A Crude Bargain;" Klosek, "Military Interventions in Civil Wars;" Woo, "Oil Export, External Prewar Support for the Government, and Civil Conflict Onset."

[11] Peter Toft, "Intrastate Conflict in Oil Producing States: A Threat to Global Oil Supply?" *Energy Policy* 39, no. 11 (2011): pp. 7265-7274. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.enpol.2011.08.048; Jeffrey D. Wilson, "A Securitisation Approach to International Energy Politics," *Energy Research & Social Science* 49, (2019): pp. 114-125. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2018.10.024.

non-zero costs of intervention, while (2) signalling restraint to the opposition through an unwillingness to escalate the fighting. This approach mitigates the catastrophic risks to energy investments described above by preserving the supporter's long-term reputation with leaders on all sides of the conflict.

Understanding why states prefer some military support strategies over others is important due to their impact on civil war dynamics like conflict duration, violence against civilians, conflict escalation, and outcomes like outright victory, conflict termination, and success of negotiated settlements.[12] I test this theory using an empirical approach. First, I explore existing work in a thematic review of literature to identify knowledge gaps. I then outline my theoretical framework to explain why external supporters with energy investments prefer indirect rather than direct military support strategies in civil wars. Based on this, I develop a series of testable hypotheses and test these in a data analysis of 94 civil wars and 1,413 instances of external military support between 1975 and 2017. My analysis reveals strong support for my argument – there is a decreased likelihood of deploying direct military support amongst investor states, and an increased propensity to employ indirect military support. I conclude with a discussion of the implications of my findings and suggestions for future work.

Thematic Review of Literature

[12] Austin Carson, "Facing Off and Saving Face: Covert Intervention and Escalation Management in the Korean War," *International Organization* 70, no. 1 (2016): pp. 103-131. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818315000284; Laia Balcells and Stathis N. Kalyvas, "Does Warfare Matter? Severity, Duration, and Outcomes of Civil Wars," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 58, no. 8 (2014): pp. 1390-1418. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002714547903; Austin Carson and Keren Yarhi-Milo, "Covert Communication: The Intelligibility and Credibility of Signaling in Secret," *Security Studies* 26, no. 1 (2017): pp. 124-156. https://doi.org/10.1080/09636412.2017.1243921; Paul Collier, Anke Hoeffler and Måns Söderbom, "On the Duration of Civil War," *Journal of Peace Research* 41, no. 3 (2004): pp. 253-273; Benjamin T. Jones, "Altering Capabilities and Imposing Costs? Intervention Strategy and Civil War Outcomes," *International Studies Quarterly* 61, no. 1 (2017): pp. 52-63. https://doi.org/10.1093/isq/sqw052; Heather Elko McKibben and Amy Skoll, "Please Help Us (or Don't): External Interventions and Negotiated Settlements in Civil Wars," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 65, no. 2-3 (2021): pp. 480-505. https://doi.org/10.1177/002200272095041; Katherine Sawyer, Kathleen Gallagher Cunningham and William Reed, "The Role of External Support in Civil War Termination," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 61, no. 6 (2017): pp. 1174-1202. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002715600761.

In this section, I synthesize three distinct bodies of literature – (1) the connection between energy resources and international conflict; (2) the role of energy resources in civil wars; and (3) foreign military interventions in civil wars. Following this, I identify gaps in these bodies of literature, laying the groundwork for my theoretical framework.

Energy Resources in International Conflicts

Scholars have proposed a link between energy resources and international conflict due to the role of oil and gas in fueling hard power capabilities. The '"resource wars" thesis suggests militarized inter-state conflicts arise from state attempts to control energy resources, driven by unequal access, widespread dependence, and the finite supply of oil and gas.[13] Consequently, states fear supply interruptions and 'oil coercion", where producers strategically threaten an importer's access to change political behaviour.[14] To reduce this risk, importers adopt anticipatory strategies ranging from peaceful actions like stockpiling resources to the occupation of territory and transit routes using military force.[15] Although conflicts labelled as "resource wars" are violent and costly, scholars cite examples like Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990.[16]

Critics have challenged the *resource wars* thesis, arguing that many conflicts commonly cited as resource wars are in fact driven by issues unrelated to oil.[17] Instead, some argue liberal international market structures alter payoffs of resource wars, promoting cooperation between importers and producers to deepen market interdependence, alliances, and partnerships.[18] Despite this, scholars have nonetheless

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[13] Emily L. Meierding, "Dismantling the Oil Wars Myth," *Security Studies* 25, no. 2 (2016), p. 261. https://doi.org/10.1080/09636412.2016.1171968; Emily L. Meierding, *The Oil Wars Myth: Petroleum and the Causes of International Conflict* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2020).

[14] Kelanic, "The Petroleum Paradox;" Kelanic, *Black Gold and Blackmail*; Philippe Le Billon, "The Geopolitical Economy of 'Resource Wars'," *Geopolitics* 9, no. 1 (2004):pp. 1-28; Meghan O'Sullivan, "The Entanglement of Energy, Grand Strategy and International Security," in *Handbook of Global Energy Policy*, ed. Andreas Goldthau (Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), pp., 30-47.

[15] Kelanic. "The Petroleum Paradox;" Kelanic, *Black Gold and Blackmail*.

[16] Jeff D. Colgan, "Fueling the Fire: Pathways from Oil to War," *International Security* 38, no. 2 (2013): pp. 147-180. https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC_a_00135.

[17] Indra de Soysa, Erik Garzke and Tove Grete Lie, "On the Relationship Between Petroleum and Interstate Disputes," (unpublished manuscript, 2011); Meierding, "Dismantling the Oil Wars Myth;" Meierding, *The Oil Wars Myth.*

[18] Eugene Gholz and Daryl G. Press, "Protecting "' The Prize': Oil and the U.S. National Interest," *Security Studies* 19, no. 3 (2010): pp. 453-485. https://doi.org/10.1080/09636412.2010.505865; Sam Raphael and Doug

found evidence to suggest states do fight over energy resources in specific circumstances, including geographic proximity to resources or the elasticity of the international energy market.[19] Powerful importers offering strategic protection to large producers, known as "petro-alignments," may also be drawn into conflicts when they do occur.[20] Conversely, scholars have found that large producers with revolutionary foreign policies may initiate more foreign conflicts, known as *petro-aggression*, due to a combination of weak domestic accountability structures and strategic insulation provided by powerful importers.[21]

Energy Resources in Civil Conflicts

Like the literature on international conflicts, work exploring the role of energy resources in intra-state conflicts is equally rich and full of debate. There is a lively debate about the degree to which energy resources play a role in conflict onset, known colloquially as the *greed vs. grievance* dichotomy. Proponents of the greed mechanisms argue that resource-abundant states are more likely to experience civil wars because the value of their capture alters payoff structures to initiate conflict.[22] Others contend the

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Stokes, "US Oil Strategy in the Caspian Basin: Hegemony Through Interdependence," *International Relations* 28, no. 2 (2014): pp. 183-206. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047117813517911; Wilson, "A Securitisation Approach to International Energy Politics."

[19] Alex Braithwaite, "The Geographic Spread of Militarized Disputes," *Journal of Peace Research* 43, no. 5 (2006): 507-522. Francesco Caselli, Massimo Morelli and Dominic Rohner, "The Geography of Interstate Resource Wars," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 130, no. 1 (2015): pp. 267-315. https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/qju038; André Månsson, "Energy, Conflict and War: Towards a Conceptual Framework," *Energy Research & Social Science* 4, (2014): pp. 106-116. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2014.10.004; Georg Strüver and Tim Wegenast, "The Hard Power of Natural Resources: Oil and the Outbreak of Militarized Interstate Disputes," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 14, no. 1 (2018): pp. 86-108. https://doi.org/10.1093/fpa/orw013.

[20] De Soysa et al., "On the Relationship Between Petroleum and Interstate Disputes;" Kim, "A Crude Bargain;" Inwook Kim and Jackson Woods, "Gas on the Fire: Great Power Alliances and Petrostate Aggression," *International Studies Perspectives* 17, no. 3 (2016): pp. 231-249. https://doi.org/10.1093/isp/ekv004.

[21] Jeff D. Colgan, *Petro-Aggression: When Oil Causes War* (Cambridge University Press, 2013); De Soysa et al., "On the Relationship Between Petroleum and Interstate Disputes;" Kim, "A Crude Bargain;" Strüver and Wegenast, "The Hard Power of Natural Resources."

