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U.S. Air Force/Troy Wickman

In October 2009, provincial governors gather to lay out their homegrown plan to improve the security and development of the four easternmost Afghanistan provinces.

How to Prepare for State-Building

BY ROGER MYERSON

The question of how stable democratic states are established is one of the fundamental questions of social science. But it is also a question of practical importance for great nations whose power to deter international threats may depend, not only on an ability to defeat adversaries in battle, but also on an ability to make tactical victories serve larger goals of political development. This article considers questions about what America could do to be better prepared for future challenges of post–conflict political reconstruction or state-building, with hope of stimulating further discussion of these questions. Even if state-building preparedness is not a salient issue in current political debates, these fundamental problems of political development and international relations deserve careful consideration by experts in government and academia.[1]

Any discussion of how to invest in state-building capacity must begin with two questions: is it really necessary, and is it really feasible? This article will begin by considering how a capacity for state-building could strengthen America's strategic defense capabilities, and why America should be committed to democratic state-building. Then I will suggest an alternative conceptual approach for more effective planning of future state-building missions, based on the vital importance of cultivating national and local political leaders with a balanced federal distribution of power. Then, after reviewing some lessons from past history and cautionary advice from experts on intervention, I will try to summarize some basic principles that this analysis would suggest. I offer these tentative conclusions here with hope that they may stimulate a broader discussion that may ultimately yield better principles for thinking more clearly about the fundamental problems of state-building.

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The Strategic Value of a State-Building Capability

Politicians regularly argue for investments in many areas of military capacity. Even when everyone hopes that some military capability will never be used, people generally understand that investing in such military readiness can help to keep the peace. When operational problems reveal weakness in an essential military capability, there is generally agreement that those operational capabilities should be strengthened. But unsuccessful results of recent state-building efforts have not prompted investment in operational readiness for state-building. Instead of asking how to prepare better for such challenges in the future, politicians have found it easier to suggest that American military strategy should simply avoid state-building, as if the effectiveness of military operations would not depend on their political consequences.

This problem is not new. In a broad survey of American military history from the Mexican War to the invasion of Iraq, Nadia Schadlow, Deputy Assistant to the U.S. President for National Security Strategy, observed that U.S. military and political leaders have consistently underestimated the need to better prepare for political aspects of military interventions.[2] Schadlow identified several historical factors that may have encouraged this attitude, including America's traditional opposition to colonialism, and discomfort in a democracy with the idea of military officers exercising leadership in a political arena.

In recent decades, opposition to the idea of state-building in American defense strategy has been hardened by a series of disappointing failures in costly counterinsurgency operations from Vietnam to Afghanistan and Iraq. The decision in 2004 to create a State Department office for coordinating reconstruction and stabilization operations was sharply condemned by foreign policy analysts Justin Logan and Christopher Preble.[3] They argued that a standing office for state-building operations would become an advocate for American involvement in such missions throughout the world, pushing a costly agenda for America to rebuild every failed state.

Of course there is always a risk that investment in any defense capability could encourage those who provide it to push for further spending to use their capability. But when an operational unit is considered essential for national defense, policymakers generally have accepted the need to fund it, with an expectation that they will be able to rely on its officers to give professional advice about the costs and benefits of using their unit in conflict. Surely officers of a state-building agency could also be expected to accept a general professional norm of giving the best possible expert advice to policymakers, without attempting to oversell the benefits of sending their unit into action.

Logan and Preble do not consider the possibility of such professionalism in a state-building agency because they implicitly assume that state-building operations have been motivated only by some idealists' missionary zeal for spreading democracy. Such an argument ignores the vital fact that military operations have political objectives, so that a capacity for post–conflict political reconstruction can be an essential component of strategic military preparedness. That is, state-building may have an essential role in American defense strategy, not because

people want to install better governments around the world, but because effective military plans cannot neglect the question of who will take local political power after the battle is won. A military victory would accomplish nothing if the devastation of battle merely created a political vacuum that dangerous adversaries could fill.

A policy of avoiding involvement in post–conflict political reconstruction would profoundly limit military planners' ability to develop deterrent strategies against current threats to American national security. The straightforward way to avoid state-building would be to accept a general strategic constraint that American forces can be sent only into countries where a suitable government exists and is ready to take power. But if American military forces can operate only in countries where a well-organized friendly government is ready to assume power, then adversaries in other parts of the world will know that they are beyond America's reach. Hard experience in recent years has shown that areas of ungoverned instability can become sources of global terrorist threats.

Thus, deterrence against international terrorism requires some ability to plan a military response against attacks from terrorists who are based in poorly governed regions. In such situations, the only way to avoid state-building would be to plan a military retaliation that aims to devastate the terrorists' bases without making any attempt to occupy territory.[4] With no attention to post–conflict political reconstruction, however, such a military retaliation could ultimately enable the terrorist leaders to consolidate power in their region, building popular support by posing as defenders against America's destructive power.

Indeed, a basic motivation for terrorist actions may be to provoke just such crude military responses, which destroy the basic structures of local communities and drive their inhabitants to seek protection from militant leaders. So when militants perceive that they could actually benefit from an American attack on the regions where they operate, American military power is no longer a deterrent, and instead it can become a lightning rod that attracts provocative attacks against Americans.

The most effective deterrent against international terrorist attacks from a weakly governed territory may be the threat that a military response would establish a stable government that could police this territory in the future, thus destroying the militants' hopes for local power. In this sense, an investment in readiness for state-building could provide a valuable deterrent against terrorism even if this state-building capability is never actually applied.

Accepting the Challenges of Democratic State-Building

In the past, military planners had less need to worry about post–conflict political reconstruction, when victory in battle could be followed by conquest or colonization of the occupied territory. But such imperialist solutions are considered unacceptable in the world today, and so we face new and unfamiliar questions about what a victorious army should do when its professed goal is to support the establishment of a sovereign democratic state.

It is right and appropriate that America should maintain this goal of supporting independent democratic governments when it becomes involved in a military

intervention. The modern global norm for independent sovereignty of every nation is based on principles that Americans have championed since the American Revolution. Today, when the United States is acknowledged as the dominant superpower in the world, we have a vital practical interest in maintaining these principles. The alternative, a policy of installing neo-colonial authoritarian regimes in the aftermath of any U.S. military intervention, would ultimately provoke stronger global opposition against U.S. military superiority and would increase military challenges around the world. Thus, hope for American leadership in a peaceful world may depend on Americans learning how to promote democratic state-building in the aftermath of a military intervention.

Recent experience has raised doubts about the feasibility of democratic state-building, however. Is it really possible for an international intervention to support the establishment of an independent democratic state in a nation where such a government has not previously existed? The ability of victorious armies to promote political change has been demonstrated by imperial conquests throughout human history. If armies throughout history have been able to impose exploitative foreign rule on conquered populations, surely a victorious army today should face less resistance to achieving the more benign goal of establishing an independent popularly elected government. The global spread of democracy in the past century is evidence for the possibility of new democratic regimes taking root anywhere in the world. Thus, even if recent state-building missions did not achieve their goals, we cannot simply conclude that international forces are powerless to support democratic political change. Instead we must try to understand what has undermined the effectiveness of these missions and made democratic state-building seem so much more difficult than imperial conquest.

Countering Excessive Centralization in State-Building

In a classic study of counterinsurgency, French military officer David Galula emphasized that the essential goal of counterinsurgency warfare is to build a political machine from the population upward, and he also observed that political machines are generally built on patronage.[5] Successful stabilization will depend on the new regime developing a political network that distributes power and patronage throughout the nation. As the *U.S. Counterinsurgency Field Manual* has suggested, winning "hearts and minds" may actually mean convincing people that they will be well rewarded and well protected when they serve as local agents in the regime's political network.[6]

The effectiveness of a government depends, not on its general popularity, but on its ability to command the active efforts of supporters and agents who enforce the government's authority throughout the nation. Against threats from a violent insurgency, the government's active supporters must be motivated by a confidence that their loyal service can indeed earn them long-term rewards and protection from the government.

If a community were occupied by an army that planned to impose permanent imperial rule, then its officers could offer promises of long-term rewards and protection to any local leader who served the new regime. But in a mission of democratic

state-building, a popularly elected government is expected to take sovereign power from the occupying army, and so its officers cannot make any long-term promises to local supporters. Such promises can be made only by leaders of the new government.

Thus, if a state-building intervention is to establish a government that can stand on its own, its political leaders must develop networks of supporters that are wide and strong enough to defend the regime against those who would take power from it. There may be some regions where government supporters are not a majority, but a strong state needs at least some active supporters who will maintain the government's authority in every part of the country. If there are communities where the regime lacks any local supporters, then these communities can become a fertile ground for insurgents to begin building a rival system of power with encouragement from disaffected local leaders.

However, the hard work of negotiating with local activists to build an inclusive national political network can be expensive and tedious for a national leader. If foreign military support could enable a national leader to retain power without making so many promises to recruit supporters in remote communities, the leader might prefer to do so. Thus, foreign assistance can perversely encourage a national leader to keep the benefits of power narrowly concentrated in a smaller circle of supporters, neglecting remote areas, and this narrowing of the political base can perpetuate the regime's dependence on foreign forces. This basic impetus for excessive centralization can explain the paradoxical observation that vast international efforts to support a state may ultimately seem to weaken it.

Once we understand the problem, we can try to identify a solution. Foreign support may increase national leaders' desire to concentrate power more narrowly around themselves, but the distribution of power in a democracy can be regulated by constitutional rules. In particular, constitutional provisions that devolve a substantial share of power to locally elected officials of municipal and provincial governments can help to ensure that every part of the country has some popular local leaders who have a real stake of power in the regime.

Foreign assistance can perversely encourage a national leader to keep the benefits of power narrowly concentrated in a smaller circle of supporters, neglecting remote areas, and this narrowing of the political base can perpetuate the regime's dependence on foreign forces.

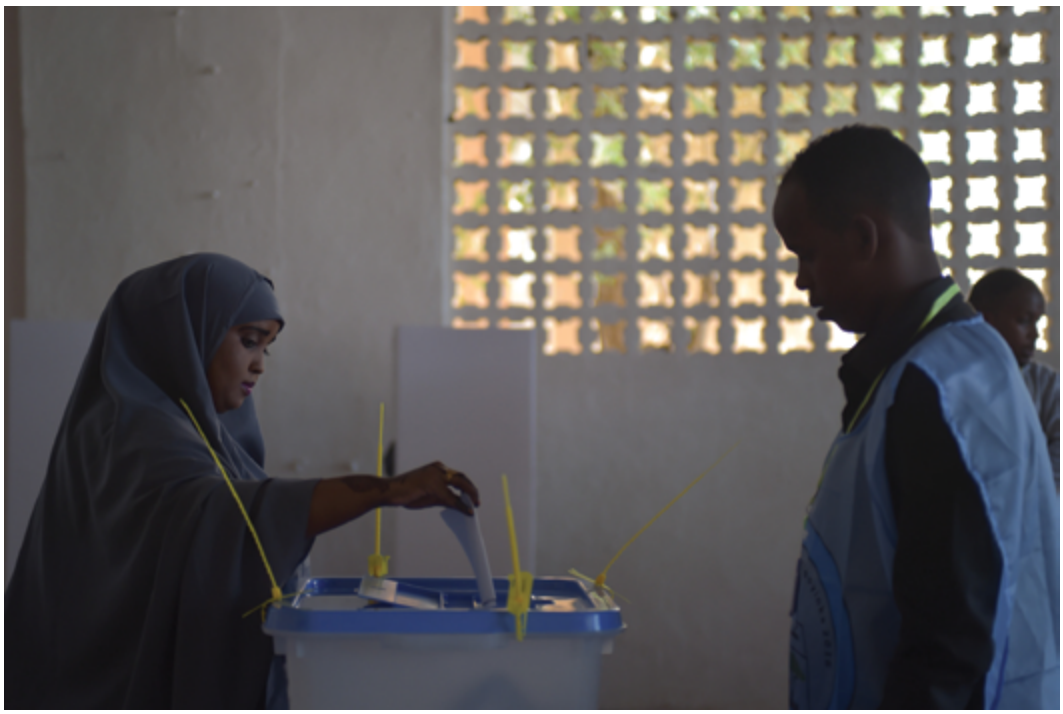
Thus, a state-building mission can have a better chance of success if it supports a federal constitution that distributes power across national and local levels of government. Just as the feasibility and cost of a residential construction project would depend on its architectural plan, so the feasibility and cost of a state-building mission can depend crucially on the constitutional structure of the state that is being established. To counter the tendency of foreign assistance to increase national leaders' bias toward centralization, foreign interveners need to actively encourage some decentralization of political power.

Of course, constitutions and legal systems are only as strong as the willingness of political leaders to enforce them. So the primary goal in effective state-building should always be to encourage a balanced development of local and national leadership in the new state. Too often in recent state-building interventions, American policymakers have instead focused primarily on developing the capabilities of the national government from the top down.

Learning from the Past

In 2002, America supported the creation of a centralized presidential government in Afghanistan, a country that had a long tradition of decentralizing substantial power to traditional local leaders. In subsequent years, America and its allies paid a heavy price to support the regime. When power became concentrated in the capital, there were many rural districts where nobody felt any personal political stake in the government, and so its authority could be maintained only with help from foreign forces and their financial subsidies.[7]

In Iraq, the counterinsurgency successes in the Sunni-majority provinces after 2006 depended on local leaders' expectations of achieving some share of power in locally elected provincial governments. But America disengaged from Iraq's provincial politics as U.S. troops were withdrawn, and then sectarian political maneuvering in Baghdad led to a breakdown of federal power–sharing in the Sunni provinces, which opened the way for advances by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant in 2014.



AMISOM/Tobin Jones

A female delegate casts her vote in the December 2016 Somaliland election to vote a member of parliament into Somalia's House of the People in Mogadishu, Somalia.

Somaliland, since its separation from Somalia in 1991, offers an example of successful state-building that contrasts starkly with the repeated failures of internationally sponsored state-building in Somalia. The state in Somaliland was established by a series of negotiations among local leaders from every part of the country, without international support.[8] In these negotiations, the participants' status as local leaders always depended on their maintaining broad popular approval in their respective communities. But in Somalia, once a leader became part of the internationally sponsored state-building process, he could expect external recognition and subsidies that reduced or eliminated his need for broad popular backing.[9] Such leaders in Somalia then built weak states that could not govern without foreign support.

The contrast between Somalia and Somaliland shows that international sponsors of state-building can do more harm than good when they support leaders whose positions do not depend on some form of local political recognition. This may be a good reason to promote democracy, but local accountability might not be through formal elections. Although the Somalilanders ultimately chose to introduce popular elections for positions of local authority in their constitutional system of government, the foundations of their state were initially organized by leaders whose positions depended on traditional clan institutions.

British military intervention in Sierra Leone successfully ended a long and brutal civil war in 2002. The empowerment of elected local councils in towns and rural districts throughout Sierra Leone has contributed to the long-term durability of the new democratic government since this state-building mission.

The best example of a successful state-building mission that avoided the trap of excessive centralization can be found in America's own history. After the Revolution of 1776, Americans instituted the Articles of Confederation in which power was principally distributed to the thirteen locally elected provincial assemblies. This decentralization of power created some difficulties in financing the war effort, but it gave the American Revolution a broadly distributed political strength that was essential to its ultimate success.[10] In 1776, every community had at least one respected leader, its local assembly representative, who had a substantial vested interest in defending the new regime. One may imagine, however, that the outcome might have been very different if France, in agreeing to provide essential military support for the American cause, had insisted that the new republic should centralize all power under George Washington's national government.

It is sometimes argued that America's efforts at state-building have suffered from a naive assumption that foreigners would welcome democracy like Americans. But history suggests that the actual problem may have been a failure to recognize that people everywhere are like Americans in having local political interests that are as vital to them as their national politics.

Wise Warnings

British diplomat Rory Stewart and political economist Gerald Knaus in 2012 expressed deep skepticism about the ability of even the best international experts to plan a strategy for rebuilding a nation's political system in

isolation from its local realities.[11] They are appropriately critical of anyone who would claim to have a formula for guaranteeing success in state-building.

Knaus criticizes three different conceptual approaches to state-building, which he calls the planning school, the liberal imperialism school, and the futility school. He criticizes the planning school's reliance on formulas for estimating costs of state-building, such as have been offered by former Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs, and Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan James Dobbins among others.[12] Dobbins and his coauthors may originally have intended these formulas as minimal cost estimates, to warn policymakers about the level of budgetary commitment that would be necessary for a state-building mission to have any realistic chance of success. But Knaus is appropriately critical of planners who would claim that any such resource commitment could be sufficient to guarantee success. Knaus similarly criticizes the "liberal imperialists" who claim that a state-building mission can succeed when its agents act decisively to reconstruct national institutions, wielding full power to forcefully remove any obstacles to their reforms.[13] Both planners and liberal imperialists are criticized by Knaus for overconfidence that success in state-building can be achieved by a well-planned intervention with a sufficient commitment of financial resources and military force.

On the other hand, Knaus also criticizes those of the futility school who believe that, by skeptically dispelling illusions about state-building, they can then dismiss any question of such interventions in the future.[14] As we argued above, an effective defense strategy cannot ignore the problems of political reconstruction after a military action. Furthermore, the consequences of anarchy in a failed state can be so harmful, both to its inhabitants and to its neighbors that other nations may prefer to invest in a state-building mission that offers some possibility of ameliorating the situation there. In such situations, Knaus would recommend considering intervention with a modest approach that he calls principled incrementalism.

Knaus's principled incremental approach is based on an understanding that interveners can support positive political change in a nation, but only by working with political leaders there, by encouraging political deals that advance the agenda of building a peaceful democratic state. From this perspective, the goals of an intervention at any point in time must be limited to what local allies are prepared to do, and should not be expanded to impress constituencies in Washington.

Stewart emphasizes the importance of local knowledge in state-building. He notes a fundamental contrast between the level of local commitment that was expected of colonial state-builders in the 19th century and what is expected of democratic state-builders today. Where colonial officials were expected to serve for decades in a country before rising to top political positions, the democratic state-building interventions today may be led by officials who just fly in or serve a one-year tour. Stewart warns that, without a deeply rooted understanding of local political realities, modern state-builders have been prone to overselling their mission, exaggerating the adverse consequences that would follow from its defeat, and overestimating

what they can accomplish with a new strategy and more resources.

Stewart's warning against excessive reliance on international experts must include the author of this paper, who is an academic social scientist. But let me suggest that Stewart and Knaus are really arguing against overestimating the ability of outsiders to transform a nation's political system, and for the principle that realistic goals and tactics for a state-building mission can be determined only with the involvement of local political leaders. These arguments do not intrinsically contradict a suggestion that an investment in state-building capacity should be based on some general strategic principles that can be applied anywhere.

If one assumed instead that every nation's politics is totally unique, then a strategy for state-building in any nation would have to be totally directed by the nation's best political experts who are willing to cooperate with the intervention. But such individuals are not neutral observers. The best expertise on any nation's political culture is found among the prominent, politically active citizens of the nation, and such individuals generally have an interest in maximizing the power of leaders with whom they are connected. In particular, individuals are most willing to actively cooperate with an intervention when they are politically connected with the top leadership of the regime that the intervention would support, and such experts then may be systematically biased toward recommending a centralization of power in the new regime.

Thus, an agency for international state-building needs some general doctrine, at least to avoid the dangers of excessive centralization. The doctrine should emphasize the basic fact that a sovereign nation's political system can be transformed only by indigenous political leaders, and so a general strategy for state-building can only provide a framework for working with local leadership. But some prior doctrine is needed, at least to guide the mission's strategy for developing relationships with local leaders, and this doctrine must be derived from a general understanding of the common aspects of political systems in all societies.

A Tentative List of Basic Principles

To summarize the argument of this article and (hopefully) to stimulate further discussion of these issues, let me offer here a tentative list of seven general principles that might help to guide the establishment of an effective state-building agency. For specificity, I discuss these principles here as if they would be applied to an agency of the American federal government, but we could equally consider applying such principles to a state-building agency that might be established by another great nation or international organization.

Do Not Attempt to Oversell the State-Building Mission to Policymakers at Home

Before an intervention, state-building agents should have a professional responsibility to make sure that leading American policymakers understand the potential long-term costs of the intervention. In particular, policymakers should be warned that, in failed states, weak capacity of the central government and strong centrifugal forces of local politics must be considered normal.[15] After an intervention has begun, state-building agents should encourage American policymakers to keep

the mission's goals bounded by the limits of what local leaders can be realistically expected to do, because a state-building mission can only encourage reforms that indigenous political leaders will support.

The Essential Core of a State-Building Mission is to Cultivate and Support Effective Political Leadership both Locally and Nationally

The defense of a democratic state against insurgency or chronic instability ultimately will depend on active leaders in every community who have the ability to mobilize local political supporters and who have a stake worth defending in the national regime. Effective political leaders need reputations for providing patronage benefits to their supporters and for providing public services to the wider population of their communities. To cultivate such leadership, responsibility for public spending should be distributed with clear public accountability. Development projects can contribute to the political goals of state-building only to the extent that these projects enhance the reputations of the political leaders who oversee the projects. Similarly, a military operation to strengthen the government's authority in a district is misdirected if allied local leaders do not consider it helpful, and their views should be actively solicited in planning and evaluating such operations.

State-building interveners must continually ensure that they are supporting leaders of the host government who have a real base of popular political support, and are not simply maintained in their positions by the recognition and support of foreign interveners.

Beware of the Danger that Foreign Support for a Government can Induce its Officials to Become More Dependent on Foreigners than on Their Own People

State-building interveners must continually ensure that they are supporting leaders of the host government who have a real base of popular political support, and are not simply maintained in their positions by the recognition and support of foreign interveners. Competitive elections can provide evidence of broad popular support, but there will be long intervals between elections. It may be helpful, therefore, to use a system of parliamentary responsibility, where a broad representative council has the power to replace the regime's executive officials at any time, both in the national government and in local governments.

State-Building Agents Should Work to Develop an Appropriate Balance Between the National and Local Levels of Government

State-builders should be ready to counter a natural inclination of national leaders to push for more centralization of power, which can become excessive when it makes the regime dependent on foreign forces to maintain authority outside the capital. A state-building mission can help to develop an appropriate balance between the national and local levels of government by supporting a reliable and transparent distribution of budgeted funds to all levels. But any division of power entails some potential for tension between different branches of government, until the lines of constitutional authority for

each branch become generally recognized and accepted. State-building agents may help by suggesting principles that other countries have found useful for defining a proper division of responsibilities between different levels of government.[17]

A State-Building Mission Should Entail Expectations that at Least Some Members of the State-Building Team will Maintain a Long-Term Involvement with the Host Nation

The ability of state-building agents to influence a nation's political leaders can depend on expectations that cooperation with the American mission will be remembered with gratitude by agents of the American Government. So there should be some expectation that American state-building agents will be able to develop and maintain long-term relationships with local political leaders. Of course agents in the field cannot make unlimited promises for the U.S. Government, and state-building agents must never promise to keep any particular leader in power against the votes of his countrymen; but a local leader who responds to Americans' requests today may reasonably ask for some reciprocal right to get Americans' attention in the future. For this purpose, it may be useful to establish a general policy that at least part of the state-building team should remain involved with this country for many years after the mission, perhaps at positions in the American embassy.

