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**The Paradox of US Military Aid:
A case study of Uganda and the LRA**

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To my parents, for their love and support.

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List of Acronyms

AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
AU	African Union
CAR	Central Africa Republic
CSOPNU	Civil Society Organizations for Peace in Northern Uganda
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
HSM	Holy Spirit Movement
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICC	International Criminal Court
IDP	Internally displaced persons
IHRO	International Human Rights Organizations
ISS	International Institute of Social Studies
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
LRA Act	Lord's Resistance Army Disarmament and Northern Uganda Recovery Act
LRA Disarmament Strategy	Strategy to Support the Disarmament of the Lord's Resistance Army
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NIF	National Islamic Front
NRA	National Resistance Army
NUDEIL	Northern Uganda Development of Enhanced Local Governance, Infrastructure, and Livelihoods
NUTI	Northern Uganda Transition Initiative
OFDA	Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance
SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army
SPRING	Stability, Peace, and Reconciliation in Northern Uganda
TRG	Somali Transitional Federal Government
OFDA	Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance
UN	United Nations
UNLA	Uganda National Liberation Front
UPDA	Uganda People's Defense Army
UPDF	Ugandan People's Defense Forces
US	United States

Abstract

The LRA is a rebel group from northern Uganda, predominately composed of child soldiers. For the last 24 years the LRA has continued to commit horrendous human rights violations by conducting massacres, performing mutilations, and abducting children for to become child soldiers or rebel brides. In effort to protect the human rights of the LRA-affected communities, the US has passed the 2009 Lord's Resistance Army and Northern Uganda Recovery Act. This human rights foreign policy permits the US government to provide military aid to Uganda in order to contribute to counter-LRA efforts. On October 14, 2011, the US deployed 100 military personnel to northern Uganda in efforts to eliminate the LRA and bring an end to its human right abuses. However, this research demonstrates that this means to promote human rights may actually endanger the human rights of the LRA-affected populations. This research presents a human rights analysis of the fundamental elements of the LRA Act to demonstrate the human rights implications of the LRA Act military aid implementation strategy.

Keywords

LRA, Joseph Kony, Human Rights Foreign Policy, LRA Disarmament and Northern Uganda Recovery Act 2009, LRA Act, US military aid.

Chapter 1

1.1 Research Problem: 2009 LRA Act and the Deployment of 100 US Military Personnel

The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) started in the mid-1980's as an armed political opposition group to Ugandan President Museveni (Arieff and Ploch 2012: 8). During the past 24 years of President Museveni's reign, the LRA rebel group has conducted violent massacres, large scale abductions, sexual assaults, and mass looting in northern Uganda. The LRA has a reputation for abducting children as a method of recruiting soldiers. Civil Society Organizations for Peace in Northern Uganda (CSOPNU), an estimate of 80% of the LRA soldiers are abducted children (Dagne 2011: 7). Currently the LRA is dispersed among the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Central African Republic (CAR), and South Sudan (Arieff and Ploch 2012: 4). At present, over 2 million civilians have become victims the LRA conflict (Dagne 2011: 7). The Ugandan government and other key actors, including the United States (US), have shifted among various strategies to disarm the LRA. However, all strategies have been unsuccessful (Atkinson 2009: 15).

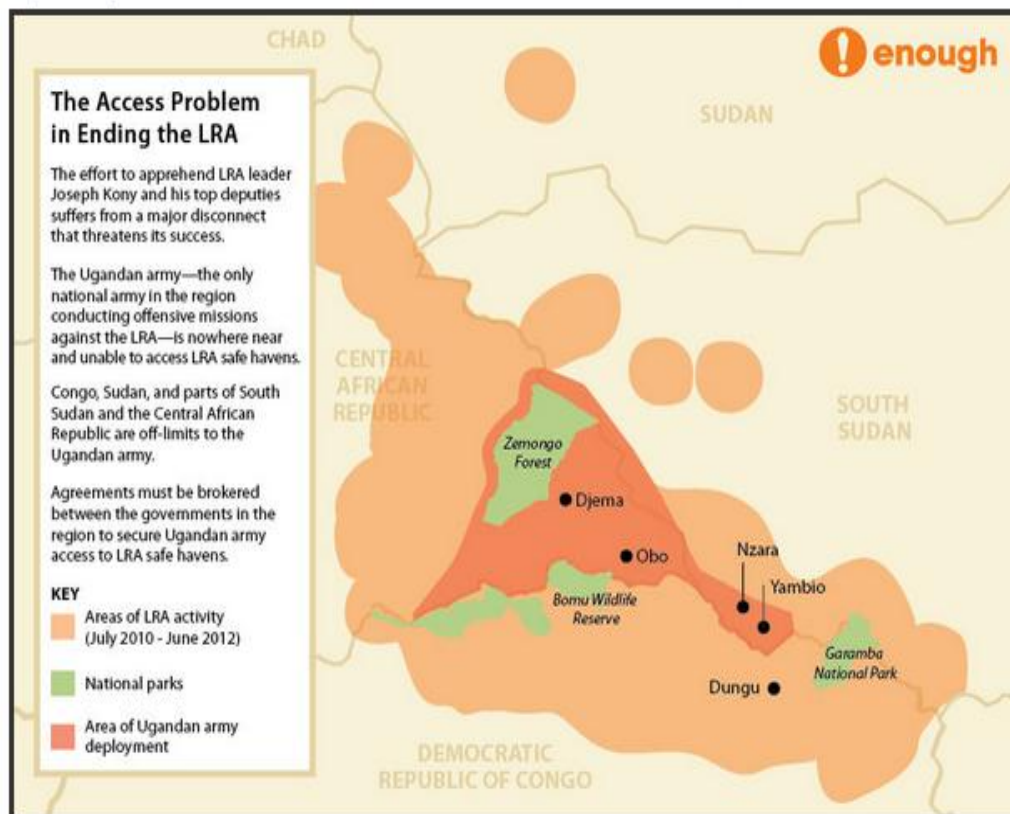
The US enhanced its commitment to eliminate the LRA on May 24, 2010 when President Barack Obama signed the *2009 Lord's Resistance Army Disarmament and Northern Uganda Recovery Act* (LRA Act) into Public Law 111-172 (P.L. 111-172) (Arieff and Ploch 2012: 8). This bill mandated the Obama administration to present a policy response to "guide future United States support ... for viable multilateral efforts to mitigate and eliminate the threat to civilians and regional stability" caused by the LRA (LRA Act 2009).

November 24, 2010, the Obama administration presented the *Strategy to Support the Disarmament of the Lord's Resistance Army* (LRA Disarmament Strategy) (Berman 2010). The LRA Disarmament Strategy provided the US Congress with comprehensive guidelines to disarm the LRA by increasing military assistance to the Ugandan national army, Ugandan People's Defense Forces (UPDF), deploying US military personnel to provide training to the UPDF, and assisting regional military engaged in LRA disarmament efforts (ibid).

On October 14, 2011, the United States announced the deployment of 100 US military advisors to Uganda to contribute towards the capture of top commanders of the LRA, including LRA leader Joseph Kony. President Obama announced, "Our forces will provide information, advice, and assistance to select partner nation forces. Subject to the approval of each respective host nation..." (Obama 2010: 1). To help protect human rights in northern Uganda and central and east Africa, the US has implemented the LRA Act through a military strategy. US military assistance to Ugandan has created tension between those who believe it could help eliminate the LRA (Ugandan government, US government, African Union (AU), International Criminal Court (ICC), United Nations (UN) Security Council, and nonprofit organizations (NGOs)) and those who believe military assistance to Uganda can potentially lead to further human rights violations (Ugandan Civil Society Organizations, Acholi religious leaders, and academics).

The critical issue of the LRA Act is the lack of uncertainty as to whether or not the implementation strategy will achieve the LRA Act objective. The purpose of the LRA Act is to promote “stabilization and lasting peace” (LRA Act 2009); and the LRA Act Strategy believes this objective can be fulfilled through a military solution (Berman 2010). This research stands on the position that US military assistance to Ugandan may not fulfill the objectives of the LRA Act and can contribute to potential human rights violations on LRA-affected populations. The focus of the research will be on the critical concern that the US military aid may be counter-productive to the LRA Act objective and can potentially threaten the human rights of LRA-affected communities.

Map 1
Areas of LRA activity



Source, Enough (2012)

1.2 Background to the Research Problem

Historical Background: Ethnic and Political Roots of northern Uganda

The LRA originated from Acholiland or Acholi district in northern Uganda. To understand the origins of the LRA it is important to understand the LRA's historical context within Uganda and the political development of northern Uganda. This section references the findings from various African and Western academics and reporters, to piece together the political history of Uganda, most relevant to this research. The following will briefly describe how the ethnic identities and British colonialism significantly influenced the political development of Uganda; the shift in presidential power after Uganda's independence from Britain; and the northern Uganda's internal and external political struggle. Furthermore, this section will describe the two perspectives of the LRA development. The first perspective presents the common story line presented by US and Ugandan governments; ultimately this perspective serves as the foundation for the 2009 LRA Act. The second perspective roots the LRA development in respect to the political and economic marginalization of northern Uganda. Lastly, this section summarizes previous attempts performed to disarm the LRA; additionally acknowledges the accusations for reasons why these strategies had failed to achieve their objective. All in all the, the history of the ethnic and political background will provide insight to further support arguments made in the subsequent chapters.

Ugandan Tribal and Regional Identities

Ugandan ethnic identities have been categorized by describing the 'tribal' and 'regional' identities. The tribal identification distinguished the Buganda Kingdom (politically organized through a centralized monarchic) and chiefdoms (a decentralized political structure) (Branch 2010: 26). The distinction of the political organizational structures contributed to the creation of two political identities (ibid). The political divisions were reinforced when the British used these political structures to indirectly administer rule during the years of colonialism (Mutibwa 1992: 6).

