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ELECTIONS AND THEIR ROLE IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION

By Major Patrick Lanouette

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INTRODUCTION

How do conflicts truly end? When is the opportune moment to transition from the end of hostilities to nation-building or peace support operations? These are but only some of the questions that modern politicians and militaries struggle within the 21st century in terms of conflict resolution. An important factor in conflict resolution is the transition of governance to an able body. For western countries, it is commonly believed that the "able body" be a democratically elected government. In order to have a democratically elected government, an election must occur. Elections in conflict or post-conflict zones can be very challenging. Not only do they need to be conducted properly, safely, and free of corruption; but they must also occur at the right time in the conflict-resolution phase. If an election occurs too early and conditions have not been met, such as security, then the elected government will not be able to govern properly. Conversely, if an election occurs too late, there is a possibility that the "power vacuum" has been filled by multiple war-lords.

This paper will demonstrate the importance of correctly timing the conduct of elections during conflict resolution and peace stability operations in order to ensure successful governance of the failed state. This will be done by firstly properly defining conflict resolution and then situating elections in a theoretical construct as it pertains to state transition. Secondly, different international organizations and their view on the electoral process will be examined. Third, different examples of elections held too early, and those held at the right time will be given. Finally, to provide a counter-argument, a

small case study of Haiti's most recent election will be given. This case study will demonstrate what can happen when foreign involvement is too enduring and how it hinders democratic prosperity.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Before proceeding with the study of elections and their role in conflict resolution, conflict resolution itself must be defined. The research suggests that there are conflicting views, and understanding, of the terms *conflict termination* and *conflict resolution*. Some use the terms interchangeably; however, there is much evidence that suggests they are separate entities.

For the purpose of this paper, *conflict termination* is defined as the formal end to combat operations, but not the end of the conflict itself.[1] Typically in a military conflict, it is the military's strategic leadership that should advise political leaders on when to end combat operations and transition to conflict resolution operations.[2] As military operations end, the conflict will undoubtedly continue in some form or other: insurgency, geopolitical actions, civil uprising, terrorism, or warlords seeking to fill the void of power.[3]

On the other hand, *conflict resolution* is more within the realm of a changing relationship between the conflicting parties. There is a shift at the strategic level that can be represented as a partnership, in which both sides try to agree on a way to ensure peace. Moreover, it is agreed that peace and cooperation is in the best interest of all parties

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[1] William Flavin, "Planning for Conflict Termination and Post-Conflict Success," *Parameters*, (Autumn 2003): 96.
[2] Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Doctrine for Joint Operations*, JP 3-0, (Washington, D.C.: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2001), III-24.
[3] Flavin, "Planning for Conflict Termination and Post-Conflict Success," 96.

involved.[4] There are of course limits to the strength of these new relationships. The quality of the relationship can be dependent on many factors, such as the specific circumstances, changing interests, and the individual leadership of the respective parties. Conflict resolution is but one of many essential steps in peace support operations (PSO). It is a fragile step because it involves forming new relationships and *trying* to let new principles (co-existence) move forward. At the same time, old perceptions (the reasons the conflict existed in the first place) may still exist.[5]

As parties try to transition from being enemies on the battlefield to potential partners for peace, there is much room for instability, and that transition needs to be monitored. If a conflict had multiple parties, then there is a strong chance that one, if not all, of those parties, will seek power in order to run the "new" country. Arguably, one of the best ways to ensure peaceful governance is to hold democratic elections.

ELECTIONS

Before examining how various international organizations conduct elections, the concept of elections will be framed within a theoretical construct of conflict resolution and state/peacebuilding. On the surface, electoral politics and violent conflict seem to go hand in hand in failed states. If voting and fighting are both seen as strategic level equivalents, meaning that the political actors can decide between conducting elections or fighting, the popular support of the local populace can heavily influence this decision.[6] If opposing parties are too close in support should an election occur, then fighting might be

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[4] Herbert C. Kelman, "Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation: A Social-Psychological Perspective on Ending Violent Conflict Between Identity Groups," *Landscapes of Violence*, Vol 1, No 1 (2010): 2.

