Coups In Uganda

Obote Milton

Obote's strategies Obote seemed to be aware of the danger of this over-dependence on the army. He resorted to two strategies. The first was to form the special force of the General Service Unit in order to weaken the army command as the sole arbiter of physical power. The second, through The Common Maris Charter, was to turn Uganda towards the left. The Charter was in fact sub-titled First Steps for Uganda to Move to the Left, and it proposed to strengthen the public and co-operative sectors of the economy while at the same time attempting to weaken the grip of foreign capital. The perspective was that popular support would in time not only create a momentum for social change but would also bring grass-root support to the party and thus lessen dependence on the army. The leftward turn was rather hesitant, and by the time of the coup the partial nationalizations were still in mid-stream. But the attempt to turn to the left inevitably had the effect of disgruntling those of the elite who, despite Obote's egalitarian admonitions, preferred Mercedes Benz motor-cars to bicycles, and of preparing them as potential allies of any force that would challenge this direction of government. And, as every- where else where the same policy has been tried, the attempts to diversify the armed forces' command served to provoke the army rather than to weaken it.

Idi Amin

On January 25, 1971, Idi Amin Dada, seized control of the government from, Milton Obote, who was blocked from returning home from a British Commonwealth meeting in Singapore.

First, despite Idi Amin's international reputation, he may not have been Uganda's bloodiest tyrant.

In 1994, scholar A.B.K. Kasozi's deeply researched account, ***The Social Origins of Violence in Uganda 1964-1985***, reported that the total number of deaths for political motives during Amin's reign reached as high as 300,000. These were dwarfed, however, by those recorded during two periods when Milton Obote ruled as president (from 1962 to 1971 and from 1980 to 1985).

Estimates of murders during the Obote years were "…not less than 50,000 and could have been as high as one million."

A second melancholy fact, the murders have not stopped. Death by staged auto accident and poisoning remain tools of political repression well into the 21st Century.

Amin was part of a trend during Uganda's independence era of people overthrowing the government or using undemocratic means of holding onto power. Obote himself suspended the Constitution after Uganda's independence, arbitrarily detained his opponents, and refused to have elections. Having toppled Obote, Amin was subsequently overthrown in April 1979 by Ugandan rebels and forces from neighboring Tanzania, and Yusufu K. Lule was installed as president. Only 68 days into his presidency, Lule was removed from office in a coup led by the National Consultative Council for "allegedly making wide ranging appointments in government without consulting them." In June 1979, Godfrey Binaisa was installed as President. His tenure only lasted eleven months after which he was removed "by a military clique that included Museveni [Uganda's incumbent president]." Following Binaisa's fall, the country was briefly placed under the control of a military commission and then the Presidential Commission of Uganda, both of which were led by Paulo Muwanga who served as the country's *de facto* president until the elections of December 1980.
The 1980 election saw the return of Obote to the presidency. The parties that competed in the 1980 elections included the Uganda People's Congress (UPC) (led by Obote), the Democratic Party (DP) (led by Paul Ssemogerere), and the Uganda Patriotic Movement (UPM) (led by Yoweri Museveni). (Omongole R. Anguria, *supra* at 93.) The UPC and DP won 74 and 51 seats respectively, while the UPM, which fielded 82 candidates, only won 1 seat. Museveni lost his own contest to a DP candidate. (Keneth Ingham, Obote: A Political Biography 174 (1994).) Obote assumed the presidency and Museveni, citing election-rigging by Obote, launched a civil war in 1981. In 1985, General Tito Okell removed Obote and assumed power. In January 1986, Museveni overthrew Okell and became President.
Museveni, who is now 73 years old, remains in office. Having been re-elected in 2016, his current term ends in 2021. However, a recent amendment to the Constitution removed a requirement (section 102) that presidential candidates be under the age of 75, thereby allowing him to extend his rule beyond that time. The amendment also reinstituted a two-term cap on presidents (section 105), meaning that Museveni's rule will come to an end by 2031 (unless, of course, the Constitution is changed again to eliminate the term limit, as happened in 2005).