Regional identity was originated between the 'Nilotic' people from the north of the Nile River and 'Bantu' people from the south (Branch 2010: 27). During Uganda's colonial period, the British created an economic and social divide between the north and south of Uganda. In the south, the British developed industry, the production of cash crops, and used the north as inexpensive labor (Doom and Vlassenroot 1999: 7-8). Southerners were often employed in the civil service and Northerners were mainly recruited for the army (Mutibwa 1992: 6-7). This divide established, "an economic marginalization of the north and a further development of the south" (Doom and Vlassenroot 1999: 8). The historical development of the ethnic and political identity goes beyond the scope of this research, however, it is important to acknowledge the political

identities were based on and developed prior to colonialism and reinforced during the British colonialism period and post colonialism.

Post-Independence Presidential Overthrows

In 1962, Uganda became independent from Britain, and Kabaka Yekka, a southerner, became the President and northerner Milton Obote was appointed as the Prime Minister and commander of the armed forces (Omara-Otunnu 1987: 49-50). This perpetuated the colonial identity that northerners, the people from the Acholi district, made up Uganda's military force (Mutibwa 1992: 6). Shortly after Yekka was granted presidential rule; Obote led the national troops to overthrow the government (Doom and Vlassenroot 1999: 8). Thus, since the beginning of Uganda's independence, "every oppositional force found it necessary to use military might to argue its point of view" (Mamdani 1994: 5). Obote gained president power and Idi Amin became the commander of the army (Omara-Otunnu 1987: 145). By 1971, Amin used the military to indiscriminately torture and kill politicians; many of which were Acholi officers (ibid: 157). Anti-government forces (such as the Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA)) worked with the Tanzanian Army and overthrew Amin's government (ibid). After the coup, Obote II was voted in as the new president (ibid). In 1981, Museveni created anti-government army, called National Resistance Army (NRA) (ibid).

In 1985, the UNLA overthrew Obote II (ibid). General Tito Okello Lutwa became President and Lieutenant-General Basilio Olara-Okello became the commander of the military (ibid: 165-166). This was the first time the political and military power was held by the Acholi's (ibid: 168). President Okello Lutwa quickly began negotiations with Museveni and NRA forces; and both parties signed the Nairobi Peace Agreement (ibid: 186). Regardless of the agreement, in January 1986, NRA overthrew the Acholi dominated government and the UNLA military (Omara-Otunnu 1992:446).

Northern Uganda Internal and External Struggles

Following the government overthrow, the previous national army, predominately made up of Acholi soldiers, returned to northern Uganda (Doom and Vlassenroot 1999: 9). Consequently, the change in presidential power lead to significant outcomes. First, retaliation groups were created in northern Uganda (Branch 2010: 26). Second, the return of the soldiers disrupted the already weak internal Acholi authority (ibid). Third, tensions grew between the local Acholi government and the new President Museveni (ibid).

The local Acholi district suffered from the lack of political and military organization (Mwenda 2010: 40). The return of soldiers and former national leaders to northern Uganda created an internal struggle for the Acholi political identity and local authority (Branch 2010: 25). Furthermore, the NRA, the new national army responded violently to the Acholi retaliation, "The NRA found themselves in a hostile environment and its response was brutal: executions, torture, rape and looting became part of their normal conduct" (Doom and Vlassenroot 1999: 15). As a result, the Uganda People's Defense Army (UPDA) was created to protect the Acholi people and overthrow Museveni

(ibid: 14). Many Acholi voluntarily joined and supported the UPDA soldiers (ibid: 15).

Additionally, Alice Aluma Lakwena rallied the Holy Spirit Movement (HSM) (Omara-Otunnu 1992:455). Lakwena claimed to be sent from God to overthrow the government and bring peace to region (ibid). Lakwena convinced her followers that they were capable of “chang[ing] stones into exploding grenades, bees and snakes would be transformed into allies, and they were immunized against the bullets of enemies” (Doom and Vlassenroot 1999: 18). At first, Lekwena’s movement rallied thousands of young Acholi (ibid) and gained support from many Ugandans (Omara-Otunnu 1992: 456). After receiving support from the UPDA, Lakwena tried to take control of the UPDA by using her armed forces to attack UPDA troops that refused her leadership (Doom and Vlassenroot 1999: 15). During this time, UPDA, HSM and later the LRA rebel movements created an internal Acholi conflict in a struggle for political Acholi identity (Branch 2010: 25). At the same time, these armed groups were also fighting the national crisis between the Acholi district and Museveni’s government and national forces, the NRA (ibid).

All in all, Museveni offered amnesty to the UPDA and HSM. A number of UPDA soldiers were accepted the amnesty (Doom and Vlassenroot 1999: 15). On June 3, 1988, the NRA and UPDA commanders signed the Gulu Peace Accord (ibid). NRA integrated 2,000 former UPDA soldiers into their military (ibid). Alice Lekwena was exiled and took refuge in IFO Refugee Camp in Kenya (ibid). Joseph Kony, the alleged cousin of Alice Lekwena, claimed to have spiritual powers. Kony, a radical charismatic leader, created the Holy Spirit Movement II which was later renamed as the Lord’s Salvation Army, the United Democratic Christian Force, and ultimately the Lord’s Resistance Army (Doom and Vlassenroot 1999: 22).

The Origins of the LRA

Throughout the years some perspectives of the LRA have dominated the public opinion over other viewpoints (Finnstrom 2010: 77). Overall, there are two main storylines regarding the origins and the purpose of the LRA. One perspective states that the LRA was created to regain government control after Museveni, from southern Uganda, overthrew the previous Acholi government (ibid: 77). Thus, this perspective claims the LRA was developed simply because the north could not accept that the political power of the country shifted from north to south Uganda and therefore must regain control (ibid: 78).

The other perspective of the story expands on the violence suffered by northern Ugandans as well as the Acholi political and economic exclusion (ibid: 78). As previously stated, reports indicated that Museveni forces had committed physical abuse including rape, and tortured against northern Ugandans (ibid: 78). At this time, the Acholi people lacked political and military organization due to the inner struggle for the Acholi leadership (Mwenda 2010: 40). The other perspective of the story further explains that the LRA fought both Museveni’s forces and the Acholi people, “to fight the south [President Museveni’s regime], according to Kony, part of Acholi society would have to be fought as well, and so anti-civilian violence would be the privileged tool for carrying out this political programme” (ibid: 41). The LRA committed violent

acts of mutilation and killing against Acholi's who were suspected of collaborating with government forces (ibid). The LRA used scare tactics to prevent people from reporting them to the government as well as trying to demonstrate the government's inability or unwillingness to protect northern Ugandans (ibid). During this time, the Acholi people suffered the violence from internal LRA forces and the external forces from Museveni's national army.

Furthermore, this lack of organization and the increasing violence justified the exclusion of the Acholi population from national political participation. "The cabinet... was made up of less than 6 per cent Lwo speakers... over 90 per cent Bantu Speakers" (Omara-Outunnu 1987: 117). The LRA sought for political power through violence means. In the end, the violent measures justified the exclusion of the Acholi political participation. Ten years into Museveni's reign, northern Ugandans still expressed the sense of political oppression, "Young Acholi men and women especially, often communicated... their experience of being effectively denied Ugandan citizenship... [lack of] accountable democracy or participatory democracy and security from freedom of expression" (Finnstrom 2010: 81). Political marginalization also contributed to the economic exclusion.

To legitimize his newly acquired government, President Museveni focused on rebuilding and stabilizing the country's economy (Mwenda 2010: 46). Uganda achieved success on a macro level though the economic reforms provided by the World Bank (ibid). From 1987 to 2005, the government received an average of \$650 - \$738 million per year in foreign aid (ibid: 47). Its economic growth rate averaged to seven percent each year (ibid). Ugandan had become a World Bank success story (ibid). However, the reality of this success was not apparent on the micro level of the country, particularly in northern Uganda. "On the one hand there is impressive economic performance and on the other there is deepening abject poverty, human deprivation, vulnerability and inadequate social services" (Branch 2011: 83). "By 1999, 65 percent of those in the north were under the poverty line, three times as high as in the central region" (ibid). "Northern Ugandans are superfluous according to the global capitalist economy their roles restricted to being little more than obstacles in the way of large-scale land buyers and raw material" (ibid: 8). In other words, northern Ugandan did not benefit or contribute to the economic growth of the country. However, many argue the preservation of the LRA significantly contributed to Uganda's economic growth.

There are speculations that the Ugandan government has used the LRA as a leverage to obtain foreign aid and to strengthen the national military (Mwenda 2011: 51). President Museveni maintained dominate control over the country's foreign aid, therefore, he decided to invest into military expansion (ibid). The military budget increased from \$42 million (1992), \$88 million (1996), \$110 million (2001), \$200 million (2004), and \$260 million (2010) (ibid). The military expanded despite the complaints or objections from donors (ibid). President Museveni justified the defense budget stating it was necessary to protect his citizens from the LRA (ibid). Due to donor's inability to restrict Uganda's military spending, Museveni has had control of large flows of foreign aid and the ability to invest in his own political and military objectives (ibid). In the end, the LRA has failed to pose a political or military threat to the Ugandan

government. Instead the LRA contributed to the alienation of the Acholi population from the national government and economic growth.

At this time, the LRA has left Uganda and is scattered among neighbouring countries. However, the Acholi exclusion is still apparent today, “What has not ended ... is the legacy of violence for people, society, and politics.... Various forms of violence and exclusion continue within the Acholi society... particularly around contestation over land and political authority, and continue to characterize the relation between the Acholi and national government- the very conditions that gave rise to the rebellions and then sustained them for twenty years” (Branch 2011: 10).

Summary of approaches to end the conflict

In 1998, Ugandan government developed Inter-Displacement Camps (IDP Camps) in northern Uganda and claimed that these camps would provide civilians with better protection from LRA attacks (Mwenda 2010: 55). The Ugandan government forced northern to relocate to the IDP camps and declared that those living outside the camps would be considered conspirators of the LRA (Allen and Vlassenroot 2010: 14-15). The camps failed to provide basic necessities. The Humanitarian Crisis World Health Organization reported the camps created an extreme humanitarian emergency situation where disease, violence, and starvation killed up to 1,000 people per week (WHO 2005: 3). Human Rights organizations question the sincerity of the government efforts (Mwenda 2010: 55). The Ugandan government has been accused of using the IDP camps as a method to justify the killings of citizens living outside the camps; to destroy the northern economy; and to eliminate the Acholi population by keeping them hostage under the extreme emergency conditions (ibid). “The real victims, the people of northern Uganda, especially the Acholi, were caught between the fire and the frying pan: a hostile army of occupation and a ‘terrorist’ rebel group” (Mwenda 2010: 55). This strategy is argued not only to be unsuccessful but to have further enhanced the LRA ability to attack civilians and abduct more children (ibid). Additionally, the UPDF has been accused of failing to protect the inter-displaced persons from LRA attacks (ibid).

