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THE US ARMY WAR COLLEGE QUARTERLY PARAMETERS

Contemporary Strategy & Landpower

Confronting the “Islamic State”

*W. Andrew Terrill
David S. Sorenson
Ross Harrison
Dana El Kurd*

NATO’s Rebirth: Rhetoric & Reality

*John R. Deni
Luis Simón*

Challenges in Russia & Afghanistan

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Special Commentary: The Army’s Professional Ethic

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Of Note: Whose Breach, Whose Trust?

Kimberly Field



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Vol. 44 No. 3 • Autumn 2014

FEATURES

Special Commentary

7 Renewing the Motivational Power of the Army's Professional Ethic

Don M. Snider

Is the Army in Danger of Losing its Professional Status?

Confronting the "Islamic State"

13 Understanding the Strengths and Vulnerabilities of ISIS

W. Andrew Terrill

How Should We Address Each?

25 Priming Strategic Communications: Countering the Appeal of ISIS

David S. Sorenson

What Should the Strategic Message Be?

37 Towards a Regional Strategy Contra ISIS

Ross Harrison

What Would a Regional Strategy Require?

47 The Jordanian Military: A Key Regional Ally

Dana El Kurd

How Well Do We Know a Key Partner?

NATO's Rebirth

57 NATO's New Trajectories after the Wales Summit

John R. Deni

Is NATO's Rebirth Sustainable?

67 Assessing NATO's Eastern European "Flank"

Luis Simón

Should the US and NATO Do More?

Challenges in Russia & Afghanistan

81 Crimea and Russia's Strategic Overhaul

Kristin Ven Bruusgaard

What is New about Russian Strategy?

91 Reforming the Afghan Security Forces

Daniel Glickstein and

Michael Spangler

Is There a Viable Solution?

Cyber Strategies

105 Hacking Back: Not the Right Solution

Emilio Iasiello

Is Attack Stronger than Defense in Cyberwar?

115 The Age of Digital Conflict: A Review Essay

José de Arimatéia da Cruz

What Have We Learned about Digital War?

Of Note

125 Whose Breach, Whose Trust?

Kimberly Field

Are We Debating the Right Issues, Can We?

DEPARTMENTS

5 From the Editor

127 Commentaries and Replies

127 On “Strategy Versus Statecraft in Crimea”

Stephen Blank
Lukas Milevski Responds

134 On “Military Professionalism & Private Military Contractors”

Christopher Mayer
Scott L. Efflandt Responds

130 On “Strategy Versus Statecraft in Crimea”

Christopher Mewett
Lukas Milevski Responds

137 Book Reviews

Strategic Studies

137 Clausewitz Goes Global: Carl von Clausewitz in the 21st Century

Edited by Reiner Pommerin
Reviewed by Hugh Smith

138 Creative Strategy: A Guide for Innovation

By William Duggan
Reviewed by Charles D. Allen

Afghanistan

141 102 Days of War: How Osama bin Laden, al Qaeda & the Taliban Survived 2001

By Yaniv Barzilai
Reviewed by Ronald E. Neumann

142 The Tender Soldier: A True Story of War and Sacrifice

By Vanessa M. Gezari
Reviewed by Janeen Klinger

Regional Policy & Security

145 US Taiwan Strait Policy: The Origins of Strategic Ambiguity

By Dean P. Chen
Reviewed by Richard Halloran

147 Cuba in a Global Context: International Relations, Internationalism, and Transnationalism

Edited by Catherine Krull
Reviewed by José de Arimatéia da Cruz

Security & Defense

149 Cybersecurity and Cyberwar: What Everyone Needs to Know

By P.W. Singer and Allan Friedman
Reviewed by Nathan K. Finney

150 Grounded: The Case for Abolishing the United States Air Force

By Robert M. Farley
Reviewed by Ryan D. Wadle

152 The Invisible Soldiers: How America Outsourced Our Security

By Ann Hagedorn
Reviewed by Steven L. Schooner

Organizational Change & Adaptation

155 Military Adaptation in Afghanistan

Edited by Theo Farrell, Frans Osinga, and James A. Russell
Reviewed by Chad C. Serena

156 Gender, Military Effectiveness, and Organizational Change: The Swedish Model

By Robert Egnell with Petter Hojem and Hannes Berts
Reviewed by Ellen Haring

*War & History***158 *Blowtorch: Robert Komer, Vietnam, and American Cold War Strategy***

By Frank Leith Jones

Reviewed by Ingo Trauschweizer

161 *The Yom Kippur War: Politics, Diplomacy, Legacy*

Edited by Asaf Siniver

Reviewed by William F. Owen

159 *Climax at Gallipoli: The Failure of the August Offensive*

By Rhys Crawley

Reviewed by W. Andrew Terrill

163 *Law and War*Edited by Austin Sarat, Lawrence Douglas
and Martha Merrill Umphrey

Reviewed by Sibylle Scheipers

From the Editor

This issue of the *US Army War College Quarterly* opens with a special commentary by Don M. Snider, “Renewing the Motivational Power of the Army’s Professional Ethic.” Snider argues the US Army needs to preserve those traits that make it a profession, a task never easy in times of transition and resource reallocation. In the *Quarterly*’s “Of Note” section, Brigadier General Kimberly Field’s short essay, “Whose Breach, Whose Trust?” challenges the Army to consider the questions Andrew Bacevich raised in his *Breach of Trust* regarding the professionalism and effectiveness of the All Volunteer Force.

Our first forum, *Confronting the “Islamic State,”* offers four articles examining the latest incarnation of Al Qaeda in Iraq (among others), and how to deal with it. Andrew Terrill’s article, “Understanding the Strengths and Vulnerabilities of ISIS,” begins the discussion with a strategic assessment of the group calling itself the “Islamic State.” David S. Sorenson’s “Priming Strategic Communications: Countering the Appeal of ISIS” suggests critical points for an effective strategic communications campaign. Ross Harrison describes three prerequisites for a broader, integrative strategy in “Towards a Regional Strategy Contra ISIS.” Dana El Kurd’s “The Jordanian Military: A Key Regional Partner” provides important insights into the structure and culture of Jordan’s armed forces, an essential partner in the fight against ISIS.

The second forum, *NATO’s Rebirth,* features two contributions concerning the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. John R. Deni’s “NATO’s New Trajectories after the Wales Summit” explores what was agreed to at the summit and its implications for the future of the Alliance and the role of the United States. In “Assessing NATO’s Eastern European Flank” Luis Simón considers those and other agreements by Alliance leaders in light of recent Russian moves in Eastern Europe.

Our third forum, *Challenges in Russia & Afghanistan,* offers two timely articles. In the first, “Crimea and Russia’s Strategic Overhaul” Kristin Ven Bruusgaard evaluates what is new in Russian military doctrine and strategy, and explores the implications for Western defense planners. The second article, “Reforming the Afghan Security Forces” by Daniel Glickstein and Michael Spangler, considers an alternative course of action with the potential to help Afghanistan address its current security dilemmas.

The final forum, *Cyber Strategies,* consists of an article and a review essay, both of which seek to advance our understanding of this rapidly growing field. Emilio Iasiello’s “Hacking Back: Not the Right Solution” suggests a new way to approach cyber defense, one that adapts traditional ruses and stratagems to the cyber domain. José de Arimatéia da Cruz’s “The Age of Digital Conflict” evaluates recent contributions to the ever burgeoning literature on cyber warfare. ~AJE

SPECIAL COMMENTARY

Renewing the Motivational Power of the Army's Professional Ethic

Don M. Snider

ABSTRACT: The US Army currently faces challenges not unlike those of the post-Vietnam era and the post-Cold War period. Subsumed within these challenges is a more critical overarching one; simply stated, will the Army that emerges from this transition period in 2025 be an effective and ethical military profession, or just another large government bureaucracy? The former can defend the Republic and its interests abroad, the latter cannot. How to understand and think about this challenge is the topic of this commentary.

The new understanding of modern, competitive professions holds that, contrary to what we might have learned from Huntington's *Soldier and State*, the idea that "once a profession, always a profession" is not true. In fact, modern, competitive professions "die" in the sense they might still exist as organizations, but their culture and behavior, and that of their individual members, becomes other than that of a profession.

Applying this fact to the US Army as a military profession, we must recall it is by design an institution of dual character – a bureaucracy and a profession – with constant and intense tensions between them. The Army has only been a military profession for roughly half of its two hundred and forty-year existence. For example, in the early 1970s, after Vietnam, the Army was not a profession mainly because it had expended its corps of non-commissioned officers who were later so instrumental in professionalizing the junior ranks of the new all-volunteer force. A decade later, however, the Army of Desert Shield/Desert Storm was the world's model of military professionalism.

So, in the case of the Army Profession, to "die" means the institution would duplicate the behavior of a large, government bureaucracy, treating its soldiers and civilians more as bureaucrats than as professionals. As a result, soldiers would be unmotivated by a personal calling to "honorable service," being instead micro-managed within a centralized, highly-structured organizational culture. Sadly, were this to occur it would be the antithesis of the Army's current doctrine of mission command within a professional culture.

The current potential for the Army to lose this internal struggle for cultural dominance, and for the profession to die as such, is heightened by ongoing defense reductions. All defense reductions are pernicious toward the military's professional character. They will, as they have in the past, strongly reinforce the unremitting de-motivations of the Army's bureaucratic character and undermine the essential professional character, e.g., with highly centralized, impersonal micromanagement for force and personnel cuts, and fiscal resources allocated to "do more with less."

Dr. Snider currently serves as Professor of Army Profession and Ethic in the Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College and as Senior Fellow in the Center for the Army Profession and Ethic at West Point. He is also Professor Emeritus of Political Science at West Point, and in a previous military career served three combat tours in Vietnam as an infantryman.

Further, beyond current defense reductions, if other recent events are accurate indicators—the too frequent moral failures of senior leaders, the institution’s as yet unsuccessful campaign to expunge sexual harassment/assault from its ranks, the necessity for Secretary of Defense to appoint a new flag officer as his Special Assistant for Military Professionalism, attempts within the Congress to reduce commanders’ legal authorities, etc.—the Army Profession is already struggling to maintain its professional character, at least from the perspective of the American people and their elected representatives.

Given this confluence of events, the best chance for Army 2025 to come through this post-war transition as a military profession lies in the renewal of the motivational power of its ethic. Only professions can use a normative, principled ethic, which is far more than compliance-oriented rules and regulations, as the means of social control for the performance of both the institution and its individual members. Thus, the power of the ethic, its internalized attitudinal and behavioral expectations shared Army-wide, is critical to effective and ethical practice at both the individual and institutional levels. And, the stewards of the Army Profession must now reassert it.

Why the Ethic?

My argument rests on a particular understanding of the nature of the military professional’s daily practice. The Army has recently created, for the first time in its history, official doctrine on what it means for the institution to be a profession and for its soldiers and civilians to be professionals (Army Doctrinal Reference Publication 1—*The Army Profession*, 2013). In this new doctrine, the practice of Army professionals is noted as “the repetitive exercise of discretionary judgments,” implemented and followed with review for effectiveness. For professions, the nature of their trust relationship with their client is such that the client cannot flourish, or indeed survive, absent the profession’s effectiveness; thus, efficiency is a secondary consideration.

Further, all such discretionary judgments by Army professionals are highly moral in nature, each one influencing the well-being of many human beings. This is true whether the individual is a junior professional leading tactical operations in the Middle East or a senior Army leader allocating fiscal and personnel shortages from within the Pentagon. In both cases, the decisions will directly and significantly impact the welfare of many Army professionals, their families, non-combatants on the battlefield, wounded veterans receiving care in the United States, and so on.

We can all agree such discretionary judgments are better made by individuals who are themselves of high moral character. As General Sir John Hackett observed decades ago, “The one thing a bad man cannot be is a good soldier or sailor...” And, for the most part, that has been the case within the US Army. Historically, such discretionary judgments have been made by individuals whose professional development has led to deeper moral character as they advance in rank and responsibility; (given their far greater developmental experiences and responsibilities, general officers are expected to be of significantly deeper moral character than 2d lieutenants who are just entering the profession, even though

they both follow the same ethic). In other words, moral development has long been an inherent part of the progression of leader development within the Army. But that is not to say it is sufficiently effective today.

Achieving a profession of moral character takes careful selection during accessions, followed by life-long development in an environment that fosters, supports, and sustains exemplary behavior, what the Army now calls “honorable service” in its new doctrine. In other words, professionals are only developed, particularly in their early years, within a uniquely professional culture. Bureaucracies do not produce individual professionals (though many professionals, once developed, do serve well in large bureaucracies). So, if Army 2025 is to have individual professionals who are called to “honorable service,” the Army must be maintained as a military profession with a powerfully motivating ethic.

In summary, the practice of Army professionals is to make discretionary judgments routinely; those judgments are highly moral in nature; such decisions are better made by professionals of high moral character; and such high moral character is only developed and manifested within the “honorable service” of those serving daily in the professional culture and motivations of the Army’s ethic.

Current Efforts to Renew the Power of our Ethic

In the new doctrine, the Army’s ethic is defined as:

...the evolving set of laws, values, and beliefs, deeply embedded within the core of the Army’s culture and practiced by all members of the Army Profession to *motivate and guide* the appropriate conduct of individual members bound together in common moral purpose.

The best we could do in that doctrine was to frame the ethic into a two-by-two matrix arraying various sources of ethical principles by whether they are codified in law and whether they are more applicable at institutional or individual levels. Frankly, as that exercise demonstrated, the Army has too many statements of its ethic! What the Army lacks is consensus on a single understanding, concise and accessible to all.

The Army’s Center for the Profession and Ethic has been working during fiscal year 2014 on a single-page restatement of the Army Ethic, recently announced in a new white paper. On July 30-31 of this year, the Chief of Staff of the Army hosted the inaugural Army Profession Symposium at West Point to develop a shared vision, reinforce guidance, and generate dialogue on “Living the Army Ethic.” Over a hundred senior leaders and their sergeants major reviewed the white paper, explored future ethical challenges to the Army Profession, and discussed the Army’s concept and strategy for character development.

The intent of the Chief of Staff of the Army in establishing this symposium was to generate shared understanding of the central role of the Army ethic in explaining, inspiring, and motivating why and how we serve. However, better understanding of the ethic by itself will not address the challenge the Army now faces. The remainder of the challenge, as the Chief has often stated, is motivating leaders of all stripes, uniformed and civilian, to own it and live it in every decision and action they take daily.

As explained by the various schools of psychology, the crux of the issue is in the “moral motivations” stage of moral decision making when, having determined the “right” thing to do, the individual must manifest the moral courage (personal character) to do so, usually in an action weighted heavily with the institution’s and clients’ interests. Or, alternatively, Army professionals will manifest moral cowardice when acting on daily discretionary judgments, placing their own equities and needs above those of the profession and its client, the American people. Stated another way, they will manifest the behavior of a “careerist” rather than that of an “honorable servant.”

Simply stated, the Army’s challenge in character development comes down to moral courage versus moral cowardice. The crux of the current challenge is not a difficulty of Army professionals determining the right thing to do; rather it is institutionally and individually creating motivation for them to act with the moral courage (character) to do the right thing.

The Key to the Future of the Army Profession – Institutional Adaptation for Enhanced Character Development of our Professionals

So, the key to the future of the Army as a profession comes down to whether, in the midst of a bureaucratizing set of defense reductions, the stewards of the profession can adapt the Army’s major systems of human capital development (accession, utilization, certification, education, assessment and retention, and advancement) to create and maintain the necessary motivational culture wherein professionals will choose to act routinely as professionals—those who are motivated to follow the sacrifices and satisfactions of a calling versus merely having a government job and paycheck.

Sadly, the Army’s own research shows how far the Army has to go. The just released *2013 Center for Army Leadership Annual Survey of Army Leadership* (April 2014), concluded once again that among all of the core leadership competencies, “developing others” still rates the lowest. Within the active component in 2013, just over sixty percent of uniformed leaders were rated effective. That means Army leaders of all ranks are telling the stewards responsible for the Army’s professional culture/developmental systems that two-in-five of their immediate leaders are currently ineffective in developing those with whom they lead and serve! The *Center for Army Leadership Annual Survey of Army Leadership* continues:

There is other support for this finding. Twenty percent of leaders report that formal and informal performance counseling never or almost never occurs. When performance counseling is done, only 52% agree it was useful for setting goals. Up to 3 in 10 respondents indicate their immediate superior does not provide feedback on their work, talk with them about how to improve performance, or help prepare them for future assignments. Also 4 in 10 leaders say they do not currently have a mentor.

This is a stark report, indeed, since we know from Army history and all our own experiences that the moral purpose of the Army Profession, the identity of Army professionals, and the values/moral principles that control them (i.e., the Army ethic) are best passed on in such

irreplaceable, interpersonal experiences in which leaders serve as role-models, counselors, coaches, and mentors.

Conclusion

Defense reductions are, historically, dangerous times for the Army. Wisely, current stewards have made “Adaptive Army Leaders for a Complex World” and “Soldiers Committed to our Army Profession” their strategic priorities, among others for hardware, software, and force structure. However, stating a priority is not the same as implementing it. The Army’s systems that develop and manage precious human resources are from the industrial age; their negative influences on Army culture have been notoriously hard to change. Within this framework the right motivations can remain elusive within command climates. The ethic’s influence can be sidelined by Army bystanders not motivated to live it.

So if Army 2025 is to be a military profession, its stewards will have to make it so by ensuring the culture of a profession dominates during the defense reductions. Later, we will learn whether they were successful by observing where researchers always look to see if the Army is still a military profession – by how effectively and ethically its leaders apply new knowledge of sustained land-power in the “first battles of the next war,” earning and sustaining the trust of the American people.

CONFRONTING THE “ISLAMIC STATE”

Understanding the Strengths and Vulnerabilities of ISIS

W. Andrew Terrill

ABSTRACT: The so-called Islamic State has emerged as a major force in the struggle for the future of Syria and Iraq with a worldview that is deeply at odds with that of the United States and its allies. In this struggle, US military and intelligence personnel must analyze the nature of this organization continuously, seeking ways to overcome its strengths and exploit its weaknesses. A discussion of such strengths and weaknesses is provided here while acknowledging constant adjustment is necessary as the Islamic State evolves.

The organization calling itself the Islamic State (IS; also widely known by the older names of ISIL or ISIS, and the Arabic acronym *Da'ish*) has emerged as a major force in the struggle for the future of Syria and Iraq.¹ IS's rise to world attention resulted from its capture of large areas of both countries since early 2014. The organization became especially prominent following its June 2014 lightning-swift military advance over northern Iraq, where it encountered an abysmally low level of government resistance.² This catastrophe prompted an international re-examination of Iraq's corrupt and sectarian government and the need to overcome the deeply polarizing legacy of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki. The Iraqi Parliament was also shaken by the military disaster, and came under international and domestic pressure to find new leadership. Parliament correspondingly removed Maliki from his position as prime minister, and appointed him to a largely ceremonial post as one of Iraq's vice presidents.³ The United States also intensified military assistance to both the Iraqi government and Iraq's Kurdish Regional Government and began a program of ongoing tactical airstrikes to contain and help roll back the IS advance in Iraq. Additionally, 1,600 US service members were sent to Iraq to serve as military advisors, intelligence analysts, and other needed specialists.⁴ Later, a US-led coalition bombed targets in Syria.

Although IS forces did not face a serious challenge from the Iraqi military in the June offensive, the organization has fought a variety of

1 The older names of ISIL and ISIS refer to the Islamic State of Iraq and Greater Syria. The Arabic word *sham* is translated in English as Syria and more literally as Greater Syria or the Levant. *Da'ish* is an Arabic acronym that sounds like the vernacular Syrian verb for to trample upon. Unsurprisingly IS members do not like to be referred to as *Da'ish*.

2 International Crisis Group, *Iraq's Jihadi Jack-in-the-box*, Policy Briefing Number 38 (Brussels, Belgium: ICG, 2014), 3.

3 Associated Press, "Iraqi parliament approves new partial Cabinet," *Jordan Times*, September 8, 2014.

4 Craig Whitlock, "Dempsey raises possibility of involving U.S. combat troops in fight against the Islamic State," *Washington Post*, September 16, 2014, A-1.

W. Andrew Terrill, Ph.D. is a research professor at the Strategic Studies Institute of the US Army War College. He specializes in Middle East security issues.

more determined adversaries throughout its existence. IS military forces have performed well in confrontations with Iraqi Kurds, Iraq's Iranian-trained Shi'ite militias, Syrian government forces, the al-Qaeda affiliated al-Nusra Front, and other Syrian rebels. Eventually, it emerged as the dominant resistance group in Syria after demonstrating willingness to inflict and accept significant casualties in combat with a variety of opponents including the relatively well-armed Assad government forces. IS military victories in both Syria and Iraq have allowed the organization to seize a combined area of Syria and Iraq equivalent to the size of Jordan, containing about 6 million people.⁵

The emergence of the IS threat and its role in both Syria and Iraq has presented new challenges for the United States, Iraq, and their allies. An ongoing and evolving understanding of IS strengths and weaknesses is therefore necessary to meet American and Iraqi goals of containing, degrading, and ultimately destroying this organization as well as working with allies to develop a comprehensive strategy to meet these goals. Iraqi policy-makers, US intelligence analysts, military advisors to the Iraqis, and others will need to be especially attentive to IS to find military, political, economic, and information campaign vulnerabilities capable of being exploited and enemy strengths to guard against and neutralize.

The Rise of the "Islamic State"

The original predecessor of IS was *Jamaat al-Tawhid wal Jibad*, which was formed in the terrorist training camps of western Afghanistan and relocated to Iraq in 2003. This organization rose to prominence waging war against US military forces in Iraq under fugitive Jordanian terrorist, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. In October 2004, Zarqawi swore allegiance to al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden, after which the organization was consistently referred to as al-Qaeda in Iraq.⁶ As al-Qaeda's emir in Iraq, Zarqawi paid limited attention to bin Laden's guidance, often irritating the al-Qaeda leader and his deputy, Ayman al-Zawahiri. In contrast to the two al-Qaeda leaders, Zarqawi did not curb his brutality against Shi'ite civilians in an effort to improve al-Qaeda's image with Muslims worldwide. Instead, he blatantly attacked Iraq's Shi'ite citizens and institutions.⁷ In a captured letter he called the Shi'ites, "the insurmountable obstacle, the prowling serpent, the crafty, evil scorpion, the enemy lying in wait and biting poison."⁸ From outside Iraq, Zawahiri sought to refocus Zarqawi solely on killing US forces and their Iraq allies, but was unable to do so.⁹ Zarqawi was later killed in a US airstrike on June 7, 2006, but the anti-Shi'ite nature of his organization never changed.

5 "Two Arab countries fall apart; The Islamic State of Iraq and Greater Syria," *Economist*, June 14, 2004, 41.

6 The literal name of al-Qaeda in Iraq is "al-Qaeda jihad organization in the Land of the Two Rivers." Ahmed S. Hashim, *Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency in Iraq* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), 144.

7 Hashim, 192.

8 "Letter Signed by Zarqawi, Seized in Iraq in 2004," in Jean-Charles Brisard, *Zarqawi: The New Face of Al-Qaeda* (New York: Other Press, 2005), 235.

9 Nelly Lahoud and Muhammad al-'Ubaydi, "The War of Jihadists Against Jihadists in Syria," *West Point Counterterrorism Center Sentinel* 7, no. 3 (March 2014): 2.

In January 2006, al-Qaeda in Iraq changed its name to the Islamic State in Iraq (ISI) after merging with several smaller groups.¹⁰ About this time, the United States and Iraq implemented new anti-insurgency measures, including the establishment of US-funded anti-al-Qaeda militias known as the *Sahwa* or "Awakening" Groups, which were especially prominent in Sunni areas. As the *Sahwa* gained momentum, ISI suffered a number of serious setbacks in combat with US and *Sahwa* troops and was marginalized in Iraq by 2011.¹¹ The organization saved itself from extinction by fleeing to Syria, which had been engulfed in civil war since April 2011. ISI reconstituted itself in Syria after recruiting a number of foreign fighters and re-emerged in Iraq by 2013 after Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki had defunded and disbanded the Sunni militias.¹² By then, Maliki had sidelined Iraq's Sunni political leadership and consolidated an Iraqi special relationship with Iran.¹³

In addition to its activities in Iraq, ISI emerged as an important fighting force in Syria in 2013, two years after the civil war began. At this point, ISI changed its name to Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in order to reflect its interests in both Iraq and Syria. Some of Syria's armed Islamist opposition initially welcomed ISIL support, but its extraordinary brutality and struggle to dominate the opposition soon produced a substantial backlash among other anti-government groups. ISIL leadership publicly claimed to have established authority over, and correspondingly absorbed, the large and powerful al-Nusra Front, al-Qaeda's major affiliate already fighting in Syria. Al-Nusra leaders responded they had not been consulted on a merger and would not submit to ISIL authority.¹⁴ While the ideology of ISIL and the al-Nusra Front are close, these groups are not the natural allies they might initially appear to be. The al-Nusra Front and its leadership are dominated by Syrian fighters who view their first priority as the defeat of the Assad regime. ISIL (later IS) has a stronger Iraqi and international leadership, and is more oriented to a global agenda than its rival.¹⁵

In the struggle between the two jihadi organizations, the al-Qaeda leadership, by then under Zawahiri, came down squarely on the side of al-Nusra Front and ordered ISIL to confine its military activities to Iraq stating, "the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant will be abolished."¹⁶ Predictably, for anyone but Zawahiri, ISIL refused to accept this judgment.¹⁷ In January 2014, serious infighting was provoked by ISIL against the al-Nusra Front in Syria's Raqqa, Idlib, and Aleppo provinces with significant losses on both sides.¹⁸ On February 2, 2014, the problems

10 Ezzeldeen Khalil, "Partners to Foes: al-Qaeda-ISIL Split Worsens Civil Conflict in Syria," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, May 29, 2014.

11 On the development of these groups see Peter R. Mansoor, *Surge: My Journey with General David Petraeus and the Remaking of the Iraq War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), especially chapter 5.

12 Anthony H. Cordesman and Sam Khazai, *Iraq in Crisis* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 96-114.

13 International Crisis Group, *Make or Break: Iraq's Sunnis and the State* (Brussels, Belgium: August 14, 2013), 15-23.

14 Lahoud and al-'Ubaydi, 2.

15 Liz Sly, "Al-Qaeda Disavows Ties to Hard-line Iraqi-Syrian Affiliate Fighting Assad," *Washington Post*, February 3, 2014, A-7.

16 "Al-Qaeda Leader Scraps Syria, Iraq Branch Merger," *Daily Star* (Beirut), June 19, 2013.

17 "ISIS Slams Zawahiri, Refuses to Quit Syria," *Daily Star*, May 13, 2014.

18 Dīaa Hadīd, "Radical Syria Rebel Pleads for Infighting to Stop," *Daily Star*, January 7, 2014.

between al-Qaeda and ISIL reached a crisis point when Zawahiri released a statement disassociating his organization from ISIL, thus expelling the organization from al-Qaeda.¹⁹ Despite this affront, ISIL expanded its power by seizing territory already under the control of the al-Nusra Front and other rebel groups.²⁰ In late June 2014, the usually reliable Syrian Observatory for Human Rights stated it had documented up to 7,000 deaths in rebel infighting chiefly between ISIL and the al-Nusra front and its allies.²¹ This casualty estimate also included a number of civilians who were killed in the crossfire.

In Iraq, ISIL's initial effort to capture territory was directed at the Sunni cities of Ramadi and Fallujah. The organization established fairly solid control of Fallujah, but maintained only a limited presence in Ramadi.²² As noted earlier, ISIL then electrified the world with its northern offensive, which gave the organization its greatest victory. All four Iraqi army divisions stationed in the north collapsed instantly when faced with the ISIL assaults, and ISIL seized Iraq's second largest city, Mosul.²³ The militants then claimed to be planning to seize Baghdad, though this threat was never considered credible. At the time, ISIL had only 3,000-5,000 fighters in Iraq (with about the same number of allied Sunni forces), and Baghdad is a city of over 7 million people, the majority of whom are hostile Shi'ites with their own militias.²⁴ Following the rout of Iraqi security forces, ISIL declared an Islamic Caliphate in the area it controlled, and Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the ISIL leader since April 2010, was declared "caliph" and the "leader of Muslims everywhere."²⁵ To underscore this claim, ISIL changed its name to the Islamic State (IS), reflecting its enhanced ambitions beyond the Levant and Iraq. This statement asserted that IS was now the only legitimate authority in the Muslim world and its authority superseded and replaced the leadership of each Muslim country. This assertion also challenged al-Qaeda leadership of the jihadi movement.

Strengths

The central component of IS success is its ability to tap into Sunni Arab fears and resentment of Shi'ite leadership in Iraq and Alawite leadership in Syria.²⁶ Identity politics in Syria have dominated the country since its establishment after World War I and especially since the first Assad regime came to power in 1970.²⁷ Sectarian identity politics has been the dominant factor in Iraqi society since 2003, after gaining

19 Sly, A-7.

20 Tim Arango and Kareem Fahim, "Rebels' Fast Strike in Iraq was Years in the Making," *New York Times*, June 15, 2014, A-1.

21 Associated Press, "Sunni Jihadi Group Expels Rivals from Syrian City," *Washington Post*, July 14, 2014. Note that the Syrian Observatory has a network of activists throughout the country.

22 Michael Knights, "The ISIL's Stand in the Ramdi-Falluja Corridor," *West Point Counter Terrorism Center Sentinel* 7, no. 5 (May 2014): 8.

23 Farnaz Fassihi; A. Ali Tamer, El-Ghobashy, "Iraq Scrambles to Defend Baghdad---Iraq Says Forces Hoin Battle against Advancing Sunni Insurgents Threatening Capital, Holy Cities," *Wall Street Journal*, June 13, 2014, A-1.

24 Anthony H. Cordesman, "Key Factors Shaping the President's Islamic State Speech," *Burke Chair Paper*, September 9, 2014. 1-3.

25 AFP, "Jihadists Fighting in Syria, Iraq Declare 'Caliphate,'" *Jordan Times*, June 29, 2014.

26 Alawites are a minority sect of Islam, usually identified with Shi'ite Islam.

27 See Nikolaos van Dam, *The Struggle for Power in Syria* (London: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 1996), especially chapter 9.

salience from 1991 to 2003 during the era of sanctions.²⁸ Sunni Iraqis often viewed post-Saddam policies such as de-Ba'athification and disbanding the Iraqi Army as a mechanism to break Sunni political power in Iraq and reduce Sunni Arabs to second class citizens. Many Iraqi Sunnis referred to de-Ba'athification as "de-Sunnization," viewing the entire effort as a form of revenge and a effort to bar them from power indefinitely.²⁹

US military and civilian leaders quickly came to view de-Ba'athification as a mistake due to its broad scope, but Iraq's Shi'ite-led government continued to embrace it after assuming power. While the US government created the de-Ba'athification program, it could not end or modify it by this time, and it was often used by Shi'ites within the government as an instrument to dominate Sunni Arabs.³⁰ In 2008, the Justice and Accountability Law replaced the original de-Ba'athification law, but was also used to repress Iraqi Sunnis.³¹ Shi'ite Iraqis, for their part, were infuriated by an unrelenting series of car bombs and suicide attacks directed against Shi'ite religious sites and pilgrims.³² The polarization created by this situation created an ideal opening for IS that will not be rolled back easily.

IS also has strong financial reserves and may be entirely self-financing at this point.³³ This financial independence is the result of an ongoing strategy to reduce or eliminate dependence on private foreign donors, who may face government crackdowns on efforts to transfer funds. To achieve financial self-sufficiency, IS has focused on seizing loot from conquered areas, imposing taxes within its areas of control and influence, and smuggling oil from facilities it controls in Syria and Iraq. Oil smuggling is especially lucrative, but IS may be able to sustain itself even if this revenue stream is disrupted.³⁴ US and allied efforts to crack down on IS smuggling, in some cases bombing oil assets, are useful but should not be regarded as a panacea.³⁵

IS military operations benefit from the expertise of their officials who previously served as officers or technicians with the old Iraqi Army disbanded in 2003.³⁶ These individuals have a strong sense of grievance against both the United States and the Iraqi government, and al-Qaeda in Iraq (later ISIL then IS) allowed some of them to join that organization after they "repented" their former involvement with Saddam Hussein's secular Ba'athist regime and pledged loyalty (*bay'a*) to IS.³⁷

28 Fanar Haddad, *Sectarianism in Iraq: Antagonistic Visions of Unity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 89-116.

29 Hashim, 192-193.

30 W. Andrew Terrill, *Lessons of the Iraqi De-Ba'athification Program for Iraq's Future and the Arab Revolutions* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2012), 56-60.

31 Terrill, 48-50.

32 Haddad, 184.

33 Tim Arango and Eric Schmitt, "US Actions in Iraq Fueled Rise of a Rebel," *New York Times*, August 11, 2014, A-1.

34 Steven Mufson, "Islamic State Draws on Oil Assets for Funds Fuel," *Washington Post*, September 16, 2014., A-12.

35 Helene Cooper and Anne Barnard, "Warplanes Blast Militant's Refineries in Syria, Targeting a Source of Cash," *New York Times*, September 26, 2014, A-1.

36 Ben Hubbard and Eric Schmitt, "Trained in Army, ISIS Leaders Use Their Expertise," *New York Times*, August 28, 2014, A-1.

37 Michael Knights, "ISIL's Political-Military Power in Iraq," *West Point Counter Terrorism Center Sentinel* 7, no. 8 (August 2014): 3.

IS also has the tremendous advantage of being able to move back and forth between Syria and Iraq. If defeated in Iraq, the organization can potentially re-group in Syria and attack into Iraq at a later time, unless defeated or contained in Syria. Comprehensively defeating IS in Syria will be significantly more difficult for the US-led coalition due to the lack of a strong partner on the ground.

Another advantage for IS is that it is relatively well-armed and equipped. In the aftermath of its victory in northern Iraq, the organization seized massive amounts of modern Iraqi military equipment, acquired by the Baghdad government from the United States. While an exact inventory is not available, 4 infantry divisions and supporting troops fled the battle in June 2014, leaving behind almost all of their weapons, equipment, and supplies including artillery, tanks, and a variety of other military vehicles. It is unclear how long IS will be able to use and maintain American tanks, although it is possible IS ex-regime soldiers (or those trained by them) will be able to keep some of them in use. In Syria, IS has captured large stocks of weapons and equipment from Assad government forces, including older Russian T-55 tanks.³⁸ IS forces may also have been able to seize advanced Man Portable Air Defense systems (MANPADs) from one of the major Syrian bases that it has overrun.³⁹ Prior to these seizures, IS used weapons from the previous insurgency in Iraq and weapons supplied directly or purchased with funds from supporters throughout the region.

IS also had considerable opportunity to expand and strengthen itself during its initial time in Syria. The Assad regime allowed IS to develop its military strength in Syria with a *de facto* truce seemingly in effect in 2013 and into 2014.⁴⁰ At this time, Assad's priority was to attack more moderate and respectable opposition forces and the al-Nusra Front in the belief that the West would never allow IS to come to power. Assad appeared to hope the West would be forced to acquiesce, or even support, the continuation of his regime. The Syrian regime also chose not to attack IS, while it was attacking other rebel forces to seize territory they controlled, with heavy casualties on all sides. The militants responded to this restraint by avoiding conflict with the Syrian military, instead consolidating their hold over territory previously controlled by other opposition militias. This expedient approach dramatically ended in summer 2014, when IS attacked government forces in an effort to seize territory and military infrastructure controlled by the regime.⁴¹ By this time, IS was a formidable fighting force. In August, its forces captured the Tabaqa airfield in northern Syria in a serious setback for the Assad regime, involving large-scale casualties on both sides. This air force complex served as a basing facility for a number of ground forces as well as several squadrons of combat aircraft.⁴²

38 Michael R Gordon and Helene Cooper, "U.S. General Says Raid Syria is Key to Halting ISIS," *New York Times*, August 22, 2014.

39 Thomas Gibbons-Neff, "Islamic State Might Have Taken Advanced MANPADS from Syrian Airfield," *Washington Post*, August 25, 2014, A-1.

40 David Blair, "Why Syrian Leader Secretly Stoked the Crisis," *Daily Telegraph*, August 23, 2014, 6.

41 "The Next War against Global Jihadism; Confronting the Islamic State," *Economist*, September 13, 2014, 53.

42 Ryan Lucas, "Jihadis Capture Major Syrian Air Base in Northeast," *Daily Star*, August 24, 2014.

IS also has strong recruiting advantages conferred by its spectacular military successes against the Iraqi army and its ability to seize and retain significant territory and declare a caliphate. IS began the lightning offensive in northern Iraq with an estimated total deployed strength of 3,000 to 5,000 fighters, now expanded to perhaps over 30,000, although only about a third are fully trained.⁴³ To some extent this expansion is due to IS absorbing smaller radical groups in the area it now controls and because it has the resources to pay new recruits, many of whom are destitute and have few options.⁴⁴ Perhaps more importantly, this expansion is also a result of IS propaganda successes in trumpeting victories in Syria and Iraq through its own elaborate and professional media.⁴⁵

Finally, IS benefits from the mistakes and abuses of its enemies, particularly the Iraqi government's long history of anti-Sunni discrimination and brutality. While many Sunni Iraqis are appalled by IS brutality, they are also deeply afraid of Shi'ite militias fighting as auxiliaries with the Iraqi Army. The most important of these militias are Iranian-trained and receive ongoing funding from Tehran through its al-Quds Force.⁴⁶ During the Iraq war of 2003-2011, these militias established a reputation for torturing and killing Sunni Muslims as part of the continuing violence. Numerous witnesses claimed that Shi'ite militias are responsible for a number of recent crimes including torture, rape, and summary executions of Sunni Arabs in military operations against IS.⁴⁷ In the grim zero-sum mentality of many Iraqi Sunnis, IS may be the only protection they have from the Shi'ite militias. Sunni villagers also fear what they view as an Iranian-backed Iraqi military, which they see as little better than the hostile militias.

Vulnerabilities

In addition to its strengths, IS has a number of strategic disadvantages. IS personnel are exclusively radical Sunni Muslims, and the IS leadership seeks the religious and cultural destruction of Shi'ite Muslims. IS fighters are known to murder and enslave Shi'ites simply for being Shi'ites.⁴⁸ Beyond this savagery, IS has also announced plans to destroy all major Shi'ite shrines in the territory it captures. The organization has already made good on these threats in Mosul after it seized control.⁴⁹ IS leaders have further stated their intentions to destroy the shrines of Iraq's leading Shi'ite holy cities of Karbala and Najaf. They refer to Karbala as "the filth-ridden city" and Najaf as "the city of polytheism."⁵⁰ Many Shi'ites would die to protect these cities, and the

43 Eric Schmitt and Michael R. Gordon, "The Iraqi Army was Crumbling Long Before its Collapse, U.S. Officials Say," *New York Times*, June 12, 2014, A-1.

44 Ceylan Yeginsu, "From Turkey, ISIS Draws a Steady Stream of Recruits," *New York Times*, September 16, 2014, A-1.

45 Shane Scott and Ben Hubbard, "ISIS Displaying a Deft Command of Varied Media," *New York Times*, August 31, 2014, A-1.

46 "Unsavoury Allies: The War against Jihadists," *Economist*, September 6, 2014.

47 Kareem Fahim, Ahmed Azam and Kirk Semple, "Sunnis in Iraq often See Their Government as the Bigger Threat," *New York Times*, September 11, 2014, A-1.

48 Abigail Hauslohner, "With the Rise of Islamic State, Iraq is Splintering along Religious and Ethnic Lines," *Washington Post*, September 30, 2014, A-1.

49 Loveday Morris, "Razing of Mosul's Shrines Sparks First Signs of Resistance against Islamic State," *Washington Post*, July 30, 2014; A-8; Tim Arango "Tears and Anger, as Militants Destroy Iraq City's Relics," *New York Times*, July 30, 2014.

50 Thomas Erdbrink, "As Sunni Militants Threaten its Allies in Baghdad, Iran Weighs Options," *New York Times*, June 13, 2014, A-10.

IS approach of treating them and their religious values with contempt ensures irreconcilable friction with Shi'ites, who are the majority of the Iraqi population. IS barbarity has also made enemies of smaller ethnic groups and non-Sunni religious sects in Syria and Iraq including Kurds, Yazidis, Alawites, Christians, and others.⁵¹

IS brutality may have been a short-term advantage for the victory in the north where it terrorized unmotivated government troops who fled without fighting, but this strategy has long term problems. Shi'ite Iraqis and other non-Sunni Arab groups are now more strongly motivated to fight since IS has proven that there is no place for them or their religion in any future Iraq under their control. IS brutality, terrifying to undisciplined troops, may be motivation for more professional troops to seek to destroy them in order to protect their families and communities. The unfortunate consequence of this situation may be a further hardening of sectarianism on all sides, making political reconciliation among Iraq's communities more difficult.

The durability of the IS alliance with other Iraqi Sunni groups, including former Ba'athists and some tribal leaders, is also subject to uncertainty.⁵² This is an unnatural coalition held together more or less exclusively by fear and hatred directed at the Baghdad government, Iraq's Shi'ite militias, and Iran. The ex-Ba'athists often belong to the "Men of the Army of the Naqshbandia Order" (often known by its Arabic initials, JRTN) and are the largest group of anti-government insurgents after IS itself.⁵³ This group has been completely comfortable with secularism in the past and may not be a lasting IS ally. Additionally, tribal leaders have every reason to be wary of IS, and they are not interested in ceding authority to this group.⁵⁴ IS has maintained limited cooperation with some tribes, upheld through intimidation and by providing them with opportunity to loot property left behind by fleeing Kurds and Shi'ites, but strong distrust remains.⁵⁵ In particular, tribal notables are concerned IS wishes to assume authority over them, and replace tribal law with Shariah law. Such an action could nullify traditional tribal authority.

IS also has a number of tactical and operational shortcomings. As US Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Martin Dempsey has stated, "they're stretched right now—stretched to control what they've gained and stretched across their logistics [and] lines of communications."⁵⁶ Additionally, the IS decision to kill the majority of its prisoners of war, usually after humiliating and perhaps torturing them, has practical military shortcomings beyond its moral obscenity.⁵⁷ While these actions have helped to panic and defeat enemies in the

51 Agence France-Presse, "Syrian Jihadists Lay Down Rules for Christians," *Jordan Times*, February 26, 2014; "Plight of Iraqi Minorities Worsens with Forced Conversions and Killings," *New York Times*, August 17, 2014, A-14.

52 "Douri Surfaces to 'Liberate' Iraq," *Arab News* (Saudi Arabia), July 14, 2014.

53 Eric Schmitt, Alissa J. Rubin, "U.S. and Iraqis Try to Fragment Extremist Group," *New York Times*, July 13, 2014, A-1.

54 For an outstanding work on Iraqi tribalism see Norman Cigar, *Al-Qaida, the Tribes, and the Government: Lessons and Prospects for Iraq's Unstable Triangle* (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University Press, 2011) especially chapter 4.

55 Knights, 5.

56 Schmitt and Rubin, A-1.

57 Associated Press, "Islamic State Group Kills Captured Syrian Soldiers," *Washington Post*, August 28, 2014, A-1.

past, Iraqi, Syrian, and Kurdish soldiers can only be encouraged to fight to the death rather than surrender to an enemy that will mistreat, and ultimately kill them. Moreover, many IS recruits appear to have come from the lowest rungs of their societies with little education and perhaps only limited literacy in Arabic.⁵⁸ Such individuals can show courage in battle, but it is unclear if they can adapt to rapidly changing battlefield conditions if their leaders are killed or incapacitated.

IS grandly claims to be a universal movement with Baghdadi, the leader of all Muslims, but this assertion is hardly credible. While the IS message has been effective among some discontented Sunnis in Iraq and Syria, it is unclear if it will have strong resonance in other countries. In all other Arab states, except Lebanon, Sunni Muslims comprise either all or most of the political leadership. Even Lebanon is quite different from Syria and Iraq since it maintains a number of democratic institutions and engages in power sharing among Christians, Shi'ite Muslims, Sunni Muslims and other groups. Moreover, many Sunni Arabs are also angered and offended by IS tactics of beheadings, crucifixion and the enslavement of women. Correspondingly, IS has created and alarmed an large number of enemies including the United States, the Sunni-led Arab states, Europe, al-Qaeda, Iran, and other countries and groups. While many of these states and organizations will not cooperate with each other, they will all behave as adversaries of IS.

Undermining Strengths & Exploiting Weaknesses

The United States, Iraq, and their allies seek either to destroy IS or marginalize the organization so it is no longer a serious threat. They also hope to eliminate conditions under which IS successor organizations might be reborn from a series of defeats. All of this can only be done with a comprehensive and evolving understanding of IS strengths and weakness. At the present time, the most important advantage that IS maintains is Sunni Arab hostility to the Baghdad government, which must be significantly diminished in order to undermine the roots of IS appeal. This will not be an easy problem to overcome, but it is achievable provided that the Iraqi government behaves responsibly and US military forces in that country are able to help rebuild the Iraqi military while airstrikes and other actions buy time. US Army, and possibly Marine Corps, trainers must also plan to continue supporting Kurdish forces in Iraq and possibly work with Sunni local defense forces assigned to operate in Sunni areas. US and Iraqi intelligence analysts will have to carefully consider any information indicating anti-IS activities among the tribes and evaluate which tribes appear most reliably anti-IS.

Iraqi leadership, not the United States, will be the most important coalition entity in any strategy to undercut IS ability to mobilize Sunni resentment against the Iraqi government. The ability to do so is currently the greatest IS strength in Iraq. On the political level, this situation requires the current and all future Iraqi governments must find ways to reassure Sunnis they will not be victimized because of their sect by Shi'ite officials operating with impunity. Sunni regions must receive greater autonomy, including local self-defense. There must also be a reasonable level of Sunni representation in national institutions in Baghdad

58 Yeginsu, A-1

with no use of security forces to harass Sunni political leaders. In a clear sign of progress, Prime Minister al-Abadi is supporting critically important plans to establish Sunni national guard units to provide security in the north and delegate more authority and funding to provincial governors.⁵⁹ One hopeful factor is that, at the very minimum, Shi'ite leaders now know what can happen when the Sunnis are marginalized, which may be the best incentive for becoming more inclusive. Nevertheless, more needs to be done, and many Sunnis remain unconvinced of the government's lasting good will.

There must also be a strong ongoing US effort to understand IS military capabilities in order to wage war on it in both Iraq and Syria. As noted, its most spectacular victory was against a terrorized Iraqi military that was unwilling to fight, and is therefore an inconclusive test of its fighting prowess against competent enemies in conventional battles. Yet, while there is a danger of overestimating IS, there is also a real danger in underestimating it by dismissing its easy victories against weak opponents without considering its other military encounters. As noted earlier, IS has done especially well in fighting serious enemies in Syria. Establishing an accurate picture of IS military effectiveness will therefore be a difficult tightrope for US military and intelligence officials to walk, but it must be done.

In moving forward on this task, military intelligence analysts from the US Army and other services will need to work closely with national level intelligence agencies on IS order of battle issues and establishing the nature of IS communication nodes. Such actions will help to provide information critical to the tactical successes that are needed to buy time for Iraqi government reform.

Careful attention must also be given to the military support activities of regional powers that may seek to destroy IS but will also pursue their own agenda in Iraq and Syria. In this regard, Iran probably has little or no constructive role to play in rebuilding Iraq, although it is vehemently opposed to IS. Iran has supported extremely troublesome Iraqi leaders and also seeks an endgame in Syria which leaves the Assad regime in power. These are policies that Sunni Arab states will never accept, and any US cooperation with Iran in Iraq will correspondingly increase Arab suspicions of Washington. Tehran is a Shi'ite political and religious powerhouse that is gravely distrusted by Sunni Arabs throughout the region. It will never be viewed as anything other than a Shi'ite ally and advocate by the leadership of Sunni states and Sunni Iraqis.

Finally, there is the question of IS capabilities in Syria. While IS has a number of exploitable weaknesses in Iraq, Syria presents a more challenging set of problems. Since the majority of IS forces are in Syria, the US Administration's decision to lead a coalition of Arab countries conducting air strikes seems reasonable as a way of diminishing the organization's overall strength, although the endgame remains difficult to predict. The Free Syrian Army (FSA) is an uncertain but possibly very weak reed on which to depend to roll back IS, even with additional training and support the United States and its allies now plan to provide.