[5] Ibid, 2-3.

[6] Thad Dunning, "Fighting and Voting: Violent Conflict and Electoral Politics," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol 55, Iss 3 (2011): 328.

the more attractive option. The previous example and the link between fighting

willingness and electoral support are entirely conditional on the type of conflict.[7]

As previously mentioned, certain conditions must be met after a conflict to ensure

successful elections. The research demonstrates that if democratic institutions (electoral

offices, courts, the judicial system, legislative and executive branches of government etc.)

are not mature enough, then elections will not be successful in the long term. Weak

democratic institutions will likely constrain politicians. Those parties who lose the

election may choose to revert to using violence and aggression in order to change

elections' results. On the contrary, the winners of the elections may attempt to impose

constraints in order to make their hold on power more permanent.[8] Post-conflict elections

and political institutions can range from a complete collapse, as happened in Liberia in

1997, or relative perseverance, as was seen in Angola's 2008 elections.

When democratic institutions are mature and have been established for some time,

politicians will likely avoid cheating during elections since it is more difficult to do so;

they are more than likely to respect democratic norms should they win, and will probably

not revert to violence should they lose. Some experts have also added that mature

democratic institutions provide increased credibility to the elected leaders in the eyes of

the international community. [9]

Although there exist multiple democratic institutions, the following are

considered to be crucial and they are the ones that need to be matured before elections

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[7] Ibid.

[8] Thomas Edward Flores and Irfan Nooruddin, "The Effect of Elections on Postconflict Peace and Reconstruction," *The Journal of Politics*, Vol 74, No. 2 (2012): 561.

[9] Ibid, 561-562.

can take place. First and foremost are security institutions. A state should have a

developed security force (usually the combination of police and military, or in Haiti's

case, just a national police force); this lowers the probability that parties resort to violence

during the whole electoral process (before, during, or after). The security forces need to

be under civilian control and must not be corrupted.[10] Secondly, a functional electoral

framework must be in place, such as an honest electoral commission, which will ensure

to voters, politicians and the international community, that the election itself will be

legitimate and free of corruption.[11] Lastly, having established executive institutions like

an independent judiciary and a strong legislature, can avoid repression on the losing

parties from the election winners.[12]

Since *successful* elections are a relative term, it is essential to highlight that, for

the purpose of this paper, it is accepted that the first elections that occur after conflict will

typically not be the *definitive* elections for lasting peace. Instead, a typical stable

democratic system will likely take several electoral cycles.[13] Figure 1 demonstrates a

complete electoral cycle.

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[10] Ibid, 562.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Annette M. Fath-Lihic and Dawn Brancati, "Elections and Peacebuilding: Why the timing and sequencing of transitional elections matter," *Electoral Integrity Initiative-Kofi Annan Foundation*, No 4 (2017): 8.

Figure 1 – The Electoral Cycle

Source: Fath-Lihic, "Elections and Peacebuilding," 6.

These first post-conflict elections are referred to as *transitional elections*. Transitional

elections are the first electoral cycle that occurs after a significant disruption in the

political system of a state such as a violent conflict, death of a national leader, a *coup*

d'état, a constitutional crisis, etc.[14] Although, arguably, transitional elections are

necessary for peace and security in a region, they are not without risks. There is a chance

that they make a fragile situation even worse but can also trigger different and new

violent conflicts. Therefore, the timing of the first electoral cycle is critical.

Not only does the host nation (HN) (the conflicted state) need to have mature

democratic institutions, but the international actors and stakeholders that are physically

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[14] Ibid.

supporting the HN need to have combined expertise in conflict prevention and mitigation, but also in elections and democracy.[15] It is up to these international and local stakeholders to determine the *when* and the *how* for conducting these elections. Since every conflict is different, and every country is different, it becomes difficult to determine a template, or perfect timing, to hold elections.[16] In most cases, it is the United Nations (UN) and other Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) that are the "experts" in country to advise, assist, and support the conduct of elections. These support roles can be expanded to include security of voting sites, ballot escorts, actual counting of the votes, etc. It is highly unlikely that failing or failed states will be able to conduct post-conflict elections by themselves without the help of external organizations. Depending on which stakeholders are present to assist, this external help comes with its own set of challenges. As will be shown in the next section of this paper, different organizations can have differing opinions on the timing and the conduct of elections.

INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS AND ELECTIONS

The United Nations

The UN has several entities that contribute to providing electoral assistance in failed or failing states such as the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), the UN Development Program, UN Office for Project Services, and many more. However, the principal department responsible for supporting elections is the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA). Through its "Electoral Assistance Division,"

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[15] Ibid, 40.
[16] Ibid.

the UN DPPA serves as the focal point for electoral assistance. Requests for UN electoral assistance are forwarded to the Under-Secretary-General (USG) for Political Affairs, who is the head of DPPA. The USG then advises the Secretary-General on the received requests and they ensure that the support provided is consistent across the board.[17]

For the UN, many factors go into the analysis on whether or not they will accept the request for assistance from member states. Firstly, the UN needs to ensure that the assistance will be engineered to the specific case of the country in question. Secondly, the UN has to ensure that their support is as impartial, independent, objective, and neutral as possible; at the same time, they must respect the sovereignty of the country and reinforce that the responsibility to conduct elections lies with member states.[18] The UN supports elections in many ways, and it depends on what is included in the request for assistance. The following paragraphs will focus on the main types of electoral assistance provided by the UN.

The type of request that is used most often, comes in the form of technical assistance. It is considered to be the legal, logistical, and operational assistance provided to either develop or improve electoral laws, institutions, and processes.[19] UN assistance can either be, for a single electoral event, or can be more long term and can cover multiple election cycles. Although technical assistance is generally provided to the requesting nation's election administration and institutions, if the former and latter are in

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[17] UN Entities Providing Electoral Assistance, "The United Nations Political and Peacebuilding Affairs," last accessed 13 April 2020,
https://dppa.un.org/en/elections#UN%20Entities%20Providing%20Electoral%20Assistance
[18] Elections, "The United Nations Political and Peacebuilding Affairs," last accessed 13 April 2020,
https://dppa.un.org/en/elections
[19] United Nations Policy Directive, *Principles and Types of UN Electoral Assistance*, (New York: UN, 2012), 5.

their infancy, technical assistance can be provided to other stakeholders that may be conducting those roles.[20]

It is highly unlikely that if there is a request to the UN for electoral assistance by a member state, that the situation is calm in the requesting state. Therefore, the UN also provides support for creating an environment where an election can be successful. In these cases, there is likely already an established peacekeeping or stability operations mission from the DPKO or another organization like the Multinational Force and Observers. With the use of the Military Component (MC) and Police Component (PC), the DPKO missions can stabilize the country and allow a favorable environment before, during, and after the conduct of elections.[21]

The third most commonly used electoral assistance by the UN is the supervision of elections. In this process, the UN needs to endorse and approve every step of the electoral process. The main goal is to ensure the credibility of the election(s) as a whole. Primarily, this support comes in the form of issuing regulations, monitoring polling stations, the wording of the ballot, counting of the votes, and assisting in dispute resolution. In order for the election to progress to the next phase, the UN must be satisfied and endorse each phase. If the UN is not satisfied, then the electoral management body is required to act upon the recommendations from the UN.[22]

Lastly, the UN can provide assistance in the form of electoral observers; this is done in two ways: operational support, and the coordination of international observers.

[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid, 9-10.
[22] Ibid, 11.

Coordination is done through many activities, including logistical and administrative

support to the electoral observers and other activities such as training observers or even

their deployment and supervision.[23] The UN is the main contributor, and the most

prominent organization involved in electoral support, however, it is essential to consider

how another organization might view elections.