Peace talks were first attempted in 1994 by Uganda Minister, Betty Bigambe. Some progress was made but in the end no peace treaty was signed. The first negotiation was abandoned when President Museveni issued Kony and ultimatum. In response the LRA executed more attacks on civilians (Allen and Vlassenroot 2009: 11). In 2008, in the Juba Peace talks initiated a second attempt but failed when Kony did not sign the peace agreement (Allen and Vlassenroot 2009: 18). It is argued that the peace negotiation process was ruined once President Museveni indicted LRA top commanders to the ICC (ibid).

In 2003, President Museveni referred the LRA conflict to the ICC (International Criminal Court). The court issued an arrest warrant to LRA top commanders, including LRA leader Kony. The court has no forces to make this arrest. Many have also accused President Museveni of using the LRA referral to the ICC as distraction away from the illegal activity conducted by the UPDF in the Congo (Allen and Vlassenroot 2009: 15).

Promoting amnesty has also been used as another strategy to establish peace. After reintegration programs were created, 2004 reports indicated five thousands adults were granted amnesty (Allen and Vlassenroot 2009: 15). However, granting Amnesty has been controversial, since former LRA soldiers return with impunity and struggle to reintegrate into society.

Military operations have been a main approach to disarm the LRA. However, many military launches end in violent LRA retaliations. In 1991, was the first time the UPDF attempted to a military attack towards the LRA. It was called Operation North and it ended when the LRA countered the attack killing hundreds of people in the northern; accusing them of being military collaborators. After this attack, the Ugandan government was criticized for neglecting to provide civilian protection (Allen and Vlassenroot 2009: 11). The Iron Fist attack of 2002, backed with logistical support by the US, was another failed military attempt. Hundreds of abducted children were killed and LRA commanders successfully escaped and increased their forces by abducting more children in new districts of Uganda. Iron Fist II campaign of 2004, was more effective military attack because it forced LRA commanders to release a number of abducted recruit (ibid). However, this release was not enough to dismantle the LRA (ibid: 15). The 2008 Operation Lightning Thunder was the most recent military launch which took place after the failed Juba Peace talks (Atkinson 2009: 1). This operation was a collaboration of Uganda, southern Sudan, and DRC (ibid). The LRA headquarters, which were located in DRC's Garamba Forest, were bombed. However, the military strategy was not fully executed when ground troops failed to follow the bombings (ibid). This allowed the LRA troops to scatter throughout the region (ibid: 13-14). From this failed operation, critiques question the level of commitment made to this attack given the ground troops did not fulfill their role (ibid: 15-16). After this attack, the LRA violently retaliated against civilians in the DRC and CAR; the most notable attack being 'The Christmas Massacre' (ibid: 15). In additional to these military attacks, attempts were made to isolate the LRA through the 2008 Operation Rudia and 2009 Operation Rudia II (Allen and Vlassenroot 2009: 19-20). Both attempts failed and LRA continues to violently attack civilians in the Uganda's neighbouring countries: DRC, CAR, South Sudan (ibid).

1.3 Uganda and Human Rights Violations

Uganda government has been accused of committing severe human rights violations. The most serious problems include "arbitrary killings; vigilante killings; mob and ethnic violence; torture and abuse of suspects and detainees; harsh prison conditions; official impunity; arbitrary and politically motivated arrest and detention; incommunicado and lengthy pretrial detention; restrictions on the right to a fair trial and on freedoms of speech, press, assembly, and association; restrictions on opposition parties; electoral irregularities; official corruption; violence and discrimination against women and children, including female genital mutilation (FGM), sexual abuse of children, the ritual killing of children; trafficking in persons; restrictions on labor rights; and forced labor, including child labor " (US State Department 2010). For the relevance of this research, the following will provide further details on the human rights violations com-

mitted by the UPDF in the DRC and during the presidential election campaigns.

UPDF has been accused of the committing various human rights violations. The most recent account, October 2012, has been exposed in a UN leaked report claiming the UPDF and the Rwanda have been supporting M23, an armed rebel group in the DRC (Nichols 2012). Uganda denies any accusations for supporting the M23 or looting resources in the DRC (ibid). The UPDF has periodically crossed into DRC territory in pursuit of the LRA (Dagne 2011: 14). However, Uganda has been accused of using the LRA as an excuse to enter the DRC to illegally extract natural minerals and resources, with no genuine commitment to defeat the LRA (Mutaizibwa 2012). From 1989 to 2003, the Ugandan government has been found guilty for committing human rights abuses in the DRC (International Court of Justice 2005: 280). In 2005, the International Criminal of Justice found Uganda guilty of “engaging in military activities against the Democratic Republic of the Congo...by occupying Ituri and by actively extending military, logistic, economic and financial support... by the conduct of its armed forces, which committed acts of killing, torture and other forms of inhumane treatment of the Congolese civilian population, destroyed villages and civilian buildings, failed to distinguish between civilian and military targets... trained child soldiers, incited ethnic conflict...” (ibid).

For the past 24 years, Museveni has reigned as the President of Uganda. However, Uganda has been highly criticized for committing human rights abuses, with impunity, towards political opposition leaders and their supporters especially during the presidential elections (HRW 2011). In the most recent presidential election of 2011, there were a number of violent opposition arrests. Female activist reported to ill-treatment by the police and complained of being “forced to undress and [be] held overnight” for protesting against the Electoral Commission claiming it was impartial and not transparent (Amnesty International 2011). Additionally, the police and a group called the Kiboko squad were reported to have disrupted a political rally for opposition candidate, Kizza Besigye, by beating him as well as his supporters (ibid). Olara Otunna, another opposition candidate has been criminally charged for sectarianism; for suggesting the Ugandan government was complicity in the human rights abuses that took place in northern Uganda (ibid). Media reports are also strongly censored, “Key opposition leaders had public rallies and media events... radio talk shows, cancelled or blocked by police and government representatives” (ibid). Furthermore, the Ugandan government is working to limit political opposition through the Public Order Management Bill. This bill would require a group of three or more to obtain police permission to discuss “principles, policy, actions or failure of any government” (ibid).

1.4 Uganda and US Relations

Warm relations developed between the US and Uganda once Museveni became President in 1986 and pursued economic reform and appeared to be making attempts to promote human rights (US State Department: Uganda Country Profile 2012). In 1998, relations tempered when the UPDF intervened in the DRC (Dagne 2011: 12). In 1999 and 2000 Clinton administration also criticized

the clash between Uganda and Rwanda in eastern DRC (ibid: 12). Relations were restored during Bush administration. President Museveni supported the US international war on terror and was the first African leader to support the US in the Iraq war (ibid:12). This section provides further details of the US and Ugandan relations most relevant to this research. The following will summarize the history of US military aid to Uganda; present the US and Uganda military corporations in Sudan and Somalia; and briefly describe the US foreign assistance to Uganda.

Media reports indicate the US has provided Uganda with military aid since the 1990's (Branch 2011: 85). After the Cold War, the US focus shifted from threats of communism to threats of terrorism (Mwenda 2010: 49). When El Bashir gained control of Sudan in 1989, with the support of the National Islamic Front (NIF), the US labeled this new regime a threat (Mwenda 2010: 49). In 1995, the US listed Sudan as a state that sponsored terrorism (Branch 2010: 84). According to western media, the US responded by channeled funds through Uganda to the Sudan's rebel group the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) (Mwenda 2010: 49) (Branch 2011: 85). Sudan government retaliated by providing funds and supplies to the LRA (Mwenda 2010: 49). By 2001, the US declared the LRA a terrorist group and added the group to the 'US terrorism Exclusion List,' which prohibits the group from entering the US (Schomerus, et.al. 2011:2). Ultimately, this strategic partnership greatly benefited the Ugandan government, "By crafting his own agenda in line with the US agenda to fight the spread of 'Islamic extremism' in the region, the Ugandan president brought the diplomatic, financial, logistical, technological and moral resources of the world's sole superpower to his side" (ibid). Uganda became an ally of the US War on Terror and ultimately economically benefited from the military aid to fight terrorism in Sudan and the LRA (ibid).

There are claims that the US government is also using the Uganda as a proxy military in Somalia. The US government has allegedly used the UPDF and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) to channel weapons to the Somali Transitional Federal Government (TRG) (Branch 2011: 226). In 2006, the US assisted Ethiopia in invading and overthrowing the weak Somali government, the Union of Islamic Courts (ibid). Since 2007, AMISOM, the majority of which is Ugandan troops, have strived to deter advances from the al-Shahaab (ibid), an armed group believed to be linked to Al Qaeda (Ploch 2011: 17). Thus, the US has been criticized for using Uganda's military forces in pursuit of its own objectives.

Table 1
United States foreign aid to Uganda (2008-2011)

FY 2008-11, as Managed, by Account, in Millions of Dollars

		FY 2008 Total	FY 2009 Total	FY 2010 Estimate	FY 2011 Request
	TOTAL	431.225	416.953	456.819	480.302
USAID	Development Assistance	32.600	45.950	70.650	69.283
	Public Law 480 (Food Aid)	72.649	39.741	25.000	25.000
	International Disaster Assistance	6.863	5.000	TBD	TBD
	Transition Initiatives	5.337	7.801	-	-
	Global Health and Child Survival	40.451	45.282	66.000	89.500
USAID and State	Economic Support Funds	17.500	15.000	-	-
State	International Military Education and Training	0.625	0.629	0.550	0.600
	Foreign Military Financing	-	-	0.300	0.300
	International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement	-	-	0.235	1.535
	Nonproliferation, Antiterrorism, Demining, and Related Programs	0.200	-	-	-
	Global Health and Child Survival	255.000	257.550	294.084	294.084

Source, USAID/Uganda (2012)

Since the 1980s, the US has funded various programs aimed at LRA-affected population (US State Department 2010: 6). In the height of the IDP camp humanitarian crisis, in 2006, USAID opened a permanent Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) in northern Uganda (ibid). From 2006 to 2008, the US showed support for the Juba peace talks between the Ugandan government and the LRA (Carson 2011). In 2008 to 2010, the US provided the UPDF with \$23 million dollars of logistical and intelligence support Operation Lightening Thunder, the regional military attack on the LRA (ibid: 6). From 2008 to 2009, USAID adapted their approach and established three programs: Stability, Peace, and Reconciliation in Northern Uganda (SPRING), Northern Uganda Transition Initiative (NUTI), and Northern Uganda Development of Enhanced Local Governance, Infrastructure, and Livelihoods (NUDEIL) (ibid: 6).