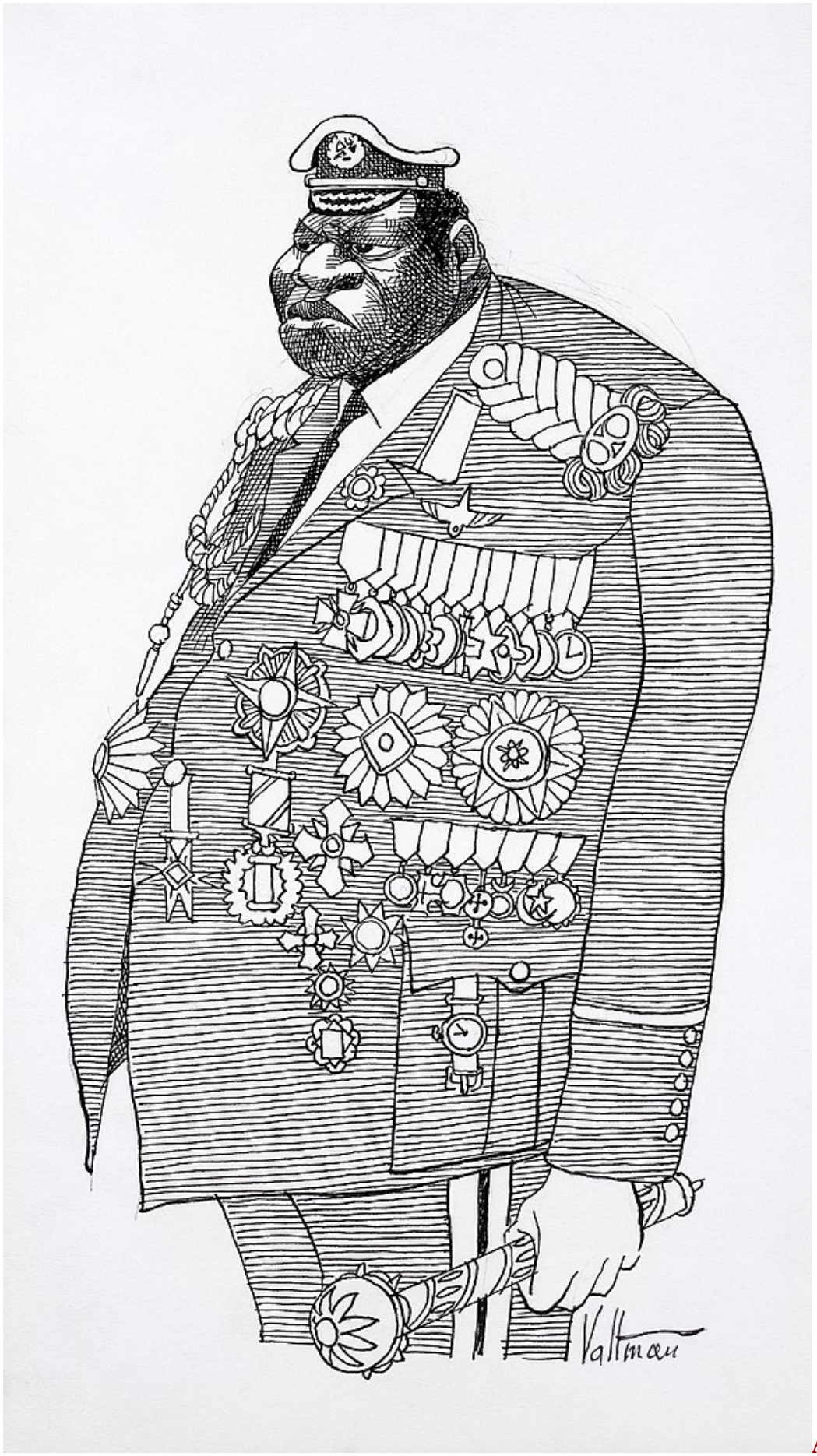
Amin replaced Milton Obote, who had been in power since independence in 1962 and who had presided over a steady slide toward authoritarianism. Obote also abolished Uganda's constituent kingdoms – a key source of pride

and identity for millions – in favour of a unitary state. His putatively socialist economic policies had become widely discredited.
As a result, Amin's declaration that Obote had been overthrown and that the army had taken over guardianship of the nation was greeted with relief in many quarters.
Amin's *coup d'état* was in some respects the culmination of Uganda's tumultuous decolonization. Nationalist politics in the 1950s had been ferociously contested along religious, ethnic, and regional lines, and fractures remained – indeed deepened – during the 1960s. Many who perceived the civilian political class as increasingly illegitimate welcomed the seizure of power by a supposedly apolitical professional soldier.
However, neither patriotism nor altruism motivated Amin; rather, personal circumstances moved him to act. His own position had become perilous in the months prior to the coup as his relationship with Obote deteriorated. He had been demoted from his former post as commander of the Ugandan armed forces, and he had recently learned of his impending arrest on the charge of misappropriating public funds.
In any case, following a brief honeymoon period in which the new regime enjoyed some public support, the nature of Amin's government soon became appallingly clear. He carried out bloody purges of soldiers from rival ethnic groups, while his brutal security forces clamped down on dissent and increasingly unleashed violence with impunity.
To some extent, Amin could be seen as representative of precolonial military culture, the resurgence of an idea deeply rooted in the region that military leaders made the best political leaders, and that army and state were indelibly intertwined. Yet Amin himself was also very much the product of British colonial rule. As a young semiliterate man from the Kakwa ethnic group in the far northwest of the Ugandan Protectorate, he had been recruited into the King's African Rifles, the British colonial regiment in East Africa.

It was British policy to target for military recruitment communities on the peripheries of their territories, and groups identified as "martial" in culture and physiology. Idi Amin served the British with some distinction, including in Kenya during the Mau Mau uprising in the 1950s. He drew praise for his vigour and loyalty from his commanding officers who nonetheless commented that he was intellectually challenged – not untypical, and usually racially framed.

Perhaps for those very reasons, at least in part, Amin – while initially supported by the British, who saw him as an ally compared to the leftist Obote – quickly became hostile to Britain and to the West in general. By the mid-1970s, he gravitated toward the Islamic world in diplomatic terms, embraced his Muslim identity, and became particularly close to Libya's Muammar al-Qaddafi.

After the British Government severed diplomatic relations with Uganda in 1977, Amin awarded himself a new title – Conqueror of the British Empire – and enjoyed taunting his former colonial masters.



A 1977

caricature of Idi Amin in military and presidential dress.

Almost as important as any actual policy shifts to understanding Idi Amin is the image-making that went on around him in the course of the 1970s. Right from the outset following his *coup*, Amin projected himself as a man of the people, cultivating a folksy, jocular persona behind the bemedaled uniform of the Field Marshal and President for Life.