[22] Richard Auty, "Natural Resources and Civil Strife: A Two-Stage Process," *Geopolitics* 9, no. 1 (2004): pp. 29-49. https://doi.org/10.1080/14650040412331307822; Curtis Bell and Scott Wolford, "Oil Discoveries, Shifting Power, and Civil Conflict," *International Studies Quarterly* 59, no. 3 (2015):pp. 517-530. https://doi.org/10.1111/isqu.12150; Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, "On Economic Causes of Civil War," *Oxford Economic Papers* 50, no 4 (1998): pp. 563-567. https://doi.org/10.1093/oep/50.4.563; Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War," *Oxford Economic Papers* 56, no. 4 (2004): pp. 563-595.

geographic location of resources matters more for conflict than whether a state has energy resources or not, such as when resources are located on- or off-shore. When resources like oil are onshore, rebel groups can more easily access, loot, and profit from them, reducing the financial burdens of war-making and the need for external funding.[23] On the other hand, when oil resources are offshore, governments benefit due to the difficulty for rebel groups to access them.[24]

Energy resources may also alter the dynamics of conflict themselves. Some scholars suggest energy resources can stretch civil war duration by increasing both the capacity of the incumbent and the rewards of state capture for the opposition;[25] while others have found contradictory evidence.[26] Others argue civil war onset may be due to the political exclusion of ethnic groups claiming ownership of resource rents, such as during separatist conflicts like the ongoing Cabinda War in Angola.[27] Similarly, scholars have found energy resources can provoke conflicts in unconventional ways. The presence of lucrative resources like oil in isolated regions can lead some countries to enact pre-

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https://doi.org/10.1093/oep/gpf064; Vally Koubi, Gabriele Spilker, Tobias Böhmelt and Thomas Bernauer, "Do Natural Resources Matter for Interstate and Intrastate Armed Conflict?" *Journal of Peace Research* 51, no. 2 (2014): pp. 227-243. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343313493455; Rafael Reuveny and Katherine Barbieri, "The Effect of Natural Resources on Civil War Reconsidered," *International Journal of Social Science Studies* 4, no. 5 (2016): pp. 71-83. https://doi.org/10.11114/ijsss.v4i5.1500; Frederick van der Ploeg, "Political Economy of Dynamic Resource Wars," *Journal of Environmental Economics and Management* 92, (2018): pp. 765-782. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeem.2017.09.002.

[23] Päivi Lujala, "The Spoils of Nature: Armed Civil Conflict and Rebel Access to Natural Resources," *Journal of Peace Research* 47, no. 1 (2010): pp. 15-28. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343309350015.

[24] Jørgen Juel Andersen, Frode Martin Nordvik and Andrea Tesei, "Oil and Civil Conflict: On and Off (Shore)," *Centre for Applied Macro – and Petroleum Economics Working Paper Series,* no. 1 (2017): pp. 1-32. http://www.bi.no/camp.

[25] Govinda Clayton, "Oil, Relative Strength and Civil War Mediation," *Cooperation and Conflict* 51, no. 3 (2016): 325-344; Lujala, "The Spoils of Nature."

[26] Humphreys, "Natural Resources;" Hirotaka Ohmara, "Natural Resources and the Dynamics of Civil War Duration and Outcome," *Asian Journal of Comparative Politics* 3, no. 2 (2018): pp. 133-148. https://doi.org/10.1177/2057891117728817; Michael L. Ross, "How Do Natural Resources Influence Civil War? Evidence from Thirteen Cases," *International Organization* 58, no. 1 (2004): pp. 35-67. https://doi.org/10.1017/S002081830458102X; Krista Wiegand and Eric Keels, "Oil Wealth, Winning Coalitions, and Duration of Civil Wars," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 63, no. 4 (2018): pp. 1022-1105. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002718766414.

[27] Matthias Basedau and Jan Henryk Pierskalla, "How Ethnicity Conditions the Effect of Oil and Gas on Civil Conflict: A Spatial Analysis of Africa from 1990 to 2010," *Political Geography* 38, (2014): pp. 1-11. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2013.10.001.

emptive repressive techniques to subdue and force large groups of people from their homes to commence resource exploitation.[28] In other cases, the discovery of oil windfalls may lead governments to pre-emptively repress rebel groups hoping to exploit their profits[29] or may lead to increased victimization of civilians.[30]

Foreign Military Interventions in Civil Conflicts

A third body of work explores foreign military interventions in civil conflicts, linking both inter- and intra-state conflicts. Existing work indicates states involve themselves in foreign civil wars for a variety of reasons including humanitarian, geostrategic, national, or material interests, as well as based on civil war dynamics like conflict intensity, the salience of issues at stake, kinship with ethnic groups, or the likelihood of victory.[31] Interventions can take on many forms, including diplomatic, economic, and direct or indirect military support.[32] For the purposes of this paper, I focus exclusively on instances of unilateral direct and indirect military support by states.

In recent years, some scholars have proposed that the economic interests of foreign states – including bilateral trade and energy resource supplies – can influence the decision

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[28] Ross, "How Do Natural Resources Influence Civil War?"

[29] Peter D. Carey II, Curtis Bell, Emily Hencken Ritter and Scott Wolford, "Oil Discoveries, Civil War, and Preventive State Repression," *Journal of Peace Research* 59, no. 5 (2022): pp. 648-662. https://doi.org/10.1177/00223433211047365.

[30] Balcells and Kalyvas, "Does Warfare Matter."

[31] Aysegul Aydin, "Where Do States Go? Strategy in Civil War Intervention," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 27, no. 1 (2010): pp. 47-66. https://doi.org/10.1177/0738894209352128; Hedley Bull, *Intervention in World Politics* (Oxford: Claredon Press, 1984); David Carment and Dane Rowlands, "Three's Company: Evaluating Third-Party Intervention in Intrastate Conflict," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 42, no. 5 (1998): pp. 572-599. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002798042005003; Rupen Cetinyan, "Ethnic Bargaining in the Shadow of Third-Party Intervention," *International Organization* 56, no. 3 (2002): 645-677. https://doi.org/10.1162/002081802760199917; Jacob D. Kathman, "Civil War Diffusion and Regional Motivations for Intervention," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 55, no. 6 (2011): pp.847-876. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002711408009; Sang Ki Kim, "Third-Party Intervention in Civil Wars and the Prospects for Postwar Development," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 61, no. 3 (2017): pp. 615-642. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002715590873; Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, "Power Politics and the Balance of Risk: Hypotheses on Great Power Intervention in the Periphery," *Political Psychology* 25, no. 2 (2004): pp. 177-211. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9221.2004.00368.x.

[32] Patrick M. Regan and Aysegul Aydin, "Diplomacy and Other Forms of Intervention in Civil Wars," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 50, no. 5 (2006): pp. 736-756. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002706291579.

to intervene.[33] Civil wars, although confined within a set of borders, can have externalized consequences for energy importers by disrupting international supply chains or endangering incumbent governments that provide friendly export policies.[34] Scholars have noted civil wars in countries with large energy exports and reserves may invite direct foreign military interventions by importers aiming to end the conflict to restore exports,[35] or in some cases, to loot accessible onshore oil resources.[36] In these cases, direct military intervention involving the deployment of troops is noted as a strategy states use to resolve conflict by tipping the balance of power in favour of the supported side, especially when oil production or reserves are large enough to meet the intervener's domestic energy needs.[37] Additionally, the regime of external supporters may alter the incentives of resource-based interventions, with democracies intervening to stabilize international energy markets and autocracies to capture resources and reward regime loyalists.[38]

Gaps in Existing Knowledge

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[33] Suleiman Abu-Bader and Elena Ianchovichina, "Polarization, Foreign Military Intervention, and Civil Conflict," *Journal of Development Economics* 141 (2019): p. 102248. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdeveco.2018.06.006; Aysegul Aydin, *Foreign Powers and Intervention in Armed Conflicts* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012); Colgan, "Fueling the Fire: Pathways from Oil to War," p., 152; Ross, "How Do Natural Resources Influence Civil War;" Stojek and Chacha, "Adding Trade to the Equation."

[34] Klare and Volman, "The African 'Oil Rush' and US National Security."

[35] Bove et al., "'Oil Above Water';" Colgan, "Fueling the Fire: Pathways from Oil to War," p., 152; Jonathan Andrew Stewart Honig, "Of Democracies, Dictatorships, and Resource Deposits: A Time-Series Analysis of Third-Party Military Interventions in Civil Wars," *Journal of Global Peace and Conflict* 7, no. 2 (2019): pp. 1-10. https://doi.org/10.15640/jgpc.v7n2a1; Humphreys, "Natural Resources;" Kehl, "Oil, Water, Blood and Diamonds;" Klare and Volman, "The African 'Oil Rush' and US National Security;" Le Billon, *Fuelling War*; Ross, "How Do Natural Resources Influence Civil War;" Belgin San-Akca, Duygu S. Sever and Suhnaz Yilmaz, "Does Natural Gas Fuel Civil War? Rethinking Energy Security, International Relations, and Fossil-Fuel Conflict," *Energy Research & Social Science* 70, (2020): p. 101690. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2020.101690; Stojek and Chacha, "Adding Trade to the Equation;" Stokes, "Blood for Oil;" Strüver and Wegenast, "The Hard Power of Natural Resources."

[36] Michael G. Findley and Josiah F. Marineau, "Lootable Resources and Third-Party Intervention into Civil Wars," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 32, no. 5 (2015): pp. 465-486. https://doi.org/10.1177/0738894214530828.

[37] Bove et al., "'Oil Above Water';" Kehl, "Oil, Water, Blood and Diamonds;" San-Akca et al., "Does Natural Gas Fuel Civil War;" Stokes, "Blood for Oil;" Strüver and Wegenast. "The Hard Power of Natural Resources."

[38] Honig, "Of Democracies, Dictatorships, and Resource Deposits."