The US Army must nevertheless treat any future training support role for FSA members as important since a powerful FSA force may provide moderate Syrians with some bargaining strength for a future political settlement should one appear possible and acceptable. A near optimal solution would be for a strong FSA to contribute to an eventual settlement that excludes the Islamic State and the Nusra Front while compelling Syrian President Assad and his immediate entourage to leave the country. Training the FSA also re-assures US Sunni Arab allies such as Jordan and the Gulf Cooperation Council countries that the United States is not seeking to wage war on the IS in a way that accepts the Assad regime as the only alternative to IS extremism. Still, such a settlement is a very long term possibility. In the medium term, the result of US policy in Syria will probably look more like containing rather than defeating IS. Real inclusiveness in Iraq will therefore have to become a permanent feature of Iraqi politics since IS may be hovering over the border for some time.

CONFRONTING THE “ISLAMIC STATE”

Priming Strategic Communications: Countering the Appeal of ISIS

David S. Sorenson

ABSTRACT: This article examines the Islamist rationale used by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) to recruit and sustain its members. It proposes counter-narratives using Islamist thinking to challenge the veracity of ISIS thought and action. A counter-ISIS information campaign is proposed to persuade potential recruits and current members that joining ISIS violates basic Islamic principles.

In his September 10, 2014 address to the United Nations, President Obama said of the jihadist group Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), “The only language understood by killers like this is the language of force.”¹ The president then announced that the United States would lead an air campaign against ISIS targets, partnering with Arab and European forces, Iraqi forces would conduct the bulk of the ground combat.

The application of military force alone is not likely to defeat ISIS, especially given the reluctance of the United States and other regional powers to commit ground forces. The United States must reach for other instruments of power, including the use of *information operations* to increase its capacity to degrade and defeat ISIS. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Martin Dempsey makes this point specifically, calling for a “whole of government” approach challenging ISIS’ religious claims: “In particular, stripping away their cloak of religious legitimacy behind which they hide.”²

The real vulnerability of ISIS is not its brutality, which seems to draw followers, but rather its claim to be a true Islamic group, when its operations significantly violate fundamental Islamic tenets. The writings of the very Islamic theorists who are considered foundations of *jibadi* Sunni Islam contradict ISIS’s claims concerning the religious legitimacy of their actions, and the most legitimate source of Islam, the Qur’an,

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1 The ISIS use of terms can be confusing; it once called itself the “Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant,” (ISIL), which can have an expanded meaning over the ISIS concept, as the “Levant” includes Lebanon and, for some political geographers, Israel and Jordan. The author appreciates helpful suggestions from W. Andrew Terrill, Jacqueline Whitt, and Christopher Hemmer. Any remaining errors are the author’s alone.

2 Jim Garamone, “Anti-ISIL Campaign Will Take Time, Dempsey Says,” US Joint Chiefs of Staff, September 26, 2014, <http://www.jcs.mil/Media/News/tabid/3887/Article/11272/anti-isil-campaign-will-take-time-dempsey-says.aspx>.

specifically forbids many of ISIS' actions.³ Remove its claim of religious legitimization of murder and destruction, and ISIS becomes only a criminal enterprise. As ISIS uses Islam to recruit and motivate members, its embrace of Islam may ultimately expose it as a naked emperor, who has distorted the core of Islam to the point where ISIS members may be guilty of the very crime it attaches to its Muslim victims—apostasy.⁴

The confrontation with ISIS is the latest in a series of hostilities that the United States has had with radical Islamist-inspired groups, and US policy makers have almost always developed a counter-radical Islam operation as a part of a larger strategy to defeat these groups. Previous campaigns have tried to block Islamist messages, or offered pro-American missives (including American music and cooking), or using “de-radicalized” Muslims to counter radical imagery. Other operations have killed the messenger (Bin Laden, Anwar al-Awlaqi, for examples). Current campaigns show no changes — in August 2014, the US State Department’s Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications launched a media campaign to counter ISIS. It distributed videos showing a beheaded corpse and other savagery committed, calling upon potential recruits to “think again, turn away.” In contrast, ISIS wages a slick social media campaign offering all the advantages of jihad (“jihad is a cure for depression,” and “you can even bring your family”). The effectiveness of the State Department’s campaign can be measured even in social media; an ISIS jihadi got 32 “favorites” for his recruiting hashtag, at the same time, the State Department’s posting got zero. Efforts to counter ISIS propaganda continue to fall short, as ISIS recruiting success indicates; ISIS enrolled over 6,000 new members in June 2014, according to one source.⁵ It is time to invest more heavily in counter-ISIS information campaigns that use Salafiyya Islam itself to counter the ISIS appeal.

This essay briefly discusses *Salafiyya* thought, the supposed source of ISIS thinking and inspiration. It then compares these foundations to ISIS doctrine and actions, showing how ISIS actions far exceed even *Salafist* doctrine, and concludes with recommendations for an information campaign designed to use Islam itself as a deterrent for Muslims interested in joining ISIS.

3 This article is not specifically about *jihad*, as the concept covers multiple Islamist movements. The term is probably the most controversial and misunderstood in the corpus of Islam, so definitions are quite complex. Specifically, *jihad* refers to legal doctrine, including the questions of when, and whom, to fight, laws of war, and the desired outcome of fighting. Some Muslim writers argue for a “greater jihad” involving personal struggles against temptation, but this is largely a Sufi (Muslim mystic) ideation. Because there is no single definition of *jihad*, the term is widely appropriated by various Islamist groups to justify a wide range of behaviors. Michael Bonner, *Jihad in Islamic History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press), 2006; David Cook, *Understanding Jihad* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); John Esposito, *Unholy War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); and Giles Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam Cambridge* (MA: Harvard University Press, 2002). This article employs the term to denote Islamist groups who embrace fighting as an essential part of Islamic practice.

4 Obviously not all of ISIS’ victims are Muslims (the Yazidi and Christians are other religious groups savaged by ISIS), but given the population dominance of Muslims, they are by far the most numerous ISIS targets. Moreover, being an “unbeliever” is a less serious offense in ISIS’ thinking than being an “apostate,” a Muslim who has departed the faith, which is where ISIS puts the Shi’a and its variants.

5 “Islamic State ‘Has 50,000 Fighters in Syria,’” *Al Jazeera*, August 19, 2014. The source for the numbers is the “Syrian Observatory for Human Rights,” a small organization based in London whose data have been disputed. But even if the recruitment is off by half, the numbers still do not indicate that counter-Islamist information campaigns are working.

Salafiyya Thought

The parents of Taqi ad-Din Ahmad ibn Taymiyya were among the few to survive the Mongol decimation of Damascus in 1260. As Ibn Taymiyya reflected on the reasons for the Mongol devastation, he concluded that the fault lay not in Islam itself, but rather with Muslims who had become spiritually lax, distracted by religious reform, or influenced by what Ibn Taymiyya regarded as apostate forms of Islam, for example, the Sufi mystics, and the Alawi interpretation of Shi'a Islam.⁶ He believed that the loss of Islamic zeal caused Muslim society to return to the early pre-Islamic days of ignorance and disorder (*jahiliyya*).⁷ For Ibn Taymiyya and his later interpreters, the solution for the Islamic community was to return to the time of the Prophet Muhammad and his community of believers (the *al-salaf al-Salih* or "pious ancestors," thus the term *Salafiyya* for their followers), and to cast aside those innovations that, for Ibn Taymiyya, had weakened Islam.

Ibn Taymiyya's views had little influence during Caliphate times, as they would have challenged the governing codes and practices of most "caliphates." However, Salifiyyist thought has enjoyed a modern rebirth, in part because of its interpretation by Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahab, whose writings inspired the movement contemporarily known as "Wahhabist" Sunni Islam.⁸ Al-Wahab reconstructed Ibn Taymiyya's emphasis on a puritanical vision of Islam to prevent reform, foreign ideas, and practices (saintly veneration, or Sufi traditions), to weaken the Muslim community.⁹ For the Egyptian Islamist Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966), *jahiliyya* was everywhere in Nasserist Egypt, governed, for Qutb, by Muslims in name only, who had neglected faith in their contrivance of modern governance, ruling *faux* Muslims who only pay lip service to their religion.¹⁰ Qutb, whom Nasser had hanged in 1966, is one of the most influential Islamist thinkers for modern *jihadi*.

Components of Salifiyyist Belief

While return to the *salaf* is a desired endstate for its proponents, notions of *tawhid* and *takefir* are tools used to combat *jahiliyya*. They are hardly unique to ISIS, but ISIS has taken them to extremes not found

6 The irony is Ibn Taymiyya himself came from Sufi origins, and was buried in a Sufi cemetery in Damascus.

7 Roxanne L. Euben and Muhammad Qasim Zaman (eds.), "Abd Al-Salam Faraj" in *Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), 323-324; Michael Doran, "The Pragmatic Fanaticism of al-Qaeda: An Anatomy of Extremism in Middle Eastern Politics," *Political Science Quarterly* 117 (2002): 179.

8 Henri Lauzière, "The Construction of Salafiyya: Reconsidering Salifism from the Perspective of Conceptual History," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 43 (2010): 369-389; Eleanor Abdella Doumato, "Manning the barricades: Islam according to Saudi Arabia's School Texts," *The Middle East Journal*, 57 (2003): 230-247; Natana J. DeLong-Bas, *Wahhabi Islam: From Revival and Reform to Global Jihad* (New York: Oxford University Press), 2004. Both Doumato and DeLong-Bas argue that Saudi Arabia's ruling al-Saud family has influenced the teaching of Islam in general and even "Wahhabi" Islam in particular, omitting the reformist passages and even fabricating passages about the necessity for Muslims to kill Jews before Judgment Day (Doumato, 241).

9 Al-Wahab partnered with Muhammad al-Saud to start the first al-Saud state in the 18th century, though the Ottoman Empire sent Egyptian troops to that Islamist state in 1818.

10 John Calvert, *Sayyid Qutb and the Origins of Radical Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 217-220.

even in the thinking of traditional *salifiyyists*.¹¹ Their metanarrative must be understood to develop counter-arguments to ISIS' "Islamic" claims.

Tawhid

Tawhid literally means the "oneness" of God, and is an essential element of Islam, which requires believers to reject the veneration of anything but God, including saintly worship and the Christian Trinity. However, many Sunni Muslims argue that Shi'a Muslim belief and ritual violate the nature of *tawhid* through the Shi'a elevation of their Imams (particularly Ali ibn Talib and Hussein ibn Ali, the son-in-law and the grandson of the Prophet) to partnership status with God. The differences between Shi'a and Sunni practices are considerable, and their reverence of the Prophet's son-in-law and cousin Ali ibn Talib and his son Hussein give fuel to the argument the Shi'a are apostates as their practices and thought violate *tawhid*.¹² The Shi'a reject this allegation, arguing that only early Shi'a extremists ever attempted to deify the Imamiyya, and continue to profess fidelity to God and God alone.¹³ This has not prevented Sunni theorists from denouncing them; Ibn Taymiyya censured Shi'a beliefs and practices, reserving special scorn for the Ismaili Shi'a, whom he regarded as in jahiliyya, but concluded that most Shi'a (particularly the majority *Imami*, or "Twelver" Shi'a) are simply misguided Muslims.¹⁴ Nowhere did he denounce them as *kufi*; or "unbelievers."¹⁵ Sayyid Qutb, in one of his influential writings *In the Shade of the Qur'an*, states "Islam does not force people to accept its beliefs, rather it aims to provide an environment where people enjoy full freedom of belief."¹⁶ For Qutb, ridding Islamic society of deviants would take a long-term educational effort, not mass murder.¹⁷ Ibn Abd al-Wahab did not call for violence against the Shi'a, despite strong criticism of Shi'a "errors," but rather called for debate and logic as the weapons to be used against them.¹⁸ And Saudi Arabia, where "Wahhabist" Islam forms the backbone of the Saudi State, has seen current King Abdullah welcome dialog with Saudi Arabian Shi'a, though tensions certainly remain.¹⁹

11 There is no uniform understanding of *Salifiyyist* theology; some argue it prohibits all forms of rule, while others argue it prohibits rebellion against just rule. Abdulmajeed al-Buluwi, "Saudis Debate Salifism and Democracy," *Al-Monitor*, June 23, 2014. <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/06/saudi-arabia-debate-salafism-governance-isis.html>.

12 Heinz Halm, *Shi'ism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 60-62; Moojan Momen, *An Introduction to Shi'a Islam* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985), 178-183.

13 Momen, 176-177.

14 Tariq al-Jamil, "Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn al-Mutahhar al-Hilli: Shi'i Polemics and the Struggle for Religious Authority in Medieval Islam," in Yossef Rapoport and Shahab Ahmed (eds.), *Ibn Taymiyya and His Times* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 236-237.

15 Moreover, the one country that constructed its Sunni system indirectly inspired by Ibn Taymiyya has never declared its Shi'a population as unbelievers, and thus has not tried to force their conversion or eliminate them (though some Saudi Arabian leading religious figures have called for such actions) Toby Craig Jones, *Desert Kingdom: How Oil and Water Forged Modern Saudi Arabia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 18.

16 Sayyid Qutb, "In the Shade of the Quran," passage quoted in Roxanne L. Euben and Muhammad Qasim Zaman (eds.), *Princeton Readings in Islamic Thought: Texts and Contexts from al-Banna to Bin Laden* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), 146.

17 Emmanuel Sivan, *Radical Islam, Medieval Theology, and Modern Politics* (New Haven, CT: Yale University, 1985), 89.

18 DeLong-Bas: 90. It is important to distinguish between *thought* and *application*; DeLong-Bas argues that both Saudi Arabian political leaders and jihadi movements like al-Qaeda gave a stricter interpretation of al-Wahhab than his writing warrant (227-280).

19 Toby Jones, "The Iraqi Effect in Saudi Arabia," *Middle East Report*, 237 (2005).

Yet ISIS ignores these arguments offered by Sunni theorists who are admired and emulated by *jihadi*; this note came from an ISIS spokesman:

O soldiers of the Islamic State, what a great thing you have achieved by Allah!...He has healed the chests of the believers through the killing of the *nusayriyyah* (alawites) and *rafidab* (Shiites) at your hands....O Sunnis of Iraq, the time has come for you to learn from the lessons of the past, and to learn that nothing will work with the *rafidab* other than slicing their throats and striking their necks.²⁰

Thus, for ISIS, once a Muslim individual or group is accused of violating *tahwid*, they are eligible to be declared *takfir*. Christians suffered a similar fate, though technically not considered apostates as they never claimed Islamic status; they were not automatically put to death, but ISIS demanded that Iraqi Christians either pay a religious tax, convert, or die.²¹

Takfir

Takfir is both the process and outcome of the declaration of a Muslim's removal from the Islamic community (*u'mma*) because of deviation. From the time of the Umayyad Caliphate forward, some Sunni scholars and jurists specifically applied *takfir* to the Shi'a and their derivative groups, the Druze, the Alawi, and the Alevi, because they supposedly violated *tahwid*.²² However, despite doctrinal and ritual differences, most Sunni scholarship does *not* refer to the Shi'a community as heretics, and the Shi'a as the minority within Islam did not generally threaten Sunni dominance of that community (the 10th-12th century Fatimid was one exception), until the rise of *political* Shi'a theory propagated by Ruhollah Khomeini.²³ While *takfir* has been a part of Islam from its earliest days, *takfir* trials were exceedingly rare until modern times.²⁴ Even the classic Islamist scholars like Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazali and Ibn Taymiyya rejected *takfir* judgment, with al-Ghazali arguing that to question a Muslim's belief actually constitutes *unbelief*, and Ibn Taymiyya claimed that *takfir* was innovation, or *bida*, and thus impermissible.²⁵

However, since the 1970s *jihadi* from many Islamist groups have been declaring *takfir* against almost any Muslim leader that they disagreed with,

20 "ISIL Spokesman Vows 'Defeat' for America, Calls for Killing Westerners in New Message." *Hanin Networks Forum* (in Arabic), September 22, 2014.

21 "They are Savages,' Say Christians Forced to Flee Mosul by ISIS," *The Guardian*, July 24, 2014. There are widespread reports on Christian websites of Christian crucifixions but they are difficult to validate.

22 Ibn Taymiyya personally participated in a campaign against Nusayri in Lebanon in 1305, reportedly describing them as "heretics, more heretical yet than Jews and Christians." Bernard Rougier, *Everyday Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam among Palestinians in Lebanon* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 162. For a discussion of the largely Turkish Alevi, see Kabir Tambar, *The Reckoning of Pluralism* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2014).

23 Daniel Brumberg, "Khomeini's Legacy: Islamic Rule and Islamic Social Justice," in W. Scott Appleby (ed.), *Spokesmen for the Despised: Fundamentalist Leaders of the Middle East* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 16-82; Ray Takeyh, *Guardians of the Revolution: Iran and the World in the Age of the Ayatollahs* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), Ch. 1; Vali Nasr, *The Shia Revival: How Conflicts within Islam Will Shape the Future* (New York: W.W. Norton), Chs. 8-9. The reaction from the Sunni states in particular was as much due to Khomeini's claim as an Islamic revolutionary as it was to his Shi'a unorthodoxy.

24 Cook, 139.

25 As'ad AbuKhalil, "The Incoherence of Islamic Fundamentalism: Arab Islamic Thought at the End of the 20th Century," *Middle East Journal*, 48 (1994): 678-679.

partly due to the influence of Sayyid Qutb.²⁶ So many Tunisian Islamists painted their opponents as apostates that the Tunisian constitution of January 2014 contains a provision criminalizing the *taqfir* practice.²⁷ The “Amman Message,” composed by Jordan’s King Abdullah II and endorsed by hundreds of Islamic leaders and scholars, declared that:

...It is neither possible nor permissible to declare as apostates any group of Muslims who believes in God, Glorified and Exalted be He, and His Messenger (may peace and blessings be upon him) and the pillars of faith, and acknowledges the five pillars of Islam, and does not deny any necessarily self-evident tenet of religion.²⁸

ISIS has embraced a radical vision of *taqfir*, creating a long list of actions that would merit banishment, to include violations of *tawhid*, but also violations beyond it. They argue, for example, that when Muslims call upon non-Muslim members to join a coalition, they are infidels, as this passage from the “Syrian Supreme Judiciary Council” (an ISIS front group) indicates:

We indicate that giving any kind of support to the United States, Western countries, and their allies in the region against a fighting Muslim group in the region is apostasy against the religion of God (Islam) and definite infidelity, and the individual who does so is no more Muslim.²⁹

An ISIS video denounced Bahraini monarch Hamid ibn Issa and his prime minister as an infidel because, among other reasons, “...they befriend the already infidels and apostates” (presumably the Americans and the Bahraini Shi’a).³⁰ Another statement from ISIS member Abu Mohammad al-Adnani denounces all Muslims who do not support ISIS: “By God, we cannot find for you a religious reason to lag behind in supporting this state. Today, fie on *Ramafid* (Shi’ites), *Sahawat* (Awakening movement) and apostates.”³¹ Another ISIS leader declared that even other *jibadi* groups like the Palestinian Hamas should be beheaded for signing a cease-fire with Israel.³²

Taqfir doctrine as practiced by ISIS is so extreme that even some al-Qaeda theorists have questioned its legitimacy (Mustafa al-Yazid, one of al-Qaeda’s founders, for example, Attiyah Allahal-Libi, and Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi), though other Al-Qaeda members (specifically the late Yemeni organizer Anwar Awlaki) have endorsed it. The danger of the concept for some Islamists is it can be used to settle personal

26 Cook, 139.

27 “Tunisia’s New Constitution Criminalizes ‘Taqfir,’” *Al-Hayat*, February 3, 2014.

28 *The Amman Message* (Jordan: The Royal Al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought, 2009), 17.

29 “Syria: Supreme Judiciary Council Prohibits Supporting ‘Crusade Campaign’ Against Muslim Groups,” Statement attributed to the Supreme Judiciary Council of the Courthouse in the Levant, September 14, 2014. Emphasis added. The full text is: “God says: ‘O ye who believe! Take not the Jews and the Christians for your friends and protectors: They are but friends and protectors to each other. And he amongst you that turns to them (for friendship) is of them. Verily Allah guideth not a people unjust,’ (Koranic verse, *Al-Ma’idah*, 5:51).

30 “Video Shows 4 ISIL-Affiliated Bahraini Militants addressing ‘Sunni People of Bahrain,’” September 27, 2014.

31 “ISIS Declaration of War Against Al-Qaeda,” *Asharq al-Awsat*, July 1, 2014. The “*Sahawat*” (or “*Sawa*”) movements can refer to the “Awakening” movement in Iraq in Anbar Province, but it can also refer to more “moderate” Islamist movement like Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood or the “Sahwa” movement in Saudi Arabia.

32 David D. Kirkpatrick, “ISIS’ Harsh Brand of Islam is Rooted in Austere Saudi Creed,” *New York Times*, September 24, 2014.

scores, and its impudent application may violate even radical understandings of *Shari'a* (Islamic law).³³

Jahiliyya

Jahiliyya is the feared state of barbarism and ignorance that Ibn Taymiyya warned about centuries ago, arguing the Muslim *umma* (community of Muslim believers) must be ever-vigilant, or it will return to those times. The term *jahiliyya* appears in the Qur'an and in the Prophet's *hadith*, though Sayyid Qutb put a particular dramatic emphasis on it. For Qutb, *jahili* societies are where the strong oppress the weak, materialism reigns over spiritualism, and decadent behavior rules because people have rejected the *Shari'a*.³⁴ As non-believers are the chief source of *jahiliyya*, for Qutb, they must be placed in a *dhimmi* (protected) status that declared them both "protected" but also inferior to Muslims; a status that most Muslim countries eliminated years ago.³⁵ Moreover, Qutb emphasized modern *jahiliyya*, as opposed to traditional *jahiliyya*, can appear "Muslim," but a society is ruled by *people* instead of *God*, even if they profess to be Muslims, is in *jahiliyya*.³⁶ Yet what is critical is even Qutb does not label these "so-called Muslims" as *kufri*, or "unbelievers."³⁷ This is important, because neither the Qur'an nor the *hadith* containing *jahiliyya* refer to those in its state as *kufri*, which is consistent with Qutb, the most radical interpreter of the concept. Yet ISIS consistently refers to the *kufri* as worthy only of death, a sentence that not only violates the Qur'an (the most authentic source of Islam) but also the *hadith* of the Prophet and influential *jihadi* writers like Sayyid Qutb.

The Caliphate Movement

Caliphate comes from the Arabic term for successor (*khalifa*), meaning those who assume the role that Muhammad did as a political leader (but *not* as a *messenger* of God, as Islam holds that Muhammad was the last messenger). The Islamic legitimacy of the caliph ideation itself is controversial; its Qur'anic basis is questionable, and the very notion would seem to contradict the belief that Islam is a religion between believer and God, not a sanction for religious governance.³⁸ Most Sunni Muslims argue that the first three successors to the Prophet, his father-in-law, Abdullah ibn Abi Qahafa (known as Abu Bakr), 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, and 'Uthman ibn 'Affan were legitimate successors, or "rightly guided" (*Rashidun*) and some would attribute the same status to the fourth caliph, Ali ibn Abi Talib, though many Sunni do not accept Ali's *Rashidun* standing. For the Shi'a, though, Ali is the only authentic caliph, as they argue that unjust companions blocked his rightful accession as Muhammad's successor.

33 Jerry Mark Long and Alex S. Wilner, "Delegitimizing al-Qaeda: Defeating an Army Whose Men Love Death," *International Security*, 39 (2014): 158-159.

34 Calvert, 218; William E. Shepard, "Sayyid Qutb's Doctrine of Jahiliyya," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 35 (2003): 524.

35 For the suspension of *dhimmi* status in Egypt, see Rachel M. Scott, *The Challenge of Political Islam: Non-Muslims and the Egyptian State* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010), Ch. 4.

36 Shepard, 528.

37 Ibid. 529; Calvert, 220, 235.

38 AbuKhalil, 683-684; Mohammed Ayoob, *The Many Faces of Political Islam* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008), 10-12.

Following the *Rashidun* Caliphate, a plethora of caliphates emerged in varying parts of the Muslim world, some were Sunni, Shi'a, Arab, and Turkish, but most, following the Umayyad Caliphate, had *political* leaders rather than *prophetic* governance.³⁹ The last caliphate, the Ottoman Empire, ended in 1924 with the establishment of the Turkish Republic.⁴⁰ After that time, the caliphate ideal waned, replaced in the Arab world by Arab nationalism as a response to Western colonialism, with only a few fringe groups (*Hisbat al-Tahrir* for example, in Central Asia and London) calling for its restoration. *Al Qaeda* called for a caliphate, but its leaders never proclaimed one. In 2014, Ibrahim al-Badri, taking the *nome de guerre* "Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi," declared the presence of the "Islamic State," as a caliphate initially encompassing the territory that ISIS seized in northern Iraq and southeast Syria, whose defining point is the Euphrates River.⁴¹ While some concluded that the aspirations of ISIS were largely the Sunni areas of Syria and Iraq, its forces pushed over the Lebanese border, close to Israeli-occupied Golan, near the Jordan-Iraq border, and very close to the Turkish border, as of September 2014. Its territorial aspirations appeared to be defined more by its capacity to push away from its core areas than by some preconceived plan.

In the announcement of the ISIS "Caliphate," Ibrahim al-Badri, the self-proclaimed Caliph Ibrahim promised a caliph would protect against *jahiliyya*:

Without this condition (the caliphate) being met, authority becomes nothing more than kingship, dominance and rule, accompanied with destruction, corruption, oppression, subjugation, fear, and the decadence of the human being and his descent to the level of animals.⁴²

The claim that a caliphate is preferable to *jahiliyya* is curious, however; violence, treachery, assassination, and disorder characterized most caliphates, including the *Rashidun*—three of the first four caliphs were murdered and constant war took place during their reigns.⁴³ Those following the first four quickly became imperial dynasties, with conquests for wealth and power dominating their narratives.⁴⁴ They were hereditary monarchies, increasingly bereft of Islamic guidance; the great fourteenth century scholar Ibn Khaldun notes the decline, "...from Mu'awiyah (the first Umayyad caliph) on, the group feeling (of the Arabs) approached its final goal, royal authority. The restraining influence of religion had weakened."⁴⁵

39 The Umayyad Caliphate claimed its legitimacy from their claim as the family of Uthman, the third Caliph. Patricia Crone, *God's Rule: Six Centuries of Medieval Islamic Political Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 34. As Crone notes, however, the Umayyids violated the essence of the caliphate through dynastic succession rather than election.

40 Not all Muslims agreed that the Ottoman Empire was really a caliphate, citing the lack of prophetic mandate for Ottoman sultans.

41 Interestingly, al-Badri took the name of the first Caliph as his surname.

42 "ISIS Spokesman Declares Caliphate; Rebrands Group as "Islamic State," *SITE Monitoring Service*, June 29, 2014, <https://news.siteintelgroup.com/Jihadist-News/isis-spokesman-declares-caliphate-rebrands-group-as-islamic-state.html>.

43 Fred M Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers at the Origins of Islam* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010).

44 Efraim Karsh, *Islamic Imperialism: A History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006); Patricia Crone, *God's Rule: Government and Islam: Six Centuries of Medieval Islamic Political Thought*, 17-219

45 Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History* (translated and introduced by Franz Rosenthal) (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 168.

The legitimacy of self-declared caliphate of ISIS is dubious at best in historical Islamic thought. One of the guiding principles under *tawhid* is *hakimiyyah*, a term meaning all sovereignty belongs solely to God. For theorists like Sayyid Qutb, this means there is a difference between *authority* and *enforcing* authority, because while authority is gained by the recognition of *hakimiyyah*, enforcing authority can only be done with the consensus of the Muslim community.⁴⁶ Notes Hasan al-Turabi, "... an Islamic state is not primordial; the primary institution is the *umma* (the Muslim community). The phrase 'Islamic state' itself is a misnomer. The state is only the political dimension of the collective endeavor of Muslims."⁴⁷ Ibn Taymiyya did not rule out the permissibility of a caliphate, as his detractors argue, but he does argue that it must mirror the guidance of the Prophet and the *Rashidun*, the latter whom were chosen by consensus rather than by self-proclamation.⁴⁸

In short, for these theorists, only the *umma* can create and sanctify a caliphate, and thus the Islamic State is no more a caliphate than for example, the self-proclaimed Ismaili Shi'a "Fatimid Caliphate," with its own dubious Islamic legitimacy, even among the Shi'a.⁴⁹ Moreover, ISIS' claimed desire of unifying Muslims under its "caliphate" also lacks historical exactitude. Caliphates gave the illusion of unity under the Islamic tent, but such unity was largely imaginary. Observed Afzal Ashraf:

The Ottoman caliphate coincided with the Safavid caliphate and the Mughal Empire, which occasionally claimed a caliphate. The Ottomans and the Safavids even went to war with each other. So, the idea of Islamic unity under a political caliphate, rather than a prophetic one, has no basis in history. Until Muslim scholars make that point clear, the uneducated will continue to be radicalised by false political notions.⁵⁰

The Islamic State is in reality a rent-seeking criminal enterprise, similar to some of the corrupted caliphates that followed the *Rashidun*. The Islamic state took territory containing exploitable petroleum reserves, and banks, from which its forces stole the equivalent of hundreds of millions of US dollar equivalents to finance its operations. It governs not through Islam, but through a reign of terror, with executions, torture, and rape as the cost of not abiding by IS's corrupt vision of "Islam," in clear violation of Islamic law: "Women and children may be taken into captivity, but jurists are in universal agreement that no

46 Sayed Khatib, "Hakimiyyah and Jahiliyyah in the Thought of Sayyid Qutb," *Middle Eastern Studies*, 38, no. 3 (July 2002): 155-156. For Muhammad Qutb's approach to Hakimiyyah, see Stéphane Lacroix, *Awakening Islam: The Politics of Religious Dissent in Contemporary Saudi Arabia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 54-55.

47 Hasan al-Turabi, "The Islamic State," in Roxanne L. Eubin and Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought: Texts from al-Banna to Bin Laden* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), 214-215.

48 Mona Hassan, "Modern Interpretations and Misrepresentations of a Medieval Scholar: Apprehending the Political Thought of Ibn Taymiyya," in Yossef Rapoport and Shahab Amhed, (eds.), *Ibn Taymiyya and his Times* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 343-346.

49 The Fatimid "Caliphate," an Ismaili Shi'a polity, originated in what is now Tunisia and later migrated to Cairo in 909, and lasted until 1171, when the Kurdish Sunni leader Salal ad-Din conquered it. It was probably more of a dynasty than a true caliphate, though its leaders took the title caliph. Halm, 160-163; Momen, 55; Hamid Dabashi, *Shi'ism: A Religion of Protest* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 121-131 on Khwajah Nizam al-Mulk, an influential Ismaili theologian.

50 Afzal Ashraf, "The Myth of the Caliphate and the Islamic State," *Al Jazeera*, July 10, 2014.

hard should befall them at the hands of Muslims. Furthermore, it is not permitted to torture or mutilate adult male prisoners...⁵¹

Conclusions and Policy Implications

While much of the world, including much of the Islamic world, is horrified by ISIS actions, too many young and disposed persons find ISIS actions attractive or justifiable—one American beheading was defended by a potential recruit's father: "He was an agent and deserved to die."⁵² ISIS media campaigns that call followers to jihad in "defense of Islam" must be opposed with a counter-media operation that uses Islam to defeat ISIS propaganda. Opposition must work to convince both active members and possible recruits that joining and serving ISIS will not lead to the pleasures of Paradise, but rather a fiery eternity.

Covert Information Operations?

The United States faces significant obstacles in launching a counter-ISIS information campaign, as they lack credibility in the minds of most Muslims.⁵³ Yet if the United States can wage covert military operations, it can also wage covert information operations. The United States has the technology, intelligence, and media experience to identify pertinent communities, craft messages, and to deliver them. Anti-ISIS messages do not need American ownership; for example, the US-developed counter-al-Qaeda information campaign featured a reduced American role, with more Muslims joining the narrative, and enjoyed some success.⁵⁴ Messages may be sent to comics in Baghdad, film makers in Sudan, newspaper writers in Cairo, for examples. It can accelerate ISIS opposition already growing in European Muslim communities.⁵⁵ Counter-ISIS communications can be woven into internet sites used by ISIS itself or its adherents. Care should be taken to employ terms that most Muslims understand, but add sophistication in place of the simple arguments that "Islam forbids this."

The campaign should be designed to evoke *dialog* over *monologue* by encouraging Muslims to discuss and implement religious prohibitions on ISIS ideation.⁵⁶ They must employ the very messages of those Islamic thinkers admired by *jihadi* to counter IS messaging (the unsophisticated messages in IS videos reveal how little ISIS "messengers" really understand about Islam). Ibn Taymiyya's regarding *takfir* as impermissible carries more weight with Muslims than the simple "Islam forbids

51 Wael B. Hallaq, *Sharia: Theory, Practice, Transformations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 330.

52 Ceylan Yeginsu, "ISIS Draws a Steady Stream of Recruits from Turkey," *New York Times*, September 15, 2014. The same story reported some recruits successfully fled ISIS after they discovered the true nature of their deeds (one member had to bury a victim alive to be accepted as an ISIS member), yet recruiting remained strong after the beheading videos in particular went global. It is also the case that ISIS pays recruits and offers them amenities, but it still draws upon its "Islamic" claims to attract them initially.

53 Ronald R. Krebs, "Rethinking the Battle of Ideas: How the United States can Help Muslim Moderates," *Orbis* 52 (2008): 339; Marc Lynch, *Voices of the New Arab Public* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 153-184.

54 Kristin M. Lord and Marc Lynch, *America's Extended Hand: Assessing the Obama Administration's Global Engagement Strategy* (Washington, DC: Center for New American Security, June 2010), 23.

55 Dan Bilefsky, "In New Front Against Islamic State, Dictionary Becomes a Weapon," *New York Times*, October 2, 2014.

56 Peter Krause and Stephen Van Evera, "Public Diplomacy: Ideas for the War of Ideas," *Middle East Policy* 16, no. 9 (Fall 2009): 106.

takfir." Imagine, for example, a video clip of an Islamic religious scholar explaining to potential ISIS recruits Quranic passages that clearly forbid killing for violating *tawhid*, or that caliphates are not legitimate unless their origin is the *umma* itself. Qur'an readings and teachings are common television fare in Muslim countries, and narrators might be willing to critique ISIS theology, if only to prevent a fiery end to potential ISIS recruits, or prevent other Muslims from dying at the hands of ISIS. Islamic-style rock and roll is another venue for an information campaign, as lyrics lampooning ISIS might have an effect on those who find Qur'anic readings uninspiring.

Education on Islam is also important, as many ISIS recruits come from impoverished backgrounds and have little formal knowledge of religion.⁵⁷ A Moroccan news outlet noted some Moroccan ISIS recruits, "Most of them were peddlers, and their education level is elementary at best. Moreover, they have a superficial knowledge of religion and difficulties in integrating their social environment."⁵⁸ Noted another analyst about ISIS recruits, "The vast majority of Westerners joining up with ISIS are extraordinarily ignorant when it comes to religion."⁵⁹ ISIS recruiting techniques focus on simplified Islam, or on ideation that attracts the dispossessed, and provides only glib references to Islam: "Muslims are being attacked...," or "jihad is obligatory for Muslims," for example, to hook vulnerable members. If ISIS recruits and members understood more about the very religion they claim to fight for, they would be able to resist the appeals of defending it, and the special appeal of martyrdom. ISIS practices apostasy daily, and its "caliphate" has no meaning for the vast majority of Muslims.

What is needed is an education campaign focusing on how a better understanding of traditional Islam can shatter the ISIS propaganda and convince both active and potential members ISIS is acting on its corrupted "Islamic" beliefs which will not result in rewards in Paradise, but rather a much more unpleasant fate. As the Qur'an holds, "Had we but listened or used our intelligence, we would not have been among the dwellers of the blazing Fire!"⁶⁰

Robert S. McNamara once stated that the United States was at war with the Vietnamese birth rate as he tried to explain why killing communist troops was failing to win the war. The United States faces a similar problem; the flow of new recruits is far greater than is the ability to kill or wound them. ISIS stole most of its infrastructure and weapons, so bombing what they have only motives them to steal more.

In short, the limits placed on US military will not allow for anything resembling a military victory, thus it is imperative that all the other instruments of influence be applied to defeating ISIS. If even a few potential recruits and active members can be persuaded they will not

57 ISIS spokesman Abu Muhammad al-Adnani, according to a report, announced, "Congratulations on this clear victory, congratulations on this great triumph ... Today the nations of *kufir* [sic: *kuffar*] (unbelievers) in the West are terrified," al-Adnani said in a 34-minute speech, where he mistakenly referred to the plural of "kafir" or "kuffar" as the word for "disbelief" (*kufir*), highlighting his shallow understanding of not only Islam, but even his native language." *Counter-Current News*, July 2, 2014, <http://countercurrentnews.com/2014/07/isis-changes-name-declares-new-caliph/>.

58 "Fifty youths from Meknes joined ISIL ranks." *Al-Abdath al-Maghribiyah*, September 24, 2014.

59 "ISIS Recruiting Westerners: How The 'Islamic State' Goes After Non-Muslims And Recent Converts In The West," *International Business Times*, September 8, 2014.

60 Quran 67:8-10.

obtain ISIS's promised heavenly rewards, the counter-ISIS information campaign will have succeeded.

CONFRONTING THE “ISLAMIC STATE”

Towards a Regional Strategy Contra ISIS

Ross Harrison

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ABSTRACT: A Regional strategy with three essential elements is needed to defeat ISIS. The first involves rolling it back in Iraq and Syria by attacking its capabilities and strategies. The second is to contain it by helping fortify weaker Arab countries that might be at risk. The third is to influence the relationships between Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Jordan, and Iran, countries whose efforts will be required to defeat ISIS and end the conflicts in Syria and Iraq.

On the eve of the 13th anniversary of the horrific 9/11 attacks, President Barack Obama delivered a primetime televised speech in which he identified the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL, also widely known as ISIS) as a significant threat to the United States, its allies and the overall stability of the Middle East. He also articulated several pillars of a counterterrorism strategy to “degrade, and ultimately destroy ISIL.”¹

ISIS represents a threat with three different faces. To the United States and its western allies, it is a terrorist organization. However, for Arab states, ISIS represents an insurgency without political boundaries that threatens the survival of countries [such as Iraq, Syria and Libya] in the midst of civil wars, puts at risk weak states desperately trying to avert civil war, like Lebanon and Jordan; and poses a challenge to the legitimacy of even stronger states like Egypt and Saudi Arabia. When examined from a regional perspective, ISIS represents the spearhead of a broader movement threatening to sunder the Arab political order that has existed since the end of World War I, and potentially threatening non-Arab states such as Iran, Turkey and even Israel.

Any strategy to eradicate ISIS must take into account the threat’s three essential aspects. To deal with it, the United States will need the capability to fight ISIS using military means, but also to strengthen the military and political capacity of individual Arab states at risk. Moreover, it will need to move beyond country-specific approaches towards a regional effort to manage the relationships between competing powers, such as Iran, Saudi Arabia and Turkey, all of which have contributed to the instability that has allowed ISIS to flourish.

The Nature of the Threat

In the wake of 9/11, the US Department of Defense greatly increased its capacity for dealing with asymmetric threats such as al-Qaeda. United States Special Operations Command, and under it, Joint Special Operations Command, along with other parts of the military,

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1 Statement by the President on ISIL, *Office of the White House Press Secretary*, September 10, 2014.

have enhanced detection, surveillance and response capabilities against non-state opponents. However, ISIS is a hybrid organization. It uses a combination of terrorist and conventional military tactics and, atypical for asymmetric opponents, it holds large swaths of territory (in Syria and Iraq) over which it has imposed sovereignty.

Other unique aspects of ISIS could bedevil the United States and its coalition partners. First, US-led military operations against ISIS are taking place against the backdrop of civil wars in Syria and Iraq, with the additional complication that ISIS has conflated these conflicts by essentially erasing many of the border areas separating these countries. Military operations taking place within the context of two civil wars are likely to be fraught with unprecedented degrees of complexity. Unfortunately, military operations cannot be sealed off completely from the civil wars; and unintended consequences from these operations could exacerbate the conflicts and inadvertently strengthen opponents the United States has vowed to undermine. For example, the air battle now raging against ISIS in Syria in support of the Kurds could very well reinforce the Assad regime which President Obama claimed in 2011 must be replaced.²

Second, the US government may think it is battling only ISIS, but the threat comes from a broader political movement which military means alone cannot defeat.³ Reducing western influence in the region, upending what is perceived by some to be an oppressive order in the Arab world, and erasing artificially imposed boundaries between Syria, Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon transcend ISIS's battles in Iraq and Syria. These efforts have broader mainstream appeal, even among those who abhor ISIS's brutal methods.

Third, we are not just facing a threat from ISIS, but a proliferation of jihadist groups with shifting coalitions. The new al-Qaeda elite group Khorasan has now aligned with Jabhat al-Nusra, another al-Qaeda affiliate.⁴ Rivalry between ISIS and al-Qaeda could result in new coalitions and even new groups. Beyond the Middle East, groups like Boko Haram in Nigeria and al-Shabaab in Somalia have established strongholds from which to attack local populations and US interests. Defeating ISIS may be necessary, but insufficient for eliminating the threat to the United States, and its allies in the region. In fact, the consequence of defeating ISIS may be the strengthening of other groups, the spawning of new ones, or the formation of new formidable coalitions between existing groups.⁵

Some Pundits argue the threat from ISIS is exaggerated, as the group has too many internal conflicts and external enemies for it to

2 Scott Wilson and Joby Warrick, "Assad Must Go, Obama says," *The Washington Post*, August 18, 2011.

3 Michael Ryan, "Al-Qa'ida: Time to Engage the Deep Battle," *Middle East Institute*, August 2, 2013, where he insightfully describes Al-Qa'ida as a movement, not merely an organization. This insight can also be applied to the case of ISIS.

4 Dina Temple-Raston, "Al-Qa'ida Reasserts Itself with Khorasan Group," *NPR Radio*, October 3, 2014.

5 See Ross Harrison, "Defeating the Islamic State Militarily is Only Half the Battle," *The Middle East Institute*, October 3, 2014.

sustain itself.⁶ There is some validity to this claim. The leadership consists of both religious ideologues and those from more secular, Ba'athist party backgrounds. A potential exists, therefore, for a split between the various factions, particularly as the group comes under increased pressure from the military coalition arrayed against it. Moreover, the assumption a sustainable polity can be built on a jihadist Sunni Islamic identity has yet to be proven, not to mention the dangers of overextension should ISIS advance and try to expand its boundaries further.

While the Islamic State could prove vulnerable over time, in the short to medium term it can continue to wreak havoc, destroy lives, sunder communities and make it more difficult for Syria and Iraq to emerge from their civil wars intact. The United States cannot afford to assume ISIS will somehow extinguish itself in time to save the Middle East from even more destruction and instability.

Confronting ISIS requires military responses in Iraq and Syria which the United States is now leading, but they must be wrapped in a broader regional strategy. This regional strategy should include efforts to strengthen the military and political capacities of Arab states, such as Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt. It should also include a regional level initiative to secure cooperation between major powers, namely Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Iran to resolve the bloody civil conflicts in Syria and Iraq that feed ISIS. This regional strategy also requires military efforts by the Defense Department be reinforced by coordination with the State Department and other agencies within the executive branch. Absent this coordination, military actions alone are unlikely to be effective.

The Military Response

In the initial stages of the military campaign it appears the attacks against ISIS have been tactically successful. With help from Kurdish spotters and the Iraqi military the campaign has protected the Yazidis stranded on Mount Sinjar. The campaign has also fortified the Kurdish Peshmerga in its fight against ISIS, preventing the fall of Erbil. Thus far it has also helped thwart ISIS's attempts to overrun Syrian Kurdistan, in particular the town of Kobani on the Turkish border. Airstrikes in Iraq have also dislodged ISIS from the Mosul dam area, and spared large areas of Iraq, including Baghdad, from the threat of flooding.

It appears the focus of the military campaign has been to degrade ISIS's capability, attacking what is believed to be its base in Raqqa, Syria, and slowing down and even rolling back its advances in Iraq. Early successes notwithstanding, the military campaign is not being waged on an inanimate object, but against a savvy, sophisticated, albeit brutal, opponent. ISIS will likely adjust its strategy to the tactics used against it. Even before the American-led coalition commenced operations, ISIS dispersed its forces and resources, apparently in an attempt to avoid exposing its center of gravity to attacks capable of throwing it off balance.

In addition to compromising ISIS's capability, it is also critical for the United States to ascertain its strategy and devise plans to disrupt it. It is important to understand ISIS's strategy for Iraq is very different from

⁶ For an example see Steven Simon, "Who Will Win in Iraq?: ISIS Will Fail in Iraq, and Iran Will Be the Victor," *The New York Times*, June 16, 2014 and "Why ISIS is Not al-Qaida" *MSNBC*, September 11, 2014.

its Syrian strategy, defying a one-size-fits-all military approach. In Syria, ISIS is using a “direct competitive strategy,” simultaneously attempting to outmaneuver other jihadist groups, such as al-Qaeda affiliate Jabhat al-Nusra, the weaker secular groups which until now have been receiving modest US assistance, and the Assad regime.⁷ It has taken advantage of the splintering of political and militia groups that occurred over the course of the civil war. ISIS has also flourished due to its ability to combine brute force with the skillful use of modern technology to attract recruits. Moreover, it has advanced because of its prudent use of resources such as, earning revenue by selling oil to the Assad government, as well as to Turkey via the black market.

Within this competitive game, the relationship between ISIS and the Assad regime is ambiguous, perhaps even symbiotic. At one level they are sworn enemies; at another level they derive some benefit from each other. ISIS benefits from Assad’s assault on competitive rebel groups, while the Syrian regime benefits from the presence of ISIS by being able to position itself as the only force capable of preventing an Islamic terrorist takeover, something it artfully uses to justify its brutal methods over both secular and Islamic rebel groups.

In Iraq, ISIS’s strategy is quite different. It involves less a direct competitive strategy against the Shi’i-led Iraqi government in Baghdad, and more a weakening of the government “indirectly” by increasing the intensity of sectarian violence between Iraqi Sunnis and Shi’i, creating chaos and turmoil throughout the country and turning disenfranchised Sunnis into recruits.⁸ In other words, while the ultimate goal of ISIS in Iraq may be to topple the government in Baghdad, it is trying first to marginalize it and challenge its legitimacy before attacking it directly. By turning up the heat of the civil conflict, it weakens the government, creating a political vacuum and a opportunity for growth. This approach allowed it to expand into Sunni strongholds such as Anbar almost unopposed.⁹

The United States and its coalition partners need to take these differences in ISIS’s strategy into account. In Iraq, the challenge is inherently more political than it is in Syria. The key in Iraq is to try to disrupt ISIS’s indirect strategy by working, not just to increase the Iraqi government’s military capacity, which according to retired General John R. Allen, coordinating the international coalition, could take up to a year, but also its political capacity.¹⁰ It may be too late to woo Sunni tribal leaders and former Iraqi military officers back into the fold of the government, but some positive developments could open up a pathway for increasing the political and military capacity of the Iraqi government. The new government in Baghdad, led by Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi, seems to be willing to govern more inclusively, notwithstanding the fact that, like former Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, he comes from the Shi’i Dawa party. Another hopeful factor is that the major regional players

7 Ross Harrison, *Strategic Thinking in 3D: A guide for National Security, Foreign Policy and Business Professionals* (Potomac Books, 2013), chapter 4 for an analysis of direct strategies.

8 *Ibid.*, chapter 3 for an analysis of indirect strategies.

9 Liz Sly, “Al-Qaeda Force Captures Fallujah amid Rise of Violence in Iraq,” *Washington Post*, January 3, 2014. The Islamic State was an Al-Qaeda force until Ayman al-Zawahiri, the current leader of al-Qa’ida disavowed the group, throwing its support to the al-Nusra Front instead.

10 Kirk Semple, “Coalition Leader Warns of Long Fight Against ISIS in Iraq,” *The New York Times*, October 3, 2014.

coalescing around the new prime minister seem to be Saudi Arabia, Iran, and the United States are working towards increasing the political capacity of the Iraqi government to help break the momentum of an ISIS advance.¹¹ In order to build momentum, the United States needs to continue to play a strong lead role.

In Syria, US strategy is unclear and seems to be limited to using air power. The problem with this approach is the secular rebel groups vetted by the United States are divided, weak, and unlikely to be an effective fighting force on the ground to augment US-led operations from the air. Since President Obama has pledged no "boots on the ground," the US military has little choice but to continue to train and support these rebels. The United States must also ramp up support for the Kurds, who have proven to be more reliable and viable fighting forces against ISIS.