Agents Should Study Local Governments in Different Parts of the World to Train for State-Building Missions

A state-building agency must be ready to organize provincial reconstruction teams that could be sent anywhere in the world to support the establishment of effective local government against threats of violent insurgency.[18] For such a mission to support local political development in any country, agents should bring some understanding of how local governments have been organized in other countries that have similar cultural traditions. Thus, state-building agents should have broad training in comparative local politics.

A State-Building Agency Needs Sufficient Funding to Recruit a Corps of Long-Term Career Officers who Could have Otherwise Chosen Careers in Military or Diplomatic Service

Post–conflict political reconstruction does not utilize expensive weapons systems, and so it has not been a profitable priority for defense contractors. But it requires some investment in staffing units that would be ready to support political reconstruction in the aftermath of conflict anywhere in the world. The Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations in the State Department could be a natural institutional home for these units, as their members would need the kind of deep analytical understanding of politics and government that is regularly demanded in diplomacy.[19] But state-building agents would need to focus on problems of local government and on challenges of maintaining a balanced relationship between local and national politics,

which is different from the traditional diplomat's focus on national and international political issues. State-building agents would also need a broad mix of financial, managerial, and linguistic skills, along with basic military training to operate in an area of conflict. So the practical skills that would be required in a state-building agency could be different from what is generally expected in diplomatic or military service, while combining substantial elements of both.

There are at least two reasons for suggesting that postconflict reconstruction should be the responsibility of civilian agencies, even though its mission would be complementary to the military. First, the armed forces need to focus on maintaining their ability to prevail over any adversary in any battlefield, and asking them to also prepare for political missions would be a distraction from their core military function. Second, an agent whose job is to support political reconstruction must become proficient at recognizing dysfunctional political systems and intervening to repair them. For the sake of our civilian-led political system, it would probably be better to separate such a job from control of the world's most powerful weaponry. But civilian state-building agents would need sufficient military training to be able to operate under military command in a theater of active conflict.

In conclusion, it may be worth recalling again Galula's famous summary of the goal in state-building—"build (or rebuild) a political machine from the population upward." The phrase "from the population upward" should indicate the importance of developing the new regime's local political roots, but this point has not always been emphasized in practice. To put more emphasis on this point, we could suggest an expanded summary statement—"Cultivate and protect responsible local leaders in communities throughout the nation, and help local and national leaders to work together in a democratic system of political networks that reach out to the entire population." PRISM

Notes

[1] We might equally consider what Britain or NATO or the UN could do to develop more capacity for missions of democratic state-building. In an article from 2014, I also considered the question of what international standards might be applied to certify that state-building interveners are acting effectively for the goal of establishing an independent democratic state. See: Roger Myerson, "Standards for state-building interventions," in *Economics for the Curious*, edited by Robert Solow and Janice Murray (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pages 174-188; available at <http://home.uchicago.edu/~rmyerson/research/std4sb.pdf>. See also: Roger Myerson, "A Field Manual for the cradle of civilization: theory of leadership and lessons of Iraq," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 53(3):470-482 (2009); Roger Myerson and J. Kael Weston, "American military readiness must include state-building, 2016, available at <http://home.uchicago.edu/~rmyerson/myerson_weston.pdf>.

[2] Nadia Schadlow, *War and the Art of Governance* (Washington D.C: Georgetown University Press, 2017).

[3] The State Department's Office of the Coordinator of Reconstruction and Stablization (S/CRS) was the predecessor of today's Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations, which was

established in 2011. Justin Logan and Christopher Preble, "Failed States and Flawed Logic: the Case Against a Standing Nation-building Office," *Cato Policy Analysis*, 560:1-29, January 11, 2006.

[4] Such a strategy of retaliation without occupation has been advocated by Simons, Joe McGraw, and Duane Lauchengco in The Sovereignty Solution (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2011). A crucial gap in their argument can be glimpsed on page 132, where they assert that "Americans' hope should be that, in the wake of such devastation, those most capable of asserting authority and taking control will quickly rise to the occasion and then prevail." They fail here to consider the fearful possibility that the terrorists who provoked the American attack could expect to take power after it.

[5] David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (Praeger, 1964).

[6] U.S. Army and Marine Corps, *Counterinsurgency Field Manual FM 3-24* (University of Chicago Press, 2007), appendix A-26.

[7] For a history of the struggle for Garmser in Helmand Province see :Carter Malkasian, *War Comes to Garmser: Thirty Years of Conflict on the Afghan Frontier* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[8] Mark Bradbury, *Becoming Somaliland* (London: Progressio, 2008).

[9] Mary Harper, *Getting Somalia Wrong?* (London: Zed Books, 2012).

[10] This point is discussed further in an article of mine from 2015. See: Roger Myerson, "Strength of American federal democracy," World Bank Policy Research Paper #7512, 2015.

[11] Rory Stewart and Gerald Knaus, *Can Intervention Work?* (Norton, 2012).

[12] James Dobbins, Seth G. Jones, Keith Crane, and Beth Cole DeGrasse, *The Beginner's Guide to Nation-Building* (RAND, 2007).

[13] Knaus cites Paddy Ashdown, *Swords and Ploughshares: Bringing Peace to the 21st Century* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2007).

[14] The futility school may be exemplified by articles such as Logan and Preble (2006).

[15] Such advice has been needed. Barack Obama recalled that his expectations for Libya after the fall of Qaddafi turned out to be too optimistic because analysts had not predicted the degree of tribal divisions and the quick breakdown of administrative structures there (Jeffrey Goldberg, "The Obama Doctrine," *The Atlantic*, April 2016).

[16] A sustainable fiscal decentralization will depend, as Ashraf Ghani and Claire Lockhart (2008) have argued, on the effectiveness of the national finance ministry, which must be able to distribute funds reliably and accountably under clear rules. See Ashraf Ghani and Clare Lockhart, *Fixing Failed States* (Oxford, 2008).

[17] In successful federal democracies, autonomously elected sub-national governments commonly control between 25% and 50% of public spending. Any fraction in this range could be considered a balanced distribution between local and national governments, depending on the allocation of responsibilities to each level.

[18] For a discussion of the effectiveness of provincial reconstruction teams see: Carter Malkasian and Gerald Meyerle, *Provincial Reconstruction Teams* (Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2009), available at<http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/PUB911.pdf>.

[19] Max Boot and Michael Miklaucic have suggested that state-building missions could be led by USAID, but this would require fundamentally reconfiguring USAID, which has a valued reputation for nonpolitical development assistance. Max Boot and Michael Miklaucic, "Reconfiguring USAID for state-building," Council on Foreign Relations Policy Memorandum #57 (2016), available at<http://cfr.org/USAID_memo>.

Wikimedia/Email4Mobile

Protests in Sanaa, Yemen in April 2011.

Is There a Path Out of the Yemen Conflict?

Why it Matters

BY GERALD FEIERSTEIN

Among the countries affected by the Arab Spring, only Yemen was able to negotiate a peaceful political transition. In November 2011 Yemen's major political parties, with the support of the United States and the international community, signed the Gulf initiative that included provisions for the:

- replacement of the government of former President Ali Abdallah Salih;
- election of a new interim president; and
- establishment of a two-year roadmap for new presidential and parliamentary elections to include the creation of a National Dialogue as a forum to address Yemen's problems.

Taken on its own, the overall implementation of the initiative was relatively successful.[1] Yemenis elected Abd Rabuh Mansur Hadi as interim president in an election/referendum featuring a high voter turnout. The Yemeni military and security services, with substantial assistance from the United States, the United Kingdom, and other international participants, drafted new organization charts and set about restructuring their operations.

A National Dialogue Conference—the key step in the transition process—concluded in the spring of 2014 and a constitutional drafting committee worked through the summer to complete recommended revisions and amendments to Yemen's constitution for final approval by the National Dialogue.[2] By the fall of 2014, few steps remained before the Yemeni people would be able to go to the polls and elect a new government, completing a peaceful transition of power.

Developments outside of the initiative, however, were ominous and proved fatal to the transition process. Comprised equally of members drawn from Ali Abdallah Salih's General

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People's Congress and the opposition Joint Meeting Parties, under the leadership of Prime Minister Mohammed Basindwa, the interim government was weak, dysfunctional, and riven by party and personal rivalries. Governance and security collapsed, while corruption surged to new levels. Sabotage and insurrection around the country brought economic activity to a halt as the capital, Sanaa, and other urban centers were plunged into darkness for days and weeks at a time.[3]

Despite the fact that the negotiators of the initiative were committed to addressing legitimate Huthi grievances and included in the roadmap special provisions to that effect, and despite the fact that the Huthis participated in all of the agreement activities (except for the February 2012 election of Abd Rabuh Mansur Hadi to serve as interim president, which they boycotted), and specifically endorsed the National Dialogue process, they remained a disruptive force.[4] They refused to withdraw their armed elements from the resistance encampment in Sanaa, dubbed Tagher (Change) Square, and frequently adopted obstructionist positions within the Gulf initiative mechanisms.[5]

Most concerning, the Huthis resumed their siege of a Salafist madrassa in the town of Dammaj, forcing its evacuation and breaking a ceasefire that had existed for two years. Emboldened by their success at Dammaj, the Huthis continued their advance into Amran governorate, neighboring Sanaa. There, they defeated forces loyal to arch enemy Ali Mohsen (the architect of six failed military campaigns against the Huthis from 2003–09) and elements of the Hashid tribal confederation, followers of the al-Ahmar family that had also fought against the Huthis previously. Former President Ali Abdallah Salih, despite his earlier antagonistic relationship with the Huthis, joined his forces with theirs, seizing the opportunity to confront their common enemies: the government of Abd Rabuh Mansur Hadi, Ali Mohsen, the al-Ahmars, and the Islah party—Yemen's branch of the Muslim Brotherhood.

The combined Huthi/Salih forces placed increasing military pressure on the government through the summer and fall of 2014 aimed at overturning the political process. The Huthi/Salih forces were able to take advantage of the weakness of the transitional government and the collapse of Yemen's security forces to move aggressively into Sanaa. In September 2014, the Huthis forced the signing of a new political agreement, the Peace and National Partnership Agreement, organizing a new government under Prime Minister Khalid al-Bahah. But by early 2015, amid fresh fighting between Huthi elements and government security forces, the Huthis moved to dissolve parliament and the government and force President Hadi to resign. Hadi, who had been placed under house arrest by the Huthis, fled initially to Aden in February 2015 and, when Aden itself came under attack, escaped to Oman and then Saudi Arabia, a month later.

As the political crisis deepened inside Yemen, the Huthis also menaced neighboring Saudi Arabia. Thousands of Huthi fighters and military cohorts joined military "maneuvers" near the Saudi–Yemeni border in a move clearly intended to provoke the Saudis. Mohammed al-Bukhaiti, a member of the Huthi Political Office, told the Yemen Times that "the maneuvers aim…to send a message to regional powers that the Huthi

popular committees will not allow any plots against Yemen to succeed."[6]

Operation Decisive Storm Begins

The precipitous collapse of the Hadi Government, and the power grab by a group closely associated with the Government of Iran and hostile to key U.S. goals and objectives, alarmed the Obama Administration as well as our friends and partners in the region. In urgent consultations between the U.S. Government and the Government of Saudi Arabia in March 2015, the United States accepted that Saudi Arabia would intervene militarily to prevent the Huthis from completing their occupation of Yemen and would seek to stabilize the area around Aden to permit the Hadi Government to reestablish its operations in the south as a prelude to a return of the government to Sanaa to complete implementation of the Gulf initiative.[7] For their part, the Saudis organized a coalition of predominantly Sunni Arab states, principally the United Arab Emirates (UAE), to support their military campaign. The United States committed to logistically support the Saudi intervention, including provision of limited intelligence information. It was further agreed that the intervention by the international community in Yemen should seek to:

- restore the legitimate government in Yemen to complete the implementation of the Gulf initiative and the National Dialogue;
- prevent a Huthi/Ali Abdullah Salih takeover of the government through violence;
- secure the Saudi–Yemeni border; and
- defeat Iran's efforts to establish a foothold in the Arabian Peninsula threatening Saudi and Gulf security.

As events unfolded in the spring of 2015, the rapid collapse of the Hadi Government undercut Coalition plans to defend Aden and to establish a secure position there to push back against Huthi/Salih aggression.[8] Despite initial optimism that the Saudi-led Coalition could achieve its limited military objectives quickly, the fighting devolved into a protracted stalemate. Forces loyal to the Hadi Government and the Coalition have secured most of the southern and eastern portions of the country while the Huthi/Salih forces are entrenched in the North, including Sanaa.[9]

The Costs of Conflict in Yemen

The Coalition has relied heavily on airpower in the conflict, placing it in a situation not dissimilar to the asymmetric warfare facing U.S. forces in places like Afghanistan. Members of the Coalition are fighting a low-tech insurgency where their massive advantage in sophisticated weapons is neutralized. The insurgents are mostly fighting on their own turf; they blend in with the local population, making identification of legitimate targets difficult; and they are willing to accept extraordinary losses to avoid defeat. The consequences have been considerable.

Saudi Arabia

The impact of the conflict on Saudi Arabia has been steep. The military has suffered significant casualties and Saudi security forces have proved incapable of defending their country from missile and ground attack;

the financial burden has been enormous at a time that the social safety net has been trimmed; and Saudi performance has been criticized domestically and internationally.

The Saudi air campaign has complicated Saudi relations with the Yemeni people, who hold Saudi Arabia responsible for the death and injury of thousands of Yemenis and trauma suffered by tens of thousands more. In retaliation for Saudi attacks inside Yemen, the Huthi/Salih forces have launched dozens of Scud and SA–2 missiles refitted as surface-to-surface missiles targeting Saudi cities, especially Najran and Jizan, as well as mounted cross-border raids into Saudi territory. As a result, the Saudis have suffered dozens of civilian and military casualties while being forced to evacuate civilians from towns and villages along the border.

The financial burden of the conflict in Yemen, too, has been considerable for the Saudis. Estimated costs of the Saudi air campaign in 2015 alone were in excess of $5 billion.[10] Moreover, the Saudis report that they have provided more than $8.2 billion in humanitarian assistance to Yemen from 2015–17.[11]

Perhaps the greatest, and most unanticipated, impact of the conflict has been the strain it has placed on Saudi Arabia's relationships with its key western partners, principally the United States and the United Kingdom. The reputational damage to Saudi Arabia and its Coalition partners should not be underestimated. Accusations of war crimes leveled against Saudi and Coalition armed forces and threats to end arms sales to the Saudis have the potential to inflict long

U.S. Navy

International naval forces in the Arabian Sea in spring 2016 seized multiple shipments of illicit arms that the United States later assessed originated in Iran and were likely bound for Huthi insurgents in Yemen.

lasting damage to these relationships that go well beyond the scope of the Yemen conflict and could undermine the international community's determination to confront Iran's regional threats. Furthermore, as noted by the International Crisis Group: "The [Saudi] intervention has layered a multidimensional, thus more intractable, regional conflict between Saudi Arabia and Iran onto an already complex civil war, significantly complicating prospects for peace."[12]

Iran

For the Government of Iran, the Coalition's inability to defeat the insurgents and restore the legitimate government in Yemen is a significant win. Iranian support for the Huthis comes at very little cost in contrast to the financial, human, and reputational damage suffered by the Coalition.

During the past several years, there has been some debate as to the extent of Iran's support for the Huthis and whether the Huthis are an instrument of Iranian policy as determined by the Iran Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and the hardline factions surrounding Ayatollah Khamenei. In fact, while Iran's control over the Huthis may be less determinative than some have speculated, its intervention in Yemen's internal affairs in recent years has been unambiguous. It is difficult to discern any vested interest that Iran might have in Yemen aside from a desire to provoke and threaten Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf states.

In 2014, the Iranians exploited Huthi successes in Sanaa by encouraging and facilitating threatening actions on the Saudi–Yemeni border. Allegations of Iranian intervention have been a commonplace for years but there was never compelling evidence to support the claim. Following the Arab Spring, however, Iranian support for the Huthi movement became clearer. Well before the breakdown of Yemen's political transition in early 2015, Iran was engaged in smuggling weapons, in some instances highly sophisticated weapons, to Yemen for the Huthis. In early 2012, Yemeni authorities seized a shipment containing fabrication equipment for explosively formed penetrators (EFPs), the improvised explosive devices (IEDs) used to devastating effect against American forces in Iraq a decade earlier, destined for a Yemeni businessman with close ties to the Huthis, according to a senior Yemeni security official.[13] A year later, U.S. naval forces, in cooperation with the Yemeni Navy, seized an Iranian dhow carrying 40 tons of military equipment with markings indicating they came from IRGC facilities.[14]

Since the political situation in Sanaa deteriorated in the fall of 2014, Iranian intervention has expanded in scope and become more blatant. Former Secretary of State John Kerry told PBS Newshour in April 2015 that Iran had sent "a number of flights every single week" to Yemen with supplies for the Huthis.[15] In addition to the materiel supplies, Iran dispatched IRGC Quds Force and Hezbollah trainers to assist the Huthis. A USA Today article, citing Reuters sources, quoted unnamed senior Iranian officials as saying that the Iranian Revolutionary Guards had hundreds of military personnel in Yemen training Huthi fighters: "About 100 Huthis traveled to Iran in 2014 for training, and the pace of money and arms transfers has increased since the seizure of Yemen's capital, Sanaa, this year."[16] A number of IRGC personnel and their Hezbollah allies have been killed or captured in Yemen, but

compared to the toll in Syria, the losses have been negligible.

Between April 2015 and October 2016, U.S. or allied naval forces seized four weapons shipments from Iran for the Huthis, according to the U.S. Fifth Fleet Commander, Vice Admiral Kevin Donegan. The Australian Government released photos of an additional shipment of light anti-armor weapons seized from a smuggling vessel in January 2017.[17] But there is no reason to believe that the various naval forces patrolling in the Red Sea successfully interdicted all or close to all of the Iranian weapons destined for Huthi forces. The bulk of Iran's weapons supply has been low-tech weapons, including small arms, C4 explosives, anti-tank and anti-armor missiles. During the conflict, however, Iranian weapons supplies have included increasingly sophisticated arms, including surface-to-surface and anti-ship missiles. In October 2016, USS *Mason* detected incoming missiles, deploying countermeasures to defeat the attack. That attack appeared similar to the attack two weeks earlier on an Emirati supply vessel. The U.S. Naval Institute News, citing experts, reported that the missiles resembled Chinese-built C–802 anti-ship missiles. The same model had been sold to Iran previously and reverse engineered by the Iranians, who fielded it as the Nour missile.[18]

The missile attacks, as well as a "drone boat" attack on a Saudi frigate in January, make explicit the threat from the Huthis and Iran to challenge shipping in the vital Red Sea waterway and the Bab al-Mandeb. Long before the crisis, President Hadi had warned of Iranian ambitions to gain a chokehold on the global economy through its ability to block shipping transiting the Strait of Hormuz and the Bab al-Mandeb.[19] In a rare video, Mehdi Tayeb, a senior cleric who reportedly advises Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, acknowledged that Iran had provided the missiles to the Huthis, declaring that: "Iran's catering [sic] of missiles to the Huthis was carried out in stages by the Revolutionary Guards and the support and assistance of the Iranian Navy."[20] In a further development, the U.S. Office of Naval Intelligence in April warned of a possible threat to commercial shipping in the Bab al-Mandeb from naval mines possibly placed in the area by the Huthis.[21]

Al-Qaeda

Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) has also been a beneficiary of the political conflict in the country. Having suffered a series of setbacks from 2012–14 as a result of focused coordination and cooperation between the United States and the Hadi Government, AQAP has reconstituted itself and regained much of the ground that it lost. "In recent years," notes the Sanaa Center for Strategic Studies, "AQAP has heavily exploited the increasing polarization of Yemeni society, the retreating authority of the Yemeni state and security services, and gained significant financial largesse when it controlled the port of al-Mukalla from April 2015 to April 2016, such that today, AQAP and its affiliate Ansar al-Sharia are arguably stronger and wealthier than they have ever been."[22]

In particular, al-Qaeda has successfully positioned itself within the framework of tribal resistance to Huthi advances in three governorates of southern and western Yemen, al-Bayda, Abyan, and Shabwah, capitalizing on specific socio-political, tribal, security and

economic dynamics there as well as perceptions that the civil conflict is, in fact, a sectarian struggle between Sunni and Shia Yemenis.[23] Although Yemenis are very conservative religiously, they are generally not drawn to al-Qaeda's ideology. Nevertheless, desperate times call for desperate measures, and many Yemenis, confronting perceived existential threats to their social and economic survival, have aligned with al-Qaeda as a matter of self-preservation.

The idea that the Huthis are a "natural enemy" of AQAP because of their sectarian differences is a misconception. They have no history of fighting against al-Qaeda and may well conclude, as the Salih regime did, that the presence of violent extremist groups is useful leverage in obtaining financial support and neutralizing western and regional opposition to their rule. As al-Muslimi and Barron of the Sanaa Center for Strategic Studies conclude, "as long as Yemen continues its slide into failed statehood and catastrophic humanitarian crisis, AQAP and similar groups will continue to thrive."[24]

Humanitarian Suffering

Rough estimates of civilian casualties since fighting began in March 2015 now exceed 10,000 killed with more than 40,000 injured, according to press reports, and the human toll continues to mount. The UN Office of

CIA World Factbook

Yemen transportation map from 2012.

the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reports that more than 3 million of Yemen's 27.5 million citizens have been displaced by the conflict, while more than half of the population is considered to be food insecure. Famine and epidemics of disease may be on the near horizon for Yemen.

This April, a humanitarian relief fund raising conference, co-sponsored by the Governments of Sweden and Switzerland, generated an estimated $1.1 billion in fresh pledges, including a $94 million commitment by the United States, or half of the $2.1 billion UN appeal, according to press reports.[25] Despite the improved donor response, more than half the population, or 17 million people, is considered by the UN to be food insecure. The World Food Program's regional director, Muhammad Hadi, said in an interview that the WFP provided rations to five million people in March but it is seeking to expand deliveries to reach nine million "severely food insecure" people a month.[26] The humanitarian crisis is driven by supply and demand challenges.

On the supply side, a Famine Early Warning System Networks report from late March noted that: "recent food import data suggest that food imports into al-Hudaydah port recently declined sharply. As this port supplies many key markets in western Yemen, declining imports raise concerns about future supply levels and food markets that rely on this port as a source."[27] Overall, however, the UN Verification and Inspection Mechanism for Yemen (UNVIM) reported that March deliveries of food, fuel, and general cargo equaled a total of 636,810 metric tons—an increase of 223,467 metric tons from February.[28]

The key to addressing the supply side of the food crisis confronting North Yemen, home to an estimated 75 percent of the total Yemeni population, is restoring to full operation the port of al-Hudaydah and guaranteeing access for humanitarian supplies. According to the UN, al-Hudaydah is the entry point for 70–80 percent of the country's humanitarian deliveries and an even higher percentage of commercial food and fuel imports. But operations at the port have been severely limited by damage from Coalition airstrikes in August 2015 and subsequent fighting. Port workers have been forced to offload cargo by hand.[29] The Hadi Government and the Coalition are insistent that the port is the entry point for Iranian smuggled weapons as well as a source of substantial funding to the Huthi/Salih war effort. They have, therefore, insisted on a rigorous system of inspection slowing the process of deliveries. The Huthis have also interfered in port operations, and their control of the road from Hudaydah to Sanaa, the principal route for supplies leaving the port, has posed an additional obstacle for humanitarian deliveries.