The literature described above makes it clear that energy resources have implications for both inter- and intra-state conflicts. However, current research is limited in two primary ways. First, many studies focus on the import-export dynamic, attributing inter-state conflicts to the calculus of energy-importing states with large energy deficits, especially great powers.[39] According to recent studies in this domain, foreign interventions in intra-state conflicts are attributed to the size and value of energy production and reserves.[40] Where a country experiencing civil conflict has large reserves, foreign importers are more likely to involve themselves in supporting their trading partner.[41] However, contradictory findings, such as those which find oil presence has no effect or even deters interventions in civil wars, indicate a need to explore these links further.[42]

Discrepancies may arise from the insufficiently explored motivations of foreign countries intervening to protect their energy investments abroad. These investments typically involve substantial sunk costs, expertise, and infrastructure, often resulting in the domination of the energy sector by foreign firms in poorer countries.[43] Investment relationships likely differ from import-export relationships because energy resources are not only location-specific, but also involve large upfront costs, delayed profits, and long-term operational horizons, requiring firms to compete for lucrative contracts.[44] Some recent work has sought to close this knowledge gap. Klosek (2020) suggests states with large foreign direct investments are more likely to intervene in civil wars, including those with large oil deposits. However, oil is measured in the form of production, consumption, and reserve levels rather than with existing investments. Another study by Lee (2020) found that countries with foreign-owned energy sectors are more prone to experience foreign military interventions aimed at ensuring regime survival, though the scope of

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[39] Kelanic, "The Petroleum Paradox;" Kelanic, *Black Gold and Blackmail.*

[40] Bove et al., "'Oil Above Water,'" Honig, "Of Democracies, Dictatorships, and Resource Deposits;" Kehl, "Oil, Water, Blood and Diamonds;" San-Akca et al.,"Does Natural Gas Fuel Civil War;" Stokes, "Blood for Oil;" Stojek and Chacha, "Adding Trade to the Equation;" Strüver and Wegenast,"The Hard Power of Natural Resources."

[41] Bove et al., "'Oil Above Water';" Kehl, "Oil, Water, Blood and Diamonds;" San-Akca et al., "Does Natural Gas Fuel Civil War?"

[42] Aydin, "Where Do States Go? Strategy in Civil War Intervention;" Jun Koga, "Where Do Third Parties Intervene? Third Parties' Domestic Institutions and Military Interventions in Civil Conflicts," *International Studies Quarterly* 55, no. 4 (2011): pp. 1143-1166. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2478.2011.00684.x.

[43] Aydin, "Where Do States Go? Strategy in Civil War Intervention," p., 56.

[44] Klare and Volman, "The African 'Oil Rush' and US National Security."

interventions was not limited to civil wars.[45] Consequently, we still have much to learn about how foreign energy investments influence intervention decisions.

Second, most work on foreign interventions in civil wars has not considered the decision-making calculus underlying different types of military support strategies. Instead, the supply of support is often aggregated to include both direct and indirect military support strategies[46] or to focus exclusively on the deployment of troops.[47] Yet, emerging evidence suggests states select different support strategies for different purposes, which can impact civil war dynamics and outcomes. Direct military support can prolong conflicts, decrease uncertainty over war-fighting capabilities, and influence the likelihood of negotiated settlements.[48] A combination of direct and indirect military support, like arms transfers or intelligence sharing, may enhance battlefield success for the opposition, while direct support matters more for governments in protracted conflicts.[49] Other work has found covert military support can be used to communicate with civil war combatants and reduce the threat of conflict escalation among competing great powers in proxy wars,[50] but may also increase civilian victimization by rebel groups.[51] More recently, scholars have suggested limited troop deployments and remote

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[45] Chia-Yi Lee, "Petro-Friends: Foreign Ownership of Oil and Leadership Survival," *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 24, no. 2 (2022): pp. 343-360. https://doi.org/10.1177/13691481211023965.

[46] For example, Aydin (2010), Bove et al. (2016) and Stojek and Chacha (2015, p., 233) use a dataset that combines both direct and indirect military interventions, defined as "troop deployments, naval or air support, deployment of military advisors, and [the] transfer of military equipment." This dataset is from Patrick M. Regan, "Third-Party Interventions and the Duration of Intrastate Conflicts," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 46, no. 1 (2002): pp, 55-73. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002702046001004. Similarly, Klosek (2020) and San-Akca et al. (2020) use an aggregate military support variable from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program's (UCDP) External Support Dataset (ESD) from Stina Högbladh, Therése Pettersson and Lotta Themnér, "External Support in Armed Conflict 1975-2009. Presenting New Data," *Paper presented at the 52nd Annual International Studies Association Convention,* (Montreal, Canada: 16-19 March 2011).

[47] Glen Biglaiser and Karl DeRouen, "Following the Flag: Troop Deployment ad U.S. Foreign Direct Investment," *International Studies Quarterly* 51, no. 4 (2007): pp. 835-854. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2478.2007.00479.x; Le Billon, "The Geopolitical Economy of 'Resource Wars';" Le Billon, *Fuelling War*; Stokes, "Blood for Oil."

[48] Dylan Balch-Lindsay and Andrew J. Enterline, "Killing Time: The World Politics of Civil War Duration, 1820-1992," *International Studies Quarterly* 44, no. 4 (2000): pp. 615-642. https://doi.org/10.1111/0020-8833.00174; McKibben and Skoll, "Please Help Us (or Don't);" Sawyer et al., "The Role of External Support in Civil War Termination."

[49] Jones, "Altering Capabilities or Imposing Costs."

[50] Carson, "Facing Off and Saving Face;" Carson and Yarhi-Milo, "Covert Communication."

[51] Arthur Stein, "Committed Sponsors: External Support Overtness and Civilian Targeting in Civil Wars," *European Journal of International Relations* 28, no. 2 (2022): pp. 386-416. https://doi.org/10.1177/13540661221084870.

air war tactics like drone strikes are becoming more common due to their lower human and financial costs and their ability to maintain plausible deniability of wrongdoing by reducing troop visibility.[52] While we know from existing work that energy importers are more likely to provide direct military support generally, we do not know if some strategies are preferred over others when foreign energy investments are at stake.

Taken together, these gaps provide a fruitful avenue for investigation. By exploring the decision-making calculus of military support strategies among external supporters with foreign energy sector investments in civil conflicts, this study aims to contribute to a growing discourse on the role of energy resources in non-traditional international conflicts, namely foreign military interventions in civil wars.

Theoretical Framework

In this section, I advance a theoretical framework to explain how foreign energy sector investments influence the type of military support provided in civil wars. Existing research on inter- and intra-state conflicts suggests that large energy importers are willing to use military force to form security guarantees with large producers, initiate conflicts when access is jeopardized, and use force in the civil wars of their trading partners and suppliers.[53] Recent work has also found this willingness to engage in foreign military conflicts also applies when foreign energy sector investments are at risk, though in limited contexts.[54] Yet, as noted earlier, the British were reluctant to deploy troops in the Nigerian civil war, leading to less effective military support strategies, an extended and protracted war, as well as oil shortages. Other examples include the refusal of Pakistan and Malaysia –two long-time energy investors in Yemen – to deploy troops to assist the

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[52] Vanessa Meier, Niklas Karlén, Therése Pettersson and Mihai Croicu, "External Support in Armed Conflicts: Introducing the UCDP External Support Dataset (ESD) 1975-2017," *Journal of Peace Research* 60, no. 3 (2023): pp. 545-554. https://doi.org/10.1177/00223433221079864.

[53] Bove et al., "'Oil Above Water';" Colgan, "Fueling the Fire: Pathways from Oil to War;" De Soysa et al., "On the Relationship Between Petroleum and Interstate Disputes;" Kehl, "Oil, Water, Blood and Diamonds;" Kelanic, "The Petroleum Paradox;" Kelanic, *Black Gold and Blackmail*; Kim, "A Crude Bargain;" Kim and Woods, "Gas on the Fire;" Klare and Volman, "The African 'Oil Rush' and US National Security;" San-Akca et al., "Does Natural Gas Fuel Civil War;" Stojek and Chacha, "Adding Trade to the Equation;" Stokes, "Blood for Oil."

[54] Klare and Volman, "The African 'Oil Rush' and US National Security;" Klosek, "Military Interventions in Civil Wars;" Lee, "Petro-Friends."

Saudi-led coalition in 2015. The United Arab Emirates and Qatar, which have no investments, have committed troops. What explains the reluctance?

The Shadow of the Future

Foreign energy investments create long-term implications for energy firms and states. Firms investing in foreign energy resources require significant up-front capital expenditures to build, test, operate, and maintain infrastructure and must rely on the long-term stability of host countries to see benefits and returns accrue. Likewise, states benefit from having direct access to foreign energy resources, ensuring steady supplies in case of shortages elsewhere and increasing oil security.[55] The game theory concept known as the shadow of the future highlights the importance of maintaining long-term relationships.[56] In an ideal scenario, two actors – the external supporter and host country leaders – are locked in an iterated game. Where future interactions are expected, they will choose to cooperate, rather than defect. In civil wars, cooperation by a foreign state resembles providing military support to assist in winning the civil war, while defection would involve refusing requests for support. Likewise, cooperation by the supported side resembles maintaining favourable conditions for foreign investors and firms, while defection would involve taking punitive actions like seizing or holding investments hostage, damaging infrastructure, blocking exports, revoking licenses or agreements, giving licenses to competitor firms, stalling logistical operations, or threatening expropriation.