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)

The OSCE provides less *assistance* than the UN; however, they are quite active in

observing elections throughout their 57 participating States. It does, in some cases,

provide technical assistance to augment the administrative and legislative branches for

elections in some countries.[24] The primary branch of the OSCE, which observes

elections, is the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). They

focus on ensuring that the electoral process is respected proper freedoms and ensures the

following are respected: accountability, universality, equality, political pluralism, and

transparency.[25]

When compared to the UN, the OSCE does not conduct as many operations in

support of elections. However, they do conduct some operations that are limited in size

and scope. Such operations include: "advising election commissions; application of

international standards and good practices; improvement of electoral administration;

technical reviews of elections; reform of electoral codes; supporting NGOs observing

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[23] Ibid, 11-12.
[24] Elections, "The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)," last accessed 19 April 2020, https://www.osce.org/elections
[25] Ibid.

local and national polls,"[26] etc. When trying to understand better how the OSCE ODIHR contribute to elections, it is essential to look at their methodology.

In order to better understand how ODIHR conduct their operations and support to elections, their "Election Observation Handbook" (EOH) is the reference. The handbook provides guidelines that observers use to properly understand the electoral process, firstly, by examining the legal framework and the performance of the election administration. Then the conduct of an electoral campaign is described, followed by a description of the complaints, appeals, voting, counting, and tabulation process is given.[27]

The EOH provides much useful information to would-be observers. Of the most important for this paper, is Chapter 4, *Assessing the Conditions and Needs for Election-Related Activities*. The Chapter is broken into two parts. Firstly, conditions for effective, credible, and professional observation missions are given. ODIHR states that the host nation's government needs to facilitate the work of the observers so that they can accomplish their tasks timely and effectively; this will ensure effective, credible, and professional observation and elections.[28] The tasks and conditions that are laid out in this particular section of the handbook are quite extensive. They range from "Establish[ing] a mission within a timeframe that permits long-term observation of all phases of the election process" to "Hav[ing] unimpeded access to polling areas, election commissions, and counting and tabulation centers throughout the country."[29] Although the list is rather

[26] Ibid.

[27] Methodology, "The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights," last accessed 19 April 2020, https://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/methodology

[28] The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, *Election Observation Handbook* (Warsaw: OSCE/ODIHR, 2010), 25.

[29] Ibid, 25-26.

extensive the ODIHR considers them as basic conditions. Contrary to the UN, the

ODIHR will not deploy an observation mission if those basic conditions do not exist.[30]

Before sending in an observation team, ODIHR normally deploys a needs assessment

mission (NAM).

A NAM is normally sent several months before a predicted election in order to

assess the environment and determine what kind of preparations are needed for the event.

Most importantly, they are there to recommend to the ODIHR whether or not an

observation mission is even needed. The NAM conducts high-level visits and meets with

election administration officials, officials from government authorities, representatives

from the different political parties, and other international organizations.[31] The NAM has

its own checklist of criteria that need to be met in order to recommend a mission. These

range from political pluralism in the electoral process, to ensuring there is an added value

of an ODIHR election observation activity.[32] Once the NAM returns, they will

recommend either full or limited election observation support, or, another type of election

support activity. It is clear the OSCE's ODIHR does not contribute as extensively to

elections support as does the UN. However, they can be complementary. Some elections

see the support from both the UN and the ODIHR, as was the case in the 1995 Azerbaijan

election.[33]

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[30] Ibid, 26.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid, 26-27.
[33] OSCE/UN Report, *OSCE/UN Joint Electoral Observation Mission in Azerbaijan on Azerbaijan's 12 November 1995 Parliamentary Election and Constitutional Referendum*, (New York: UN, 1996).

Even with the external electoral assistance of the OSCE or UN, some elections can still go wrong. As mentioned previously, timing is crucial when deciding to conduct an election. Examples of elections that were conducted too soon and at the right time will now be given to demonstrate the importance of timing.