1.5 Research Objectives and Questions

This research is focused on the LRA Act as a US foreign policy created to protect the human rights through the disarmament of the LRA. Given the context previously described, the objective of this study is to conduct a human rights analysis of the LRA Act and implementation strategy to demonstrate that US military assistance may fail to achieve its objectives of protecting human rights in LRA-affected communities and furthermore can potentially lead to more human rights violations. The objective of this research is to answer *why is the LRA Act counter-productive?* The following research chapters aim to answer this question by evaluating the limitations of human rights foreign policy as a method to promote human rights; conducting a discourse analysis on the international description of the LRA; analyzing how the LRA Act has framed the LRA-Uganda conflict and actors involved; and explaining the human right im-

plications of US military aid to Uganda. The following is a breakdown of the main research question and sub questions.

- Why is the LRA Act counter-productive?
- What are the limitations of human rights foreign policy?
- How has the LRA discourse influence the US perception of the LRA and what are the human rights implications?
- How does the US frame the actors of the LRA-Uganda conflict?

1.6 Theoretical Components

This research analyses the LRA Act and implementation strategy through the support of a human rights theoretical analysis. This section will provide an explanation on how this research has identified commonly used key terms and phrase. Additionally this section will break down a theoretical summary of each chapter.

LRA-Ugandan conflict- is used to indicate the struggle between the LRA and the government of Uganda. The “LRA Conflict” is a term most commonly used to describe the violence; however, this terminology dismisses the Ugandan government as a main actor in the conflict. Therefore this research will refer to the violence struggle as the LRA-Ugandan conflict.

LRA-affected communities/people- is used to describe all individuals that have been affected by the actions of the LRA. Since the LRA has moved beyond the borders of northern Uganda the term LRA-affected communities/people is a term used to include civilians in the DRC, CAR, and South Sudan.

LRA Act- is used to describe the 2009 Lord’s Resistance Army and Northern Uganda Recovery Act, passed as a public law 111 172 in May 2010. The over-all objective of this bill is “To support stabilization and lasting peace in northern Uganda and areas affected by the Lord’s Resistance Army through development of a regional strategy to support multilateral efforts to successfully protect civilians and eliminate the threat posed by the Lord’s Resistance Army and to authorize funds for humanitarian relief and reconstruction, reconciliation, and transitional justice, and for other purposes” (LRA Act 2009).

LRA Disarmament Strategy- is a policy response to the LRA Act. The policy response aims to eliminate the threat that the LRA poses to civilians through increase civilian protection; the “apprehension or removal” of Kony and LRA commanders; the encouragement of “disarmament, demobilizations, and reintegration” of LRA fighters; provision of humanitarian relief to LRA-affected communities (Berman 2010).

Counter-productive- describes an action that produces the opposite outcome of the initial intentions or as defined in Oxford Dictionaries, “having the opposite of the desired effect” (Oxford Dictionaries 2012).

Counter-LRA armies- is used to describe all armies involved the efforts to disarm the LRA, including Uganda, DRC, CAR, and South Sudan.

Donor state- is used to identify the state that has provided funds to a foreign state or recipient state.

Recipient state- is the state that has received the funds from a donor state.

Chapter two uses the works of Carey, Gibney, Poe, Freedman, Ignatieff, Sepulveda, van Banning, Gudrun, and Chamounnd to do define human rights. Additionally, the research utilizes Mutua's limitation of human rights. This research links the limitation of human rights with the limitations of foreign policy as a method to protect human rights. This chapter serves as a theoretical explanation to show the limitations of the LRA Act as a human rights foreign policy.

Chapter three examines the LRA discourse in order to better understand the US framing of the LRA. The chapter further analyses the human rights implications of the LRA Act discourse. This research defines discourse as "the language above the sentence" or in other words the patters and organizational structure behind words phrases, and sentences (Cameron 2001:9). This definition of discourse is used it presents the power behind the discourse; questions the validity and the source; provides the opportunity to challenge the discourse by presenting the opposing point of view. This chapter shows how discourse has influenced the LRA Act and LRA Disarmament Strategy, thus influence the human rights implications.

Chapter four implements Mutua's savages, victims, savior human rights metaphor to explain the way in which the LRA-Ugandan conflict has been framed by the US government and subsequently the LRA Act. This metaphor is used because it supports the US frame of the Ugandan government, LRA, LRA-affected people, and the US. The savages, victims, savior framing permits this research to analyze the human rights implications of these frames as well as better understand the US justification for implementing the LRA Act through military assistance.

1.7 Methodology

This research is based on documents provided by the US government (Congress Research Service, White House reports, Department of State), International Human Rights Organizations (Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International) transnational organizations (Resolve), national and international news reports, and academics experts of the LRA conflict. These documents provide context and contribute to the research analysis. Chapters two, three, and four respond to the research sub questions; ultimately answering the main research question.

1.8 Limitations and Scope

A limitation of this research is that this study has built on the position that the LRA has originated through political and economic oppression and therefore has a political position. However, this research acknowledges that the LRA political position may not be static. However, the scope of this research does not explore other possible LRA objectives. Thus this study is limited to the research findings which demonstrate that the root of the LRA violence is in response to the political and economic oppression. However, this research

acknowledges it is possible for the LRA to adopt other political position as well as alter original objectives.

The scope of this research is to conduct a human rights analysis of the LRA Act and the LRA Disarmament Strategy. However, the main research questions, *why is the LRA Act counter-productive*, can be further supported based on likely implications of the military strategy which may pragmatically lead to further human rights violations. This is because a military approach risks the possibility that the LRA may violently retaliate and increases the likelihood of further militarization of the east and central Africa. These are two important aspects that can further support the argument that the LRA Act is counterproductive and may lead to further human rights violations.

A military approach risks the possibility that the LRA may violently retaliate and therefore furthering human rights violations, contradicting the LRA Act. As explained in the historical background, after a military attack against the LRA, the LRA has violently retaliated against civilians in the region by raiding villages, abducting children, and performing violent acts of mutilation and killings. Academic journalist, Atkinson states, “Anyone familiar with the LRA would have known that if pushed, let alone attacked, it would retaliate against soft targets that the rebels believed are associated with their enemies” (Atkinson 2010: 14). The LRA is likely to violently respond to any military attack. Additionally, the Ugandan government has faced serious criticism for not only ineffective combat missions, but the lack of protection to civilians after the combat mission (ibid). Therefore, recent history has shown that these military combat missions have place civilians at risk of a violent response from the LRA. Therefore, there is a significant concern that the increase in military assistance may perpetuate a cycle of unsuccessful attacks against the LRA and violent retaliation.

Additionally, an increased military aid to counter-LRA armies enhances the likelihood of further militarization of the east and central Africa. The LRA Disarmament Strategy allows the US to offer training, logistical support, and military equipment to counter-LRA operation of armies of Uganda, DRC, CAR, and South Sudan. In addition to the 100 US military advisors that were deployed to Uganda, the US has also supported the armies of neighbouring countries, “the government of DRC deployed a U.S.-trained and- equipped battalion to participate in counter-LRA efforts in the LRA’s areas of operation in the DRC. We have also provided some equipment to CAR forces deployed in the LRA-affected area, and we plan to provide targeted training to SPLA forces that will deploy to LRA-affected area of South Sudan” (Carson 2011). The LRA Disarmament Strategy promotes the increased military support to various national armies which have been accused of conducting illegal activity as well as committing human rights violations. Furthermore, in response to increased military activity, reports from northern Uganda claim that the LRA has announced that it is prepared to retaliate and has made references to previous massacres that they had committed in response to an attack launched by the Ugandan army. As a result from these threats, local populations have begun to formulate their own groups for protection; this militarization of communities holds its own consequences and in the end, most likely fails to provide civilian protection (Schomerus, et.al. 2011:3).

LRA retaliation and the militarization of the region are two important aspects that can further support the argument that the LRA Act is counterproductive and may lead to further human rights violations. It is critical to briefly acknowledge these two arguments; however, the focus of these possible human rights consequences extends beyond the scope of this research. This study concentrates on conducting a human rights analysis on the LRA Act (specifically on the foreign policy approach, discourse used to describe the LRA, and the actor framing) to demonstrate how the LRA Disarmament strategy will most-likely fail to achieve its objectives and possibly lead to further human rights abuses.

1.9 Reflexivity

I was first introduced to the Uganda-LRA conflict in 2006 after watching the “Rough Cut” documentary produced by Invisible Children. From the documentary I had learned about the LRA abductions, child soldiers, and child night commuters. After watching this emotional and inspiring documentary, I was eager to learn more and to help the children in northern Uganda. As a high school and college student, I worked through Invisible Children student committees to raise awareness about the LRA violence. My friends and I worked together to organize Invisible Children film screening and Q & A presentations to groups of students, community organizations, religious groups, and other various assemblies. We also created ways for our audience “to do more than just watch”. We worked to find simple method that would enable anyone to join our campaign and contribute to our efforts of working to make a change in the lives of the children of northern Uganda. In this manner, we coordinated awareness events with fundraisers by arranging social events, collecting coins, selling merchandise. All our contributions contributed to the Invisible Children Schools4Schools project to rebuild secondary schools that had been damaged by the LRA.