Ultimately, the Obama administration must develop a cogent strategy for how to deal with the Assad government. An undefined strategy is not problematic in the early phases of an operation, but over time it will need to be clearer, particularly if attacking ISIS and other jihadist rebel groups emboldens the Assad regime to launch more brutal attacks on the very secular rebels the United States needs in the fight against ISIS. The Obama administration may be faced with the reality that the Assad regime may be the only viable force for fighting ISIS from the ground. Since the administration has been clear it will not cooperate with the Assad government, US policymakers will likely face a dilemma.

In addition to such external challenges, the United States has a difficult organizational task ahead. Compounding the challenge of disrupting ISIS in two different theaters of war, managing the coalition of over 60 countries will likely become increasingly unwieldy over time. While only a handful of these countries are actively involved in the US-led air campaign, coordination will become more difficult, as interests between the United States, its Arab, non-Arab, and even its Western allies start to diverge. As military campaigns wax and wane, it is likely the domestic politics in each country will put strains on the coalition.

What should the United States do to plan for this contingency? First, there needs to be a "whole of government" approach to the conflict. Managing the coalition will require unprecedented degrees of collaboration between the Department of Defense, Department of State, and the intelligence community. Second, the United States must have the capability to manage more transactional, issue-specific coalitions as opposed to the firmer alliances of the Cold War. Turkey is an example. Although a fellow NATO member, it has been a reticent ally on many issues, including ISIS. Due to domestic considerations involving the Kurds, issues with Syrian refugees, and the fact ISIS held hostage 49 of its diplomats, the country was reluctant to join the coalition until recently. Finally, on October 2, 2014, the Turkish Parliament authorized the military to engage. Tensions will need to be managed, particularly since Turkey has pushed for attacks on the Assad regime, while the United States at least for now is limiting its focus to ISIS. This is just one example of the complexity of managing relationships with coalition partners.

11 Michael Georgy and Ahmed Rasheed, "U.S. Ready to Help New Iraq Leader, Iran Welcomes Choice," *Reuters*, August 13, 2014.

Containing the Spread of ISIS

ISIS poses not only a military challenge to Iraq and Syria, and a terrorist threat to the United States, but also strains the legitimacy of political boundaries of the region, potentially posing threats to Lebanon, Jordan and even Egypt. While these governments have to develop their own political response to ISIS, the United States can help prevent ISIS's military and terrorist expansion into these states. Efforts should be tailored to the needs of each state, complementing the ongoing military campaigns against ISIS in Iraq and Syria.

Jordan, part of the US-led coalition, has already faced pressure from its own Muslim Brotherhood, which is opposed to the government's role in air raids in Syria and Iraq. This speaks to the fact that the biggest threat to Jordan from ISIS is not from across its borders, which are protected by a well equipped and trained military, but from within. The threat of an ISIS cell forming within the country is a possibility for which the Jordanian government needs to prepare. One of the major challenges in terms of government capacity is the Syrian refugee situation in Jordan is outstripping its resources and infrastructure. More aid from the United States and Gulf Arab states will be needed, in addition to the \$300 million the United States already gives to the Jordanian military annually.¹²

While ISIS has limited capacity to challenge the borders of Egypt, it could attack the regime from within through disaffected cells of the Muslim Brotherhood. In the wake of the overthrow of President Mohammed Morsi in 2013, Egyptian government forces killed over a thousand protesters from the Brotherhood, driving its leaders and followers underground. ISIS could penetrate the more radical factions within the Brotherhood, or directly infiltrate Egypt through the lightly defended Sinai Peninsula, creating convenient beachheads from which to attack the regime.¹³

For now, Egypt has the means to defend itself against attacks from ISIS. The Egyptian military is capable and well trained. It appears to have wide support from the Egyptian people, and President el-Sisi seems to be popular, at least among secular groups.

That said, the political response necessary to avert an advance by ISIS would be a slow but deliberate rehabilitation of the Muslim Brotherhood into the political realm. Egypt will be better able to thwart attempts by ISIS (and other jihadist groups) to threaten the country if the Brotherhood is part of the opposition, rather than underground where it can plan attacks on the regime with ISIS.

The United States has limited immediate leverage with which to influence Egypt on this issue, particularly since Egypt's main financier, Saudi Arabia, shares el-Sisi's contempt for the Brotherhood. However, with some persuasion and economic incentives, el-Sisi may conclude the threat from jihadist groups demands a change in his position regarding the Brotherhood.

12 David Schenker, "Countering the ISIS Threat to Jordan," *Wall Street Journal*, July 13, 2014.

13 "Reining in Egypt's Military Aid," editorial, *The New York Times*, October 4, 2014.

The country that has little wherewithal for defending itself militarily or even politically is Lebanon. It has been rattled by years of civil war in Syria, and controversy over Hezbollah's involvement in that war on the side of the Assad regime. Also, it is internally fragile, and has been destabilized by the large number of refugees from Syria who now reside in the country. It has already suffered the savagery of ISIS. During this past summer the Lebanese town of Arsal was briefly occupied by ISIS, and more recently it was reported that several Lebanese Army officers were beheaded.¹⁴

Since Lebanon lacks the infrastructure and internal cohesion to defend itself, and is the weakest link in the chain of vulnerable Arab countries, it needs help from the outside. What can the United States and others do? The United States has already given the Lebanese Army, an institution which presently has broad based respect in the country, an emergency infusion of weapons.¹⁵ Moreover, in early 2014 the Saudis gave the Lebanese Army a \$3 billion subvention.¹⁶ More stunning even, the Iranian National Security Council announced in September it would award a grant to the Lebanese Army.¹⁷ The United States can work with the Saudis and Lebanese Army to make sure these resources are best deployed. It could also work with the Saudis and other Gulf Arab states towards increasing support for Lebanon's security sector.

As much as the United States and its international and regional partners can help Arab governments increase their internal capacities to thwart the expansionist efforts of ISIS, there are limits to what can be done by outsiders. The main impetus for defensive political action against ISIS must come from the Arab states themselves. While the United States can provide military and other forms of assistance, it can not completely inoculate the Arab world from the effects of ISIS. The efforts of the United States need to be augmented by political action on the part of governments in Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon towards building legitimate institutions and political processes. Without political will and adequate responses from the Arab states, US aid is likely to be ineffective.

Another thing the United States cannot and should not attempt to do is play a role in the question of political identity in the Arab world. ISIS has raised the stakes by subordinating tribal, ethnic and Arab identities under a jihadist variant of Sunni Islamic identity. Questions regarding state-based Iraqi and Syrian identities and the sectarian divides between Sunni and Shi'i can only be addressed by Iraqis and Syrians. Also, whether an underlying Arab nationalism, which seemed fleetingly apparent during the headier days of the Arab Spring, can be a unifying force is something only Arab leaders and their constituents can answer. Failure to address the question of political identity in the Arab world could mean leaving it to ISIS and the broader jihadist movement to answer.

14 Hwaida Saad and Rick Gladstone, "Border Fighting Intensifies between ISIS and Lebanon," *The New York Times*, and "ISIS Executes Second Lebanese Soldier," *The Daily Star*, September 7, 2014.

15 Daa Hadid, "US Delivers Military Aid to the Lebanese Military," *Time Magazine*, August 29, 2014.

16 Anne Barnard, "Saudi's Grant to Lebanon Seen as Message to US," *The New York Times*, January 6, 2014.

17 "Iran to Give Military Grant to Lebanese Army: Official," *Reuters*, September 30, 2014.

However, the United States can play a critical role. In addition to increasing their defensive capabilities and nudging them towards political inclusion, the United States should encourage its Arab partners to engage politically on issues related to Iraq and Syria. As the Syrian and Iraqi civil wars evolve, there will be non-Arab stakeholders, namely Turkey and Iran, involved in trying to shape governments in these two countries, or even dealing with border realignment. It will be necessary for an Arab bloc, including Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, to have a seat at the table. The United States should use its convening capacity to facilitate.

Forging Regional Cooperation

While Saudi Arabia and Iran seem to be in agreement on some issues regarding Iraq and ISIS, this development is recent. The civil wars in Syria and Iraq which spawned the formation of ISIS were fueled by proxy conflicts between these same regional powers. Saudi Arabia, which has backed Syrian rebel groups against the Assad regime, waged a proxy battle against Iran, which backed Assad. This dynamic extended to Iraq as well, where Iran was a benefactor of former Prime Minister Malaki, and his Shi'i Dawa party, while Saudi Arabia lent support to many of the Sunni rebel groups who were in opposition, some now aligned with ISIS.

Since these civil conflicts have escalated, and spawned destructive groups like ISIS, Iran and Saudi Arabia appear to be working in tandem, or at least no longer at cross purposes. Both countries, along with the United States, "encouraged" former Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Malaki to step down and gave early support to his replacement, Prime Minister Abadi. Iran went so far as sending its own Quds force of the Revolutionary Guard Corps to Iraq to help fight against ISIS. Also, Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister visited Saudi Arabia in August of 2014 to discuss with the Saudi Foreign Minister threats to regional security, like the rise of ISIS and the growing instability in Iraq and Syria.¹⁸ Moreover, Iran seems to have tacitly accepted US airstrikes in Syria, as long as the regime of President Assad is not targeted. Further collaboration between the major powers of the region will be necessary to stabilize Iraq and Syria and defeat ISIS.

The cooperation between Iran and Saudi Arabia is informal, and still deep-seated animosities persist. Thus, joint efforts to subdue the civil wars in Iraq and Syria could prove fleeting. The Syrian and Iraqi conflicts are already shifting the distribution of power between Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Egypt, potentially straining cooperation. A collapse or further weakening of Syria and Iraq could attenuate Iran's sphere of influence, specifically threatening to truncate the Shi'i arc that extends from Tehran through Damascus and to Hezbollah in Lebanon. In other words, the strategic windfall Tehran experienced with the collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime could now become a strategic liability. The longstanding airtight alliance between Iran and Syria may be fraying as well, despite Iran's stated commitment to the survival of the Assad

18 "Iran Deputy Foreign Minister to Visit Saudi Arabia," *Reuters*, August 25, 2014.

regime.¹⁹ While this could reduce Iran's ability to meddle and increase its willingness to play a constructive role, such a challenge to its regional preeminence could instead raise the perception of threat in Tehran, making it more, not less, recalcitrant with respect to Iraq and Syria.

While Iran's position as a regional power could be undermined by the havoc in Syria and Iraq, Egypt's star could be set to rise. Egypt's relative standing in the region is likely to increase given the power vacuum in Iraq and Syria, and el-Sisi's cautious yet clear desire to play a regional role. While still economically hobbled, Egypt has already taken the lead in negotiating the ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, and joined with the United Arab Emirates in attacking Islamic militants in Libya.²⁰ Egypt's regional involvement, particularly when backed by Saudi Arabia and other Gulf Arab states, could cause jitters in Tehran, making future cooperation on tackling ISIS more difficult.

During this period of instability, the United States should influence relationships between Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Iran and Egypt, with the goal of keeping cooperation from being derailed. The United States is in a unique position to manage some of the rough spots that could arise from changes in the distribution of power in the region, enhanced by the clout it derives from being the head of the military coalition in the battle against ISIS. This role becomes easier once there is more clarity on the nuclear issue with Iran. Nonetheless, the threat that ISIS poses to the region creates an opportunity for collaboration between Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt. If successful, the resultant cooperation between these countries could greatly contribute to defusing the conflicts in Iraq and Syria and prove an effective regional challenge to ISIS.²¹

Skeptics of the United States ability to cool regional tensions should remember the acrimony between Iran and Saudi Arabia, while deep-seated and historical, did not develop in a geopolitical vacuum. Past US policies exacerbated the tensions between the major regional powers in recent years. The US invasion of Iraq in 2003, and the toppling of Saddam Hussein, created a vacuum through which Iran almost effortlessly projected power into the Arab world, a development that directly challenged Riyadh's regional ambitions. Later when the Arab Spring erupted in 2011, tension between Iran and Saudi Arabia spilled over into competition for influence in Syria and Iraq, creating a proxy war dynamic. The United States further reinforced this tension by treating Saudi Arabia as a bulwark against Iranian ambitions.²²

A change in US strategy towards working constructively at the regional level, the deft use of diplomacy, and the possibility of a thaw in relations with Iran, could have a positive effect on relationships between Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Egypt, something that could directly defuse the conflicts in Iraq and Syria and help beat back ISIS.

19 Ruth Sherlock and Richard Spencer, "Syria Crisis: Support for Assad Starting to Fade as Allies become Disillusioned by Setbacks," *The Telegraph*, September 14, 2014.

20 Anne Gearan, "Egypt and UAE strike Islamist Militias in Libya," *The Washington Post*, August 25, 2014.

21 Ross Harrison and Shahrokh Fardoust, "Time for a U.S. Regional Strategy for the Middle East," *The National Interest*, May 25, 2014, where we discuss the prospects and challenges of a regional approach to the Middle East.

22 *Ibid.*

Conclusion

The President's strategy for destroying ISIS contains many of the pillars needed for success. It involves air attacks on key positions, protection of forces arrayed against ISIS on the ground, humanitarian assistance, and a broad based counterterrorism coalition.²³ But if we think of ISIS as an insurgency movement, in addition to being a terrorist group, it becomes apparent we need more than military responses. Political and diplomatic strategies will also be necessary, and will need to operate at different levels. The first is working with individual Arab states particularly susceptible to penetration by ISIS on their political and military responses to this insurgency. The second is working diplomatically at the regional level, trying to collaborate with the major powers which, while once may have been a big part of the problem, now seem to be a key part of the solution. This task will be a difficult, though not insuperable. The civil wars in Syria and Iraq, and the emergence of the marauding and destructive ISIS has for now created a convergence of interests, which while possibly ephemeral, is nonetheless unprecedented.

To prevent this opportunity from passing, the United States must push back ISIS militarily. But it also needs to rally Arab support for taking political ownership of an insurgency threatening the regional order. It must also develop a regional framework to build cooperation towards the eradication of ISIS.

²³ Statement by the President on ISIL, Office of the White House Press Secretary, September 10, 2014.

The Jordanian Military: A Key Regional Ally

Dana El Kurd

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ABSTRACT: Jordan has weathered a number of political challenges inspired by the Arab Spring in a way that has preserved the regime's control. The Jordanian military's role in these developments has been neglected but is critical to understand, particularly as the United States and its coalition partners continue to deal with violent extremist threats in the region.

Since early 2011, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has weathered a number of political challenges inspired by the Arab Spring. Analysts agree the regime has navigated the demands of its population in a way that has preserved its control.¹ Although on the surface, the Jordanian establishment has much less to fear from the Arab Spring in terms of its long-term power, there are important challenges the monarchy must address in the coming years.

The Jordanian military's role in these developments has often been neglected, despite its increasing importance as a crucial component of the ruling political coalition. Most academic work on the subject of the Jordanian armed forces has merely assumed the institution's acquiescence to any political change approved by the king. As such, the army is characterized as being professional and, so far, dependable.² This characterization ignores the occasionally tumultuous relationship the military has had with past monarchs and the recent strain between military officials and the ruling family, which points to fissures in the dependability of the armed forces.

In any given society, the military is one of the most powerful institutions, even when under the control of civilian officials. Particularly in the Middle East, the military has been identified as a key institutional player regardless regime, in the setting and execution of government policy.³ Military forces have also played a central role in deciding the outcomes of protest movements and revolutions in countries affected by the Arab Spring.⁴ As such, and particularly in the case of Jordan—a monarchy dependent on a tribally-dominated military to maintain its rule—an analysis of the army is crucial to understanding future political developments.

Using an institutionalist approach, this article utilizes indicators of civil-military relations to outline the army's position in Jordan today.

1 Zoltan Barany, “Unrest and State Response in Arab Monarchies,” *Mediterranean Quarterly* 24 (2013): 5-38.

2 Ibid, 90-91.

3 Barry Rubin, “The Military in Contemporary Middle East Politics,” in *Armed Forces in the Middle East: Politics and Strategy*, Barry Rubin and Thomas Keany, eds. (London: Routledge, 2002).

4 Derek Lutterbeck, “Arab Uprisings, Armed Forces, and Civil-Military Relations,” *Armed Forces and Society* 39 (2012): 44.

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It explores the military's unique relationship to the Hashemite monarchy, and its evolution since the creation of Jordan in 1946. While the Jordanian military establishment has so far been similar to those of other modern monarchies—playing a key role in both containing political turmoil and maintaining an acceptable pace of reforms—its increasing self-awareness and pursuit of its corporate interests threaten to challenge the monarchy's grip on the institution overall.

Historical Development

Scholars utilizing the institutionalist approach highlight critical junctures that bind actors in certain arrangements, with greater effects as time passes.⁵ To understand contemporary Jordanian civil-military relations, it is important to examine the historical development of the Jordanian Armed Forces (JAF) and identify the critical junctures responsible for its evolution.

The JAF emerged from the Arab Legion, an institution under British command, passed to the command of King Abdullah I in 1949.⁶ The king was from a different region, and had blatantly coordinated with the British in the 1948 war. Subsequently, the ruling family lacked the “civic-myth” responsible for its legitimacy.⁷ For this reason, the rule of King Abdullah I came to an abrupt end with his assassination in 1951.

King Abdullah's grandson, Hussain, ascended the throne in 1952. In the same year, the Free Officers movement seized power in Egypt, and Arab nationalist ideology began to sweep the region. King Hussain gained intelligence that there were many nationalistic officers sympathetic to challenging his rule, and a coup was attempted a year later by officers emulating the Egyptian example. Luckily, the institutional legacy of British recruitment (of predominantly Bedouin soldiers) saved Hussain from removal, as “soldiers chose their king over their officers in 1957.”⁸

The king's reactions following this initial coup attempt constitutes the first critical juncture in the development of the JAF. Hussain purged officers suspected of sympathizing with the nationalists. He reconstituted his cabinet with loyalist members only, removing members of Palestinian origin.⁹ From that point forward, the king pursued policies of patronage to the tribes and Bedouins termed “East Bankers” at the expense of increased Palestinian marginalization. The king also made clear his stance on the politicization issue: the armed forces were to remain separate from politics. King Hussain remained suspicious of the officer corps and the possibility of coups, and maintained the legal separation between members of the armed forces and political expression.¹⁰

With the onset of Black September in 1970, Palestinians with Jordanian citizenship were marginalized entirely. In this conflict, the

5 Peter A. Hall and Rosemary C. R. Taylor, “Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms,” *Political Studies* 44 (1996): 936-957.

6 Michael Herb, *All in the Family* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999).

7 Mehran Kamrava, “Military Professionalization and Civil-Military Relations in the Middle East,” *Political Science Quarterly* 115 (2000).

8 Herb, *All in the Family*, 226.

9 Alan George, *Jordan: Living in the Crossfire* (New York: Zed Books, 2005), 31.

10 Kamrava, “Military Professionalization,” 90.

armed forces saw large-scale desertions by Jordanians of Palestinian descent.¹¹ The attempted coup, led by factions of the Palestinian Liberation Organization, can be considered another critical juncture in the relationship of the monarchy with the armed forces. Despite some evidence to suggest that Jordanians of Palestinian origin constitute two-thirds of the entire Jordanian population, King Hussain and government leaders pursued a consistent policy of limiting their role in the armed forces. Estimates place the proportion of Jordanian Palestinians in the officer corps at only ten percent.¹² Additionally, the king relied heavily on Jordanian tribes for any important military appointment, striking a balance that worked to increase their ties to the regime.¹³

Although King Hussain consolidated his control, some groups within his coalition did not firmly support the regime. Often, groups within the monarchy's fold viewed Hashemite policies as "divide and rule," rather than any sort of "pluralist inclusion."¹⁴ Each tribe supported by the king believes it is getting less patronage than others. Consequently, the continued support of the armed forces, despite "extensive royal patronage," should not be considered a certainty.¹⁵ However, both the patronage offered by the monarchy and the "de-Palestinianization" of the armed forces have increased the military's loyalty to Hashemite rule, as well as its political support of Jordanian nationalism.¹⁶

The military, particularly its leadership, should be considered a crucial part of the elite coalition.¹⁷ Its relationship to the monarchy is an intimate one, beyond that of a patron and beneficiary. Hussain was himself a military man, and Abdullah II, like his father, was involved in the military and came to power with its measured support. Specifically, he had to assure the dying Hussain, and by extension the military, that his half-brother Prince Hamzah would be the crown prince. Hamzah was beloved by the military, and his removal from this position in 2004 marked the beginning of tension between Abdullah and his royalist supporters, both within the tribes and their representatives in the military.¹⁸ The king was also in the process of consolidating his power in the economic sphere through neoliberal measures, but his reforms began to benefit Palestinians in the private sector rather than the tribes. Consequently, tribal leaders in supposedly loyal towns and regions began to protest in support of Hamzah's return to power as king.¹⁹ The

11 Nawaf Tell, "Jordanian Security Sector Governance: Between Theory and Practice," paper presented at *Challenges of Security Sector Governance in Middle East* workshop (Geneva 12-13, 12-13 July 2004), 17.

12 "Jordan Personnel: Composition, Recruitment, and Training," *Federal Research Division of the Library of Congress, Country Studies Series*, 1989.

13 Curtis R. Ryan, *Jordan in Transition: From Hussein to Abdullah* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002), 10, 88.

14 *Ibid.*, 89.

15 Dr. Zoltan Barany, Transcript of Interview (Al-Urdun al Jadid Research Center, April 23, 2012).

16 Tell, "Jordanian Security," 17.

17 Beatriz Magaloni, "Credible Power-Sharing and the Longevity of Authoritarian Rule," *Comparative Political Studies* 41/5 (2008): 715-741.

18 "Jordan Crown Prince Loses Title," *BBC News*, last modified November 2004, "Jordan Crown Prince Loses Title," *BBC News*, "Jordan's King Names Son, 15, as Crown Prince," *Reuters*, last modified July 2009.

19 David D. Kirkpatrick, "Jordan Protestors Dream of Shift to King's Brother," *The NY Times*, last modified Nov. 21, 2012.

ultimate outcome of these cleavages within Jordanian society remains unclear.

Indicators

Scholars have often employed variables, such as professionalization and representativeness of the army, to assess civil-military relations in the Middle East. Indicators of professionalization include the clarity of the chain of command, the cohesiveness of the military's mission, and the politicization of the armed forces. As for the civilianization/representativeness of the armed forces, indicators include type of army and the military's domestic role.²⁰

A cursory look at listed commanders or chiefs of staff within each service indicates most leadership positions are filled by a member of a prominent East Bank family or tribe (for example, the Al-Zabens, the Habashnehs, etc.), appointed by the king himself. This is a patrimonial trait of the Jordanian Armed Forces, as is the marginalization of Palestinian Jordanians.

Professionalization

According to the Constitution, the king and his Council of Ministers are responsible for internal and external security. The chain of command between the armed forces and the state flows through this council. Although technically, the Parliament has oversight over the Council of Ministers, this council is appointed by the king and all final decisionmaking is under his authority.²¹

The king is considered Supreme Commander of the armed forces, and has generally sought to complicate the chain of command between the military and the state beyond this title. The Prime Minister has historically delegated the responsibilities of Defense Minister to his Chief of Staff. The Chief of Staff is nominated by the Prime Minister, but approved by the king, and accountable to him only.²² Thus, the king's power over all defense matters is wide ranging.

Although within each service branch of the armed forces, the chain of command is relatively clear and conventional, the chain of command between the armed forces and the state is obfuscated by the role of the king. Essentially, the monarch makes the Council of Ministers play a secondary role in decision-making and policy creation. The Defense/Prime Minister has no oversight over Chiefs of Staff or Directors of different service branches. The only instances where the Prime Minister has had any effect on the security sector, JAF included, are when the Prime Minister had a background of security service *or* had personal connections with heads of the service branches.²³ This is not a formal

20 Yezid Sayigh, "Agencies of Coercion: Armies and Internal Security Forces," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 43 (2011), 404. The JAF is organized in five main service branches. The Army, the Navy, and the Air Force are the main divisions. The JAF also features the Jordan Royal Guard for the personal protection of the king and his family. Finally, the armed forces contain the Joint Special Operations Command (established in 1963). The creation of the Gendarmerie reflects an increased militarization of internal security, since the Department of Public Security (that is, the police) and the General Intelligence Department both emerged from the JAF and prominently feature paramilitary forces

21 Tell, "Jordanian Security," 18.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid., 18.

institutional arrangement, and thus is an unreliable check on the king or security sector's power.

The Constitution has theoretically allocated some means of control for the Parliament over the military, but the legislature does not have any security committee. Thereby, it lacks civilian expertise or direct oversight. The budget of the armed forces is passed through Parliament, but legislators are not allowed to examine how any sum is to be spent. In some instances, the budget is not passed through Parliament at all (namely, any budget having to do with intelligence). Reliance on foreign aid helps the armed forces remain autonomous from any constitutionally mandated oversight.²⁴

The Council of Ministers is accountable to the Parliament but this arrangement amounts to very little oversight since the ministers themselves have always delegated important decisionmaking power to their chiefs of staff. In the rare event the king convenes a National Security Council meeting to address security issues, legislators are not on the list of contributing members. Instead, the king often seeks the opinions of relevant ministers, chiefs of staff, and commanders of particular service branches. Abdullah, like his predecessors, has maintained his right to convene this group and fill its seats with whomever he deems fit.²⁵

Civilianization

Jordan abolished the draft in 1992, and has since featured an all-volunteer army. The implication of a conscript army is that it is highly representative of society, barring any racist or separatist laws that limit certain segments of society from involvement in the military. With an all-volunteer army however, one must assess the backgrounds of those most likely to serve and analyze the state's recruitment policies (in terms of their target citizen) to assess representativeness.

Following the monarchy's purge of politicized members and those of questionable loyalty (in many cases, Palestinians), from the armed forces, recruitment for the military focused on East Bank tribes and Bedouins (though some ethnic minorities have also been incorporated).²⁶ Clearly, the ruling family adopted a specific strategy to maintain a mostly East Bank military to consolidate power and directly allocate patronage benefits through the state to royalist citizens. This may not be a sustainable policy in the future, however, since demographic changes among Jordanian citizens may force the monarchy to allow Palestinians within the higher echelons of the military.²⁷ The loyalty of the armed forces to their king is not unquestionable, but safe to assume for the present.

Internal Role

The domestic function of the JAF has always been to protect the regime; specifically, the ruling family. The monarchy has often deployed the armed forces against real or perceived internal enemies (for example, factions of the Palestinian Liberation Organization or political dissidents).

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid.

26 Herb, *All in the Family*; Ryan, *Jordan in Transition*.

27 Alexander Bligh, "The Jordanian Army: Between Domestic and External Challenges," *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 5, No. 2 (June 2001):13-20.

Some analysts make the claim internal policing is the primary function of the military, despite stated intentions.²⁸ Examining the capabilities of the military, it is clear Jordan is ill-equipped to fight any external war, yet spends increasing amounts of revenue on the Joint Special Operations Forces and newly created Gendarmerie—both of which focus on internal counterterrorism and stability. Therefore, this claim has merit.

The JAF also serve the internal role of upholding Jordanian nationalism, particularly against Palestinians as citizens of questionable loyalty.²⁹ The military exists first to be loyal to the king, embodying the tangibility of the Jordanian national state. This fits in with the concept of the nation-building monarchy, in which the king serves as a linchpin above a multitude of tribal and regional cleavages. In this manner, the monarch can co-opt potential challengers by incorporating certain societal groups within the coalition and excluding others.³⁰ The ruling family serves as the “thread that holds a divided country together.”³¹ In Jordan, this strategy is clearly reflected in the army’s composition. It has a positive relationship with certain segments of society, but the proper “civilianization” of the JAF is questionable and has the effect of souring civil-military relations.

Civil-Military Relations Under Pressure

Instability

Recent uses of the military in internal affairs occurred following the Arab Spring in protests concerning electoral reform, neoliberalist policies, and charges of corruption.³² The police forces served their purposes for a time, though the spread of protests in commonly loyal cities worried the monarch. As a result, the gendarmerie was put to good use.³³ This paramilitary force has been involved in quashing protests, even in gatherings predominantly filled with “East Bankers.”³⁴ There is no reason to believe the remaining service branches would not follow suit if necessary.³⁵ After all, with some semblance of professionalization comes a subordination to the regime, and the military has no shortage of experience in maintaining domestic stability, as its history proves.

However, some questions remain as to whether East Bankers, perceiving marginalization, will deploy to protect the monarchy in such a loyal fashion.³⁶ Grievances recently expressed both by military veterans, and the tribes they come from, indicate a gradual shift in the political

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid.

30 Lisa Anderson, “Dynasts and Nationalists: Why Monarchies Survive,” in *Middle East Monarchies*, ed. Joseph Kostiner (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000).

31 Zoltan Barany, “Unrest and State Response in Arab Monarchies,” *Mediterranean Quarterly* 24 (2013): 12.

32 Bruce Riedel, “Jordan’s Arab Spring,” *The Daily Beast*, November 15, 2012.

33 Yezid Sayigh, “Agencies of Coercion: Armies and Internal Security Forces,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 43 (2011).

34 Achim Vogt, “Jordan’s Eternal Promise of Reform,” *Internationale Politik und Gesellschaft* 4 (2011).

35 Sean L. Yom, “Jordan in the Balance: Evaluating Regime Stability,” *Combating Terrorism Center*, January 14, 2013.

36 Ibid.; Daoud Kuttab (Director General of Community Media Network), transcript of interview by Dr. Zoltan Barany, April 24, 2012.

landscape of Jordan.³⁷ More importantly, it may point to some fissures within the armed forces themselves.

Political Reform

While outright mutiny may be out of the question for Jordan's armed forces, some questions have been raised over whether the army will get involved in the debate on political reform, or continue to acquiesce to the king's pace. In May 2010, a petition was raised by the National Committee of Military Veterans calling for an end to corruption, a resolution to the "Palestinian" question within Jordan's borders, and changes to the constitution to the benefit of parliamentary power by limiting the monarch's role.³⁸ This organization has significant political power, with over 140,000 ex-soldier members and high-ranking generals from the most prominent tribes.³⁹ Some analysts considered this move by military veterans, and their broad scope of demands (political *and* economic), as a "culmination of a gradual process in recent years, whereby senior army veterans interfere in politics."⁴⁰

This act suggested to many the military was not a silent actor in the political arena. In fact, some demands of veterans flirted with attacking the monarchy itself. The petition emphasized the corruption around the queen and demanded an end to "elite treachery."⁴¹ Some tribes went so far as to insist on the ascension of Prince Hamzah to the throne.⁴² Protests which developed in loyalist regions, involving tribes affiliated with the armed forces, panicked the monarchy. It seemed a clear case of dissent "coming from the senior ranks of the military" and "trickling down" to entire towns and regions.⁴³

The "Hirak" movement emerging out of royalist towns has been highly vocal about maintaining the East Bank character of the state, income inequality between rural and (mostly Palestinian) urban areas, and electoral reform.⁴⁴ Members of these tribes represent military officials at all levels, and there is no reason to believe tribe members within the armed forces do not share the same concerns, in spite of the patronage benefits they receive from the regime. Corruption within state bureaucracies, and within the monarchy's inner circle, has sent negative signals to the military establishment.⁴⁵ Neoliberal reforms have worked to privatize and reduce public resources and expenditures, again affecting public servants such as soldiers and officers to a great extent.⁴⁶ Despite the doling out of material benefits at any sign of unrest, it seems the military leadership recognizes the increasingly powerful role it plays in determining the country's political future.

37 Jeffrey Goldberg, "The Modern King in the Arab Spring," *The Atlantic*, March 18, 2013; David Schenker, "Will Jordan be the First Arab Monarchy to Fall?" *The Atlantic*, January 8, 2013.

38 Assaf David, "The Revolt of Jordan's Military Veterans," *Foreign Policy*, June 16, 2010.

39 Vogt, "Jordan's Eternal Promise of Reform"; Dr. Zoltan Barany, transcript of interview with Steven Tucker (USAID), April 24, 2012.

40 David, "The Revolt of Jordan's Military Veterans."

41 Vogt, "Jordan's Eternal Promise of Reform."

42 Kirkpatrick, "Jordan Protestors Dream."

43 David, "The Revolt of Jordan's Military Veterans."

44 Schenker, "Will Jordan be the First Arab Monarchy to Fall?"

45 Marwan Muasher, "Reform in Jordan: After the Vote," *The Global Think Tank, Carnegie Endowment*, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2013/01/28/reform-in-jordan-after-vote/f6fg>.

46 Vogt, "Jordan's Eternal Promise of Reform."

Neglecting the military's grievances may prove detrimental to the monarch's long-term control. Without the loyalty of the JAF, the threat that some tribes might "follow Tunisia and Egypt" poses great risk to King Abdullah personally, and to the future of his line.⁴⁷

Conclusions

Jordan has formal institutions governing politics, and in particular civil-military relations, but the monarch's increasing involvement has led to institutional decay. Nevertheless, the JAF have been recognized as highly institutionalized in comparison to other armies in the region. The Jordanian military is politicized, but the armed forces still feature a conventional chain of command internally. There is little civilian oversight with regard to their affairs and budgets, however, which suggests civilian control could be strengthened. Additionally, the marginalization of most Palestinian Jordanian citizens harms the level to which the armed forces are representative of society. Combined with the consistent use of the military in internal conflict, these traits allude to the possibility of strain between society and the armed forces. Despite continued subordination to the monarch, recent tensions arising from the military's perceived marginalization may exacerbate the politicization of JAF, and create a possible opening for their intervention in politics.

Implications for US Policy

Formal institutions, particularly as outlined by the Jordanian Constitution, have the capacity to function in such a way to allow for the role of the king, but also give the military establishment space to develop professionally. The first step to reforming civil-military relations would be to strengthen formal institutions.⁴⁸ The United States can play a role in encouraging balanced civil-military relations through the use of conditional military aid, as well as continued joint military relationships. Since Jordan is a key ally in the region, this objective should be a priority.

Secondly, the JAF has expressed grievances as a result of privatization programs and alleged corruption. Although the military receives aid from external sources (namely, US aid makes up approximately 46 percent of the entire budget), it remains woefully behind in a number of crucial areas.⁴⁹ External defense capabilities are lacking, and expenditures appear focused on internal counterterrorism forces. Reprioritizing the military's expenses would reorient their mission, and transition any harmful internally focused role to the role of a modern military.⁵⁰ This is yet another area in which the United States can have a direct positive effect by increasing conditional aid and military-to-military cooperation.

However, this should not necessarily imply the need for deployment of American forces on the ground. Recent events in Syria have threatened Jordanian borders, pushing King Abdullah to request a limited US military presence to support "the security of Jordan." And indeed, 900 American military members are now stationed within the country, in

47 Ibid, 67.

48 Tell, "Jordanian Security."

49 William Parsons and William Taylor, "Arbiters of Social Unrest: Military Responses to the Arab Spring," *US Army Military Academy at West Point* (2011), www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA562816.

50 Bligh, "The Jordanian Army;" David, "The Revolt of Jordan's Military Veterans."

addition to an assault ship off the coast. This move has only served to exacerbate the grievances of agitated parties within the Jordanian polity, rather than bolster the stability of the regime. For instance, tribal leaders have expressed discontent at the presence of foreign forces within Jordan, and have even characterized the military personnel as a legitimate target of attack. Secular and Islamist groups have registered outrage and added it to their list of criticisms against the state.⁵¹ Clearly, such a move only weakens the king and his legitimacy, and despite American interests in both Jordanian security and the Syrian-Iraq crisis, American policymakers would do well to step lightly.

Programs like military exercise "Eager Lion," on the other hand, are an appropriate level of involvement. This annual military exercise began in 2011 and encompasses Jordanian, American, and assorted Arab troops from around the region.⁵² Not only does such an exercise help strengthen military-to-military ties between Jordan and the United States, it can be publicized to the Jordanian public as an effective way to fortify the Jordanian army during a time of increased security threats. Additionally, programs such as "Eager Lion" help to stabilize the region in the sense that such exercises foster ties amongst neighbors and pave the way for further military cooperation between Arab countries in the future. This issue is becoming progressively more important, as the conflict in Syria spills over to its increasingly fragile neighbors burdened by domestic issues and an influx of refugees. Thus, renewal of this particular exercise, and the development of more opportunities of this kind, would be highly useful for American purposes.

All in all, with political turmoil far from over in the Arab world, and on-going in Jordan, understanding the actions of significant actors such as the JAF continues to be the most important task.

51 David Schenker, "What Have US Troops Been Doing in Jordan?" [CNN Global Public Square blog]. (July 12, 2013).

52 Rachel Badgeley and Zach Mott, *Exercise Eager Lion Begins in Jordan*, http://www.army.mil/article/105272/Exercise_Eager_Lion_begins_in_Jordan/.

NATO's REBIRTH

NATO's New Trajectories after the Wales Summit

John R. Deni

ABSTRACT: NATO is seeing something of a rebirth manifested by the Wales summit in September 2014. The summit did not fix all NATO's woes, but it did address a number of them, especially the reconfigured security situation in Europe. However, it remains unclear how NATO can add to its already full plate, especially during a time of personnel cuts and zero-growth budgets.

When the North Atlantic Alliance first announced in November 2013 that it would hold its next summit September 2014 in Wales, NATO watchers anticipated the meeting would be a rather ordinary affair. The summit was expected to focus largely on the concluding chapter of the Alliance's extensive involvement in Afghanistan – a kind of self-congratulatory denouement to a decade of war. Of course, all that changed in early and mid-2014, as Russia first invaded and then annexed Crimea, and later invaded the Donbas in the apparent hope of adding yet more Ukrainian territory.

In so doing, Russia fundamentally altered the security situation in Europe, and during the Alliance's gathering in Wales its leaders wasted no time in noting that fact in their summit declaration – indeed, it was the second sentence: “Russia's aggressive actions against Ukraine have fundamentally challenged our vision of a Europe whole, free, and at peace.”¹

For several allies in Eastern Europe, this statement amounted to a regrettable “I told you so,” and they have since clamored for a robust, allied response. Yet to other allies in Southern Europe, the threat of Russia remains less compelling given illegal migration, smuggling, and other illicit activities across the Mediterranean Sea. Meanwhile, some in Western Europe – especially those struggling with anemic economic growth or those interested in protecting lucrative business dealings with Russia – were hoping Moscow's actions represented a passing storm rather than full-blown climate change. For the United States, navigating these various interests has required walking the line between doing too much on the one hand – thereby negating the incentive for allies to pull their fair share – and not doing enough on the other – thereby weakening the Alliance and encouraging Moscow's adventurism.

Despite these challenges, the Alliance has seen something of a rebirth due to the Wales summit. Certainly the Alliance's approach toward some of the subjects addressed in Wales – such as defense spending, or energy security – reflected tired methods or ongoing, unresolved

¹ “Wales Summit Declaration,” issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Wales, Press Release (2014) 120, September 5, 2014, paragraph 1. The author would like to thank Ms. Valerie Andreyko for her research assistance.

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debates among the allies. However, there were several issues – such as a renewed focus on maneuver warfare readiness, the rotational stationing of allied troops east of Germany, reversing the downsizing of NATO’s command structure, and tightening the linkage between cyber-attacks and Article 5 – where the Alliance appears indeed to have been rejuvenated with a sense of purpose and intent.

Alliance Purpose and Missions

In terms of its broad approach toward national security, NATO officials reiterated the three-fold purpose of the Alliance at Wales – collective defense, crisis management, and cooperative security.² This announcement was particularly important in the face of collective exhaustion following major combat operations in Afghanistan and the return of an aggressive dynamic Russian threat in the East. It would be easy to argue the Alliance, now returning home from Afghanistan, should refocus on strengthening itself for upholding Article 5, territorial defense.³ However, it is clear several NATO members – especially the United States – still want an Alliance capable of contributing to collective defense and security, not only in Europe, but beyond it as well.⁴

Whether to focus on one of NATO’s three overarching objectives or to maintain equal emphasis on all of them is not merely a theoretical or diplomatic question. Such discussions have concrete implications for defense planners and military leaders. Capabilities most necessary for territorial defense – such as heavy armor or artillery – differ from those necessary for expeditionary crisis management operations – such as strategic air- and sealift, mobile medical support, overseas intelligence networks and capabilities, and deployable logistics capabilities.⁵ Certainly, one must be careful not to overemphasize the distinction between forces necessary for territorial defense versus those necessary for expeditionary operations – for instance, tanks and self-propelled artillery could be useful in an expeditionary crisis-response operation, depending on circumstances.⁶ However, without specialized expe-

2 NATO, “Active Engagement, Modern Defence: Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization,” November 2010, www.nato.int/strategic-concept/pdf/Strat_Concept_web_en.pdf.

3 Bernd Riegert, “NATO Needs to Rethink its Strategy,” *Deutsche Welle*, May 6, 2014.

4 See the 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) Report on the US desire to partner with European allies in the protection and promotion of common interests and security; Derek Chollet, “Transatlantic Security Challenges: Central and Eastern Europe,” Senate Foreign Relations European Affairs Subcommittee Testimony, April 10, 2014; www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Chollet_Testimony.pdf. According to Chollet, the Alliance will certainly need to “place more emphasis on high-end deterrence and defense,” but it must also make its forces “more deployable and sustainable.” For an outside perspective, see Erik Brattberg, “Should NATO Go Global or Back to Basics?” *The Hill*, May 7, 2014, thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/foreign-policy/204737-should-nato-go-global-or-back-to-basics.

5 Richard Weitz, “Transatlantic Defense Troubles,” *Strategic Insights* 10, no. 3 (Winter 2011): 53, 59. Elsewhere, then-US Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs Alexander Vershbow argued the Alliance needs to emphasize expeditionary capabilities that could also fulfill a territorial defense mission, essentially trying to overcome the distinction in capabilities between forces focused on territorial defense versus those focused on expeditionary operations. Alexander Vershbow, “Crafting the new Strategic Concept: Ambitions, Resources, and Partnerships for a 21st Century Alliance,” keynote speech delivered at the “New Challenges, Better Capabilities” conference, Bratislava, Slovakia, October 22, 2009, slovakia.usembassy.gov/speech2.html.

6 David Yost argues the distinction between territorial defense capabilities and expeditionary crisis response capabilities has been overstated. Further, expeditionary capabilities may be necessary for territorial defense, given the expansion of the Alliance from 16 to 28 member states – the allies need to be able to project force to every part of the enlarged treaty area. David Yost, “NATO’s evolving purposes and the next Strategic Concept,” *International Affairs*, 86, 2 (2010): 495-7.

ditionary capabilities such as those noted above, Alliance forces are limited to territorial defense and unable to project enough force to make a difference.

In the debate over whether NATO will prioritize expeditionary or territorial-defense capabilities, the Alliance declared it would establish an enhanced program with “an increased focus on exercising collective defence including practising comprehensive responses to complex civil-military scenarios.”⁷ Clearly here the Alliance is looking to stress not simply territorial defense conceived of as conventional maneuver warfare but also the so-called hybrid or new generation warfare some argue Russia has implemented nearly perfectly in Crimea and attempted in eastern Ukraine.⁸ More broadly, it is possible to read the statement by the Alliance as a decision to favor collective defense capabilities and readiness at the expense of NATO's other two broad strategic purposes.

However, a more accurate read is the Alliance is righting a ship far out of balance. For the last decade, Alliance capabilities and readiness efforts have strongly favored counterinsurgency, foreign internal defense, and reconciliation and reconstruction – precisely what allied troops needed for their mission in Afghanistan. With that mission ending, more attention can be paid to collective defense capabilities and readiness. Nonetheless, the Alliance will need to spend considerable time, money, and effort in rebuilding corps- and division-level capability and readiness for territorial defense.

Meanwhile, NATO continues to devote attention and effort toward so-called emerging security challenges. On energy security, the Alliance's pronouncements at Wales reflected NATO's split personality on this issue. On one side, the allies declared energy supply, diversification of routes, suppliers and energy resources, and the interconnectivity of energy networks are “primarily the responsibility of national governments and other international organisations.”⁹

On the other hand, the allies declared the Alliance would:

...further develop our capacity to contribute to energy security, concentrating on ... enhanc[ing] our awareness of energy developments with security implications for Allies and the Alliance; further develop[ing] NATO's competence in supporting the protection of critical energy infrastructure; and continu[ing] to work towards significantly improving the energy efficiency of our military forces.¹⁰

This seemingly contradictory approach – leaving energy security to member states and/or the European Union, while simultaneously continuing efforts to play a greater role in energy security – reflects the debate within the Alliance. Some members – especially those in the east – want the Alliance more involved on this issue, helping to protect critical energy infrastructure. Others – especially Germany and Italy – are equally adamant that NATO not step beyond very limited bounds. The Wales summit declaration reflected this divide, but one can expect

7 “Wales Summit Declaration,” paragraph 10. Emphasis added.

8 For a description of this new generation of warfare, see Janis Berzins, “Russia's New Generation Warfare In Ukraine: Implications For Latvian Defense Policy,” National Defence Academy of Latvia Center for Security and Strategic Research, Policy Paper No. 2, April 2014.

9 “Wales Summit Declaration,” paragraph 109. Emphasis added.

10 Ibid.

the Alliance's approach to energy security to evolve further as the debate unfolds.

The Alliance took a similar approach with regard to the growing threat to allied cyber security. NATO reinforced the notion that individual allies are responsible for developing the relevant capabilities for the protection of national networks, but concurrently agreed cyber defense falls within the realm of NATO's core collective defense tasks. Even though a member state may believe a cyber-attack crosses the collective defense threshold, the Alliance clearly noted "a decision as to when a cyber-attack would lead to the invocation of Article 5 would be taken by the North Atlantic Council on a case-by-case basis."¹¹ This statement represents a significant clarification of the Alliance's approach, at least in comparison to how NATO addressed cyber defense during the 2010 Lisbon summit and the 2012 Chicago summit.

NATO after Afghanistan

Clearly not content to rest on their laurels, NATO's Heads of State and Government announced or approved six new initiatives, plans, or efforts across a variety of issues.¹² While it appears NATO has been reinvigorated, the critical questions are whether and how the Alliance will manage to add to its already full plate, especially during a time of personnel cuts and zero-growth budgets in Brussels and Mons as well as mixed approaches to defense spending and investment among NATO allies.

The Readiness Action Plan is comprised of several elements designed not only to address issues in Eastern Europe, but beyond in areas "further afield that are of concern to allies."¹³ This was an important, rather explicit acknowledgement of the significantly diverging threat perceptions in the Alliance today, accounting for the Alliance's slow and limited action in the face of Russia's aggression earlier this year. Understandably, Poland, the Baltic states, and perhaps Romania are focused on what in some ways is an existential threat emanating from Russia. For these countries, NATO must refocus on territorial defense of its member states, as the combat mission in Afghanistan ends. Meanwhile, countries to the south, such as Spain and Italy, are far more concerned with illegal immigration and refugee flow from North Africa, the Levant, and Sub-Saharan Africa. They have less interest in preparing for warfare against a revanchist Russia, and remain more concerned with maritime security across the Mediterranean. Still other allies, such as the United States and United Kingdom, genuinely maintain a global outlook when it comes to conceptualizing their role in the world, and want to ensure NATO remains a vehicle for protecting and promoting their interests beyond Europe. Even at this early stage, the Readiness Action Plan seems aimed at satisfying all of NATO's various constituencies.

11 "Wales Summit Declaration," paragraph 72.

12 New initiatives endorsed by the Heads of State and Government include the Readiness Action Plan, the Very High Readiness Task Force, a Defense Planning Package, the Framework Nations Concept, the Defence and Related Security Capacity Building Initiative, and the Partnership Interoperability Initiative.

13 "Wales Summit Declaration," paragraph 5.

As part of the plan, the allies will “enhance” the NATO Response Force by developing force packages capable of moving rapidly and responding to potential threats. One enhancement will be the creation of not simply a high readiness force but rather a “Very High Readiness Joint Task Force” – so named perhaps to distinguish it from the NATO graduated readiness forces already extant around Europe which form the backbone of the NATO Response Force.¹⁴ Based in Eastern Europe, the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force will consist of roughly 4,000 troops – the vast majority of which will be conventional land forces, with appropriate air, maritime, and special operations forces available to support.¹⁵ The forces will be rotational in nature – hence, the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force is not a permanent basing of allied forces in the east.¹⁶ Even so, this represents a significant step toward meeting the long-standing, and largely unfilled, security needs of the Alliance’s eastern members.