ELECTIONS CONDUCTED TOO SOON

It has already been determined that holding elections too soon after the termination of conflict is troublesome, such early elections can focus too much on wartime combatants and narrow-minded parties in power. Such parties may even undermine or destroy democracy once elected.[34]

The first example is Cambodia's transitional 1993 elections, which were monitored and supported by the United Nations Transitional Administration in Cambodia (UNTAC). At the time, the UNTAC mission was the biggest and most anticipated peacekeeping and democratization mission the UN had ever conducted. The elections had seemingly gone perfectly; however, it was clear shortly after the election that the country did not have the necessary foundations to self-govern. There was evidence that the incumbent Prime Minister Hun Sen, and his party, had gained fewer elected seats than the opposition, and therefore there was no party that could ultimately form a majority.[35] As threats of another civil war began to surface, a corrupted deal was signed, and there was a power-sharing coalition of two "co-prime ministers" from the two parties. The arrangement was highly unstable and was completely dissolved shortly thereafter when

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[34] Annette M. Fath-Lihic and Dawn Brancati, "Elections and Peacebuilding", 10.
[35] Benjamin Reilly, "Timing and Sequencing in Post-Conflict Elections," *Centre for Research on Peace and Development*, (Murdoch: Oxford University Press, 2016), 6-7.

Hun Sen was able to rout his opponents to become the only Prime Minister.[36] The

UNTAC mission was supposed to support a legitimate, credible, and democratic election,

yet Cambodia found itself with a defective, make-belief, democracy. Hun Sen, to this

day, is still the Prime Minister of Cambodia.[37]

There are countless more examples of such elections that are held too early post-

conflict. In these cases, domestic actors are often overlooked and are a big contributor to

failed elections. In Iraq, for example, the US and other international actors wanted to hold

elections after the invasion in 2002 quickly. The rationale was that there was a need for a

Constituent Assembly to have a new constitution and the hopes of transforming Iraq into

a symbol of democracy in the Middle-East.[38] Moreover, there was significant pressure

from domestic elites to hold national elections as quickly as possible. Therefore, elections

were held at the beginning of 2005, even though there was a lack of security and a

boycott from a major Iraqi ethnic group, the Sunnis. In the end, most experts agreed that

the election was held too early and that there was a lack of mature democratic institutions

in place; this hindered the long-term process of democracy.[39] Another example where

local elites played a role of expediting elections was in East Timor in 1999. The United

Nations Mission in East-Timor (UNAMET) was under pressure from one of the local

parties to hold elections before other parties could get organized and gain popular

opinion.[40]

ELECTIONS CONDUCTED AT THE RIGHT TIME

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[36] Ibid, 7.
[37] Central Intelligence Agency, *The CIA World Factbook-Cambodia*, (Langley: CIA, 2020).
[38] Ibid, 7.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid.

The Republic of Angola has two contrasting examples of post-conflict elections. In 1992, elections were held shortly (about one year) post-conflict. The elected party won a majority vote in the national legislature, yet, the opposition party was able to mobilize the military and resumed fighting.[41] However, in 2008, elections were held six years after the second civil war had ended, and the rebel opposition, the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), that started the war had been demobilized. Similar to the election in 1992, UNITA claimed the election results were not valid. Contrary to the elections in 1992, UNITA did not try to resume armed conflict, but instead attempted to challenge the results in the country's newly reformed democratic institutions (courts).[42] Although they were unsuccessful in their contentions and challenges, peace prevailed, and the elections stood. Thus demonstrating that with properly mature democratic institutions, elections in failed, or failing, states can succeed.

Liberia experienced similar results to Angola. In 1997, Liberia held elections immediately post-conflict while their institutions remained weak. A former warlord Charles Taylor had overwhelmingly favorable results during the elections, this was due to his corrupt organizational network, his exclusive use of the media, and he also had extensive financial and military resources.[43] It was later determined that most voters had voted for Taylor simply out of fear that he would ravage and destroy the country had he lost. Nonetheless, his rule came to a halt, and a renewed civil war started just two years later in 1999. This last civil war came to a halt in 2005 with renewed elections that were

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[41] Dawn Brancati and Jack L. Snyder, "Time to Kill: The Impact of Election Timing on Postconflict Stability," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, (St. Louis: Washington University, 2012) 828.
[42] Ibid, 828-829.
[43] Ibid, 830.

successful. The democratic institutions were properly developed: the media was

liberalized, an independent electoral commission was created, and political groupings

were actual parties and not simply rebel groups. There were, of course, contentions to the

results of the election and the electoral process itself, but those matters were settled in

court and not through armed conflict.[44] Once again, demonstrating how proper timing and

having mature democratic institutions can lead to successful elections. However, it must

be noted that democratic institutions in failed or failing states cannot by themselves

conduct successful elections. They often need the help of military forces, usually in the

form of a UN peacekeeping force. Is there a possibility of having *too much* international

assistance? At some point, a country should be able to take matters into their own hands.