In 2009, I became more involved with the Invisible Children when I was introduced to all the Invisible Children projects in northern Uganda in order to enhance my understand the Invisible Children programs and to better represent the organization. Additionally, in the same year I completed an internship in the Invisible Children London office. During this time, I contributed to the LRA Act lobby campaign where we presented the bill as a way to pressure the US government to create a strategy to that would pressure the Ugandan government to establish peace in northern Uganda and LRA-affected communities. This campaign was headed by Invisible Children and another organization called Enough Project and Resolve, previously known as Resolve Uganda. The lobby event brought over 2,000 people to Washington DC to lobby state senators and representatives. The bill was unanimously passed by the US Congress and signed into law one year later.

I continued to follow the developments of the LRA-Ugandan conflict and the US involvement through the LRA Act. My confusion about the LRA Disarmament Strategy surfaced when the US created a military strategy and deployed 100 military personnel. I was unsure of this strategy and like many of my friends from Invisible Children and my Ugandan friends from the Institute

of Social Science (ISS), I was very unsure of what to think about the US military strategy. My confusion further intensified when Invisible Children launched the Kony2012 film to support and promote the US military assistance to Uganda. The film became an online sensation. The Kony2012 film and campaign gained publicity around the world and stirred up significant criticism against the organization as well as the US military strategy. The conversations I had previously had with friends and colleagues were now taking place on a large scale. This emotional period led me to ask more questions about the US involvement in northern Uganda, central and east Africa. During this time I face a strong divide in opinions between my community of friends from Invisible Children who defended the belief that US military aid was a way to protect the LRA-affected communities and my colleagues at ISS who believed that US military assistance would be more harmful than helpful.

Through the HDS courses at ISS, I began to find a better understanding other points of view and build a grounded position that the US military aid is not likely to protect the human rights of the LRA-affected populations and in fact can contribute to furthering human rights violations. Therefore, I am writing this research to unpack the LRA Act and US military strategy to demonstrate the LRA Act can potentially be counter-productive. This research has been written for the US government to show that the objective of the LRA Act will not be fulfilled through a military strategy. It is crucial that the US address the limitations of this approach. Additionally, this research is written for my community of friend who have been involved with Invisible Children and those who have participated in any Invisible Children film screening or fundraising event. This research serves to present another position and framing of the LRA to help clear confusion about criticism and to address the uncertainty and confusion behind the US military strategy. Ultimately, this research is for the LRA-affected communities, that they may be protected from any potential human rights abuse caused by the LRA Act and military implementation strategy.

All in all, my research paper has been inspired by my previous involvement with Uganda and my confusion regarding the recent criticisms that have surfaced through the US military deployment to Uganda and the Kony2012 film. This research process has been a great opportunity for me to academically analyze my past experience through a human framework. I am thankful for the opportunity to learn more about the LRA-Ugandan conflict and the US human rights foreign policy.

Chapter 2

The Contradiction of Human Rights Foreign Policy

The LRA Act was created to contribute to the protection of human rights of LRA-affected communities. There are several challenges in promoting human rights through foreign policy. This chapter argues the limitations of human rights foreign policy through a theoretical discussion on human rights, the limitations of human rights, and how human rights can be used as a Western tool. The second part of this chapter will analyze foreign policy and discuss the contradiction in using foreign policy as a method to promote human rights.

2.1 Human Rights: Foundation and Limitations

Human rights were created with the intention to protect individuals against the abuse of state power, “rights that could be invoked against a government and should be safeguarded by it” (Sepulveda, et al. 2004: 3). The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948 (ibid: 4) to express that the “recognition of the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world” (UDHR 1948). The thirty rights have been categorized between civil and political rights as well as economic, social, and cultural rights (ibid: 9). These two dimensions of rights are rooted from in the cold war ideology (Nowak 2005: 178). Western countries, particularly the US, favoured civil and political rights; which protected individuals from state power mainly through judicial resolutions (ibid). These rights imply negative obligations, believed to require no resources. Therefore they can be implemented immediately (Sepulveda, et al. 2004: 9). Socialist states traditionally have promoted economic, social, and cultural rights; claiming that the realization of these rights is a prerequisite to enjoying civil and political rights (Nowak 2005: 178). Economic, social, and cultural rights are considered imply positive obligations; in other words these rights are progressively realized and conditional to the resources available (Sepulveda, et al. 2004: 9). It is difficult to hold states accountable for fulfilling economic, social, and cultural rights because individual countries, respectively, have different levels of resources available to fulfill (ibid).

There are several limitations to human rights that are relevant in the context of this paper. The first such a limitation of human rights is the gap between the legal norms and the realization of rights. Second, human rights lack a successful enforcement mechanisms to ensure that rights are respected, protected, and fulfilled (Carey, et al. 2010: 13). Third, human rights are challenged by the absence of justification. Human rights are “products of human choice” they are not self-evident or natural (ibid: 60). International Human Rights law is the “product of political power, pragmatic agreement and a limited moral and consensus” (ibid). Therefore human rights is made from individual who have various standards of morality and thus this manmade creation is a prod-

uct of compromise. Fourth, the universality of human rights is challenged by the diversity of history, religion, and culture of the international community (ibid: 14). Distinct backgrounds from various states influence the morality and values of individuals and groups, this diversity can be surface opposing viewpoints. This limitation of rights also defies human rights universalism for acting 'imperialistic' (Freeman 2002: 172).

One of the main human rights critiques is the fact that human rights have been predominately developed and enforced by western states. Human rights are severely criticized for applying a Western cultural standard on the international community, "human rights are part of a cultural package of the west, complete with an idiom of expression, and system of government and certain basic assumptions about the individual and the relationship with society" (Mutua 2001: 236). Furthermore, after the end of the Cold War, the west has gained more space to enforce human rights. As a result there have been incidents of western human right intervention and political involvement; such as in Kosovo, Iraq, and Afghanistan (Ignatieff 2006: 12). This new level of human rights enforcement has threatened state sovereignty, particularly in non-western states (ibid). For this reason, the universality of human rights is argued to influence and control governments and individuals (Mutua 2001: 236). Mutua further refers to "the impulse to universalize Eurocentric norms and values by repudiating, demonizing and "othering" that which is different and non-European" (ibid: 210). Therefore human rights promotion also fosters a universal culture; in which powerful western countries perceive 'other' cultures to be inferior, 'evil', or backwards (ibid: 226).

In order to genuinely promote human rights, it is critical that the approach taken doesn't mistake universality for uniformity by overlooking the significant historical and cultural context (ibid). The focus of this research is on the foreign policy as a means to protect and/or promote human rights. It is important to point out that human rights foreign policy can potentially further marginalizing the rights of individuals therefore can be counter-productive.

2.2 Human Rights in Foreign Policy

Human rights foreign policy is a complex means to promote the enjoyment of human rights. This section will argue how human rights foreign policy can fail to meet its objective of protect human rights. The trans-national human rights promotion requires non-western states to "conform" to domestic laws or in other words, "civilize". Through the human rights rhetoric, according to Mutua, "the advocacy of human rights across cultural borders is an attempt to displace the local culture with the "universal culture of human rights" (ibid: 226). The imposition of human rights contradict the concepts of human dignity and discards the 'other' cultures' contributions to developing universal human rights (ibid: 244). In the process of promoting and enforcing human rights through human rights foreign policy, there is a tendency to denounce cultural relateness.

Human rights foreign policy can overpower, and undercut, the voice of the victims. This method of human rights promotion speaks over the voices of

individual and civil society organizations, undermining their abilities to self-proclaim their rights. "A human rights approach is meant to... give the beneficiaries a leading role in their own assistance or development. Allowing those receiving assistance to identify their priorities, concerns, and needs can help to avoid deepening crises since local populations are often more aware of the underlying causes and attainable solutions" (Posner and Clancy 2001: (Armstrong 8). Human rights foreign policy is created by the leading authority of the donor state and not by the people those receiving assistance. It is argued that trans-national approach can open the "backdoor" for local initiatives. There is some truth to this; however, western positions often override the voices of the victim and ultimately undermine their rights and contribute to further marginalization. According to Freeman, "The concept of human rights demands respect for human individuals as moral agents" (Freeman 2002: 74). Therefore, human rights foreign policy by nature contradicts its intention of promoting human rights by speaking on behalf of another, and further marginalizing the rights of individual agents by undermining their abilities to create the societal change in order to obtain their human rights.

Human rights foreign policy is also vulnerable to the fact that foreign policy is bounded with dual intentions. Human rights foreign policy has two motivations: the promotion of human rights and national interests. For example, "US foreign assistance has always had the two fold purpose of furthering America's foreign policy interests in expanding democracy and free markets while improving the lives of the citizens of the developing world" (USAID/Iraq 2012). It is important to consider that no state is required to place the human rights of other states over their own (Callaway and Matthews 2008: 12). Therefore, the problem with dual intentions is the likeliness that one will be favoured over the other. There is also the possibility of conflicting interest between the two motivations behind foreign aid and often there are conflicts of interests between human rights promotion and national interests (ibid: 12). Consequently, the priority of national interest can be at the expense of the human rights of citizens of recipient countries. Human rights fulfilment can also be at risk with foreign policy because of the inability of the state to control or predict outcomes (ibid). Lastly, no state is expected to guarantee or continue the foreign policy strategy to ensure human rights of citizens of the recipient state are realized (Callaway and Matthews 2008: 33). In the end, it is more likely that national interest behind the foreign policy will triumph over the human rights of a recipient state (Callaway and Matthews 2008: 33).

The LRA Act is likely to be counter-productive in promoting human rights in the LRA-affected region, based on the argument that human rights foreign policies may not meet their objectives of promoting human rights. The subjective foundation of human rights provides a challenge in promoting rights without replacing 'other' cultures with a western democratic ideology. The practice of human rights foreign policy is also believed to further oppress the voices and actions of the violated through dominant international involvement. The nature of foreign policy, prioritizes national interest at the expense of the human rights objective. Not all foreign policies have a mandate which requires the policy to ensure fulfillment of the human rights objective. All in all, human rights foreign policies are often falsely applauded, because in reality the consequences for linking human rights and foreign policy can actually expose indi-

viduals to greater risks and can be endanger individuals to further marginalization of their agency.