Although, in theory, the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force will be capable of deploying with just a few days’ notice, its operational activation will be subject to decision by the North Atlantic Council, the highest political decision-making body of the Alliance. In other words, the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, currently US Air Force General Phil Breedlove, will not have operational control over this force in peacetime and, hence, he will not have the ability to deploy it at the moment a threat arises, thereby nullifying the modifier “very” in the task force’s name.

In addition to the Readiness Action Plan, the allies agreed on a Defense Planning Package featuring a number of priorities:

- enhanced training and exercises;
- command and control, especially for air operations;
- intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance;
- ballistic missile defence;
- cyber defence; and,
- land force readiness.

Improving allies’ capabilities across these areas is necessary.¹⁷ The Alliance clearly needs to augment its intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities, for instance, and to use enhanced exercises to build up skills in large-scale conventional maneuver warfare that have atrophied through a decade of countering the Taliban in Afghanistan. However, it is unclear how this effort to promote specific defense planning goals would differ from previous attempts to prioritize and spur defense investments among the allies, such as the Prague Capabilities Commitment, the Defence Capabilities Initiative, the Connected Forces Initiative, or Smart Defence.

14 Emphasis added.

15 John-Thor Dahlburg and Julie Pace, “NATO Approves New Force Aimed at Deterring Russia,” *Associated Press*, September 5, 2014.

16 Alexander Vershbow, remarks at Multinational Corps (North East) in Szczecin, Poland, September 18, 2014, poland.usembassy.gov/szczecin3.html.

17 “Wales Summit Declaration,” paragraph 64.

Reflecting a multifaceted approach to capabilities development, allies also embraced the Framework Nations Concept, an initiative in which groups of allies work together to develop capabilities and forces, particularly in Europe. For example, the United Kingdom will lead Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, and Norway in developing a “Joint Expeditionary Force,” a rapidly deployable force capable of conducting the full spectrum of operations, including high intensity operations.¹⁸ Also, Denmark will lead a project including the Czech Republic, Greece, Norway, Portugal, and Spain that focuses on multinational approaches toward using air-to-ground precision-guided munitions.¹⁹

The Framework Nations Concept, originally a German proposal endorsed by Alliance defense ministers in June 2014, embodies the Smart Defence initiative launched by the Alliance in 2011, which encourages groups of allies to work together to develop, acquire, operate, and maintain military capabilities.²⁰ In some respects, the Framework Nations Concept mirrors NATO operations in Afghanistan (and Kosovo), in which military forces from smaller allies plug into military formations of larger allies. The risk in this approach is critical countries may decide to sit out certain operations, reducing the overall effectiveness of NATO forces. Indeed, given the recent history of NATO operations, in which several allies exercised their right to withhold force contributions even after voting to support an Alliance operation, it would seem this risk is growing.

Separately, but along the same lines, “two allies” – presumably the United Kingdom and France, although the Alliance’s summit statement was oddly opaque on this point – have announced their intention to establish a Combined Joint Expeditionary Force by 2016, to be available for full-spectrum operations, including at high intensity. This agreement and the Framework Nations Concept are important efforts on the part of the Alliance, but they underscore the reality that the force structures of many larger and mid-size allies in Europe – such as the United Kingdom and the Netherlands – have shrunk to the point they cannot independently field corps-size or even division-size formations as they did just a few years ago.²¹ Additionally, and with regard to the Joint Expeditionary Force in particular, although the end result may benefit the Alliance, this initiative appears likely to exacerbate the problem of equitable risk-sharing among the allies. Most countries that decided to join the United Kingdom in the Joint Expeditionary Force effort have arguably out-performed other European allies in taking on risk in Afghanistan.

The allies also agreed to launch a Defence and Related Security Capacity Building Initiative.²² This would formalize the Alliance’s actions in training Iraqi and Afghan security forces, which NATO views

18 UK Ministry of Defence, “International Partners Sign Joint Expeditionary Force Agreement,” September 5, 2014, www.gov.uk/government/news/international-partners-sign-joint-expeditionary-force-agreement.

19 Richard Tomkins, “NATO Members Launch Air-to-Ground Precision-guided Weapons Initiative,” *United Press International*, September 5, 2014.

20 “Wales Summit Declaration,” paragraph 67.

21 Interview with a civilian member of the NATO International Staff, July 16, 2014.

22 “Wales Summit Declaration,” paragraph 89.

as part of its Cooperative Security task. The Alliance has stated the program will focus initially on Georgia, Jordan, and Moldova, but this “demand-driven” initiative will remain open to any partner. As is the case with regard to US national security policy, these sorts of security cooperation – or military-to-military – activities are becoming increasingly important. The fact NATO is formalizing its approach to security cooperation is a positive development, but key to future success will be deconflicting the military-to-military activities of the Alliance and its member states, as well as the allocation of sufficient funding and appropriately trained manpower resources.

Quantity & Quality in Defense Spending

Aside from unveiling a host of new initiatives, allies also used the summit to address challenges in defense spending. The summit provided clear evidence the Alliance recognizes the importance of both quantity and quality of defense spending. In terms of quantity, the allies reiterated the political goal of having each spend the equivalent of 2 percent of its gross domestic product on defense.²³ Military capability also depends on how scarce defense resources are used. To address this qualitative angle, the allies agreed to spend at least 20 percent of their defense budgets on procurement and research and development.

Obviously – judging from NATO’s own figures – not all allies are meeting these goals.²⁴ However, the allies agreed to redouble efforts to achieve both quantitative and qualitative targets, explicitly pledging that those allies not spending the equivalent of 2 percent of gross domestic product or devoting 20 percent of their defense budgets to procurement and research and development would indeed meet those objectives – over the next decade.

Giving themselves an entire decade to achieve objectives seems less than aggressive. However, the real issue is not time, but rather whether those targets are truly reflective of equitable burden sharing or will result in useful capabilities. The cases of Greece and Denmark are most illustrative. The Greek government routinely spends more than the equivalent of 2 percent of its gross domestic product on defense – one of only four NATO allies in 2013 to do so. That same year, Greece spent nearly 18 percent of its defense budget on procurement and related research and development. As far as NATO’s targets are concerned, Greece appears as a model ally. However, Greece’s contributions to allied operations in Afghanistan, Libya, and Kosovo have been minimal, and the Greek military remains largely unable to project significant force for any length of time or distance.²⁵

Meanwhile, the Danes regularly spend less than the 2 percent goal – averaging 1.5 percent since 2000 – and in 2013 were projected to spend just 10 percent on procurement and related research and development.

23 “Wales Summit Declaration,” paragraph 14.

24 NATO Public Diplomacy Division, “Financial and Economic Data Relating to NATO Defence,” Communiqué PR/CP(2014)028, February 24, 2014.

25 In Kosovo, Greece contributes 119 troops, or roughly 2.4 percent of the troops there – more than Denmark currently contributes, but far less than the 314 troops from NATO ally Slovenia, for instance, which has less than one fifth Greece’s population. In Libya, Greece contributed one of the 18 ships and five of the 185 military aircraft involved in Operation Unified Protector. In Afghanistan today, Greece has roughly 9 troops, or roughly 0.02 percent of the 41,000 troops remaining.

As far as NATO's objectives are concerned, Denmark is clearly falling short. However, the Danes have a highly capable, deployable military, and have had a relatively high casualty rate in Afghanistan. Danish forces took on far more risky missions in the southern region of Afghanistan than many of the larger allies. At half the population of Greece, Denmark clearly punches above its weight class, making significant contributions to NATO's missions, and able to project force across time and distance.²⁶

A far more effective way to determine which countries need to devote more effort would be for the Alliance to develop a burden-sharing score. Such a score could be based on factors similar to the percentage of defense spending devoted to procurement and related research and development, but also could include contributions to recent and ongoing missions, as well as force usability levels. NATO defines this last concept – usability – in terms of deployability and sustainability, and a decade ago, the Alliance established a goal for member-state force usability. In their Wales summit declaration, the allies pledged to meet those usability goals – 50 percent of each member's overall land-force strength should be deployable, and 10 percent of each member's overall land-force strength should either be engaged in, or earmarked for, sustained operations – but they again failed to agree on making such usability data public.

These are necessary, but insufficient, conditions for maintaining collective defense and security; disparate allied forces must also be able to operate together, often side by side in complex security environments. The allies clearly recognize this need, and pledged once again to ensure their armed forces will be able to operate together effectively, capitalizing on the immense interoperability gains of the last decade in Afghanistan. Specifically, the allies launched a Partnership Interoperability Initiative to “enhance our ability to tackle security challenges together with our partners.”²⁷ This initiative will consist of dialogue as well as practical cooperation aimed at building and maintaining interoperability. As with other initiatives outlined above, however, the proof will be in the budgeting – and unfortunately, most member states continue to favor investment in military platforms at the expense of readiness and the exercises and training necessary to underpin it.²⁸

Finally, while NATO clearly recognized its needs to expand, modernize, and invest in the security tools at its disposal, it also acknowledged the need to adjust the command structures directing those military assets. Although esoteric, the issue of Alliance command structure is vitally important for member states. Changes in allied command structures mean major, in behind-the-scenes, intra-Alliance battles over the placement of valuable NATO infrastructure and the distribution of prestigious and influential general and flag officer billets.

In what amounts to an implicit admission the Alliance cannot meet its own ambitions, the allies noted they will ensure its command

²⁶ At the height of the surge in Afghanistan, Denmark had roughly 750 troops there; today, that figure is down to 145 troops. In Libya, Denmark contributed 7 aircraft.

²⁷ “Wales Summit Declaration,” paragraph 88.

²⁸ Interview with a senior civilian member of the NATO International Staff, July 16, 2014.

structure has a “regional focus.”²⁹ Although vague, this is an indication the Alliance will revise its command structure.³⁰ Just a few years ago, NATO’s command structure had a regional focus; northern air, land, and maritime component commands reported to a northern joint forces command in Brunssum, and southern air, land, and maritime component commands reported to a southern joint forces command in Naples. In 2011, the Alliance began implementing a plan to do away with one air command, one land command, and one maritime command, cutting in half the number of component commands. When implementation was complete one year later, the changes were hailed as an example of necessary streamlining and more efficient use of resources. In retrospect, though, it has become clear – certainly to those within the Alliance organization and now evidently to Heads of State and Government – the Alliance lacks the command structure to do all that it says it must do, in peacetime and during crises.

Conclusion

The Wales summit did not fix all NATO’s woes, but it did address a number of its security, organizational, and functional challenges, especially the new security situation in Europe. In some ways, the Alliance has seen a rebirth as a result of Russia’s actions in Ukraine. However, in the absence of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and the upending of the security environment in Europe, NATO certainly was not headed toward irrelevance. To the contrary, the Alliance had plenty on its plate before Moscow made its fateful decision to send Russian military forces throughout Crimea and into the Donbas.

The great irony of Russia’s actions is they have rejuvenated the Alliance in a way inimical to Moscow’s perceived interests, including the stationing of US and allied troops east of Germany and a new NATO emphasis on territorial defense. In sum, just as the Alliance ends its Afghanistan odyssey, the Wales summit indicates NATO has found a new footing and adjusted its trajectory in an effort to meet new, as well as old, challenges.

If the allies – especially those in Europe – can individually or collectively rise to meet those challenges, their efforts will doubtlessly be very welcome in the United States. While Washington professes a continuing desire to see US foreign and security policy rebalanced to the Asia-Pacific, events affecting vital and important American interests in the Middle East, West Africa, and Eastern Europe provide critical reminders that one cannot always choose the terrain upon which to counter threats. In this environment – and especially with further rounds of sequestration-induced defense budget cuts on the horizon, the United States needs partners more than ever. European allies together represent the best option – and with the possible exceptions of countries such as Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, the *only* option. In order to match ability with will, all NATO allies must now work to fulfill the aspirations of the Wales summit.

29 “Wales Summit Declaration,” paragraph 9.

30 Interview with a civilian member of the NATO International Staff, July 16, 2014.

Assessing NATO's Eastern European "Flank"

Luis Simón

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ABSTRACT: Russia's annexation of Crimea and ongoing efforts to de-stabilize Eastern Ukraine have led NATO and the US to adopt a number of initiatives aimed at "reassuring" Eastern and Central European allies. This article assesses the implications of those initiatives for NATO's evolving position in Eastern Europe. It also appraises the Alliance's renewed focus on defense and deterrence with respect to European and transatlantic capabilities.

The aim of this article is to assess NATO's evolving geostrategic position in Eastern Europe in the context of a resurgent Russia.¹ Admittedly, the military-strategic level is but one aspect of Russia's resurgence. Although Russian military power did play an important part in the annexation of Crimea and subsequent de-stabilization of Eastern Ukraine, Moscow is showing a clear preference for "non-traditional" ways and means when it comes to expanding its influence across Eastern Europe, including energy blackmail, the use of undercover assets (the so-called "little green men"), financial penetration, cyber-attacks, and information warfare. This is particularly true in the case of Eastern and Central European countries covered by NATO's mutual defense guarantee. In this regard, economic and political means are likely to become central to any Western response or strategy aimed at countering Russian influence in Eastern Europe. Having said this, Central and Eastern European perceptions of Russian power are largely mediated by the evolving military-strategic balance. Thus, the latter provides a sort of "superstructure" or framework within which geopolitical competition in Eastern Europe plays out.

This article looks at Europe's "Eastern Flank" primarily from a geostrategic perspective. The opening section examines some of the main initiatives adopted by NATO's Heads of State and Government at the September 2014 Summit in Wales, and assesses their contribution to defense and deterrence in Eastern Europe. The second section seeks to place these initiatives within a broader geostrategic context, by breaking down the so-called eastern flank into three sub-components or sub-theaters: the Baltic Sea; the Black Sea; and the "continental" northeastern European flank. It identifies the main geostrategic vulnerabilities NATO faces in each sub-theater and suggests possible ways to overcome them. The third and final section looks at the implications

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¹ The author would like to thank Alexander Mattelaer, James Rogers, and Daniel Fiott for their comments on an earlier draft of this article.

of NATO's renewed emphasis on defense and deterrence for European and transatlantic discussions on capability development, and offers some broader reflections on what the crisis of the "crisis management" paradigm might mean for Western military strategy.

NATO Reloaded? The 2014 Wales Summit

Arguably, the main outcome from the 2014 Wales summit was the return of defense and deterrence in Eastern Europe to the center of NATO debates.² This does not mean the era of Western expeditionary military operations has come to pass. However, Russia's annexation of Crimea in February 2014 and subsequent meddling in Eastern Ukraine has aggravated a sense of insecurity amongst NATO's Central and Eastern European allies, and prompted the Alliance to place a renewed emphasis on defense and deterrence in an Eastern Flank context. A clear illustration of this fact was NATO's decision in Wales to adopt the Readiness Action Plan, to ensure the Alliance will be able to react to crises swiftly and firmly.

The backbone of the Readiness Action Plan will be a new Very High Readiness Joint Task Force of some 4,000-6,000 troops, which should be able to deploy to the front line within a matter of days.³ Credibility will hinge on the existence of appropriate reception facilities, logistics and equipment in each of the allied countries situated on the Eastern European "front-line." It will also require the construction of bases and fuel and ammunition depots that can be used on short notice. More particularly, streamlining the Alliance's command and control infrastructure in Central and Eastern Europe will be key to the success of the Readiness Action Plan. Hence NATO's recent efforts to strengthen the role of Multinational Corps Northeast (Szczecin, Poland) in the planning, command, and control of Eastern European-related contingencies and in ensuring high readiness.

Pessimists might be tempted to portray the Readiness Action Plan and the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force as yet another "made-in-Brussels" political compromise that comes short of satisfying ongoing demands for a permanent presence of NATO troops in Central and Eastern Europe – and ultimately fails to provide a credible conventional deterrent against Russian military power. The fact that NATO's Supreme Allied Commander (SACEUR) will not have full authority to call allied troops into the front-line – as some member states hoped he might – is arguably the greatest shortcoming of the Readiness Action Plan. However, the Alliance's insistence on "all year-round" rotations promises to give the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force a status just short of a permanent presence in Central and Eastern Europe.⁴

The rotations foreseen in a Readiness Action Plan/Very High Readiness Joint Task Force context will complement similar initiatives undertaken by individual allies. Most notably, the United States announced in late April 2014 the redeployment of 600 paratroopers from its 173rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team (based in Vicenza) to

2 James Bergeron, "Back to the Future in Wales," *RUSI Journal* 159, No. 3 (June-July 2014): 4-8.

3 "Wales Summit Declaration," issued on September 5, 2014, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_112964.htm

4 Author's interview with NATO official in Brussels, September 22, 2014.

Poland and the Baltic States.⁵ These troops will be conducting training and exercises with the armed forces of Poland and the Baltic States and will remain in those countries “until further notice.”⁶ In addition, the US Air Force has decided to increase the number and size of F-16 rotations into its Aviation Detachment at Lask Air Base (Poland), as part of its post-Crimea effort to reassure Central and Eastern European allies.⁷

All in all, the all-year-round nature of Readiness Action Plan/Very High Readiness Joint Task Force and US force rotations could constitute an allied tripwire of sorts in Central and Eastern Europe. Although it remains to be seen how long these rotations will be maintained, for now they seem to have given the allies a *de facto* permanence in the area. Moreover, it is important to situate the Readiness Action Plan/Very High Readiness Joint Task Force and US initiatives within the framework of a broader trend, namely the increasing presence and visibility of NATO in Central and Eastern Europe following Russia's annexation of Crimea in February 2014. This trend has presided over a higher-tempo of NATO air patrols over the Baltic States, of naval patrols in the Baltic and Black Seas and more frequent and large-scale military exercises in Central and Eastern Europe.⁸

Admittedly, the United States has been the main driving political force behind many of the NATO initiatives aimed at reassuring the Central and Eastern European allies in a post-Crimea context. However, there have not been any major adjustments to US force posture in Europe. Although the Pentagon is currently conducting a review of US force posture and defense strategy in Europe, a significant reintroduction of US military assets to the European theater seems unlikely, not least as sequestration continues to impose budgetary constraints on the Pentagon.⁹ The ongoing demand for US military engagement in the Middle East and Washington's intention to rebalance its strategic efforts in favor of the Asia-Pacific constitute additional obstacles to a significant reintroduction of US military assets into the European theater of operations.

In Washington's eyes, Russia's geopolitical resurgence in Eastern Europe represents just one of many global security challenges.¹⁰ This may partly explain why the United States is adopting an increasingly indirect approach to European security, by placing partnerships up front and stepping up its calls to European allies to do more to uphold Europe's security order.¹¹ Indeed, if NATO's commitment to strengthen the security of the eastern flank is to be meaningful, it is imperative Europeans take defense more seriously. The pledge adopted by NATO's Heads of State and Government to halt any further decline in defense

5 “Vincenza-based Paratroops Deploying to Poland, Baltics,” *Stars and Stripes*, April 22, 2014.

6 Author's interview with NATO official in Brussels, 12 June 2014.

7 *Ibid*

8 Luis Simón, “‘Back to Basics’ and ‘Out of Area’: Towards a Multi-purpose NATO,” *RUSI Journal* 159, No. 3 (June-July 2014): 14-19

9 Multiple interviews with US and NATO officials in Washington and Brussels, June-September 2014. On the impact of sequestration upon the US military see Michael J. Meese, “Strategy and Force Planning in a Time of Austerity,” *Strategic Studies Quarterly* 8, No. 3 (Fall 2014), 19-29.

10 Michael G. Roskin, “The New Cold War,” *Parameters* 44, No. 1 (Spring 2014): 5-9.

11 Sean Kay, “Rebalancing and the Role of Allies and Partners: Europe, NATO and the Future of American Landpower,” in John Deni (ed.), *Augmenting Our Influence: Alliance Revitalization and Partner Development* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute and U.S. Army War College Press, 2014): 69-115.

spending, move towards the Alliance's 2 percent benchmark within a decade, and devote greater resources to equipment acquisition, research and development is a step in the right direction.¹²

While it remains unclear whether (most) NATO member states will abide by the promises undertaken at Wales, such promises must not be regarded in isolation. Since the annexation of Crimea, the European allies have devoted increasing resources to the Baltic Air Police Mission, to NATO naval task forces in the Baltic and the Black Sea, and to large-scale exercises and training initiatives in Central and Eastern Europe. Additionally, the new NATO Framework Nations Concept bears a strong European flavor.¹³ By encouraging the formation of small groups of allies coordinated by a lead nation, the aim behind the Framework Nations Concept is to stimulate the joint development of forces and capabilities.¹⁴ Of the various groupings developing in the framework of this initiative, two of them are particularly relevant to Europe's commitment to defense and deterrence in the eastern flank — the German-led and British-led initiatives.

A German-led, 10-nation strong grouping shall concentrate in logistics support; chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear protection; delivering fire-power from land, air, and sea; and deployable headquarters. Delivering fire-power from land, air, and sea is surely critical in an eastern flank context, as is the emphasis on logistical support and deployable headquarters, which dovetails with the Readiness Action Plan. In this regard, it is important to bear in mind Germany has doubled its presence in NATO's Multinational Corps Northeast headquarters in Szczecin (Poland) from 60 to 120 staff officers.¹⁵ This should help NATO's plans to move that HQ — predominantly dedicated to territorial defense — from low to high readiness.

Additionally, a British-led, 7-nation Joint Expeditionary Force will be able to deploy rapidly into theatre and conduct full spectrum of operations, including high intensity.¹⁶ Although the Joint Expeditionary Force is not assigned to any particular geographical theatre, its composition hints at a strong Baltic flavor. Indeed, by fostering interoperability between the United Kingdom, Netherlands, Norway, Denmark and the three Baltic States, the British-led Joint Expeditionary Force will help improve the Alliance's readiness and ability to project maritime and amphibious power through the North and Baltic Seas all the way to the Baltic States. This will represent an important contribution to the security of NATO's eastern flank.

Conceptualizing the "Eastern Flank"

As mentioned, the different initiatives adopted by NATO should be considered in terms of three military-strategic sub-theaters: the Baltic Sea; the Black Sea; and the continental flank. The Arctic area could be regarded as a fourth sub-theater of the eastern flank, as it will

12 "Wales Summit Declaration" (note 2).

13 Author's interview with NATO official in Brussels, June 12, 2014.

14 "Wales Summit Declaration" (note 2).

15 Jan Techau, "Germany's Budding Defense Debate," *Carnegie Europe*, June 17, 2014.

16 "Wales Summit Declaration" (note 2).

likely become increasingly important geopolitically, and presents a great degree of interconnectivity with the Baltic Sea.¹⁷

Currently, the continental flank is primarily confined to northeastern Europe, and NATO's efforts to strengthen defense and deterrence in Eastern Europe focus mainly on the Baltic States and Poland. This focus is because Ukraine constitutes a large continental buffer separating Russia from Central Europe (Slovakia, Hungary and southern Poland), and both Ukraine and Moldova "shield" the entire Balkan Peninsula from Russia. Should Kiev fall completely within Moscow's strategic orbit, the defense of Europe's eastern flank would become much more complicated, since the entire continental space running from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea – the so-called *intermarium* – would suddenly be in play. This possibility means avoiding a full military-strategic alignment between Russia and Ukraine, or Russia and Moldova (whatever the political modalities), should be a top priority for the West.

In some ways, Belarus' status as a geopolitical buffer between NATO and Russia resembles that of Ukraine. Although Minsk is politically close to Moscow, it still maintains an important degree of military autonomy in the sense Russian armed forces do not have a significant presence in Belarusian territory; nor are they in a position to transit Belarusian territory or airspace freely.¹⁸ However, Russia has in recent months taken steps aimed at reinforcing defense cooperation with Belarus and expanding its military presence in that country.¹⁹ As explained below, this trend is likely to aggravate Poland's geostrategic exposure to Russia and complicate the defense of NATO's eastern flank.

Admittedly, the Baltic Sea and the northeastern European flank are very much intertwined. However, its geostrategic supremacy in the Baltic Sea gives NATO two separate military supply lines to the "front-line" in the Baltic States: a maritime and "amphibious" communication line running through the North Atlantic and North Sea through the Baltic Sea; and a continental one running through Germany and Poland onto the Baltic States. In this regard, the British-led and German-led Framework Nations groupings shall help further substantiate the "maritime-amphibious" and "continental" foundations of Eastern European security.

Safeguarding NATO's Supremacy in the Baltic Sea

During the Cold War period, the Baltic Sea was a highly contested space, and constituted one of the main geostrategic "battlegrounds" between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. However, the integration of Poland and the Baltic States in NATO and the EU (and that of Sweden and Finland in the EU) has given the West a position of political-strategic supremacy in the Baltic to this day. In this regard, initiatives such as the British-led Joint Expeditionary Force, the reinforcement of NATO's Baltic Air Policing Mission and Standing Maritime Groups, and a more

17 On the geopolitical interconnectivity between the Baltic and Arctic spaces see James Rogers, "Geopolitics and the Wider North," *RUSI Journal* 157, No. 6 (December 2012): 42-53.

18 Jacek Bartosiak and Tomasz Szatkowski, "Geography of the Baltic Sea: a Military Perspective," *National Center for Strategic Studies* (December 2013, Warsaw).

19 Arkady Moshes, "Belarus' Renewed Subordination to Russia: Unconditional Surrender or Hard Bargain?," *PONARS Eurasia Policy Memo* 329 (August 2014).

ambitious program of exercises and training exercises in the area shall help cement the Alliance's position in the Baltic.

If NATO is to preserve its strategic supremacy in the Baltic Sea it must continue to strengthen military-to-military relations with Sweden and Finland, and seek to integrate those two countries further into its exercises and defense plans for the Baltic theater of operations. Sweden would add much value to the Alliance in the Baltic. Its territory envelops large swathes of the Baltic Sea, and the central location of Gotland makes that island of great geostrategic importance for the defense of the Baltic States.²⁰ Additionally, greater interoperability with Finland in the maritime and air domains and a strengthening of the naval, air and missile defense presence in Estonia would help the Alliance strengthen its ability to contain the Russian Navy in the Gulf of Finland in the event of hostilities, and thus complicate Moscow's access and freedom of movement in the broader Baltic.

The role of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania in underpinning NATO's geostrategic supremacy in the Baltic Sea can not be overstated. If the security of the Baltic States were undermined, Russia's standing in the Arctic would be significantly enhanced. In turn, the Alliance's, own geostrategic position in the Baltic Sea could rapidly crumble, like a house of cards, and the Baltic would become again a contested geopolitical space. Against such a backdrop, Finland and Sweden (who have been getting closer to NATO recently) might be compelled to "swing back" into a quasi-neutral status. Hardening the defenses of the Baltic States and firming up NATO's presence there is, therefore, a geostrategic imperative for the Alliance. If the Baltics remain secure and firmly integrated within the West, then Sweden, Finland, and NATO's position in the Baltic Sea will also remain secure. Not least, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania straddle the Baltic Sea and the continental, northeastern European flank, and highlight the high-degree of interdependence between those two sub-theaters.

The Baltic States and Poland: NATO's Bulwark in Northeastern Europe

Europe's northeastern continental flank presents important geostrategic vulnerabilities. Chiefly, the Baltic States are highly exposed to conventional Russian land and air power. Russia could theoretically move easily into Estonia by land, air or sea, and into Latvia by land and air. In turn, the Russian enclave in Kaliningrad borders Lithuania and could serve to encircle the Baltic States geostrategically. The increasing military-strategic alignment between Moscow and Minsk should lead Polish and Baltic military planners to assume a high degree of Belarusian compliance with Russian demands for operational access in the event of a military conflict in northeastern Europe. This process threatens to leave Poland directly exposed to Russian military power and the Baltic States almost completely encircled by Russia and Russian proxies. Accordingly, the geopolitical evolution of Belarus has a great incidence upon the security of the Baltic States and Poland – an indeed upon that of Europe's northeastern flank.

²⁰ Robert Nurick and Magnus Nordenman (eds.), "Nordic-Baltic Security in the 21st Century: The Regional Agenda and the Global Role," *Atlantic Council* (September 2011).

The defenses of Europe's northeastern continental flank will surely benefit from initiatives such as NATO's new Readiness Action Plan/Very High Readiness Joint Task Force, the US decision to rotate small contingents of land forces into Poland and the Baltics, the German-led Framework Nation grouping, the strengthening of the Alliance's command and control presence in Poland or that country's commitment to increase defense spending. These are steps in the right direction. The effective implementation of the Readiness Action Plan and the role of the German-led Framework Nation grouping will be of paramount importance, particularly when it comes to testing and improving the connectivity between Germany, Poland, and the Baltic States in an "Air-Land" context. This is, after all, the military-strategic heart of NATO's eastern flank.

However, the rotational, non-permanent nature of the Readiness Action Plan/Very High Readiness Joint Task Force and similar US initiatives could be insufficient to guarantee the defense of the Baltic States, which is complicated by the geography of northeastern Europe and the lack of a conventional military balance against Russian power. Unless these rotational forward deployments are reinforced by a credible Alliance strategy to deploy overwhelming air power quickly and follow-on land forces in the area, they will fail to constitute a reliable conventional deterrent against Russia in northeastern Europe in the short and medium term. NATO defense planners are already aware of this shortcoming, and are trying to identify ways of complementing and reinforcing the measures adopted in Wales.²¹ However, a credible conventional follow-up would require a more radical transformation of allied strategy.

After decades of defense budgetary reductions and an emphasis on expeditionary warfare, the forces of most European countries have been hollowed out to such an extent they are unable to field corps or even divisions in some cases. This leads to the core of the problem: the existence of a dangerous gap in the Alliance's strategy for the defense of the eastern flank, between (part-time?) tripwires of sorts (i.e. the Readiness Action Plan/Very High Readiness Joint Task Force and US rotational deployments in the Baltics and Poland) and the promise of nuclear deterrence. To fill that critical gap, NATO and its Member States will need to think beyond readiness and devote considerable time and resources to rebuilding corps and division capabilities.

If NATO is to strengthen the conventional defenses and deterrence of the eastern flank the allies will need to boost their air and land presence in the Baltic States and Poland, and give such presence a more permanent form. An Alliance-wide effort to strengthen the theater missile defenses and air-defenses of the Baltic States and Poland would also be beneficial. However, any credible defense and deterrence strategy in the eastern flank would require a greater conventional effort and commitment on the part of the Western European allies. Greater military-strategic synergies between Germany and Poland would prove particularly valuable.

Given the ongoing presence of US and UK military forces in Germany and the position of Poland and Germany in Central Europe,

21 Author's interview with NATO defense official in Brussels, September 22, 2014.

these two countries constitute the geopolitical anchor between Western and Eastern Europe. In this regard, Germany's decisions to augment its command presence in Poland and lead a Framework Nation grouping are steps in the right direction, and should be complemented with greater efforts to improve the interoperability between the German and Polish armies and air forces. These measures would ensure that, in the case of a crisis, NATO would be able to draw on Western reinforcements rapidly to boost its position in Poland and the Baltic States.

The point is often made that conventional military power will not be of much help for NATO in the eastern flank, because Russia is using unconventional warfare techniques, such as cyber-attacks, under-cover assets ("little green men"), energy blackmail, financial penetration, agitation of ethnic Russian minorities, information warfare and so on.²² This is an important point. In fact, the Alliance has already recognized it must strengthen the cyber-defenses, information warfare, counter-propaganda and intelligence capabilities of the Baltic States.²³ These are areas that transcend the military proper, and where greater cooperation between NATO and the EU would bring added value. An effort is also needed to help the Baltic States monitor foreign direct investment inflows from Russia, as well as to craft strategies to mitigate their energy dependence.

However, if there is a common thread to Russia's different unconventional warfare techniques it is its attempt to undermine the self-confidence and political morale of target countries. This possibility is precisely why a conventional military component in the Baltic States (and Poland) is important: it helps reassure those countries both militarily and, most importantly, politically. By conveying a strong message of strategic and political support from the West, a permanent conventional NATO footprint in the Baltics (and Poland) would complement existing rotational deployments and exercises and help further underpin the confidence of Baltic politicians, businessmen, and opinion formers, and empower them to turn away from (subtle) Russian means of penetration when targeted.

The Black Sea Balance after Russia's Annexation of Crimea

While Russia's annexation of Crimea and meddling in Eastern Ukraine may not have directly altered the military-strategic balance in northeastern Europe or the Baltic Sea, it could constitute a true game changer in the Black Sea.²⁴ Admittedly, Moscow's attempts to shore up its geopolitical standing in the Black Sea area pre-date the annexation of Crimea. Its 2008 invasion of Georgia and subsequent support to the breakaway regions of Abkhazia (situated on the Black Sea Basin) and South Ossetia are most illustrative in this regard. Insofar as Crimea is concerned, back in 2010 Russia had already secured the Ukrainian government's consent to maintain the lease of its Sevastopol naval base at least until 2042. However, the lease agreement signed by Kiev and Moscow imposed important restrictions on the Russian Black Sea Fleet,

22 For a good analysis of how to counter Russia's asymmetrical threat to the Baltics see Jakub Grygiel and A. Wess Mitchell, "Limited War is Back," *The National Interest*, August 28, 2014.

23 Author's interview with NATO defense official in Brussels, September 22, 2014.

24 Igor Delanoë, "After the Crimean crisis: towards a greater Russian maritime power in the Black Sea," *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 14, no. 3 (2014): 367-382.

particularly when it came to deploying additional warships to Sevastopol and replacing ageing platforms.²⁵

Following the annexation of Crimea, Russia is now in a position to earmark any additional warships and resources to Sevastopol, as illustrated by the recent announcement by Admiral Viktor Chirkov (commander-in-chief of the Russian navy) that Russia's Black Sea Fleet will be bolstered by the arrival of 30 new warships over the next six years. In addition, the annexation of Crimea resulted in Russia's acquisition of the majority of the platforms and assets of the Ukrainian navy. More broadly, direct rule over Crimea represents a strengthening of Russia's geopolitical position in the northern rim of the Black Sea. A consolidation of *de facto* Russian control over Eastern Ukraine (whatever the political modalities) would only serve to further compound this fact. What does this mean for the Alliance?

Any NATO/Western strategy aimed at balancing Russian naval power in the Black Sea is complicated significantly by the legal regime regulating the transit of warships through the Turkish straits. According to the 1936 Montreux Convention, non-Black Sea nations must give Turkey a 15-day notice before sending any warships through the straits onto the Black Sea. Moreover, the access of non-Black Sea nations into the Black Sea must be limited to 21 straight days per warship, and a maximum aggregate tonnage of 45,000, with no vessel heavier than 15,000 tons.²⁶

Admittedly, Turkey's control of the Dardanelles Strait, the Sea of Marmara and the Bosphorus, and the fact NATO enjoys a position of naval and strategic advantage in the Eastern Mediterranean mean Russia is "bottled up" in the Black Sea anyway. However, if Russian power in the Black Sea is left unchecked and that sea becomes a "Russian lake," small and medium Black Sea countries might begin "bandwagoning" on Russia. Against such a backdrop, it would be far easier for Moscow to use its proxies in Transnistria as a way of destabilizing Moldova, weaken the Western link with Georgia and the Caucasus, as well as further strengthen its position in Bulgaria – where it already enjoys considerable economic and political influence. In other words, while Turkey might continue to thwart Russia from breaking into the Eastern Mediterranean and challenging the Alliance, Moscow could exploit its reinforced position in the Black Sea to consolidate and expand its influence over a number of (weaker) NATO allies and partners in southeastern Europe. How can the Alliance prevent such a scenario?

Turkey is certainly a key factor when it comes to the Black Sea – and its NATO membership is of enormous geostrategic value to the West. In this regard, the close political and military ties between Turkey and Romania represent an important check to the prospect of Russian hegemony in the area.²⁷ Greater Turkish-Romanian cooperation on naval and missile defense matters would be particularly important in this regard. Still, Ankara is wary of confronting Russia – a country on which it is heavily dependent in terms of energy. Moreover, Turkey sees the recent

25 John C.K. Daly, "After Crimea: The Future of the Black Sea Fleet," *The Jamestown Foundation*, May 22, 2014.

26 Stephen Starr, "How The 1936 Montreux Convention Would Help Russia In A Ukraine War," *International Business Times*, May 12, 2014.

27 Author's interview at the US Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island, May 30, 2014.

wave of hostility between the West and Russia as an opportunity to increase its own political leverage vis-à-vis both parties.²⁸

The importance of the Turkish factor notwithstanding, NATO should take additional measures to reinforce its position in and around the Black Sea Basin. In late April 2014, the Alliance announced the deployment of six combat aircraft to Romania, along with 200 troops, pilots, mechanics and maintenance staff.²⁹ Barely four months later, Romania was designated “lead-nation” in an Alliance project to develop Ukraine’s cyber defenses.³⁰ These are steps in the right direction. However, they should be further complemented with similar measures aimed at streamlining the Alliance’s air and land posture in Bulgaria (arguably the Alliance’s weakest link in southeastern Europe) and bolstering Sofia’s cyber-security capabilities.³¹ In addition to this, the Alliance should make it a top priority to enhance the theater missile defenses of Romania and Bulgaria and strengthen its military-to-military ties with Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova.

Insofar as the maritime domain is concerned, NATO should consider earmarking one of its Standing Maritime Groups to the Black Sea to facilitate its engagement in permanent naval exercises and training initiatives with the navies of Romania, Bulgaria, Georgia and Ukraine. To mitigate the restrictions imposed by the legal regime of the Turkish Straits prohibiting non-Black Sea warships to stay on that sea for longer than 21 days, the Alliance might consider enhancing its presence at US Naval Support Facility in Souda Bay (Crete). This move would help reinforce the Alliance’s presence in the Aegean Sea and make it easier to maintain a high tempo of naval rotations through the Turkish straits, as well as react quickly to Black Sea-related contingencies.

Implications for European and Transatlantic Capabilities

Admittedly, defense and deterrence are not the main concern of all European countries, many of whom continue to attach more importance to expeditionary operations and non-eastern flank contingencies. Indeed, geopolitical volatility in the broader Middle East and the shift of the world’s geostrategic center of gravity towards the Indo-Pacific maritime axis underscore the ongoing importance of out-of-area concepts. However, the renewed focus on the eastern flank is likely to result in a reinvigoration of NATO and lead many European allies to give greater consideration to defense and deterrence in the context of their own national force planning processes. It is only logical these changes feed into European capability discussions within the Alliance, the EU, as well as in a national context.³² This leads to a broader point: the crisis of the crisis management paradigm.

28 Author’s interview at the US Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island, May 30, 2014.

29 “Allies Enhance NATO Air-policing Duties in Baltic States, Poland, Romania”: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_109354.htm

30 Author’s interview with NATO official in Brussels, September 22, 2014.

31 On the risks of Russian penetration in Bulgaria see Rachel A. Dicke, Ryan C. Hendrickson and Steven Kut, “NATO’s Mafia Ally: The Strategic Consequences of Bulgarian Corruption,” *Comparative Strategy* 33, No. 3 (2014): 287-298.

32 On the need to link NATO and EU force and capability generation processes see Alexander Mattelaer, “Preparing NATO for the Next Defense-Planning Cycle,” *RUSI Journal* 159, No. 3 (June-July 2014): 30-35.

The crisis management paradigm has thrived on the assumption that Western military power can make free use of the “global commons” (sea, air, space and cyber-space) to transit into out-of-area operational theaters, thus allowing the West to engage in external crisis management and follow-up state-building initiatives. A related assumption was the main challenges to the global commons would come in the form of low-level transnational threats, such as terrorism, piracy, organized crime (including cyber-crime) and so on. Similarly, obstacles to crisis management and state-building endeavors would come not so much in the form of traditional enemies, but through irregular and asymmetric insurgencies.³³

The crisis management paradigm has come to define the last two decades, which have seen the Alliance engage in military conflicts with relatively low-level adversaries and engage in follow-up state-building enterprises through a combination of military, civilian, security sector reform, political and economic initiatives. The emphasis on crisis management and state-building has led Western countries to emphasize expeditionary military concepts and capabilities, but also to look at ways to achieve greater coordination between military and civilian operational tools. These parameters applied to the interventions in the Western Balkans and Afghanistan, the main operational theaters for post-Cold War NATO.

The crisis management paradigm was underpinned by Western global strategic and political supremacy, and it has organized the way in which Americans and Europeans have thought about military power over the past twenty-five years. Crisis management has had a pervasive influence upon Alliance doctrine and capability debates since the end of the Cold War. It has also been central to European military transformation, having come to organize the strategic culture, operational doctrine and approach to capability development for most European countries over the past two decades.³⁴

Today, the crisis management paradigm itself is in crisis – and NATO's increasing focus on defense and deterrence in Eastern Europe is just one manifestation of a deeper strategic trend. Reasons behind the “crisis of crisis management” are manifold, and include the return of great power competition (both in Europe and globally), intervention fatigue in the West, as well as declining defense budgets in the United States and Europe. Another key factor in this regard is the development and proliferation of so-called “anti-access area denial” capabilities, aimed at denying Western military forces access and freedom of movement in a given theater of operations. Such capabilities are being developed primarily by China and Russia, but are also being exported to countries like Iran and Syria.³⁵ The anti-access area denial challenge includes kinetic (i.e. ballistic and cruise missiles) as well as non-kinetic capabilities (i.e. cyber and anti-space weapons).

33 Antulio J Echevarria II, “After Afghanistan: Lessons for NATO's Future Wars,” *RUSI Journal* 159, No. 3 (June-July 2014): 20-23.

34 Terry Terriff, Frans Osinga, and Theo Farrell (eds.), *A Transformation Gap? American Innovations and European Military Change* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010).

35 For a good overview of the A2/AD challenge see John Gordon IV and John Matsumura, “The Army's Role in Overcoming Anti-Access and Area-Denial Challenges,” *RAND Corporation, Report for the US Army* (2013).

Mounting defense budgetary pressures and an increasingly contested global political and strategic environment are underpinning a rebalance within Western military strategy, from intervention towards defense, deterrence, intelligence, prevention and military diplomacy. Against such a backdrop, the West may need to move away from the assumption of unhindered global access and freedom of movement and think more about how to preserve Western supremacy in the commons (sea, air, space and cyber-space) and how to use the commons to project power in a contested environment. While this does not mean the era of Western expeditionary military interventions is over, long-lasting military engagements will tend to be avoided and “surgical” forms of intervention prioritized, i.e. precision strikes, special operation forces, cyber-attacks, etc.

The United States has already begun to grapple with the implications of the crisis of the crisis management paradigm. Indeed, the Pentagon’s growing emphasis on building partnership capacity reflects a prioritization of defense diplomacy and prevention over intervention.³⁶ In turn, concepts like airsea battle, conventional prompt global strike, missile and space defense or directed-energy weapons can help overcome the anti-access area denial challenge as well as strengthen deterrence and defense.³⁷

European debates on capability development must also transcend external crisis management and adopt a multi-task mindframe. To strengthen defense and deterrence in an eastern flank context, Europeans should pay greater attention to air-land capabilities (i.e. air combat, air defense, heavy armor and artillery, etc.), cyber-defense, strategic and theater missile defense or energy-based weaponry. Insofar as power projection is concerned, fewer resources should be devoted to strategic airlift and sealift, air-to-air refueling or tactical airlift. These capabilities are broadly aimed at enabling expeditionary operations in permissive strategic environments, and are likely to become less relevant as the external crisis management paradigm wears down. In this regard, greater emphasis should be placed on capabilities and concepts that can both contribute to assert (Western) strategic supremacy in the global commons and help project military power in more challenging operational environments, such as long-range strike, air and sea combat, undersea warfare, stealthy aerial combat systems, cyber warfare, space defense and anti-satellite weapons, etc.

Conclusions

Throughout 2014, NATO has adopted a number of measures aimed at consolidating its position in Europe’s eastern flank in the context of an increasingly assertive Russia. Such measures have included the creation of a 4,000-6,000 strong Very High Readiness Joint Task Force, the streamlining of the Alliance’s command, control and logistical

³⁶ Deni (ed.), *op. cit.*, note 10.

³⁷ Andrew F. Krepinevich, *Why AirSea Battle?* (Washington D.C.: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2010); Amy F. Woolf, “Conventional Prompt Global Strike and Long-Range Ballistic Missiles: Background and Issues,” *Congressional Research Service*, 26 August 2014; Mark Gunzinger and Christopher Dougherty, *Changing the Game: The Promise of Directed-Energy Weapons* (Washington D.C.: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2012); Tod Harrison, *The Future of MilSatCom* (Washington D.C.: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2013).

infrastructure, and a series of rotational force deployments into Central and Eastern Europe. These measures constitute important steps. However, if they are to create a lasting impact upon European security, they should be complemented by a more permanent and sizable allied military presence in Central and Eastern Europe and a broader effort to regenerate the conventional military power of the European allies. The former will require structural changes in both force planning and capability development.

Admittedly, a return of a Cold War-type confrontation with Russia over Eastern Europe could weaken the West's standing elsewhere especially at a time when the fulcrum of global geopolitics is rapidly shifting towards the Asia-Pacific and the Middle East is beset by mounting instability. Not least, an escalation of tensions between the West and Russia could push the latter towards China and seriously undermine the security of the Western-based global order. However, this is precisely why the transatlantic allies should focus on hardening defense and deterrence in Europe's eastern flank. For one thing, Russia might interpret any Western attempts to reach an accommodation as a sign of weakness, and an invitation to further expansion. This interpretation could eventually require a greater commitment of Western strategic and financial resources to Eastern European security in the medium and long term. Moreover, if the West is ever to establish any sort of meaningful dialogue with Russia on global security issues, it must do so from a position of strength. Thus, hardening the defenses of Eastern Europe must be a pre-condition to any such dialogue.

Crimea and Russia's Strategic Overhaul

Kristin Ven Bruusgaard

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ABSTRACT: Russian operations in Crimea in 2014 demonstrated an enhanced ability for implementing strategy; Russia effectively combined military and state tools to reach its policy goals. That means new demands for Western defense planners. Confronting Russian military power in the future will require an expanded toolkit.

Russia used military force in new ways to annex Crimea in March 2014. Experts have focused on the military novelties in the Russian approach—the use of asymmetric, covert, and otherwise innovative military tools. However, the real novelty in Crimea was not how Russia used its armed might (in terms of new military doctrine), but rather how it combined the use of military with state tools. This is an important distinction as it indicates an updated view of the military tools Moscow has at its disposal and how these can combine with other elements of state power to reach formulated policy goals.

Evidence for this argument is threefold. First, although Russia demonstrated new principles of warfighting in Crimea, most of the tactics and doctrine displayed represented traditional Russian (or Soviet) warfighting principles refitted for modern war. Second, Russia integrated military tools with other tools of pressure in innovative ways, and made use of a seamless transition from peace to conflict. Third, this improved Russian approach to strategy is no coincidence; several bureaucratic processes have served to enhance this ability in the past decade.

Why Does it Matter?

The question of whether the novelties Russian strategy displayed in Crimea were new may seem semantic. It is not; the question helps us understand the implications of Russian activities in Crimea. Russian doctrinal novelties have consequences in the military realm; strategic novelties have consequences for Russian policy on a broader scale.

Debates in the West and in Russia reveal slight different understandings of the terms strategy and military doctrine. In the West, strategy is the link between political ends and military means, relating to the potential or actual use of military force in war.¹ The Western concept of grand strategy expands this toolset to include all tools available to the state: the “capacity of the nation’s leaders to bring together all of the elements, both military and non-military, for the preservation and enhancement of the nation’s long-term (that is, wartime *and* peacetime)

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1 Richard K. Betts, “Is Strategy an Illusion?” *International Security*, no. 25 (2000): 5-50.

best interest.”² The difference between strategy and grand strategy is thus that strategy is concerned with linking military means and political ends in war, whereas a grand strategy is what links all available tools to political ends, in times of both peace and war.

Russian definitions of strategy resemble Western definitions: formulating the military-political goals of a country as well as the means of achieving them.³ However, Russian definitions of strategy contain more, as “the highest level of military activity, that is, the avoidance of war, the preparation of the armed forces and the country in general for repelling aggression, and the planning and carrying out of operations and war.”⁴ Indeed, one authoritative Russian definition closely resembles Western grand strategy: “the goals and tasks for strategy are defined by and stem directly from the aims and goals of state policy, of which military strategy is one means.”⁵ Any Russian analyst will tell you there is no such thing as Russian grand strategy; the Russian military dictionary defines this term as an American phenomenon.⁶ Nonetheless, scholars have debated the possible emergence of a Russian grand strategy in recent years, using varying definitions of such a grand strategy.⁷ For the purposes of this article, the Russian definition will be used: the link between all available (rather than only military) means and political ends – in times of both war and peace.