The next section of this paper will provide a counter-argument stating that too much

foreign aid renders a country dependent and hinders progress. What follows is a small

case study of the most recent elections in Haiti, which were arguably one of the most

successful elections in Haitian history in terms of security and conduct, yet still, lead to a

questionable end state.

HAITI GENERAL ELECTIONS 2016-2017 – ENDURING FOREIGN AID

What was once considered to be "the pearl of the Antilles," Haiti has become the

poorest country in the Western Hemisphere[45]. Plagued with problems of corruption,

violence, and multiple natural disasters, Haiti has been unable to become a developed

country. Many UN missions have been sent to Haiti to assist in its development. The UN

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[44] Ibid.
[45] Michael S. VanHook, "The Pearl of the Antilles: A History of Haiti", *International Strategic Alliances*, (West Chester: ISA publishing group, 2019), 4.

mission that was present during the last Haitian elections was the United Nations

Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH).

MINUSTAH succeeded the Multinational Interim Force in Haiti on 1 June 2004

with UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1542. MINUSTAH's role was to send a

stabilization mission that would facilitate the political and constitutional process while

maintaining a stable and secure environment.[46] The MINUSTAH mission was required

because there was civil unrest everywhere in the country. From 2004 to 2016, the security

situation became much more stable; this was due in part of the presence of MINUSTAH

peacekeepers, but also because of the capacity building of the Haitian National Police

(HNP) by UN forces. Figure 2 demonstrates the historical evolution of MINUSTAH,

while figure 3 shows the decrease of UN security forces in the country coupled with the

increase in qualified HNP.

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[46] MINUSTAH, "United Nations Missions," last accessed 26 April 2020,
https://minustah.unmissions.org/historique

Figure 2 – MINUSTAH Historical Evolution

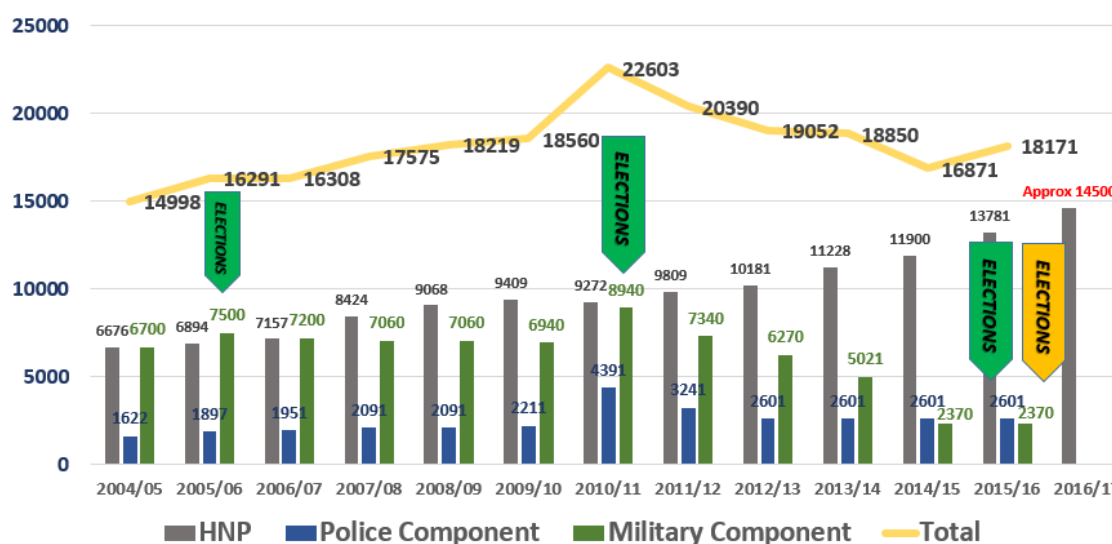Source: Col Pilon, "OP HAMLET Backbrief to Commander Canadian Joint Operations Command", 8.