However, civil wars are uncertain events. Combatants are incentivized to exaggerate or hide their true capabilities, complicating the decision-making process of external supporters who cannot know *apriori* which side will achieve victory.[57] External supporters must not only consider how their military support strategies might impact

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[55] Kelanic, "The Petroleum Paradox;" Kelanic, *Black Gold and Blackmail;* Klare and Volman, "The African 'Oil Rush' and US National Security."

[56] Pedro Dal Bo, "Cooperation Under the Shadow of the Future: Experimental Evidence from Infinitely Repeated Games," *The American Economic Review* 95, no. 5 (2005): pp. 1591-1603. http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.332580.

[57] Shanna A. Kirschner, "Knowing Your Enemy: Information and Commitment Problems in Civil Wars," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 54, no. 5 (2010): pp. 745-770. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002710372753; Barbara F. Walter, "The Critical Barrier to Civil War Settlement," *International Organization* 51, no. 3 (1997): pp. 335-364. https://doi.org/10.1162/002081897550384.

short- and long-term reputations with the supported side, but with the adversary, as well. Consequently, there are three potential outcomes external supporters must consider for safeguarding their investments.

In the first scenario, the supported side loses the war. By throwing full support behind a losing side, the external supporter risks perceptions of *defection* by the victor, who can punish the supporter by revoking contracts, expropriating firms, or in the most extreme case, nationalizing resources. In the Syrian civil war, China, Russia, India, and Iran were rewarded with lucrative contracts for providing support to the regime. Meanwhile, the United States and Turkey, which supported the opposition, were publicly chastised. As the Syrian ambassador to China noted: "We want countries like Russia, China, India, and Iran to come and take part in the reconstruction… We are not going to welcome the countries [like the United States and Turkey] that participated in the Syria war..."[58] Similarly, in 2011 Libya threatened the nationalization of resources to punish the United States, France, and the United Kingdom during the NATO-led intervention.[59]

In the second scenario, risks remain even if the supported side achieves victory. The supported side may perceive the external state as "not doing enough" to help achieve victory and may take revenge on investments. For instance, during the Nigerian Civil War, the FMG repeatedly complained that the British, who supplied outdated weaponry, were not doing enough to help achieve victory. To extract additional support, the Nigerian government embargoed Shell-BP's oil shipments to force the hands of the British, who quietly agreed to increase both the quantity and quality of arms and military equipment. However, providing direct military support was strictly avoided after the leader of the Biafrans threatened "all British interests in Biafra, both now and in the future, automatically become forfeited" for doing so.[60]

In the third scenario, civil wars may end in a negotiated settlement. The lack of a clear winner means incumbent and opposition leaders may be integrated into a post-war coalition government, such as those following civil wars in the United Kingdom, El

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[58] Quoted in Guy Burton, *China and Middle East Conflicts: Responding to War and Rivalry from the Cold War to the Present,* (United Kingdom: Routledge, 2020), p., 165.

[59] Steven Mufson, "Conflict in Libya: U.S. Oil Companies Sit on Sidelines as Gaddafi Maintains Hold," *The Washington Post,* 10 June 2011, https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/conflict-in-libya-us-oil-companies-sit-on-sidelines-as-gaddafi-maintains-hold/2011/06/03/AGJq2QPH_story.html.

[60] Article from *The Times,* "Britain Accused of Blocking Nigeria Peace Moves," 11 February 1969. FCO 65/435, folio 61. British National Archives.

Salvador, Mozambique, South Sudan, Zaire, and Nigeria. Opposition groups can form political parties to compete in national and regional elections or may retain political power in regional governments where resources are located.[61] Defection against investments can occur from both sides to punish for providing too little or too much support.

Hedging and Escalation Control

External supporters are trapped in a delicate dance – too little support risks punishment from the supported side, while too much may provoke retaliation from the opposition. The optimal approach is to adopt a strategy of "hedging," a concept in international relations which refers to a strategy weaker states use to obscure their "true "intentions during great power competitions.[62] Hedging generates strategic ambiguity to mitigate the catastrophic risks of aligning solely with one power, shielding against "the fallout of betting on the wrong power."[63] This approach studied extensively among East Asian regional foreign policy amid competition between China and the United States, employs 'flexible' strategies to satisfy both powers and minimize the potentially catastrophic risks of betting on the wrong side. For instance, states in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) have encouraged non-escalatory policies like non-aggression pacts or economic agreements with China, while maintaining long-standing security commitments with the United States.[64]

Hedging strategies can offer insights into the decision-making calculus of foreign energy investors providing military support in civil wars. Supporters risk catastrophic losses through nationalization or expropriation if aligned too closely with the losing side.

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[61] Ozlem Tuncel, Carrie Manning and Ian Smith, "Political Integration and Post-war Elections," *Joint brief series: The Political Dynamics of DDR* (Stockholm: Folke Bernadotte Academy, PAW and UNDPO/OROLSI DDR Section, 2022). https://fba.se/globalassets/publikationer/political-integration-and-post-war-elections.pdf.

[62] David C. Kang, *China Rising: Peace, Power, and Order in East Asia* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2007); Kei Koga, "The US and East Asian Regional Security Architecture: Building a Regional Security Nexus on Hub-and-Spoke," *Asian Perspective* 35, no. 1 (2011): pp. 1-36. https://doi.org/10.1353/apr.2011.0014.

[63] Charles Chong-Han Wu, "Why Do States Hedge in East Asia? An Empirical Study of Hedging," *Asian Perspective* 43, no. 3 (2019): p., 579. https://doi.org/10.1353/apr.2019.0017.

[64] Darren J. Lim and Zack Cooper, "Reassessing Hedging: The Logic of Alignment in East Asia," *Security Studies* 24, no. 4 (2015): pp. 696-727. https://doi.org/10.1080/09636412.2015.1103130.

On the other hand, even if the supported side wins, too little or too much support can lead to punishment or revenge-seeking behaviour by both sides that can damage or halt investment activities in the short, medium, and long-term. To understand how hedging can be accomplished in civil conflicts, I draw on the theory of conflict escalation control. According to this literature, direct communication during civil wars is difficult because of the risks of it backfiring – it can breed contempt, be viewed as *cheap talk*, or be misinterpreted.[65] However, foreign investor states that decide to intervene must nevertheless navigate these communication barriers and manage reputations with all sides of the conflict. Carson's (2016, 2018) theory of the role of secrecy in preventing civil war escalations provides a useful framework for understanding how foreign interveners can achieve this by communicating two messages.[66] First, covert military support signals a commitment to the supported side by demonstrating a willingness to take on the non-zero costs of intervention without provoking calls for increased support by hawkish audiences. Second, secrecy communicates restraint to adversaries by signalling a desire to maintain a limited conflict.

Although Carson's theory focuses on the role of secrecy, scholars argue different forms of military support can achieve similar goals. Indirect military support strategies, like intelligence sharing or providing weapons, are less risky, more cost-efficient, and more discrete than direct military support strategies like deploying troops.[67] These strategies offer more plausible deniability, allowing supporters to establish "distance between the decision-maker and the supported forces, [helping] states avoid retaliation by [the opposition]."[68] Indeed, many modern conflicts showcase similar calculus by foreign interveners who draw a bright line at deploying troops despite publicly providing indirect support. For instance, in February 2024 NATO allies rejected the notion that troops would be deployed to Ukraine after Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov warned of inevitable direct conflict with Russia should this occur.[69] Meanwhile,

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[65] Noel Anderson, "Competitive Intervention, Protracted Conflict, and the Global Prevalence of Civil War," *International Studies Quarterly* 63, no. 3 (2019): pp. 692-706. https://doi.org/10.1093/isq/sqz037.
[66] Carson, "Facing Off and Saving Face;" Austin Carson, *Secret Wars: Covert Conflict in International Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018).
[67] David Carment and Dane Rowlands, "Three's Company."
[68] Karlén Niklas and Vladimir Rauta, "Dealers and Brokers in Civil Wars: Why States Delegate Rebel Support to Conduit Countries," *International Security* 47, no. 4 (2023): p., 121. https://doi.org/10.1162/isec_a_00461.
[69] Lipika Pelham and Lou Newton, "Nato Allies Reject Emmanuel Macron Idea of Troops to Ukraine," *BBC News*, 27 February 2024, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-68417223.amp.

NATO allies have publicly ramped up indirect military support to Ukraine since the start of the conflict in 2022, while still avoiding direct confrontation with Russia.

Indirect support allows the external supporter to effectively signal commitment to the supported side, while drawing the line at direct support signals restraint to the opposition and avoids dangerous conflict escalation. This approach of 'hedging' helps to mitigate the perceptions of overt alignment and better manages long-term reputations with all sides of the conflict. It offers a superior middle-ground strategy that balances perceptions of cooperation and defection with leaders on all sides of the war. Although these strategies do not guarantee that some level of offence will not be taken by both combatant parties, they do help invested foreign supporters to *hedge their bets* by protecting against the catastrophic losses of betting it all on the wrong side.

Hypotheses

Based on the theoretical framework above, I form two sets of hypotheses. When invested external supporters decide on a strategy of military support, they can choose from one of two options: (1) indirect support, or (2) direct support. In some cases, states may choose to provide a combination of indirect and direct military support, which represents the most intensive form of overt alignment with one side. I theorize supporters will seek to manage their reputations by adopting a *hedging* approach to avoid the catastrophic risks of overt alignment, and thus the strategy of external military support will reflect the need to communicate commitment to the supported side while signalling restraint to the opposition.

