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New Conflicts New Methods

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Cold War and New War: New Conflicts Call For New Methods

Abstract

During the Second World War and the Cold War, OA analysts often made standard assumptions that are not necessarily true in the messy low level conflicts that we have been involved in recently. In particular we used to assume:

- Conflicts are between two well-defined sides
- Armies are raised and maintained by the sides involved in the conflict
- Conflicts are settled by brute force (attrition)
- There was an emphasis on maximizing weapon effectiveness.
- Conflict is a “zero sum” game. Any loss to the enemy was an equivalent gain for our side.

It was like playing a game of chess where you can design or buy your pieces. To win, you can design better chess pieces, use them more effectively (be a better chess player), or have deeper pockets and deploy larger forces.

None of these assumptions really hold for the recent small wars and interventions that are now being emphasized, such as the intervention in Sierra Leone. The problem is less on defeating the opponent in a stand up fight, and more on understanding the motivations and objectives of the multiple players involved. The analogy is not that of a chess game, but rather that of a Soap Opera. You have to understand who are friends with who and what are the motivations for the characters to behave in the way they do. New methods are needed.

Three particular methods are examined in this presentation; they are

- *Drama Theory*: A method, derived from game theory which structures problems as players alter the game being played to eliminate dilemmas.
- *Matrix Gaming*: A more free-form method in which actions are considered and arguments advanced as to why they should succeed.
- *Multi player board gaming*. A board game is constructed, and the options studied as a means not of examining weapons effectiveness, but as a means of examining the alliances and interactions of the players, and developing robust strategies for success.

The presentation will be illustrated with a board game constructed on the situation in Sierra Leone and Liberia.

There will be opportunity during 18 ISMOR for further illustration, by actually playing the Sierra Leone game (perhaps on Wednesday afternoon).

New Conflicts: New Methods

Mike Young



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Some "Standard" Assumptions

- Conflict between 2 well defined sides (Nations)
- Conflicts settled by brute force.
- Armies raised and maintained by states.
- Orientation on maximising weapons' effectiveness.
- "Zero-sum" game.

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The Old analogy

- Chess where you can buy your pieces.



£3



£5

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Strategies to win wars with the "Standard" assumptions.

- Build better chess pieces
- Be a better chess player
- Buy more chess pieces



"New" Wars

- Sierra Leone
- And Liberia
- And Guinea
- And Sudan
- And Somalia
- And Afghanistan
- And Macedonia.....?



Assumptions

- Conflict between 2 well defined sides (Nations) = No!
- Conflicts settled by brute force. = No!
- Armies raised and maintained by states. = No!
- Orientation on maximising weapons effectiveness. = No!
- "Zero-sum" game. = No!



The "New" Analogy

- The soap opera
- The drama



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Strategies to win "new" wars

- Understand motivation and mindset of sides.
- Find out the "game" that is being played.
- Find out victory conditions.
- "Solve" the game.
- Beware of cultural differences.
- History more relevant.

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Differing methods.

- **Drama theory**
Great way of structuring
Poorer at recommending strategies.
- **Matrix Gaming.**
Most free thinking.
Fewer Assumptions
- **Board Games.**
Does the game reproduce their actions and behaviours?
If the game reproduces the observed behaviours we have the motivations correct.
Can we "solve" the game?

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Method: Drama Theory

- Structure Problem as "Card Table"

Actors		Futures		
		Invasion	Cease Attacks	Continue Attacks
United Nations				
	Invade	Yes	No	No
RUF				
	Terrorise	Yes	No	Yes



Method: Drama Theory

Actors		Futures		
		Invasion	Cease Attacks	Continue Attacks
United Nations				
		3 2	1	2 3
	Invade	Yes	No	No
RUF				
		3	2	1
	Terrorise	Yes	No	Yes



Method: Matrix Gaming

- Action and three arguments as to why should succeed.
- Action judged by "referee". Probability of happening judged.
- Flexible and free ranging: allows players to act politically as well as militarily.
- Can easily be made non zero sum.

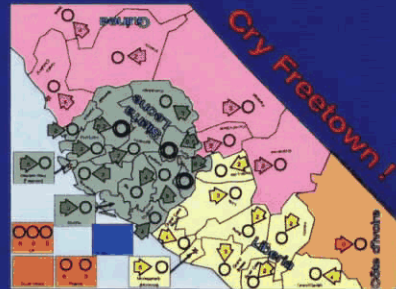


Method: Matrix Gaming: Example Event

- Action: Liberia Loses Diplomatic Privileges
- Reason 1: Flagrant Abuses Of System well known and documented
- Reason 2: Guns for diamonds deals supports by other dubious criminal activities
- Reason 3: Abuse causes direct support to UN enemies, the RUF.

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Method: Board Gaming



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Players: Charles Taylor of Liberia



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Players: President Kabbah



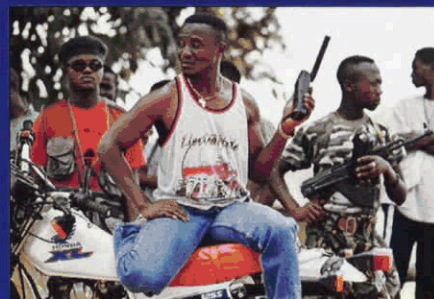
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Players: Foday Sinkoh



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Players: "Mosquito" of the RUF



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Players: Issa Sesay



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Players: The diamond traders



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Players: UN



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Players: ECOMOG (Nigeria)



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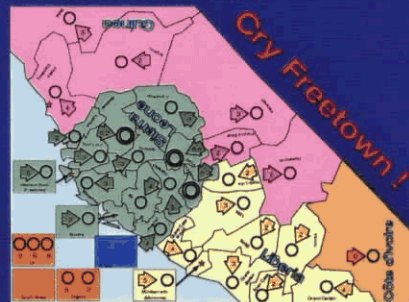
Players: General "Butt Naked"



Joshua Milton Blahyi, a former Liberian factional fighter known as "General Butt Naked", preaches to a congregation at the Victory Christian Church in Monrovia, Liberia.

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Cry Freetown: The Game



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