Western media, on the other hand, framed him as a bloodthirsty clown and unstable despot. He was thus positioned in a canon of European stereotypes about African leaders stretching back to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Thus was the figure of Amin racialized in the bluntest of terms, and he himself became a byword for the bizarre cruelty of African military regimes.

While there were various plots against Amin, as well as several assassination attempts, in the end he was brought down by a foreign policy blunder – an ill-advised invasion of Tanzanian territory, which led to the Tanzanian army's uncompromising response alongside Ugandan forces in exile. Within weeks, his army was crushed, and he fled into exile, first to Libya and later to Saudi Arabia, where he remained for the rest of his life. He died in 2003.

In the short term, Amin left Uganda in turmoil – a succession of unstable governments through 1979-80, and ultimately the return of Milton Obote following the rigged election of 1980. Civil war erupted in the early 1980s and the regime popularly known as 'Obote II' involved more death and destruction than the whole of Amin's tenure. Obote was overthrown for the second and last time in 1985. Six months later, the current regime – the National Resistance Movement under Yoweri Museveni – seized power.

Amin's era was a traumatizing period for millions of Ugandans. In many ways, Uganda has lived under the shadow of Amin ever since, even though the majority of Ugandans now have no direct memory of his regime.

NRA

The NRM and the occult

The NRM came to power in 1986 after a long and violent guerilla war against the government of Milton Obote. The architects of the NRM saw themselves as disciplinarians, restoring a straight-backed order among people who had been corrupted by the temptations and corruptions of Obote's government. The NRM's leader, Yoweri Museveni, had in a former time converted to the

East African Revival, a Christian evangelical movement that encouraged followers to disavow worldly affections. The young Museveni was deeply impressed with revivalists' probity and discipline.[8] In the 1980s Museveni found in the apparatus of the NRM a means by which to author other people's salvation. NRM propaganda argued that the Obote government had promoted an enclave of "night clubs, neon lights, tourist hotels and shiny office blocks," and had auctioned off the country's wealth for the guilty enjoyments of consumer goods.[9] "Today African coffee, cotton, gold, copper, oil or uranium are being exchanged for toys, wigs, perfumes, whiskey or Mercedes Benzes," wrote Museveni. "The moral fabric of our society is all but destroyed." Museveni planned to constitute a "Directorate of National Guidance," charged with:

promoting a general revival of moral values in society, in particular to fight the evils of corruption, tribalism, religious sectarianism, anti-social behavior such as overcharging, smuggling, hoarding, ostentatious living, parasitism and other evils of this nature.[10]

Once they were in positions of authority, NRM officials advanced Museveni's war against moral and political corruption. In 1987 the Minister of Local Government established a strict set of regulations for video theaters and dance halls, arguing that they were "a danger to public security, morals and convenience." Film censorship was imposed, and bars were made to close by 10 pm every night.[11] In 1991 government restricted access to video halls for people under 18 years of age. The halls were showing "sexy blue movies, bloody violence, murder, rape, organized robbery and scenes depicting armed conflict which have a disastrous effect," argued the Minister of Information.[12] Local government officers took things even further. In Kasese District, in Uganda's remote western border, a county chief ordered that people found playing cards during the morning hours were to be arrested and imprisoned. Any boy or girl under 18 years old found idling in town during daylight hours was to be dragooned into public works projects. "Boys do wander about in towns drinking beer only and all girls have left their rural areas in Uganda to settle in towns for prostitution purposes," the chief argued.[13] The draconian rules were a means of imposing a public morality.

The NRM's reformist agenda was felt with particular urgency in Uganda west. The region had long been poorly served by Uganda's central government: when in 1986 NRM officials inventoried government assets in Bundibugyo, they found that none of the police had guns or uniforms. Of the 135 clerks in government employ, only seven were educationally qualified for their jobs. Most were marginally literate. There was no Supervisor of Works, and neither was there a Road Inspector.[14] The district had only 135 trained teachers and two secondary schools for a total population of 112,000 people. Most of the teachers had worked for months without receiving a salary.[15] There were only two government buildings in the whole of the district; there was no post office and no electrical grid. The only doctor in the whole of the district left his post in 1985, and for two years he was not replaced.[16] The district – at the end of a long and winding road from Fort Portal – was often cut off from the rest of

the country during the rains, for the flowing water turned the road into an impassable gully.[17]

NRM cadres thought of themselves as harbingers of a new epoch. One of the movement's supporters thought the "Uganda Revolution" was "politically and morally the most significant event that has happened in Africa since the Ghana victory. … Ghana was the first phase, and Uganda the second in the long march to genuinely free Africa."[18] Local authorities in western Uganda were likewise certain about their historical role. Reading through their correspondence in the newly catalogued archives of district government, it is difficult not to be impressed with their industry and initiative. The Resistance Council in Kasese District described the paradigmatic government official as:

the model of the new man. He is the paragon of talent and good manners, he is the messenger of the new civilization and the propagandist of the Era of the Wananchi. He is the individual who has moved beyond the classical solution to human problems. … He has discovered the corruption of the political, economic and social structures throughout the world. He will thus succeed in attracting all those who are thirsty for a new existence in a new world ruled by liberty, justice and progress.[19]

Here was the charter for a new mode of public administration, freed of the corruptions of the past. The paradigmatic official, said the Kasese charter, was to be "free to think and act, he must have great strength of soul and character, he must be exemplary in his talent, his zeal, in performance of his duties, in his behavior."