Military doctrine, as distinct from strategy, depicts how to employ military tools: what kind of wars one plans to fight, and how one plans to fight them. “Strategy decides how policy’s goals are to be advanced and secured, and it selects the instrumental objectives to achieve these goals. Military doctrine, for its vital part, explains how armed forces of different kinds should fight.”⁸ Military doctrine is “institutionalized beliefs about what works in war,” normally codified in written documents.⁹ Russian military doctrine “expresses the state’s views on how to prepare and conduct the armed defense of the Russian Federation” – in a similar vein to Western doctrine.¹⁰ This definition makes it possible to use existing Russian doctrine to examine whether the novelties in Crimea pertain to general Russian principles and traditions of warfighting (new doctrine), or to ways of connecting means and ends (new strategy).

2 Paul Kennedy, *Grand Strategies in War and Peace* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 5.

3 Yuri Gaidukov, “The Concepts of Strategy and Military Doctrine in a Changing World,” *International Affairs* 38 (Moscow, 1992): 60-69

4 “Voенно-Энциклопедический Словар” [Military-Encyclopedic Dictionary] Moscow: Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, <http://encyclopedia.mil.ru/encyclopedia/dictionary/list.html>.

5 Sokolovskiy (ed) et al, *Voennaya Strategiya [Military Strategy]*, 2nd. ed. (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1963), 24

6 “Voенно-Энциклопедический Словар” [Military-Encyclopedic Dictionary] Moscow: Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, <http://encyclopedia.mil.ru/encyclopedia/dictionary/list.html>.

7 Andrew Monaghan, “Putin’s Russia: Shaping a ‘Grand Strategy?’” *International Affairs* 89, no. 5 (2013): 1221-1236; Andrei P. Tsygankov, “Preserving Influence in a Changing World: Russia’s Grand Strategy,” *Problems of Post-Communism*, 58 no. 1 (March/April 2011): 28-44; Henriikki Heikka, “The Evolution of Russian Grand Strategy. Implications for Europe’s North,” *EURASIA Research Study* (Berlin Information Center for Transatlantic Security, 2000).

8 Colin S. Gray, *The Strategy Bridge* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 78.

9 Harald Hoiback, “What Is Doctrine?” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 34 (2011): 879-900.

10 “Voennaya Doktrina Rossiiskoy Federatsii” [Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation], *Rossiiskaya Gazeta*, February 10, 2010 <http://www.rg.ru/2010/02/10/doktrina-dok.html>.

Russian Novelties

Active Use of Subversion and Covert Action

The first and most evident tactical novelty in Crimea was the covert use of special operation forces.¹¹ There was no Russian declaration of war or intent to annex Crimea, but armed individuals seized key points on the peninsula, disarmed Ukrainian military forces, and took control of territory. Russia combined covert military action with subterfuge (using civilian self-defense forces) to create conditions needed to legitimize further military action.

The tactics of using covert action and subversion are part of, in doctrinal terms, the Russian tradition of *maskirovka*: misleading the enemy with regard to the presence and dispositions of troops and military objectives. This is an old Soviet warfighting principle employed in both policy and military planning; indeed, deception was integral part of any successful military operation.¹² Today, deception and deniability are key doctrinal traits of special operations forces across the globe.

Russian strategy used covert actions and subversion to create plausible deniability. This approach also made it possible to present a *fait accompli* to Kiev in terms of Russian military control over the peninsula. This is what Sun Tzu referred to as the “perfection of strategy” that is, producing a decision without any serious fighting.¹³

The use of deception and deniability are hardly novel in Russian doctrine. However, the active use of subterfuge and civilians in the form of local self-defense forces is new. Since 2010, Russian military debates have focused on Western tactics for nurturing regime change by using political, economic or military support to selected groups, covert action and information operations.¹⁴ Despite heavily criticizing such Western practices, Russia clearly adopted and refined these elements in its own planning for modern military operations. Indeed, these topics are under scrutiny as Russia renews or amends its military doctrine.¹⁵

Overt Use of Russian Quick-Reaction Forces

As so-called “little green men” and units of self-defense forces established control in Crimea, Russia gradually transitioned to using clearly marked high readiness forces - deploying naval infantry, airborne troops and special operations forces to Crimea. The use of such forces is not new to Russian doctrine. The utility of these units has increased, due to a general modernization of the armed forces and last year’s renewed focus on snap drills and readiness. Better training made these units the natural choice for rapid operations; indeed, since 2010, Russian doctrine

11 Aleksey Nikolsky, “Russian Special Operations Forces: Further Development or Stagnation?” *Moscow Defense Brief*, 04 no. 42 (2014); Mark Galeotti, “Putin’s Secret Weapon,” *Foreign Policy* July 7, 2014.

12 Brian D. Dailey and Patrick J. Parker (Eds.), *Soviet Strategic Deception* (Lexington, MA/Toronto: D.C. Heath and Company, 1987), xvi, 277.

13 Lawrence Freedman, *Strategy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 137.

14 Valeriy Gerasimov, “Tsennost’ Nauki V Predvidenii [The value of science in prediction]” *Voenno-Promyshlenniy Kur’er* 8 (2013): 2-3.

15 Vladimir Mukhin, “Moskva Korrektiruyet Voyennuyu Doktrinu” [Moscow Corrects Its Military Doctrine] *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* (August 1, 2014).

highlighted rapidity and readiness as key to modern warfighting. Thus, there was no doctrinal novelty in deploying these troops to Crimea.

However, the new element consisted in gradually transferring them from covert to overt use of force to reach the political-military goal of establishing complete control of the peninsula. This gradual transition meant that once Russia was willing to acknowledge their presence, that presence could be boosted immediately.

Current Russian military doctrine says little about this transition, but experts elaborated on this phenomenon after 2010.¹⁶ One observer describes this as “a new form of warfare that cannot be characterized as a military campaign in the classic sense of the term.”¹⁷ The use of non-military tools curtailed the image of a conflict in the making. Western policymakers’ focus on the use, or non-use, of force possibly contributed to the surprise at the Russian annexation of Crimea. With the benefit of hindsight, one can discern a long-running Russian strategy of influencing the political trajectory of Ukraine throughout 2013 – culminating in the use of military force in 2014.

This view of modern conflict and the role of armed force is evident in academic debates and key political statements. The general conviction is the West is intent on bringing about regime change in a number of countries, including Russia, and armed force or subversive action is the policy tool of choice. One particularly interesting Russian article from 2013 portrays new-generation warfare as a series of eight phases, the first four of which entail non-military, covert, and subversive asymmetric means to reduce the enemy’s morale and willingness to take up arms.¹⁸ This article reads like a how-to manual for the operation that took place in Crimea – describing a careful political, psychological, economic preparation of the battlefield; eventually combined with the overt use of military force. This indicates careful thinking in military circles and the subsequent implementation of such ideas in Russian strategy.

Non-contact Warfare/Escalation Control

The Russian armed forces have been known for their brutality and lack of respect for human life, indeed, Soviet operational concepts made up for shortfalls in technological finesse with overwhelming manpower and firepower. Using heavy artillery in counterinsurgency operations in Chechnya is one example of this trait in recent history.

Yet, the tactics employed in Crimea were different: those of non-contact warfare through strict standard operating procedures adhered to by well-trained specialists. At a doctrinal level, controlling the level of violence, both one’s own and that of one’s enemy, is escalation control.¹⁹ This task entails leaving responsibility for escalation to the enemy – particularly if one’s enemy is more risk-averse. The Russians expertly

16 Yuriy Baluyevskiy and Musa Khamzatov, “Globalizatsiya i Voennoye Dyelo,” [Globalization and military affairs] *Nezavisimoye Voennoye Obozrenie*, August 8, 2014.

17 Janis Bersins, “Russia’s New Generation Warfare in Ukraine: Implications for Latvian Defense Policy,” National Defense Academy of Latvia Center for Security and Strategic Research, Report 02 (April 2014).

18 S.G. Chekinov and S.A. Bogdanov, “O Kharaktere I Soderzhanii Voi’ny Novogo Pokoleniya” [On the Character and Content of New Generation Warfare] *Voyennaya Mysl’* 10 (2013): 13-24.

19 Forrest E. Morgan, “Dancing with the Bear Managing Escalation in a Conflict with Russia,” *Proliferation Papers*, No. 40 (Winter 2012).

manipulated risk to their advantage in Crimea.²⁰ The political-military goal of this strategy was to deter Ukrainian armed resistance, and achieve a peaceful annexation of the peninsula.

Russian special operations forces can be expected to adhere to strict standard operating procedures. As such, these tactics were not new, albeit different from the common perception of the Russian armed forces. To be fair, comparing lax Russian conscripts smoking on top of their tanks in the 2008 Georgia war with well-equipped special operations forces in Crimea in 2014 does no justice to the diversity of units in the Russian armed forces. On the doctrinal level, escalation control is nothing new; this concept is an old Soviet one (which the 2000 doctrine also prescribed).²¹ The strategy of risk manipulation and limiting the level of violence was not new either – although the results of this strategy were unprecedented in Crimea. The emphasis on a different set of concepts and tactics from what Russia did in Georgia in 2008 does not amount to novel Russian doctrine.

Use of Asymmetric Means

The fourth novel element in Crimea is another old Soviet concept in new skins: asymmetrical warfare (now rephrased by many academics as non-linear war).²² This concept consists of utilizing any means (political, economic, informational, or other) to offset an enemy's military advantage.²³ In Crimea, this consisted of applying a wide range of tools to influence the situation; from early political consultations, complex information operations to influence the Crimean, Ukrainian and Russian populations, and to covert and ultimately overt military operations to support Crimean independence.

One thus can not talk about novelty at the level of military tactics or even military doctrine (although asymmetry features in both old and new Russian military doctrine). Again, the way in which military tools were combined with other tools to reach certain goals, was new. New thinking on asymmetric action is evident in recent academic debates where the focus has shifted from “direct destruction to direct influence, from a war with weapons and technology to a culture war, from traditional battleground to information or psychological warfare and war of perceptions.”²⁴ The Russian theory of victory has changed from direct annihilation to internal decay of an enemy, with the aim of destroying morale and willingness to fight.²⁵

To sum up, Russia was able to achieve new things by using old doctrinal principles in Crimea; and by combining a wide range of different tools, including military ones, but avoiding outright military confrontation. Strategy is as much about how to avoid war and use one's tools

20 Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966).

21 “Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation” (2000), English translation available at https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2000_05/dc3ma00.

22 Peter Pomerantsev, “How Putin Is Reinventing Warfare,” *Foreign Policy*, July 5, 2014.

23 Valeriy Gerasimov, “Tsennost' Nauki V Predvidenii [The value of science in prediction]” *Voenna-Promyshlenniy Kur'er* 8 (2013): 2-3.

24 Janis Bersins, “Russia's New Generation Warfare in Ukraine: Implications for Latvian Defense Policy” National Defense Academy of Latvia Center for Security and Strategic Research, 02 (April 2014).

25 Ibid.

in times of peace as well as war. The bulk of novelties in Crimea, as examined here, were new elements of strategy rather than doctrine.

The Real Novelty: Effective Implementation

Having established that what was novel in Crimea was Russian strategy, rather than doctrine, how does Crimea differ from Russian behavior in the past? Russia used military force to achieve political goals in Georgia in 2008: demonstrating a willingness to use force to retain its dominance in the near abroad. What kind of strategic overhaul took place?

Answering this question entails returning to the distinction drawn in the West between strategy and grand strategy – as it is here the novelty of the Russian approach in Crimea lies. Classical definitions of grand strategy are remarkably suitable to describe what Russia has done in Ukraine: “Fighting power is but one of the instruments of grand strategy – which should take account of and apply the power of financial pressure, of diplomatic pressure, of commercial pressure, and, not least of ethical pressure, to weaken the opponent’s will...”²⁶ The case of Crimea stands apart from Georgia in 2008 by the effectiveness of the combined pressure of all the tools employed. The tools emphasized in Crimea (escalation control, non-linearity, information operations and political pressure) were different from those in Georgia (large-scale operations, combined with some political and economic pressure). The efficacy with which these achieved Russia’s political goal was unprecedented, partly because observers had problems distinguishing between peace and conflict. Russia has refocused its ability to direct all state tools toward achieving strategic goals effectively.

This outcome does not mean Russia can always formulate effective strategies for political goal. Annexing Crimea was a limited strategic goal; and it may prove to be no long-term success for Russia. Moreover, specific conditions made Crimea a particularly easy strategic task: an existing Russian military presence, the possibility of pre-scripted contingency plans, pro-Russian popular sentiments, and the opportunity that arose with Yanukovitch’s resignation.

Nevertheless, Russian actions in Crimea offer lessons of value to any policymaker. They demonstrate the results of processes serving to enhance Russia’s ability for strategic coordination. Since Putin came to power, there has been increased academic and policy debate on the coordinated use of state tools to reach formulated goals. This awareness has led to a large-scale formulation of strategies for how to pursue policy goals, and, most recently, to bureaucratic changes have likely improved Russia’s ability to use its policy tools in an integrated manner.

Elevated Thinking about Strategy

The discussion above on the novelties in Russian warfighting highlighted recent Russian debates regarding strategy, the application of military force under modern conditions, and how this element of state power fits in with the other state resources. Such debates on strategic thought traditionally take place only within military circles in Russia,

26 Basil H. Liddell Hart, *Strategy*, 2nd rev. ed. (London: Faber and Faber Ltd. 1967), 322.

where the General Staff Academy and affiliated research institutes have been the leading institutions.²⁷ Civilians have limited access to military matters. Due to the prominence of military power in such strategic debates, and an increased focus on integrating military and non-military tools to reach political goals, these appear to be debates over Russian grand strategy, if one were use Western lenses and terminology. These debates have contributed to comprehensive thinking about the integrated use of state tools to reach political goals. The dividing lines between military, paramilitary and other forms of state power (covert as well as overt) are blurred in contemporary Russia.

Top bureaucrats in both military and civilian circles now speak similarly of Russian policy goals. This consensus suggests little controversy and internal disagreement across Russian military and civilian policy circles regarding the priorities of Russian foreign and security policy. The consolidation of the Putin regime over a period of 14 years is likely a contributing factor to such a consensus, be it forced or factual. The intermeshing of military and paramilitary or state security actors and elites is another contributing factor. An increased dominance of anti-Western sentiment, and particularly the conviction that the West intends to bring about regime change in Russia, may have served as a rallying point. Russian elites are increasingly communicating a coordinated view of the growing anarchy and role of military force in international politics – probably as a result of the broad concerns in policy circles on what modern conflict looks like.

These elevated Russian debates on strategy, grand strategy, and the integration of state tools to reach political goals, contrast to the state of the debate in the West – where some scholars claim strategy formulation is a neglected policy area.²⁸ Russian debates have flourished, with a focus on determining how best to secure Russian interests in the long term.

Increased Communication of Strategy

This lively debate is no coincidence; rather, it is the result of clear instructions from the supreme leadership (i.e. President Putin) to formulate long-term strategies for Russia.²⁹ A large number of strategies have been issued in the past 14 years, including foreign policy concepts, national security strategies, defense strategies, Arctic strategies, information strategies and strategies for the economic development of Russia. Strategy formulation and strategic planning has become almost a “keynote of Putin’s approach to the exercise of state power.”³⁰ Strategies are communicated frequently, conveying Putin’s intentions to his bureaucracy and to the outside world.

This process of strategy formulation and coordination has demanded new levels of cooperation from the Russian bureaucracy. Critics have questioned whether it is possible to implement all these strategies.³¹

27 Jennifer G. Mathers, “Déjà Vu: Familiar Trends in Russian Strategic Thought,” *Contemporary Security Policy* 16 (1995): 380-95.

28 Hew Strachan, “Strategy and Contingency,” *International Affairs* 87 (2011): 1281-1296.

29 Julian Cooper, *Reviewing Russian Strategic Planning: The Emergence of Strategy 2020* (Rome: NATO Defense College, 2012).

30 Julian Cooper, op.cit

31 Andrew Monaghan, “Defibrillating the Vertikal? Putin and Russian Grand Strategy”, Chatham House Research Paper (October 2014)

Moreover, several internal factors, such as endemic corruption and friction within the elite may obstruct implementation. Nevertheless, the process of producing an output has increased awareness of strategic goals across the Russian bureaucracy. Moreover, a forced focus on the relationship between different policy tools, including military tools, has contributed to a more comprehensive approach among key bureaucrats. The consolidation of power around Putin has also had a disciplining effect within the Russian bureaucracy.

With regard to the Crimean case in particular, strategic documents guiding foreign and security policy clearly state Russian priorities in its near abroad – where Russia believes it retains privileged interests. The 2010 military doctrine states “interference in the internal affairs of Russia or its allies, or the presence of armed conflict on the territories of states adjacent to Russia” can be a military threat (indicating this may legitimize the use of force). Moreover, it states a principal task of the Russian armed forces is (inter alia) “the protection of its citizens located beyond the borders of the Russian Federation.”³² Russia communicated its political goals in this region (remaining the key security guarantor) as well as its strategy for ensuring this goal (that of using all means available, including military means) *a priori*, and neither Russian goals nor priorities in its near abroad were new.

Rather, the formulation of comprehensive strategies has enabled linking and consolidation of the modern tools available to the Russian leadership, such as information technologies, modern military forces, and other levers of influence. This result, combined with an elite-wide, updated view of how modern conflict works, likely contributed to ensuring effective strategy implementation in Crimea.

Enhanced Tools for Implementation

The last development contributing to this consolidation is a bureaucratic overhaul in the strategic sphere. This development sets the current situation apart from what came before, as strategies have been a key feature of the Putin era; it is only recently that the ability to ensure implementation has been addressed.

The Russian Security Council was elevated bureaucratically in 2009, making it the key (formal) arena for strategic planning and coordination—integrating the perspectives of the military and other parts of the Russian bureaucracy. Although little is known of the academic merit and capacities of the Security Council, its authority and visibility in strategic matters highlighted the leadership’s focus on the cross-bureaucratic efforts to reach policy goals. Moreover, the Security Council’s prominence underscored the need to integrate military and other state tools to reach those goals.

Russia established a National Defense Center in 2014, with the explicit goal of coordinating all government agencies engaged in the defense of the Russian Federation (e.g. the armed forces, the Interior Ministry, the Federal Security Service, the Emergencies Ministry, and

32 “Voennaya Doktrina Rossiiskoy Federatsii” [Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation], published in *Rossiiskaya Gazeta*, February 10, 2010 <http://www.rg.ru/2010/02/10/doktrina-dok.html>.

others, with a *primus inter pares* role for the Russian General Staff).³³ The National Defense Center is an addition to the already existing system of government-wide situation centers that has been developing since 2009.³⁴ The exact level of functionality and interoperability of these centers is unclear; but the intention of improved government-wide coordination is. Putin's preference for "manual control" optimizes this kind of centralized coordination (at the risk of system overload). In a regime where decision-making is as centralized as Putin's Russia, a "comprehensive approach" to using state power may be feasible.

Formulating long-term state strategies is no panacea – and success in Crimea it is not attributable to any single strategy document formulated by the Russian bureaucracy. Nevertheless, formulating strategic goals, enhancing awareness of such goals within the bureaucracy, and making organizational adjustments for carrying out complex operations with a wide range of tools will increase the ability to coordinate effectively. Effective strategy implementation in Crimea was thus no coincidence – Russia had prepared for this kind of operation by thinking carefully about not only strategic goals, but also on what tools were needed to get there and how they might be employed effectively. This is what amounts to the Russian strategic overhaul as seen in Crimea.

Conclusions & Implications

Russian military novelties in Crimea were an amalgamation of old Soviet ideas, augmented by observations of Western warfare, spun by threat perceptions, adopted and redesigned for use by the modernized armed forces. Although certain doctrinal novelties were on display, the integration of military tools with more unconventional tools was the real novelty. The "battlefield" was carefully prepared with the use of political, economic and informational tools. Special forces' deception capabilities were combined with subterfuge using the local population, serving to deceive and hide Russian intentions. This combination ensured a gradual transition from a condition of peace to one of conflict, presenting the Ukrainian side with a *fait accompli*. Lastly, an asymmetrical approach ensured the optimum use of military and non-military capabilities.

The implications of strategic innovation are more comprehensive than those for doctrine. Whereas the latter affects how foreign militaries plan for contingencies involving the armed forces, the former entails rethinking contingencies involving all elements of Russian state power. Russia will choose the tools it deems most suitable in any eventuality, be they military, paramilitary, political, economic, or informational. Russia is actively enhancing its ability for their coordinated use, which means over time, their skill at orchestrated strategy implementation may improve further.

The fact the debates on doctrine and strategy have taken different trajectories in Russia and the West represents an obstacle in this regard. An increased Western focus on strategy formulation and implementation may be necessary to counter the kind of strategic behavior Russia

33 Valerii Gerasimov, "General'niy Shtab i Oborona Strany," [The General Staff and the Country's Defense], *Voenno-Promyshlenniy Kur'er* 4(522) (February 5, 2014).

34 Julian Cooper, *Reviewing Russian Strategic Planning: The Emergence of Strategy 2020* (Rome: NATO Defense College, 2012).

demonstrated in Crimea. Planning for contingencies involving Russia should take account not only of military capabilities, but of the entire range of tools Russia might employ. Any potential confrontation with the West will likely include an asymmetrical or non-traditional Russian approach to offset Western conventional superiority. The modernized Russian military represents a tool the Russian leadership is unlikely to employ separately.

Moreover, US defence planners should keep in mind the current Russian leadership sees little distinction between a state of peace and a state of war. Thus, all options are on the table, at all times, in the pursuit of strategic goals such as economic prosperity and national security.

Strategic innovation as demonstrated in Crimea will also influence future military doctrine in Russia. New doctrine will likely focus on integrating military and other tools, and may thus reveal a comprehensive approach to the armed defense of the country, rather than a focus on the tasks of the Russian armed forces alone.

Reforming the Afghan Security Forces

Daniel Glickstein and Michael Spangler

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ABSTRACT: Given the recent successes of the “Islamic State,” it is unclear how well the Western-trained Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) will perform against a resilient Taliban. This article recommends expanding the Afghan Local Police (ALP) to improve security, compensate for high Afghan Army attrition, and boost Pashtun recruitment in Afghanistan’s south and east.

Some scholars warn the “Afghanistan surge” from 2010 to 2012 fell well short of the positive, albeit short-term results of the 2007-08 surge in Iraq.¹ Since the Taliban threat remains high, its capabilities lethal, and its ideology resilient, the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF – including both Army and Police) continue to face major challenges countering insurgency while protecting the civilian population, particularly in the south and east.

Against the backdrop of the “Islamic State’s” initial successes against the coalition-trained Iraqi Army, there are doubts about the future effectiveness of the ANSF. The ANSF remains deficient in intelligence, logistics, and sustainment capabilities, with a shortfall of non-commissioned officers, a limited air force, and a relative dearth of Pashtun recruits from the south and east of Afghanistan.² To meet these challenges, this article recommends new Afghan leaders adopt a slightly larger target for the ANSF’s overall size than announced at the NATO Summit in May 2012 by bolstering the Afghan Local Police to compensate for high Afghan Army attrition and low Pashtun recruitment. These adjustments would hold the total cost to NATO’s previously agreed upon \$4.1 billion per year by the end of 2017.

Key Challenges

The approach outlined here is designed to address three developmental challenges facing the ANSF. First, the ANSF suffers from roughly 30-percent attrition, 10-percent absenteeism, and inflated recruitment rolls, all of which impede its operational effectiveness and retention.³ Soldiers and police are often recruited from other areas to serve in urban outposts and contested localities, providing space for insurgents to

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1 The Iraqi “surge” recorded a significant drop in violence until sectarian violence reemerged in 2013. Anthony H. Cordesman, *The Challenges to Afghan Transition* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, July 31, 2014).

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid. The attrition rate is also analyzed in the US Department of Defense, *Report on Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, October 2013 (Washington, DC: US Department of Defense, October 2013), 48, http://www.defense.gov/pubs/October_1230_Report_Master_Nov7.pdf.

exploit indigenous populations.⁴ Secondly, the standing ANSF appears to be falling into an unsustainability trap, undermining its long-term viability. The relatively high cost of the ANSF, if not reduced, might not be underwritten by international donors beyond another five years.⁵ Thirdly, the top-down, corrupt practices of the national government could continue under the new “national unity” government, eroding its legitimacy and the ANSF’s will to fight. If new Afghan leaders fail to show flexibility in incorporating their country’s ethnically and tribally diverse populace into a national security architecture, Afghanistan may devolve over time into a political mosaic of different armed groups controlling separatist-like territories.

For these reasons, the United States and other coalition members should encourage new Afghan leaders to stand up a more resilient, inclusive, and localized security structure to deter and respond to terrorist and other criminal attacks, while keeping conventional forces focused on countering larger insurgent concentrations. Like politics, all security is local. Drawing on the personal commitments of Afghan Local Police (ALP) recruits to protect their families, community, and tribal ties, the ALP can improve security in both rural and urban areas.

The approach described here calls for improving the accountability of expanded ALP forces. Local communities must believe police forces can be held accountable, and new Afghan leaders must be convinced ALP forces will not support local or regional strong-men.⁶ To address these issues, Afghan leaders should consider tapping Afghan National Army Special Operation Forces to assume the key tasks of recruiting, supplying, and mentoring ALP forces, while other authorities establish an overlapping monitoring system.

In addition, the ALP approach urges special forces officers to engage with local partners in recruiting and monitoring ALP forces. The inclusion of these partners should make the national government more accountable to the extent that it recognizes the need for stronger grassroots support throughout the country. During this process, international donors should anticipate that Afghan progress towards more inclusive democracy will be as slow, fitful, and inconsistent as it was in their own countries.

Part one below reviews three main ANSF-sizing positions, part two lays out a mid-sizing option relying on ALP development, and part

4 This was the case in most of Afghanistan and Iraq except for the latter’s Sunni triangle and Kurdish region. Thomas E. Ricks, Ricks, *The Gamble: David Petraeus and the American Military Adventure in Iraq 2006-08* (London: Penguin, 2009), 219-20. Ricks argues the US-led Coalition began working more effectively with Iraq’s tribal and ethnic structure in those areas during 2007, under the leadership of Petraeus and then Brigadier General John Allen. Other observers argue the Sunni Awakening was embraced earlier. Notwithstanding chronology, General Petraeus made similar efforts to draw ethnic forces into the overall Iraqi defense effort in Mosul in 2004. In all cases, sustainability of these forces – both financial and political – became a glaring problem over time since they were mainly seen as potential challenges to the government rather than localized approaches to be incorporated into the government.

5 Because of funding uncertainty, many critics believe a universal draft is the long-term answer to bringing down the cost of the ANSF. Compulsory service was proposed by President Karzai in early 2010 but most scholars have ruled it out mainly because of its potential to alienate local populaces in the very areas where the insurgency is strongest. Jerry Meyerle, et al., *Conscription in the Afghan Army* (Alexandria, VA: Center for Naval Analyses, April 2011).

6 Department for International Development, *Understanding and Supporting Security Sector Reform* (London: Department for International Development, 2002), 27-33.

three assesses two major objections to this option, hinging on ALP accountability.

I. ANSF-SIZING

The US-led NATO coalition in Afghanistan has long regarded the ANSF as necessary to the war-torn country's long-term peace and stability. The ANSF is perhaps the most studied aspect of Afghan government power, the largest Afghan investment made by the US government, and the linchpin of the coalition's exit strategy. What is shaping current thinking on the ANSF's size and structure?

The Zero Option: Setting the Stage for the ANSF after 2014

Afghanistan's international donors have increasingly focused on ANSF planning since President Barack Obama unveiled the US "zero option" decision in May 2014. In light of the ANSF's takeover of the lead security role throughout Afghanistan in June 2013, President Obama decided to draw down US advisors, trainers, and counter-terrorism forces by 2017.⁷ This Presidential decision reflects a prior US (and NATO) political commitment to transition out of Afghanistan while expressing confidence in Afghan-led security efforts after thirteen years of overall support encompassing about \$750 billion in US assistance and the lives of almost 3,500 coalition soldiers.⁸

Three Views on Future ANSF Sizing

Position 1: Reduce ANSF Size to a Financially Sustainable Level by the End of 2017

This first view is defined by official coalition policy announced at the NATO Summit in Chicago in May 2012. The Summit called for reducing the ANSF force from the currently planned level of 382,000 to 258,500 by the end of 2017.⁹ The main reason for this decision appears to be long-term financial sustainability: coalition nations decided the ANSF budget should be reduced from the current \$11 billion to \$4.1 billion per year by the end of 2017. The United States would contribute \$2.3 billion, the remaining coalition nations \$1.3 billion, and the Afghan government \$500 million per year through 2024.¹⁰ The Summit communique emphasized that ANSF size would be regularly assessed in light of the evolving security environment, stating:

The pace and the size of a gradual managed force reduction from the ANSF surge peak to a sustainable level will be conditions-based and decided by

7 "Statement by the President on Afghanistan," *White House*, May 27, 2014.

8 Anthony H. Cordesman, "The U.S. Cost of the Afghan War: FY2002-2013," *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, May 15, 2013, <https://csis.org/publication/us-cost-afghan-war-fy2002-fy2013>; and "The Cost of War in Afghanistan since 2001," *National Priorities Project*, <http://nationalpriorities.org/cost-of/>.

9 "Fact Sheet: Chicago Summit – Sufficient and Sustainable ANSF?" *White House*, May 21, 2012. A major recruitment effort has doubled the size of the ANSF since 2009. At the end of 2013, ANSF personnel totaled 334,852 (about 185,000 Afghan National Army and 150,000 Afghan National Police), as reported by NATO, Combined Security Transition Command to the U.S. Special Inspector General for Afghan Reconstruction in January 2014. Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, January 30, 2014 (Arlington, VA: Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, January 30 2014), <http://www.sigar.mil/pdf/quarterlyreports/2014Jan30QR.pdf>.

10 *Ibid.*

the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in consultation with the International Community. The preliminary model for a future total ANSF size, defined by the International Community and the Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, will be reviewed regularly against the developing security environment.¹¹

To date, NATO's preliminary ANSF target for the end of 2017 has not been formally revised.

The smaller ANSF size proposed at the NATO summit was based on the need to set politically acceptable levels of international financial support to 2024. Since 2012, the ANSF has performed well, holding its own against the Taliban while suffering substantial casualties.¹² Yet, the ANSF still relies heavily on NATO financial and military aid in roles such as air support, logistics, and reconnaissance. Charting a near-term path to make the ANSF more self-sufficient is a key objective of the NATO community.

Position 2: Maintain Current ANSF Size through 2018

The chief representative of this view is the Center for Naval Analyses (CNA) selected by the Department of Defense to make "an independent assessment of the strength, force structure, force posture, and capabilities required to make the ANSF capable of providing security."¹³ Its January 2014 report argues Afghanistan's security efforts through 2018 will require a slight decrease in the current ANSF force structure from the currently planned level of 382,000 to 373,400 personnel.¹⁴ It estimates the annual cost of sustaining these force numbers would be about \$5-6 billion per year at a time of budget constraints for Afghanistan's international donors, including the United States.

This estimate is predicated on assuming the Taliban insurgency will grow beyond 2014. Between 2015 and 2016, the Taliban is likely to keep pressure on the ANSF in rural areas, expand its control and influence in areas vacated by coalition forces, encircle key cities, conduct high-profile attacks in Kabul and other urban areas, and gain leverage for future political negotiations. Between 2016 and 2018, once the insurgency has had time to recover from the past decade and a half of fighting, the expectation is of a much larger and more intense Taliban insurgency effort.¹⁵

Moreover, the report assumes if NATO significantly cuts its commitment to Afghanistan and Pakistan, tensions between the two nations are likely to worsen. The CNA also believes a rapid decline in international financial support could lead to another civil war in Afghanistan, thus implying NATO's policy decision of May 2012 was not only risky, but premature since the Taliban insurgency, a potential civil war, and

11 NATO, "Official Text: Chicago Summit Declaration on Afghanistan," May 21, 2012, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_87595.htm.

12 This assessment is widely shared. William A. Byrd, *Revisiting Chicago: The Critical Need to Maintain Support for Afghanistan's National Security Forces Post-2014* (Washington: US Institute of Peace, June 5, 2014).

13 CNA, "Summary of Independent Assessment of Afghan National Security Forces," January 2014, <https://www.cna.org/research/2014/summary-independent-assessment-afghan-national>.

14 Jonathan Schroden, et al., *Independent Assessment of the Afghan National Security Forces* (Alexandria, VA: Center for Naval Analyses, January 2014). CNA's assessment calls for about 10,000 more ANA personnel than does the current planning target, while reducing the ANP by about 5,000.

15 *Ibid.*

worsening Afghan-Pakistani relations loom as existential threats to the Afghan government. It also contends large-scale spending is required until these threats have been significantly diminished. In short, this view relies on a worst-case scenario to justify a large ANSF size through 2018, and presumably beyond.¹⁶

The financial cost of the ANSF is of particular concern moving forward. If the Afghan government proceeds with an ANSF-sizing trajectory in line with CNA's assessment, international donations will remain vital. As history has shown, however, international donations decline over time in concert with troop withdrawals. If the Afghan force-structure is not revised before this aid pipeline dries up, the Afghan government may be forced to cut back security efforts in rural areas. In such a scenario, a large standing Afghan National Army (ANA) may well be preserved, while dispersed Afghan National Police (ANP) and Afghan Local Police forces are cut. This outcome is likely to present the Taliban and other criminal groups with opportunities to challenge the Afghan national government.

Position 3: A Smaller Military Footprint

One of the prominent advocates of this group is Scott Mann, a retired US Army special operations force officer, who helped design the Village Stability Program and stood up the first Village Stability Coordination Center in southern Afghanistan.¹⁷ Mann argues the ANSF continues to face a serious insurgency whose center of gravity lies in rural community support. The relative lack of ANSF presence in rural areas cedes recruitment and training grounds to Muslim extremists.¹⁸

This view argues for partnering ANSF SOF forces with Afghan Local Police (ALP) units (including irregular local militia) in remote areas to ensure that training and equipment are adequate, local defense capabilities are effective, and the villagers themselves have confidence and buy-in to resist Taliban insurgents. This position identifies Special Operations Forces for this train-and-assist task because of past US history working with Afghan defense groups, going back to the retaking of Afghanistan from the Taliban in late 2001. In addition, Mann believes local ALP unit commanders should be made accountable to their village elders and tribal leaders, as well as national government (or ANSF) leadership.¹⁹

Mann points out the ALP has significant potential to stand up as Pashtun tribal defense forces (*arbakai*) if its members "are truly local, treat the people well, and if the community to which they are

16 Ibid.

17 This position reportedly includes senior-level US administration officials such as Vice President Joseph Biden. Fred Kaplan, "Obama's new policy for Afghanistan tries to steer a middle course," *Slate*, March 27, 2009, http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/war_stories/2009/03/counterinsurgenterrorism.1.html. Also Fred Kaplan, "CT or COIN?," *Slate*, March 24, 2009, http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/war_stories/2009/03/ct_or_coin.html.

18 Scott Mann, "Bypassing the Graveyard: A New Approach to Stabilizing Afghanistan," *Small Wars Journal*, July 30, 2014, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/bypassing-the-graveyard-a-new-approach-to-stabilizing-afghanistan>.

19 Ibid.

accountable accepts them as part of their social structure.”²⁰ Afghan Deputy Minister Tariq Ismati of the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development points out, “If the *arbakai* are put in situations where they are not trusted by the whole population, they will be seen as militias rather than *arbakai*.”²¹

While attuned to Pashtun cultural issues, this view has not proposed a specific number of ANSF Special Operations (SO) commando battalions or ALP forces needed to secure Afghanistan, especially its restive south and east where most of the country’s poor, illiterate, and religiously conservative Pashtuns reside. Nor has it addressed training issues surrounding the merging of the ALP into the ANSF command structure.

II. A NEW SIZING OPTION AT NATO-AGREED COST

Reduce the ANA and Raise the ALP through 2017

This article proposes a new sizing option based on blending key elements of the three options reviewed above. This option embraces a slightly larger target for the ANSF’s overall size compared to the NATO Summit target while incorporating ALP elements, and adjusting internal ANSF component numbers to hold the total cost to NATO’s previously agreed upon \$4.1 billion per year by the end of 2017.

The table below compares the key ANSF numbers proposed in the current Plan of Record, CNA report, NATO Summit, and this article; it breaks down the ANSF’s total size in terms of its major force components:

AFGHAN NATIONAL SECURITY FORCES

	ANA	(SOF)	ANP	ALP	OTHER	TOTAL
PLAN	165,500	(11,900)	139,200	30,000	47,300 ²²	382,000
CNA	175,500 ²³	(11,900)	134,500	29,100	34,300 ²⁴	373,400
NATO		228,500 ²⁵		30,000		258,500
NEW	95,000	(22,000) ²⁶	125,000	60,000		280,000

PLAN = Current ANSF Plan of Record quoted in the CNA study, **CNA** = Center for Naval Analyses, **NATO** = Summit Decision of May 2012, **NEW** = This article, **ANA** = Afghan National Army, **SOF** = Afghan Army Special Operations Forces, **ANP** = Afghan National Police, **ALP** = Afghan Local Police

20 Ibid. Also see Mohammed Osman Tariq, *Tribal Security System (Arbakai) in Southeast Afghanistan*, Occasional Paper No. 7 (London: Crisis States Research Center, December 2008), <http://www.lse.ac.uk/internationaldevelopment/research/crisisstates/download/op/op7tariq.pdf>.

21 Interview with Deputy Minister Tariq Ismati, Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, October 2012. Savannah, Georgia. (Quoted by Scott Mann in Ibid.)

22 Other includes recruits, training staff, and Defense and Interior Ministry staff.

23 The CNA number adds 18,900 logistics and support positions and 2,500 Army Headquarters staff, while eliminating 9,800 infantry and 1,500 combat support soldiers. These ANA changes plus the elimination of funding for 14,600 Afghan Civil Order Police and 12,400 Defense and Interior Ministry staff mainly account for the CNA’s slightly smaller ANSF size compared to the Plan of Record size.

24 The CNA retains all of the PLAN’s “other” categories except 12,400 Defense and Interior ministry staffers, presuming coverage by the Afghan government budget.

25 NATO has not publicly released a more detailed break-down of its ANSF target size announced at the May 2012 Summit.

26 Included in the ANA number.

As the table shows, the approach doubles the size of the ANA/SOF and Afghan Local Police by the end of 2017 to help absorb the relatively high attrition of Afghan Army soldiers. The SOF and ALP personnel hikes as well as improved salaries, can be covered by reducing full-time ANA personnel. This proposal is designed to support a strong, consistent narrative on the financial sustainability of the ANSF. The financial sustainability of the counter-insurgency force is as much a part of effective strategy as the use and reliability of the force itself.

The Right Ratio?

Current estimates put the total number of Taliban fighters around 25,000.²⁷ If this is true, the sizing proposal presented here means one insurgent faces three ANA or six other ANSF personnel. This ratio glosses over a number of important questions including the right tooth-to-tail ratio for the ANA (historical US military averages would put 15 percent of the ANA force in headquarters and 35 percent in logistics), the complementary counter-terrorism roles of the ANA and ANP/ALP, and the degree to which the new ANSF can respond rapidly to a wide spectrum of enemy actions.

Nonetheless, this ratio has proven to be sufficient to counter Taliban strikes so far, mostly consisting of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), suicide bombers, hit-and-run raids, insider attacks, and remote ambushes. To the extent Taliban forces consolidate for conventional operations, ANA Special Operation Forces and ANP Civil Order Police (totaling 26,500 and geared to rapid response) should be sufficient to take point and give advantage to ANA infantry battalions with their superior weaponry and tactics.

Why Reduce the ANA?

The force structure outlined here returns the ANA to mid-2009 levels, while augmenting and improving the ANA SOF, ANP and ALP to serve as the front-line against terrorist attacks by the Taliban and related groups. This sizing proposal is designed to address long-standing strategic challenges including the need for effective counter-terrorism efforts, reduced civilian casualties, a lower ANSF attrition rate, and a solid path toward Afghan self-sustainability. Failure to make progress on these strategic challenges by 2017 may well set up Afghanistan for failure, more so than potential security threats posed by the Taliban and other groups.

Growing Casualties

The ANA's smaller footprint (but larger SOF element) is critical to reduce civilian casualties while countering Taliban terrorist tactics in the future. At present, civilian casualties in Afghanistan are on a significant upswing, particularly in and around Kabul, and in seven provinces in east and south Afghanistan. ANSF positions have sustained small, largely harassing terrorist attacks that nevertheless take a heavy toll in civilian

²⁷ Rod Nordland, "Study Finds Sharp Rise in Attacks by Taliban," *New York Times*, April 19, 2013.

casualties.²⁸ A recent United Nations report indicates civilian deaths and injuries rose 24 percent in the first half of 2014 compared to the same period in 2013.²⁹ This sharp spike in casualties mostly stemmed from escalating ground engagements between Taliban-associated groups and the ANA. Indeed, civilian deaths from mortars, rockets, and grenades more than doubled from the same six-month period in 2013.

It is counter-intuitive to argue fewer Afghan army soldiers on the ground will translate into greater public security. In practice, however, the ANA SOF is more capable of taking the lead in conducting counter-terrorist operations and raids against Taliban leadership and other high-value targets while restraining civilian casualties. Conventional ANA forces should be dedicated largely to what they are trained to do best: respond to conventional direct and complex Taliban offensives once the insurgents act against population centers and other targets. Over time, shrinking the number of ANA bases may also funnel Taliban terrorist attacks to them, further limiting prospects for collateral damage. Reducing civilian casualties, if realized, will help establish a virtuous cycle in which the ANSF receives stronger public support for its security efforts.

High Attrition

The Afghan National Army currently suffers from a high attrition rate.³⁰ Recent statistics indicate almost a third of its trained personnel move on after their first year of service.³¹ More must be done to retain the expertise of these departing soldiers; hence the need for an expanded ALP, as well as ANA, pay incentives. Assuming the current attrition rate remains constant, the ANA size will shrink to a target of 95,000 by 2017. While some observers believe most of these departing soldiers return to peaceful lives in their home provinces, it is reasonable to expect that some join other armed groups including the Taliban, local warlords, and drug-trafficking chiefs. If true, it suggests the ANA could actually be training and, to some extent, equipping internal Afghan power brokers. Down-sizing the ANA (and encouraging retention through pay incentives) will reduce future attrition flows to the ANSF's adversaries, even if the attrition rate itself does not fall.

Civil Strife & Border Security Challenges

Some analysts believe a larger ANA is needed to counter additional threats including regional war-lords operating on ethnic or tribal lines, a Taliban surge swelled by terrorists flooding in from northwest Pakistan, and possibly even Pakistani army units that challenge Afghan border

28 Anti-government elements including the Taliban accounted for 74 percent of the civilian casualties in the first half of 2014, while the ANSF caused 8 percent, according to: United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, *Afghanistan: Midyear Report 2014, Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict* (Kabul, Afghanistan: United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, July 2014).

29 Ibid.

30 The ANA also suffers from high absenteeism, apparently stemming from cultural work ethics, inadequate supervision and the lack of cross-checking attendance-taking systems.

31 The attrition rate was 31.4 percent per year as of September 2013, according to US Department of Defense, *Report on Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, October 2013, 48. ANP attrition is also significant but recruitment has compensated for these losses for the most recently reported period from September 2012 to September 2013, according to US Department of Defense, *Report on Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, November 2013 (Washington, DC: US Department of Defense, November 2013).

control.³² Most of these potential threats are likely to emerge in eastern Afghanistan (the provinces of Nangarhar, Kunar, Khost, Pakhtia, and Paktika), and in the south (Helmand and Kandahar). At present, these provinces receive the brunt of attacks by Taliban groups (including the Haqqani Network), and conflict zones are situated along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, strategic transit routes, and river valleys. Conventional ANA units can be efficiently cross-loaded to these regions while operating with a reduced standing force. Of course, the NATO coalition will need to improve the ANA's rapid-response time by providing additional air support assistance.

The current ANSF Plan of Record – similar to the CNA assessment – calls for only 7,800 air force staff out of a total of 382,000 positions.³³ Air capability must be significantly strengthened to protect remote ANP posts adequately over time. Each functional aircraft acts as a force-multiplier in support of the proposed decentralized, local security force structure. It is therefore critically necessary for the coalition to regularly review its support to the Afghan National Air Force, as it has done for the Iraqi Army.

Why a Larger ALP?

Adopting a localized approach to absorbing naturally retiring ANA soldiers calls for doubling the current ALP size from 30,000 to 60,000 by the end of 2017. The ALP component is defined as an ANP reserve that serves under ANA SOF mentors and senior ANP officers. Such a force would act to soak up retired ANA soldiers who wish to return to their homes and continue to serve their communities. Just as importantly, this component would constitute the main channel through which to recruit security officers for under-served regions, notably the south and east of Afghanistan.³⁴ This recruitment effort should be led by ANA SOF mentors and would require input from tribal, village, district, and national government representatives.

The extent to which these recruits can be located around ANP posts in population centers to monitor terrorist activities, the more secure such posts should be. On the other hand, establishing these units in remote rural areas is equally essential to fill a security vacuum, although such posts will remain difficult to staff and defend.

While committed to deterring crime, the ANP and ALP will continue to be first responders to Taliban terrorist attacks in concert with ANA SOF forces. The Afghan Uniformed and Anti-Crime Police (AUP), numbering about 98,000 of the 150,000-strong ANP, constitutes the main crime-fighting force of the ANP.³⁵ Since AUP and ALP units confront both criminal and terrorist organizations, they must continue, in concert with the ANA SOF and ANP's Counter Terrorism Police, to

32 This threat array was derived from the CNA. Jonathan Schroden, et al., *Summary of Independent Assessment of Afghan National Security Forces* (Alexandria, VA: CNA, January 2014).

33 Cordesman, *The Challenges to Afghan Transition*.

34 The ALP approach drawing on *arbakai* appears better suited for this region where tribal traditions persist. Mohammed Osman Tariq, *Tribal Security System (Arbakai) in Southeast Afghanistan*.

35 The ANP consists of the Afghan Uniform Police, responsible for general police duties, and four specialized police organizations: the Afghan National Civil Order Police (ANCOP), the Afghan Border Police, the Counter Narcotics Police of Afghanistan (CNPA), and the Afghan Anti-Crime Police, including a counter-narcotics, a counter-terrorism, and a criminal investigations department.

be trained to handle both threats. By contrast, the ANA is dedicated to holding bases around urban areas and roads (so-called tier one and two areas mainly in the south and east of Afghanistan) where the majority of rocket launches, complex attacks, and hit-and-run raids occur. These ANA formations would continue to respond to major attacks on ANP and ALP forces.

III. TWO MAJOR OBJECTIONS

This restructuring proposal is controversial. Two key objections to this approach stem from the widespread Afghan perception that the ALP is inherently unaccountable, falling under regional power brokers working at variance with national leaders. In fact, Afghan villagers “do not distinguish between the local police, who are formally part of the government, and private militias...(serving) for years as a proxy for weak government forces.”³⁶ As a result, the “accountability” issue must be carefully addressed to undergird any ALP expansion.

Objection One: ALP Units Would Challenge National Sovereignty

There is an inherent knee-jerk reaction among critics to label local security forces as independent militias that could threaten the integrity of the Afghan state. In fact, locally originated village defense groups have been consistently rejected by Afghan national leaders over the past decade – and by NATO Coalition officials who generally regard them as a potential challenge to civilian control of the military and to the state’s monopoly on the use of force.³⁷

Case Study in Nangarhar

A case in point is the coalition’s experience in Nangarhar province in eastern Afghanistan in 2009. One hundred and sixty of the most influential Shinwari tribal elders agreed among themselves to denounce the Taliban in public. They sought help from the coalition and the Afghan government to remove corrupt local officials and to have a say in who served in the local security forces in their tribal area. Both requests are still valid: corrupt leaders remain a major source of instability, and the ANP needs tribal support to be successful.³⁸

Insurgents eventually lost their freedom of movement in Shinwari areas of Nangarhar, whereas the ANP could operate freely. The so-called Shinwari pact – an agreement among the Shinwari themselves and not with the NATO coalition – provided badly needed mutual support for their dispersed villages, as required in a counterinsurgency campaign. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton hailed the pact as an example of “classic counterinsurgency.”³⁹ Additionally, the coalition’s military leadership in Afghanistan viewed the pact as an opportunity to improve subnational governance by drawing in traditional tribal structures.