Early this year, the Coalition made clear its intent to cut off the Huthis from the Red Sea coast, known as the Tihama, believing that a successful operation to gain control of the coastal region would cripple the Huthi war effort and pressure them to return to the negotiating table. Coalition forces successfully seized control of the port of Mocha, 200 km (124 mi) south of Hudaydah, and began to move north. But progress has been stalled since March.[30] Local observers report that pro–Huthi elements are well-entrenched in Hudaydah, home to more than one million people, and warn that a military assault on

the city would likely be highly destructive. The observers voiced skepticism that, even with a successful operation, the Coalition would be able to maintain security, re-open the port, and open the roads to normal traffic.[31] As of this writing, the planned offensive appears to be on hold.

Equally, obstacles to the distribution of food and medicines rest on the demand side. Even where food remains widely available in the marketplace, the lack of liquidity, exacerbated by the failure since August 2016 to pay the public sector salaries upon which 25 percent of Yemeni workers depend, has contributed to the developing crisis. The International Crisis Group reported that the failure to pay salaries "is a product of shrinking state finances, an acute liquidity crisis and the banks' inability to move financial resources between areas controlled by conflict parties."[32] In a letter this April to UN Special Envoy Ismail Ould Chaikh Ahmed, Huthi "Foreign Minister" Hisham Abdullah proposed that a technical team drawn from Central Bank personnel in Sanaa and Aden, headed by a neutral individual, be allowed to operate from either Cairo or Amman. The team would communicate their decisions to the in-country branches of the Central Bank of Yemen (CBY) for implementation.[33] However, Deputy Central Bank governor Khalid al-Abbadi responded that bank management is not the issue. He reiterated that the failure to receive anticipated donor funding or oil revenue is the real source of the bank's difficulties. He called again for the Huthis to permit the Sanaa branch of the CBY to function without political interference. Nevertheless, al-Abbadi did acknowledge that the CBY branch in Aden is in possession of YR 150 billion ($597 million)—an amount roughly equivalent to two months of the government payroll—in fresh currency from the bank's Russian printers.[34]

The Situation Today—Ending the Insurgency Will Not End the Conflict

Two years of fighting in Yemen reveal that the fissures dividing Yemeni society persist and will not be resolved by an end to the conflict. One potential flashpoint is the possible de facto re-division of Yemen along the pre–1990 border. The majority of anti-Huthi/Salih fighters in the former South Yemen, according to the International Crisis Group, belong to a network of loosely allied militias dubbed the "Southern Resistance," who are fighting for independence and resistance to "northern invaders."[35] These groups are likely to reassert their desire for southern independence once the threat from the Huthi/Salih forces is eliminated. While there are some outside of Yemen who might welcome that prospect, it is fundamentally an outcome to be avoided, as it will mean two (or more) failed states in the southern Arabian Peninsula, each one incapable of providing adequately for its population and both becoming breeding grounds for violent extremist groups.[36]

Moreover, the two Yemeni coalitions that are parties to the conflict are, themselves, internally fragile. The Huthi–Salih alliance, in particular, is a marriage of convenience rather than a true partnership and is unlikely to survive in a political environment rather than an armed conflict. Long years of enmity between Salih and his followers and the Huthis have been papered over, not resolved. And both sides have political aspirations that will be difficult to reconcile when it comes to

a real political process. It has long been anticipated that the final act of the drama over political control in Sanaa will be a showdown between Salih and the Huthis, and signs of tension between the two sides abound.

The pro–Hadi Government side also contains the seeds of its own dissolution. The defense of Taizz, under siege by Huthi forces for 18 months, is divided between pro–Hadi forces aligned with the Muslim Brotherhood under Adnan al-Hamadi and forces aligned with the Salafist militia commander, Abu al-Abbas, who are both anti-Huthi and anti-Muslim Brotherhood, and receive support from the Coalition. Their internal conflict reflects deeper fractures within the pro–government coalition.[37]

What this Means for the United States

Five years after Abd Rabuh Mansur Hadi's election as interim president started the clock on the only negotiated political transition of the Arab Spring, the future of the survival of Yemen hangs in the balance. In the almost certain absence of strong governance or law enforcement, the likelihood is that internal dynamics, as well as the revived tribal rivalries and enmities, will drive continued instability and conflict in Yemen, at great consequence to U.S. interests.

Saudi Arabia's Internal Stability

A failure in the campaign would open the House of Saud, especially King Salman and his son, Crown Prince Muhammed bin Salman, to charges of mismanagement and incompetence. It could increase tension surrounding succession and also affect the Saudi military, generating restiveness and a loss of morale. Domestic instability in Saudi Arabia would have ripple effects globally and would complicate U.S. efforts to re-stabilize the region. The Kingdom is a pillar of the global economy, owing to its role as the world's largest oil producer, and Riyadh has partnered with Washington for promoting regional stability and security since the end of World War II.

Heightened Saudi–Iranian Tension

A Coalition failure to ensure that Yemen's government remains in friendly hands would almost certainly mean that the Iranians would, once again, seek to establish a military presence in Yemen threatening Saudi Arabia's southern border. The Saudis would see a need to respond, either militarily against Iran or by destabilizing the government in Yemen. This would mean, at the very least, prolonged instability on the Saudi–Yemeni border.

As Saudi Arabia perceives a heightened threat from an Iranian-supported, Huthi-dominated regime in Sanaa, they almost certainly will expect that the United States will step up its pressure on Tehran. For their part, the Iranians may see Huthi success in Yemen as further evidence that their campaign for regional domination is succeeding. This could encourage them to become more aggressive at challenging U.S. interests, particularly in the Gulf. A pro–Iranian regime in Sanaa would also represent a continuing security concern for freedom of navigation in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. The Iranians may see that holding the global economy hostage by credibly threatening to close the Strait of Hormuz and the Bab al-Mandeb simultaneously is their most effective insurance policy against international pressure.

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Cohesion

Saudi Arabia and the UAE are unhappy over the role that Oman has played in the Yemen conflict, which they see as enabling the Huthis and facilitating Iranian intervention. Should the Huthis succeed and establish a government in Sanaa that is hostile to Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states, there will likely be fingers pointed at the Omanis from Riyadh and Abu Dhabi. A failure may also generate tension between Saudi Arabia and the UAE. The Emiratis joined the Coalition to support Saudi Arabia, but they have reservations about the conflict, are dissatisfied with many aspects of Saudi leadership, and believe the fighting has gone on too long. An unsatisfactory outcome could have repercussions for Saudi–Emirati security cooperation.

U.S.–GCC Relations

Although the United States has been heavily criticized domestically for what is perceived as open ended support for an illegitimate Saudi war on Yemen, this is not the way it is perceived in the region. The Saudis see that U.S. assistance, including arms sales and tactical and logistics support, has been grudging from the start and steadily scaled back during the conflict. While the Trump Administration has suggested that it intends to change course, details of renewed cooperation are unclear. Opposition remains strong in the U.S. Congress and among the public. The Saudis may conclude that U.S.–GCC security cooperation is a one way street. When the U.S. perceives a security challenge, it calls for GCC support. But when the reverse is true, even in an instance where the Saudis believe they are confronting an existential threat, the United States is at best a reluctant and unreliable partner.

Recommended Actions for the United States to Take This Year

The conflict in Yemen has grown more complex and can no longer be characterized primarily as a clash between two rival coalitions fighting for political power in Sanaa. Indeed, the social, economic, and political structure of the country has been fractured and Yemen's ultimate survival as a unified country, which ought to be a principal objective of U.S. policy, is not assured. In view of that reality, the United States should seek to achieve several goals this year.

Secure a Limited Political Agreement through the UN-led Negotiations

UN Security Council Resolution 2216 remains the basis for a resolution of the political conflict in Yemen. While changes in the government may come about as a result of subsequent political negotiations, they should not be determined through force or violence. A successful outcome to the negotiations would provide for: the restoration of security in Sanaa; resumption of government operations while negotiations for a new interim arrangement continue; restoration of Central Bank operations; and the return of diplomatic missions to support the process. Utilizing Oman's diplomatic channels to Iran, the willingness of the Iranian leadership to support negotiations should be assessed.[38]

Assist the Saudi-led Coalition in Ending the Conflict

Achieving an end to the fighting is the *sine qua non* of progress toward a political

resolution. Moreover, it is important to recognize that Saudi Arabia has legitimate concerns about the potential Iranian threat to its security should a pro–Iranian regime come to power in Sanaa. Limitations on U.S. assistance to the Coalition, whether through restrictions on the resupply of munitions or denying advice and assistance to Coalition armed forces is counter-productive. The United States should reengage with the Saudi military and political leadership to strengthen Saudi border security and encourage a more careful, deliberative use of military force in Yemen, limited to defensive operations and emphasizing avoiding collateral damage. Offensive military actions should only be undertaken to advance the political process.

The fundamental reality that there is no purely military solution to the threat that al-Qaeda poses has not changed. Our objective of defeating and destroying violent extremism in Yemen is a long-term challenge and it requires that we take a long view on how to achieve it.

Relieve Humanitarian Suffering

Securing the port of Hudaydah remains the key to addressing the deepening humanitarian crisis in Yemen, which must be the highest priority. Coalition determination to mount a military offensive to take the port and city of Hudaydah appears to be fading in the face of tactical obstacles as well as intense international opposition. The pause provides an opening to seek a political rather than military solution to the problem. The UN has proposed, and the government and Coalition should accept, halting plans for a military offensive and establishing a neutral third party mechanism to operate the port in exchange for a Huthi/Salih commitment to withdraw their forces from the port, city, and surrounding environs, including the road connecting Hudaydah to Sanaa. The neutral party would be responsible for inspecting all cargo, ensuring that the port was not being used in violation of the UN arms embargo, providing for unfettered access to the port for humanitarian relief organizations, and contracting with local transport companies to distribute relief supplies throughout the country.

Preserve the Goodwill of the People

AQAP's success in embedding itself within the larger Sunni resistance to the Huthi insurgency poses challenges to the United States. Legitimately concerned by al-Qaeda's ability to resurrect its presence in Yemen and potentially pose new threats to global peace and security, the United States has resumed kinetic operations to deter and defeat the organization. Although U.S. motivation is understandable and justifiable, the additional layers of complexity that we now confront in Yemen argue for extreme caution in conducting military operations targeting al-Qaeda there. The fundamental reality that there is no purely military solution to the threat that al-Qaeda poses has not changed. Our objective of defeating and destroying violent extremism in Yemen is a long-term challenge and it requires that we take a long view on how to achieve it.

Preserving the goodwill and cooperation of the Yemeni people is essential if we are to be successful, and there is no quicker way to lose that goodwill than through ill-considered military operations that generate high

numbers of innocent civilian casualties. Thus, military operations should be limited to those instances where our intelligence is impeccable, and we must maintain the standard of near certainty that there will be no collateral damage.

Recommendations for Outlying Years

If these efforts are successful this year, we should seek to accomplish additional steps next year. Without these measures, Yemen's continued descent into complete social, political, and economic collapse is all but guaranteed.

Establish a New, Time-limited Transitional Government

Based on the successful conclusion of UN-led political negotiations, the United States should support the establishment of a new, credible interim government with a mandate limited to implementation of the GCC transitional arrangement and the conclusions of the National Dialogue Conference and charged with conducting new parliamentary elections within one year.[39] During its limited tenure, the interim government can begin the process of restoring security and stability, repairing damaged infrastructure, and restarting economic activity.

Begin a Discussion of Reconstruction

The United States ought to help facilitate a pledging conference to begin a discussion of reconstruction and provide the Yemeni people with confidence that the international community will assist them moving forward. Yemen has suffered billions of dollars in damage to its infrastructure and key economic capacity. Beyond pledges for infrastructure reconstruction, the international community can provide essential assistance in institutional capacity building, especially in providing adequate schools and health facilities. In addition, GCC member states have suggested that they would consider offering Yemen full membership in the organization (Yemen participates in a number of GCC specialized committees but is not a full member). Such an offer would be very well-received by the Yemeni population. PRISM

Notes

[1] Not everyone would agree with the characterization of the implementation of the Gulf initiative as reasonably successful. See Nadwa al-Dawsari, "Breaking the Cycle of Failed Negotiations in Yemen," POMED (May 2017), and "Yemen: Is Peace Possible," International Crisis Group Middle East Report No. 167 (February 2016). I would not dispute that there were shortcomings in the process, but the implementation was as good as could have been expected given the state of political organization, weakness of the political parties and civil society, and the deep fractures, especially within the southern movement that undermined coherent policy making.

[2] Both the Huthis and Southern Movement representatives expressed unhappiness at the outcome of the National Dialogue. Several southerners either resigned in advance or refused to sign the agreement. The Huthis boycotted after their representative, Dr. Ahmad Sharifuddin, was assassinated. Southern and Huthi unhappiness was particularly focused on the decision to create six "federal" units. While there was broad, albeit not universal, agreement that Yemen should institute a federal system, the drawing of new boundary lines among the federating regions was

poorly done and was clearly intended to disadvantage the Huthis who had supported federalism in principle. (The Islah Party, the Muslim Brotherhood affiliate, disapproved of the federal system in principle.) The author had many conversations with President Hadi about this issue, arguing that the country would be better off maintaining existing governorates as the federating units. But the President was determined to re-draw the map, observing that the Yemeni people would demand to see "something new." In the end, his effort was probably the most significant cause of the failure to implement the conclusions of the National Dialogue Conference.

[3] Author observations.

[4] "Agreement on the Implementation Mechanism for the Transition Process in Yemen in Accordance with the Initiative of the Gulf Cooperation Council," Article 21(d): "Examination of the Various Issues with a National Dimension, Including the Causes of Tension in Saada." See also Haythem Mouazahem, "Yemeni Houthi Leader Committed to National Dialogue," *Al-Monitor*, posted May 20, 2013.

[5] Both on the Yemeni side and within the international community, there were extensive efforts to bring the Huthis into the transition process more constructively. The UN Special Envoy and the European Union representative, in particular, traveled frequently to Saada to meet with Abdul Malik al-Huthi and his inner circle to encourage their engagement. Despite those efforts, the Huthis remained obstructive both within the transition mechanisms and in the street.

[6] Bassam al-Khameri, "Houthi Military Exercises Continue Near Saudi Border," *Yemen Times*, March 16, 2015.

[7] The author participated in the discussions as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near East Affairs

[8] Aden wouldn't be liberated until July 2015 when UAE forces successfully expelled the Huthi/Salih occupiers.

[9] Coalition spokesmen accurately note that this leaves some 75–80 percent of Yemen's landmass in pro–government hands. But the statistic is misleading, as most Yemenis live in the 20–25 percent of the country that is contested or in the hands of the Huthi/Salih forces.

[10] Mehmood Hussain, "Saudi Intervention in Yemen and Its Impact on Saudi's Economy," *Foreign Policy News*, December 11, 2016.

[11] Handout from the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center. The Saudis provided $8.2 billion in assistance to Yemen between April 2015 and April 2017. The aid includes $847,598,580 in humanitarian aid and relief, $1,130,186,557 for aid to Yemenis in Saudi Arabia, $2.95 billion in development assistance allocated to Yemen, $2.276 billion in bilateral government assistance, and $1 billion as a deposit in the Central Bank of Yemen.

[12] International Crisis Group Middle East Report No. 167, February 9, 2016, i.

[13] Eric Schmitt and Robert Worth, "With Arms for Yemen Rebels, Iran Seeks Wider Mideast Role," *New York Times*, March 15, 2012.

[14] Barbara Starr, "Weapons Seized Off Yemen Point to Iran, U.S. Official Says," CNN, January 29, 2013.

[15] Oren Dorell, "Iranian Support for Yemen's Huthis Goes Back Years," *USA Today*, April 20, 2015.

[16] Ibid.

[17] C.J. Chivers and Eric Schmitt, "Arms Seized Off Coast of Yemen Appear to Have Been Made in Iran," *New York Times*, January 10, 2017.

[18] Sam LeGrone, "Destroyer USS *Mason* Unsuccessfully Attacked from Yemen," *U.S. Naval Institute News*, October 10, 2016.

[19] Conversation with the author.

[20] "Iranian Cleric Admits IRGC Provides Weapons to Huthis in Yemen," Iran Observed, Middle East Institute, April 20, 2017.

[21] Dale Wainwright, "Shipping Faces Fresh Yemen Mine Threat," Tradewinds: The Global Shipping News Service, April 18, 2017.

[22] Farea al-Muslimi and Adam Barron, "The Limits of US Military Power in Yemen: Why al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula Continues to Thrive," Sanaa Center for Strategic Studies, March 27, 2017, 3.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid; Finally, it is the author's experience that the Ambassador on the ground is a key player in maximizing the effectiveness of U.S. military operations, both as the main interlocutor with the host government and as the U.S. official with the most accurate perspective on the impact these operations are having on the ground. The role of the Ambassador should be preserved.

[25] "UN Seeks Help for Famine-Hit Yemen, Where a Child Dies Every 10 Minutes," Business World, April 26, 2017, S1/8.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Yemen at the UN—March 2017 Review, Sana'a Center for Strategic Studies, 5.

[28] Ibid.,7.

[29] Mohammed Ghobari, "Yemen's War-Damaged Hodeidah Port Struggles to Bring in Vital Supplies," Reuters, November 24, 2016.

[30] Yemen at the UN— March 2017 Review, 3.

[31] Author interviews.

[32] "Instruments of Pain: Conflict and Famine in Yemen," International Crisis Group Middle East Briefing No. 52, (April 13, 2017), p. 4.

[33] "Subject: Yemeni Salaries, An Update & Proposal," Letter from Hisham S. Abdullah, "Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sana'a" to H.E. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, UNSG Special Envoy to Yemen, April 15, 2017.

[34] Statement by Khalid al-Abbadi, Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Yemen, "Yemen—The Way Forward," A Yemen Crisis Workshop Co-sponsored by the U.S. National Defense University/NESA Center and the Gulf Research Center, May 5, 2017.

[35] "Yemen: Is Peace Possible," 12.

[36] There is no reason to believe that a re-division of Yemen would stop at the borders that existed between the Yemen Arab Republic and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen prior to 1990. In 2011, the author hosted a lunch for a visiting senior U.S. Government official to meet with southern Yemenis. The discussion was dominated by representatives from Aden and Abyan, who argued on behalf of a re-separation of the country. Several guests from the eastern part of the country remained silent until the end of the lunch when they launched into a harsh indictment of the Aden/Abyan contingent and made clear that, should the country divide, they wanted an independent state of their own, comprising Hadramawt, al-Mahra, and Socotra. The other Yemenis were as nonplussed as the Americans.

[37] Maysaa Shuja al-Deen, "The Endless Battle in Taiz," Atlantic Council, April 26, 2017, 2.

[38] The Saudis argue that Yemen is an "Arab problem" and want to exclude Iran from the discussion. But Iran is a party to the conflict playing an unconstructive role. It is deeply involved in supporting the Huthi/Salih forces and exacerbating Yemen's internal problems. Hardline elements around Ayatollah Khamenei, especially the IRGC, have dominated Iran's Yemen policy until now. Deepening tensions between Iran and the Sunni Arab Gulf states of the GCC, however, are not in Iran's interest. Moreover, there is every reason to believe that Iran's leadership fears that the current confrontation with the United States could lead to a war, with devastating consequences for Iran. Recent efforts by President Rouhani and Foreign Minister Zarif to engage friendlier GCC leaders in a dialogue to reduce tensions suggest that many in the Iranian leadership recognize this reality and would like to find a way to tamp down the regional tensions. Ending the conflict in Yemen would be the easiest and least costly avenue that the Iranians could pursue should they decide to adjust their strategy to the new conditions. There may be a window of opportunity following the upcoming Presidential elections to test whether the Iranians might be willing to encourage the Huthis to return to the negotiating table and find a peaceful resolution to the conflict. The Omanis would be the best positioned of the GCC countries to test this proposition.

[39] Any agreement on a new interim arrangement should not be open ended. The two-year transition envisioned by the GCC initiative has already extended to six years. There are only a few steps left to complete the implementation and those should be concluded rapidly. One outstanding issue will be the fate of Ali Abdullah Salih and his family. Permitting Salih to return to any position of authority, either directly or by remote control through his family, will make all of the efforts and the suffering of the last six years meaningless. Salih should be required to abandon his positions and leave Yemen permanently without any further involvement in Yemen's public affairs. Alternatively, he should be stripped of his immunity and prosecuted.

Photos

Page 16. Photo by Email4Mobile available at < https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yemeni_Revolution#/media/File:Yemeni_Protests_4-Apr-2011_P01.JPG>. Licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share alike 3.0 unreported, < https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/deed.en>. Reproduced unaltered.

U.S. Navy/Amanda Williams

In September 2005, U.S. Coast Guard Vice Admiral Thad Allen, principle federal official for the federal response to Hurricane Katrina, addresses the crew of the USS *Iwo Jima*. The Navy's involvement in the humanitarian assistance operations was led by the Federal Emergency Management Agency in conjunction with DOD.

Leading the National Security Enterprise

BY RONALD SANDERS

Today's complex, chaotic, and interconnected world has forced us to rethink some of our fundamental assumptions about the nature of leadership, especially when it comes to leading whole-of-government or even whole-of-nation efforts. This is especially the case in the U.S. national security enterprise (hereafter referred to as the NSE or enterprise) where a complex, diverse constellation of military and civilian agencies must wield both hard and soft power on behalf of the United States. For various reasons, that enterprise has become our nation's "first responder" when it comes to almost any challenge, from traditional military operations to a myriad of nonmilitary ones, to include disaster and pandemic relief and humanitarian assistance (the Ebola crisis comes to mind), post–conflict reconstruction, and even nation-building. Irrespective of the challenge, our nation's political leaders look to senior officers—particularly but not exclusively those in uniform—who are in, and/or who have been developed by our NSE to lead the way.

However, are they prepared for what we ask of them? As former U.S. Coast Guard Commandant, Admiral Thad Allen and others (including myself) have argued, almost everything of any consequence that government does today is collaboratively co-produced by a complex collection of public and private entities, from other agencies and levels of government, to nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and even other countries, and international bodies.[1] This is becoming the "new normal" for national leaders—whether they are elected, or in the case of senior career military and civilian officials, appointed or selected—and it has made their job exponentially more difficult. From the short-term dramas of pandemics, hurricanes, ecological disasters, and "lone wolf" terrorist attacks to the decades-long challenges of homeland security, energy independence, the health of our veterans and, at the extreme, great power competition and conflict—virtually everything government does requires the

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concerted efforts of complex networks that are comprised of multiple actors and organizations.