Chapter 3

3.1 LRA Discourse

In the statement delivered on the occasion of signing of the 2009 LRA Act, President Obama used what academic experts call the LRA “official discourse” (Branch 2011: 5 and Finnstrom 2010: 75). The president presented the LRA as an evil apolitical terrorist group which; “preys on civilians-killing, raping and mutilating the people of central Africa; stealing and brutalizing their children; and displacing hundreds of thousands of people” (Obama 2010). He stressed the absence of a political objective by stating, “Its leadership, indicated by the International Criminal Court for crimes against humanity, has no agenda and no purpose other than its own survival” (ibid). He described violent acts of the LRA, as acts of terror that threaten all of humanity, “it fills its ranks of fighters with the young boys and girls it abducts... its actions are an affront to human dignity” (ibid). The LRA Act is based on a specific perspective of the LRA-Uganda conflict. Based on the discourse used to describe the LRA, the US has implemented a strategy to “capture or arrest” top LRA leaders. The objective of this chapter is to reveal the human right consequences of the LRA discourse. This chapter presents the four common perceptions of the LRA and examines the origins of the discourse involved and questions the accuracy of this frame and presents the opposing perspective. In the end, this chapter will analyze the human rights implications of the LRA “official discourse”.

Crazy Kony?

The common perception of the LRA has played an influential role on how the international community, particularly the West, have perceived the LRA-Uganda conflict. The LRA is seen as a mystical cult with a leader who is “possessed by spirits” (Allen 2007: 147). Adjectives such as “bizarre”, “syncretic”, and “mad” have been used by the media, including *Le Monde Diplomatique* and Uganda’s state regulated newspaper the *Monitor* (Finnstrom 2010: 75). Former rebellion leader, Alice Lekwena has been depicted as a “voodoo priestess and former prostitute” (ibid: 74). These allegations were strongly reinforced by Museveni’s description of the LRA as primitive, superstitious, armed hyenas, believers of witch craft, and Christian fundamentalist (ibid: 80-81). However, it is important to question the roots of this discourse in order to challenge the validity of the source and to acknowledge the other point of view.

It is imperative to recognize that Kony and the LRA have been hiding, fighting, and living in the ‘bush’ for over twenty years (Atkinson 2009: 15). Thus, there may be some truth to any alleged descriptions, however, because the LRA is hiding in remote locations it is difficult for researchers and the media to investigate the other side of the story. The LRA savage frame has perhaps been reiterated and further reinforced as factual partly due to the inability and lack of opportunity to contact the LRA.

Additionally, the LRA frame, as a non-political armed group, has also been furthered by the censorship of the LRA manifestos. In the late 1990's, the LRA released various manifestos to clarify the outsiders misconception of the LRA political position (Finnstrom 2010: 84). In the 1997, the LRA stated that, "While a big percentage of the Movement's members are ordinary and practicing Christians, I would strongly deny that these members are or in any way have the intention of becoming Christian fundamentalists" (ibid: 84). In the same statement, Kony explains that the movement is for all Ugandans and 'Lord' is used to give thanks to the 'Heavenly father' for maintaining the resistance against Museveni's forces (ibid). Past documents indicate that the LRA has made attempts to clarify its spiritual label. These documents were not received with sincerity and the Ugandan government ignored or dismissed these statements as invalid (ibid: 85). Those supporting or validating the LRA manifestos to any extent were arrested by the government and denied court trials for treason or terrorist suspicions, as reported by UHRC (2003) and HRW (2004) (ibid:85). As a result, the statements were not widely publicized. All in all, the cryptic nature of the LRA and the Ugandan government's response to the LRA manifesto has created a dominant, single-sided description of the LRA as a crazy, non-political terrorist group.

LRA rebels with a cause

Second, there is a common perception that the LRA is an armed group without any political agenda. The conflict has been called meaningless and the LRA is believed to have 'no political agenda' and 'no purpose other than its own survival' (Obama 2010). The LRA manifestos and the 2006 Juba Peace talks are two ways in which the LRA has expressed its political position. For various reasons, these political expressions have been mostly disregarded. As previously stated, all LRA statements were considered invalidated and people who took interest in these documents were subject to unlawful arrest (ibid: 85). The promotion of human rights, national social-economic balance, peace and security, and the elimination of corruption were clear political demands made in the LRA manifestos to the Ugandan government (LRA manifesto 1997 as cited in ibid: 85-86). "LRA laid out a political agenda that included democracy the end of war through negotiations, the national political integration of Acholi on a equal basis with the rest of the country, an end to government violence against Acholi, reparations for lost cattle, free elections, and even multipartyism". (Branch 2011: 75). However, given the LRA human rights record, their promotion for human rights was naturally disregarded (Finnstrom 2010: 86). It is important to note that the demands of the LRA reflect the realities of unbalanced economic distribution in Uganda. Uganda's IMF structural adjustment and privatization program had benefited the booming economy in Kampala, the capital of Uganda, but has not been nearly as successful in other Ugandan regions, particularly in northern Uganda (ibid: 87). This shows the LRA has formally acknowledged the marginalization of the northern Ugandans and demanded a

social, economic, and political change (LRA manifesto 1997 as cited in *ibid*: 85-86).

In addition to the LRA manifestos, the Juba Peace talks were another platform that revealed the LRA's political objective. The Juba Peace talks created a diplomatic environment to negotiate a peace agreement between the LRA and Ugandan government (*ibid*). This platform provided the LRA with a political outlet to announce its objective (*ibid*). "It is not true, that the LRM/A has no political agenda" was the first statement made by the LRA representative at the Juba Peace talks (*ibid*: 88). The representative further explained that the LRA's political objective was previously expressed through its actions, in other words, through violence (*ibid*: 83). This statement shows that the LRA's frustration about lacking a political outlet. There are two key reasons for the limited LRA political space for the LRA. First, the LRA manifestos were disregarded and ignored. Second, the LRA is an armed group of soldiers and not a political group.

A political position expressed through violent actions is not the model or ideal approach, but given the circumstances it can be interpreted as a political expression. Attacks, even attacks against one's own community, can be validated as a political action, "when the political environment has silenced your position... when you cannot pursue any oppositional effort... and when you can do nothing" (*ibid*: 83). Therefore, when diplomatic outlets are restrained, it is argued that self-destructive violence, against one's own people, can be a grave and desperate statement (*ibid*). It is important to point out that the LRA political objectives may not be static. To identify LRA objectives would contribute to the argument that the LRA has been falsely framed without a political position. However, this is beyond the scope of this research. It is important to recall the original objective of the LRA (to promote marginalized northern Ugandans) and to keep in mind the past political statements from the LRA. All and all, the stifled LRA manifestos and the violent and vague acts of 'political' expressions have contributed to the argument that the LRA has no political objective.

Rebel or Terrorist

Third, in the US the LRA label has changed from *rebel army* (from the late 1980s) to *terrorist group* (from 2001). This transition of LRA discourse began when the LRA troops had relocated outside Uganda and the development of the war on terror (*ibid*: 89). The LRA label from a *rebel army* to a *terrorist group* is a significant transition in influencing the international perception of the LRA. This label was officially transformed in 2001, when the US added the LRA to the 'US terrorism Exclusion List' (State Department 2012). In 2008, Kony was labelled as a "Specially Designated Global Terrorist" (State Department 2012).

The international community using terrorist discourse removed the LRA's political position and its self-identification as freedom fighters (*ibid*: 83). In 2006, during a personal interview with researcher Schomerus, Kony explained, "I am a military position [sic] who is fighting in Uganda. I am a freedom fighter who is fighting for freedom in Uganda. But I am not a terrorist" (interview cited in Schomerus: 129). "A terrorist is not a person like me. Be-

cause [...] we are soldiers. We are international people who are fighting” (ibid: 114). Kony attempted to make a distinction between terrorists and soldiers. He justified the violence of the LRA in terms of a soldier fighting for freedom. In the interview, Kony also claimed that Museveni had framed him and ‘spoiled’ the LRA identity (ibid: 118). Therefore, it is important to consider the influence of world politics on the LRA frame and the LRA self-perception.

Crimes against Humanity or Ugandans

Finally, the discourse such as, ‘crimes against humanity, human rights violations, or humanitarian crisis’ are were used in LRA Act lobby campaigns and in media. This has allowed outsiders of this conflict to relate on a ‘human level’ and to feel empathy. Images and stories of human suffering have been reiterated by NGOs, US politicians, and the media. However, the focus on the humanity extracts the contextual setting of the conflict, the history, the conflict, and the individual agency of the people (Branch 2011: 5). Furthermore, extracting the human element from its contextual setting makes it out that it is crucial to protect humanity by protecting Ugandan victims (ibid).

3.2 Human Rights Implications of the US LRA Discourse

The chapter concludes one of the main issues of the LRA Act is that it is founded on the subjective LRA discourse. This discourse permits the US to extract the political elements of the LRA-Uganda conflict and justifies a non-political solution to address the LRA threat. The US developed a non-political solution through the LRA Disarmament Strategy, which permits the US to provide Uganda with military assistance to head hunt LRA commanders. However, there are several human rights consequences to this approach.

First, this solution neglects the political issues between the LRA-Uganda and instead sides with the Ugandan government. This relationship between the US and Ugandan government can lead to significant human rights implications as the US partnership will support a military group, the UPDF, that is also guilty of committing human rights violations (International Court of Justice 2005: 280)

Second, a non-political solution would fail to address the original tensions between the LRA and Ugandan government. Instead, the US strategy focuses on the consequences of the LRA-Ugandan conflict, and not the root cause of the consequences. In other words, the US government has focused on eliminating the threat of the LRA and not eliminating the problem that is ultimately responsible for the LRA violence. Therefore, the US has excluded the Ugandan government as a key actor of the conflict and has focused on blaming the LRA as the only actor responsible for the ‘crimes against humanity’ committed in the area (Hoover 2012: 259). This narrow focus distracts the US from addressing the political relations of the LRA and Ugandan government and does not reframe the social structures that produced these tensions (ibid). Fur-

thermore, the US doesn't hold Uganda accountable for its practices for sustaining the conflict for over twenty years (ibid). The LRA discourse leads to falsely problematizing the consequence of the conflict and siding with one actor can lead to the continuation of the conflict and not end the violence.