36 Azam Ahmed, “Taliban are Rising Again in Afghanistan’s North,” *New York Times*, October 23, 2014.

37 Ibid. Ahmed reports that newly elected President Ashraf Ghani has “promised to disarm (local) militias,” chiefly because they collect taxes by force to support themselves.

38 Randy George and Dante Paradiso, “The Case for a Wartime Chief Executive Officer: Fixing the Interagency Quagmire in Afghanistan,” *Foreign Affairs*, June 21, 2011.

39 Ibid.

The US embassy, however, opposed the pact after Afghan senior officials complained it undermined the Karzai administration.⁴⁰ Subsequently, conflicting civilian and military guidance led to confusion among both Afghan and Coalition officials. The US embassy in Kabul forbade US diplomats from meeting with tribal leaders to discuss tribal “pacts,” ruling out on-the-ground contact with local defense groups concerning counterinsurgency and counterterrorism.⁴¹ The opportunity was lost, chiefly out of concern local defense groups might spur inter-tribal conflict and eventually oppose the national government.

Overarching Control

This case underscores the importance of bringing local defense initiatives under overarching ANA/ANP control. First, ALP and ANP reservists should be equipped with a limited load-out of ammunition and weapons (AK-47s and RPGs, and perhaps 1-2 machine guns). This step would prevent these forces from amassing weapons and ammunition to expand their numbers or challenge higher authorities. A close partnership with the ANA SOF is key to preventing these local security forces from being overrun by insurgents or lapsing into exploitative practices.

Second, active ANA SOF forces should take charge of ALP training in public and post protection. An active platoon could rotate through various villages in its area of operations and equip, train, and mentor the reservists. This measure would give the ANA an opportunity to recuperate from front-line operations and facilitates local-national cooperation. The key caveat is the ANA must ensure supplies and training are delivered to local forces. Any disruption in this flow would damage intra-ALP morale and fuel chronic fears in rural areas that the national government does not care about improving ALP accountability or public security.

Objection Two: ANP and ALP are Corrupt, and Inadequately Trained and Supervised

A Corrupt ANP

The ANP and ALP are not positively viewed by Afghans: they are widely seen as corrupt, incompetent, and closely tied to local power brokers.⁴² Why suggest they have any utility as front-line responders? Admittedly, the training of Afghan police officers has been inadequate, complicated by limited training budgets and the need for the ANP/ALP to conduct both counter-terrorism and crime-fighting roles.⁴³ Just as importantly, ANP/ALP corruption appears to be much higher in the south and east of Afghanistan where the Taliban is centered. The ANP is susceptible to bribery by Taliban and other criminal groups operating lucrative drug-trafficking operations.⁴⁴ These corruption issues

40 B. Matta, “Tribal Dispute in Afghanistan Benefits Taliban,” *Voice of American News*, October 10, 2011.

41 Ibid.

42 Steve Bowman and Catherine Dale, *War in Afghanistan: Strategy, Military Operations, and Issues for Congress* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, December 3, 2009), 41-42.

43 Donald J. Planty and Robert M. Perito, *Police Transition in Afghanistan* (Washington, DC: US Institute of Peace, February 5, 2013).

44 See a fuller discussion in Cordesman, *The Challenges to Afghan Transition*.

constitute serious threats to the legitimacy of Afghanistan's national government and call into question any proposal that would identify the ANP as part of the solution to Afghanistan's current instability.⁴⁵

Overlapping Chains of Reporting

Faced with these obstacles, the ANP and ALP have done much more effective work in areas where they have had coalition and ANA Special Forces partners – even though they remain susceptible to local feuds, power brokers, and their own exploitation of the local population.⁴⁶ Since Afghanistan's regional and ethnic divisions have the potential to shift ANP and ALP forces into dominant factions, the proposal outlined here recommends a highly redundant, overlapping system of chains of reporting for both forces. This means ANP and ALP units should be visited frequently by those authorities to whom they report: ANA Special Operations officers, senior ANP officers, village headmen, and district chiefs. These cross-checking visits and overlapping authorities may be confusing to ANP/ALP officers to the extent they receive conflicting guidance. As a result, the chain of command must be clear but dual-use, drawing on SOF officers for counter-terrorism actions and ANP officers for criminal interdiction. On the other hand, the reporting system is diffuse, thereby better informing senior authorities how well ANP and ALP units perform. Such monitoring reports should, in turn, make ALP actions more transparent and effective over time. Just as crucially, if an ANSF general officer or political leader attempts to suborn ALP units, the over-lapping system of reporting authorities should expose the problem and lead to resolution.

Assessment visits tapping into multiple sources and local opinion should make clear to the ANP and ALP their pay is tied to their progress in guaranteeing public security. Assessing police units will permit better funding for those who perform their missions and more training and other corrective actions for those that do not. It is counter-productive to provide additional training for ANP and ALP units without first identifying their shortcomings and making them accountable through multiple-channel assessments.

CONCLUSION

Ultimately, the legitimacy of the Afghan national government may determine if the ANSF fights, or falls to the Taliban. Many observers believe international donors saddled Afghanistan with a governmental system in 2001-2003 that was too centralized.⁴⁷ Structuring the Afghan state under an extremely powerful chief executive appears to have retarded the development of checks-and-balances and facilitated corrupt

45 One of President Karzai's brothers, Ahmed Wali Karzai, was identified as such a criminal actor, according to press reports. Simon Tisdall, "Ahmed Wali Karzai, the Corrupt and Lawless Face of Modern Afghanistan," *Guardian*, July 12, 2011. A.W. Karzai was killed by his bodyguard on July 9, 2011.

46 Cordesman, *The Challenges to Afghan Transition*.

47 Aunohita Mojumdar, "Afghanistan: Rethinking the Constitutional Balance of Power," *Eurasianet*, October 1, 2009, <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insightb/articles/eav100209a.shtml>. Power in Afghanistan is highly concentrated in the President's office. Governors of provinces are appointed by the president. Provincial councils – whose elections are held concurrently with the presidential vote -- have no powers and barely any role in the management of local affairs. District council elections have yet to be held.

practices. Moving away from this top-down system has the potential to foster positive democratic trends including the election of local-level representative bodies and a more responsive justice system.

Whether or not these democratic reforms can be instituted over the long term, the time is right for the new Afghan leadership to try to boost ANSF forces in areas heavily influenced and contested by the Taliban. Indeed, the Taliban has already adopted its own version of the ALP approach outlined here and continue to forge it into a conventional force. Faced with this adversary (and the relative success of this approach), Afghan leaders should reach out to tribal elders to help protect their home lands. If asked, tribal elders will likely show courage but need to be backed up by an inclusive ANSF.⁴⁸

The alternative to this course appears stark: Afghanistan may again have to resort to its allies to stave off existential challenges to its government. Drawing red lines that trigger the return of international security forces, as in the past, will largely be determined by the national security interests of Afghanistan's allies. On the other hand, a more effective, inclusive, and accountable ANSF depends on the decisions of Afghans alone.

48 Following a six-day battle between the ANSF and Taliban killing over 100 civilians in the Ghazni district of Ajrestan in September 2014, Pashtun villagers hanged four Taliban fighters turned over by the ANSF. Their action demonstrated a strong resolve to resist the Taliban and protect their homeland. Reuters, "Afghan Villagers Hang Taliban Fighters as Battle for District Rages," September 27, 2014.

Hacking Back: Not the Right Solution

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ABSTRACT: In cyberspace attackers enjoy an advantage over defenders, which has popularized the concept of “active cyber defense”—offensive actions intended to punish or deter the adversary. This article argues active cyber defense is not a practical course of action to obtain tactical and strategic objectives. Instead, “aggressive cyber defense,” a proactive security solution, is a more appropriate option.

The ability to retaliate against cyber attackers—irrespective of the legalities of such actions—appears to have gained traction in the United States government, but is it a practical response for achieving tactical and strategic objectives in cyberspace? Attribution limitations, collateral damage considerations, the Internet’s global architecture, and potential event escalation make the challenges of engaging in active cyber defense an ineffective course of action destined to achieve limited tactical successes at best; and it risks accelerating digital as well as physical conflict. Too many variables prevent active cyber defense deterring or punishing adversaries in cyberspace. For that reason, this article advocates a more productive solution—aggressive cyber defense—to frustrate attackers via nondestructive or damaging activities.

A Note on Terminology

There are no internationally accepted definitions for “cyber attack” and “active cyber defense.” In its 2011 *Strategy for Operating in Cyberspace*, the US Department of Defense defines active cyber defense as:

... synchronized, real-time capability to discover, detect, analyze, and mitigate threats and vulnerabilities ... it operates at network speed by using sensors, software, and intelligence to detect and stop malicious activity before it can affect DOD networks and systems.¹

Using this designation as a baseline, the following definitions have been adopted for the purposes of this article:

- **Cyber Attack:** Actions ranging from network exploitation for information collection/data theft to attacks designed to deny, degrade, disrupt, or destroy an information system, an information network, or the information resident on them. Examples include distributed denial-of-service attacks, the insertion of malware designed to destroy information systems, or the information resident on them such as Stuxnet or Shamoon.
- **Active Cyber Defense:** A range of offensive *damaging or destructive* actions, such as counterhacking, that engage an adversary during or

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¹ US Department of Defense, *Department of Defense Strategy for Operating in Cyberspace* (Washington, DC: US Department of Defense, July 2011); <http://www.defense.gov/news/d20110714cyber.pdf>.

promptly after an initial cyber attack. Active cyber defense does not include nonviolent actions such as diplomatic or economic sanctions. Examples include counterhacking and technical countermeasures with weaponized payloads.

- **Passive Cyber Defense:** A range of cyber defensive actions taken to protect the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of information systems and networks through the use of layered network security devices, processes, and countermeasures to protect the integrity of the information assets in an enterprise. Examples include firewalls, intrusion detection systems, and host-based intrusion detection systems.
- **Aggressive Cyber Defense:** A range of aggressive passive and active defensive actions to be used in concert with one another that identify, deceive, and frustrate attackers into giving up and moving elsewhere. Examples include severing connections between targeted computers and the attacking command and control servers, as well as redirecting hostile traffic to a benign target or destination.

Active Cyber Defense

The United States faces increasing cyber threats capable of targeting private and public sectors from a diverse actor set. Director of US National Intelligence James Clapper identified cyber as the top threat facing the United States, over traditional high profile threats such as terrorism and weapons of mass destruction.² Cyber crime, hacktivist-related distributed denial-of-service attacks, and cyber espionage have prompted policymakers to develop deterrence strategies. The United States, as well as the governments of Canada,³ France, Germany, and the United Kingdom, have developed and published cybersecurity strategies acknowledging the severity of this threat, as well as categorizing the actors suspected of perpetrating it.⁴

Opponents of passive cyber defense quickly point out there has been limited success in mitigating hostile activity via conventional cyber defense practices. Active cyber defense seemingly remains the only real solution to deter or stop aggressive cyber actors.⁵ This concept is not new; the cybersecurity research community has discussed active cyber defense for nearly a decade.⁶ However, for it to be effective, an active cyber defense program must be able to:

2 Director of National Intelligence, *Statement for the Record: Worldwide Threat Assessment of the US Intelligence Community*, James R. Clapper, Director of National Intelligence (Washington, DC: Office of the Director of National Intelligence, January 29, 2014).

3 Government of Canada, *Canada's Cyber Security Strategy*, <http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/cbr-scrst-strtyg/cbr-scrst-strtyg-eng.pdf>.

4 The White House, *International Strategy for Cyberspace* (Washington, DC: The White House, May 2011); Government of Canada, *Canada's Cyber Security Strategy*, <http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/cbr-scrst-strtyg/cbr-scrst-strtyg-eng.pdf>; Agencie Nationale de la Securite des Systemes d'Information, *Information Systems Defence and Security – France's Strategy*, http://www.ssi.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/2011-02-15_Information_system_defence_and_security_-_France_s_strategy.pdf; Federal Ministry of the Interior, *Cyber Security Strategy for Germany*, http://www.cio.bund.de/SharedDocs/Publicationen/DE/Strategische-Themen/css_engl_download.pdf;jsessionid=065625A05192FE06B3F0C34A89E935B3.2_cid093?__blob=publicationFile; Government of the United Kingdom, *The UK Cyber Security Strategy*, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/60961/uk-cyber-security-strategy-final.pdf.

5 Ellen Nakashima, "Cybersecurity Should Be More Active, Official Says," *Washington Post*, September 16, 2012.

6 Jody Westby, "Caution: Active Response to Cyber Attacks Has High Risk," *Forbes.com*, November 11, 2012.

1. Correctly identify the originator of the cyber attack or an impending cyber attack
2. Determine why the attack happened or will happen and be prepared to launch a cyber response with commensurate power and effect

A retaliatory action should cause more harm than the original attack, and as a result, thereby deterring or halting an attack. But can such a goal be obtained?

Certain conditions must be in place prior to implementing active cyber defense. First, a state must have, and communicate to, the international community that it has a red line for tolerance of hostile cyber activity against its networks. Equally important is that this threshold be manageable; a state must be able to deliver on a promised reprisal. For example, a zero-tolerance policy is unfeasible in an age where the volume of hostile cyber activity ranges from aggressive network scanning, to surreptitious network exploitation, to assertive distributed denial-of-service attacks from the large and diverse threat actor landscape.⁷ A state could exhaust personnel and financial resources very quickly trying to address every possible threat.

Second, and a corollary to communication, is signaling. Whether in peacetime or war, a key element of any active cyber defense strategy includes the ability to signal intentions to the receiver properly. Without the ability to signal, active cyber defense runs the risk of being misunderstood or misinterpreted, increasing the danger of conflict escalation. What's more, the signaling nation must have established credibility conducting successful and destructive cyber retaliation. If the adversary does not believe the credibility of a signaling state, signaling efforts will fail.

The third necessary condition is the capability to deliver an appropriate cyber response. Proper proportionality eliminates the need to "kill a cockroach with a rocket launcher" when simply stepping on it would suffice. A disproportionate response runs the risk of escalating conflict. Fourth, a state must determine if the cyber attack was intentional and not a mistake, a misunderstanding, or the result of collateral damage. Fifth, and perhaps most important, a state must determine attribution and be willing to accept the risk of being wrong.

Attribution is not easy. Several technical measures as well as operator tactics, techniques, and procedures readily obfuscate a hostile cyber actor's true country of origin. Anonymizers, proxies, and the use of a series of compromised computers in different countries or "hop points" all impede technical attribution. Furthermore, operational security measures and an increasingly sophisticated malware environment (such as multi-functional rootkits) pose real challenges to identifying individuals conducting nefarious activities. Prior to engaging active cyber defense, attribution must be conclusive to ensure the right target is in the cross hairs and the initial attack was intentional. Therein lies the heart of the problem—the ability to identify the intent and identity of the attacker conclusively.

Antagonistic cyber actors can be cast into two categories: the opportunistic hacker and the focused hacker. The former will take advantage

7 Martin Libicki, *Cyberdeterrence and Cyberwar* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2009).

of a vulnerability and attempt to exploit it regardless of the target; whereas the latter—whether a state or those actors working on behalf of one—identifies specific targets to exploit. While the tactical objective of active cyber defense is the original attacker, the strategic objective is the decision maker—whether the leadership of a government or a group of nonstate actors. Therefore, active cyber defense must achieve two objectives: 1) make adversarial efforts economically or punitively impractical so they stop, and presumably, go on to another target; and 2) cause the decision making authority to stop directing the hostile activity.

In its 2011 strategy, the Department of Defense determined hostile cyber activity included the persistent theft of proprietary information as a justified reason to conduct active cyber defense.⁸ However, there are several challenges and potential pitfalls to engaging in this type of cyber retaliation, even if governments focus efforts exclusively on actors engaged in sophisticated cyber attacks:

- **Multiple Computers.** One goal of active cyber defense is to touch the adversary's computer digitally. But this rationale appears predicated on assuming the attacker has access to, or only uses, one computer. If resourced by a foreign government, it is extremely likely actors will have more than one computer at their disposal. Should an active cyber strike destroy one computer, the others could continue. A second computer would have a new IP address, and attackers could route their activities through a different infrastructure, thus compromising the defender's ability to track their movements. In this instance, the tactical objective—"hurting" the attacker is achieved, but with limited strategic value.
- **Collateral Damage.** The networked environment is notoriously insecure and has historically fallen victim to intentional and unintentional malware spills. Given that key servers may be optimum targets in cyberwarfare, the possibilities for collateral damage increase, especially if these servers host important civilian emergency services, hospitals, or schools. While some may believe some cyber weapons will have safeguards to prevent collateral damage, historical and current examples say differently.⁹ Suspected of having been developed by nation states,¹⁰ Stuxnet was a computer virus designed to target specific configuration requirements in Siemens software resident on the centrifuges of the Iranian nuclear facility at Natanz. However, the virus escaped, infecting computers in Azerbaijan, Indonesia, India, Pakistan, and the United States.¹¹ Another sophisticated cyber weapon called Flame was designed to spread to other systems over a local network or via USB drive, with the ability to record audio, capture screenshots, log keyboard activity, and network traffic.¹² Although the

8 US Department of Defense, *Department of Defense Strategy for Operating in Cyberspace* (Washington, DC: US Department of Defense, July 2011).

9 David Raymond, Gregory Conti, Tom Cross, and Robert Fanelli, *A Control Measure Framework to Limit Collateral Damage and Propagation of Cyber Weapons*, http://www.cedcoe.org/publications/2013proceedings/d1r2s6_raymond.pdf

10 Nate Anderson, "Confirmed: U.S. and Israel Created Stuxnet, Lost Control of It," *Ars Technica*, June 1, 2012.

11 Symantec, "W32.Stuxnet," http://www.symantec.com/security_response/writeup.jsp?docid=2010-071400-3123-99.

12 Aleks, "The Flame: Questions and Answers," *Secure List*, May 28, 2012, https://www.securelist.com/en/blog/208193522/The_Flame_Questions_and_Answers.

apparent targets of this malware were computers in the Middle East, Flame also propagated outside that area. Microsoft suffered some collateral damage from Flame, which exploited a previously unknown flaw in the company's digital certificates to disguise malicious code as a Microsoft product. The software firm subsequently issued an update to block other hackers from abusing the fraudulent certificates.¹³ In 2012, the US Department of Defense signed a directive limiting any collateral damage from dangerous robotic instruments to "minimize the probability and consequences of failure." Yet, while the directive was set up to create these safeguards, it explicitly "does not apply to autonomous or semi-autonomous cyberspace systems for cyberspace operations."¹⁴

- **Escaping into the Wild.** An ancillary concern to collateral damage is having malware circumvent any existing controls and spread across the Internet. While this effect may not be the intent of a cyberweapon, when malware interacts with already imperfect information systems, the potential for undesired effects cannot be overlooked or underestimated. The 1988 Morris Worm, according to its creator, was not designed to cause damage, but to gauge the size of the Internet.¹⁵ Regardless, the worm's creators lacked knowledge concerning its potential propagation rate; incomplete testing thus caused the worm to replicate much faster than anticipated, infecting approximately 60,000 machines.¹⁶ If the cyber weapon is self-propagating, like a worm or virus, then the possibility of it "escaping" remains a real concern, despite controls. After all, Stuxnet was never intended to travel outside Natanz's air gapped networks, but an error in the code caused the worm to replicate itself when an Iranian technician connected an infected laptop computer to the Internet.¹⁷ One source claimed the worm spread to at least five countries and as many as 115, including a Russian nuclear plant.¹⁸
- **Friendly Fire.** Active cyber defense assumes the attacker is actually operating from within a certain state's borders. Should active cyber defense be successful, adversary nations may relocate their operators globally and alter their methods of operation. This response would give attackers the advantage of "disappearing" into the ether as technical and operational data become obsolete. Compounding problems would occur if attackers operated from not only a third-party country, but an allied or friendly one. This possibility leads to difficult questions: Can the defender legally and morally attack the infrastructure of allied or third-party nations without the consent of the host government? Should the defender strike the attacking cyber operator, or the government directing the attack? How will the defender determine if

13 Aliya Sternstein, "U.S. Moves to Contain Collateral Damage from Cyber Weapons," *Nextgov*, June 19, 2012.

14 "Pentagon Strips Collateral Damage Safeguards from Cyberwar Weapons," *RT.com*, November 28, 2012.

15 Craig Wright, "What the Law Says About Distributing a Virus," *Infosec Island*, September 20, 2011.

16 Carolyn Marsan, "The Morris Worm Turns 20: Look What It's Done," *Network World*, October 30, 2008.

17 Vincent Manzo, "Stuxnet and the Dangers of Cyberwar," *National Interest* (January 29, 2013), <http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/stuxnet-the-dangers-cyberwar-8030>.

18 Vivian Yeo, "Stuxnet Infections Continue to Rise," *ZD Net*, August 6, 2010; John Leyden, "Rogue US-Israel Cyber Weapon Infected Russian Nuclear Plant," *The Register*, November 11, 2013.

whether the government was in fact guiding the attacker?

Two examples underscore the impracticality of active cyber defense within this context. The first involves the 1998 distributed denial-of-service attack against Georgia, when the Russian government was suspected of being involved.¹⁹ Technical analysis by Arbor Networks indicated computers in several countries were used, suggesting a botnet attack.²⁰ Based on this information, where should a defender direct an active defense action? A similar example involved GHOSTNET, a large cyber espionage campaign exploiting computers in 103 countries, particularly those of ministries of foreign affairs and embassies. Should a defender strike back at hosting or command and control servers in other countries, thereby encroaching on the sovereignty of a third party? In both examples, active cyber defense does not seem feasible.

- **Attacker Uses Victim Country.** Here, the aggressor initiates attacks from within the victim country and routes through several hop points before coming back to the target. This approach would take advantage of governments' notoriously horrible bureaucracies and failures of intelligence and security services to collaborate. By the time conflict is resolved, the attackers have most likely relocated to another country to resume operations. Additionally, operating out of a victim country nullifies technical analysis linking attackers with governments based on "office hours" and holidays.
- **Risk of Counter-Strike . . . and Escalation.** There is a real possibility active cyber defense will not deter attackers and, in fact, will invite a stronger counterattack against more valuable systems. This is a dangerous scenario; it runs the risk of conflict escalation, particularly if the attacker perceives the active cyber defense response as disproportionate to the initial attack. Furthermore, a quick and efficient counterattack reveals to the attacker a sense of the defender's capabilities, attribution processes, and the types of tools the defender has at his disposal. Further complicating matters, if the attribution was incorrect, the retaliating government could strike the wrong target, particularly if hasty action is taken.
- **Nonstate Actors.** Terrorist groups, hacktivists, and cyber criminals tend to operate in areas with limited legal restrictions, or government interference. For example, in 2007, after it was determined pro-Kremlin Russian hacktivists originated distributed denial-of-service attacks against Estonia, Tallinn submitted requests to Moscow for assistance in tracking the perpetrators—which were refused.²¹ If Estonia chose to conduct retaliatory strikes against Russian interests, it ran the risk of escalating the crisis. Another iteration of this scenario involves a nonstate actor operating from a third-party country, neither allied nor friendly with the victim country. By retaliating against the nonstate actor, the victim country would encroach on the sovereignty of the third country. Even if the retaliation was successful, it is not clear it would achieve any noticeable effect. Assuming extradition is unlikely, and the actor is essentially shielded by the laws of the host country,

19 Jason Healey, *A Fierce Domain: Conflict in Cyberspace, 1986-2012* (Vienna: Cyber Conflict Studies Association, 2013), 202-203.

20 Jose Nazario, "Georgia DDoS Attacks—A Quick Summary of Observations," *Arbor Networks*, August 12, 2008.

21 Eric Talbot Jensen, "Cyber Deterrence," *Emory International Law Journal*, 26 (2012): 805.

it would be difficult to deter the actor from future activity. Tactical success (hacking back, destroying the computer, etc.) would not translate into strategic victory.

Aggressive Cyber Defense—One Possible Solution

It is highly unlikely any organization can stop all hostile cyber activity targeting its information systems. However, it is wrong to think passive cyber defense has been a failure. Based on multiple surveys, standard defense-in-depth principles have a valid place in computer security, particularly in countering the significant volume of “known” cyber threats. Many companies are still not consistent with implementing the most basic of security procedures. According to one survey, only 45 percent of responding companies believed they were doing well, and of that, only 10 percent were taking adequate security steps.²² The following points highlight how, if adhered to, most basic security practices are able to mitigate the vast majority of malicious cyber activity an organization encounters on a day-to-day basis:

- An internationally recognized information security vendor SANS, developed the fourth iteration of its “Twenty Critical Security Controls for Effective Cyber Defense (CSC),” baseline security measures addressing the most common hostile cyber activities.²³ For those organizations properly implementing the CSC, there have been encouraging signs of success in the reduction of known threats. In 2009, the US Department of State Chief Information Officer implemented the CSC and found 88 percent reduction in vulnerability-based risks against 85,000 systems.²⁴ In a 2013 survey, 25 percent of 699 respondents from companies ranging from 100 employees to Global 200 stature were able to quantify improvement in their respective risk postures after implementing the CSC.²⁵
- In 2011, the Australian government’s Defence Signals Directorate (DSD) published a revision of its “Strategies to Mitigate Targeted Intrusions” designed for advanced persistent threat activities. The strategies listed therein focused on basic information security principles such as patch applications, whitelisting, minimizing the number of users with administrative privileges, filtering, user education, host-based and network intrusion detection systems, to name a few. According to the Australian DSD’s findings, the strategies would have prevented at least 70 percent of the intrusions the DSD analyzed in 2009, and at least 85 percent of the intrusions responded to in 2010.²⁶

A needed step forward is shifting the mindset of security personnel from passive cyber defense to an aggressive cyber defense; the difference is the latter focuses on proactive defensive measures to mitigate lesser sophisticated attacks (using conventional cybersecurity devices such as

22 James A. Lewis, *Raising the Bar for Cybersecurity* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic & International Studies, February 12, 2013).

23 SANS Institute, “CSIS: 20 Critical Security Controls,” <http://www.sans.org/critical-security-controls>.

24 SANS Institute, “A Brief History of the 20 Critical Security Controls,” <http://www.sans.org/critical-security-controls/history>.

25 John Pescatore, “SANS 2013 Critical Security Controls Survey: Moving from Awareness to Action,” June 2014.

26 Government of Australia, *Strategies to Mitigate Targeted Cyber Intrusions*, February 2014.

intrusion detection systems, firewalls, and antivirus programs), enabling security professionals to concentrate on more sophisticated cyber threats. The objective is to build stability through a strong defensive posture placing emphasis on aggressiveness in defense, not on offense. Through a combination of strategy, policy, and defensive tactics, techniques, and procedures, attackers' success rates should decrease; defenders' ability to improve upon resiliency will increase, and the costs associated with cleaning up after cyber incidents will be greatly reduced.

- **Mitigating Targeted Intrusions.** Make it extremely difficult for all but the most dedicated and persistent adversary to continue hacking. This serves two goals. First, it deters most attackers looking to target networks; the theory is there are easier targets to go after. Second, it will be easier to attribute attackers who are able to intrude on networks since such intrusions will require a certain level of sophistication and skill. Combining cognitive and behavioral analyses with technical analysis should assist in attribution efforts.
- **Honey Pot/Honey Net.** Organizations should have a mirror network to entice attackers to target first, whereby defenders can monitor offensive tactics, techniques, and procedures and apply defensive strategies to the organizations' true networks. In 2013 a Trend Micro researcher created a fake water utility supervisory control and data acquisition system and observed suspected Chinese espionage agents, known as "Comment Crew," gain access to the "honeypot" via an infected MS Word document, and monitored their movements about the system.²⁷
- **Active Defense Tools.** Examples of such tools include those capable of opening trigger ports on hosts, whereby attackers would automatically get identified and blacklisted. Other tools include those able to identify the real IP address of a web user, even one behind a proxy; and those that employ geo-location and a browser's share function to pinpoint the physical location of a web user. Last, there are also tools capable of detecting network-reconnaissance and of feeding attackers phony information using networks of virtualized decoys.²⁸
- **Denial and Deception.** These include techniques used to mislead attackers through technical solutions. Some examples are the implementation of an operating system that recognizes when an attacker is downloading a rootkit for installation, and deletes it without notifying the attacker. Another is the creation of a website that provides files of data compiled at random from real files to confuse attackers into seeing nonexistent connections. File transfer utilities that identify common attack signatures, and pretend to succumb by responding in the same way an affected system would are useful as well.²⁹

Conclusion

Active cyber defense can-not curb most malicious activity in cyberspace. Too many variables make it ineffective and potentially

27 Juha Saarinen, "Chinese Hackers Take Over Fake Water Utility," *ITNews*, August 5, 2013.

28 Kelly Jackson Higgins, "Free Active Defense Tools Emerge," *Dark Reading*, July 11, 2013.

29 N. Rowe, "Counterplanning Deceptions to Foil Cyber-Attack Plans," in *Information Assurance Workshop, 2003. IEEE Systems, Man and Cybernetics Society* (West Point: IEEE, 2003), 203-211; N. Rowe and H. Rothstein, "Two Taxonomies of Deception for Attacks on Information Systems," *Journal of Information Warfare* 3, no. 2 (2004): 27-39.

catastrophic. Attacks have to be destructive to communicate displeasure to the aggressor while ensuring commensurate damage is inflicted. Therein lies the crux of the problem: being able to identify, execute, and control a measured destructive response in a timely manner. Cyberspace is fraught with examples of actor missteps and malware that has escaped to cause unintended harm to third-party systems. While fortunately cyber conflicts have not yet escalated into greater military engagements, this may change as nefarious activity continues without diplomatic, economic, military repercussion or consequence. There is little empirical evidence on which to base informed judgments concerning cyber strategies, which in turn increases the risk of unintended consequences. Moreover, developing offensive cyber capabilities does not preclude adversaries from constructing similar capabilities. Until a better understanding of how cyberpower can be leveraged as a means of *détente*, it is more prudent to increase efforts in building cyber defenses, while maintaining open dialogues with states to bridge gaps in understanding and language. In this case, the idea the best defense is a good offense should be viewed as a last resort, and not as a first choice.

The Age of Digital Conflict: A Review Essay

José de Arimatéia da Cruz

According to Eric Schmidt, Executive Chairman of Google, and Jared Cohen, Director of Google Ideas and an Adjunct Senior Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, the Internet is among the few things humans have built that they do not truly understand. The Internet is a network of networks, a huge and decentralized web of computer systems designed to transmit information using specific standard protocols. Nations and individuals rely on the Internet on a daily basis to conduct business, connect with friends, and even find love. To state the Internet is an integral part of our way of life is not an overstatement. The Internet allows for friendships, alliances and enmities between states to be extended into the virtual world, adding a new and intriguing dimension to traditional statecraft. As the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Army General Martin E. Dempsey stated, “the spread of digital technology has not been without consequence. It has also introduced new dangers to our security and our safety.”¹

Three books will be reviewed here which highlight the addition of the Internet to an already complex international system in which combat takes place not only in the physical domain but also now in the cyber domain. The Department of Defense designated cyberspace a new domain of warfare in 2011. This elevation in strategic importance makes cyberspace comparable to land, sea, air, or outer space as a new battle frontier. The US Government and its Armed Forces recognize the importance of cyberspace as a potential future battleground. Former Defense Secretary Leon Panetta stated “cyberspace is the new frontier, full of possibilities to advance security and prosperity in the 21st century. And yet, with these possibilities, also come new perils and new dangers.”² The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Dempsey, stated “the Department of Defense is adding a new mission: defending the nation, when asked, from attacks of significant consequence—those that threaten life, limb, and the country’s core critical infrastructure.”³ For international jihadists the Internet has become the most cost-effective means of delivering its messages worldwide, and coordinating attacks. The Internet allows jihadist organizations to recruit without leaving the confines of their safe havens. Jihadist groups and terrorist organizations are using the Internet as a tool to carry-out their “cyberplanning” without fear of retaliation and in secret. Lieutenant Colonel Timothy L. Thomas, an analyst at the Foreign Military Studies Office in Fort

Books Reviewed:

War Play: Video Games and the Future of Armed Conflict

By Corey Mead

The New Digital Age: Reshaping the Future of People, Nations and Business

By Eric Schmidt and Jared Cohen

Cybersecurity and Cyberwar: What Everyone Needs to Know

By P.W. Singer and Allan Friedman

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1 Claudette Roulo, “DOD Must Stay Ahead of the Cyber Threat, Dempsey Says,” *US Department of Defense*, <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=120379>.

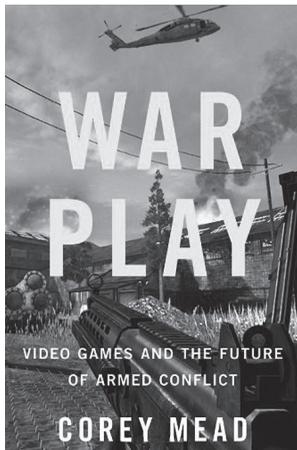
2 Leon Panetta, “Remarks by Secretary Panetta on Cybersecurity to the Business Executives for National Security, New York City,” October 11, 2012, <http://www.defense.gov/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=5136>.

3 Roulo, “DOD Must Stay Ahead of the Cyber Threat, Dempsey Says.”

Leavenworth, Kansas, defines “cyberplanning” as “the digital coordination of an integrated plan stretching across geographical boundaries that may or may not result in bloodshed.”⁴ An understanding of future armed conflict, combat and intervention in the new digital age will help US Army leaders to train its soldiers for new forms of armed conflict in the twenty-first cyberspace in light of sequestration and diminishing defense budget.

War Play: Video Games and the Future of Armed Conflict

How does the US military train its current and future soldiers for new forms of armed conflict in the twenty-first century in light of sequestration and a diminishing defense budget? Corey Mead's book *War Play* that the military is making use of more and more video games, that is, serious video games, as part of its arsenal of tools to fight the wars of the future. The military, according to the author, is turning to video games for scenarios involving new and unexpected roles for soldiers. For example, today's Generation Z soldiers, born in the age of cell phones and information, are using video games to learn skills such as cultural negotiations and cultural sensitive training. As a new generation of soldiers are recruited and deployed, in addition to learning combat skills, they may also have to negotiate with warlords or tribal leaders in remote villages. Also, virtual training sessions are helping the military ration training grounds, which are in especially short supply today as troops



Corey Mead, *War Play: Video Games and the Future of Armed Conflict* (Eamon Dolan/Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013). 208 pages. \$20.00

return from their overseas deployments (68). According to the author, video games allow for near-instantaneous user modifications, meaning soldiers in the field can, on a daily basis, input the enemy's latest fighting tactics, so that troops who are stateside can keep their training up to date (3).

The proliferation of video games or computer-based war gaming programs as an integral part of the military's learning tools was recently re-energized by comments from Edward O. Wilson, emeritus professor of biology at Harvard University, and President Barack Obama. Wilson recently remarked, “games are the future of learning,” while President Obama stated the creation of good education game software is one of the “grand challenges for American innovation” (5). True to his statement, President Obama created the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Education, which has as its major objective the creation of education software “as compelling as the best video game” (5). The Obama Administration is “pouring hundreds of millions of dollars into its Educate to Innovate campaign, a pro-STEM initiative that, in the president's words, is dedicated to reaffirming and strengthening America's role as the world's engine of scientific discovery and

4 Timothy L. Thomas, “Al Qaeda and the Internet: The Danger of “Cyberplanning,” *Parameters* 33, No. 1 (Spring 2003): 112-123.

technological innovation” (157). Two other events have led to the proliferation of video games or computer based war gaming as part of the military’s arsenal. First, the end of the Cold War and the implosion of the Soviet Union have led to a reduction of the military’s budget to a level commensurate with what Congress assumed was a greatly reduced geopolitical threat (22). Second, in the post-9/11 terrorist attacks against the homeland, former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld called for a “revolution in military affairs.” According to Rumsfeld, the US military needed a “transformation.” This transformation held that the US military’s high technology combat systems and heavy reliance on air forces had dramatically reduced the need for large numbers of troops on the ground (50). Since wars of the future will shift from ground wars to cyberspace, the military needs a complete transformation, a “wholesale technological upgrade with the goal of changing the military into a lithe, agile, easily portable fighting force that could be instantly deployed to any of the world’s future hot spots” (51). During times of across-the-board defense budget cuts and sequestration, cybersecurity is one of the few areas that will see an actual increase in its budget in the years ahead (167).

The use of video games or computer-based war gaming in today’s Army as a training tool developed in conjunction with the US Army War College’s introduction of the board game *Mech War* into its training curriculum in the 1970s (17). *Mech War* is part logistical, part strategic board game which also uses card drawing mechanics. *Mech War* allows students a chance to lead a team of mechs - enormous robot-like war machines. Using a wide variety of weapons, the goal is to secure a victory against other mechraider leaders. There are a number of other computer-based war games being used by the military today. But, perhaps the most successful computer-based war game is *America’s Army*, the world’s first video game developed by the military. The game is the idea of Colonel Case Wardynski, who for more than a decade ran the US Army’s Office of Economic and Manpower Analysis.

The game was used not only as a basic recruitment tool but also as a public relations instrument. It has been as influential in the world of marketing as it has been in the military (77). The game recognized the Army as a professional organization soldiers would not only respect but want to join. The game emphasized the Army’s “seven core values,” namely: loyalty, duty, respect, selfless, service, honor, integrity, and personal courage (76). *America’s Army* has more than 11 million registered users. The game was re-purposed several years ago for use as a government training tool and its platform is now used for dozens of training and simulation applications, including PackBot robots and nuclear, biological, and chemical reconnaissance vehicles (75). According to the game’s official website, *America’s Army* brings the best features of the previous versions to a new America’s Army environment. *America’s Army: Proving Grounds* stress small unit tactical maneuvers and training that echoes true-to-life Army scenarios. It reflects the current Army by focusing on these smaller self-contained, full spectrum units which can carry-out a variety of missions.

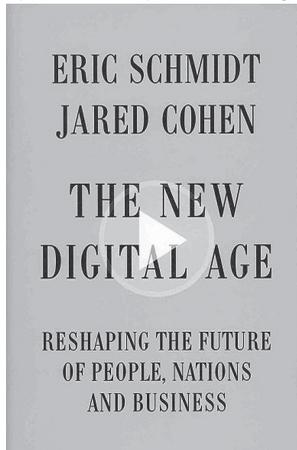
In addition to using video as a learning tool, the military is also extending the use of video games beyond the battlefield. It is using video

games to treat soldiers suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder as well as aiding veterans who are reintegrating into civil society after seeing the horrors of war. The military is not only using video games among its lowest ranks, but its leaders are also trained on video games. According to Mead, at the Army's School for Command Preparation and the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, lieutenant colonels and other leaders use *UrbanSim*, a game referred to by its creator as *SimCity Baghdad*. *SimCity* focuses on counterinsurgency. During exercises using *SimCity*, students are required to manage a complex mix of civil security and control, governance, and economic and infrastructure development (69).

Another video game being used by the military is *Virtual Battlespace 2*. This game is an army "program of record," meaning it will be maintained by the Army for as many years as possible before being replaced (105). It has been an important tool for due to its capacity to record sessions and follow up with "after-action reviews." This enables leaders to take the soldiers through the scenarios and identify what they did correctly and incorrectly (106). Another important function of this game is its content library, which features "more than four hundred military and civilian vehicles; hundred of characters representing at least five national militaries, press agents, and civilians; dozens of weapons; and countless varieties of animals, signs, buildings, natural objects, and paraphernalia such as alarm clocks and soda cans" (107).

The New Digital Age: Reshaping the Future of People, Nations and Business

Eric Schmidt and Jared Cohen are no strangers to the world of cybersecurity. In their groundbreaking text, the authors demonstrate



Eric Schmidt and Jared Cohen, *The New Digital Age: Reshaping the Future of People, Nations and Business* (Knopf Publishing Group, 2013). 336 pages. \$18.85

"ways in which the virtual world can make the physical world better, worse or just different. Sometimes these worlds will constrain each other; sometimes they will clash; sometimes they will intensify, accelerate and exacerbate phenomena in the world so that a difference in degree will become a difference in kind" (6). This technological revolution of the twenty-first century will impact everyone but not equally. As the authors point out, "everyone will benefit from connectivity, but not equally, and how those differences manifest themselves in the daily lives of people" is the focus of their work. Although this technological revolution will not impact everyone equally, it will certainly provide a venue for those without a voice in the political process in many parts of the world.

Schmidt and Cohen argue, "technology will empower people to police the police in a plethora of creative ways never before possible, including through real-time monitoring systems allowing citizens to publicly rate every police office in their hometown" (34). Governments as well will find it harder to ignore public protesters either in the physical

world or the online world as their citizens become more connected. Events that once took weeks if not months to be noticed by the world, now can be seen instantaneously as people become more connected and communication costs become more affordable. For example, farmers in Kenya now are able to determine the market price for their commodities and young people are able to organize online, and protest in the physical world. Indeed, it is a “brave new world.” As technology becomes more affordable and available to the masses, governments around the world will find it harder to cover-up government malfeasance as corrupt politicians and human-rights abuses are exposed by the media. The Green Revolution, a political movement in Iran contesting the fraudulent election results of 2009 in which Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was reelected is a good example of political activism brought to light thanks to the advancement of technology. Young people armed with cell phones took to the streets to demand the removal of Ahmadinejad. When police and security forces attacked and arrested unarmed protesters, young Iranians armed with cell phones took pictures of police brutality including the killing of Neda Agha Soltan, who became a symbol of the Green Revolution. In countries where the media is not free, the advancement of the Internet represents a danger to corrupt officials, powerful criminals and other malevolent forces in a society. As Schmidt and Cohen point out, “one reason that corrupt officials, powerful criminals and other malevolent forces in a society can continue to operate without fear of prosecution is that they control local information through harassment, bribery, intimidation or violence” (52).

The result of authoritarian societies where the media is controlled by criminal elements in power, especially since the end of the Cold War when state-owned media was privatized, is “a lack of an independent press” reducing both “accountability and the risk that public knowledge of misdeeds will lead to pressure and the political will to prosecute” (52). As corrupt politicians and their cronies continue to manipulate and control the Internet to advance their own interests, we could see the proliferation of a “digital police state” (77).

The new digital age is also transforming the field of international relations. As Schmidt and Cohen argue “friendships, alliances, and enmities between states will extend into the virtual world, adding a new and intriguing dimension to traditional statecraft” (83). As powerful nations around the world, in order to protect their territorial integrity, filter and restrict what can and cannot be seen by their citizens, we are witnessing the “balkanization” of the Internet. This balkanization will have a tremendous impact on the future of nation-states. Again, Schmidt and Cohen argue, “the Internet could ultimately be seen as the realization of the classic international-relations theory of an anarchic, leaderless world” (83).

As the world becomes more connected and relations move from the physical world to the cyber world, this “leaderless world” will also become more dangerous. While the Cold War may have ended with the implosion of the former Soviet Union, a new “Code War” is just beginning. In this new interconnected world of the twenty-first century, “embedded moles, dead letter drops and other tradecraft will be replaced by worms, key-logging software, location-based tracking and other

digital spyware tools” (113). Although some observers argue war in the digital age is not really war from a Clausewitzian’s perspective, that is, “a continuation of policy by other means,” others argue to the contrary. For example, Craig Mundie, Microsoft’s chief research and strategy officer and leading thinker in Internet security, calls cyber-espionage tactics “weapons of mass disruption” (105). Schmidt and Cohen go on to argue,

“states will do things to each other online that should be too provocative to do off-line, allowing conflicts to play out in the virtual battleground while all else remains calm. The promise of near-airtight anonymity will make cyber attacks an attractive option for countries that don’t want to appear overtly aggressive but remain committed to undermining their enemies” (105).

The evolution of the digital age is also changing the traditional definition of war. While guns and bullets are still an integral part of combat, so are bits and bytes. Warfare is not a new concept in strategic analysis. What is different today is nations will use “cyber war primarily to meet intelligence objectives, even if the methods employed are similar to those used by independent actors looking to cause troubles. Stealing trade secrets, accessing classified information, infiltrating government systems, disseminating misinformation—all traditional activities of intelligence agencies—will make up the bulk of cyber attacks between states in the future” (103). As nations around the world recognized the utility of cyber attacks as a form of strategic offense, cyber attacks will occur with greater frequency and more precision with each passing year (104). With the establishment in 2009 of the United States Cyber Command (USCYBERCOM) and former secretary of defense Robert Gates declaring cyberspace to be the “fifth domain” of military operations, alongside land, sea, air and space, there has been a proliferation of a “cyber-industrial complex” (110). The cyber-industry is estimated to be worth somewhere between \$80 billion and \$150 billion annually (110).

Another important concept with the advancement of the digital age is cyber terrorism. In his remarks to the Business Executives for National Security, New York City, Secretary Panetta warned business leaders, “A cyber attack perpetrated by nation states or violent extremists groups could be as destructive as the terrorist attacks on 9/11. Such a destructive cyber-terrorist attack could virtually paralyze the nation.”⁵ Panetta also goes on to state, “the collective result of these kinds of attacks could be a cyber Pearl Harbor; an attack that would cause physical destruction and the loss of life. In fact, it would paralyze and shock the nation and create a new, profound sense of vulnerability.” While a “cyber Pearl Harbor” has not yet occurred, rogue nations are either creating or improving their cyber capabilities. For example, as Schmidt and Cohen point out, “most terrorist organizations have already dipped a toe into the media marketing business, and what once seemed farcical—al Qaeda’s website heavy with special effects, Somalia’s al-Shabaab insurgent group on Twitter—has given way to a strange new reality (157).

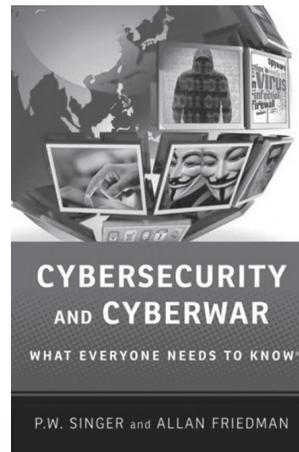
This new reality of the twenty-first century under the digital age calls for nations to practice two foreign policies and two domestic policies—one for the virtual world and one for the physical world—and these policies may appear contradictory (255). In their final analysis,

5 Panetta, “Remarks by Secretary Panetta on Cybersecurity to the Business Executives for National Security, New York City.”

Schmidt and Cohen argue, “anyone passionate about economic prosperity, human rights, social justice, education or self-determination should consider how connectivity can help us reach these goals and even move beyond them” (257).

Cybersecurity and Cyberwar: What Everyone Needs to Know®⁶

Written by P.W. Singer, Senior Fellow and the Director of the 21st Century Defense Initiative, and Allan Friedman, Fellow in Governance Studies and Research Director of the Center for Technology Innovation both at the Brookings Institute, *Cybersecurity and Cyberwar: What Everyone Needs to Know®* is an easy-to-read yet deeply informative book on the nature of cybersecurity and cyberwar. Unlike Schmidt and Cohen, Singer and Friedman argue cyberspace may be global but it is not “stateless” or a “global commons” (14). According to Singer and Friedman, cyberspace “is first and foremost an information environment. It is made up of digitized data that is created, stored, and, most importantly, shared” (13). Singer and Friedman also argue cyberspace is not purely virtual as it is commonly sensationalized by media reports. Cyberspace, according to Singer and Friedman, comprises computers storing data plus the systems and infrastructure allowing it to flow. Included in this total package is the Internet of networked computers, closed intranets, cellular technologies, fiber-optic cables, and space-based communications (13-14). Regardless of one’s operational definition of the Internet and cyberspace, one thing is for certain: cyberspace, as *Wired* magazine editor Ben Hemmery points out, is “the dominant platform for life in the 21st century” (16).



P.W. Singer, *Cybersecurity and Cyberwar*
(Oxford University Press, 2014). 320 pages.
\$63.36

This book is divided into three parts. Part I answers the important question to latecomers that is, “How It All Works;” Part II answers the question, “Why It Matters;” and finally, Part III “What Can We Do?” In Part I “How It All Works,” several important themes are discussed including, but not limited to, what do we mean by security when it comes to the Internet; how do we trust in cyberspace; how do we keep the bad guys out of our critical infrastructure; and who is the weakest link when it comes to cyberspace. Cyberattacks against financial institutions, governmental agencies, individuals, and corporations are on the rise as other nations begin to develop their own cyber soldiers. According to Singer and Friedman, quoting a study prepared by the National Research Council in 2009, a cyberattack occurs when an individual or nation-state take “deliberate actions to alter, disrupt, deceive, degrade, or destroy computer systems or networks or the information and/or programs resident in or transiting these systems or networks” (68). Cyberattacks usually take place against a nation’s critical infrastructure as well as against Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA). A nation’s

6 See the review by Major Nathan K. Finney elsewhere in this issue.

critical infrastructure is “the underlying sectors that run our modern-day civilizations, ranging from agriculture and food distribution to banking, health-care, transportation, water, and power” (15). The Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition is “the computers systems that monitor, adjust switching, and control other processes of critical infrastructure” (15). A concern regarding SCADA (besides its vulnerability to cyberattacks) is the fact that between 85 percent and 90 percent of US critical infrastructure is controlled by the private sector. While there have been major improvements in the private sector when it comes to cybersecurity; the default still remains the federal government. Therefore, when a cyberattack occurs, the blame game between the private sector and the federal government begins without anyone taking responsibility and stepping up to protect the US’s critical infrastructure.