In this regard, there is a realization among senior government leaders, both military and civilian, that the national security challenges they face can no longer be addressed by individual agencies or commands, each narrowly (even myopically) focused on its own specialized authorities and responsibilities. Rather, as those challenges become even more complex and interdependent, leaders at all levels—all with potentially overlapping jurisdictions and diverse areas of expertise—are required to collaborate with one another towards some common mission outcome. Thus, NSE leaders must have the *meta*-leadership skills to reach beyond their immediate organizations and mobilize a network of interdependent actors to achieve a shared mission and in so doing, achieve outcomes that are greater than the sum of their individual parts.[2]

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A New Kind of NSE

For purposes of this paper, NSE is defined in two ways. First, in concept, it represents all of the various departments and agencies, mostly though not exclusively federal, that have some responsibility for the U.S. national and homeland security missions broadly defined. This includes the "usual suspects" like the Defense Department (DOD) and the elements of the Intelligence Community (IC), but it also includes parts of the Departments of Energy, State, Justice, and Commerce, as well as more specialized agencies and departmental subcomponents like the United States Agency for International Development, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the National Oceanic and Administrative Administration.

Not every element of that constellation of organizations will be relevant to a particular circumstance—indeed, that is part of the leadership challenge—so the second definition is more situational. In that context, the NSE is that operational subset of those institutional entities that may be necessary to accomplish a specific national or international mission sanctioned by the United States as relevant to its national security. These situationally relevant constellations can include federal, state, and local government departments and agencies, their subordinate bureaus and divisions, and even tribal governments. But they can also encompass the private sector and not-for-profit NGOs, the United Nations, the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), even organizations like the International Red Cross, Doctors Without Borders, and their regional counterparts and analogs.

And a New Kind of National Security Leader

Whatever the combination, our national leaders increasingly look to someone in or from the NSE to lead them, even when the

national security implications may not seem so apparent. The challenge may be strategic and long-term, to address global issues such as migration, drought, and climate change (yes, that too has been defined as a national security issue), or regional ones such as the Syrian civil war and its attendant refugee crisis, North Korea's bellicosity, or the fragile European Union. Or it may be more operational, such as border security, counterterrorism, or emergency management during a disaster.

While the composition and purpose of the constellation may vary—indeed, it almost certainly will—there is one common denominator: the mission at hand involves multiple actors and organizations, each semi-autonomous or independent, yet bound together to achieve a common task. And it needs someone to lead them. Take the Ebola crisis of just a few years ago. When it suddenly metastasized—from something tragic but far from our shores to an issue that has all sorts of intertwined international and domestic implications ranging from disease control protocols to border security—the challenges were enormous. Yet who did the White House (and the world) look to for leadership in that regard? Civilian and military leaders drawn mostly from the NSE to coordinate the various elements of this complex enterprise.[3]

In other words, these whole-of-government and whole-of-nation challenges are extra-organizational in nature (a characteristic that has significant implications for the development of enterprise leaders), and they require a leader who can achieve unity of effort—among multiple entities, each with its own agenda, interests, culture, and politics—without the luxury of unity of command. To do so requires a whole new set of leadership competencies that, with some exception, have not been deliberately or formally developed by the NSE.

What Makes for an Effective NSE Leader?

It is clear that the effective NSE leader needs to have a deep understanding of the institutional, organizational, and (especially) the individual actors that comprise the enterprise, and that does not mean just an understanding of their missions and structures and budgets and bureaucratic processes. Although those are important, the enterprise leader must also understand their mindsets—a product of their histories and cultures, their traditions and stories, even their heroes and lore—if he or she is going to be successful. The NSE leader must also acquire the empathy to see their shared challenge from a collective, inter-subjective point of view, rather than a strictly parochial one.

Second, the NSE leader must be able to connect the dots across that enterprise; that is, to be able to see and understand the NSE as a dynamic, interconnected social system, with complex formal and informal interrelationships and inter-dependencies, positive and negative feedback loops, etc. that exist between and among the enterprise's constituent organizations. The leader must also understand how the relevant parts of the NSE interact with those other elements of the enterprise that may act in opposition to its interest and objectives. Finally, since those organizations are populated—and more importantly, led—by people, the NSE leader must also be able to grasp the complex social networks that exist within and among those counterparts (formal and otherwise) who can

influence action, build new relational networks, and most importantly, leverage them to achieve the aim of the enterprise.

Senior officials or commanders in one or more of its constituent organizations will rarely have any sort of formal, chain of command authority over the entire network of extra-organizational components that are critical to the success of the enterprise; however, those senior officials may still be held personally accountable for that success.

Finally, the enterprise leader needs to be able to lead without formal authority, well beyond his or her official chain of command. This quality distinguishes the NSE leader from his or her more internally-focused colleagues, for while they too must be able to exercise influence over peers and colleagues of equal stature and rank, they do so in the context of a shared chain of command that ultimately leads to the head of the component, agency or department—where the buck stops. In most cases, the NSE leader enjoys no such luxury. Thus, while in theory, all such leaders and their organizations report to the President, there is no such practical reality, and without effective enterprise leadership, interagency impasses often fester, or worse, become muddled and mired in the search for the lowest common denominator consensus.

In today's NSE, inter-dependence (or inter-reliance) is the rule, rather than the exception. Senior officials or commanders in one or more of its constituent organizations will rarely have any sort of formal, chain of command authority over the entire network of extra-organizational components that are critical to the success of the enterprise; however, those senior officials may still be held personally accountable for that success. Today this is an all-too-common contradiction to the classic axiom that authority must match accountability. To be successful, the NSE leader requires certain boundary-spanning, net-centric competencies and characteristics that are fundamentally different from those implicitly intra-organizational competencies necessary to lead any one of the enterprise's organizational components.

To be sure, this unity of effort can be achieved on a transactional basis. Two or more organizations can achieve common ends simply by barter and exchange of information, resources, people, even promises (i.e. "if you do this for me, I will do this for you"). However, that transactional approach can be fragile and often results in a "whole" that is less than the sum of its parts. A NSE built on transactions may not be resilient enough for the challenges it must confront, and while some transactions are inevitable, a necessary precondition to enterprise, they are not likely to be resilient enough to weather the mission turbulence that is also inevitable. To be up to its wicked task, an enterprise must be built on a shared sense of mission, shared values and interests, shared experiences, and trust. And it takes a special kind of leader to be able to create and leverage those conditions across an enterprise.

This kind of challenge is largely immune to the hard power of chain of command authority. Instead, it requires collaborative, integrated, soft power leadership to mobilize and unify the complex network of co-producers who share any given mission space. This

has significant implications for leadership development. While these competencies are now required (and expected) of senior NSE leaders, they are not specifically developed in them. This needs to change.

Developing NSE Leaders: A Brief History

While it may not use precisely these terms, certain parts of the NSE recognized the nascent need for this kind of integrated, boundary-spanning leadership, at least in the military domain. More than 30 years ago, a few visionaries realized (after some painful lessons on a small island named Grenada) that to effectively fight—and more importantly, win—modern wars, our armed forces needed to operate in a far more integrated way. In response, they made *jointness* part of our commissioned officer corps' genetic code, the result of the Goldwater–Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986.[4]

And as a practical matter, that integration was codified by the more mechanical but no less effective mandate that a military officer must complete at least one joint duty assignment as a prerequisite to promotion to flag rank. That requirement forced the development of military leaders who, at least in theory, could focus on the entire domain of hard power combat arms. Many attribute the phenomenal success of the U.S. armed forces during and since Desert Shield/Desert Storm to its unifying effects. However, as farsighted as the NSE was in that regard, even it never anticipated—nor prepared its leaders for—the challenges of the Ebola plague, nation-building, or countering violent Islamic extremism.

Nevertheless, while the notion of jointness represented a great leap forward in leadership, the painful lessons that led to it had to be relearned by the U.S. Intelligence Community (IC) on September 11, 2001. The tragic events that transpired are all too familiar, and they need not be recounted here; however, it is useful to consider the reasons for the apparent failure of the federal government's intelligence and law enforcement agencies to detect and prevent the attacks.

In that regard, the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States (also known as the 9/11 Commission) concluded that among other things, the IC lacked senior leaders who had the wherewithal to lead the entire U.S. Intelligence Community, and in so doing, know, understand, and most importantly, integrate all of the IC's collection, analytic, and kinetic capabilities to deal with the terrorist threat as it evolved. The more-or-less contemporaneous Presidential Commission on the Intelligence Capabilities of the United States Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction in Iraq (otherwise known as the WMD Commission), reached a similar conclusion concerning that particular intelligence failure: just as with 9/11, the IC lacked—and desperately needed—senior leaders who had an enterprise-wide perspective.

Those conclusions—as well as the lessons that precipitated Goldwater–Nichols—were not lost on the subsequent drafters of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (IRTPA), and they mandated a similar approach in the IC. Specifically, the IRTPA required that the newly created Director of National Intelligence (DNI) "seek to duplicate joint [military] officer management policies established by…the Goldwater–Nichols

Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986." More specifically, it authorized the DNI to "prescribe mechanisms to facilitate the rotation of [civilian] personnel of the intelligence community through various elements of the intelligence community in the course of their careers" and to make such interagency assignments "a condition of promotion to such positions within the intelligence community as the Director shall specify," all in an effort to mirror the military requirement established by Goldwater–Nichols.[5]

With those statutory mandates in-hand, the Office of the DNI (ODNI) established a civilian equivalent of the military's joint duty policy, requiring IC professionals to complete at least one extended interagency assignment as a mandatory prerequisite for promotion to senior executive rank—the civilian equivalent of a general officer in the military.[6] This requirement applied to each of the autonomous senior services that covered civilian leaders within the IC, including the "regular" Senior Executive Service (SES), as well as the DOD and FBI SES corp(s), and the CIA's Senior Intelligence Service.[7]

And for those that completed such a civilian joint duty assignment (or JDA, as it came to be known) and became eligible to compete for such promotions, ODNI also identified and validated a set of competencies that were intended to describe the qualities of someone capable of "Leading the Intelligence Enterprise," which collectively served as the basis for rating and ranking candidates for such promotions.[8] Those requirements remain in effect to this day, and they have produced a senior leadership cadre in the IC that is close to 100 percent "joint" in nature.

However, the IC was not the only part of the Federal government to recognize this emerging leadership requirement. At about the same time, then Deputy Secretary of Defense Gordon England established a similar set of requirements for the estimated 1,300 senior civilian career executives within DOD. Because it lacked a legislative mandate comparable to the Goldwater–Nichols Act or the IC's Intelligence Reform Act, the Department chose not to establish interagency mobility (and the leadership competencies associated with it) as a mandatory prerequisite for entry into those senior executive ranks; however, DOD officials did make a mobility assignment after an individual's initial SES selection a mandatory prerequisite for promotion to higher-than-entry-level SES rank.[9] Unfortunately, for various reasons, the strict enforcement of those requirements has been uneven, and the Department's civilian executive corps reflects that fact.

Other parts of the Federal government's NSE also saw the need for these enterprise leadership competencies during and immediately after Hurricane Katrina, when unconnected federal, state, and local relief efforts made a horrendous natural disaster even worse. However, there was a silver lining of sorts. The Homeland Security Council's after-action review of the disaster led to the issuance of Executive Order 13434, *National Security Professional Development* (NSPD), by President George W. Bush, which established its namesake program.[10] Taking a page from similar efforts (and antecedents!) in DOD and the IC, the NSPD program was specifically designed to develop the very same

enterprise leadership competencies across the agencies that made up the U.S. national security establishment. In so doing, it sought to produce enterprise leaders who could successfully lead a whole-of-government/whole-of-nation response to the next Katrina.[11]

Unfortunately, that well-intentioned vision was never fully realized in the Bush Administration, and for years thereafter, the NSPD program atrophied from benign neglect. The U.S. Office of Personnel Management made a laudable but belated attempt to reinvigorate the program in July of 2016, issuing guidance that encouraged agencies to identify those senior civilian positions in the NSE that require interagency experience as a technical qualification requirement (although not necessarily a leadership one); and it urged the use of temporary and permanent career-broadening assignments, as well as existing inter-agency

The 17 elements of the U.S. Intelligence Community. Use of this graphic does not reflect an official endorsement by the IC.

rotation programs like the one sponsored by the President's Management Council, to develop candidates who could meet that requirement. It also commended agencies to afford those candidates who had actually acquired such interagency leadership experience "strong preference" when making selections for those executive positions.[12] However, as is evident, this guidance was largely hortatory and its impact accordingly negligible.

Developing the "New" National Security Leader

The goal of Executive Order 13434—that is, the establishment of a professional development program for the entire NSE—remains as valid today as it was when it was first issued more than a decade ago, perhaps even more so. That Enterprise has an emergent but no less urgent need for a cadre of senior leaders, both military and civilian, who understand all of its complexities and interconnectedness, and more importantly, who have the competencies to be able to lead effectively across the entire national security mission space.

However, as important as that cadre may be to the effective operation of the NSE overall, the actual development and deployment of its individual leaders remains the internal—and largely unconnected—responsibility of its individual departments and agencies (and in the case of DOD, its individual components). For the most part, those individual agencies make the day-to-day decisions so crucial to leader development—who to develop, promote, reward, assign—and this means that the senior leaders they produce reflect their individual, agency-centric missions and cultures. The net result: senior leaders, even those in uniform, who find it increasingly difficult to deal with the sorts of whole-of-government and whole-of-nation challenges that they are asked to lead.

Moreover, those individual agency-level leadership development efforts have been uneven at best. For example, while the U.S. military sets the gold standard for uniformed leader development, particularly of the joint kind, its civilian leadership development efforts lag far behind. Yet even those efforts surpass most other civilian national security agencies, which under-invest in leadership development of even the most basic kind, especially when compared to DOD overall. And as one would expect, the situation is even worse at the enterprise level. Only the 17 elements of the IC—a relatively small fraction of the total NSE—operate under a common, interdepartmental leader development framework established by the DNI.

Thus, in my view, the NSE urgently needs to develop and execute an enterprise-wide executive-level talent management strategy that is designed to deliberately develop and deploy its senior military and civilian leaders across its entire potential mission space. And that strategy must include (1) some sort of multi-agency governance structure to devise it, and then to manage its day-to-day execution; (2) the identification and validation of the leadership competencies that are critical to leadership success at the enterprise level; (3) a curriculum of formal enterprise leadership education, perhaps including the NSE equivalent of the National Defense University; and lastly (4) policies and processes to require and manage mobility across the entire spectrum of the enterprise, as the most effective way to acquire and demonstrate those competencies.

Competencies as the DNA of Enterprise Leadership

These days, the science of leadership and leader development typically starts with competencies…the knowledges, skills, abilities, and attributes that taken together, make for an effective leader. In effect, those competencies represent the DNA of an organization's leadership, and to stretch the human genome analogy a bit, there are almost as many leadership competency models in the literature (and in practice) as there are combinations of chromosomes. That said, the competencies required of senior leaders in the NSE are emergent, and with some exception, they are not likely part of most traditional (that is, existing) leadership competency models, except perhaps by accident.

In that regard, we must acknowledge the inherent limitations of those traditional leadership competency models. The vast majority—especially those preached and practiced in our own NSE—implicitly assume that senior leaders enjoy authority commensurate with their accountability, clear unity of command, and the hard power of positional authority; indeed, even though those models may advocate a kinder, gentler application of that hard power, the superior-subordinate relationships that underlie it remain, albeit unspoken. Thus, when the leader speaks, gently or otherwise, his or her subordinates are expected to obey. However, while NSE leaders will regularly face challenges that are largely immune to the hard power of chain-of-command authority, the leadership competencies necessary to do so have yet to be identified for the NSE writ large.

The IC and DOD offer a good start in that regard, having done so for their respective senior civilians—and their respective parts of the larger enterprise. Their competency models suggest that among other things, NSE leaders must be able to (1) understand the institutional, organizational, and individual actors that comprise that mission space, to include their cultural mindsets and even their bureaucratic dialects; (2) conceptualize those actors as a single dynamic social system, with complex formal and informal interrelationships and interdependencies; (3) identify the patterns and networks of influence between and among those individual actors and organizations; and (4) build and leverage those networks to achieve the collective objectives of the enterprise.

But that is only a start. If the NSE is to begin to develop a cadre of senior officers, both military and civilian, capable of leading that enterprise, the first order of business should be to identify and validate (in the technical sense of the word) the competencies required to do so.[13]

Mobility to Develop and Demonstrate Enterprise Leadership Competencies

Assuming the NSE can identify and validate the competencies necessary to lead it, how does it—and its constituent organizations—go about developing leaders who can demonstrate them? Given the likely nature of these competencies, enterprise-wide mobility may be the single most effective way of doing so, but this prospect is far easier said than done.

The good news: mobility is something embedded in the career development paradigm (indeed, the very culture) of our

armed forces, at least since the end of World War II. And as previously noted, the U.S. military's operational definition of that term was significantly broadened in 1986 by the requirement in the Goldwater–Nichols Act for one or more joint assignments as an essential part of an officer's career path. The not so good news? Those joint assignments are still largely confined to other military components in the DOD and do not begin to prepare the most senior military officers for the challenges associated with the even broader NSE.

However, it is even more problematic on the civilian side of the enterprise. In theory, all of the various senior civilian services encompassed by that NSE (like the Senior Executive Service) assume mobility as a condition of promotion into executive ranks; however, what post–promotion mobility there is tends to be insular, that is, within the senior executive's "parent" department or agency. Thus, while Senior Foreign Service officers are globally mobile, their mobility is almost exclusively within the confines of the State Department. Similarly, while senior civilian executives within DOD's military departments have become more mobile of late, that mobility is almost exclusively within their home service.

More importantly for our purposes, unlike the military, civilian mobility requirements generally attend only after promotion to senior rank, rather than as a prerequisite thereto. In other words, it is generally not required as part of civilian leader development. There are some exceptions: for the most part, the military departments expect some degree of mobility as a precondition to a civilian's promotion to senior executive rank; however, it is not mandatory, and when it does occur, it is almost exclusively within the civilian's "home" service. Only in the IC is interagency mobility a mandatory prerequisite for promotion to senior rank, and it is specifically intended to ensure that senior promotion candidates are prepared to lead the entire IC, and not just a single agency.

Thus, it is clear that if the NSE wants senior military and civilian leaders with the competencies to lead it, it must do two things. First, for military officers, it must broaden the concept of joint duty—especially as a precursor to flag rank—to include assignments beyond the Combatant Commands, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and the Joint Staff, to other departments and agencies, multi and international organizations like NATO and the UN, and even the private sector, via vehicles like the Secretary of Defense's Corporate Fellows Program. To be sure, many of those assignments occur today, and officers receive some joint service credit for completing them, but they are treated as "consolation prizes" for those not selected for a coveted tour of duty to a Combatant Command, the Joint Staff, or a senior service school.

For civilians, the answer is even more straightforward: mobility should be a mandatory qualification requirement for senior rank, just like it is for civilian professionals in the IC. That is, before an NSE civilian is even considered for promotion to flag-equivalent rank. And like their military analogs, civilian mobility assignments should not be limited to their home agency. If the objective is to prepare civilians to share the burden of leading the NSE, their professional development must include assignments across that enterprise. This should sound familiar, as it is exactly what Executive

Order 13434 had in mind when it established the now largely moribund NSPD program.

One can argue that pre–promotion (developmental) mobility need not be a necessary prerequisite for all senior national security civilians, especially at the entry executive level. After all, there will always be a need for highly specialized technical or functional civilian executives in the NSE, as well as those who are intimately familiar with a particular agency's mission. However, I would contend that even the NSE's more mundane internal challenges—administrative, technical, managerial, etc.—would benefit from leaders who have had these cross-cutting experiences.

Toward a Senior Leader Talent Management Strategy

It should be apparent by now that the 21st century national security environment demands senior NSE leaders who are able to see the big picture, take a whole-of-government point of view, employ certain enterprise leadership competencies to overcome agency-centric stovepipes, and have the resilience to achieve interagency, intergovernmental, and/or international unity of effort regardless of the challenge. And thoughtfully planned, increasingly responsible developmental mobility assignments, starting well before an individual becomes a senior officer or official, may be the most effective way to develop those competencies.[14]

All mobility assignments, developmental and otherwise, must be managed at the enterprise-level as part of an integrated talent management strategy, but today, no such corporate mechanism exists to do so. The problem is that as a practical matter, no one official actually leads the NSE, so developing and executing such a senior leader development strategy itself becomes an exercise in collaborative soft power, perhaps led by the President's National Security Advisor or a specially designated subset of the National Security Council's Principals Committee.

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The spotty history of Executive Order 13434 is instructive in this regard. President Bush initially vested responsibility for implementing his Order with the Office of Personnel Management, but after several months of relative inaction—and the personal intervention of the Deputy Director for Management within the Office of Management and Budget—that responsibility was transferred to OMB. Thereafter, that same Deputy Director took it upon himself to bring a sense of urgency to the initiative (after all, who knew when the next Katrina would hit?) and significant progress was made during the last two years of the Bush Administration. As the Obama Administration took office, those involved in the program were optimistic that this momentum could be sustained, but despite some early hopeful signs—President

Obama's newly-appointed National Security Advisor was among a group of current and former national security thought leaders who had endorsed the concept as part of a report on modernizing the Goldwater–Nichols Act—that optimism turned out to be short-lived, and implementation has remained stagnant for much of the past eight years.

So when it comes to the development and execution of a senior officer talent management strategy for the NSE, "who will be in charge?" remains the most vexing question. However, when it comes to the strategy itself, successful examples exist. For example, DOD comes close, with senior military assignments (including joint ones) centrally managed by the individual services and the Joint Staff under broad Department-wide policy guidelines. As noted, DOD has also established similar policy guidelines for the development and deployment of its civilian executives, as well as a governing body—the Defense Executive Advisory Board (DEAB)—to manage them. Established by a DOD Directive and nominally chaired by the Deputy Secretary, the DEAB conducts regular executive talent reviews, recommending decisions about selection, development, and deployment across the agency; however, DOD tends to focus more on its top career civilians (tiers two and three of its three-tiered structure) in the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the "fourth estate" of defense agencies, leaving the military services to manage their own civilian executive cadres under the aegis of the Department's overarching policy directive.[15]

The IC takes a similar federated approach, with each of the six cabinet departments and two executive agencies (ODNI and CIA) retaining "ownership" over their respective senior civilian executives—together, they total more than all of DOD—and managing them accordingly. Moreover, the larger intelligence subcomponents of those departments—like the National Geo-Spatial Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, and the FBI—also have separate approaches to talent management.[16] Thus, while the coordination of senior executive development and deployment does occur in this federated system, it is far less formal than DOD's military and civilian mechanisms.[17]

Most importantly, DOD and the IC have demonstrated that senior civilian leader development (to include developmental mobility assignments) can be managed across cabinet departments, military services, and executive agencies *without* asking the heads of those individual departments and agencies to give up legal "ownership" of their senior leaders. The IC's version of this federated model—in which its component departments voluntarily subscribe to common, multi-departmental leader development framework—offers a way ahead in that regard.[18] But to say that even this federated approach threatens all sorts of bureaucratic rice bowls (each agency tends to view its senior officers and executives for its "internal use only") is an understatement, and the resistance to such a notion will be considerable. Yet it must be overcome if the nation wants senior military and civilian leaders who are able to effectively lead the NSE.