Onyango Odongo was one of the high-minded cadres called to government service in these heady days. He was an accomplished man. Trained as an accountant, he had served as Secretary to the Opposition in Uganda's Parliament during the mid-1960s. In 1976 he had co-authored an important book about the history of the Lwo-speaking people, basing his analysis on the extensive body of oral histories he had collected in southern Sudan and eastern Uganda. Odongo actively edited out references to magical or metaphysical events, insisting on a thoroughly secular narrative. His book, he proclaimed, "contained no fantasy like the story of the imaginary woman who could change herself into an elephant at night and then revert to a human being by day."[20] The NRM government appointed Onyango Odongo as District Administrator in Bundiguyo shortly after it came to power. In the first report he authored from his new post he described western Uganda's postcolonial history as a fall from a state of grace. "The Garden of Eden has been criminally neglected by the willfully myopic and hopefully ignorant Ugandan politicians," he wrote.[21] Under the Obote government corrupt officials had squandered public funds, particularly for the purchase of "imported perfumes for their pampered women." Bundibugyo had been the "worst victim of the Politics of Eating": the district's peasant farmers had doggedly produced coffee and tea with their hoes, but the "heartless [government] rulers in Kampala would come to them at the right

time every year, buy off their harvest at absurdly low prices, carry the crops away to world markets and exchange them for cash … and then begin to squander with impunity."[22] Odongo urgently wanted a "well organized scientific research project" to "ascertain the economic potentialities of every area in Uganda"; he asked also for a program of road-building, and for funds to support a new cooperative of coffee farmers.

For Onyango Odongo as for other men of the NRM, ethnic heritage had a strictly limited role to play in the radical work of political and economic reform. NRM authorities thought that self-interested British rulers had imposed chiefs on Ugandans as part of their "long established … policy of divide and rule." Because tribalism had thwarted citizenly sentiment, most Ugandans, wrote an NRM lawyer, "had not adequately become politically mature" at the time of national independence.[23] The movement's code of conduct prohibited cadres from engaging in "tribalism or any form of sectarianism. We must be very stern on this point."[24] When in 1990 the Directorate of Cultural Affairs launched a literary competition, it defined a strictly limited role for research or writing about history. The competition's purpose was to "further enlighten Ugandans on the ongoing Revolution in our country."[25] There was to be no mention of ancestral tradition. Authors were invited to compose their writing around forward-looking themes, such as "The Political Programme of the NRM: Four Years of Action," and "Forward We Go, Backward Never." The aim, wrote the competition's organizers, was to "have Uganda's history-in-the-making on permanent record for tomorrow's generations." By 1992 the past had been entirely absented from national celebrations of culture, and the organizer of the Uganda Cultural Festival could promise to emphasize "DEVELOPMENT, i.e. new ideas—innovations and inventions in all sections so as to enhance national development."[26]

The NRM government of the late 1980s and early 1990s regarded Uganda's conflicted history as a hindrance to progress, and they sought to direct citizens' attention toward a bright and promising future, not toward the benighted past. Government authorities were therefore discomfited when Uganda's people did not, all at once, embrace the new era they announced. In remote Bundibugyo District, Onyango Odongo was surprised to find that the local Amba people feared witches and sorcerers. He lamented that:

they can recite what they have learned from our cadres with amazing accuracy and clarity, but the fairly sound knowledge they received from the modern political education has not succeeded to liberate even highly educated men and women from the grip of primitive belief in the power of charms.[27]

Amba people did indeed possess a fearsome reputation: in an earlier time a British ethnographer had argued that "one cannot progress very far in the understanding of the [Amba] … without at least a rudimentary knowledge of their system of witchcraft."[28] For Odongo, Amba people's metaphysical

commitments were a delusion. He complained that local government authorities habitually refused to arrest smugglers, for they feared to be killed by witchcraft. “This primitive belief is holding the entire [population of] natives here the captive of baseless fears,” Odongo observed.

The men of the NRM thought occult knowledge was out of place in the new era that they sought to advance. But there are reasons to think that the field of work for Amba sorcerers and other therapeutic workers was actually expanding at the time the NRM government came to power. The infrastructure for public health in Uganda – formerly among the best in Africa – had entered an extended state of crisis during the 1970s and early 1980s, as qualified medical staff fled the country, infrastructure crumbled, and supplies of modern pharmaceuticals dried up.[29] In 1979, the last year of Idi Amin’s government, the real purchasing power of the health budget was 6% of what it had been in 1969.[30] Five hospitals had been destroyed during the war that toppled the Amin government. Ugandans responded to the crisis by seeking out alternatives to modern medicine, and by the early 1980s, “traditional” healers had achieved a new prominence in public life. In Bukedi, in Uganda’s east, the anthropologist Susan Reynolds Whyte found that medical practice was increasingly individualized, as sufferers diagnosed themselves and devised their own, eclectic therapies.[31] In Buganda, the ex-politician Erisa Kironde described how his grandmother – a traditional healer – saw her practice expand dramatically, as people disgusted at the corruption in the medical infrastructure sought alternative paths to wellness.[32] Many people planted kitchen herb gardens, and both forest and bush were combed to provide medicines for first aid.[33] In 1987 officials in Kabale, in Uganda’s southernmost district, compiled a list of 23 herbalists and traditional doctors who practiced in the town’s precincts. They claimed to be able to heal “so many diseases,” including lunacy, bone fractures, worms, and a number of diseases that they named with vernacular-language terms: *oruhima*, *eshashe*, *ebiyaga* (epilepsy), *ekinyu* (yaws) and others.[34] The malady called “slim disease” reached epidemic levels in Uganda by the mid-1980s, and it seems that traditional medical practitioners reworked their therapies to respond to the challenge that AIDS represented. In 1988 an NRM official in Bundibugyo reported that illegal medical practices were proliferating in his area. Many of these illegal practitioners were said to be using syringes to administer herbal remedies for AIDS.[35]