All in all, the US government has built the LRA Disarmament Strategy based the LRA "official discourse." This discourse has justified a non-political solution which permits the US to side with the Ugandan government at the risk of continuing human rights abuses. Thus the implementation of the LRA Act can potentially be counter-productive.

Chapter 4

4.1 Savages, Victims, Saviors: The US Framing of LRA-Ugandan Conflict

The LRA Disarmament Strategy was created by the US government based on the framings of the LRA Act. This chapter breaks down the LRA Act framing of individual actors: Ugandan government, LRA, LRA-affected population, US. Through Mutua's savages, victim, and savior human rights metaphor, this research will expose the human rights implications of the US framing of the conflict. The Savage represents the "cruel and unimaginable ... a negation of humanity" (Mutua 2001: 202). In reality the savage is a "cultural deviation from human rights" (ibid). The savages prey on the victims who are the "powerless, helpless, innocent" (ibid: 203). The victim is saved by the savior, or "redeemer, the good angel who protects, vindicates, civilizes, restrains, and safe guards" (ibid: 204). Using this metaphor, the US has framed the LRA and the Ugandan government as savages; the LRA-affected population, particularly the children, as the victims; and the US actors as saviors. The objective of this chapter is to show that the LRA Act is based on the savages, victims, saviors framing of the conflict and to explain the human rights implications of this frame.

4.2 Savages

Savages: Ugandan Government

The US government and US trans-national organizations that supported the LRA Act have justified their support by framing the Ugandan government through the savage metaphor. The following identifies three ways in which the Ugandan government is framed to be insincere, dishonest, and to some extent corrupt (Mwenda 2010: 50). For these reasons, the US believes the Ugandan government requires international pressure and accountability (Resolve 2012: 5). Framing the Ugandan government as savages thus justifies the LRA Act and the US involvement.

There are several reasons why the Ugandan government has been framed according to the savage metaphor by the US government. First, the Ugandan government has been accused of allowing the LRA to carry on its illegal activity in order to continue the flow of foreign and military aid (Mwenda 2010: 50). "Museveni found himself in a favourable position not only to access large inflows of foreign aid, but also with a free hand to pursue his preferred political and military objectives" (ibid: 49-50). Therefore, many have argued that the Ugandan government has purposely maintained the LRA existence in order to continue to obtain economic benefits (ibid: 50).

Second, the Ugandan government and army have also been accused of administrative corruption. Reports accused the government of paying salaries to "invisible soldiers" (Mwenda 2010: 48). It is argued that the UPDF would not report the death or withdrawal of their soldiers (ibid). However, "by 2003

between one-third and two-thirds of the army war actually dead or missing...ghost soldiers cost the army up to US\$40 million per annum” (ibid: 52). This type of corruption allowed many elite government and military officials to profit from military aid.

Third, the UPDF has developed a reputation of committing a number of human rights violations, as previously stated in chapter one. The UPDF does not only threaten the physical security of the people in of northern Ugandan but also communities in the DRC (International Court of Justice 2005: 280). All in all, US military assistance is argued to hold the Ugandan army up to a high professional standard. The US government has stated clearly that their military aid is provided under the condition that the UPDF are respectful of human rights, “We have continued to provide logistical support for their operations on the condition that they remain focused on the mission, cooperate with the other regional governments, and do not commit abuses” (Carson 2011). Thus, the LRA Disarmament Strategy is justified for the purpose of adding international pressure to the Ugandan government and encouraging good governance through a ‘carrot approach’.

The Ugandan government has been framed as savages based on corruption. There are human rights implications of this frame. Most importantly, the US justifies its assistance based on this framing. This action excuses the actions of the Ugandan government. From this perception of the Ugandan government, the US has decided to encourage better governance through rewarding with military assistance rather than acknowledging, shaming, or condemning these acts of human rights violations, unaccountability, and lack of transparency. Furthermore, the US excuses these practices through the savage frame, rather than questioning these practices. Is important to question the behaviour of the Ugandan government, assuming there is an element of truth to these allegations. Does the Ugandan government maintain or even foster the LRA in order to sustain constituency support? for greed? To maintain power and control?

Savages: LRA

The US framing of the LRA and Ugandan government correspond to Mutua’s savage metaphor. As explained in the previous chapter, the LRA discourse has created a ‘barbaric’ image of the LRA as an evil, crazy terrorist with no political objective. The savage image is further supported through the description of gruesome acts committed by the LRA. The LRA has been held responsible for mass killings, mutilations, and rape: “Since September 2008, the LRA has embarked on one of the most devastating waves of violence in its history, killing over 2,400 people, abducting over 3,400, and displacing upwards of 460,000” (Resolve 2010: 1)¹. As a form of sustaining an army, the LRA has enslaved

¹ As previously stated, Resolve played a significant role in the development of the LRA Act and was a leading LRA Act lobby campaign. Therefore, the US framing of the LRA-Ugandan conflict was strongly influenced by the way in which the Resolve organization framed the conflict. For this reason, this section explains the LRA frame by using quotes from the Resolve organization.

children, “the LRA has forcibly-recruited thousands of children to be used as soldiers and sex slaves” (ibid). Additionally, LRA activity has impeded on communities of northern Uganda and neighbouring countries, “LRA attacks has displaced hundreds of thousands of people in the Congo, South Sudan, Central African Republic and Uganda over the past two decades... [which has] disrupted the very fabric of community life, targeting schools, churches and market places... affected most are the already among the poorest and the most remote.. that have little representation in the governments throughout the region” (ibid). All in all, this frame has de-politicized the LRA and paints a wild, ferocious, and inhumane picture of the armed group.

The LRA’s violent actions represent the savage metaphor described as the “cultural deviation from the human rights” norm (ibid: 202). The LRA’s violence originated as a method to overthrow Museveni’s government. However, it is important to acknowledge that Museveni gained political power through a military coup. Prior to Museveni, President Tito Okello also gained political power as presidential through military overthrows. Since Uganda’s independence from Britain, most president power has been transitioned through government coups. The pattern of using force to gain political power is not comparable to current Western democratic practices, therefore government coups can be argued to be a “cultural deviation from human rights”(ibid: 202).

Analysing the LRA through the savage metaphor, does not justify the LRA acts as “cultural deviation from human rights” (ibid: 202) but through this metaphor this research questions why the LRA would chose to commit these acts. Why is there a cultural deviation? One reason may be that the LRA does not have the necessary political space to make its demands, as compared to other democratic systems. This metaphor allows this study to question if the LRA be held under the same standard of human rights if the country is not operating under the same level of democracy as other Western countries? Uganda has faced critical flaws in the country’s democratic system. There are limitations in Uganda’s democratic election process. Having President Museveni in power after twenty-four years, contributes to support the argument that the LRA does not have the political space to make this change. This leads the research to question if the LRA should be measure through the same cultural of human rights as Western democracies.

Through this frame we can further speculate that the (root) problem is not the savage actions of the LRA, but the suppression of the Ugandan government that restrict the political space. The LRA Disarmament Strategy strengthens the Ugandan government and military forces, and therefore this research argues it strengthens the political barrier that restricts democratic space for political oppositions. This study acknowledges that lack of political opposition space is part of the root political problem. However, this study does not suggest that increase political platforms for the opposition parties is the only solution to the LRA-Ugandan conflict, although, this would contribute to create political structural change. As opposed to the LRA Act which strengthens a critical component of the root problem of the LRA-Ugandan conflict by strengthening the Ugandan government and the states’ ability to suppress the political oppositional space. Consequently, the US military assistance to Uganda can contribute to maintaining or fostering the conflict. In the end, the LRA Act, will most likely fail to achieve its objectives of creating “sta-

bilization and lasting peace”, and in fact the LRA Disarmament Strategy can continue violence and can be counter-productive to the LRA Act objectives.

This section concludes that the savage framing of the LRA and Uganda disregards the importance of the elements, consequently overlooking the root problem of the conflict. As a result, the LRA Act permits an implementation strategy that can strengthen the root cause of the conflict and contribute to sustaining the conflict and the human rights violations; ultimately contradicting the objective of the LRA Act.

4.3 Victims

Victims: Ugandan Government

The US has framed the Ugandan government in both the savage and victim metaphor. The Ugandan government has been perceived to be “hampered by a lack of strategic coordination, logistical delays, and limited [in] leadership” (2009 LRA Act). This frame has been further supported by Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, when he stated that the national militaries “lack the full range of resources and capabilities in the area such as logistics, intelligence gathering, and airpower, to effectively deal with the problem”. This frame aligns with the victim metaphor since “the victim must also be constructed as sympathetic and innocent” (Mutua 2001: 230). As a result the victim frame creates public support at the cost of disregarding the historical tensions between the LRA and Ugandan government; overlooking human rights violations committed by the Ugandan government. Human rights are supposed to protect individuals against arbitrary use of state power. In the case of Uganda, the Ugandan government has practiced ‘arbitrary use of state power’ by failing to protect individual citizens and allowing the conflict to continue for 24 years. This neglect in the use of power can also be defined as ‘arbitrary use of state power.’ Therefore supporting that this state, as a way to promote human rights is contradictory.

Victims: Crimes against Humanity and Child Abduction

The LRA-Ugandan conflict has also been framed specifically in light of the crimes the LRA has committed against the children of northern Uganda. This shock factor of the conflict has been highlighted as the main focus of the media and non-profit organization. This is because the victim frame suggests the need for help or outside intervention to relieve the victims from their conditions: “the victims themselves deeply believe in and openly declare their helplessness and plead for outside help” (Mutua 2001: 229). This frame has been reinforced by international organizations who have targeted relief efforts and programs focused on the children caught in the cross fire of the conflict. “Narratives of suffering provide a cause for the activities of international bodies and also assist in the provision of funds for these activities” (Armstrong 2008: 5-6). As a result, the child victimization frame was developed. Furthermore, this frame explains main problem shift, from the struggle between the LRA and

Ugandan government to the child abductions and child soldiers. This frame has incorrectly identified a consequence of the conflict as the main problem of the conflict.