PRISM

Notes

[1] *Building a 21st Century Senior Executive Service: Ensuring Leadership Excellence in our Federal Government, ed. Ronald Sanders* (National Academy of Public Administration, 2017). See also *Tackling Wicked Government Problems: A Practical Guide for Enterprise Leader*, Nickerson and Sanders, ed., (Brookings Institution Press, second edition 2014).

[2] Adapted from *Building a 21st Century Senior Executive Service*, Sanders, ed., (National Academy of Public Administration, 2017). See also See *Tackling Wicked Government Problems*. See also Marcus, L., et all, "Crisis preparedness and Crisis Response: The meta-Leadership Model and Method," in D. Kamien, ed., *McGraw-Hill Homeland Security Handbook*. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2012).

[3] As well as a special military-like "czar" (Ron McCain, who demonstrated many of the qualities of a NSE leader) appointed by—and reporting directly to—to the President, with the implicit power of that office.

[4] Goldwater–Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, Pub. L. No. 99-433 (1986).

[5] Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004, Pub. L. No. 108-458, 118 Stat. 3638 (2004).

[6] In the interest of full disclosure, this author led that effort for the DNI. As noted, the IC has far more senior civilian positions than DOD does flag officers and career executives.

[7] Office of the Director of National Intelligence; Intelligence Community Directive No. 660, Intelligence Community Civilian Joint Duty Program (2013), available at <https://fas.org/irp/dni/icd/icd-660.pdf>.

[8] Office of the Director of National Intelligence; Intelligence Community Directive No. 610, Competency Directories for the Intelligence Community Workforce (2010), available at <https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/ICD/ICD_610.pdf>.

[9] Goldwater–Nichols Act of 1986. See also Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004. See also U.S. Department of Defense Directive No. 1400.25, Vol. 1403 (1996), DOD Civilian Personnel Management System.

[10] Exec. Order No. 13434, National security professional development, May 17, 2007, available at <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/WCPD-2007-05-21/pdf/WCPD-2007-05-21-Pg650.pdf>.

[11] Ibid.

[12] *National Security Professional Development (NSPD) Interagency Personnel Rotations Program Guidance* [OPM letter, June 2016], available at <https://www.chcoc.gov/content/national-security-professional-development-nspd-interagency-personnel-rotations-program-0>. In its most recent NSPD guidance, OPM recommends the PMC program and encourages agencies to give those who complete its required 6-month rotational assignment "strong preference" in SES positions that require a whole-of-government perspective.

[13] According to the Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures (at chapter 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations, §1607), an organization must demonstrate an empirical relationship between the requirement for a particular competency and actual success on the job. Many of the leadership competencies proffered by existing models have not been validated in that technical sense of that word, in part because validation can be a difficult and time consuming process; however, it is legally necessary if those competencies are to be used to make personnel decisions, like who gets selected or promoted to key leadership positions. Note that for the most part, the military is exempt from the Uniform Guidelines. Of course, that begs the "who is in charge question," but even without its answer, it may be possible the members of the NSE to come to some agreement on a set of essential leadership competencies.

[14] *Building a 21st Century Senior Executive Service*.

[15] U.S. Department of Defense Directive No. 1400.25, Vol. 1403 (1996), DOD Civilian Personnel Management System.

[16] Federated Human Resource Management in the Federal Government: The Intelligence Community Model (Thompson, IBM Center for the Business of Government, 2010), available at <http://www.businessofgovernment.org/report/federated-human-resource-management-federal-government-intelligence-community-model>.

[17] It is interesting to note that DOD's civilian intelligence executives are not included in the DEAB's talent review.

[18] Ibid.

U.S. Department of the Treasury

The *Intelligence Authorization Act of 2004* established the Office of Intelligence and Analysis within the U.S. Department of Treasury.

21st Century Intelligence

The Need for a One-Team-One-Fight Approach

BY LESLIE IRELAND

We've been through this before. Now we're just waiting to see how soon it fails." As I put down the phone, the dismissive words about integration from one of the Iran watchers within the Intelligence Community (IC) resonated in my ears. In November 2005, less than two months into my role as the first Iran Mission Manager for the Director of National Intelligence (DNI), I was face-to-face with the unfolding skepticism the IC felt about the implementation of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevent Act (IRTPA) of 2004 that reorganized the Community and created the DNI position.[1] In retrospect, I am thankful for those words. They braced me for the challenges that lay ahead and helped shape my approach to integrating IC efforts on Iran. They were not far from the truth. I had been part of a number of "tiger" or "hard target" teams assembled to tackle particular intelligence challenges. They saw success in discreet areas that tapered off after the team was disbanded or new concerns siphoned off resources. The challenge for integration now was how to make it sustainable and enduring beyond changes in leadership. I am also thankful for the person who spoke those words. By the end of my three-year tenure, they were a champion for integration and a big supporter of the mission management concept.

The Robb–Silberman Commission—commonly known as the Iraq Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission, identified this concept in its March 2005 report to President George W. Bush that famously concluded the "IC was dead wrong in almost all of its pre-war judgements about Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. This was a major intelligence failure." The IC was "not a community in any meaningful sense," rather, it was a "loose confederation of 15 separate intelligence entities." No single individual or office within the IC was responsible for getting the answers right on the most pressing intelligence questions. According to the report,

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IC elements were "allocating among intelligence priorities in a way that seemed sensible to them, but were not optimal for a community-wide perspective." In essence, the Community's aggregate support was far less than the sum of its parts.

As the Iran Mission Manager, I could see across the business lines of the other 16 intelligence agencies as well as Iran's business lines, such as support for terrorism, development of weapons of mass destruction, and foreign policy objectives.[3] Iran does not address those issues in isolation—why should we? And it was not just important that I be able to see across the entire Iran problem set. A core team of Iran watchers from across the IC—responsible for collection and analysis—needed that visibility as well. Working together, and armed with knowledge of each other's capabilities and the direction of U.S. policy, we moved forward on addressing strategic intelligence gaps.

The goal of this integration was to provide the President and his national security team with timely and accurate information from which to make informed policy decisions about Iran. For the first time, all intelligence agencies were welcome to contribute intelligence and analysis to the President's Daily Brief (PDB), once the nearly exclusive purview of the CIA.[4] Mission managers represented the IC, and any differing views within the Community, at National Security Council deputies meetings that informed U.S. policy discussions. This integrated Iran effort also allowed the IC to concentrate on a honed set of priorities keyed to the direction of U.S. policy. In 2005, the Iran mission was hampered by a plethora of "number one" priorities. So many, in fact, that some collectors were conflicted about where to place resources. The value of establishing priorities on enduring challenges cannot be underestimated. Building or developing capabilities in collection and analysis can take years. A colleague at one intelligence agency recently told me that the Iran priorities set out in 2006 caused them to develop the accesses necessary to provide the intelligence the Obama Administration needed to enter and conclude negotiations with Iran under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.[5]

In 2006, Under Secretary Stuart Levey, the first head of Treasury's Office of Terrorism and Financial Intelligence (TFI), approached me to ask that intelligence collectors expand their aperture to include information on Iranian financial flows. The Treasury Department wanted to increase its efforts to use sanctions as part of U.S. policy on Iran. The status of the dollar as the world's reserve currency, the central role of the U.S. financial sector in the global economy, and the aversion bankers have for negative risk make Treasury's ability to cut-off access to the U.S. financial sector a powerful and persuasive tool for the U.S. government. The impact on the target of sanctions can be powerful and persuasive, too. For example, sanctions can make it more difficult for terrorists to raise and/or move money and to conduct operations, frustrate the ability of proliferators to obtain critical materials and equipment, or even cause broader negative impact on a country's economy. Treasury's newly-minted intelligence element, the Office of Intelligence and Analysis (OIA) under the direction of Assistant Secretary Janice Gardner, needed the additional financial intelligence to provide the unique analysis

Treasury policy and enforcement would use to support sanctions programs.[6]

Treasury analysts knew well the value of following financial flows. Money moves for a specific purpose between individuals or organizations that know and trust each other. There is nothing casual about the relationship. It provides insights about personalities, relationships, networks, and patterns of life or activity. Stopping what seems like a small amount of money can have a significant impact, particularly for the individual or organization depending on it. And like water running through a river, money finds a way to move again even after it hits an obstacle. Following "the money" is a full time job. This early work by Treasury/OIA would lead to near-term and long-term integrated efforts that would move the use of tracking money flows beyond sanctions to addressing the broad range of threats to U.S. national security. That near-term integration would be in an active war zone—Iraq.

Multi-National Forces–Iraq (MNF–I) was charged with, amongst other tasks, building Iraqi security forces from scratch and enabling them to be carry more of the burden themselves. In the face of the insurgency that started in summer 2003 and intensified in spring 2004, it was particularly challenging. In a September 26, 2004 *Washington Post* Op-ed Lieutenant General David Petraeus, then the Commander of Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq (MNSTC–I), said trying to build Iraqi security forces in the face of multiple insurgent groups was "akin to repairing an aircraft while in flight—and while being shot at."[7] Something had to be done to give MNSTC–I and the nascent Iraqi security forces much needed breathing room.

In 2005, the National Security Council directed the creation of the Iraq Threat Finance Cell (ITFC) to "enhance the collection, analysis, and dissemination of timely and relevant financial intelligence to combat the insurgency." Under the joint leadership of Treasury/OIA and DOD, the ITFC for the first time integrated military, civilian and law enforcement analysts in theater who used financial information to define and track insurgent networks, help inform counterinsurgency operations and DOD debriefings of detainees, and aid efforts by the Government of Iraq to build its own counter-threat finance capabilities. The cell grew to more than 30 officers at its height. In addition to analysts from Treasury/OIA and U.S. Central Command, the cell enjoyed support from the Defense Intelligence Agency, Central Intelligence Agency, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Secret Service, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, as well as the Internal Revenue Service.

The ITFC's location, first in Baghdad and later at additional sites in Iraq, gave it the advantage of integrating analysts with each other, sitting side by side, and in many cases with military operators. Analysts who served in the cell noted that stovepipes frequently found in Washington D.C. came down and the sense of urgency and mission of the war zone fostered an invaluable one- team-one-fight spirit. There were lessons learned as well. Financial information was not commonly collected and frequently left behind during sensitive site exploitation. That is not surprising. Following financial flows was a relatively new art and financial information can be found in many places. Ledgers and bank account statements are well known, while financial trails can be found in travel

data, on cell phones, and in pocket litter. As analysts sensitized collectors, more and more information became available. However, technology lagged and analysts lacked adequate tools to exploit financial data to the maximum amount possible. The ITFC was best at triaging information as it came in, but did not have the search capability they needed.

The success of the ITFC was replicated in Afghanistan with the creation in 2008 of the Afghan Threat Finance Cell (ATFC) under a Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) lead, with Treasury and DOD as co-deputies. It grew to nearly 60 integrated analysts, special agents, and personnel from the IC, law enforcement, and every branch of the military. The ATFC embedded with military commands across Afghanistan and provided actionable intelligence to civilian and military leaders in theater. Co-location helped improve the targeting of insurgents' financial infrastructure, yielded tens of thousands of documents and led to raids, detentions, arrests, and extraditions. Like their counterparts in the ITFC, analysts in the ATFC needed to sensitize collectors to seize financial information during raids. Unlike their counterparts, however, they benefited from new analytical tools developed by DARPA specifically for the ATFC's unique financial mission to ingest structured and unstructured data and perform data visualization. The cell shared its findings outside of Afghanistan through IIRs (Intelligence Information Reports), enabling additional actions, including sanctions. The ATFC also worked with Afghan authorities to build an independent capability to track and disrupt illicit financial activity. Kirk Meyer, the DEA agent who stood up the ATFC, and his Treasury Deputy, Frank Calestino, were finalists for the 2010 Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medal. This was clear recognition of the contribution the ATFC made the U.S. and allied efforts in Afghanistan and a testament to the value of integration.

DEA's lead role apparently reflected the perceived significance of the Afghan drug trade as a funding source of terrorist and insurgent groups. As analysts in the cell began digging into financial flows, a different picture emerged. According to Kirk Meyer, "you couldn't just look at the Taliban, you couldn't just look at corrupt officials, and you couldn't just look at the drug traffickers. Even though on the surface, these groups were at odds, in reality, everybody was in the money game to some degree. You had corrupt Afghan officials; you had bad actors in the Afghan business and financial sector, the Taliban and drug traffickers, all of whom were frequently acting in tandem. So you could look at one thing, say a *hawala*, or a bank, or a drug trafficker, and the connections would spider out and connect to other illicit areas in operations in Afghanistan."[8]

Afghanistan's banking system was rudimentary and relied on an informal system of hawalas to conduct some 80 percent of the financial transactions in the country. Hawalas are used for many legitimate transactions, but are also exploited by terrorists and insurgents to move large amounts of money quickly, cheaply, and with little or no oversight. Following illicit transfers through hawalas would be one of the ATFC's challenges. Little did they realize they would uncover massive corruption in the fledgling formal banking system. The ATFC learned that several senior executives at Kabul Bank, the largest private bank in

Afghanistan, were diverting bank deposits to Afghani elites in "loans" that were not being repaid. It was, in essence, a pyramid scheme. Depositors were average Afghani citizens, NGOs, and most anyone else who needed banking services in the country. That included the United States and the International Security Assistance Force, which used Kabul Bank to transfer the money to pay the salaries of Afghan Government employees, mostly in the military and police. Of the roughly $1.2–.3 billion in deposits, more than $800 million was stolen. In addition to aiding military efforts against insurgent and terrorist groups, the ATFC played an important role in exposing high-level corruption that threatened U.S. and allied measures to build Afghani governance and security capacities.

While I have just discussed the benefits of successful interagency cooperation, integration is much easier said than done. Agencies and institutions need to trust each other and have confidence that their information and capabilities will be treated with respect and care. If I share my information, will I risk losing a source? Will my ability to prosecute a law enforcement case be compromised? Can a civilian organization truly appreciate the sensitivity of military operations? The examples of integration outlined above all share one feature: a sense of urgency. Once urgency is gone, or people return to their home organizations, the natural tendency is to revert to silos. Integration is not sustainable without a change in culture. The interagency mission management concept—now embodied in DNI National Intelligence Managers (NIMs)—is an important vehicle for such change in the national security arena.

In 2008, DNI James Clapper made IC integration the core mission of the ODNI. During his tenure, he established 17 NIMs—formerly known as Mission Managers—to cover a range of regional and functional missions. Today, NIMs play a lead role in honing the IC's focus on national security challenges. As IC representatives in interagency discussions they have a clear view of the direction of policy—that can change with world events or elections—and work with the IC to prioritize collection and analysis resources accordingly. NIMs champion their mission priorities within the ODNI. They are best positioned to inform discussions about the resource trade-offs that always come when there is a change in focus or emphasis. Lastly, NIMs and their staffs come from all parts of the Intelligence Community. This reinforces integration and leads to professional relationships that will benefit the employee and the IC for years to come.

NIMs are also powerful advocates for new missions. In 2010, DNI Clapper added Threat Finance (TF) as a mission area and created the NIM–TF, a position I also filled until I retired in November 2016. When I began that role, the intelligence and law enforcement professionals who used financial flows more closely resembled the "loose confederation" that the Robb–Silberman Commission described. In 2005, many saw financial information as a niche capability exclusive to Treasury's sanctions programs or for use in theater, such as by the ITFC and ATFC. Today, "following the money" is increasingly used to address the broad range of national security concerns facing the United States. That is due, in part, because having a NIM allowed the IC to tackle two of the challenges that emerged in Baghdad and

Afghanistan—insufficient analytical tools and inconsistent collection focus. We worked with DARPA to develop a customized government-owned tool specific to mining financial data. It was based largely on the work DARPA did for the ATFC. In addition, we were able to introduce and elevate threat finance as an intelligence collection focus. It was gratifying to see what began with the ITFC and ATFC grow into a broader integrated effort.

In my experience, organizations are more likely to enthusiastically participate in integration efforts when they address a gap or meet an unmet need. The IC Information Technology Enterprise—IC ITE, pronounced "eye sight"— is one example of this. For the first time, the IC will be able to easily and securely share information, technology and resources across a common IT infrastructure. IC ITE will mean cost savings for larger agencies. Smaller ones will have access to tools, applications and innovations that their IT budgets normally could not afford. The overall mission will benefit from the changes in communication, collaboration and information sharing. IC ITE is only possible because of IC leadership committed to contributing their resources, sharing their information and adopting the common IT infrastructure within their agencies. I hope the IC continues pursuing IC ITE. It will play an important role in reinforcing a culture of integration in the IC.

Looking forward, I believe an integrated model will be critical to addressing the challenges posed by cyber threats. While I was at the Treasury Department, I watched the capabilities of the department and its interaction with the financial services sector on cyber threats grow. This sector, perhaps more than any other part of U.S. critical infrastructure, faces a broad range of malicious cyber activity, including theft of funds and sensitive client information, ransomware, breaches in the retail sector, disruptive or destructive attacks and insider threats.[11] For example:

- In February 2016, cyber actors stole $81 million from Bangladesh Bank's New York Federal Reserve account using stolen credentials and laundered the money through several Filipino casinos.
- Cyber criminals have grown more sophisticated in their attacks on ATMs, where they use both physical and remote means to steal cash directly from machines. Attacks against ATMs in Thailand and Taiwan last year netted close to $2.5 million for the thieves, and attacks have also occurred across Europe with as of yet undisclosed results.
- The financial sector is impacted by second-order effects from cyber attacks on retailers—both brick and mortar and online stores—that remain attractive targets. Think about the breaches at Target or Home Depot.
- In 2013, three major South Korean banks came under cyber attack where customers were unable to access funds through ATMs and some 40,000 computers were rendered unusable, also known as being "bricked." From 2011–13, there was a lengthy campaign of distributed denial of service attacks against numerous U.S. financial institutions, where public-facing

websites were overwhelmed in the face of a coordinated flood of data.

- Cyber criminals have been seen on the dark web actively soliciting bank employees in England and Mexico to conduct fraudulent activities. In another instance, a threat actor advertised alleged access to insiders at two Brazil-based financial institutions who could provide sensitive information about clients, including account passwords and personally identifiable information.

These cyber threats to the financial sector are critical because they threaten to erode trust and confidence, both between financial institutions and customers, and between institutions themselves. Trust and confidence are the lifeblood of the financial sector. In the extreme, their loss could lead to consumer panic. The sector, and I would argue our economy, would be at risk of not continuing to function. In fact, due to the global nature of the financial sector, cyber threats present a worldwide risk.

I believe the mission management model is well-suited to the challenges presented by cybersecurity in the financial sector. Take, for example, the Avalanche network, so called by law enforcement because of the aggressive onslaught of attacks cyber criminals conducted primarily against banks. After operating out of Eastern Europe for nearly four years, it was dismantled in an international law enforcement operation in

DEA

Burning hashish seized in 2008 during a joint Afghan, NATO, and DEA operation.

late 2016. The network offered cyber attacks as a criminal service to customers globally, advertising through postings on exclusive underground online criminal fora. There were multiple criminal campaigns ongoing simultaneously. Services included phishing attacks that delivered ransomware, banking trojans that stole sensitive banking credentials later used to conduct fraudulent wire transfers, and a network of "mules" who purchased goods to launder stolen funds. This range of activity would cut across several departments in a financial institution, including IT systems, fraud departments, and anti-money laundering (AML) sections. The Avalanche network undoubtedly understood the totality of its efforts against the financial sector, but were the affected institutions in a position to connect the dots, particularly if cyber attacks impacted both domestic and global operations?

A cybersecurity "mission manager" would be responsible for overseeing cyber-related activity across a financial institution. The day-to-day operations to detect, deter, and mitigate attacks would remain within the departments themselves. When I was the Iran Mission Manager, intelligence agencies knew that I acted under the authority of the DNI and reported directly to him on the status of efforts on Iran. In a financial institution, a cybersecurity mission manager would need to act with the authority of the CEO and report directly to him/her about the scope of cyber threats facing a financial institution. This process would better inform discussions and decisionmaking in the C-Suite and by the Board of Directors. For example, in the face of a successful ransomware attack, the C-Suite and Board of Directors would need to quickly weigh whether to pay a ransom. Does the bank have the recovery and resiliency capabilities to resume operations if its data remains encrypted? Or, must it pay? If the bank does pay, can it be certain that criminals will release its data? Will it be marked as a victim who will pay in the future?

Information sharing is a critical part of integration. The need is no different in the face of cybersecurity threats. The financial sector has set the gold standard for cybersecurity information sharing since it established one of the first Information Sharing and Analysis Centers (ISACs) almost 20 years ago. Recently, the heads of the eight U.S.-chartered banks considered to be "globally systemically important banks" (G-SIBs) took this a step further and created the Financial Systemic Analysis and Resilience Center (FSARC).[10] The goal of the FSARC is to integrate the work of threat intelligence teams to go beyond protection of individual institutions to systemic defense of the financial sector against current and emerging cybersecurity threats. The Center is being stood up in Virginia, adjacent to the Department of Homeland Security National Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Center (NCCIC) to facilitate greater information sharing with the U.S. Government. A smaller presence is being stood up in New York to facilitate collaboration with the law enforcement community. The question still remains about the extent of information sharing in the FSARC. As I know from my time in government, intentions can be overshadowed by institutional stovepipes, different interpretation of authorities and outright restrictions on sharing.

The Intelligence and National Security Alliance (INSA) has developed a concept to

take public-private cooperation and integration on cybersecurity a step further.[10] INSA's Financial Threats Task Force recently drafted a proposal recommending that elements from DHS, Treasury, FBI, and the Secret Service partner with essential financial institutions to establish a public-private cybersecurity/information assurance program unique to the financial sector. It would be modeled after the Defense Industrial Base (DIB) Cybersecurity Program (CS), which began in 2007 between DOD and its core contractors and was expanded in 2012 to other members of the DIB. Members are able to access a range of services and information through the Defense Cyber Crime Center (DC3), including information about cyber activity in real-time through a Secret-level system called DIBNet. The DC3 "fosters a cyber threat sharing information partnership with DIB participants by offering analytic support, incident response, mitigation and remediation strategies, malware analysis, and other cybersecurity best practices." A similar "FINnet" system which allows for real-time sharing of classified cyber attack indicators and defense measures between the government and the private sector would seem to be warranted, given the critical role the financial sector plays in the strength of the United States.

As with all successful integration, a "FINnet" most likely will require a culture change. The DIB was accustomed to operating in a classified environment when DIBNet was created. Companies already had facilities to handle classified information and equipment to conduct secure communications, as well as employees with government-granted security clearances. While the financial services sector is experienced in sharing information about cyber security threats through the FS–ISAC, it does not have an intelligence-driven approach to security. The FSARC could be an important step in that direction. Intelligence analysts and collectors are some of the best informed on intentions and capabilities of threat actors and could provide unique insights to members of the FSARC. In return, experts from the financial sector could help intelligence professionals hone their focus on the areas that are most critical. Security clearances for members of the Center would be very beneficial.