Support: *Indirect support only → Direct support only → Direct and indirect support*

Intensity: Least Intensive → More → Most Intensive

Strategic Ambiguity: Most strategic ambiguity → Less → Least strategic ambiguity

Cost: Least costly → More → Most costly

Risks: Least risky → More → Most risky

Figure 1. Spectrum of external support strategies

As shown in Figure 1 above, military support strategies can be considered on a continuum from least to most intensive. The most effective way to signal commitment to the supported side and restraint to the opposition is to opt for military support strategies on the left-hand side of the spectrum above. Indirect support strategies are advantageous because they are the least intensive and risky while offering the most cost-effective option with high strategic ambiguity. As a result, the potentially catastrophic risks of overt alignment are mitigated more effectively than support strategies which move right along the spectrum.

Hypothesis 1 tests the utility of indirect military support as a tool to signal commitment. When states want to signal a commitment to the supported side, they may decide to increase the quantity of indirect support, such as bundling weapons, intelligence, and logistics together, rather than simply providing weapons alone. By increasing the quantities of indirect support, the external state can effectively signal higher levels of commitment to the supported side while still avoiding the catastrophic risks that deploying troops may provoke from the opposition:

> Hypothesis 1: External supporters with energy investments will provide more forms of indirect support than non-invested supporters.

Hypotheses 2-4 test the utility of indirect support strategies to signal restraint to the opposition. If this assertion is true, we should observe that invested external supporters are reluctant to deploy troops alone, but should be especially reluctant to combine troop deployments with indirect support as this carries the least strategic ambiguity and signals the most overt alignment:

> Hypothesis 2: External supporters with energy investments will be more likely to provide indirect military support than those without energy investments.
>
> Hypothesis 3: External supporters with energy investments will be less likely to provide direct military support than those without energy investments.
>
> Hypothesis 4: External supporters with energy investments should be less likely to provide combined direct and indirect support than those without energy investments.

Data Collection

To test my hypotheses, I compiled a dataset on civil wars, external military interventions, and energy investments. Civil war and external military support data are sourced from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program's (UCDP) External Support Dataset (ESD) from 1975 to 2017.[70] The ESD defines armed conflicts as contested incompatibilities involving the "government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government or the state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths in a calendar year."[71] Instances of extra-state conflict where the two primary warring parties are not internal actors, such as the American-led coalition invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 or Iraq in 2003, are excluded. Additionally, to avoid bias and focus on individual state decision-making about military support strategies, I remove all cases of multi-lateral interventions directed by international organizations like the United Nations or NATO.[72] The final dataset includes 3,225 dyadic-year observations between civil war countries and external supporters. The dataset covers 94 civil wars between 1975 and 2017 and 113 unique external supporters, with 82 of the 94 civil wars involving at least one external supporter. Figure 2 below visualizes the total number of civil wars and external interveners across time.

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[70] Meier et al., "External Support in Armed Conflicts."

[71] Stina Högbladh, Therése Pettersson and Lotta Themnér, "External Support in Armed Conflict 1975-2009. Presenting New Data," *Paper presented at the 52nd Annual International Studies Association Convention,* Montreal, Canada (16-19 March, 2011).

[72] Many multi-lateral interventions sanctioned by international organizations provide financial incentives or troop deployment requirements, which may bias the type of support given. For more on this, see Vincenzo Bove and Leandro Elia, "Supplying Peace: Participation In and Troop Contribution to Peacekeeping Missions," *Journal of Peace Research* 48, no. 6 (2011): 699-714. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343311418265; Katharina P. Coleman and Benjamin Nyblade, "Peacekeeping for Profit? The Scope and Limits of 'Mercenary' UN Peacekeeping," *Journal of Peace Research* 55, no. 6 (2018): https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343318775784; Seung-Whan Choi, "What Determines US Humanitarian Intervention?" *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 30, no. 2 (2013): pp. 121-139. https://doi.org/10.1177/0738894212473916; Seung-Whan Choi and Patrick James, "Why Does the United States Intervene Abroad? Democracy, Human Rights Violations, and Terrorism," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 60, no. 5 (2016): pp. 899-926. DOI: 10.1177/0022002714560350.

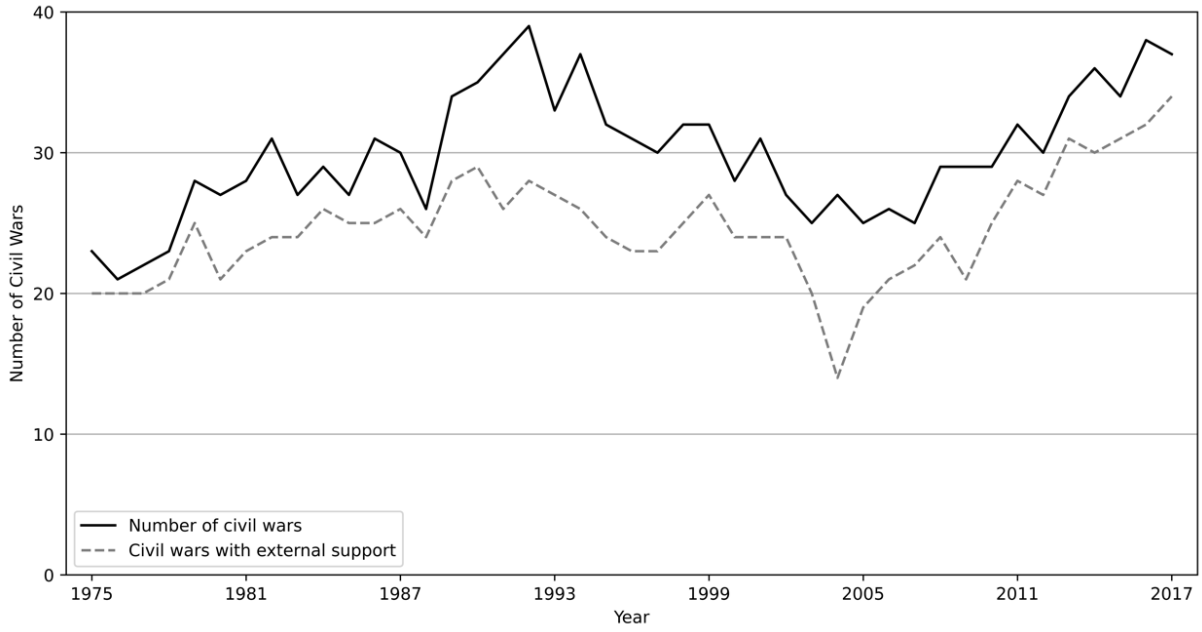

Figure 2. Number of civil wars and external interveners, 1975-2017[73]

Dependent Variables

The dependent variable is the provision of external military support which can be either indirect or direct. The ESD provides detailed data on the type of support, the state supplying it, and the recipient. Types of military support in the dataset include military financial aid, weapons, intelligence, materiel, logistics, training, territorial sanctuary, deploying troops, and other forms of indirect support that do not fall within existing categories.[74] To test decision-making outcomes regarding the type of military support provided, I create two dependent variables. The first is an *ordered support* variable based on the spectrum of support in the Hypotheses section above. This variable is coded 1 for indirect support only (i.e., anything that falls short of the deployment of troops), 2 for the deployment of troops only, and 3 to indicate both troops and indirect support were supplied. I also construct a *count indirect support* variable which counts the number of forms of indirect support provided in a single dyad-year, ranging from a minimum of 0 to a maximum of 7. Figure 3 below plots the frequency of the *ordered support* variable over time.

[73] This figure was generated by Julius.ai using the author's original dataset: Julius, version 23 May 2024, *Caesar Labs, Inc.*, https://julius.ai/.

[74] Meier et al., "External Support in Armed Conflicts."

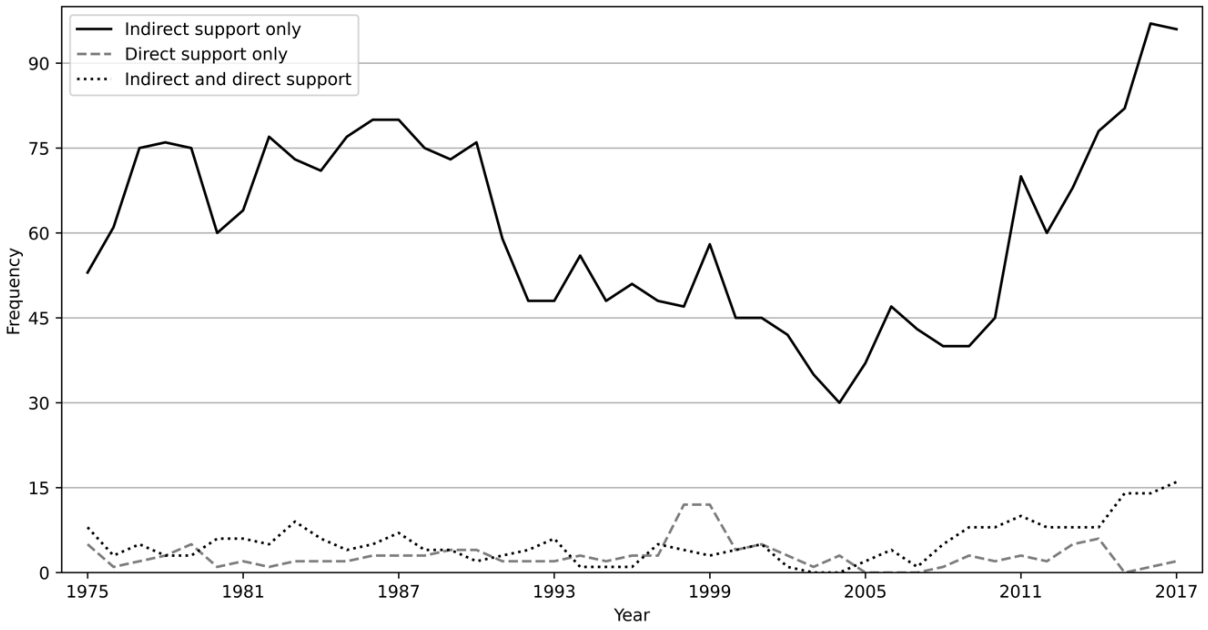

Figure 3. Types of external military support supplied, 1975-2017[75]