Figure 3 – MINUSTAH Security Forces

Source: Col Pilon, "OP HAMLET Backbrief to Commander Canadian Joint Operations Command," 9.

Figure 3 also demonstrates the number of democratic elections held in Haitian history during the presence of MINUSTAH. The 2015 elections were meant to be the last elections in Haiti that had MINUSTAH support. Scheduled for three rounds of voting, mounting tensions over the electoral process and heightened security concerns forced the third round to be postponed.[47]

By using the metrics described in the above sections of this paper, the 2015 election had all the conditions for a successful democratic election. There was an abundance of external financial support, and there were seemingly mature democratic institutions such as an electoral council (called the Conseil electoral provisoire (CEP)), there was assistance from the UNDP, Organization of American States support, United States Agency for International Development, etc.[48] Further, the security situation was more stable than ever before.[49] The HNP was at impressive numbers and were professional in their dealings. The MINUSTAH forces rarely, if ever, got involved in local security matters. Why then is Haiti not yet prospering and still facing civil unrest to this day?[50]

Using the metrics described in the previous sections of this paper as a reference, Haiti had all the potential to succeed in proper democratic elections with a view of self-

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[47] Carl MacKinlay. "Transition in Haiti: CAF Officers Supporting The UN Mission at a Critical Time," last modified 06 July 2018. http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/news/article.page?doc=transition-in-haiti-caf-officers-supporting-the-united-nations-mission-at-a-critical-time/iozi65u9

[48] The United Nations, *UNDP Haiti Support to the Electoral Process in Haiti Project-Final Evaluation*, (New York: UNDP, 2018).

[49] Colonel Nicolas Pilon, "Task Force Port-au-Prince Commander - OP HAMLET Backbrief to Commander Canadian Joint Operations Command" (Ottawa: CJOC, 2016), 15-16

[50] The Guardian, "Killers lurk in the shadows as Haiti chaos takes a sinister turn," last accessed 27 April 2020, https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2019/dec/05/killers-lurk-in-the-shadows-as-haiti-chaos-takes-a-sinister-turn

governance and a successful withdrawal of all MINUSTAH forces. These were the third

elections to be held more than 12 years after the conflict. However, Haiti had become a

country that had seen UN assistance for about 22 years, with the start of the UN Mission

in Haiti in 1993.[51] An argument can be made that Haiti simply had become dependent on

the international community and would not be able to prosper while there was still a UN

presence in the country.

The third round of the 2015-16 elections was postponed amidst allegations of

fraud, corruption, and rising insecurity.[52] Table 1 demonstrates the election timeline and

shows the multiple postponements that this election suffered. Ultimately, the run-off

elections were held on the 20th of November, 2016.[53] About a year later, on 15 October

2017, MINUSTAH ended its mandate, and all foreign military forces left the country.[54]

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[51] The United Nations, *United Nations Security Council Resolution 867*, (New York: UN, 1993).

[52] The United Nations, *UNDP Haiti Support to the Electoral Process in Haiti*, 6.