If we truly believe cybersecurity is a global threat, we will need to consider a global solution. Cyberattacks know neither boundaries nor victim nationality. The financial sectors in Asia and Europe—that host the additional 22 G-SIBs—should consider an FSARC-like approach, if they have not done so already. This could lead to global sharing of unclassified information on cyber threats to the financial sector. During my tenure at the Treasury Department, I participated in the Treasury-led series of public-private tabletop exercises known as the Hamilton Program, which led participants from the financial sector, regulatory agencies and the government (including policy, law enforcement, and the intelligence communities) through simulated cyber incidents. One of the exercises was cross-Atlantic. All of them were very instructional in revealing faulty assumptions, managing expectations and defining roles in the event of a cyber incident. Participants walked away with a clear sense of areas for improvement.

Looking for a global solution could eventually mean giving non-U.S. citizens access to classified information on a Secret-level network. Many financial

institutions—particularly those with a global presence—employ foreign nationals. Moreover, protecting the interconnected global financial system could eventually require including the 22 G-SIBs in Asia and Europe in a FINnet system. Hopefully, those countries would have intelligence to share on cyber threats as well. Consideration for protecting sources and methods will impact the intelligence any country would provide, as it should.

Personally identifiable information (PII) must be protected in any information sharing circumstance, whether domestic or global. The Cybersecurity Information Sharing Act (CISA), passed in December 2015, calls on the government to develop procedures to share cybersecurity threat information between the public and private sectors. PII that does not link a person directly to cybersecurity threat cannot be shared. Privacy and civil liberties guidelines placing limits on the receipt, use, retention and dissemination of PII must be reviewed every two years. Critics of CISA vigorously question whether these measures go far enough to protect privacy. It will be important for all parties involved to proceed carefully and ensure that effective mechanisms and processes to strip out PII are in place. A pilot project testing the concept of public-private information sharing between the government and the financial sector, perhaps at the unclassified level, could be an important test bed for demonstrating how PII would be protected and determining how often and under what circumstances PII would need to be shared.

My last decade of Federal Service convinced me that approaching U.S. national security interests from a one-team-one-fight perspective is the only path to take. The IC needs to develop a culture of integration, and the ODNI is positioned to lead the way through continued support of NIMs and the IC ITE. That integration needs to extend to a deepening public-private partnership. I cannot think of a more critical area to begin than cybersecurity. We cannot wait for a "cyber 9/11" to give us the urgency to increase information sharing. The level of integration I am advocating has not been tried before. Failure is not an option. "We've been through this before. Now we're just waiting to see how soon it fails?" Not again.

PRISM

Notes

[1] The U.S. Intelligence Community is comprised of 17 organizations. This includes two independent agencies—the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA); eight Department of Defense elements—the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), the National Security Agency (NSA), the National Geospatial- Intelligence Agency (NGA), the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO), and intelligence elements of the four DOD services; the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force. Also included are seven elements of other departments and agencies—the Department of Energy's Office of Intelligence and Counter-Intelligence; the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Intelligence and Analysis and U.S. Coast Guard Intelligence; the Department of Justice's Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Drug Enforcement Agency's Office of National Security Intelligence; the Department of State's Bureau of Intelligence and Research; and the Department of the Treasury's Office of Intelligence and Analysis. Before signing the IRTPA President George W. Bush said, "A key lesson of September the 11th, 2001 is that America's intelligence agencies must work together as a single, unified enterprise."

[2] The Commission in its March 2005 report to the U.S. President concluded that the "IC was dead

wrong in almost all of its pre-war judgements about Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. This was a major intelligence failure." Established by President Bush in Executive order 13328 nearly one year prior, the Commission in its report looked beyond Iraq in their review of IC capabilities to assess state and nonstate proliferation threats. The Commission acknowledges the nomination of U.S. Ambassador to Iraq John Negroponte as first Director of National Intelligence as a move toward making the DNI responsible for integrating the IC, which did not include the DEA until February 2006. A full copy of the report is available at < https://fas.org/irp/offdocs/wmd_report.pdf>.

[3] DNI John identified four areas for mission management: Iran (myself); North Korea (Ambassador Joseph DeTrani); WMD (Ambassador Kenneth Brill, Director of the Non-Proliferation Center (NCPC); and Counterterrorism (Admiral Scott Redd, USN (ret.), Director of the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC).

[4] Writing for the President is hard—as it should be—and it has taken time for the broader IC to contribute to the PDB. Being able to verbally communicate differences was that much more important.

[5] In July 2015, the five permanent members of the UN Security Council—China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States—along with the European Union and the Islamic Republic of Iran, reached a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action to ensure Iran's nuclear program will be exclusively peaceful.

[6] In 2005, Treasury was leveraging several Executive Orders (EOs) to sanction Iran. It targeted Iran's support for terrorism largely through EO 13224, which authorized the U.S. government to "designate and block the assets of foreign individuals and entities that commit, or pose a significant risk of committing, acts of terrorism," and Iran's 1984 designation as a State Sponsor of Terror. Treasury targeted Iran's WMD and ballistic missile developments primarily through EO 13382, which authorized the U.S. Government to freeze "the assets of proliferators of weapons of mass destruction and their supporters."

[7] David H. Petraeus, "Battling for Iraq," *The Washington Post*, September 26, 2004, available at < http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A49283-2004Sep25.html>.

[8] This paper looks at the value of integration that the ITFC and ATFC represent. For a fuller treatment of the concept of Threat Finance Cells supporting military operations see: J. Edward Conway, "Analysis in Combat: The Deployed Threat Finance Analyst," Small Wars Journal, July 5, 2012. For an in-depth view of the creation of the ATFC, see the 2014 interview of Kirk Meyer, conducted by Global ECCO Director Michael Freeman and CTAP coordinator Amina Kator-Mubarez as part of the Combating Terrorism Archive Project (CTAP), and published in the Combating Terrorism Exchange Quarterly, Vol. 4, no. 3, August 2014. Hawala is an informal financial system based on honor and trust. Simply put, money is transferred through a network of money brokers, or hawaladars. A customer gives money to a hawaladar in one city with instructions on passing it to another customer, many times in a foreign city. The trusted hawaladar on the other end contracts the second customer to collect their money, minus a small commission.

[9] The financial sector is one of 16 critical infrastructure sectors under the protective mission of the Department of Homeland Security. The Treasury Department is the Sector Specific Agency responsible for representing the financial services sector within the U.S. Government.

[10] The U.S.-chartered G–SIBs are Bank of America, Bank of New York Mellon, Citigroup, Goldman Sachs, JP Morgan Chase, Morgan Stanley, State Street, and Wells Fargo. A G–SIB is defined as "a financial institution whose distress or disorderly failure, because of its size, complexity and systemic interconnectedness, would cause significant disruption to the wider financial system and economic activity." An additional 22 banks in Japan, China, Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom are currently considered to be globally systemically important.

[11] INSA is a Washington D.C.-based nonpartisan, nonprofit membership organization that provides venues for developing and promoting collaborative, public-private approaches to national security challenges. It established the Financial Threats Task Force in 2015 to "strengthen public-private cooperation and information sharing regarding the broad ranges of threats faced by the government, the financial services sector, and other industries, which include cybersecurity, money laundering, terrorist finance, transnational organized crime, corruption, and confidence in U.S. and global financial infrastructure."

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Honduran police in May arrest a MS 13 member accused of leading groups in the rural areas outside of San Pedro Sula, where the gang presence has been expanding to control drug trafficking routes.

The Evolution of MS 13 in El Salvador and Honduras

BY DOUGLAS FARAH AND KATHRYN BABINEAU

Mara Salvatrucha (MS 13) is rapidly evolving into a criminal-economic-military-political power that poses an existential threat to the states of El Salvador and Honduras.[1] In Guatemala, the gang remains a tier two threat—dangerous, but with far less influence and fewer capabilities than in the other two nations of the Northern Triangle. With growing ties to Mexican drug cartels, while assuming an ever-greater role in the transportation of cocaine *transportista* networks across the Isthmus, the gang is acquiring financial resources, advanced weaponry, and the ability and sophistication to wield increasing political power. Factions that once relied exclusively on violence and threats for control are now trying to win the hearts and minds of the communities in which they operate; taking concrete steps to consolidate themselves in the cocaine trade; and becoming credible alternatives to the state. MS 13 in many ways now better resembles a criminal business enterprise rooted in brutal violence than a traditional gang.

This transformation is not uniform across all gang structures nor is it the same from country to country. MS 13 is divided into neighborhood structures called *clicas*, which are grouped into *programas* that respond to the *ranfla*, or national leadership, in each country. Each clica has responsibility for its own economic needs, as well as payments to the central leadership, meaning that each clica and each programa is different. Those that control key cocaine transportation routes or crack/cocaine retail areas are far wealthier than the clicas that lack access to lucrative ventures. These disparities make generalizations difficult because few things are universally true across the structures.

Even so, it is evident that MS 13 is operating with clearer strategic goals than in the past, and amassing political and economic power. As a recent Freidrich Ebert Foundation report noted,

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> *Regarding the use of violence (armed confrontations, homicides, extortions) the behavior pattern of the contemporary gang appears to be guided by a high level of strategic logic. Taken together, the violent acts of the gangs become an instrument to protect the vital interest of the gang and broaden its opportunities. It is a reproductive rationale, which explains the search for new sources of economic, social and political power.*

Key Strategies and Trends

Criminal

MS 13's recent success is derived in part from a strategy, begun at least four years ago, of infiltrating members into the police and military, and sending selected cadres to universities to become lawyers, accountants, and MBAs. These members are now in positions to exercise influence on behalf of the gang in multiple spheres, with a far more sophisticated understanding of the world.[3]

Perhaps the most transformative political step taken by MS 13 in Honduras is the countrywide decision to stop extorting small businesses that operate in the communities that the gang controls. The decision removed an important source of revenue for the gang; however, it also bought the gang significant political goodwill by removing the most hated facet of the gang's presence in those neighborhoods. As described by gang leaders in four different communities in and around San Pedro Sula, the decision to forego the revenue from small-scale extortion was made possible because of increased revenue from MS 13's growing participation in different parts of the regional drug trade. Furthermore, the change was described as a conscious political decision to build a loyal political base moving forward.

This is not to say that MS 13 has abandoned extortion; the decision in Honduras has not been replicated in El Salvador. Furthermore, payments from larger companies—e.g. those selling LNG tanks, snack food, beverages—that transit MS 13-controlled territory in Honduras remain a major source of income. The impact of such large business extortions has far less of an impact on communities, many of whom now actively support MS 13 efforts to expand their territorial control because of the halt to small business extortions. "People will call the police to tell them who the local leaders of Calle 18 are, and the police and MS 13 coordinate to take over that area," said one resident familiar with MS 13 strategy. "People know now that where the MS 13 is in charge they won't be extorted, they can leave their cars unlocked, there is some security, but only as long as you do exactly as they say."

This shift does not imply that life under MS 13 control is pleasant. One resident who daily has to navigate between MS 13-controlled territory where she lives and numerous disputed territories to get to work described her life as one of tension-filled negotiations, seeking permission from each group in control (the *Terecereños, Los Ponce, Los Chirisos,* etc.). Control can change on a daily basis, adding to the stress, as does the constant worry that her young teenage daughter will be taken by one of the groups. The woman explained that every day her life is a version of Shakira's hit "Blind, Deaf and Dumb," (*Ciega Sordamuda*) because, in the neighborhoods that is what everyone acts like in the face of the brutality: "We see everything and act just like the song says:

blind, deaf, and dumb. We see everything but say nothing because we know we can't say anything without getting killed."

These trends will likely continue to serve as drivers of high-levels of violence, which will in turn drive high levels of immigration toward the United States. In conversations with gang leaders, they stated that it is easier now than at any time in recent memory to move migrants through Mexico because Mexican officials are much less rigorous in trying to halt them, because of the tension with the U.S. Government over the proposed border wall. This has served to greatly facilitate the movement of gang members back and forth to the United States.

At the same time, according to both gang leaders and law enforcement officials across the region, the gangs are already beefing up their ranks due to the recent influx of gang members being deported from the United States. These members are immediately incorporated into the existing gang structures. The gangs, particularly MS 13, are also offering immediate employment opportunities to other criminals with special skills, particularly in the financial and military fields.

Economic

The increasing gang capabilities are directly reflected in the gang's growing, visible financial fortune. Recent judicial investigations into the activities of MS 13 in El Salvador uncovered a multi-million dollar structure of legitimate businesses owned by the gang. The 157 businesses uncovered in Operation Check (*Operación Jaque*) in mid-2016 included bus and taxi companies, luxury car lots, brothels, motels, restaurants, and crack houses. According to the Attorney General, the gang had also set up a special financial committee known as The Federation (*La Federación*) to manage its financial assets.[4]

Ironically, much of the seed money for the gang's legitimate investments came from their negotiations with the government of Mauricio Funes (2009–14) and their ill-fated gang "truce," in which the government paid up to $25 million to the gang in an effort to reduce the nation's homicide rate. This included putting some notorious gang members on the government payroll in some municipalities.[5] These payments are at the root of many of the ongoing internal struggles within MS 13 in El Salvador.

"The government asks us what we want, and we tell them—and then they give it to us," said one gang leader with a laugh, in an interview as the truce negotiations were underway. "We have found that if they say no, we just have to dump enough bodies on the street, then they say yes."

The truce was the result of a secret pact among drug trafficking organizations, then President Mauricio Funes, his Defense Minister, David Munguía Payes, and the imprisoned leadership of the gangs. In negotiating the truce directly with the government, the gang leadership discovered for the first time that they had real political power. "The government asks us what we want, and we tell them—and then they give it to us," said one gang leader with a laugh, in an interview as the truce negotiations were underway. "We have found that if they say no, we just have to dump enough bodies on the street, then they say yes."[6]

While the fact that the gang leaders had directly negotiated with leaders of El Salvador's two main political parties was previously well-established, the magnitude of what was negotiated has only recently come to light. During the past year, MS 13 has posted a series of YouTube videos and audio recordings of their leadership directly negotiating with leaders of the two main political parties, the right-wing Republican Nationalist Alliance (*Alianza Republicana Nacionalista*—ARENA) and the former guerrillas of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN), for monetary gain and political power. The recordings show that in 2014, the FMLN's former Public Security Minister, Benito Lara, and the current Interior Minister, Aristides Valencia, met with gang leaders. During these meetings, Valencia offered MS 13 an estimated $10 million in micro-credit, with the acknowledgement that the gangs would control the funds for their own needs, making it essentially a payoff. These revelations came a few months after another released audio recording, in which Valencia could be heard negotiating with gang leaders to obtain their support during the second round of the 2014 presidential elections. Earlier recordings showed ARENA leaders offering to provide identity cards and financial rewards in exchange for the gang-controlled votes.[7]

CIA World Factbook

Map of Central America

Military

Another major strategic shift by MS 13 has been to wage a series of bloody battles with traditional cocaine transportistas in an effort to expand their territorial control beyond the traditional urban center to surrounding rural areas. The strategic objective of this rural territorial expansion is to control vital nodes of the regional illicit trafficking routes, primarily for cocaine, but also weapons, cash, and human beings, including illegal migrants, sex slaves, and others.

Newly controlled MS 13 areas, when plotted on a map, show that San Pedro Sula to the east and northeast is almost encircled by gang-controlled rural areas. This territory is key to the control of the crossroads that lead to *puntos ciegos*, or informal border crossings, vital to the flow of cocaine and precursor chemicals northward from Puerto Cortes on the Atlantic coast of Honduras to Puerto Barrios and Izabal in Guatemala.

This expansion and control of rural areas is also reportedly taking place along the Honduras–Nicaragua border, reflecting the strategic decision by the gang leadership to seek control of important international nodes of the regional cocaine trafficking trade, a move that both increases their financial revenues and puts them in almost permanent conflict with other transportista groups who have operated in the regions for many years. Given MS 13's willingness to expend significant personnel and economic resources in the rural deployments, along with the willingness of their members to employ lethal force and their existing reputation for brutality, they appear to be winning most of those battles.

The capacity of MS 13 in San Pedro Sula to carry out new military action is owed in part to the increased military training they are receiving and the improved weaponry they can now routinely access, including Uzi submachine guns, C4 explosives, RPGs, and new AK–47 and AR–15 assault rifles. This capacity has in turn strengthened the gang's ties to Mexican cartels seeking to move their cocaine through the region. According to regional law enforcement officials and gang leaders interviewed by the authors, this successful expansion is because of the unintended consequences of two actions by the U.S. and Honduran governments that are widely viewed as successes.

In an effort to build a credible police force, the Honduran government, with U.S. support, has dismissed more than 1,000 policemen suspected of corruption and/or human rights violations. A core of more rigorously vetted and trained policemen are to fill the void in new police structures. However, the massive firings have been a boon to MS 13 because the gang now has money to hire many of them as security and trainers for gang activities. According to a policeman who has been offered work by MS 13 and has several friends who have accepted the offer, MS 13 pays roughly 2.5 times what the policemen were making inside the police force.

With the guidance of former security officers, many who have trained in the United States and elsewhere, MS 13 has reportedly set up military training camps in the Honduran province of Olancho. In the camps, to which the authors were denied access, training is provided by former policemen and former special forces combatants from the wars in El Salvador, Guatemala,

and Nicaragua. The widespread availability of unemployed policemen has not only benefitted MS 13; many dismissed policemen have branched out into their own freelance criminal activity (kidnapping, extortion), or joined some of the rapidly-growing groups that offer specialized criminal services, like the *Olanchos*, who specialize in murder for hire, or *Los Ponce* and *Los Tercereños*, who now compete with MS 13 for control of drug transport routes.

These specialized criminal groups, often referred to as gangs although they do not adhere to traditional gang culture, have added significant new elements and crosscurrents to the violence in the region. These smaller groups are reportedly refining cocaine base in San Pedros, Honduras that arrives from Colombia and Venezuela into refined cocaine known as HCL. This is partly the result of the difficulty in acquiring precursor chemicals in Colombia, and the viability of flying cocaine base directly to Honduras.

Political

MS 13 in the Northern Triangle—El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras—has not yet coalesced around a coherent political ideology; however, since 2014 the gang has been exercising real political power, utilizing a three-pronged strategy that leverages the gang's unity as a voting bloc. Rather than presenting a specific political platform beyond seeking direct benefits for the gang, MS 13 uses the sheer numbers of its members (more than 35,000 in El Salvador—a country geographically the size of Massachusetts—and an equal or greater number in Honduras, according to police intelligence estimates) and its vast territorial control as both carrots and sticks to subvert the electoral process in new and dangerous ways:

- MS 13 charges individual candidates from all parties several hundred dollars to several thousand dollars to be able set up a party organization and campaign in a neighborhood the gang controls.
- The gang also bans certain politicians or political parties they view as enemies from campaigning in those areas. Most notably in 2017, MS 13 banned supporters of Honduras President Juan Orlando Hernández from campaigning for his party's nomination in some sectors of San Pedro Sula—the country's main transport hub. Although Hernández won the primary, the gang in areas they control on the outskirts of the city also forced campaign workers to quit, refused to allow propaganda to be displayed, and threatened to kill anyone found voting for the President. MS 13 has threatened to employ similar tactics against the governing FMLN in El Salvador in upcoming elections.
- MS 13 has yet to participate financially in national campaigns but has directly financed mayors and local legislatures. This has allowed the gang to move some of their own (or those willing to do their bidding) into municipal strongholds, and in some documented cases the mayors have hired gang members as municipal employees.

In growing areas in both Honduras and El Salvador, the more powerful clicas and programas of MS 13 have filled the void of an absent national government by carrying

out significant state functions. This is not universally true; other clicas, especially those that are not on routes needed by networks to move cocaine or other illicit products, continue to operate at the more rudimentary level traditionally associated with the gangs.

The Fragmentation of the State and Gang Governance

Several recent publications have described the gangs as having created a parallel state, where they are politically and economically empowered and have replaced the formal state.[8] However, the reality is that across the Northern Triangle, gangs have created a confederation of semi-autonomous mini-states within each country that coordinate more closely than the national governments.

For those clicas and programas with the most resources in and around San Pedro Sula (usually derived from a more formal alliance with the regional cocaine transporting networks), the activities in their neighborhoods include:

- Providing rudimentary but rapid judicial "sentences," issued at hearings held twice a week to resolve local disputes (charges of domestic violence, property theft, vandalism, and violating gang rules).[9]
- Providing perimeter security and protection from outside gangs and local law enforcement groups to keep the neighborhood relatively free of violence and crime from groups not under the control of MS 13.
- Creating rudimentary literacy programs, primarily designed to help their members to be able to communicate

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Rudimentary cocaine laboratory found by Honduran police this May in territory controlled by MS 13 near San Pedro Sula.

with each other with cellular telephones, but open to some others in the community.

- Funding small-scale social programs, such as bowls of soup and a slice of bread as lunch for school children and the elderly in the community, because of the gang's increased income from transporting cocaine and dominating the rapidly-expanding internal cocaine/crack retail market.[10]
- Providing small employment opportunities in the informal labor market, primarily by helping families run hundreds of small mini *maquilas* that mass-produce tee shirts, underwear, and other clothing items. Most of the material for these home operations of a few sewing machines per shop is stolen from the large international maquilas that operate across San Pedro Sula.

These clear efforts to change the perception of MS 13 among the communities in which they live also includes rebranding themselves a *La Familia* rather than gang members, or *mareros*. In many parts of San Pedro Sula, the governing clicas have painted over their old gang graffiti on the walls in an effort to present themselves as a more responsible and mature group.

The transformation is also visible in other ways. One recent report on the gang's control of a market in downtown San Salvador, written by a merchant who has had a stall there for 13 years, described how MS 13 leaders:

> *Decide everything. They are the maximum authority. They extort, kill and walk around armed through the market with total impunity…The gang member who comes by to collect the extortion every Saturday morning comes well-dressed. It is surprising to see now the boys are wearing dress shirts, dress pants and nice shoes. They even wear glasses to look like intellectuals.*
>
> *They carry a backpack and a notebook, and the accounting for what is owed by each stall (inside the market) is accurate. They know how much each stall should pay because the quotas are different depending on what the owner is selling and the size of the business. For example, a fruit vendor will be charged less than those selling clothes and shoes. They know who owes how much from the previous week; they know how much a person's accumulated debt is. We are never late with our payments. It would cost us our lives.*[11]

In Honduras, MS 13 leadership has made the strategic decision—and enforced it at the street level—to exchange the immediate financial gain of local extortion for political standing and a formalization of their political and economic authority. This decision was made possible by the gang's increasing revenues from growing ties to drug trafficking structures. In these relationships, gang members primarily operate as hired transporters for multi-ton loads of cocaine (*transportistas*), and control the retail markets of crack and cocaine (*narcomenudeo*).

Because of these new cash influxes, the gang had the financial flexibility to fundamentally shift the gang's calculation of power and sustainability away from immediate gain, toward building a political power base.