Independent Variables

To determine which civil wars have energy resources, data was gathered from Lujala et al.'s (2007) PETRODATA which provides information on the location of oil and gas fields from 1946 to 2003.[76] This is supplemented with data from the United States Energy Information Administration (EIA) International data for petroleum and other liquids between 1975 and 2017.[77] The final *energy resources* variable is binary, where 1 indicates the civil war country has exploitable energy resources and 0 indicates there are no known energy resources. In total, 75 of the 94 civil wars which occurred between 1975 and 2017 in the dataset had oil or gas resources.

The primary independent variable is whether external supporters have foreign energy investments in the civil war country. Foreign energy investments are defined as upstream operations that include exploration and production, drilling, and extraction of both oil and gas. Mid- and downstream activities like refining, transportation, or

[75] This figure was generated by Julius.ai using the author's original dataset: Julius, version 23 May 2024, *Caesar Labs, Inc.*, https://julius.ai/.
[76] Päivi Lujala, Jan Ketil Rod and Nadja Thieme, "Fighting Over Oil: Introducing a New Dataset," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 24, no. 3 (2007): pp. 239-56. https://doi.org/10.1080/07388940701468526.
[77] *Annual Petroleum and Other Liquids Production, 1973-2022,* (2023), distributed by the United States Energy Information Administration, https://www.eia.gov/international/overview/world.

marketing are excluded. Evidence of investments is validated through successful field bidding results, production sharing agreements, collaboration agreements, exploration contracts, and government or company press releases about investments or asset locations. This data was gathered using open sources such as LexisNexis, the Oil & Gas Journal, and oil and gas company websites, as well as from official government and non-government press releases, newspapers, or magazines. I construct a binary *investment* variable which codes 1 when external supporters have upstream oil and gas investments in a civil war country receiving support, and 0 otherwise. To account for the secretive nature of many oil and gas bids, the *investment* variable is coded 1 a year prior to and after existing evidence of investments.[78] There are 26 unique external supporters with energy investments at the time support was supplied, totalling 797 dyad-year observations. Figure 4 below plots the frequency of external support dyad-years with and without investments over time.

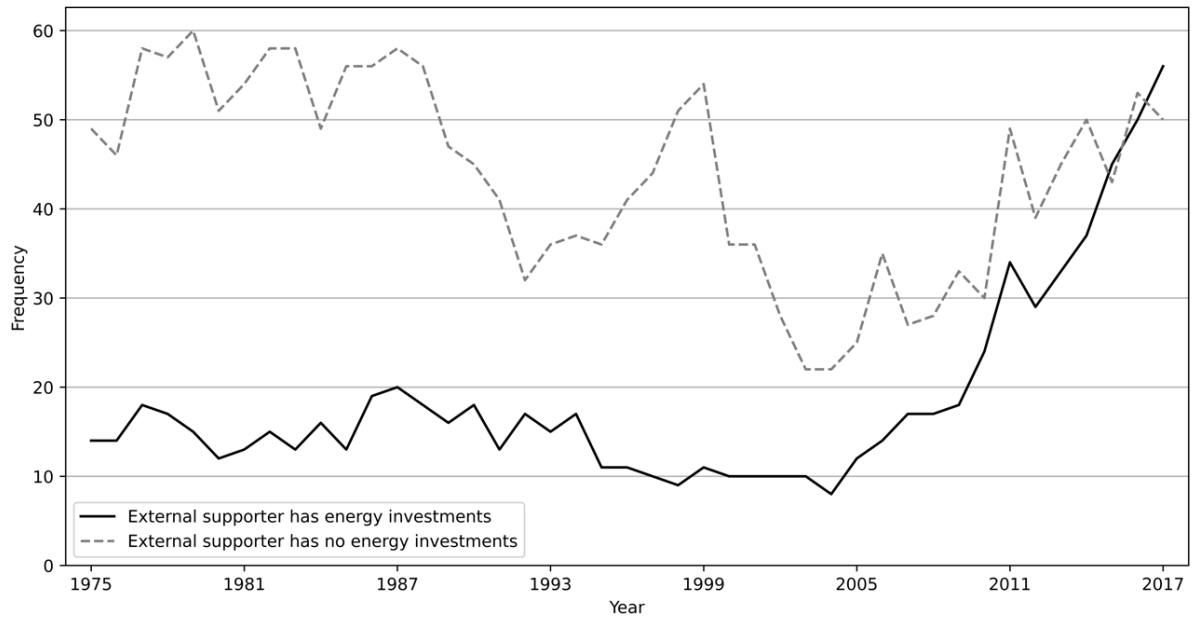

Figure 4. Number of invested and non-invested external supporters, 1975-2017[79]

Control Variables

[78] Harvey Panka, "Oil Secrets of Suriname: Public Largely in the Dark as Offshore Dreams Federred," *Caribbean Investigative Journalism Network,* 6 June 2023, https://www.cijn.org/oil-secrets-of-suriname-public-largely-in-the-dark-as-offshore-dreams-deferred/.

[79] This figure was generated by Julius.ai using the author's original dataset: Julius, version 23 May 2024, *Caesar Labs, Inc.*, https://julius.ai/.

Other variables were collected to account for alternative explanations. Some scholars argue external states alter the type of support supplied based on the warring party receiving it, such as deploying troops more often to governments rather than to opposition groups.[80] Others have found that support supplied during the global war on terror has trended toward troop deployments.[81] To account for this, I use the ESD support recipient variable to create a binary *government* variable, coded 1 for support provided to governments, and 0 for support provided to opposition groups. Next, using the ESD information about opposition actors, I construct a *war on terror* variable which codes 1 for all instances of support given to civil war combatants fighting to designate terrorist organizations from 2001 onward, and 0 otherwise. Similarly, scholars have also found that international system dynamics may impact the type of support provided, such as during the Cold War.[82] I include a binary *Cold War* variable, coded 1 for all instances of external support provided between 1975 and 1989 and 0 otherwise.[83]

To account for the possibility that external support types are altered because of competitive interventions as per conflict escalation control, I include a binary variable called *competitive* which codes 1 for all instances where at least two external supporters provide support to opposing civil war combatants during the same year.[84] Additionally, I include a binary variable called *major power*, collected from the Correlates of War State System Membership List between 1975 and 2016, coded 1 to indicate an external supporter was a major power at the time support was supplied.[85] Some literature also suggests the regime type and strength of the civil war state (*civil war polity*) and the

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[80] Ryan Grauer and Dominic Tierney, "The Arsenal of Insurrection: Explaining Rising Support for Rebels," *Security Studies* 27, no. 2 (2018): pp. 263-295. https://doi.org/10.1080/09636412.2017.1386936; Jones, "Altering Capabilities and Imposing Costs;" Meier et al., "External Support in Armed Conflicts;" Idean Salehyan, Kristian Skrede Gleditsch and David E. Cunningham, "Explaining External Support for Insurgent Groups," *International Organization* 65, no. 4 (2011): pp. 709-744. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818311000233; Sawyer et al., "The Role of External Support in Civil War Termination."

[81] Meier et al., "External Support in Armed Conflicts."

[82] Anderson, "Competitive Intervention, Protracted Conflict, and the Global Prevalence of Civil War."

[83] This end date is selected based on other work, such as Patrick M. Regan, "Choosing to Intervene: Outside Interventions in Internal Conflicts," *The Journal of Politics* 60, no. 3 (1998): pp. 754-779. https://doi.org/10.2307/2647647.

[84] Anderson, "Competitive Intervention, Protracted Conflict, and the Global Prevalence of Civil War;" Carson, "Facing Off and Saving Face;" Carson, *Secret Wars.*

[85] *State System Membership List, v2016,* (2017), distributed by the Correlates of War Project, accessed May 1, 2024, https://correlatesofwar.org/data-sets/state-system-membership.

external supporter (*external polity*) may influence the support given.[86] To account for this possibility, I gather data from the Polity 5 dataset between the years 1975 and 2017 for both the civil war country and the external supporter.[87] These variables can fall anywhere between -10 and 10, where anything less than 0 ranges from a weak autocracy (-1) to a strong autocracy (-10), and anything more than 0 ranges from a weak democracy (1) to a strong democracy (10). Taken together, the *competitive, major power,* and *polity* variables control for the potential endogenous effects that substantial military and financial power differences between different states have on the ability to provide different types of support.