The new frame of the conflict has misguided the public perception but has also played a role in the LRA Act and LRA lobby campaign. American trans-national non-governmental organizations played an important role in pressuring the US government to pass the LRA Act. These NGOs lobbied the US government based on the frame which focuses on the LRA crimes and reinforces the child abduction and child soldiers as the main problem of the conflict (Branch 2011: 238). Consequently, the LRA Act and LRA Disarmament Strategy is founded on the victimization of the children as the conflict's problem.

There are several grave human rights implications to this frame. First, the LRA Act framing of the LRA-affected community as victims permits the LRA Disarmament Strategy to respond to the people as passive sufferers rather than active agents (Armstrong 2008: 7). Consequently, this encourages the LRA-affected population to embrace the victim role in order to receive assistance. Furthermore, this frame fails to acknowledge the agency and citizenship of the people (ibid). As a result, the donor and aid recipient produce a relationship of charity, dependency, and indebtedness (ibid). This strategy fails to build a relationship where the citizens can hold donors responsible and accountable for fulfilling their rights (ibid). In the end, this type of relationship under-mines the human rights of the 'victims'.

Second, the victim frame limits the capacity of the 'victim' to create change. The LRA-affected population are citizens of their respective countries. Therefore, promoting a LRA Act strategy overshadows the citizens' ability and opportunity to demand positive change from their government. In the end, the LRA Disarmament Strategy can further restrict the victim's ability to claim his or her rights and create change. (ibid: 8)

Third, the victim frame disregards the strength of those who have survived LRA violence and abductions. This victim frame assumes that all were victims, overlooking the fact that some LRA soldiers were not abducted but had chosen to fight on the side of the LRA rather than to suffer in between the crossfire of the LRA and Ugandan government. One Acholi explains, "I will be compelled to join the rebel force to fight Uganda People's Defence Force [and the] government" (Finnstom 2010: 75). As a response to the frustration and grievance there are cases where individuals voluntarily joined the LRA (ibid). Thus, the victim frame can actually be further marginalizing the human rights of aid recipients because it disregards the fact that these people are rights holders and possess agency.

4.4 Savors

Saviors: US government

The LRA Act has framed the US government and the international community as the savior that controls the savage and rescues the victim (Mutua 2001: 227).

The US has “provide[d] logistical support ... encourage[d] stronger regional partnerships ... increased engagement with the militaries of CAR, DRC, and South Sudan regarding the LRA “ (Carson 2010). The US State Department has provided LRA-affected populations in Uganda, DRC, CAR and Sudan over \$560 million in humanitarian assistance (Arieff and Ploch 2012: 13). The US, Ugandan government, AU, ICC, UN Security Council, NGOs have supported the LRA Disarmament Strategy as a critical strategy to end the LRA violence. It is believed that the US will bring about an increase in collaboration of important actors and supports the ICC indictment.

The US frame as a savior is strongly supported because of its collaboration with the AU and the DRC. Reports have indicated that LRA activity has predominately taken place in the DRC in recent years. It's important for the UPDF to be granted permission to cross into the DRC borders in order to hunt down the LRA. However, as stated previously, the UPDF has been accused of committing human rights violations and exploiting natural resources in the DRC. For these reasons, the DRC has restricted the UPDF from crossing into its border. Therefore, the US can re-claim the relations between the two neighbouring countries. Additionally, the LRA Disarmament Strategy brought about an increase in support of the African Union. The AU has recently announced its leadership in collaborating with regional governments to assist the UPDF and the US military in capturing LRA top commanders (Reliefweb 2012). Thus, the US has brought together significant actors to disarm the LRA.

The ICC is another actor who promotes the US military aid. On May 6, 2005, the Ugandan government issued a warrant for the arrest of Kony and LRA top commanders. The objective of the US military aid is intertwined with the solution of placing the supposed rebel officers on trial at the ICC. The ICC does not have a military force to carry out ICC arrest warrants. Therefore it is in the interest of the court to increase efforts to arrest or capture Kony and the other top commanders of the LRA as a way to end the Ugandan conflict. As a result of US involvement, it is more likely that the LRA will be placed on trial through the ICC.

Furthermore, the US savior frame has also created a dependency on the US involvement and military assistance. Supporters of the LRA Disarmament Strategy argue that if the US prematurely withdrew forces it would undo all progress that has been made as well as leave civilians vulnerable to LRA attacks (Resolve 2012: 5). There are claims that the LRA will outlast the efforts of the US military assistance, the US will retreat, and the LRA will rebuild and regain forces (ibid). For this reason, many NGOs have supported the LRA Disarmament Strategy and advocate for an increase of US military assistance.

As a powerful actor and primary donor to the counter-LRA military operations (Arieff and Ploch 2012: 2) the US decision to enhance military assistance has influenced the strategies and actions of other stakeholders. The US decision to enhance military aid has influenced the response of other important actors. The AU, UN, and neighbouring actors have followed the US in its military approach and have also shaped their strategies to compliment the US force. Peace centred organizations have denounced the increase of military aid because it is a strong focus on a military solution and undermines alternative approaches such as the peace negotiations, amnesty, and traditional peace

building methods. All in all, the increase in US military aid has influenced the strategies of major actors, thus, further neglecting other approaches.

All in all, the US is a dominant actor within the international community. The enhanced investment and commitment to a specific military strategy has influenced other key actors involved. Through a human rights analysis, this savior metaphor demonstrates that a solution through a 'savior' removes the Ugandan government's responsibility to protect the citizens of the state (Armstrong 2008: 7). In the circumstances, where the state is unable or unwilling to fulfil its responsibilities, and the savior involvement undermines the agency of the 'victim' and takes away the opportunity for the citizen to create the positive structural change.

The LRA Act is counter-productive because of the way the US government has framed the LRA-Ugandan conflict and the actors involved. The LRA Act is intended to promote human rights for the LRA-affected population. However, the LRA Act frame of the conflict has further marginalized the actors involved. Furthermore, the US has implemented an action strategy based on this frame; further neglecting the human rights implications. This chapter concludes that the savage, victim, savior framing promotes strategies that potentially overlook the root cause of the problem; which undermine the human rights agency of the 'victim'; and prevent the opportunity to create structural change.

Chapter 5 Conclusion

5.1 Why is the LRA Act counter-productive?

The purpose of this research is to answer *Why is the LRA Act counter-productive?* To answer this question, this research takes a deeper look at the characteristics and position of the LRA Act. The LRA Act is characterized as human right foreign policy. Chapter two of this research features the limitations of human rights by presenting the Western origins of human rights. Furthermore, how human rights foreign policy can potentially threaten human rights, if the national interest of the donor state is prioritized over the human rights of the recipient civilians. Additionally, protecting human rights through foreign policy can undermine or may even disable the agency of the “victims”, thus further marginalizing their ability to create change. The LRA Act can be counter-productive in rights protection because of the characteristics of human rights foreign policy.

In chapter three the research traces back the development behind the LRA discourse in order to understand the US perception of the LRA and question the validity of this description. The chapter concludes that the LRA Act is based on the subjective discourse that presents the LRA as a non-political terrorist group. As a result, the US government has perceived the LRA-Ugandan conflict as the “LRA-problem”. This frame presents only one actor and dismisses the Ugandan government as a key actor. These findings indicate the LRA Act has a subjective view of the LRA, thus creating a subjective strategy which neglects the Ugandan government as a critical actor of the conflict. This chapter shows the LRA Act is counter-productive because the discourse permits the US government to provide military aid to the Ugandan government at the risk of perpetuating the conflict between it and the LRA.

Chapter four analyses the key actors of the LRA Act through Mutua’s savages, victims, savior human rights metaphor. The Ugandan government savage frame excuses unaccountable behavior. The Ugandan government is also framed as a victim of the LRA and presented as sympathetic and innocent. The LRA savage frame fails to question the purpose behind the LRA. Thus, funding the Ugandan government may only sustain the political power and “democracy” which the LRA seeks to challenge. The LRA Act further victimizes the LRA-affected population rather than recognizing their active agency. The ‘victimization’ of the LRA-affected people discourages people to act upon their agency and demand political and structural change. The US savior frame permits the implementation of a strategy that creates dependency and fails to hold the state accountable for protecting human rights and eliminates the citizens’ opportunity to demand change.

All in all, the savages, victim, savior framing of the LRA Act threatens the human rights of the LRA-affected population. Based on this research findings, of the characteristics of human rights foreign policy as well as the LRA Act’s discourse of the LRA and framing of the key actors, the military imple-

mentation strategy can potentially threaten the human rights of the LRA-affected communities. The LRA Act will unlikely fulfill its objective of protecting human rights and may contribute to further human rights violations. This research demonstrates why the LRA Act is counter-productive.

5.2 My Reflections

After presenting the contradiction of the LRA Act and military strategy, I now wonder what the US should do now. Should the US do anything? My research presents a critique to a human rights initiative; however I believe it is imperative not to use this critique as an excuse to do nothing or to end the pursuit of human rights through foreign policy. Instead I hope that the research can present a better understanding of the limitations and human rights implications in order to implement a strategy that can truly promote human rights.

All in all, I would like to acknowledge human rights foreign policy may require a more complex understanding of the perception and framing of all actors involved. This realization may lead the encouragement of less foreign involvement rather than more foreign assistance. It is important to first recognize how the US is already involved or influencing human rights situations (Branch 2011: 247). It is imperative to end the destruction caused by current assistance (ibid). The challenge is that advocating for human rights by discouraging action is counter-intuitive and unappealing. However, less intervention creates the opportunity for political agency in order to create sustainable change within the state. Additionally, it promotes political response and accountability (ibid: 247).

Furthermore, I would like to suggest separating human rights from foreign policy (Callaway and Matthews 2008: 184). National interest is often the priority of donor states and therefore can jeopardize human rights of civilians from the recipient state.

Lastly, in the words of Omara-Otunnu, I would like to encourage “informed empathy”. It is essential to continue to be empathetic of human rights abuses. I believe to be empathetic and informed can be two significant characteristics that can contribute to positive change.

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