This shift in behavior and thinking has not occurred in other gangs or MS 13 in El Salvador. Although leaders of MS 13 in El Salvador are aware of how their counterparts in Honduras are working, they say that the gang in El Salvador has not yet found a replacement revenue stream to make up for what would be lost by dropping extortion as a primary financial source.

According to interviews with MS 13 leaders in Choloma, the sector of San Pedro Sula that led the move to stop local extortions, the decision had four components:

- Provide relief to small business in areas under their control—often family members and community members known to gang members and their families—by eliminating the gang policy that people most hated.
- Leverage the relief into active political support for the gang by channeling some of the new drug wealth into rudimentary social programs, as described above, creating for the first time a more formal political face to the gangs.
- Provide security for the communities by aggressively attacking other gangs and law enforcement units on the perimeter of the neighborhood, turning MS territory into a relative safe haven in the sea of surrounding violence. This, in turn, could induce nearby neighborhoods to support MS 13's territorial expansion efforts and withdraw support from rival gangs.
- Use the safe havens to securely warehouse cocaine, weapons, and humans being trafficked through their territory, increasing the gang's control of these routes and increasing the revenues derived from providing security to other criminal groups.

Leadership Divisions

While MS 13 remains a formidable regional and transregional force with the ability to coordinate strategy, personnel movements and actions across national borders, leadership of the group in both Honduras and El Salvador said that the leaders are often now going their separate ways. While the Salvadoran branch of MS 13 has been riven by internal strife as several of the most powerful subgroups threaten to fracture, the Honduran MS 13 is pioneering new and innovative political and social strategies that are expanding its reach.

One of the biggest differences between MS 13 in El Salvador and its counterpart in Honduras is the nature of the leadership. MS 13 in Honduras has maintained a unified gang leadership, largely in prison, which has proved capable of strategic thinking, including: initiating important changes, such as halting the extortion of businesses in their neighborhoods; expanding territorial control aimed at dominating urban and rural cocaine transport routes; enhancing military capacities and capabilities; and developing a more coherent political presence.

By contrast, MS 13 leadership in El Salvador is deeply divided. Ongoing, bloody internal conflicts between the historic leadership (*ranfla histórica*), mostly in prison, and the leadership outside of prison (r*anfla libre*) are wreaking havoc within the gang structure. The infighting centers on the amount of money the ranfla histórica took from the government during the truce but reportedly did not share with the rest of the gang. This breach of gang protocol was

viewed by many of the leaders and rank and file on the street as a betrayal worthy of death. There have been bloody purges and counter-purges in the gang as a result of the feeling on the street that the prison leadership betrayed the gang for personal profits. This assessment from the street is accurate, and members outside of prison have been furious for years as they watched the wives and family members of the ranfla histórica purchase new houses, large screen televisions, and luxury vehicles.

There is little doubt that the fundamental tipping point in the growth of the gangs in Central America, particularly that of MS 13, was the ill-fated truce between the major gangs in El Salvador.

The most visible leader of the internal revolt was Walter Antonio Carrillo Alfaro—a.k.a. El Chory (from Shorty)—who believed the ranfla histórica had forfeited its legitimacy by stealing the government money and thereby "disrespecting" the gang members on the street.[12] El Chory was a member of the powerful Fulton Locos clica and was well-respected among MS 13 leaders. He was popular enough to inspire an unprecedented rebellion against the prison leadership, including a refusal to endorse new attempts at a truce, and other acts of defiance. On January 16, 2016, the ranfla histórica had El Chory murdered in prison. A series of retaliatory murders took place, and the division reportedly still festers within the ranks of MS 13.[13]

The primary architect of the ranfla histórica's financial strategy, according to interviews and published reports, is Marvin Adalay Ramos Quintanilla, a.k.a. El Piwa, who was a chief negotiator of the truce and known for his close relationship with Salvadoran Defense Minister David Munguía Payes. El Piwa was released from prison under unclear circumstances in 2013, in the middle of the truce, and was then employed by the municipality of Ilopango. Munguía Payes issued a gun permit for the gang leader, who legally acquired numerous weapons. El Piwa claimed to have left MS 13 altogether to become an evangelical pastor and occasionally appeared on TV as a preacher. Using this cover, he orchestrated MS 13's financial growth, primarily through the sale of cocaine and crack from secret pozos controlled by the ranfla histórica.[14] El Piwa was arrested during Operation Check in 2016 and remains in custody, but Salvadoran intelligence officials monitoring the gang's activities said the economic power he helped to establish is far from broken. "We are only now discovering how big they have grown economically," the official said. "They have truly entered the ranks of the business elite."

The Law of Unintended Consequences

There is little doubt that the fundamental tipping point in the growth of the gangs in Central America, particularly that of MS 13, was the ill-fated truce between the major gangs in El Salvador. The relatively successful law enforcement actions during the past three years by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, the U.S. Treasury Department, and agencies in Honduras also have been a major factor in allowing MS 13 to expand, particularly into rural areas traditionally controlled by long-standing transportista groups. These actions include:

the arresting of members of the Valle Valle clan; the dismantling of the Cachirros structure; and the shuttering of the financial operations of the Rosenthal family. These actions effectively weakened or decapitated the most powerful Honduran transportista structures in the movement of cocaine, allowing MS 13 to greatly strengthen its role in the regional trafficking structures.

The traditional transportista network viewed the gangs as their main competition and fought long, hard, and successfully for a long time to marginalize the gangs from the cocaine transport business, although the gangs have long controlled local retail business. The gangs had been unable to penetrate the drug transport trade in large part because the traditional groups could and would kill the gang members when they tried to take over key routes.[15] Key areas along the Honduran–Guatemalan border had no gang presence at all in 2014–15, nor did the transportista groups interviewed then seem concerned that MS 13 could become a major problem.

However, with the leadership of the main competition summarily taken off the playing field, MS 13 was well-positioned to step into the void. Mexican organizations, desperate to keep their product moving safely through Honduras, opened the door for the alliances that have since blossomed. MS 13 currently has control of all of the major crossroads along the strategic La Acéquia–Copan–El Paraíso corridor, to include traditionally hostile, narco-controlled areas far from their traditional urban stronghold. Decapitated bodies with severed limbs—the hallmark of MS 13 assassinations—mark the gang presence there.

The Growing Cost of the New Gangs

It is almost impossible to overstate the damage to the fabric of society that gang-driven violence has caused, and the push factor this violence creates for illegal immigration to the United States. With the almost complete absence of the state, gang beheadings and dismemberment of victims are now routine; lynching and burning victims alive are commonplace; and the recruitment of children as young as 11 is an everyday occurrence.

Those who cannot afford to send their children out of the country are forced to seek safety in the shrinking areas of the national territory where the gangs are not fully in control. Tens of thousands of people have fled their homes due to gang expansion, violence and threats, primarily against minors who do not want to join. While many move to other neighborhoods or areas of the country to find shelter with families, an increasing number are now living in de facto displacement camps around the major cities, a reality the government has consistently refused to acknowledge.[16]

The reasons for the fear for the youth in these areas are clear. Males, who represent more than 90 percent of the gang members, usually start as *banderines*, or lookouts, for the gang, and then move up the ladder to *postes* who provide local security, or *paisas* who protect and dispense cocaine and crack rocks at the *pozos,* or cocaine storage centers, then to full membership as *jommies* (hommies). Each step entails carrying out specific, usually violent acts, including murders, to prove loyalty to the gang.[17] Young females who enter the gang, either by choice or force (and there is very little choice) are known as

jainas who are by and large relegated to the role of sex slaves. While the homicide rates in the Northern Triangle have been well-documented and remain among the highest in the world, the economic and social costs of the violence, largely now driven by gangs, are also among the highest in the world.

A recent study by the Inter-American Development Bank found that Honduras and El Salvador rank as the two countries that lose the largest percentage of their GDPs to violence. According to the study, Honduras lost 6.5 percent of its GDP in 2016, or $1.3 billion, while El Salvador suffered a 5.94 percent loss of GDP, or $1.5 billion.[18] The losses far exceed the $750 million U.S.-funded three year "Plan for Prosperity" for the region, in which each of these countries is to receive less than $100 million a year to address the root causes of illegal immigration. These losses represent not only the harsh economic cost of the gangs, but also the roadblocks to creating employment and opportunities for the huge population of young people who make up the gangs and are the prime targets of gang recruiting.

The social crises are growing in the Northern Triangle in part because the gangs, particularly MS 13, have shown the state in both El Salvador and Honduras to be easily corruptible, inefficient, and incapable in every sense of confronting the gangs or taking back the territory that the gangs have taken from what one academic called the "evaporating state." In Honduras, it is widely known that MS 13 expansion is aided by the gang's alliance with sectors of the local police forces against Calle 18 and other rival groups. As part of the partnership, police often provide weapons and clear out of specific areas when MS 13 carries out attacks on other groups. There are documented cases of the police renting out their uniforms, guns, and badges to the gang so MS 13 could carry out kidnapping and assassinations with impunity.

Outlook

Rival gang members, law enforcement officials, journalists, and academics all indicate that MS 13 has surged to an unprecedented, preeminent role in the region. From this privileged position, MS 13 in El Salvador has even formed short-term tactical alliances with sectors of Calle 18, traditionally its mortal enemy, to carry out attacks on policemen. This willingness to cooperate for economic and political gain has never before been exhibited by gangs in the Northern Triangle.

There is now abundant evidence that important elements of MS 13 have evolved at the very least to third generation gangs, as anticipated by Manwaring:[19]

> *Rather than trying to depose of a government with a major stroke (golpe or coup) or in a prolonged revolutionary war, as some insurgents have done, gangs and their allies more subtly take control of territory and people one street or neighborhood at a time (coup d'street) or one individual, business or government office at a time…Its putative objective is to neutralize, control or depose governments to ensure self-determined (non-democratic) ends. The objective defines insurgency, a serious political agenda, and a clash regarding the authoritative allocation of values in a society.*[20]

It is an open question to the authors whether the gang can now be classified as a

criminal insurgency, but it is clear that MS 13, despite its divisions and internal differences, is now a markedly different and more dangerous organization than it was a year ago and a wholly transformed organization since the end of the truce in 2014. The gang violence is a primary driver of the social disintegration of the Northern Triangle, and as such, a primary driver of the illegal immigration of thousands of people from that region—often unaccompanied minors—toward the United States in journeys fraught with danger.

This dynamic is unlikely to change in the near future, and is more likely to accelerate, given the lack of political will within the governments of El Salvador and Honduras to combat the root causes of the gang's growth, including its growing presence within the state itself. The ongoing transformation of MS 13 presents a real threat to democracy and the rule of law in multiple countries that comprise a key corridor of access to the southern border of the United States.

The evolution of the gang's power and structure remains uneven, depending on the sub-group's geographic location and leadership. In El Salvador, the MS 13 leadership structure is in danger of undergoing a permanent fracturing, while in Honduras the leadership structure remains solid and disciplined. These differences indicate that the growth of the gang into a fully functional political-economic force is not inevitable, and multiple vulnerabilities exist that could be exploited with creative new strategies and a more realistic understanding of the gang structures.

While the governments of the Northern Triangle have repeatedly asked for increased aid from the United States and the international community to combat the gangs and the violence they engender, they have lacked the political will to undertake meaningful steps on their own. Recent studies show that the region's countries could recoup many times the foreign aid that they receive by curtailing the massive corruption and taking basic steps to halt the violence and end the culture of impunity that pervades the region.

At the same time, MS 13 has shown an ability to learn lessons from its own past experiences, and is actively studying the methodologies of other groups such as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), Hezbollah, and al-Qaeda. This does not imply an ideological or religious affinity toward those groups, but rather a willingness to look to those groups, via the internet, for successful military, economic and political strategies to further their own ends.

While Mexico and Colombia absorb the vast majority of the U.S. attention paid to the Western Hemisphere, the evolution of MS 13 poses a challenge that could greatly weaken the security of the southern border. The threat is at least as complex and real as those posed in Mexico and the United States, and far harder to overcome because of the lack of political will and functioning institutions in the Northern Triangle. PRISM

Notes

[1] Because of this, this report focuses on MS 13 rather than other gangs.

[2] Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Foundation, "La Violencia Pandilleril y su impacto en la economía, la cultura y la política," available at <http://www.fesamericacentral.org/el-salvador/seguridad/details/La+violencia+pandilleril+y+su+impacto+en+la+econom%C3%ADa%2C+la+cultura+y+la+pol%C3%ADtica.759.html>.

[3] The presence of MS 13 members in the Attorney General's office, the National Police, and the military has been in place since the gang "truce," at least, and is also used by Calel 1.

[4] For a good recap of the government's first move against the financial structure of the MS 13 see: Ángela Medina, "Seguridad: Por primera vez se ha tocado el patrimonio y finanzas de las MS," La Prensa Gráfica (El Salvador), July 27, 2016, available at <http://www.laprensagrafica.com/2016/07/28/landaverde-por-primera-vez-se-ha-tocado-el-patrimonio-y-finanzas-de-la-ms>.

[5] The truce was the product of a three-part negotiation among Funes, multiple drug trafficking organizations, and the gangs. The drug transport organizations wanted free passage through gang areas, the government wanted to lower homicide rates and the gangs wanted money. The truce fell apart when the opaqueness of the agreement became public. For a look at how the gangs were paid see: Héctor Silva and Bryan Avelar, "Case Against El Salvador's MS13 Reveals State Role in Gang's Growth," InSight Crime, August 3, 2016, available at <http://www.insightcrime.org/component/content/article?id=7988:case-against-el-salvador-s-ms13-reveals-state-role-in-gang-s-growth>.

[6] Author interview with MS 13 gang leaders in Zacatecolua Prison, February 2013.

[7] Clavel, op. cit.

[8] Tristan Clavel, "Report Says El Salvador Gangs Have Created a Parallel State," InSight Crime, December 22, 2016, available at <http://www.insightcrime.org/news-analysis/el-salvador-gangs-achieve-criminal-governance-parallel-economy-report>. This report was based in large part on the October 2016 report by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Foundation.

[9] In those neighborhoods where the courts were able to briefly observe the "courts" in action, sentencing usually took only a matter of minutes after each side in the dispute was heard. Sentences ranged from beatings by gang members to exile from the community. Death sentences for repeat offenders or traitors to the gang are also possible.

[10] For a closer look at the gang social structures see: Douglas Farah, "Central American Gangs are All Grown Up," *Foreign Policy*, January 19, 2016, available at <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/01/19/central-americas-gangs-are-all-grown-up/?wp_login_redirect=0>.

[11] "Vendo en el Búnker de la MS en San Salvador." *La Prensa Gráfica*, December 14, 2016.

[12] Disrespect is considered a capital crime, and the gang leadership had historically shared the wealth of the gang by paying for lawyers for the jailed members, taking care of the families of jailed members, and generally not allowing individual leaders to acquire visible wealth.

[13] InSight Crime independently verified this account of El Chory's rebellion and death. See: Steven Dudley and Juan José Martinez, "El Salvador's Prisons and the Battle for the MS 13's Soul," InSight Crime, February 16, 2017, available at < http://www.insightcrime.org/investigations/el-salvador-prisons-battle-ms13-soul >.

[14] For a fuller overview of El Piwa and the internal splits see: "Purgas en la cúpula del la MS 13 por dinero," El Faro (El Salvador), August 9, 2016, available at <http://www.elfaro.net/es/201608/salanegra/19066/Purgas-en-la-c%C3%BApula-de-la-MS-13-por-dinero.htm?st-full_text=all&tpl=11>.

[15] For a more complete look at this dynami,c see: Douglas Farah and Carl Meacham, "Alternative Governance in the Northern Triangle and Implications for U.S. Foreign Policy: Finding Logic Within Chaos," Center for Strategic and International Studies, September 2015,

[16] Author interview with Celia Medrano, director of Cristosal, a Catholic NGO that monitors internal displacement. See also: Gloria Marisela Morán, "Desplazamientos internos, una realidad innegable," ContraPunto, August 9, 2016, available at <http://www.contrapunto.com.sv/sociedad/ddhh/desplazamientos-internos-una-realidad-innegable/1399>.

[17] full-fledged gang members were required to kill at least one person. Now they are required to kill at least one person to move up the gang's organizational structure, meaning at least three murders before becoming a hommie. See José Miguel Cruz et al, "The New Face of Street Gangs: The Gang Phenomenon in El Salvador," Florida International

University and Fundación Nacional para el Desarrollo, March 2017, available at <https://lacc.fiu.edu/research/the-new-face-of-street-gangs-in-central-america/the-new-face-of-street-gangs_final-report_eng.pdf>.

[18] "The Costs of Crime and Violence: New Evidence and Insights in Latin America and the Caribbean," Laura Jaitman, editor, Inter-American Development Bank, January 2017.

[19] Max Manwaring, "A Contemporary Challenge to State Sovereignty: Gangs and Other Illicit Transnational Criminal Organizations in Central America, El Salvador, Mexico, Jamaica and Brazil," Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, December 2007, available at <http://strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=837>.

[20] Manwaring, op cit., p. vii.

DOD/Pete Thibodeau

A poppy field in Helmand Province in Afghanistan in April 2013.

The Curse of the Shiny Object

How Humans Fight Problems Where They Are Visible, and Why We Need to See Beyond

BY GRETCHEN S. PETERS

Human beings have a strong tendency to fight problems where they are visible. This intuitive and usually well-intended response to visible cues often produces inefficiencies and can result in spreading greater harm. This is the curse of the "shiny object"—when the attention-grabbing aspect of a problem distracts from identifying and countering the core drivers.

The curse impacts many aspects of life. It can cause the U.S. Government (USG) and other organizations to overcommit resources to fight visible symptoms of security problems, while initiatives to counter the structural or systemic drivers of those problems are under-resourced if not entirely ignored. In the worst cases, initiatives to restore order have ended up spreading greater harm by targeting people or entire communities that are victims, not drivers, of the original security problem.

States and law enforcement agencies could have more impact if they focus on fighting the less visible drivers of disorder. While more complex, striking at core drivers of crime will ultimately have greater, longer-lasting impact, and cause less harm.

The purpose of this article is to describe a common and often harmful tendency in the way people approach problems, in particular social disorder. The article will describe the shiny object curse, and offer several examples where the curse has had grievous impacts on U.S. national security interests. I will show how a similar tendency in law enforcement practice—the so-called "broken windows" approach—has been misinterpreted in such a way that its utility

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has been lost. The article concludes with reflections on the ramifications of the shiny object curse for national and international security.

Treating the Disease, Not the Symptoms

The curse of the shiny object can be found anywhere. Imagine a patient presents themselves to a doctor with skin lesions. If the doctor simply prescribes a topical cream to treat the lesions (the symptom), and fails to identify that the lesions are a result of an autoimmune deficiency disease (the cause), the doctor has fallen prey to the curse. In a far worse scenario, imagine a doctor treats a patient's crippling headaches with an addictive pain medicine, not diagnosing a malignant growth in the patient's temporal lobe. In time, the patient ends up addicted to narcotics and suffering from brain cancer. The patient now has more problems than before; harm has increased, and the problem remains unsolved.

The shiny object curse manifests itself in similar ways in the international security and law enforcement arena. Like the proverbial iceberg, visible only at its tip, society's most complex threats are far more profound than what we easily observe. Confronting these threats effectively requires a comprehensive response that understands and addresses the profound drivers, not just the visible symptoms. Strategies to restore order must be designed to diminish, not increase harm.

Our Minds at Work

To understand the shiny object curse, we must look at three well-documented aspects of the human psyche. First, human beings have a demand for order in their communities. Multiple assessments have found that visibly maintaining order, sometimes called "disorder policing" or "community policing," can cause a reduction in crime and an increase in public confidence in the state, while communities allowed to fall into visible disarray can experience a correlated crime increase and decrease in state confidence—more on this complex dynamic later.[1]

A second, related issue is that visual stimulation deeply impacts the mind. Recent studies have found that the brain's visual cortex, once thought to only process incoming information, also plays a powerful role in decisionmaking and shaping values.[2] What we see around us has a tremendous impact on our perception of order, and how to restore it. Terrorist groups capitalize on this, spreading fear and disrupting order through dramatic attacks that have profound impacts on national psyches, economies, elections, defense spending, and policy. As recent elections in the United States and Europe have also demonstrated, some constituencies respond positively to candidates who promise visible approaches to impose order, such as building border walls or banning immigrants.

This relates to the third relevant aspect of the human psyche; the fact that humans are not the objective, rational creatures we believe ourselves to be. In fact, our subconscious routinely shapes our decisionmaking process, providing justifications when contradictory evidence conflicts with our existing beliefs or desires.[3] The simultaneous presence of contradictory ideas or information is known as "cognitive dissonance." The rationalization process allowing individuals to justify foolish or immoral behavior, or to believe wrong information, is called "motivated reasoning." An example of this is, "I

know smoking is bad for me, but it helps keep my weight down." In some cases it results in individuals doubling down on bad decisions or finding justification for bad ideas, strategies, and untruths.[4] If a person has already decided the answer, he or she will not behave rationally, nor look at evidence objectively.

In the security and law enforcement realm, these three psychological forces create a feedback loop, resulting in the shiny object curse:

- Disorder, particularly when highly visible or shocking, produces a demand for order to be restored.
- States respond with interventions designed to restore order, often treating the visible symptoms of disorder rather than its core drivers.
- Highly visible interventions may soothe some constituencies, while distressing others. These interventions will often provide political rewards for elected officials, who won't have to endure the costs.
- In some cases, these interventions will make the problem worse.
- Policymakers and members of the public may realize that the interventions are having limited or even negative impact, but will find reasons to justify and perpetuate them nonetheless, even doubling down on clearly failing strategies.

The Curse at Work in Counternarcotics

The shiny object curse has struck U.S. counternarcotics policy on multiple occasions, in particular with regard to the eradication of narcotics crops in Colombia and Afghanistan. When coca and opium poppy fields blanketed the countryside in both countries, USG policymakers decided that the best way to reduce the flow of illicit narcotics was to destroy the fields. Despite being dangerous, complex, and costly, eradication has often been the dominant pillar of multi-pronged counternarcotics strategies in both countries, gobbling up the bulk of resources, sucking focus from other potential interventions, and complicating military and diplomatic efforts to stabilize war-torn rural areas.[5] Eradication is complex because drug cultivation tends to occur in remote, rural areas where the state has limited control and resources, and where ground eradication forces are susceptible to corruption. Also, when eradication may bring political benefits to some elected officials, there will be longer-term costs that outweigh any short-term gains. Multiple studies have concluded that eradication programs have produced more harm than good, causing environmental degredation, economic upheaval, and a sharp decline in public support, as they sent impoverished rural communities, which often farmed coca and opium out of desperation, into the welcoming arms of insurgents.

Colombia

Previously a transit country that mainly processed and trafficked cocaine, Colombia began increasing its coca output in the 1980s and by 2000 was growing 70 percent of the world's coca, having surpassed Bolivia and Peru to become the world's largest producer.[6] At its height, Colombia's coca crop covered more than 160,000 hectares, and for decades, eradication through aerial spraying was the dominant response.[7] From 2004–14, on

average 218,000 hectares were sprayed annually.[8] Multiple studies have concluded that this response did more harm than good.