The secular men of the NRM gave little credence in this field of medical work. They actively sought to suppress the religious and cultural architecture of human wellness. When in 1989 the residents of one village in Bundibugyo collected funds with which to conduct a ritual called *abarimu*, which was meant to allay conflict and encourage sociable relations between people, the local authorities of the NRM banned the ceremony. They thought it to be a distraction from the real work of development. “It brings poverty and famine to villages, due to the large number of attendants,” one official noted.[36] Such “backward traditional functions [should] be discouraged … [so that a] bright future in development will be realized,” argued another official.[37] This discomfiture with metaphysics was widely shared among NRM cadres.

Convinced that they were heralds of a new political order, the enlightened men of the NRM struggled to manage and control the vibrant presences of the occult. The Resistance Council chairman of Karugutu was full of anxiety when, in 1988, a witchdoctor named Angali appeared in his parish and set to work administering ordeals to local men suspected of wizardry and cannibalism. Angali gave the men a concoction of herbs called "ambasa" in order to test whether the suspects had violated other people. The local official wrote to his superior in Bundibugyo to ask for advice. "I don't know whether it's true," he commented, and worried that some of his people would be killed by the witchdoctor's potions.[38] The local chief shared these worries. "Since this drug is not chemically tested in any recognized Government Lab, I have a fear that it can be of great harm to the life of a human being," he wrote.[39] NRM authorities were mystified by the aggressive nature of Amba cultural practice. When the wife of a man named Ndyambo died in 1988, her parents and husband accused 10 local men of laying a spell upon her. The chair of the local Resistance Council had to rescue the 10 men from the torturous ordeal that had been planned for them, spiriting them away to a local government prison for protection. In a worried letter to the Bundibugyo District Administrator, he called local people's diagnostic practices "unhuman."[40]

The NRM came to power at a particular conjuncture. The decaying infrastructure of formal medicine in the early 1980s led many Ugandans to seek out alternative remedies. The AIDS epidemic, which took its footing at this time, doubtless lent urgency to these endeavors. The secular men of the NRM were uneasy about the practice of popular medicine: they thought magic, sorcery, and metaphysics to be dangerous distractions from the real, material problems that the country faced. That is why, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Yoweri Museveni's revolutionary regime invested in the business of heritage management.

Museveni

The LRA and ADF

Non-state violence in Uganda issynonymous with the LRA.[13] Following Museveni's seizure of power, numerous rebel groups mobilised to resist his National Resistance Movement (NRM). The LRA emerged in

northern Uganda out of these and the Holy Spirit Movement – a defunct Christian extremist group whose leader claimed the Holy Spirt had ordered her to overthrow the Ugandan government. Led by the charismatic Joseph Kony, a former altar boy and self-proclaimed medium, its anti-Museveni stance initially provided the LRA with a degree of support from the local Acholi population. But the group's violence and brutality soon alienated it from the local community and it resorted to forced conscription. At the height of its conflict with Ugandan forces, children accounted for nearly 90 per cent of the LRA's combatants.[14]

Although receiving less international attention, the ADF has also been a source of instability. The ADF brought together Ugandan Muslims from the conservative Tabliq movement with remnants of the National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (NALU). The latter comprised anti-Museveni rebels whose grievances pertained to political and socio-economic injustices among the people of the Rwenzori borderland in western Uganda.[15] The two groups shared a common narrative of marginalisation and disaffection with the regime. The ADF was most active in the west between 1996 and 2003, before being pushed across the border into the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) by a Ugandan military offensive in the mid-2000s.

For present purposes, the LRA and ADF warrant only passing discussion, for three reasons. First, they are not violent Islamist extremist groups. The LRA never articulated a clearly defined platform. The group's inclusion of former anti-Museveni fighters suggests it was at least initially concerned with overthrowing the regime and Kony at times expressed a mix of ideological and religious (Christian) motivations.[16] Evidence of Sudanese support for the LRA, as a proxy against Uganda prior to South Sudanese independence, further complicates the picture.[17] Today, researchers are just as likely to conclude that the LRA's motivation is primarily to maintain its existence, engaging in conflict in order to provide security and a vocation for its members whose brutality has prevented them from reintegrating into Ugandan society.[18]

The ADF's association with the Tabliq movement has led some to describe it as an Islamist extremist group. Its founder, Jamil Mukulu, has been depicted as having ties to Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda, and the ADF's early tactics included an Islamist component, including recruitment through mosques.[19] There is evidence that Sudan played an important role in the founding of the ADF, again providing backing and support as a regional proxy.[20] But others describe the ADF as a 'rebellion without a cause', manifesting political and ethnic tension at the local level.[21] Indeed, the ADF is now portrayed as 'borderland dissidents' – disaffected soldiers in a context of weak government control, economic marginalisation and strong cross-border cultural and ethnic ties.[22] We note that the ADF's list of demands in 2008 peace talks did not include any requests pertaining to Islam. Further, by 2011, Christian recruits were not being forced to convert, and sharia law was not being enforced in areas under ADF control.[23] The UN Security Council Group of Experts charged with overseeing sanctions imposed in the DRC has consistently found no evidence of links between the ADF and external terrorist groups.[24]

Second, neither group is likely to become a violent Islamist extremist group. That is, both groups are displaced from Uganda and unlikely to transform

into, or ally with, Islamist extremists. The LRA's current base of operations has shifted to the Central African Republic, the DRC and South Sudan. Recent years have seen a number of defections, exposing fragmentation among the leadership, as demonstrated by the January 2015 departure of senior commander, Dominic Ongwen, after Kony ordered him beaten and killed.