Finally, I account for geopolitical and temporal explanations such as previous colonial relationships, geographic distance between states, the support provided in previous years, and the duration of support.[88] First, previous colonies may attract more interventions from former colonizers. I create a binary *former colony* variable, coded 1 for dyad-year observations between an external supporter who previously colonized the civil war country. Next, I create a binary *border* variable, coded 1 to indicate the external supporter and civil war state share a land border and 0 otherwise. I also created two temporal variables, one called *support in the previous year* which is coded 1 if the external supporter provided military support of any kind in the year prior; and another called *support duration* which counts the number of uninterrupted years of support provided, ranging from a minimum of 1 year to a maximum of 43 years. Table 1 below presents the descriptive statistics of all variables.

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[86] Aysegul Aydin and Patrick M. Regan, "Networks of Third-Party Interveners and Civil War Duration," *European Journal of International Relations* 18, no. 3 (2011): pp. 573-597. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066111403515; Bove et al., "'Oil Above Water';" Caselli et al., "The Geography of Interstate Resource Wars;" Collier et al., "On the Duration of Civil War," David E. Cunningham, "Blocking Resolution: How External States Can Prolong Civil Wars," *Journal of Peace Research* 47, no. 2 (2010): 115-127. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343309353488; Karl R. DeRouen and David Sobek, "The Dynamics of Civil War Duration and Outcome," *Journal of Peace Research* 41, no. 3 (2004): pp. 303-320. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343304043771; Koga, "Where Do Third Parties Intervene;" Salehyan et al., "Explaining External Support for Insurgent Groups."

[87] Monty G. Marshall and Ted Robert Gurr, *Polity IV Project: Political Regime Characteristics and Transitions, 1800-2018,* (2019), distributed by the Center for Systemic Peace, accessed 1 May 2024, http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscrdata.html.

[88] Bove et al., "'Oil Above Water';" Braithwaite, "The Geographic Spread of Militarized Disputes;" Caselli et al., "The Geography of Interstate Resource Wars;" DeRouen and Sobek, "The Dynamics of Civil War Duration and Outcome;" Kathman, "Civil War Diffusion and Regional Motivations for Intervention;" Koga, "Where Do Third Parties Intervene?"

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of dependent and independent variables

Variable Name	Obs.	Description	Avg.	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.
Ordered support	2,991	Ordinal support variable	1.2	0.6	1	3
1) Indirect military support	2,609	--	--	--	--	--
2) Direct military support	125	--	--	--	--	--
3) Indirect and direct support	224	--	--	--	--	--
Count indirect support	2,991	Count number of indirect support forms (0 to 7)	2	1.4	0	7
Civil war has energy resources	2,873 (1) 345 (0)	Binary: 1 if civil war has energy resources, 0 otherwise	0.9	0.3	0	1
Investment	797 (1) 1,853 (0)	Binary: 1 if external has energy investments, 0 otherwise	0.3	0.5	0	1
Civil War polity score	3,016	Scale: -10 to -1 autocracy; 0 interregnum; 1 to 10 Democracy	-0.5	6.4	-10	10
External polity score	2,970	Scale: -10 to -1 autocracy; 0 interregnum; 1 to 10 Democracy	-0.03	7.8	-10	10

Support to government	1,624 (1) 1,314 (0)	Binary: 1 if support to government; 0 if support to opposition	0.6	0.5	0	1
Duration of support	2,991	Ratio: 1 year to max. 43 years	5.4	5.8	1	43
Support in previous year	2,208 (1) 783 (0)	Binary: 1 if support provided in previous year, 0 otherwise	0.7	0.4	0	1
Competitive support	1,901 (1) 1,113 (0)	Binary: 1 if external support is competitive, 0 otherwise	0.6	0.5	0	1
Major power	2,991	Binary: 1 if external supporter is major power, 0 otherwise	0.3	0.5	0	1
Former colony	173 (1) 2,818 (0)	Binary: 1 if civil war is former colony, 0 otherwise	0.1	0.2	0	1
Shares a land border	1,121 (1) 1,870 (0)	Binary: 1 if external and civil war share land border, 0 otherwise	0.4	0.5	0	1
Cold War	1,261 (1) 1,958 (0)	Binary: 1 if support provided between 1975-1989, 0 otherwise	0.4	0.5	0	1
War on terror	457 (1) 2,757 (0)	Binary: 1 if support provided to combat designated terror organization between 2001-2017, 0 otherwise	0.1	0.3	0	1

Results and Discussion

To test my hypotheses, I calculate two regression models in Table 2 below. Both models test the predictor and outcome variables in the sample of civil wars with energy resources. Model 1 fits a Poisson regression using *count indirect support* as the outcome to test Hypothesis 1, which predicts external supporters with energy investments will provide more forms of indirect support than non-invested supporters. If Hypothesis 1 is true, we should observe that invested external supports provide significantly more indirect support forms than non-invested supporters, controlling for other factors.

Next, I calculate two types of ordered logistic regressions. The first in model 2 calculates a robust ordered logistic regression (OL) using *ordered support* as the outcome. However, goodness-of-fit tests reveal some predictor variables violate the proportional odds assumptions. Therefore, Model 3 presents a generalized ordered logistic model (GOL), excluding the *former colony* variable due to separation issues. I present both models for two reasons. First, while larger samples often violate proportional odds assumptions in OL models, they offer superior statistical power and can better approximate relationships even if assumptions are not perfectly met. Second, OL models are simpler to interpret and convey than GOL models, which struggle to fit complex models with many predictors such as this. I present both to corroborate the results of each other. Both test Hypotheses 2, 3 and 4, predict that invested supporters will be more likely to provide indirect support only (H2) and will be less likely to provide direct military support (H3) and combined direct and indirect support (H4). If true, we should observe that invested external supporters provide significantly less direct and combined direct and indirect support, compared to indirect support only.

Table 2. Regression results

	Poisson	Ordinal logistic	Generalized ordinal logistic	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	
			Ordered support	
	Count indirect support	Ordered support	Direct only v.	Direct & indirect v.

			Indirect only	Indirect only
External is invested	.206**	-1.539***	-1.569***	-1.725**
	(.085)	(.360)	(.335)	(.789)
Civil War polity score	.008	-.072***	-.065***	-.130
	(.005)	(.023)	(.021)	(.102)
External polity score	.002	.036	.027	.074
	(.005)	(.025)	(.018)	(.065)
Support to government	-.321***	1.319***	1.675***	-.921
	(.083)	(.413)	(.333)	(.676)
Competitive intervention	-.084	.516*	.487	.729
	(.066)	(.310)	(.329)	(.706)
Major power	.391***	-.585	-.542	.298
	(.094)	(.448)	(.358)	(.935)
Border state	.047	.432	.621**	-.121
	(.078)	(.352)	(.294)	(.832)
Duration	.013***	-.042	-.073**	.096*
	(.004)	(.035)	(.029)	(.051)
Support in previous year	.223***	.225	.202	.919*
	(.041)	(.185)	(.194)	(.552)

Former colony	-.095	.234	--	--
	(.178)	(.634)		
Cold War	.058	-.332	-.423	-.156
	(.064)	(.354)	(.280)	(1.140)
War on terror	.023	.978**	.935**	1.143
	(.084)	(.408)	(.424)	(.831)
Constant	.433***	--	-3.225***	-3.333***
	(.086)		(.499)	(.684)
Cut 1	--	3.103***	--	--
		(.524)		
Cut 2	--	3.612***	--	--
		(.546)		
Observations	2,453	2,422	2,422	
Pseudo R^2	--	.122	.232	

Robust standard errors are in parentheses

*** *p<.01*, ** *p<.05*, * *p<.1*

Table 2 supports all hypotheses. In Model 1, the *investment* variable is positive and significant, providing support for Hypothesis 1.[89] Predicted probabilities reveal that non-invested supporters provide fewer than 2 types of indirect support (1.8), whereas invested supporters provide more than 2 (2.3), and these differences are statistically

[89] Poisson models carry several assumptions about the distribution of data. Before proceeding with the interpretation of results, a goodness-of-fit chi-squared test was calculated to determine if the Poisson model is a good fit for the data. The results reveal the Poisson model fits the data well and does not violate its assumptions ($p > 0.05$).

significant ($p < 0.05$). Incidence rate ratios reveal when foreign supporters have investments, the expected count of indirect support types increases by 23 percent, compared to non-invested supporters. Other control variables are also significant in Model 1. For instance, when external states provide indirect support to governments, they provide fewer types compared to the opposition. On the other hand, when external supporters are major powers, they provide significantly more types of indirect support than non-major powers. Finally, both temporal variables are significant and positive, indicating external supporters tend to provide more types of indirect support as the duration of support increases, and if support was provided in the previous year.

Models 2 and 3 also provide support for Hypotheses 2, 3 and 4. In both, the *investment* variable is negative and statistically significant, indicating invested supporters prefer indirect support only, rather than direct support only or a combination of direct and indirect support. The *investment* variable is negative and significant in both columns of Model 3 which compares direct support to indirect support only (column 1) and combined direct and indirect support to indirect support only (column 2). The significance of the *investment* variable in both models indicates a strong and robust relationship, where supporters with investments overwhelmingly rely on indirect strategies over other more intensive strategies. Among non-invested supporters in Model 2, the predicted probability of providing indirect support only is 85 percent, 5 percent for direct support only, and 10 percent for providing a combination of both direct and indirect support. For invested supporters, the predicted probability of indirect support increases to 96% and decreases to 2 percent and 3 percent for direct support or combined direct and indirect support, respectively. The differences between invested and non-invested supporters are significant ($p < 0.01$).