Singer and Friedman also discuss how criminal elements and organizations are taking advantage of advances in computer capability and capacity to commit crimes that not too long ago were commonly practiced by street thugs. Cybercrime, “the use of digital tools by criminals to steal or otherwise carry out illegal activities,” has become a major concern to law enforcement officers worldwide (85). General Keith Alexander, head of the US National Security Agency (NSA) and US Cyber Command, has called cyber economic espionage one of the many nefarious forms of cybercrime being committed today against American corporations and the “biggest transfer of wealth in history,” which is estimated to cost US corporations \$250 billion in stolen information and another \$114 billion in related expenses.⁷ Several culprits top the US list of countries actively engaged in cybercrime. According to the *New York Times*, cybertheft has become the “No. 1 problem” between the US and China, especially as the later proclaims its peaceful rise (95). The Cold War may have ended with the collapse of the Soviet Union, but a new Code War is just beginning. In this new Code War, bytes become the “twenty-first century nuclear weapons equivalent,” in the words of Secretary of State John Kerry during this confirmation hearing.⁸

Advances in computer technology have also created a new venue for rogue states, transnational organized criminals, and terrorist organizations as they rely on the web to conduct their nefarious activities and cyberterrorism. Lieutenant Colonel Thomas, argues terrorist organizations are using the Internet not only to recruit new foot soldiers but also for cyberplanning. Thomas defines “cyberplanning” as “the digital coordination of an integrated plan stretching across geographical boundaries that may or may not result in bloodshed.”⁹ In their “cyberplanning,” terrorist organizations are also spreading a peculiar type of knowledge called “TTPs,” an acronym for “tactics, techniques, and procedures” (1001). Singer and Friedman have also argued, “for terror groups, Internet communication does more than just create new connections and spread viral ideas; it also maintains old ones much in the same way that the rest of us use social networks to keep in touch with high school friends” (1001).

7 John D. Negroponte and Samuel J. Palmisano, *Defending an Open, Global, Secure, and Resilient Internet*, Independent Task Force Report No. 70 (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, June 2013), 17.

8 *Ibid.*, 23.

9 Thomas, “Al Qaeda and the Internet: The Danger of “Cyberplanning,” 112-123.

The US Armed Forces have also recognized the dual utility of Internet technologies in the new post-Cold War international system and its usefulness as a force multiplier in combat. The US Air Force has developed and implemented a plan for cyberwarfare known as the “Five D’s plus One” (128). According to this cyberwarfare strategy, a nation’s cyberwarfare capabilities should be able to “destroy, deny, degrade, disrupt, and deceive” while at the same time “defending” against the enemy’s use of cyberspace for the very same purpose (128). The US military has also developed Plan X, a \$110 million program designed to “help war-planners assemble and launch online strikes in a hurry and make cyber attacks a more routine part of US military operations” (128). Perhaps the greatest recognition that Internet “connection needs to be treated as a potential source of serious danger” came about with the establishment of the US Cyber Command.¹⁰ On June 23, 2009, the Secretary of Defense directed the Commander of US Strategic Command to establish a sub-unified command, United States Cyber Command (USCYBERCOM). Full Operational Capability (FOC) was achieved Oct. 31, 2010. The command is located at Fort Meade, Maryland.¹¹ The US Cyber Command brings under one umbrella all agencies or organizations of the US military that work on cyber issues such as the Army’s Ninth Signal Command to the Navy’s Tenth Fleet (133). The US is not the only superpower paying attention to the dual utility of the Internet in the post-Cold War international milieu. Russia and China have also developed their own equivalents of the US Cyber Command in order to match American cyberwarfare capabilities in the eventuality of a cyber conflict. China’s Beijing North Computer Center, otherwise also known as the General Staff Department 418 Research Institute or the PLA’s 61539 Unit, has at least ten subdivisions involved in “the design and development of computer network defense, attack, and exploitation systems” (141).

According to Ambassador John D. Negroponte and Samuel J. Palmisano, “cyberspace is now an arena for strategic competition among states, and a growing number of actors—state and nonstate—use the Internet for conflict, espionage, and crime.”¹² Recent incidents involving Russia and the Republic of Georgia in which Georgia’s government websites were bombarded with a Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) eventually were brought to a stand still show the awesome power of cyberwarfare. Cyberwarfare is indeed a power multiplier. It also shows that, as Colin S. Gray points out, “cyber can only be an enabler of physical effort. Stand-alone (popularly misnamed as “strategic”) cyber action is inherently grossly limited by its immateriality.”¹³ Cyberterrorists and rogue nation-states have realized the dual utility of the Internet. As Martin C. Libicki points out, “cyberattacks have neither fingerprints nor the smell of gunpowder, and hackers can make an intrusion appear legitimate or as if it came from somewhere else.”¹⁴ Given the attribution

10 Colin S. Gray, *Making Strategic Sense of Cyber Power: Why the Sky is Not Falling* (Carlisle, PA: US Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 2013), 49, <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=1147>.

11 “US Cyber Command,” *US Strategic Command*, http://www.stratcom.mil/factsheets/2/Cyber_Command/.

12 Negroponte and Palmisano, *Defending an Open, Global, Secure, and Resilient Internet*, 66.

13 Gray, *Making Strategic Sense of Cyber Power: Why the Sky is Not Falling*, 44.

14 Martin C. Libicki, “Don’t Buy the Cyberhype,” *Foreign Affairs*, August 14, 2014, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/print/136836>.

problem, we could very well see a proliferation of attacks coming from such states as North Korea, Venezuela, Iran, China, and Russia and yet be unable to attribute any of them to those countries. In conclusion, I concur with Colin S. Gray that while the “sky is not falling,” military leaders and students are highly recommended to comprehend the nature and utility of this powerful new tool of war.

Whose Breach, Whose Trust?

Kimberly Field

Are we debating the right issues? Andrew Bacevich's *Breach of Trust* raises questions regarding the All Volunteer Force.

Andrew Bacevich's book, *Breach of Trust: How Americans Failed Their Soldiers and Their Country*, notes a stanza from the Zac Brown Band offering fried chicken, cold beer, and jeans as symbols of freedom for which soldiers fight (189). Using this piece of pop music, Bacevich concludes it once was everyone's job to fight for our birthright – freedom. Now, a small all-volunteer force represents a country that pursues power projection through non-stop use of the military or “war,” and has lost the ethical foundation of its service along the way. I have always been repelled by the stanza, for a slightly different reason. People have died; please do not put that in the same sentiment as eating chicken. To me the stanza came to represent the well-meaning, yet rather thoughtless patriotism of many American people and the unthinking acceptance of it by the military. Both the act of military service, and putting it into service, demand more thought.

Frankly, the conversation Bacevich wants us to have about the ethical foundation of the all-volunteer force is unlikely. The professional military believes in “sustain the all-volunteer force” akin to an ideology, in part because it works; twelve years of war, it did not break, and soldiers continued to perform as well as asked. Or does it work?

Success has surely been elusive in the last thirteen years and I am disappointed that, despite the truism of civilian policy control of the military, we simply will not analyze and debate our own part in less than successful outcomes.

Further, the acceptance of everything a grateful public heaped on us has brought with it a culture of entitlement to soldiers and their families. Many of us would say only those who suffer from grievous injuries and those families who have lost loved ones are deserving of hero status or commensurate compensation. Anything else conflicts with the selfless service necessary in an all-volunteer force.

Bacevich discusses how military officers often find fault within the service, but refuse to speak up in a system that either promotes them or kicks them out. Indeed, love of service and soldiers provides unconscious rationalization for the failure to question assumptions, provide creative options, or speak up as a lone voice. And to be damningly fair, the way we develop senior leaders precludes the propensity to voice misgivings in the first place.

Notwithstanding the excellent questions and points Bacevich's book raises, there are a number of problems with his argument. First, it seems to be propped up by a realist conviction that use of the military is to be reserved for existential threats to the American way of life. He consistently implies the only appropriate use of the US military is to deter and defend, not protect, build partner capacity, enable soft power, or pursue

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limited objectives as part of a whole of government effort. If you do not buy this premise, you do not buy his claim the biggest casualty of the all-volunteer force is its over-use. Those of us involved in the Afghanistan war - volunteers all - believe we advanced civilization regardless of any potential backslide when we withdrew. Whether the American people want to pay in lives or dollars for those types of interventions is indeed the right question, but the answer is not automatically, “no way.”

What is for certain, however, is we must find more affordable ways to pursue such ends should the answer be “yes.” And the all-volunteer force is indeed part of the problem: the Baskin Robbins deployments of the past twelve years are unaffordable; they may actually tie the hands of decision-makers going forward. In fact, that is happening today. This administration with its human rights and “responsibility to protect” doctrine would likely be more deeply involved in Syria, for example, were it not for the exorbitant cost of deploying an all-volunteer force.

Secondly, I cannot accept Bacevich's claim that military elites pushed America into one conflict after another for bureaucratic, parochial reasons. Is it not the responsibility of the service chiefs, combatant commanders, and other military leaders to reject “best case” hopes, organize, train and equip services for the worst, and provide advice on what can best address threats? Accusations of presenting “should versus could” to policy makers, complacency with big bureaucracy, and at times, unexceptional performance might be warranted. However, dragging the United States into war out of deliberate mal-intent and self-service seems a leap in logic we simply should not make with him.

Still, it is time to have the conversation that General (retired) McChrystal called for regarding the viability of the all-volunteer force. The sheer frequency and scale of the use of the military instrument since the end of the Cold War, costs that could actually *constrain* the use of landpower, evidence of effect on the military ethos, and the need for the Army to represent the nation truly, are issues of significant magnitude. While it is highly unlikely the all-volunteer force would be replaced with conscripts, civil-military dialogue might help the Army in solving some of the bigger issues it now faces:

- What in fact, is its mission? “Fight and win our nation’s wars” is neither statutory nor sufficient. How should leaders prepare the Army now for the future? The Army is currently reverting to an “attitude of winning + combat arms commander-centric focus = full spectrum success.”
- What is fair, non-politicized compensation? What level is in keeping with both selfless service and the standard of living of average Americans?
- What is the source of misconduct at all ranks? Does an all-volunteer force have the right to help shape the ethos of the US military in a way a conscription force would not? Do the types of missions we prepare for hold sway over a culture that is without a doubt profane, assertive, physical?

All of these questions – the big ones that must involve the public, civilian and military leaders – are as important, but not as visible as those raised during the advent of the all-volunteer force. But perhaps that is Bacevich’s point. Let’s have the debate.

Commentaries & Replies

On “Strategy Versus Statecraft in Crimea”

Stephen Blank

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This commentary is in response to Łukasz Milewski's article "Strategy Versus Statecraft in Crimea" published in the Summer 2014 issue of Parameters (vol. 44, no. 2).

Lukas Milewski contends Russia, in at least the initial Crimean phase of its ongoing invasion of Ukraine, employed strategy while the West used statecraft. Readers may be inclined to agree with his argument, as within this framework Milewski implements the social sciences definitions of strategy and statecraft. However, his analysis is far too charitable to the West. Facts show Moscow employed a strategy, refined since 2006, if not earlier, that represented an audacious, innovative, and tactically brilliant operation, even if arguably strategically reckless. No objective account of the Western response can call European and American measures “statecraft” for they were and remain incoherent, timorous, and futile. The West’s confusion, surprise, and inability to grasp the seriousness of Russian ambitions, the stakes in this crisis, or to uphold its obligations toward Ukraine (ratified in the 1994 Budapest Agreement) do not deserve the name statecraft. Rather they represent a dismaying and still uncorrected failure to perceive the need for either sound policy or coherent strategy.

US officials seem to have no real policy towards Russia. Its refusal to practice any kind of deterrence indicates not only a continuing failure to comprehend the essentials of sound strategy and policy, but a loss of will. If the purpose of US foreign deployments in Europe and Asia is to deter and reassure allies, this policy ranks as a major failure that extends an increasingly depressing tradition.

Still worse, it appears the ability of US intelligence to detect and assess Russian capabilities and intentions is quite insufficient. Laying blame on Edward Snowden’s defection to Russia or our lack of Russian specialists may be partially correct, but these are also self-serving and insufficient responses. In fact, we have repeatedly committed unjustified and egregious strategic errors, and responded anemically to Russian threats. Claiming Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and annexation of Crimea could not be foreseen is utterly unfounded, as many specialists, including this author, have given such warning for years.

Such intelligence and policy breakdowns are by now commonplace, and include the failure to recognize how quickly China modernized its military, the rise of ISIS, etc. These cases underscore a much vaster and therefore much more dangerous and pervasive series of failures atop our national security processes. We can label these failures a miscarriage of statecraft, but world politics is a more exacting and severe judge. In this court, repeated failures invite ever greater and more serious challenges. However elegant our theories, we have been warned, and found wanting

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in the real world; and we will endure ever greater challenges until we get both strategy and statecraft right.

The Author Replies

Lukas Milevski

Stephen Blank writes powerfully on Russian foreign policy and the West's mediocre political performance with regard to Russia. In large part I do not disagree with anything he has written in this commentary, which I believe serves to supplement my article.

Because there is value in having concepts with clear boundaries, my article employed the age-old distinction between strategy and statecraft, a distinction which certainly predates modern social sciences. This is particularly the case when dissimilar forms of power are competing, as in Crimea. The dynamics of interaction between these disparate forms of power tend to be understudied and misunderstood, resulting in the loss of the importance of the opponent's use of strategy, rather than statecraft, and the subsequently erroneous belief that statecraft may overturn strategy in a direct confrontation.

Neither strategy nor statecraft imply any particular quality. Historically, most strategies have failed—for there is always a loser in war, and even winners often fail to achieve the initial political goals for which they went to war. Statecraft is likely to have a similar historical track record. The West collectively practiced statecraft against Russia during the Crimean crisis, yet without sufficient statesmanship to ensure its efforts could succeed. Blank is certainly correct about that.

Due to my article's narrow ambitions, the wider patterns of Russian foreign policy are not directly relevant, useful though they are in providing a background to the crisis. Blank is widely and expertly published on the subject. I have no wish to contest him on his home ground; nor do I see the need to, as I agree with what he has written. In the interests of keeping concepts clearly distinct, I would merely suggest that, since 2006, Russia has pursued a foreign policy which has been alternatively served by strategy (most obviously during Georgia 2008, Crimea and eastern Ukraine 2014) and by statecraft.

Perhaps it is Russia's flexibility in its choice of instruments, including armed force, which has bedeviled Western attempts to counteract Russian foreign policy, particularly given the common Western refrain that armed force is losing utility. If one automatically assumes military force has no utility, one is unlikely to imagine the possibility of annexing Crimea, regardless of those who suggest otherwise. If one cannot imagine why anyone would wish to revise or overturn the international status quo, one cannot anticipate actions which lead toward that conclusion. Ken Booth warned of the dangers of ethnocentrism in 1979. Those dangers remain with us today. Europe's widespread dependence

upon Russian gas, of course, does not help in crafting powerful counter-policies to Putin's recent foreign policy.

We must indeed get both strategy and statecraft right. This requires not just knowledge of the respective logics of strategy, statecraft, or of the foreign policies of particular states with which we may have to deal. Strategy and statecraft are both directed by the judgment of individuals, and judgment requires imagination to anticipate how our instruments and actions may influence the future. We can only hope our writings provide fertile soil to nurture that imagination and, occasionally perhaps, point it in the right direction.

On “Strategy Versus Statecraft in Crimea”

Christopher Mewett

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This commentary is in response to Lukas Milevski’s article “Strategy Versus Statecraft in Crimea” published in the Summer 2014 issue of Parameters (vol. 44, no. 2).

In a clash of opposing wills, the side that is willing to resort to violence will usually defeat the side that is not. This truism, convincingly stated in a single sentence, occupied Lukas Milevski for more than a dozen pages in the last issue of *Parameters*. Clausewitz made the same point rather more succinctly almost 200 years ago: “If one side uses force without compunction, undeterred by the bloodshed it involves, while the other side refrains, the first will gain the upper hand.”

For the Prussian, this logical proposition was merely a start point for a deep and systematic consideration of war’s unique nature—a treatment of the subject that stands unequalled in the history of Western military thought. Milevski seems content, on the other hand, to re-state what is already widely known: power politics backed by the threat of force will triumph over indifference and inaction. The dichotomy he establishes between strategy and “statecraft” does little to improve our understanding of how states behave, or of why their policies succeed or fail. We are left with little more than old Clausewitzian wine, in new confusingly-labeled skins.

The article’s thesis is the “dynamics and outcome of the Crimean crisis were determined by disparate assumptions and methods of thinking on the part of the West and Russia” (23). At root, this means Russia was willing to countenance the use of force to resolve the crisis in its own favor, while other states were not. Milevski explains the two sides’ “disparate assumptions and methods of thinking” by detailing what he understands to be the significant differences between two types of state behavior: strategy and statecraft. Strategy, we are told, is primarily concerned with “threatened (or actual) violence,” as it “is by definition adversarial and seeks victory.” Statecraft, by contrast, is said to be “merely competitive and seeks common ground and agreement” (25).¹

Of course, all of this can be stated in simpler and more familiar terms. Statecraft describes all forms of international politics, while war – the tool of strategy – “is not merely an act of policy but a true political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse, carried on with other means” (*On War*, 87). This formulation may have a familiar ring for readers of the journal.

Making sense of this revelation – understanding what it means to characterize war as a “true political instrument” and “not merely [as]

¹ Milevski acknowledges that strategy is actually a sub-set of statecraft, which comprises state-on-state activity “ranging from persuasion to coercion” to include the use of force, but he does not grapple with the implications of this taxonomic overlap (24).

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an act of policy” – was perhaps the most important intellectual challenge of Clausewitz’s final years. The text of *On War* is inconclusive and unsatisfying on this point, and poses an enduring test to modern interpreters. Milevski’s essay fails to engage meaningfully with this issue, only superficially considering the way violence alters the dynamics of a conflict and ignoring altogether the tension central to war’s dual nature: it is both *violent politics* and *political violence*, and yet its nature is different to those of either violence or politics.

Condensing *all* political action outside war into something “typically conducted via diplomacy” but that “tends, therefore, toward persuasive means of achieving political objectives” – is to accept an impoverished idea of national power and the mechanisms through which it can work. Are economic sanctions a “persuasive means”? What of blockade or embargo? Direct-action special operations, subversion, espionage, assassination, and sponsorship of terrorism are tools that may be used by one government against another without rising to the threshold of war; are these things governed by the logic of strategy or of statecraft? What about raids, or drone strikes, or other isolated applications of airpower?

Many of these tools have violence at their core; but their method of operation on the will of the adversary has more in common with sanctions and diplomacy than with a comprehensive military campaign aimed at destroying fighting forces or conquering territory. The same is true of propaganda and the use of armed proxies as a thumb on the scale of a neighboring state’s politics: however important may be the threat of violence, these means function in fundamentally political (rather than military) ways.

The application of national power through violence *does* differ in meaningful ways from the use of other policy instruments, and Milevski is right to underline this fact. Military force can indeed serve as a form of messaging, however imprecise and open to misinterpretation. But the operative mechanism at war’s logical core is destruction; the message implicit in all military action in war is “I can make things worse for you,” and what’s ultimately at stake is nothing less than the effacement of one’s personal and political existence.

Can Milevski’s framing of statecraft and strategy as analytically distinct categories of thought and action help us to explain differences in state behavior, or does it merely describe differences that emerge from already well-known causes? Does it help us to predict or even simply to understand outcomes in inter-state competition, or does it just validate those outcomes and make them seem inevitable after the fact? Is a difference in mental models the simplest and most plausible explanation for Russia’s success in enacting its will in Crimea against the objections of Western states, or has Milevski confused effect with cause?

“The smaller the penalty you demand from your opponent, the less you can expect him to try to deny it to you; the smaller the effort he makes, the less you need make yourself.” Clausewitz introduces this self-evident truth of politics by way differentiating war from unconstrained violence—to underline the controlling influence of politics on action in war. The state that cares more usually tries harder. Thus ever was it so.

The Author Replies

Lukas Milevski

Christopher Mewett has written a late but undoubtedly powerful critique of my recent article. Although Mewett argues with some justice that the strategy-statecraft dichotomy may not provide satisfactory insight into the many gray areas between war and diplomacy, it strikes me that we do not necessarily disagree all that much. Our disagreements stem primarily from method of argument and presentation, and only secondarily over substantive issues. Mewett's commentary may be reduced to three basic, inter-related points: 1) nothing new is being said in the article; 2) the strategy-statecraft dichotomy does not work; 3) the dichotomy is unnecessary in any case, as other factors explain the results of the Crimean crisis.

On the first point, I surely hope I have said nothing new! In direct confrontations, harder power defeats softer power—regardless of what, and how consequential, the longer-term effects of that softer power may ultimately be. It would be most unfortunate if this were to come as a revelation to those who think about or practice strategy and policy. Yet the hesitant responses, and their apparent purposes, offered by many Western governments to the events in Crimea seemed to indicate that observers and policy-makers believed softer forms of power might overcome the effects of the introduction of armed force. It thus seemed useful to reiterate what should already have been known. Even if policy-makers did not believe their own statements surrounding the utility of their actions in the Crimean context, they might have misled others about their actions' usefulness. Mewett may, of course, disagree with that assessment.

Mewett's second point is much weightier than his first, as he doubts the functionality of the dichotomy I employ in my article. Any rigid distinction between classical strategy and statecraft does seem to be relatively inapt in considering questions of blockade and embargo, among other instruments which Mewett identifies. I implied a broader spectrum of statecraft in my brief discussion by noting the existence of coercive diplomacy even while distinguishing it from strategy. This appears to have been insufficient for the purpose, given Mewett's commentary. Nevertheless, Mewett's overall point here is well taken, as I argued the strategy-statecraft distinction focusing on Crimea, in accordance with my topic. If that distinction requires revision or abandonment for other contexts, so be it. Nonetheless, I still suggest coercive diplomacy of any flavor (arguably up to and including coercion such as Operation Rolling Thunder) remains closer to diplomacy than to strategy—but that would be a different argument, a different article, and certainly not a commentary.

Running throughout the entirety of Mewett's commentary is his third point, really a theme, that the dichotomy employed offers no insight into behavior which observers do not already gain through other

analytical tools at their disposal. I suggest rather strategy and statecraft, as I classify them in the article, are reflections of behavior; they represent assumptions and expectations of effect to be derived from acting with the respective set of tools. As I noted in relation to Mewett's first point, many Western policy-makers appeared to have misinterpreted the significance of Russia's (semi-deniable) employment of force in Crimea. They therefore misread the effect this use of force would have on the course of the crisis and so attempted to act against it with instruments which were inappropriate for their apparent expectations. However, it was precisely their very different geographical proximities, interest disparities, and so on, which led the respective actors to choose either armed force or non-military options. The dichotomy is thus, as already mentioned, a reflection of behavior through which we can interpret actions and events, rather than behavior as such.

Moreover, Mewett ascertains the article particularly fails to address the question of what he describes as the tension in war's nature between violent politics and political violence. As Clausewitz himself did not untangle this last point in *On War* attempting to do so in an article about what was effectively a non-war, rather than an actual war seems overambitious and partially besides the point. The main purpose of the article was neither to describe nor extol the dichotomy as such or to delve into the nature of war, but rather to examine the interaction between military and non-military instruments and particularly to distinguish the uniqueness of force from the rest. Such an interaction can occur either in a wartime setting or in a conflict short of war, such as Crimea. The dichotomy establishes the difference between force and the other instruments of political power, so their respective influences on the course of events may be identified. This, in turn, returns to Mewett's first point on whether or not this is new. It is not. But, given the West's apparent rhetoric and performance in March 2014, this reminder may hopefully prove useful even without any novelty, whether to policy-makers or to their audiences!

On “Military Professionalism & Private Military Contractors”

Christopher Mayer

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This commentary is in response to Scott Efflandt's article "Military Professionalism & Private Military Contractors" published in the Summer 2014 issue of Parameters (vol. 44, no. 2).

The social contract between the military and the society it protects will evolve, as it always has and always will. These changes drive contemporary challenges to traditional notions of professionalism. In “Military Professionalism and Private Contractors,” Colonel Scott Efflandt argues the primary source of contemporary challenges comes from “private contracting companies,” and particularly private security companies. He proposes these companies “are actively and passively contesting the US military’s professional jurisdiction over its core task – the authority to employ lethal force as the agent of the state.” In support of this proposition he cites secondary sources claiming recent legislation and regulations undermine the commander’s authority to control these contractors on the battlefield. These assertions are based on a misunderstanding of the role of private security companies and US legislation regarding these actors.

Private security companies are not agents of the state for the employment of lethal force. First, private security companies do not exclusively work for governments. Most contracts for armed private security services are with private entities, such as the petroleum industry, mining concerns, and even non-governmental organizations. They cannot, therefore, be considered agents of state authority in the same way as military forces. Second, they are not used for the employment of lethal force in any way which resembles that function in the armed forces of a state. The use of force by private security companies is limited to self-defense and the defense of others from unlawful attack. This is not combat or direct participation in hostilities. It is the inherent right of individual self-defense. The International Committee of the Red Cross, in its *Interpretive Guidance on the Notion of Direct Participation in Hostilities* specifically excludes individual self-defense and defense of others against unlawful violence as meeting the threshold for direct participation in hostilities. This is true even when the attackers are members of the armed forces of a belligerent party.

Combat, on the other hand, defined as “operations to actively seek out, close with, and destroy a hostile force or other military objective by means of, among other things, the employment of firepower and other destructive and disruptive capabilities,” is inherently governmental and reserved for military performance (DODI 1100-22). This reservation is specified in law, policy, and Defense Instructions (e.g., OMB Cir A-76, OMP PL 11-01, DODI 1100-22). This division is reflected in international agreements such as *The Montreux Document on Pertinent Legal*

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Obligations and Good Practices for States Related to Operations of Private Military and Security Companies During Armed Conflict. This document clarified the status of private security companies personnel as civilians, enjoying similar protections as other civilians and subject to applicable national criminal law. It also describes use of force and firearms by private security companies only when necessary in self-defense and the defense of third persons.

Instead of blurring the line between private contractors and military forces, legislation and regulations enacted over the past ten years clarified this distinction and enhanced the authority of the military commander. COL Efflandt points out that the *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007* placed contractors in contingency operations under the *Uniform Code of Military Justice*. This supplemented, and did not replace, previous applicability of the *Military Extraterritorial Jurisdiction Act* to Department of Defense civilians and contractors. The UCMJ is used in cases where no other law is suitable or applicable. The change was tested in 2008, when a dual national Canadian-Iraqi citizen working on a US contract was found guilty by court-martial for assault and attempted murder.

The *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008* did not, as COL Efflandt maintains, remove contractors employed by other government agencies from military oversight and investigation. Section 862 of that Act requires all private security providers under contract for any federal agency operating in an area of combat operations or other significant military operations to comply with orders, directives, and instructions issued by the applicable commander of a combatant command, including rules for the use of force, and to cooperate with any investigation conducted by the Department of Defense.

Section 833 of the *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011* provided further controls over private security companies supporting contingency operations. This legislation directed the Defense Department to develop business and operational standards for private security companies. These standards do not nullify the authority of the combatant commander. Instead, they provide a reference for the combatant commander to specify minimum requirements for private security companies technical competence, a means to evaluate performance, and a method to hold the companies accountable under contract law. Certification with this standard is not mandatory, as COL Efflandt states. Rather, the law gives the Department the option to consider certification to the standard as one of several evaluation criteria in a contract award. Commanders may – and do – supplement the requirements of this standard through military orders and directives. Through the development of these standards and other initiatives, the Department of Defense has actually increased the reach of the principles upon which American military professionalism has been based by extending their logic in a way that could be used by other clients of private security services.

By law and custom, the armed forces of a state remain the only profession privileged to engage in combat. Only members of the armed forces are allowed to use lethal force on behalf of the state, and enjoy immunity from the charge of murder or other homicide; but such use must be consistent with the laws and customs of war. Private security

companies do not share this privilege in theory or practice. Despite a decade of maturation in defining the roles, limitations, and controls over armed commercial security services in complex contingencies, COL Efflandt's article demonstrates how much more work is needed to educate military and civilian leaders about private security companies. The *US Army War College Quarterly* should be commended for publishing COL Efflandt's work and the two accompanying articles in the Summer 2014 edition. The challenge now is to incorporate a proper understanding of the role of operational contract support into our military education system and other professional development and outreach.

The Author Replies

Scott L. Efflandt

My compliments and thanks to Mr. Christopher Mayer on a thoughtful and well written contribution on the effect of private security companies on the military profession. I agree with his two conclusions; a) much work is needed to educate military and civilian leaders about private security companies, b) the challenge is to incorporate a proper understanding of the role of operational contract support into our military education and professional development. However, I would add a third conclusion, c) the need to understand how private security companies are continuing to change the military profession. This is the research question of my research to date. Using Abbott's model, a profession is defined by its jurisdiction as determined by the resolution of competition with other professions in three areas—legal arena, public opinion, and the work place.

As to legal competition, Mr. Mayer offers a substantive counter-argument which I think is best addressed by others in subsequent research. Legal opinions aside, one must also consider the consequences of competition in the workplace and the court of public opinion when assessing the effects of private security companies on the military profession. Today we see an unprecedented number of armed non-military personnel performing duties previously done by uniformed service members—many (but not all) of whom are sanctioned by the state.

Likewise, the public remains very predisposed to using private security companies. Since the initial publication of my article events in the Middle East have sparked a credible public dialog on the viability of forming a contract force to assist Iraq in lieu of using the US Army as “boots on the ground.” The purpose of examining all three of these areas is to answer these questions: has the US military profession ceded jurisdiction? If so, how will this change effect US civil-military relations?

Mr. Mayer has provided important information on the legal battle for jurisdiction, but it is only part of the answer to these two larger questions. I look forward to the research of other scholars, who will continue to work in this important area. May they find our two contributions meaningful.

Book Reviews

STRATEGIC STUDIES

Clausewitz Goes Global: Carl von Clausewitz in the 21st Century

Edited by Reiner Pommerin

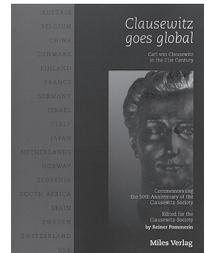
Reviewed by Dr. Hugh Smith, former associate professor, University of New South Wales at the Australian Defence Force Academy and author of *On Clausewitz: A Study of Military and Political Ideas* (Macmillan, 2005)

The Clausewitz Society was founded in Germany in 1961 to promote the study of Clausewitz's ideas particularly as they relate to current strategic and political issues. This book, first published in hardback in 2011, was commissioned to celebrate the Society's 50th year. Civilian and military scholars from 18 countries – 13 in Europe plus China, Israel, Japan, South Africa and the United States of America (the United Kingdom and Russia are notable omissions) – were asked to examine how Clausewitz's understanding of war has been interpreted in their country and whether his thinking still plays any role in military and political affairs. The book's title suggests Clausewitz, like trade and communications, has become globalized. However, the book's contents indicate for the last 180 years Clausewitz has attracted relatively limited interest in most countries, is often misunderstood or misrepresented, and rarely influences strategy or policy in any identifiable fashion.

It is not clear whether contributors were asked to write to a format but certain common themes are apparent. Some authors are able to refer to Clausewitz's visits to their country, for example, Belgium and Switzerland, with the latter claiming that Madame de Staël and August von Schlegel re-invigorated his nationalism and romanticism during his rather comfortable time as a prisoner in Castle Coppet on Lake Geneva during the French occupation. The Spanish contributor argues Clausewitz's understanding of guerrilla war would have benefited from military service in the peninsula.

More substantially, most contributors struggle to find significant and sustained intellectual efforts in their country to come to grips with Clausewitz. *On War* might be translated into the relevant language, sometimes at an early date, but this does not ensure continuing an informed interest in its content. Germany and France are significant exceptions. Even so, much has depended on the work of preeminent individuals, notably Werner Hahlweg and Raymond Aron who receive due attention from Claus von Rosen and Uwe Hartmann, and from Hervé Coutau-Bégarie respectively. Yet the salience of individual writers, it is apparent, can also wreak havoc with Clausewitz's reputation – think of Liddell Hart's "Mahdi of mass" in Britain or René Girard's apocalyptic interpretation in France.

Similar considerations apply to efforts to incorporate Clausewitz into the syllabus of military colleges or officer education. One or two enlightened educators introduce ideas – often competing with advocates of Jomini or Sun Tsu – but sooner or later, their influence wanes. Often officers are assigned to "teach Clausewitz" in military colleges, but do

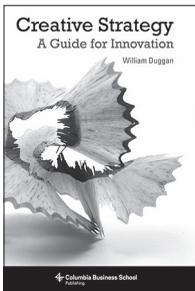


Berlin, Germany:
Miles-Verlag, 2014
380 pages
\$31.50

not have time to get beyond relating his ideas to supposedly more relevant factors such as centers of gravity, the superiority of the defense or the culminating point of the offensive. At the same time, few contributors are able to refer to any substantial study of Clausewitz in civilian universities – for obvious reasons. We learn even the study of military history was actively discouraged in Austrian and Japanese universities after 1945.

Several papers attempt to find Clausewitz relevant (or not relevant) to their nation's experience of conflict – whether national liberation, guerrilla war, Cold War, or post-Cold War conflicts. In most cases the argument is tenuous. Some contributors acknowledge how difficult it is to explain how such influence might occur, or to produce evidence of Clausewitz's impact on policy or the conduct of war. The problem of influence is all the greater when there is misunderstanding of Clausewitzian thinking or a selective quotation is used to provide spurious authority for an argument. In public debates it is common for "Clausewitzian" to become either a term of approbation or of abhorrence.

One paper stands out from the rest, by Christopher Bassford on "Clausewitz in America today." True, he has the advantage of reporting on a country that has a strong and extensive intellectual engagement with Clausewitz, at least since the US defeat in Vietnam and the appearance of the Howard-Paret translation of *On War* in 1976. But he is acutely aware of the methodological problems in demonstrating Clausewitz's influence (hence the sub-title of his 1994 book, *Clausewitz in English*, refers to "reception" rather than "influence"), while he is entertainingly trenchant in his analysis of US writers on Clausewitz and forthright in his conclusion – "American military and governmental students get very little out of reading Clausewitz" (349). The volume is worth taking off the library shelf for this contribution alone.



New York: Columbia
Business School Publishing,
2012
165 pages
\$27.95

Creative Strategy: A Guide for Innovation By William Duggan

Reviewed by Charles D. Allen, Colonel, USA Retired, Professor, Leadership and Cultural Studies, US Army War College

Within the past decade, the Department of Defense (DOD) and its armed services have issued a call for agile leaders and adaptive organizations while stressing the need for creativity and innovation to sustain US strategic advantages. Many national security professionals will agree with the needs but our military seems continually challenged by creating an effective "how to" that can provide national security advantages. Dr. William Duggan in his latest work, *Creative Strategy: A Guide for Innovation*, provides insights and a framework that may be useful within DOD. He examines two traditional methods claiming to yield creative ideas for strategy: methods of creativity (developing ideas) and methods of strategy (analyze strategic situations).

Dr. Duggan is the author of three previous books on the topic of strategic intuition, which describe the process of organizational innovation: *Napoleon's Glance: The Secret of Strategy* (2002); *The Art of What Works*;

How Success Really Happens (2003); and *Strategic Intuition: The Creative Spark in Human Achievement* (2007), which the journal *Strategy+Business* named “Best Strategy Book of the Year.”

While he is a senior lecturer at Columbia Business School (Columbia University is the source of his BA, MA, and PhD), Dr. Duggan is no stranger to the US military. He is a recurring guest lecturer at the Creative and Strategic Leadership electives at the US Army War College, has written a Strategic Studies Institute monograph, *Coup d’Oeil: Strategic Intuition in Army Planning*, and worked with Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences. Much of what Duggan writes is a direct application of the theory and approach he espouses. He does a deep dive to find historical cases, extracts examples of solutions to pieces of the problem, and then combines them in flashes of insight as innovations addressing the initial or emergent concern.

Accordingly, Duggan takes an individual level phenomenon of what some call creative genius and develops the construct of strategic intuition. For the individual using strategic intuition, “the brain selects a set of elements from memory, combines them in a new way, and projects that new combination into the future as a course of action to follow.” Duggan then provides an organizational-level technique to solve strategic issues. Importantly, an organization’s leaders struggle with strategic questions such as determining “what course of action your company should pursue in the future . . . , where no one person has enough direct experience to give a good answer solely from that source.” Rather than rely on the lone creative individual to divine the great idea, Duggan employs techniques from big corporations such as General Electric to engage multiple elements of the organization to attack its strategic issues.

Extending his assessment of how individuals think and innovate, Duggan presents a framework for creative strategy “where you apply strategic intuition in a systemic way to find a creative solution to a strategic problem.” That framework consists of three phases: rapid appraisal, “what-works scan,” and a creative combination that requires analysis of the problem space and environment, searches for existing solutions from similar problems, and cobbles together elements for an effective and novel resolution.

Readers may claim that this is nothing really new in the area of strategy development. Duggan might agree saying “Ah. Yes, but...” In the second part of the book, he provides a short précis of existing techniques for creativity and innovation and strategy—with a list of the usual suspects. As a counter to readers’ concerns, he offers an assessment of existing “best practices” to identify shortfalls. While he may seem overly dismissive of widely accepted theories and models that have become sacred cows, Duggan asks readers to understand the organizational context and apply elements of “best practices” as appropriate to the strategic problem at hand.

As the subtitle reads, “A Guide for Innovation,” this book is an easy read and very formulaic in demonstrating how to use Duggan’s creative strategy framework. His use of real-world business examples illustrates the application of the framework under conditions of success and failure. Readers may be understandably put off by his claim all other approaches are deficient. Such is the nature of this type of book.

Military readers may draw parallels to the recent design methodology from Army and Joint doctrine as applied to operational art—frame the environment, redefine the problem, and develop operational approaches to resolve the problem. Military readers may also tend to dismiss this book as a business-centered approach and not appropriate for issues of national defense. For this reviewer, creative strategy is bigger than design and it can be applied to organizational and institutional issues. As DOD wrestles with new policy and strategic guidance, downsizing and restructuring the force, and the need to develop effective structures to provide national security, I can see no greater opportunity to give this Duggan's framework a chance.

AFGHANISTAN

102 Days of War: How Osama bin Laden, al Qaeda & the Taliban Survived 2001

By Yaniv Barzilai

Reviewed by Ronald E. Neumann, former US ambassador to Algeria, Bahrain, and Afghanistan (2005-07) and a former deputy assistant Secretary of State for the Middle East.

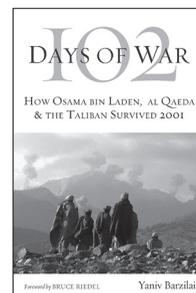
Yaniv Barzilai's *102 Days of War* is a serious and eminently readable account of the beginning of America's Afghan war. Barzilai raises fundamental issues beyond the history he chronicles, such as the relative roles of force protection versus mission accomplishment, and the correct role of the president in goal setting; themes that constantly reemerge in national security decision making.

Barzilai contends the force-protection demand for a northern base for combat search and rescue was delayed and put at risk from the beginning of the northern Afghanistan campaign. Casualty minimization may also have been a factor in General Franks' refusal to devote more US forces to the Tora Bora battle. How much risk for what purpose needs to be considered at the most senior levels. Since Benghazi, nervous Washington leaders have tilted the balance so far towards protection that America's diplomats are seriously impeded in getting out among the population to report and recommend policy approaches. With further withdrawals from Afghanistan, the force-protection issue will reemerge in a military context. How much of the remaining force will be devoted to protecting itself? Will that leave enough for mission accomplishment? The answers are uncertain but *102 Days of War* reminds us consequences will be born at the highest political level.

Barzilai's major focus throughout the book is the contention President George W. Bush failed to define the priority of destroying al Qaeda and its leader Osama bin Laden. Lack of clarity confused operational planning resulting in failure to destroy the majority of al Qaeda leadership at Tora Bora. This theme is unfolded in detailed examinations of key decisions in Washington and in the field. Documents were supplemented for interviews with major decision makers.

Within this theme are two parts; one is the absence of sufficiently clear objectives, the second is the belief President Bush should have taken a far more hands-on approach at critical moments. Each is well supported but counterpoints can be raised in both cases.

First, that the absolute destruction of al Qaeda was not adequately designated as a top priority is clearly documented. Yet there is room for discussion. Bush is quoted at one point as telling his cabinet the destruction of al Qaeda and the Taliban were of equal importance (34) and, at another, he wanted Osama bin Laden "alive or dead" (27). Was this not kept clear as discussion moved forward? Is the problem with cabinet officials and commanding generals not paying due attention to the President's guidance? One senior diplomat told me he believed both to be the case. My own policy experience is senior meetings rarely



Potomac Books, University of Nebraska Press: 2014

192 pages

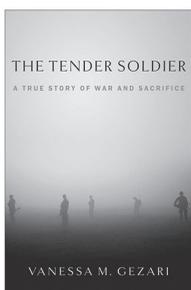
\$19.96

have the clarity suggested by study after the fact and finding the right balance in strategic guidance between too much and too little detail is difficult. Mission statements are tricky enough to frame in military staffs where the concept is both accepted and trained. It is much harder among civilian decision makers who lack this background. Getting the right strategic guidance is difficult, which is why the book's discussion is so worthwhile.

The second sub-theme is Bush delegated too broadly and should have taken a more direct role in supervising major decision points, especially the battle of Tora Bora. Contrast is made with President Obama's detailed oversight of the Abbottabad raid that killed bin Laden. Perhaps this is true, but the issue is more complicated than Barzilai suggests. There is no reminder of the micro-management of President Johnson during the Vietnam war. Yet that history is a formative part of how modern American civilian and military leaders look at the proper wartime role of the president. Reference is made to the role of other wartime leaders including President Lincoln. But Lincoln intervened to change commanders, not to manage battles nor to dictate campaign details.

The Abbottabad raid is completely different in scale from a large battle, as well as in the time to prepare which Barzilai does recognize. When the Obama administration applied the same micro-management to other decisions, such as the months spent deciding 2015 troop levels in Afghanistan, the results were political confusion in Afghanistan and NATO, which thwarted military planning. These reservations do not make Barzilai wrong. Rather, they point to the difficulty of getting the balance right in applying—in practice—the principles of strategic leadership.

102 Days of War is both elegant and detailed in examining these and many other aspects of a crucial historical period. It raises large issues that will concern us again and again in future crises.



New York: Simon and
Schuster, 2013
327 pages
\$25.00

The Tender Soldier: A True Story of War and Sacrifice

By Vanessa M. Gezari

Reviewed by Janeen Klinger, Department of National Security and Strategy, US Army War College

The tone and style of *The Tender Soldier* is vaguely reminiscent of Greg Mortenson's book, *Three Cups of Tea*, although the subject matter is quite different. Still, this book provides an introduction into counter-insurgency strategy in Afghanistan suitable for the general reader. The book touches several subjects that will be familiar to a military audience: the debate over the role of technology, and the creation of the new counter-insurgency manual, FM 3-24. By far, the book's strongest element lies in its description of the evolution and problems associated with Human Terrain Teams (HTT). The HTT program was an effort to use social science knowledge directly on the battlefield by deploying social scientists with troops. Although military professionals may well be

aware of the program, the fact the story is told from an outside perspective means the book will be of interest to them.

The tender soldier of the book's title is Paula Loyd, one member of a human terrain team that was deployed to Afghanistan 2008, and whom the author says was one of the best qualified social scientists working on such a team. The book's opening chapter describes an attack on Loyd—she is doused with fuel and set on fire; her teammate, Don Ayala, apprehends and shoots the assailant while the latter is handcuffed. The story of Loyd and Ayala is interwoven into a discussion of the evolution of the program and an analysis of the problems associated with it. Because of this interweaving, the narrative is a little disjointed but the insights into the program and its flaws are well worth the journey.

Problems with the HTT begin with the nature of the training the teams received. According to Gezari, all team members she interviewed described the training as “disappointing.” Although the ostensible purpose of the HTT was to provide cultural awareness to soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan, the author encountered some members with no such expertise and she suggested recruitment into the program was deeply flawed. She noted practitioners such as Paula Loyd, who are former soldiers with extensive experience in non-governmental organizations and time on the ground in Afghanistan, were quite rare. Interviews with key individuals involved with the program (Steve Fondacaro, a retired US Army colonel; Montgomery McFate, an anthropologist) attribute flaws in recruitment to an overly generous contract with BAI Systems, which was responsible for supplying recruits. In addition, both Fondacaro and McFate believe the program was expanded too rapidly. Fondacaro is quoted as saying the program thought it had two years to build five teams but were, in fact, required to field 26 teams immediately. McFate describes the rapid expansion of the program as “catastrophic.”

Once the HTT were deployed the problems were compounded by the ambiguity of their purpose. Some thought they were part of a humanitarian aid mission while others thought they were to explain to commanders why local people supported the insurgency. Gezari quoted one USMC colonel in Helmand Province saying he did not know what the team he was supervising was supposed to do—and neither did anyone else. Consequently, the team was left to “figuring it out as they went along.” The description of dysfunction in the HTT program suggests the execution left much to be desired.

Two broader lessons emerge from reading *The Tender Soldier*. The first involves the rather short-term memory that plagues the military and other policy-makers. The military had tried to use social scientists in an operational way in the 1960s, and Gezari outlines the details of Project Camelot, which also showed dismal results. Moreover, not only were nation-building efforts in Vietnam a failure despite the input of social scientists, the United States had also tried to replicate the success of the Tennessee Valley Authority in Afghanistan in 1960 with the creation of Helmand Valley Authority. Arnold Toynbee toured the project at Lashkar Gah and reported it “has become a piece of America inserted into the Afghan landscape. . .the new world they are conjuring up out of the desert at the Helmand River's expense is to be an America—in Asia.” That project too hit the limits of culture and history.

The second lesson involves the fundamental ambiguity so characteristic of counter-insurgency. When Gezari returned to Kandahar to learn what she could about Paula Loyd's killer, she encountered contradictory stories about the man's motive, with some locals asserting he had been kidnapped by the Taliban and forced to do its bidding and others claiming he was mentally ill. The truth regarding his motive may never be ascertained, which stands as an appropriate symbol for the difficulty inherent in counterinsurgency campaigns.

REGIONAL POLICY & SECURITY

US Taiwan Strait Policy: The Origins of Strategic Ambiguity

By Dean P. Chen

Reviewed by Richard Halloran, former foreign correspondent in Asia and military correspondent in Washington for The New York Times

For six decades, American policy toward China has been shaped by a theme called “strategic ambiguity.” The summit meeting in June between President Obama and President Xi Jinping of China in California suggested “strategic ambiguity” has run its course, and should be retired in favor of “strategic clarity, tactical ambiguity.”

This book by Dean Chen, a political scientist at the University of California, Santa Barbara, traces the evolution of “strategic ambiguity” in meticulous detail from its earliest days (before the Communist Party came to power in mainland China) to the present. The author has relied on an extensive reading of declassified files to make his case and, in so doing, shows how Washington works. In particular, he weaves a narrative of memos, position papers, directives, meetings, public speeches, and press conferences to explain how a policy is shaped.

Chen is less persuasive, however, in arguing for the continuation of strategic ambiguity. With democracy evidently having taken hold in Taiwan, Chen asserts: “Beijing should come to terms with that reality and learn to show greater respect to voices and political views that are contradictory to its own.” Given that Beijing has insisted the world accept its position on a wide range of issues, Chen’s plea is roughly akin to asking water to flow uphill.

After the Communists led by Mao Zedong took over Beijing in October 1949, President Truman and his administration struggled with a dilemma. Clearly, they did not want the United States to get into a war with the new Chinese regime. On the other hand, they did not want to see the island of Taiwan, also known by its Portuguese name, Formosa, fall under mainland control after the Nationalist Chinese had taken refuge there.