With that said, the north–south divide remains contentious in Uganda. Beyond poverty and underdevelopment, specific grievances pertain to abuses perpetrated by government forces during the military campaign, including the claim that the government allowed the war to drag on so it could benefit financially from donor aid.[25] Amnesty measures enjoy broad support but efforts to demobilise and reintegrate former fighters have proven challenging and resources are insufficient.[26] The return of displaced populations, coupled with tension over property rights, has complicated resettlement efforts and contributed to inter-communal tensions over land and resources.[27] Still, perhaps reflecting conflict fatigue, residents describe their security situation as stable and believe the government to be committed to restoring peace and enhancing economic development.[28] While it is possible that attitudes may shift if grievances persist, it appears that northern Uganda will remain peaceful in the short term.

The current aims of the ADF in Uganda are also unclear. With its core ranks diluted by Ugandan military campaigns and amnesty programmes, the ADF has increasingly relied on conscription and financial enticements for local Congolese youth, who are now estimated to make up half of the group's membership.[29] Observers describe the group as being deeply rooted in local Congolese society, having connections with political and economic actors as well as links with the Congolese military.[30] With the April 2015 arrest of Mukulu, it remains unclear whether his successor will have the same ideological perspectives and cultural connections to Uganda or will instead reflect the interests of the ADF's growing Congolese demographic. In the short term, the continued activities of the ADF in borderland regions with the DRC will present challenges resulting from refugees flows.[31]

Relatedly, the western region has experienced an uptick in anti-state violence recently. The lines of conflict here track 'cultural institutions', as recognised by Museveni following the abolition of traditional kingdoms under Milton Obote in 1967.[32] The west in particular continues to experience periodic low-level political violence. In the weeks following the 2016 presidential election clashes between supporters of rival candidates led to numerous killings and property destruction.[33] Previously, in 2014, armed groups attacked police stations and military barracks, prompting reprisals. Some view the attacks as a protest against marginalisation by the central government, and not ethnic in nature. But others point to tensions related to land, access to resources, and political power and social status.[34] This rising discontent with cultural institutions is layered on top of historical grievances with the state, lack of economic opportunity and an increasing proclivity to violence, especially among the youth. While there is little evidence to suggest this represents a resurgence of the ADF within Uganda's borders, ongoing tension points to enduring grievances of the kind that spawned earlier rebel movements.

Third, beyond the groups themselves, the Museveni regime's response to them has attracted a significant amount of scholarship. In light of its dependence on foreign aid, the regime has taken every opportunity to frame its conflict with the LRA and ADF as part of the 'global war on terror'.[35] For example, Whitaker shows how the Museveni regime embraced this rhetoric not only to advance its interests against perceived domestic threats but also press its advantage against potential domestic political competitors and ensure ongoing funding from donors.[36] In this regard, it is worth recalling that Uganda was one of few African countries to join the 'coalition of the willing' in support of the invasion of Iraq in 2003 and was the first to commit troops for AMISOM, for which it receives substantial external support.

These measures suggest a strategy of leveraging rent-seeking opportunities from assistance made available for counter-terrorism. In this regard, the Ugandan government has consistently sought to portray the ADF as a terrorist group. This includes unsubstantiated claims that the ADF was responsible for the deaths of three Muslim clerics in Kampala in December 2014 and January 2015, and that of government prosecutor, Joan Kagezi, who was leading the 2010 World Cup bombing case before being gunned down in March 2015.[37] In turn, Uganda succeeded in having the LRA and ADF listed under both US (in 2001) and UN Security Council (in 2016 and 2014, respectively) counter-terrorism prohibitions.[38] Given that the objectives and operation of the LRA and ADF are somewhat opaque, multiple actors – including the Museveni regime and donors, especially the US – have formulated responses to align with their domestic and regional interests. From this perspective, the regime's priority in managing these groups had less to do with the actual conflict and more to do with demonstrating Uganda's value to the US and other donors.[39] We return to this point in Part III, where we discuss the prospects for PVE in Uganda.

Al-Shabaab, al-Qaeda and IS in Uganda?