Several control variables in Models 2 and 3 are also significant. First, the civil war polity score is significant and negative in Model 2 and in column 1 of Model 3, indicating civil war regimes that score higher on the polity scale (i.e., stronger democracies) tend to receive indirect support only, rather than direct support. This variable fails to reach statistical significance in column 2 of Model 3, indicating direct support likely drives these results. Conversely, in Model 2 when support is supplied to the government, this trends toward more intensive forms of support rather than indirect support only. This result is contextualized in Model 3, where non-significance in column 3 again indicates direct support likely drives the statistical significance of this result. The war on terror variable reveals that support supplied to combat designated terrorist organizations tends

to be more intensive, rather than relying on indirect support only. However, column 2 in Model 3 again indicates that direct support largely drives this result. Finally, there are 3 variables that are significant in Model 3 but not Model 2. These include a positive relationship with border states in column 1, a negative relationship with duration in column 1 a positive one in column 2, and a positive relationship with support in the previous year in column 2. These results again indicate the explanatory power of singling out direct military support. Where states share a border, they are more likely to deploy troops only, but not combined with indirect support. Additionally, supporters that have intervened for many years tend not to deploy troops, except when combined with indirect support. Finally, support in the previous year increases the likelihood of providing both direct and indirect support, but not direct support only.

The results described above support all four hypotheses, yet there are still some rare cases of invested states providing direct military support. When and why does this occur? To explore this further, I segment the sample of invested states to extract only those providing direct support (or combined direct and indirect support). Doing this reveals 6 invested states that provided direct support in 14 civil wars, totalling 48 dyad-year observations. These cases, including several control variables, are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Sample of invested supporters that supplied direct military support

Civil war	External supporter	Years	Major power	Support to government	Former colony	War on terror
Afghanistan	Soviet Union	1980-89	Yes	Yes	No	No
Algeria	United States	2009	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Chad	France	1978, 1983-4, 1986-7, 2008	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Georgia	Russia	2008	Yes	No	Former USSR	No

Iraq	United States	2010-11	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Libya	United States	2016-7	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
	United Kingdom	2017	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
	Italy	2016	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Russia	2017	Yes	No	No	No
Mauritania	France	2010	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Myanmar	India	2015, 2017	No	Yes	No	No
Niger	United States	2017	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
	France	2017	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Oman	United Kingdom	1975	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Somalia	United States	2011-2017	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Syria	United Kingdom	2012	Yes	No	No	No
	Russia	2015	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Turkey	United States	2017	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Yemen	United States	2009-15	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
	Percentages:	84% post-Cold War (Avg 5.7 yrs)	89% major power	84% supported government	32% former colony	75% combat terrorism [90]

[90] This percentage is calculated based on the sample of 16 cases of external support that occurred following the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001.

Table 3 reveals several trends. First, in all but three cases (the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, France in Chad, and the United Kingdom in Oman), support was supplied after the Cold War. Second, all but two external supporters (Italy and India) were major powers. Third, all but three cases (Russia in Georgia and Libya, and the United Kingdom in Syria) provided support to governments. And finally, three-quarters supplied troops to combat designated terrorist organizations like al Qaeda or the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Only roughly one-third of these cases were between former colonies.

We can draw several insights from this. First, invested states that supply direct support tend to be major powers. This might occur for several reasons, including the fact that major powers like the United States not only have greater financial and military capacity to deploy troops abroad but also have an extended network of military bases to support these deployments. While being a former colony is not widespread, it is noteworthy that in two of the three cases during the Cold War (France in Chad and the United Kingdom in Oman), both were former colonies which housed military bases and troops prior to the outbreak of conflict. While there is not enough data to substantiate this claim beyond speculation, it is possible that having bases and troops already present may reduce the ability of external supporters to hedge in two ways. First, it may increase the pressure that supported actors can reasonably exert on external actors to supply greater support; and second, having troops already present may increase the threshold that opposition forces perceive as "crossing the line."

Next, of 16 cases of direct military support provided after 11 September 2001, 12 (75 percent) were supplied to governments to combat designated terrorist organizations operating within their borders. However, I argue these cases do not detract from my theory. To recall, I propose that invested states seek to communicate with civil war combatants using their military support strategies due to the need to manage long-term reputations with both the supported side and the opposition. However, the war on terror created widespread international norms and policies to punish states cooperating with designated terrorist organizations in any capacity. Consequently, in civil wars where one combatant is a designated terrorist organization, the incentives to signal restraint to the opposition are absent because external supporters do not foresee cooperating with terrorist groups in the future. Instead, they seek to aid governments in eradicating these groups by supplying more intensive forms of support, such as deploying troops. This proposition is supported by the fact that the war on terror variable is a significant predictor of direct military support in Table 2 above.

Overall, the results discussed here provide strong support for my theoretical framework. Of 797 dyad-year observations where an invested state supplied any kind of military support, only 48 (6%) of these observations supplied direct support, while the remaining 94% supplied indirect support only. If we exclude observations where invested supporters provided direct support to combat terrorist organizations, the percentage of invested states providing direct support decreases further to 22 dyad-year observations (3 percent). In sum, invested supporters behave as predicted by my theory in 97 percent of observed cases. Comparatively, among 1,853 dyad-year observations of non-invested states providing any kind of military support, the observed rate of direct support is more than five times as large (271 observations, or 15 percent). Based on these findings, we can conclude that when external supporters have energy investments in a country experiencing civil conflict, they overwhelmingly choose to rely on limited support strategies rather than going "all in."

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

As an exploratory study, there are several limitations to these findings. One limitation is that support strategies cannot be further disaggregated in the dataset selected. For instance, does altering the size of troop deployments or the quality and quantity of indirect support, such as providing more sophisticated weapons, strengthen these results? Future research can overcome these limitations by selecting or combining datasets which have disaggregated information on the size and quality of military support. Additionally, adding a qualitative component, such as a case study, can assist in further illustrating how investments alter the motivations to supply military support in different quantities and qualities.

Another limitation of this study is the exclusion of non-military support strategies, such as economic or diplomatic support. There is a growing body of literature which explores how and why states select non-military rather than military strategies, and how these impact civil conflict dynamics.[91] While the dataset here only includes military support strategies, future work should incorporate non-military support variables from other datasets. A third limitation is the binary coding of the *investment* variable. To the author's knowledge, this is the first study to match external states with existing upstream

[91] See for example Regan and Aysegul, "Diplomacy and Other Forms of Intervention in Civil Wars."

investments in civil conflicts where military support is supplied. A binary variable was selected to explore if the causal relationship behaves as predicted. Given the positive results in support of my theory, future work should add additional information on the size and value of foreign energy investments, which may impact the likelihood of providing certain types of military support.

Conclusion

The results of this study add to a growing body of work which explores when and why external supporters provide specific types of military support strategies, and how energy resources impact these motivations. In cases where external supporters have upstream energy investments, the incentives to *hedge* are strong. As theorized, the quantitative results reveal the preferred military strategy among external supporters with investments is a limited approach such as indirect support, as it more effectively communicates commitment to the supported side, while signalling restraint to the opposition. Doing so allows the external supporter to "hedge their bets," manage their reputations with all sides of the conflict, reduce the risk of catastrophic outcomes to investments, and thereby safeguard their future regardless of conflict outcomes. Additionally, I have also shown that while troop deployments do occur in rare cases, these deployments are likely the result of a reduced incentive to hedge, such as during the war on terror.

These findings have significant implications for understanding civil wars and their outcomes. A rich body of literature has found foreign military interventions in civil wars can have impacts on conflict duration, violence against civilians, conflict escalation, and outcomes like outright victory, the timing of conflict termination, and the success of negotiated settlements.[92] Indeed, according to the data collected, the average duration of external military support in civil wars with energy resources was 5.6 years, compared to just 3.3 years in civil wars without energy resources. While support duration can be influenced by multiple factors, it is crucial to understand how foreign energy investments

[92] Balcells and Kalyvas, "Does Warfare Matter;" Balch-Lindsay and Enterline, "Killing Time;" Carson, "Facing Off and Saving Face;" Carson and Yarhi-Milo, "Covert Communication;" Collier et al., "On the Duration of Civil War;" Jones, "Altering Capabilities and Imposing Costs;" McKibben and Skoll, "Please Help Us (or Don't);" Sawyer et al., "The Role of External Support in Civil War Termination;" Stein, "Committed Sponsors."

shape the motivations of states to supply specific types of military support. Gaining this understanding enables the formulation of policy recommendations aimed at reducing motivations to intervene, which have been shown to prolong or increase the intensity of conflicts. For instance, encouraging increased transparency and fairness in international oil and gas contract bidding may help to reduce the incentives to demonstrate commitment to the supported side by increasing accountability, reducing corruption, and disincentivizing secretive deals in return for military assistance. Ultimately, recognizing and understanding the nuanced motivations behind military support strategies and how these interact with energy interests, can lead to more effective conflict resolution and sustainable peace efforts.