[53] The British Broadcasting Corporation, "Haiti Presidential election won by Jovenel Moise," last accessed 27 April 2020. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-38140316

[54] MINUSTAH, "United Nations Missions," last accessed 26 April 2020, https://minustah.unmissions.org/historique

Table 1 – Election Timeline

Table 1: Election Timeline			
Election	**Due Date**	**Actual Date**	**Comments**
One third Senate	November 2007	19 April 2009 2nd R: 21 June 2009	
One third Senate and all Deputies	November 2009	28 Nov 2010 2nd: R: 20 Mar 2011	Earthquake 12 January 2010 disrupted election calendar
Presidential	November 2010	28 Nov 2010 2nd R: 20 Mar 2011	Candidates charged fraud, OAS verification mission, CEP accepted recommendations, President Michel Martelly elected 2nd round.
Municipal and Local	November 2009	Mayors. Delegates 25 October 2015	Political appointees replaced elected officials in 2012 after their mandate expired in 2011
One third Senate	2012	9 August 2015 2nd R: 25 Oct 2015	New CEP April 2013 New CEP May 2014
One third Senate and all Deputes	End 2014	9 August 2015 2nd R: 29 Jan 2017	Resolving issue of end dates for terms for senators elected 2009 took time; October 2015 presidential election results canceled by CIEVE; new CEP installed June 2015
Presidential	2015	25 October 2015 (results cancelled) 20 November 2016	Elections scheduled for 9 Oct 2016 postponed after hurricane; Privert elected by Senate as Interim President after President Martelly's mandate expired in Feb 2016
Local elections		29 January 2017	
Indirect Elections		11 – 14 July, 2017	For Municipal Assemblies. Other elections not held as results not yet published

Source: The United Nations, *UNDP Haiti Support to the Electoral Process in Haiti*, 6.

A new UN mission was then created, the United Nations Justice Support Mission in Haiti

(MINUJUSTH), which would focus on policing. The MINUJUSTH mission would only

last roughly two years, bringing an end to its mandate on 15 October 2019.[55] Since the

departure of all UN forces (military and police), Haiti has seen a return to civil unrest;

riots are rampant, and the populace and politicians are still disputing the legitimacy of the

2016 election.[56]

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[55] MINUJUSTH, "United Nations Missions," last accessed 27 April 2020, https://minujusth.unmissions.org/

[56] The Guardian, "Killers lurk in the shadows as Haiti chaos takes a sinister turn," last accessed 27 April 2020, https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2019/dec/05/killers-lurk-in-the-shadows-as-haiti-chaos-takes-a-sinister-turn

The author would argue that although the situation in Haiti is becoming violent, Haitians need to "figure it out" for themselves. Haiti had become too dependent on foreign aid, and the UN presence in Haiti had gone on long enough. The main support to this argument is that all the conditions were set for Haiti to prosper, yet with the presence of the UN, Haiti could return to its old ways. Time will tell if Haiti will be able to prosper through this difficult time or if they will rely on the international community to come to its aid once again. Haiti certainly has the mature democratic institutions and professional security forces in order for them to be self-sufficient.

CONCLUSION

This paper has demonstrated that post-conflict, the conduct of elections during a conflict resolution phase must be timed correctly in order to ensure successful future governance in failed or failing states. Conflict resolution itself was defined, and a theoretical framework for elections was given in the context of state transition. The different methodological frameworks used by the UN and OSCE were shown, as well as the different ways in which they can provide support to elections. Different case studies were provided as examples where international organizations held elections too early post-conflict, which lead to failure. On the contrary, examples were given of those who held their elections after mature democratic institutions were in place and had successful results. Moreover, a small case study of Haiti's most recent elections was provided and argued what can happen when foreign involvement and support is too enduring.

There are, of course, good reasons why some might want to push for early elections after the end of the conflict, international deployments (civilian and military)

are costly, people want to avoid power vacuums, organizations want to quickly instill host nation credibility and legitimacy. However, the risks of conducting early elections are enormous. Civil war rivalries likely still exist, and the political struggles between armed groups can arguably renew the armed conflict. Transitional settings are incredibly fragile, and they take place without strong political, civil, and legal institutions that are mature enough to foster. Without such mature democratic institutions in place, the credibility of elections is often brought into question, and warring parties will likely attempt to challenge the results through fighting rather than the legal courts. It is highly unlikely that international intervention in failed or failing states will diminish. There will always be a need for organizations such as the UN or OSCE to be involved in election support. Therefore, it would behoove them to look at the countless examples of failed elections and ensure that lessons are learned. In the complicated space of conflict termination, the proper timing of elections is a no-fail task.

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