In general, regional and external violent Islamist extremist causes have struggled to garner support in Uganda, as conflict has traditionally centred on local grievances, politics and actors. However, within the literature on al-Shabaab, the possibility – indeed, likelihood, albeit on a minor scale relative to neighbouring states – that al-Shabaab is active in Uganda is acknowledged. For example, Hansen observes that:

Little is known about the recruitment networks inside Uganda, the facts being blurred by a lack of on-the-ground reporting and the Ugandan regime's alleged abuses of human rights, but it seems safe to say that recruitment exists [and] that Swahili al-Shabaab propaganda might also influence Ugandans.[40]

As this suggests, the evidence here is tarnished by allegations of the use of torture in interrogation and the politicisation of the al-Shabaab threat in Uganda.[41]

With this in mind, there is occasional evidence to suggest the participation of Ugandans in international violent Islamist extremist activities. In 2013, Ugandans were among a group of 60 people arrested in Garissa, Kenya, who were believed to be travelling to Somalia to join al-Shabaab.[42] In 2014, Ugandan police arrested 19 people and seized explosives and suicide vests from an alleged al-Shabaab cell in Kampala.[43] In 2015, the government shifted blame for the killing of Joan Kagezi from the ADF to al-Shabaab.[44] One

of the suspects in that case had apparently been arrested by Pakistani authorities in 2002 and was detained in Guantanamo Bay until 2006 over suspicions that he travelled to Afghanistan to join the Taliban and al-Qaeda.[45] While these sporadic incidents are notable, their number remains small overall. Moreover, reporting on these incidents relies on government disclosures and may be subject to influence and bias.

Regarding the 2010 bombing plot, it appears to have been largely formulated in Somalia with materials routed through Kenya.[46] Al-Shabaab described the attack as being in response to Uganda's ongoing military support for AMISOM.[47] This is similar to the justifications used for the group's other regional attacks and suggests that al-Shabaab's motivations reflect politics more than an effort to establish linkages with domestic extremists. Following the bombings, some information was released regarding a Ugandan national, Issa Ahmed Luyima, who was considered the mastermind of the attacks. He joined al-Shabaab in 2009, training in the south-west of Somalia for four months before participating in campaigns in Mogadishu and Kismayo. A contact there informed him of a bombing plot in Uganda and encouraged him to return home to facilitate the attack. Luyima described his role as being responsible for identifying targets, securing a safe house, harbouring the suicide bombers, and receiving the explosives and other materials. Due to defections among the planned bombers, he also recruited his brother and one other person to launch the attacks. In transcripts of his confession, he described his motivations:

My rage was with Americans whom I deemed responsible for the suffering of Muslims. They planted the Transitional Federal Government [in Somalia] to stop the formation of an Islamic state and that explains why one of the targets I chose was the Ethiopian Restaurant. It had whites.[48]

Six of the 13 main suspects in the bombing had previously trained with al-Shabaab in Somalia, yet little is known about how these individuals encountered the group or their motivations for joining.[49]

Overall, there is little to suggest al-Shabaab or al-Qaeda have established an operational base or significant recruitment streams in Uganda. There is similarly limited evidence to suggest linkages with IS. In 2016, Kenyan police arrested two Ugandans in Nairobi with alleged connections to the ADF under suspicion of running a recruitment network for IS operating in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania.[50] The arrests at Kampala International University, noted in the Introduction, also happened that year. Hearsay evidence from a single interview source described an account of a Ugandan that travelled to Syria to join IS. However, most interviewees were quick to point out that Ugandans are far more likely to be in Syria and Iraq as employees of private military corporations.[51]

With that said, divisions within al-Shabaab over competing allegiances to IS may impact regional security. In April 2016, a group of fighters apparently disillusioned with al-Shabaab pledged loyalty to IS' leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, and announced the formation of 'Jabha East Africa'. While little is known about this group, its initial manifesto claims that Kenyans, Tanzanians and Ugandans have been ill-treated in al-Shabaab, and that they should join the IS-inspired group.[52]

In sum, evidence regarding the past and current threat of violent Islamist extremism in Uganda is modest both in terms of the amount of data available and its quality, with the most assertive claims of an extremist presence often emanating from the Ugandan state. While past threats have been contained through military action, it is a 'negative peace' that prevails in the north and west of Uganda,[53] and further local-level (non-Islamist) conflict can be anticipated in the west. Beyond the 2010 bombings and a series of arrests, regional and external extremist groups have only incidental connections to Uganda and among Ugandans. Opportunities for al-Shabaab to expand its regional presence are more prevalent in Kenya and Tanzania.[54] On this basis, we assess that the threat environment does not obviously point to a need for development actors to redirect their activities towards PVE.

he Fall of Idi Amin, the UNLF and Obote II

In April 1979, a combined force of Ugandan exiles, under the umbrella of Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLF), and the Tanzania Peoples Defense Force (TPDF) overthrew Amin's regime.

The UNLF was created through the patronage of President Nyerere of Tanzania at the Moshi Conference. It brought together a disparate group of Ugandan organizations and individuals with a common goal of ousting the Amin regime. The first UNLF government was led by Prof. Yusuf Lule as President and though well liked only lasted 68 days.

President Lule was followed by President Godfrey Binaisa, and then Paulo Muwanga whoc chaired the ruling Military Commission which organised the December 1980 general elections. UPC was declared winner of those elections though they were marred by multiple irregularities and generally considered rigged. For a second time, Obote became President of Uganda.

During Obote's second tenure as president, Ugandans went through a very trying period. Insecurity, fuelled by the government's own security organs as well as an ongoing liberation struggle devastated the country. An estimated 500,000 Ugandans lost their lives in just 5 years of Obote's reign. The economy was shattered and so was the people's faith in government.

NRA liberation struggle

In direct protest against the marred elections of 1980, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, then Vice Chairman of the Military Commission and President of the Uganda Patriotic Movement, launched a liberation struggle. It was on February 6th, 1981 **and** with only 26 compatriots organized under the banner of the National Resistance Army (NRA) that the war of liberation started.