Thus, in January, 1950, President Truman issued a statement: “The United States government will not pursue a course which will lead to involvement in the civil conflict in China.” But the president and his advisors did not say what the United States *would* do to implement their policy.

Then in June, 1950, that ambiguity was hardened when North Korea attacked South Korea beginning the Korean War. President Truman, fearing Beijing would launch a parallel attack on Taiwan, announced: “I have ordered the Seventh Fleet to prevent any attack on Formosa.” The president also called on the Nationalist Chinese to cease military operations against the mainland, further announcing: “The Seventh Fleet will see that this is done.”

In succeeding decades, strategic ambiguity became the watchword for dealing with China. During the war in Vietnam, the shift in diplomatic recognition from Taipei to Beijing in 1979, and the emergence

**US
Taiwan
Strait
Policy**The Origins of
Strategic Ambiguity

Dean P. Chen

Boulder, CO: First Forum
Press, 2012

298 Pages

\$68.50

of China as a regional economic, political, and military power, it was the default position. The basic intent was to keep the Chinese guessing about what the United States would do.

Over those same years, however, Chinese leaders have become more firm as they identified what they call their core interests and at times more aggressive, even belligerent. In the California summit, contrast the tone as explained by Yang Jiechi, a senior party official and former foreign minister, and Tom Donilon, a senior staffer for the National Security Council. They briefed the press separately after the summit meeting in an estate on the edge of a desert town named, perhaps appropriately, Rancho Mirage.

Yang was clear in stating the Chinese positions. These included Beijing's claim to sovereignty over Taiwan and large portions of the South China Sea and an adamant denial China was responsible for hacking into US cyber transmissions. In addition, he said President Xi had called for Sino-American coordination on hotspots such as the Korean Peninsula and Afghanistan and on peacekeeping and cyber security. Lastly, the Chinese proposed fostering new Sino-American military relations.

Donilon, however, indicated President Obama did not respond to those proposals. Instead, Donilon dwelled on the eight hours of conversation and the meeting's atmospherics. Among the few substantive points: Donilon said President Obama had warned President Xi that continued Chinese hacking into US cyber systems would have adverse consequences. But the president's stance on China came off as soft, vague, and perhaps even indecisive—much like the policies of several previous administrations whether Democratic or Republican. Overall, the absence of clear-cut US objectives may have made the chances of a strategic miscalculation more likely.

How much better it would be if America's China policy were based on "strategic clarity," in which the fundamental national interests of the United States were publicized for all to see. The corollary would be tactical ambiguity, in which the time and place and means of defending those interests would be kept out of the public eye. That ambiguity would be intended to keep a potential adversary off balance and would, therefore, be a critical component of deterrence.

Despite Chen's appeal for strategic ambiguity to continue, his exposition of the historical background makes an excellent contribution to the running debate that erupts from time to time on what American policy on China should be. His book, however, has one editorial flaw, which is the unfortunate academic habit of referring to scholars, researchers, officials, and even political leaders without identifying them. In a critical passage, the author refers to Jack Snyder, Aaron Friedberg, Lee Teng-hui, and Chen Shui-bian without telling the reader who they are. Many readers will know—but many others will not.

As the famously demanding editor of the *New Yorker*, Harold Ross, might have written in the margin next to each name: "Who he?"

Cuba in a Global Context: International Relations, Internationalism, and Transnationalism

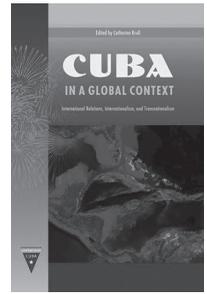
Edited by Catherine Krull

Reviewed by Dr. José de Arimatéia da Cruz

It is not an exaggeration to say no other country in the world has attracted the attention of the United States more than the island of Cuba. Extremes of friendliness and animosity have characterized US-Cuba diplomatic relations since 7 January 1959, when the United States recognized the new Cuban government but maintained serious reservations about its leader, Fidel Castro. With the end of the Cold War and the radical transformation of the bipolar world into a unipolar one dominated by the United States, Cuba now stands at a crossroad. As the world becomes more “flat,” to use Thomas Friedman’s description, Cuba will have to reorient its foreign policy during its “special period in time of peace,” and find its own niche during this process of globalization and regionalization (3). Furthermore, domestic imperatives, diverse constituencies, and US-Cuban perceptions and misperceptions will also impact Washington’s policy toward Cuba.

In this edited anthology, Catherine Krull takes a fresh look at Cuba’s international relations in its attempt to survive its contentious relations with the United States and to build new bridges in the post-Cold War world. The political constructs of international relations—where Cubans found themselves at the center of the long geopolitical struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union—are fundamental to Cuba’s future. But so are internationalism (the promotion of increased economic and political cooperation amongst nations) and transnationalism (people-to-people rather than government-to-government relationships). Cuba, according to Krull, has been active in the international system in the aftermath of the implosion of the Soviet Union. Cuba, once described as “Moscow’s favorite Marxist-Leninist showcase in the developing world—the only socialist revolution that had succeeded in Latin America,”¹ was taken by surprise once President Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in 1985, and introduced two new concepts into the political vocabulary of the Soviet Union: *glasnost* and *perestroika*. *Perestroika* was an attempt to restructure the Soviet Union’s economy, which was at the edge of collapse; while *glasnost* was the political opening of the Soviet Union’s authoritarian regime. Within a year, the Soviet Union under Gorbachev collapsed and its satellite states, including Cuba, lost their geopolitical value to the newly created Russian Republic. As Krull points out, “within a year Cuba’s massively important special conditions as a member of the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON) and the international socialist division of labor were a thing of the past, and the island was soon to reel under the impact of an 80 percent drop in its purchasing power abroad and the almost total loss of its Soviet and Eastern European markets and suppliers” (51).

Recognizing the end of the Cold War and the new international political environment of the twenty-first century, Cuba’s revolutionary project would have to find new allies. The decade of the 1980s, the so-called “lost decade” in Latin America, was a period of economic hardship followed



Savannah, GA: Relations and Comparative Politics at Armstrong State University, 2013
352 pages
\$74.95

José de Arimatéia da Cruz Visiting Research Professor at the US Army War College and Professor of International Relations and Comparative Politics at Armstrong State University, Savannah, Georgia

1 Lock K. Johnson *National Security Intelligence: Secret Operations in Defense of the Democracies*, Malden, MA. (2012):48.

by high unemployment, capital flight, and economic crisis. Proponents of globalization, Ronald Reagan in the United States and Margaret Thatcher in the United Kingdom, promised rapid economic growth and prosperity. Instead, the global economic crisis of 2008-2009 did more damage to an already frail and weak political system. As Krull points out, “damaging commodity prices, scarce line of credit, declining foreign investment, and a depressed export-import market are particularly taxing for developing countries,” including Cuba (134).

It was within this chaotic political environment that Cuba found new allies. All of them political allies who came to power with the rise of the “*pink tide*,” which brought to power political leaders not only of the radical left but also antagonists toward the United States and its foreign policy toward Latin America (Evo Morales in Bolivia, Nestor Kirchner in Argentina, Rafael Correa in Ecuador, Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua, Luis Inacio “Lula” da Silva in Brazil). In 2005, at the Fourth Summit of the Americas held in Mar del Plata, Argentina, members of the “*pink tide*” including the founding members of the MERCOSUR (Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay) closed ranks with Venezuela to oppose the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) which was endorsed by the Bush administration (133). Cuba and its radical allies are also using their “soft power” to entice an enlargement of the “*pink tide*” membership. Joseph Nye, Jr., in his book *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (2004) defines soft power as “the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments. It arises from the attractiveness of a country’s culture, political ideals, and policies.” (x) Cuba and Venezuela are spreading their “soft power” through the establishment of Telesur, “the hemisphere-wide, noncommercial television network set up by Venezuela, Cuba, Argentina, and Uruguay in 2005, which broadcasts anti-US hegemony programming” (131).

In addition to the radical left in Latin America, Cuba has also entered into bilateral agreements with China and Canada to enhance its “revolution.” According to Krull, in the relatively short period of twenty years since the end of the Cold War, China has become one of Cuba’s main strategic allies. In 1990, Cuba was China’s largest Latin American trading partner. China’s economic penetration of Cuba is astonishing and should be of concern to Washington. China has, in essence, replaced the Soviet Union as Cuba’s banker. Cuba and China became important markets for each other’s products. According to Carlos Alzugaray Treto, in his essay *Cuban-Chinese Relations after the End of the Cold War*, “trade became relatively complementary, with China importing raw sugar and nickel from Cuba, and exporting machinery, dry beans, transport equipment, and light industrial products in return. China reported bilateral trade figure of \$2.29 billion in 2007, \$2.27 billion in 2008, \$1.55 billion in 2009, and rising to \$2.43 billion in 2012” (97). For its part, Canada recognized the revolutionary government of Fidel Castro only eight months after its overthrow of the Fulgencio Batista government. Canada’s foreign policy of “constructive engagement” or “principled pragmatism” is a striking contrast with the US Government’s policy of isolating Cuba (115).

I recommend this book to anyone interested in history, politics and international relations. This text can be especially useful to students at the US Army War College and military leaders who may be called upon to engage in a “constructive engagement” with Cuba in the decades to come as the island goes through another “special period.”

SECURITY & DEFENSE

Cybersecurity and Cyberwar: What Everyone Needs to Know

by P.W. Singer and Allan Friedman

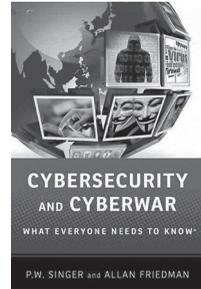
Reviewed by Major Nathan K. Finney, a US Army strategist currently working on the Army Staff.

Cyber is one of the fastest growing aspects of the military today; while most functions of the military are sustaining severe cuts to funding, those associated with cyber are among the few likely to see an increase in the near future. Despite its apparent importance, even leading to the creation of a sub-unified command with attendant service component commands, few military officers outside those tasked to support United States Cyber Command understand the subject, even with the publishing of frequent articles in professional journals, such as the recent article by Paul Rexton Kan in the Autumn 2013 issue of *Parameters*.

Fortunately, in *Cybersecurity and Cyberwar: What Everyone Needs to Know*, Singer and Friedman provide an easily accessible primer. This book was designed to take complicated material and make it understandable to non-technicians and non-academics. The beauty is it does so without stripping the topic of meaning and nuance. Fellows at the Brookings Institution, Singer and Friedman skillfully pooled their resources as experts on defense and technology affairs to create an extremely useful reference for laymen and defense professionals alike.

Written in a question-and-answer format, each section is easily digested and retained, as well as referenced later. Questions are broken into three parts: historical/technical aspects of cyber, structural and operational implications, and what we can do about it. The first section is valuable to those who have not studied the history or technical aspects of cyber; the final section provides some interesting policy proposals and personal tips to secure cyberspace. However, the middle section really provides intellectual meat for military professionals.

While discussing why cyber matters in this section, the authors spend a significant amount of time on cyber security from a military perspective. I was pleased to see a robust yet concise discussion on the finer points of cyber security, including the authors' obvious intellectual grounding in the general theory of war and the intricacies of strategy. In particular, the part that most piqued my interest was the discussion on the perceived advantage of either the offense or defense in cyber action. Singer and Friedman do a wonderful job framing the current infatuation with cyber attack as the stronger form of cyber action, drawing parallels with a similar doctrine permeating Europe in the early 20th Century. This so called "cult of the offensive" had logical groundings in military thought prior to World War I, but was subsequently proven tragically wrong in the Great War. One wonders if the same rings true in cyber space, or if this new medium truly favors the offense over the defense. Singer and Friedman do an admirable job describing the issue at hand and its inconclusive nature to date.

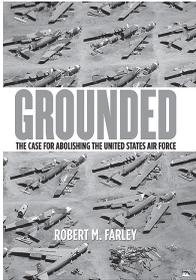


Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014
336 pages
\$16.95

Though brief, readers can expect *Cybersecurity and Cyberwar's* explanations, stories, and analysis to provide significant benefit to their intellectual foundations. This book should be a first stop for military professionals interested in cyber security.

Grounded: The Case for Abolishing the United States Air Force By Robert M. Farley

Reviewed by Ryan D. Wadle, Professor of Comparative Military Studies at the Air Command and Staff College



Lexington: University Press
of Kentucky, 2014.

244 pages
\$26.95

Robert Farley's *Grounded: The Case for Abolishing the United States Air Force* offers a bold, provocative thesis: the Air Force as a separate entity should be eliminated with its assets and missions distributed between the Army and Navy. Farley argues the Air Force's independence has always rested solely on its ability to carry out strategic attack missions. Early airpower theorists such as Brigadier General William Mitchell linked the independent air service with strategic bombing theoretically capable of defeating enemies quicker and cheaper than traditional ground and naval campaigns, and this core belief continues to drive the modern Air Force. Farley argues this optimistic view of airpower's potential violates Clausewitz's theories on the nature of war and has never been borne out through a century of combat experience. America's political leaders and decision makers continue to give the Air Force a privileged position because they are seduced by airpower's assurances of efficient, almost bloodless war; but the Air Force is incapable of delivering on its promises. Since the Air Force is presently attempting to apply its own skewed, paranoid worldview to cyberspace, seemingly unable to perform its nuclear deterrent mission, and is under cultural assault by the promise of remotely piloted aircraft (RPA), Farley reasons the Air Force should be abolished.

Farley's fundamental point about the need for defense reorganization in the wake of both the Cold War and the post-9/11 interventions is a sound one. He also identifies failings of the Air Force as a fascination with technology and frequent conflation of targeting and strategy. The author's critique of the Air Force's Manichean cyberspace policies and its contrasts with the Navy's view of cyberspace as a virtual global commons is easily the highlight of *Grounded*. Yet, while lay readers may be entranced with Farley's argument and see a viable path for defense reform, informed readers will find a book heavily reliant on secondary sources with oversights, conceptual flaws, and factual errors that completely undermine the book's core thesis.

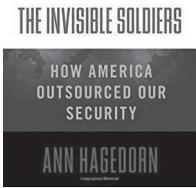
By focusing so much on the Air Force's organizational behavior and its policymaking consequences, Farley gives short shrift to the strategic context of decision making. Unlike many defense reorganization plans, Farley specifies neither the threat he envisions the United States and its allies will face in the coming decades nor how abolishing the Air Force will help the nation overcome those challenges. There is a similar absence of strategic context in the historical examples cited as evidence. It was not by accident the two dominant sea powers of the last two centuries

– the United States and Great Britain – pursued strategic bombing and robust, independent air forces while most other great power nations did not. This fact completely escapes Farley’s attention even though it helps explain much of the cultural mindset undergirding strategic airpower. Similarly, he uses the organizational structures of airpower in the Soviet Union, Canada, and Israel as potential models for reform in the United States; yet never accounts for the vastly different security needs and priorities of these nations. Without knowing Farley’s vision of the world and the United States’ role in it, it becomes extremely difficult to assess the validity of his ideas.

Farley believes abolishing the Air Force will solve many problems confronting the defense establishment, but he paints this choice as having few, if any long term costs. Eliminating the Air Force may reduce inter-service friction in some arenas and facilitate better air-to-ground and air-to-sea coordination as the author argues, but the checkered history of “jointness” both before and after Goldwater-Nichols suggests this will not be a cure-all. Farley also never spells out the fates of several critical Air Force missions and leaves vital questions unanswered. Is the Army or Navy likely to be as interested in the strategic airlift mission as the current Air Force? These sorts of trade-offs never factor into his analysis. Even though Farley contributes to *Information Dissemination*, a naval affairs blog that takes a refreshingly broad view of the value of seapower, his opinion of the Air Force is too often reductive and lacks nuance.

Most importantly, *Grounded* presents a simplistic, distorted historical narrative that tars the modern Air Force with decades-old combat failures and overpromises of efficiency and precision. Of course, sending unescorted bombers over German skies in 1943 to destroy ball-bearing factories was the pinnacle of folly, highlighting deep organizational and cultural flaws in the Army Air Force; but Farley curiously ignores the much more effective bombing raids of 1944 and 1945, which successfully struck the Nazi fuel and transportation systems and helped neutralize Germany’s war machine. Few people should take statements of airpower supremacy following World War II and DESERT STORM seriously, just as they must also force policymakers to account for their expectation of precise, cheap, and ethically “clean” airpower campaigns over strategic choices. Most major airpower theorists and analysts writing today strongly insist airpower is only effective when employed with strategic clarity and purpose, and in concert with other military and non-military levers of power.

There is an argument to be made for defense reorganization in which the Air Force ceases to exist as an independent service, and, to his credit, Farley identifies some of what ails the Air Force and the long-term challenges the service must confront to maintain relevance. *Grounded*, however, is too flawed to make an effective case for abolishing the Air Force.



New York, Simon & Schuster, 2014
320 pages
\$28.00 (hardback)

The Invisible Soldiers: How America Outsourced Our Security

By Ann Hagedorn

Reviewed by Steven L. Schooner, Nash & Cibinic Professor of Government Procurement Law, George Washington University Law School (US Army, retired).

Military historians may someday conclude that, despite the emergence of the unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV or drone) as a modern marvel of information collection, targeting, and weapons delivery, this generation's most significant battlefield evolution involved people. Never before has a nation's military enjoyed the capacity, facilitated by the Logistics Civil Augmentation Program (LOGCAP), to deploy an unlimited number of warfighters swiftly, without geographical limitation, and indefinitely sustain that fighting force with an unprecedented level of readiness. Such surge capacity and flexibility come at a steep price, both fiscal and moral, which will be debated for many years to come.

But for all the controversy generated by the government's pervasive outsourcing of battlefield support, it is the post-millennial proliferation of *arms-bearing contractors* that roiled the human rights community and catalyzed a global conversation about the nature and future of modern warfare. This new breed of weapon-toting contractors – serving as guards, escorts, police, advisors, and trainers, but cumulatively perceived in the contingency area as *soldier-like*, and called everything from private military and privatized security to mercenaries—draws Ann Hagedorn's ire and anxiety. And she is not alone.

Peter W. Singer's now familiar *Corporate Warriors: The Rise of the Privatized Military Industry*, introduced professional readers to the increasingly sophisticated arms-bearing contractor industry and the accelerating trend of state reliance on these firms. Others, including, but by no means limited to, Deborah Avant, *The Market for Force: The Consequences of Privatizing Security*, James Jay Carafano, *Private Sector, Public Wars: Contractors in Combat - Afghanistan, Iraq, and Future Conflicts*, David Isenberg, *Shadow Force: Private Security Contractors in Iraq*, Allison Stanger, *One Nation Under Contract: The Outsourcing of American Power and the Future of Foreign Policy*, and Laura Dickinson, *Outsourcing War and Peace: Preserving Public Values in a World of Privatized Foreign Affairs*, further illuminated a shadowy, seemingly unregulated, globalized, and disaggregated population of former soldiers, shrewd businessmen, soldiers of fortune, adventurers, opportunists, and, of course, the occasional cast-off, rogue, ruffian, and scoundrel.

Hagedorn, like many of her predecessors, struggles for objectivity, but makes no effort to hide her frustrations. Still, *Invisible Soldiers* fills a niche in that its publication follows the peaks and the drawdowns of the Bush and Obama administrations' deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan, in which contractors (of all types) outnumbered uniformed service-members, in both service and, at times, sacrifice. Accordingly, *Invisible Soldiers* offers a more complete retrospective on the proliferation of arms bearing contractors in contingency environments peppered with a healthy dose of skepticism for the future.

A gifted story teller, Hagedorn displays the journalistic skills and instincts she honed at the *Wall Street Journal* by introducing her book with a lengthy, engaging, and compelling, but, ultimately irrelevant, anecdote. To be fair, Hagedorn deserves credit for leading with the unique and poignant tragedy of Kadhim Alkanni, rather than resorting to Blackwater's Nissour Square debacle, now destined to occupy, for Iraq, the inflammatory space that the 1968 My Lai Massacre carved out in Vietnam. (That said, Nissour Square receives fully adequate coverage in Hagedorn's book.) Other critical, and admittedly colorful, players—Tim Spicer of Sandline and Aegis, Blackwater founder Erik Prince, and Doug Brooks, who for many years was the burgeoning security industry's organizing and sophisticated voice—feature prominently. Yet serious policy readers and military historians might be more interested in analyzing the policy role of Gary J. Motesk—DoD's point person—on outsourcing of military and security functions, who somehow escaped mention in this volume.

Ultimately, Hagedorn recognizes the military had little control over the policy vacuum that led to the swift and dramatic dilution of the government's traditional monopoly over the use of force. Rather than resulting from a careful, reasoned, and voluntary delegation of authority to the private sector in conformance with global trends, the US government's outsourcing of military and security functions was necessitated by politically popular but empirically unjustified Congressional troop caps, requiring *non-DoD actors* to rely on arms bearing contractors for, among other things, personal security in a hostile environment. (138) “How else could the nation have engaged in two wars—Iraq and Afghanistan—simultaneously without reinstating the draft?” (160).

The poster child anecdote was the State Department's reliance on its Worldwide Protective Services (WPS) contract—originally a centrally managed source for private security at embassies—which morphed as the population of diplomats and related officials, employees, and support staff multiplied in Iraq. Meanwhile, scores of security firms from around the world entered the region under commercial *subcontracts* with the unprecedented number of contractors supporting every conceivable aspect of the Defense, State, and Agency for International Development departments' missions in the region. References to the eclectic and incendiary *Star Wars* cantina scenes frequently prompted knowing head nods in conferences discussing the private security proliferation phenomenon.

Hagedorn appears to overstate the policy debate between proponents “who firmly believe...in the importance of the private military contractors and ha(ve) no intention of regulating them” (101) and opponents of the government's reliance on private security in contingency operations. No doubt, her clear abolitionist preference is tempered by her recognition the outsourcing train left the station long ago. The realists, or, if you prefer, cynics, realize—for the foreseeable future—the heart of the matter lies in government regulation and management, not the esoteric aspiration of elimination, of private security.

Here, Hagedorn's extensive notes and index demonstrate she took her homework seriously. As a late comer to the literature, *Invisible Soldiers* is able to introduce readers to the Montreaux initiative, an important and laudable global coalition aspiring to bring regulatory order to this

rapidly evolving and chaotic industry. Closer to home, Hagedorn's frustration with the US government's lackadaisical management of the industry is palpable: "The British, including journalists, human rights advocates, politicians, military experts, and private security executives, began sorting out the issues of private military companies years before the Americans." (255) Hagedorn also remains justifiably skeptical of industry self-regulation. Alas, she fares no better than her colleagues in suggesting practical, concrete alternatives.

Hagedorn's perspective and insights on arms bearing contractors, democracies, and empires—intensely personal, yet thoughtfully cognizant of policy, political theory, and philosophy—should interest readers new to the field, as well as those well versed in the issues. Outsourcing the use of force is sufficiently important to the future of democratic states that this book—as well as the growing corpus of literature it adds to—merits serious contemplation.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE & ADAPTATION

Military Adaptation in Afghanistan

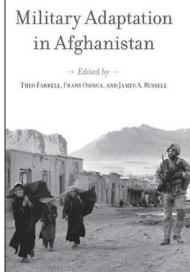
Edited by Theo Farrell, Frans Osinga, and James A. Russell

Reviewed by Chad C. Serena, Political Scientist, RAND Corporation, Pittsburgh, PA

This edited volume provides a timely, detailed, and meticulously researched set of case studies examining the process of military adaptation in Afghanistan. While the subject of military adaptation can be complex and often difficult to frame and describe in a way that resonates with readers, especially those who may not be intimately familiar with the subject, the authors of this volume manage to simplify and explain how military adaptation occurred during the Afghan campaign; and they do so across a range of cases, and within the context of the political, strategic, operational, and tactical pressures many of the participants faced. *Military Adaptation in Afghanistan* is a must read for anyone interested in learning more about the process of military adaptation in general. But its particular value lies in its examination of military adaptation through the lens of the ongoing Afghan campaign.

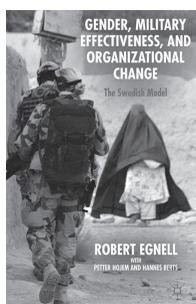
The editors, Theo Farrell, Frans Osinga, and James A. Russell, brought together scholars with varied backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives to evaluate how participating military forces have adapted their strategies, operations, tactics, and organizations, variously, throughout (and in one chapter, prior to) the course of the war in Afghanistan. The 12 chapters are written by an expert or group of experts well respected for their knowledge of the case (or cases) they examine: Farrell opens the volume by introducing the concept of military adaptation and the analytic framework the editors developed for the book; Daniel Moran discusses previous British and Soviet campaigns in Afghanistan; Russell examines the US experience since the invasion in 2001; Sten Rynning tackles coalition innovation and adaptation in ISAF and NATO; Farrell also provides a chapter on the British military in Helmand province (2006-2011); Mikkel Vedby Rasmussen explores an often overlooked but interesting and valuable case in his review of the Danish experience in Helmand; Martijn Kitzen, Sebastiaan Rietjens, and Osinga explain the Netherlands' adaptation in Uruzgan; Thomas Rid and Martin Zapfe take up Germany's participation in the alliance and the challenges it faced in deploying to an area of active conflict; Stephen M. Saideman provides an essay on Canadian adaptation; Antonio Giustozzi covers a ten-year period of Taliban adaptation; and, Adam Grissom has a chapter covering the development and adaptation of the Afghan National Army (ANA) that details the struggles it still faces as ISAF and NATO forces prepare to leave the country. Osinga and Russell conclude the book with a review of the lessons of military adaptation highlighted by each author.

How the editors define military adaptation—change to strategy, force generation, and/or military plans and operations, undertaken in response to operational challenges and campaign pressures—helps to align the authors' case study examinations at the appropriate level. This broad framework provides conceptual and analytical continuity

Stanford University Press,
Palo Alto, CA: 2013368 pages
\$35.00

throughout the book, but still gives the authors the flexibility to explore the details and nuances of each case examined. While military adaptation is the central theme of the volume and coheres each of the chapters, the authors' vantage points and the details of each case tell individualized stories of how adaptation transpired in Afghanistan, from a variety of angles and perspectives. Each chapter explores the different challenges and motivations for military adaptation the participants in the Afghan campaign faced, and continue to experience as the campaign winds down. This examination includes adaptive successes and failures and the various factors that aid, compel, or slow military adaptation, such as: pressures brought to bear by alliance politics and domestic opinion; political, economic, and budgetary factors; risk avoidance and aversion; technology and field innovation; and, changes in adversary behavior, provincial and local governance, and other important environmental factors.

Put simply, the story of military operations in Afghanistan is a story of adaptation and this work comprehensively captures how this process unfolded over the past decade-plus of operations. It is highly recommended reading for senior and mid-level officers, policy-makers, scholars, historians, and practitioners interested in the Afghan campaign generally and the process of military adaptation during this campaign specifically. No chapter disappoints, as each is well written and cogent, and provides lessons of significant value for possible future campaigns.



New York: Palgrave
Macmillan 2014

200 pages
\$95.00

Gender, Military Effectiveness, and Organizational Change: The Swedish Model

By Robert Egnell with Petter Hojem and Hannes Berts

Reviewed by Ellen Haring, Colonel (USA Retired)

Despite annual rankings placing Sweden at the top of the UN's list of most gender-integrated countries in the world, their military remains strongly resistant to the complete integration of women. A 1980 Swedish Equality Act opened all military occupations and positions to women. Today, Swedish women serve in all combat and combat support specialties and have done so for more than 20 years. While the military has officially opened its doors to women, they serve as a fractional minority and in almost no senior decision making positions. Sweden, acknowledging that the military has not met integration aspirations, is now tackling gender equality in its most resistant organization: their Armed Forces.

Dr. Robert Egnell's book is an effort to capture and chronicle Sweden's innovative and evolving approaches to organizational change within the Swedish Armed Forces. Accepting and embracing the goals established in 2000 and 2008 by UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820, which advanced the requirement for women to be included as full partners in peace and security operations, Sweden moved aggressively to create a culture that integrates a "gender perspective" in all areas of military activities. Egnell notes that Sweden's effort is a work in progress but many emerging insights merit consideration by US policy makers.

One of the most important insights of this book is Sweden's decision to focus on infusing the organization with a heightened gender perspective (a way of assessing the gender-based differences of women and men as reflected in their social roles and interaction, the relative distribution of power and their access to resources). This gender perspective is intended to be broad based, looking both internally (at the institution itself) and externally (at operational effectiveness).

Early debates considered whether the approach should be about "what is the right thing to do" or "what is the smart thing to do." Settling on the latter has provided a focus on military effectiveness rather than issues of equality. This focus changed the approach where developing a gender perspective came from personnel and administrative offices to where it is embedded in operations offices at every level.

In order to provide necessary training, Sweden—in partnership with Norway and Finland—established the first of its kind, "Nordic Center for Gender in Military Operations," located just outside Stockholm. The center trains leaders at every level in aspects of developing gender awareness. It compiles lessons learned, conducts evaluations and engages in research relative to gender informed military operations. Some of the center's research has led to changes in military operations. One example of important lessons yielded by their research is military efforts that dip into the development arena relative to women have not only failed to provide the expected outcomes (winning hearts and minds, gaining information, and providing better security) but, in many cases, have been counterproductive to the activities of those agencies that are tasked with, and better equipped to perform, development projects.

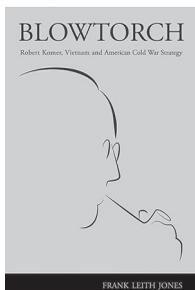
This is a necessary book for a number of groups within the US military. First, it is enormously informative for those who are currently working on integrating women into previously closed combat specialties. It highlights expected sources of resistance and offers strategies for overcoming resistance. It is important reading for the entire special operations community, specifically the civil affairs career field. Numerous sections highlight the relative importance of including gender perspectives when interacting with locals during military operations. Finally, those charged with professional military education curriculum development and delivery should read this text because, as Egnell asserts, if you do not teach it within your professional schools than it will not be viewed as important. And, the school house is the most important place to begin to effect organizational change.

WAR & HISTORY

Blowtorch: Robert Komer, Vietnam, and American Cold War Strategy

By Frank Leith Jones

Reviewed by Ingo Trauschweizer, Ohio University



Annapolis, MD: Naval
Institute Press, 2013
416 pages
\$52.95

Frank Leith Jones, a professor of security studies at the US Army War College and former senior defense department official, presents a biography of Robert Komer that doubles as an insightful study of American Cold War strategy and policy. Following Paul Kennedy, Jones approaches his subject as a history from the middle, and Komer offers an excellent case study of a mostly forgotten official at the Central Intelligence Agency, the Pentagon, and the White House who was one of the architects of Cold War strategy in the 1960s and 1970s. We tend to remember Komer for his role in running the “other war” in Vietnam from 1966–68. Jones, too, places Komer’s thinking about social, economic, and military approaches to pacification and counterinsurgency in Vietnam at the heart of his study, but he reminds us of Komer’s role in assessing the Soviet threat, his influence on policies toward Third World countries in the 1960s, and his position in Harold Brown’s defense department during the Carter administration, where Komer defined policy for strengthening the NATO alliance and helped translate the Carter doctrine into military strategy for the Persian Gulf and the greater Middle East.

Throughout three decades in government service, Komer remained a realist, consistently arguing for multilateral approaches to international security, and he developed a keen sense for the importance of Third World actors. By the 1960s, as Komer gained the trust and confidence of presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson, he emerged as a successor to George F. Kennan—a leading strategic thinker for the global Cold War. Unlike Kennan, Komer was a pragmatist who played a central role in translating strategic thought into policy for particular crises and wars (on the Indian subcontinent, in Indonesia, in Yemen, and eventually in Vietnam). Jones’s Komer is a Clausewitzian, with a firm grasp of the national interest and the need to align means, ends, and political objectives. But despite Komer’s best efforts in Washington and Vietnam—which led to a remarkably well-integrated civilian presence in the war effort under General William Westmoreland, though it suffered later from the tense relationship between the abrasive Komer and General Creighton Abrams—improved structures for counterinsurgency operations did not yield victory.

How did Komer rise to a position of great influence and where did he form his worldview? Like Kennan, Komer was as an outsider, a Midwesterner by way of Harvard University, where he studied with the historian William Langer, discovered Clausewitz, and concluded from his thesis on British strategy in World War I that, in modern war, civilian leaders were the better strategists. Komer served as a combat historian with US Fifth Army in Italy, which gave him insight into civil-military relations in the occupation of liberated areas. Langer and Komer met again in November 1950 at the CIA’s Office of National Estimates. Under

the tutelage of Langer and Sherman Kent, Komer became an expert in South Asian and Middle Eastern affairs and he closely observed the process of formulating national security policy from intelligence data. After a year at the National War College, Komer returned to the CIA as head of the Soviet estimates group and in 1958 he was appointed liaison to the National Security Council. Throughout the 1950s, Komer developed a finely tuned sense that national interests, not ideology or encrusted structures, should determine the framework for strategy and policy. Contrary to prevailing attitudes, he concluded that neutrality in the Cold War was not in itself an anti-Western position. When McGeorge Bundy reorganized the NSC staff, Komer seized the moment and made himself indispensable in carefully crafted responses to crises in Yemen, Indonesia, and India. This placed him in the inner circle of advisers in Lyndon Johnson's White House, which in turn allowed him to shape counterinsurgency approaches during the Vietnam War.

In the Carter administration, Komer found new champions and he returned as a policymaker and strategist with a strong commitment to strengthening the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Komer's policy proposals again were defined by realism and multilateralism. Building on his policies in the late 1970s, Komer, never one to shy away from a fight, offered sharp public opposition to John Lehman and the maritime strategy of the Reagan administration. This points at another Robert Komer, who emerges from Jones's skillful narrative: an historian and analyst of what went wrong in Vietnam. Komer's experience highlights the difficult relationship of civilian and military officers in a war that was never winnable by one group alone. In his studies for the RAND Corporation, Komer exposed the tensions between different agencies within the American bureaucracy.

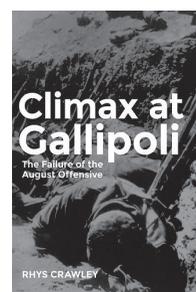
Policymakers and strategists faced with meeting today's threats could benefit from reading Komer's *Bureaucracy Does Its Thing: Institutional Constraints on US-GVN Performance in Vietnam* (1972) and *Bureaucracy at War: US Performance in the Vietnam Conflict* (1986). Jones's appreciation for Komer's thinking and the meticulous evidence he draws from government records and Komer's memoranda, blunt press briefings, and post-war studies illustrate the complexity of the Vietnam War and the global Cold War in ways that should prove critical to understanding the pitfalls inherent in any bureaucracy and the challenges faced by a superpower with global commitments, conventional rivals, and irregular enemies. *Blowtorch* deserves a wide readership; anyone interested in global strategy, the Vietnam War, the Cold War in the 1960s, or institutional history should find it enlightening.

Climax at Gallipoli: The Failure of the August Offensive

By Rhys Crawley

Reviewed by W. Andrew Terrill, PhD, Research Professor, Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College.

It has now been over one hundred years since the First World War broke out, and April 2015 is the hundredth anniversary of the beginning



Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2014
363 pages
\$34.95

of the Gallipoli campaign. In this timely consideration, Rhys Crawley's *Climax at Gallipoli* provides an important revisionist account of that campaign's August 1915 final offensive by the British-led Mediterranean Expeditionary Force (MEF). Crawley maintains the August offensive never really had a chance of defeating Ottoman forces due to deeply flawed planning, a lack of necessary resources, and other important factors. He calls the campaign an utter failure rather than the brink of victory it has been described as by historians elsewhere. Unsurprisingly, he also disagrees with key allied leaders, including MEF commander General Ian Hamilton, who portrayed the August offensive as a "very near" success (8). Consequently, Crawley's analysis goes against a deeply-rooted historical narrative, which he has challenged through a meticulous command of the facts in this very fine-grained analysis.

Most senior British officers at Gallipoli had fought in the Boer War and learned lessons in South Africa that were badly outdated by World War I. As on the Western Front, most senior MEF officers had also been taught to accept the primacy of the offensive, and did not fully realize how new technology added to the advantages enjoyed by a defending force. While recognizing the bravery of the Ottoman troops, senior MEF officers considered them to be especially vulnerable to offensively-oriented movement involving surprise, deception, and speed. In a chauvinistic flourish on this mindset, General Hamilton characterized British troops as "superior individuals" who "are animated with a superior ideal," and would ultimately prevail in any conflict with the Ottomans in which they led (67). Banal statements of national superiority seldom help military planning and may have partially caused the MEF leadership to overlook problems with many of their sick, exhausted, and inexperienced troops. These soldiers had been worn down by constant work, lack of sleep, and woefully inadequate medical care. Crawley maintains this force was not capable of prolonged action, but it was nevertheless required to assault well-prepared defenders in mountainous terrain that did not lend itself to mobility or coordinated forward movement.

Further complicating MEF problems, planners made a number of assumptions about Ottoman forces that were incorrect. In particular, British military leaders considered the Ottoman army to be weak, demoralized, and likely to crumble. General Hamilton stated the Ottomans favored trench warfare because "their stupid men have only simple straightforward duties to perform" (24). In this command climate, it is not surprising military intelligence repeatedly underestimated the Ottomans. Despite allied estimates to the contrary, Ottoman forces were not suffering massive health problems, morale was generally high, and many of these troops were prepared to die defending every inch of contested ground. Beyond miscalculations about the enemy, the MEF had huge gaps in its information about the terrain since ground reconnaissance was limited by forces encircling the beachheads. Making matters worse, MEF maps did not adequately depict problems with the terrain, and units became lost at crucial points in the campaign. One unit assigned to capture "Hill 10" in the August offensive seized a defended sand dune instead and then came under fire from the real Hill 10.

Crawley also makes a strong case the level of artillery support for the August offensive was inadequate, with erratic shooting and an insufficient volume of fire. Many of the guns provided for this campaign were

obsolete, and others were worn out. There were also a limited number of suitable sites for gun positions under MEF control and less ammunition available than on the Western front. Crawley notes the artillery had mostly shrapnel shells, which had limited value against sheltered defensive positions. Ominously, there was a severe shortage of high explosive shells, which could have been much more useful. Other problems included failures in artillery spotting due to the confusing terrain and bad maps. MEF aerial observation occurred at Gallipoli but was still in its early stages and coordination with the ground forces was extremely difficult. Conversely, the Ottoman side had a strong knowledge of the terrain and more accurate maps, which enabled the defenders to apply effective artillery fire. Ottoman guns frequently changed position, and many allied spotters were misled by dummy flashes and decoy smoke. Fleet guns used to support the offensive were fired at such a low trajectory they were of limited value against forces emplaced on, or behind, high ground. Additionally, the danger of German submarines deeply complicated naval fire support by limiting the areas from which the fleet could operate.

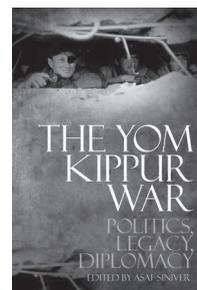
Some of the worst nightmares of Gallipoli involved logistics. Logistics in this environment had none of the advantages of the Western Front where strong road and rail networks were in place to support the movement of materials to the front lines. Unlike British forces in Europe, everything the MEF needed had to be sent by sea, mostly from 3,500 miles away. Supply ships had to travel through submarine infested waters with numerous stops, including those to repack cargo so vital supplies could be unpacked first. In most instances, it took five to six weeks to get the cargo to the troops, and sometimes supplies were not delivered until after they were no longer required. The supply system therefore worked very poorly, although there was never a complete breakdown.

Crawley notes many other problems with the campaign, but they are too numerous to examine in this review. Suffice to say the comprehensive and detailed nature of Crawley's analysis makes a compelling case about the doomed nature of the August offensive. Crawley's final evaluation of the MEF effort is it made some minor tactical gains during the August offensive, but these did not matter in the ultimate disposition of the battle. This study is clearly a useful addition to the growing body of revisionist literature (including Robin Prior's 2009 study *Gallipoli: The End of the Myth*) helping to inform debate and perhaps alter historical understanding of this campaign. Crawley's highly analytical and academic approach makes his case well but may also be less interesting for those interested in the human drama associated with Gallipoli.

The Yom Kippur War: Politics, Diplomacy, Legacy Edited by Asaf Siniver

Reviewed by William F. Owen, Editor of *Infinity Journal*

This book is a collection of essays on the very subject of the title. As such, there is very little – if any – discussion of the military aspects of the October War of 1973. The book essentially seeks to present a new



Oxford: Oxford University Press 2013
331 pages
\$35.00

dimension to the war by focussing on its diplomatic, political and cultural aspects, and in this regard it both succeeds and fails.

Problems always occur when attempting to understand the history of the 1973 war, even the Israel Defense Force (IDF) has yet to produce a definitive and agreed upon version of events (only it has any real access to the data), leaves the current military histories of the 1973 war rather lacking in all but the most obvious and widely agreed detail. The other aspect often forgotten is the history of this war is sometimes hostage to the political opinions of the authors. This book seems to take quite a left-wing view of events. However, that should not discourage readers from making an objective assessment of the views the book presents.

The book spans the incredible breadth of the subject matter, and even if some of the conjectures and facts are perhaps too colored by political opinion, it is a valuable addition to the library of anyone studying the 1973 war.

This problem does not obscure the need to assess some of the book's contentions. Two of the chapters on the cultural and social memory and/or narrative of the war seem out of place in the book, and lack any sound military understanding or perspective. For example, current scholarship is beginning to reveal the IDF was not as un-prepared as most have come to believe. Firstly, the IDF was largely configured to meet a surprise attack, but the problem was not everyone understood the plan, or when the attack came it was not a raid or incursion, but a fully-fledged theatre offensive attempting to destroy Israeli formations and take ground. Thus, to claim the surprise and violence of the Egyptian and Syrian attacks created "shock" misses the point; the war ended with Syria's almost complete defeat, and Israeli forces within Egypt able to threaten Cairo. Ultimately, the surprise failed.

Whatever anyone wishes to assert as Sadat's motivation for the war, he did not foresee the outcome being a demilitarized Sinai gained at enormous cost or a peace treaty with Israel that would ultimately claim his life and spark a border war with Libya in 1977. Asserting Israeli society was somehow shaped and effected by the "shock of 73" is an overstatement. The war of 1948 claimed a far higher percentage of the Israeli population killed, wounded, and displaced, than any war before or since. The presumed long-term effect of the 1973 war seems pretty pale compared to the social impact of the 1982 Lebanon War and the two major Palestinian rebellions that followed.

It would be safe to say there are strong chapters written by experts comfortable with their subject matter, and there are chapters where the authors are on far less solid ground. Ultimately, the biggest problem this book has to contend with is the very nature of the subject in terms of trying to write about the 1973 war without any solid grounding in the military history, or in some cases understanding the extant nature of the debate amongst other Israeli and military history scholars.

Overall, this is not a book for the uninformed. It tends to present views that could easily be countered by different perspectives. As an attempt to try and ring fence the political, diplomatic and social or cultural aspects of the 1973 war away from the actual military conduct, the work fails since a reader familiar with the military conduct of war

would quickly sense there was perhaps some lack of understanding. For example, the book's chapter on Jordanian participation (or not) in the war entirely fails to mention that, on the 7th of October, Israeli brigades reinforcing the Golan had been moved from the Jordan Valley, and performed that move under the direct observation of the Jordanian Army. This fact is clearly significant and highlights the dangers of attempting to divorce the political and diplomatic understanding of the conflict from the military. In contrast most military histories of the 1973 war deal adequately with the diplomatic and political dimensions.

Someone already comfortable and well acquainted with the 1973 war will find this book as a valuable source of information and interpretation on some of the conflict's diplomatic aspects, but should not be regarded as the authoritative source on the subject.

Law and War

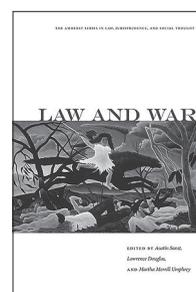
Edited by Austin Sarat, Lawrence Douglas and Martha Merrill Umphrey

Reviewed by Sibylle Scheipers, Lecturer in International Relations at the University of St. Andrews and a Senior Research Associate at Oxford University's Changing Character of War Programme.

The introduction to *Law and War* opens with a brief discussion of the targeted killing of Anwar al-Awlaki, a US citizen and suspected al-Qaeda member, who was killed on 30 September 2011 by a CIA-led Predator drone strike in Yemen. It references central figures involved in the debate over the Bush administration's approach to the law of armed conflict, such as Benjamin Wittes and Harold Koh. It is hence not implausible for the reader to assume this edited volume sets out to reassess the relationship between war and law thirteen years into the so-called "War on Terror," as major combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan have drawn to a close. However, this is not the case or, rather, if this was the aim, the book failed to achieve it.

The introduction is followed by five chapters on a variety of topics ranging from biological warfare to war crimes trials. The quality of the individual chapters differs, which is to a certain extent inevitable in an edited volume. A number of chapters, most notably Sarah Sewall's chapter on the limits of law, Gabriella Blum's chapter on the individualization of war and Laura K. Donohue's chapter on pandemic disease and biological warfare, reiterate the basic tenets of the globalization narrative, according to which globalization has led to a rise in the participation of so-called "non-state actors" in armed conflict, which in turn will undermine the law of armed conflict. This view, though oft repeated, is deeply problematic, as it mistakes the exclusionary mechanisms that are internal to the law of armed conflict for external limitations of its applicability.¹

The edited volume is further marred by a number of manifest misrepresentations of authors such as Carl Schmitt: both the introduction



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¹ See also Sibylle Scheipers, "Irregular Fighters: Is the Law of Armed Conflict Outdated?" *Parameters* 43/4 (2013), 45-56

and Blum's chapter seem to imply that for Schmitt legal constraints on warfare are irrelevant (7, 55), ostensibly deriving this conclusion from Carl Schmitt's *Concept of the Political* and his *Political Theology*, but failing to take into account Schmitt's emphasis on the importance of the law of armed conflict for restraining warfare in the *Nomos of the Earth*. Sewall includes a largely misleading reference to an article by Adam Roberts on civilian casualties in her chapter (26, note 6) and, when discussing reciprocity in "asymmetric conflicts," does not consider pertinent recent studies on the concept, such as Mark Osiel's seminal book *The End of Reciprocity*.

Samuel Moyn's chapter on Vietnam and the "War on Terror" is quite interesting and innovative. Moyn makes the case that despite large-scale violations of the law of armed conflict, public criticism regarding the US intervention in Vietnam focused on jus ad bellum issues, whereas the critical debate on the "War on Terror" has largely seized upon jus in bello issues. Yet, Moyn's chapter remains largely US-centric (it would have been appropriate to note that the debate on the Iraq war in the United Kingdom focused on jus ad bellum issues and jus in bello questions remained secondary in importance throughout the war). More importantly, although Moyn presents his chapter as a comparative perspective, his contribution focuses almost exclusively on Vietnam and does not discuss the debate over violations of the law of armed conflict in the "War on Terror."

Larry May's chapter on war crimes trials includes some substantial arguments, although it gets off to a weak start by drawing extensively on Hugo Grotius to support the argument. However, the sections on Grotius are not sufficiently compelling; and the reader is left to wonder whether the chapter had not been stronger without those sections. May's subsequent discussion on war crimes trials misses some central considerations such as the impact of criminal prosecutions of leadership figures on the peace process.

On the whole, the chapters are not coming together to make a sufficiently strong contribution to the larger debate. For instance, Blum's and May's perspectives on war crimes trials differ substantially, but this difference is nowhere explicitly discussed. The introduction remains too much at the surface to give the rest of the chapters the required level of coherence. The volume also shows that more editorial work would have been needed: Donohue's chapter, though interesting in substance, is 40 pages long, followed by 30 (!) pages of notes and references. But the most disappointing flaw of the edited volume is that issues such as torture in the "War on Terror" and the practice of targeted killing remain the proverbial elephant in the room throughout the book. These are the most problematic areas of the law of armed conflict today; yet, none of the chapters devotes any substantial thought to them. Instead, the book largely rehearses debates that are familiar from the late 1990s. This is particularly puzzling and disappointing given that most contributors are renowned scholars in this field. It would appear that despite all the public furor over violations of the law of armed conflict in the "War on Terror," the academic debate, at least to the extent that it is reflected in this book, has still some way to go.

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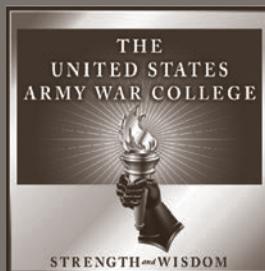
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