

determined not to internationalize its conflict with northern rebels. According to observers, "after thirty years of Soviet training, the Malian officer corp is secretive to a fault. This leads to the situation where no one will release even an opinion (let alone a fact) without the authority of his superiors ... which he will never dare to request."²² The level of suspicion, of course, varies from country to country. While the TPLF and EPLF²³ in Ethiopia and Eritrea respectively, are suspicious of outsiders, the TPLF has encouraged a greater degree of discussion within its ranks; the EPLF, by contrast, lacks a similar culture of debate and instead confines decision-making to a small group of senior cadres. Consequently, building confidence can be easier at the grassroots level than where it is needed most, at the senior-most echelons of power.

Rebel groups are likely to be secretive for different reasons. Unlike states (which are entitled to maintain arms to protect their sovereignty) the possession of weapons or the maintenance of armies by anyone other than the central government is intolerable and necessarily, therefore, clandestine.²⁴ Consequently, rebels also have reason to limit access to information regarding their own force levels and are reluctant or unable to express their force structures in the same concrete terms utilized in *inter*-state confidence building. Traditional CBMs, which often rely on verification or exchanges of information on military-force levels and acquisitions, are not applicable or are extremely difficult to facilitate in civil war contexts.

Some scholars have emphasized that the extreme discipline which is characteristic of "successful" rebel groups makes them reluctant to compromise. Again using the case of Ethiopia, the TPLF's political vision has been described in terms of its "Darwinian socialism," which allows little room for compromise and, on the contrary, insists that victory will only go to the strongest and best organized.²⁵ The ferocity with which the current war between Ethiopia and Eritrea has been waged is indicative of two extremely competitive political cultures that allow few concessions to be made. Alternatively, less disciplined groups and movements may not be amenable to confidence building measures but for the opposite reasons. While insurgent movements may have a generous supply of arms, they may be inexperienced in the give-and-take of negotiations, lacking transparent lines of authority and unfamiliar with expectations of international behaviour. Moreover, irregular forces may be motivated by causes notable for their bitterness than by clearly defined objectives.

²² Robin-Edward Poulton and Ibrahim ag Youssouf, *A Peace of Timbuktu: Democratic Governance, Development and African Peacemaking* (New York and Geneva: UNIDIR, 1998), pp. 153-54.

²³ Tigrean People's Liberation Front and Eritrean People's Liberation Front, respectively.

²⁴ The most obvious non-African example is the case of Northern Ireland whereby the Ulster Unionists refused to comply with the Good Friday agreement until Sinn Fein disarmed. Similarly, in Ethiopia in 1992, the EPRDF government refused to allow the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) to maintain its own army and eventually took aggressive action of its own – an action which did undermined any confidence the OLF had in the EPRDF's claim to be inclusive.

²⁵ John Prendergast and Mark Duffield, *Liberation Politics and External Engagement in Ethiopia and Eritrea* Horn of Africa Discussion Paper Series #8 (Washington: Center of Concern, April 1995). pp. 10-1.