As the NRA made staggering advances towards Kampala, having already cut the country off into two different administrative zones, elements of the UNLA on July 26th 1985 ousted Obote in a bid to find better negotiating ground. The Military Junta of Generals Bazilio and Tito Okello replaced Obote II's government.

By February 26th 1986 the "Okellos Junta" had fallen and shortly after the entire country was under control of the NRA.

The NRA's struggle was unique in that, for the first time in post-colonial Africa, a home grown insurgency, with no rear bases in a neighboring country and little external support, was ultimately successful. It was essentially an uprising of oppressed Ugandan citizens.

Yoweri Kaguta Museveni was sworn in as the President of the Republic of Uganda. The audious task of rebuilding the entire country and its human fabric from scratch began. To enable this task, political parties were suspended and Uganda was governed by an all-inclusive Movement system. A lot was to be achieved over the next eight to ten years.

President Amin's government was overthrown by 5,000 Tanzanian soldiers and 3,000 Ugandan rebels on April 10, 1979, and Yusufu Lule was proclaimed president by the UNLF on April 13, 1979. The governments of Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Zambia had provided diplomatic assistance (diplomatic recognition) to the government on April 12, 1979. Some 3,500 individuals were killed during the conflict, including some 440 Tanzanian soldiers and 200 Libyan soldiers. Some 100,000 individuals were displaced during the conflict.

Post-Conflict Phase (April 14, 1979-February 5, 1981): The governments of Britain, Ethiopia, and India provided diplomatic assistance (diplomatic recognition) to the government of President Lule on April 15, 1979. The European Community (EC) provided humanitarian assistance to the government beginning on April 25, 1979. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and the World Food Program (WFP) provided humanitarian assistance to individuals displaced during the conflict beginning in May 1979 (the ICRC mission was ordered out of the country on March 31, 1982). The Chinese government provided diplomatic assistance (diplomatic recognition) to the government on May 2, 1979. The U.S. government lifted economic sanctions (trade embargo) against the government on May 15, 1979. President Lule was dismissed by the NCC on June 20, 1979, and Godfrey Binaisa was appointed president by the NCC on June 21, 1979. The Tanzanian government provided civilian police assistance (1,000 policemen) to the government beginning on September 30, 1979. The British government provided civilian police assistance (60 police officers) to the government beginning in October 1979. The Uganda Freedom Movement (UFM) was established in opposition to the government in 1979. President Binaisa was deposed by the Military Commission of the UNLF on May 10-11, 1980, and the six-member military commission headed by Paulo Muwanga took control of the government on May 12, 1980. Milton Obote returned to Uganda from Tanzania on May 27, 1980. A five-person electoral commission was appointed on July 15, 1980, and registration of voters began on October 6, 1980. Legislative elections were held on December 10, 1980, and the Uganda People's Congress (UPC) won 72 out of 126 seats in the National Assembly. The Democratic Party (DP) won 51

seats in the National Assembly. Milton Obote of the UPC was elected president on December 10, 1980, and he was inaugurated as president on December 15, 1980. The CON sent 70 short-term observers from nine countries led by Ebenezer Deborah of Ghana to monitor the presidential and legislative elections from November 24 to December 18, 1980. General Yoweri Museveni, leader of the Uganda Patriotic Movement (UPM), claimed election fraud. Some 10,000 Tanzanian troops remained in the country until June 30, 1981 (some 620 Tanzanian soldiers were killed during the deployment in Uganda).

Conflict Phase (February 6, 1981-January 26, 1986): The National Resistance Army (NRA) led by General Yoweri Museveni rebelled against the government of President Obote beginning on February 6, 1981. The UFM initiated a campaign of political violence against the Ugandan government in April 1981. Former Presidents Godfrey Binaisa and Yusuf Lule established the Uganda Popular Front (UPF) in opposition to the government on January 7, 1982. The London-based human rights NGO, Amnesty International, condemned the government for "extra-legal executions, torture, killings of people in detention, and abductions" on April 15, 1982. The CON provided military assistance (36 military advisers from Australia, Britain, Canada, Guyana, Jamaica, Sierra Leone, and Tanzania, commanded by Colonel J. H. Clavering of Britain) to the government between March 15, 1982 and March 15, 1984. NRA rebels killed 81 civilians near Kikyusa on May 30, 1983. Government troops killed some 90 individuals in Namugongo on May 25, 1984. The British government agreed to provide military assistance (military training) to the government on August 17, 1984. Some 200 North Korean troops were deployed in support of the government on November 16, 1984. President Obote was overthrown in a military rebellion led by General Bajilio Olara Okello on July 27, 1985, resulting in the deaths of ten individuals. President Obote fled to Kenya on July 28, 1985. A nine-member military council headed by General Tito Okello Lutwa took control of the government and suspended the constitution on July 29, 1985. President Daniel Moi of Kenya mediated negotiations between representatives of the Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA) and the NRA from August 26 to December 17, 1985. General Okello and General Yoweri Museveni, leader of the NRA, signed the *Nairobi Peace Accord* on December 17, 1985. Under the terms of the accord, the UNLA and NRA agreed to a ceasefire and to share government power. The NRA violated the ceasefire agreement on January 17, 1986, and NRA rebels took control of the government on January 26, 1986. Some 250,000 individuals, including some 9,000 NRA rebels and 40,000 government soldiers, were killed during the conflict. At least 750,000 individuals were displaced during the conflict.

Post-Conflict Phase (January 27, 1986-February 28, 1994): General Yoweri Museveni was sworn in as president on January 29, 1986.