Eradication programs may have convinced people in Bogota and the United States that action was being taken, but they also caused serious negative economic and political consequences in the impacted areas. The spraying killed all crops, meaning that some poor rural communities were driven into deeper poverty by eradication, whether or not they grew coca. Thus, such villages ended up planting more coca, or sought protection and/or financing from communist rebels, who in turn gained greater influence in the countryside and were themselves drawn into trafficking drugs to finance their insurgency.[9] Overall eradication failed to dramatically impact the price of cocaine yet, when it did affect price, it merely encouraged farmers in other parts of Colombia to get into coca cultivation, thus ensuring that national output levels remained steady.

Identifying and countering the drug cartels, and interdicting the cocaine supply chain at a level where cocaine had greater value, ultimately had a much greater impact than eradication.

Other negative consequences were harder to measure. Glyphosate, known in the United States by its commercial name Roundup, is the active ingredient used in the herbicides sprayed in Colombia.[10] Although authorities have repeatedly claimed that aerial eradication is harmless, scientific analyses have concluded that incessant spraying in bio-diverse regions produced negative long-term effects to fauna, flora, and water sources, and also harmed legal agricultural output and public health.[11]

From a tactical and financial standpoint, aerial spraying was also a bad investment. Farmers found and implemented various adaptations to protect their crops, which so reduced the impact of the chemicals that 32 hectares of coca needed to be sprayed in order to kill just one hectare worth of output.[12] Various analyses concluded that it cost $240,000 for every kilogram of cocaine ultimately removed from the retail market through spraying, or more than five times the retail value of the cocaine.[13]

In 2006, Colombia shifted gears, radically diminishing emphasis on spraying, putting more resources into interdiction of drug cartels and destruction of drug labs. The number of hectares being sprayed dropped by 40 percent, while the number of cocaine seizures climbed by 60 percent and the number of drug labs destroyed grew by a quarter.[14] This new strategy cut the global supply of cocaine by more than half, causing a spike in retail cocaine prices.[15]

Identifying and countering the drug cartels, and interdicting the cocaine supply chain at a level where cocaine had greater value, ultimately had a much greater impact than eradication. This not only impacted the value of the retail cocaine market, but also coca cultivation, which dropped 40 percent.[16] One study found that, for every cocaine lab detected and demolished, coca production decreased by a corresponding three hectares, as demand for coca dropped.[17]

On top of that, processed cocaine represents a product of far greater value than coca leaves per kilo. The amount of money lost when a cocaine shipment was captured

and destroyed was magnitudes greater than losses incurred when a coca field was destroyed. Moreover, it is magnitudes harder for crime syndicates to adapt and replace workers at the trafficking phase of the supply chain than at the farming phase.

Alternative livelihood projects in Colombia generally were assessed to be poorly implemented and resourced when compared to Colombia's eradication efforts, yet multiple studies concluded they still had more promise, both in the short and long run, because they addressed the drivers of coca cultivation—poverty, lack of access to markets, and insecurity.[18] One alternative livelihood program that was viewed as successful, if just briefly, was the *Plan de Consolidación Integral de la Macarena*, which successfully integrated state presence into a coca-growing region through a variety of programs focused on increasing police and judicial presence, while also improving healthcare, education, and economic opportunities.[19] This model improved social and economic indicators in a short period, but was nonetheless canceled by the government.[20]

Afghanistan

For counternarcotics experts, shifting from Bogota to Kabul was like watching a bad movie all over again. With pink poppy fields carpeting the rural south, the 2001–08 USG drug strategies relied almost entirely on eradication, with comparatively miniscule resources applied to interdiction, public education, and demand reduction. This imbalance predictably produced the same results it had in Colombia; despite billions spent on eradication efforts, poppy output increased steadily from 2002–08. Rampant corruption and poor implementation led the eradication teams to mainly destroy the fields belonging to Afghanistan's poorest farmers, since rich, politically connected growers could escape eradication through bribery.[21] Compared to the resources poured into eradication, efforts to impact other aspects of the heroin business were under-resourced. Until around 2008, traffickers based in Pakistan and Iran continued to smuggle heroin and import precursor chemicals with little fear of disruption from law enforcement. Hawaladars and other money service businesses could launder drug money with virtual impunity. In other words, the bulk of efforts to combat the Afghan heroin trade focused on the one, highly visible aspect of the drug supply chain, the point where the drugs were grown.

Another key problem with counternarcotics efforts in Afghanistan centered around the reluctance of either Afghan authorities or their U.S. partners to confront prominent individuals, tribes, and constituencies involved in the opium trade out of concern for potential effects on other political outcomes or counterterrorism operations. Afghan officials argued to USG officials that counternarcotics strategy must be balanced "with the requirement to project central authority" across Afghanistan and should not target prominent tribes whose support was needed.[22] This meant that counternarcotics efforts were not applied evenly, and actions that brought short-term political gains for a few elected officials or corrupt eradication teams, spread longer-term harm in rural areas by strengthening the Taliban insurgency, which itself profited from the opium trade.

In communities where the United States or local forces implemented a heavy-handed

approach, they suffered heavy casualties and failed to implement order.[23] Eradication at times took a huge toll on communities and eradicators alike, sparking insurgent attacks and community-led rebellions.[24] In 2013, for example, 133 members of the eradication forces lost their lives to attacks by insurgents and communities trying to protect their crops.[25] Meanwhile in places where alternatives were made available, or where communities were engaged regularly to be part of the process, it was possible to restore order, even in just pocket-sized districts surrounded by violence.[26]

As with Colombia, the solution in Afghanistan is not a heavy-handed approach. Rather it is a nuanced, holistic approach that generally improves security and confidence that the state—and foreign forces—can together provide order and are on the side of the community.

The Curse in the Conservation Realm

Africa's elephant population has plunged by a staggering 111,000 in the past decade, with multiple countries, including Tanzania and Mozambique, losing more than 50 percent of their herds to poaching. The global rhino population has plummeted by more than a quarter in a poaching surge that has grown 90-fold since 2007.[27] Elephant ivory is sought after for jewelry and decorative objects, while rhino horn is prized as a palliative in traditional Chinese medicine. Unless something can be done to halt the current poaching crisis, both animals will become extinct within a decade.

Conservation groups, private foundations, and governments are pouring millions of dollars into fighting this scourge. The focus of most of these efforts, as well intentioned as they may be, is fighting the problem only where visible, and neglecting the less visible drivers of the problem.

Wildlife crime is a transnational organized crime challenge. Animals are being poached or illegally harvested at unsustainable rates and fed into transnational illicit supply chains that deliver end products to consumer markets. This criminal market is visible at either end of the global supply chain: at its beginning where the animals are killed, and at its end, where the products are retailed. It is at those two points where the majority of the interventions are taking place. Those controlling and financing the wildlife supply chain are less visible—and motivated by the huge profits they can earn from trafficking in wildlife parts. The global market for illicit ivory is valued at $4 billion per year, while rhino horn now sells for more than gold or cocaine per ounce.[28]

On the African end of the crisis, many organizations are mounting Herculean efforts to protect the animals, a challenging prospect especially given that pachyderms live across vast, wild spaces, and can cover huge terrain during their daily travels. To keep them safe, parks, reserves, private ranches, and conservancies install costly, high-tech fences and surveillance systems that include hidden cameras, animal collars and even drones.[29] Security teams and paramilitary forces patrol parks and conservancies, some of which have become bloody war zones. One rhino in Kenya even has his own 24-hour bodyguard unit.[30] In interviews with people in the field, they acknowledge they are fighting a losing battle, but many continue to double down instead of modifying their strategy.

This is the curse of the shiny object, distracting attention from the drivers, and

focusing it on the visible. The anti-poaching unit in Kruger National Park has shot more than 300 poachers, for example, but few middlemen and only a single exporter have been brought to justice in South Africa.[31] Perhaps the most striking example of the curse is the "Rhinos Without Borders" effort, which is airlifting 100 rhinos from high-poaching areas in South Africa to safer ones in neighboring Botswana.[32] The process, which involves darting the animals with tranquilizers, and then shifting them using a combination of helicopters and cargo planes, is expensive and risky in and of itself. It takes at least three months to move each animal and costs a breathtaking $45,000 per rhino.[33]

Projects like the rhino airlift are understandable in a region where corruption is rampant and political will to counter organized crime is low. The airlift also represents a highly visible response to the most emotional aspect of the crime: the iconic animals being slaughtered. It is hard to imagine a shinier object than a 3-ton pachyderm. It is noteworthy that, across Africa, there are far fewer efforts, all of them poorly resourced compared to anti-poaching and animal protection efforts, aiming to identify and interdict the traffickers moving ivory and rhino horn to Asia, or to counter the corrupt state actors who protect these illicit markets.

This is significant for three reasons. First, most poachers cannot afford to hunt without receiving financing from criminal bosses; most cannot even afford to buy the bullets they fire, which sell for more than $20 per round.[34] Therefore, interdicting the criminal bosses will have a cascading effect down the supply chain, causing poachers to lose this critical financing. Second, when interdiction strategies focus on the trafficking stages where the greatest increase in value occurs, criminal profits decline far further than when policies are aimed at the early stages of procurement. Third, it is harder for crime

Michael Dalton-Smith

A Northern White Rhino in Kenya that has 24-hour security.

syndicates to adapt and replace goods and people when they are lost to seizure or arrest at the trafficking phase. It is critical to understand these aspects of the supply chain in order to design a strategy that has the most disruptive impact.

Community buy-in and popular support are present in nearly all projects in Africa that have succeeded in reducing poaching.

In many parts of Africa, the local kingpins are more or less known; however, those fighting the problem struggle to build a solid body of evidence and put forward successful cases in often corrupt court systems. As in other crime sectors, there appears to be a limited number of syndicates moving the vast majority of endangered wildlife parts transnationally. A few targeted operations mounted alongside the existing physical efforts to protect the herds could have a profoundly disruptive impact in a relatively short period of time, buying more time for the animals at risk of extinction.

Lastly, there is the corruption problem, another invisible driver. Few groups across Africa have mounted anticorruption campaigns to support anti-poaching efforts. A handful of community-based projects have found success in protecting animal herds when coupling tactical protection efforts with projects focused on simultaneously interdicting poaching syndicates, while also collaborating with and protecting local communities, improving economic opportunities, and reducing graft at the local level.[35] Zakouma National Park in Chad, which lost 90 percent of its elephants from 2002–10, today has a healthy and growing elephant population and also a stable environment for local communities.[36] The nongovernmental organization Africa Parks was brought in to manage Zakouma in 2011, weeding out corruption among rangers in the Rhode Island-sized sanctuary, improving capacity, equipment, and discipline, and improving lives for local villages by building schools and health clinics.[37] There is also cautious optimism about Garamba National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo where park managers are working to professionalize the rangers, fight corruption, and provide protection and jobs for communities in and around the park. Community buy-in and popular support are present in nearly all projects in Africa that have succeeded in reducing poaching.[38] Poaching decreases in places where local communities have ownership or partial ownership of reserves or a share of the revenue from reserves, as well as jobs.[39] Implementing these strategies may be more complex, but they are ultimately no more expensive than installing hi-tech surveillance systems or airlifting multi-ton animals to safer places. Moreover, they produce multiple positive outcomes for local communities, including greater general stability and increased confidence in the state.

Broken Windows Policing

In 1982, prominent criminologists George L. Kelling and James Q. Wilson published a paper in *The Atlantic* arguing that, "at the community level, disorder and crime are usually inextricably linked, in a kind of developmental sequence."[40] Their broken windows theory was based on a 1969 experiment, which parked a car without

plates and its hood open in a run-down part of the Bronx. The vehicle was vandalized within 10 minutes of being parked, at first by affluent-looking white people, and virtually destroyed within 24 hours of being parked. Meanwhile, another car parked in affluent Palo Alto sat for a week untouched, until the researchers returned and smashed a window with a sledgehammer, after which, it was destroyed within a few hours, again by predominantly white people.[41] In both neighborhoods, visible indicators that order was not being maintained appeared to lead to further vandalism and crime.

The authors of the article explicitly argued that race played no intrinsic role in maintaining order, citing the case study of a white police officer whom they tracked as he patrolled a mostly black neighborhood in Newark, where he collaborated with community members to both define and maintain order. Rules of the street, the authors argued "were defined and enforced in collaborations with the 'regulars' …another street might have different rules, but these, everybody understood, were the rules for *this* neighborhood. If someone violated them, the regulars not only turned to [the officer] for help but also ridiculed the violator."[42] Community members and the security enforcer alike agreed on the rules and collaborated to enforce them. Enforcement was not arbitrary, but impacted rule-breakers who engaged in begging, petty theft or loitering, or who were visibly inebriated or harassing others. When these basic rules were enforced, the level of more serious crime also went down. Even though the Newark neighborhood was poor, it was secure, and people enjoyed a sense of community.[43]

The idea that Kelling and Wilson wanted to impart was that, if police focused on countering disorder and less serious crime in communities, they could reduce public fear, increase confidence in the police, and deter more serious crime.[44] When police operated in collaboration with the community, residents themselves helped take control of their neighborhoods and also prevented more serious crime from infiltrating.[45] Unfortunately, this deceptively simple broken windows narrative was often misinterpreted.

In 1993, Rudy Giuliani was elected mayor of New York City on a campaign promise to reduce soaring crime and clean up the streets. Giuliani embraced the broken windows theory, and implemented a program in which disorder was aggressively policed and all violators were ticketed or arrested. The New York City Police Department cracked down on misdemeanors, arresting people for smoking marijuana in public, spraying graffiti, and selling loose cigarettes.[46] Police also focused on cleaning up the New York City subway system, which at the time suffered 250,000 turnstile jumpers every day.[47] Their aggressive response seemed to work. Almost instantly, crime began falling, and the murder rate plummeted. Giuliani called the strategy miraculous, and was reelected in 1997.

However the Giuliani approach—many criminologists now refer to this as "zero tolerance" or "stop and frisk" policing—has come under fire. First, criminologists began to note that crime had dropped at corresponding rates around the United States, including in other big cities that did not implement New York's approach.[48] Some began to question whether Giuliani's

approach had anything to do with New York's crime decrease. Moreover, minority communities and civil rights groups hit back against "zero tolerance," saying such policies caused police to disproportionally target minorities, thus increasing disorder and mistrust amid rising complaints of police misconduct.[49] More recent high-profile killings of African Americans by white police, such as Michael Brown, who was stopped for jaywalking in Missouri, and Eric Garner, who was confronted for selling loose cigarettes in New York, were said to be examples of broken windows policing run amok. George Kelling, one of the authors of the original broken windows article himself hit back against the way his theory had been applied, writing in 2015 that, "broken windows was never intended to be a high-arrest program," and had been grossly misinterpreted.[50]

Other academic analyses have come to the same conclusion. One 2015 study published in the *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* found that "disorder policing strategies generate noteworthy crime control gains," but that "the types of strategies" implemented can matter greatly.[51] Comparing 30 different instances of disorder policing, the study concluded that aggressive order maintenance strategies focused on making high numbers of arrests do not generate significant crime reductions.[52] In contrast, it found that "community problem-solving approaches" seeking to change "social and physical disorder conditions" can produce significant crime reductions.[53] It found examples of successful strategies that yielded consistent crime reduction effects across a variety of violent, property, drug, and disorder outcome measures.[54]

These findings support the idea that police and other security forces should pay attention to visible signs of disorder when seeking to reduce more serious crimes in neighborhoods. The key to success is that they focus on a community cooperation model over a zero-tolerance or stop and frisk model.[55] The 2015 study concluded that, "in devising and implementing appropriate strategies to deal with a full range of disorder problems, police must rely on citizens, city agencies, and others in numerous ways."[56] Moreover, a sole commitment to increasing misdemeanor arrests is likely to undermine relationships in low income, urban communities of color, where distrust between the state and citizens is most profound.[57] As Kelling put it in his 2015 article, levels of crime and demand for order remain high in minority and poor communities in the United States, but zero-tolerance approaches have exacerbated the problem.[58]

The final lesson was that disorder problems, and the responses to them, are highly contextualized to local conditions. Since each community and its problem are unique, so should be strategies to counter them.[59] Furthermore, it is important to make a distinction between imposing order on the general public, and targeting highly violent syndicates, repeat offenders or gangs. An aggressive program focused on the disorderly behaviors of violent gang members, for example, could include focused deterrence tactics more rigorous than those used in a program to control the more general disorderly conduct of ordinary citizens.

Conclusion

The purpose of this article is to help communities, states, and organizations comprehend

and address why they fall into the very understandable psychological trap of the shiny object curse. The most important takeaway should be that identifying root drivers of problems and engaging—not isolating—communities impacted by these threats must be the first order of business. Community members hold the keys to success, and in every occasion encountered here, they have felt as desperate for peace and security as the rest of us. Trust between the community and the state depends on whether policymakers fall victim to the curse.

The Drivers of Disorder are Typically More Profound than What is Immediately Visible

Therfore, it is imperative that security forces and policymakers alike conduct thorough information gathering and analysis to understand how illicit networks operate, obtain financing, and solicit protection. Just as each community is unique, so must be interventions. Unless a fairly complete analysis is conducted prior to shaping and implementing policy, that policy may cause greater harm than it alleviates.

It Will be Necessary to Engage Communities to Help Fight Disorder

Community members often hold a great deal of intelligence about the drivers of disorder, and are be able to identify ringleaders. Moreover, they have an interest in improving levels of order in the place they live, and are vital partners in restoring and maintaining order. This idea can have relevance for policymakers trying to protect communities domestically, or trying to implement peace-building strategies or stability operations abroad.

Elected Officials May Perceive Benefits from Implementing Highly-Visible Interventions that Ultimately Have Neglibible or even Negative Impact on Affected Communities

These visible interventions may bring those politicians short-term political gain, or give the appearance that the elected officials are taking action, when in fact the elected officials are avoiding doing what actually needs to be done. Advocating for elected officials to take a tough stand against illicit activity is a complex arena for security forces, but security forces may find useful allies in the community if they already have mutual trust and a solid working relationship. PRISM

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Photo

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EFFECTIVE, LEGITIMATE, SECURE

INSIGHTS FOR DEFENSE INSTITUTION BUILDING

Today, the United States faces a security paradox. On the one hand, the U.S. military is unrivaled in size, strength, capacity, and budget; on the other hand, the global operating environment of the 21st century is diffuse and complex, and threats are often asymmetric and transnational. Such challenges stipulate that no single nation, regardless of its traditional military might, can completely address its security objectives alone. The United States is no exception. Developing a network of competent partners that can share the burdens and responsibilities of global security, embracing a strategy of coalition and cooperation, is therefore vital to U.S. interests.

The challenge is how to best invest resources to help establish strong and capable defense partners. To this end, traditional security cooperation and assistance approaches have proven insufficient to instate sustained improvements to partners' defense sectors. Defense institution building (DIB) seeks to fill this gap by supporting partner stakeholders as they seek to develop the systemic capabilities and strong institutional foundations needed for legitimate, effective, professional, and sustainable defense sectors that are responsive to civilian control and contribute to the overall security and prosperity of the state—and in turn, to regional stability and U.S. national security.

Effective, Legitimate, Secure: Insights for Defense Institution Building offers an introduction to the concept of DIB and argues that establishing effective and legitimate defense institutions to undergird a partner's defense establishment is the only way to ensure long-term security.

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Mark Jhomel

In June 2017, the Philippine Air Force conducted airstrikes against militant groups in Marawi City.

ISIL Radicalization, Recruitment, and Social Media Operations in Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines

BY NATHANIEL L. MOIR

In a 2014 video posted to YouTube, the Islamic State in Iraq and Levant (ISIL) announced the end of Sykes-Picot.[1] While Sykes-Picot may be unfamiliar among many in the West, ISIL's appeal in 2014 centered on promoting its ability and vision, as a caliphate, to invalidate the boundary between Iraq and Syria. That border, a result of World War I neocolonial competition, stemmed from the 1916 Sykes-Picot Agreement that divided the region into mandates governed by and reflecting the interests of France and Britain. Where was the Wahhabbi doctrine in this YouTube message? Nowhere. Rather, the message suggested that administrative control of territory, an opportunity provided by the Syrian Civil War, distinguished ISIL from other terrorist organizations and that expansion of a caliphate did not rely on the legitimacy of radical Wahhabism ideology alone. While ideology remains central to this process, ISIL radicalization depends on exploitation of networks including familial ties, friendship, religious institutions and especially expansion of these connections. With the potential end of its attempted caliphate in Iraq and Syria, what other regional networks will ISIL target for exploitation?

As ISIL diminishes in Iraq and Syria, the organization seeks to survive by exploiting radicalized networks elsewhere, especially in Southeast Asia. To assess this ongoing development, the task and purpose of this article is to examine ISIL-oriented radicalization and recruitment in Southeast Asia. First, this process is assessed in Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines with attention to specific groups as national or, where applicable, transnational entities. Second, the paper addresses how ISIL-related radicalization incorporates social media

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operations in Southeast Asia and how the use of encrypted communication apps support those efforts.

Southeast Asian terrorist groups' self-proclaimed ties with ISIL grew in 2015 and 2016. This article asserts that these connections may expand as ISIL's base in Iraq and Syria decreases. Indeed, many Southeast Asia-based organizations sought Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's acknowledgement of their allegiance to the Iraq and Syrian-based "Islamic Caliphate" at its zenith in 2014 and 2015. However, during its primary period of expansion in 2015, ISIL did not recognize Indonesia, for example, as a territory or as a sponsored province known as *wilayaht*.[2] Despite this, Indonesian affiliates still sought ISIL acknowledgment by providing recruits to ISIL with the intent of potentially extending the caliphate to Southeast Asia.

ISIL leadership in Syria and Iraq failed to confirm Southeast Asian terrorist groups' allegiance to ISIL in a manner similar to the ISIL enfranchisement provided to Boko Haram and al-Shabaab in Nigeria and Somalia. Why? ISIL's apparent focus on recruitment prioritized replacing its dwindling supply of personnel in the conflict contesting the Assad regime in Syria instead of viably extending its caliphate to Southeast Asia. One reason, with the current exception of Mindanao in the Philippines, includes lack of popular support for ISIL despite pockets of radicalized populations in Southeast Asia. Indeed, it is difficult to argue that a wide-range of the populace, in any Southeast Asian country, supports radical Wahhabist interpretations of Islam let alone ISIL demagoguery. Historically, only the Darul Islam movement and rebellion, which took place in West Java from 1949–62, received sustained public support. Still, ISIL's proven use of radicalized individuals and small groups demonstrates that networks in Southeast Asia remain viable threats to partners in the region. This is particularly true with the provision of specialized training to regional networks, groups, and individuals.

Groups such as the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) and Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) continue to operate in the Philippines and Indonesia, but their prestige among radical Islamic supporters is diminishing. However, the ebb and flow of group viability may depend on what happens to ISIL in places such as Mosul and Raqqa, Iraq. Although ISIL is in a position of weakness this year, as compared to 2014 and 2015, it still poses a serious challenge because of its ability to franchise its ideology and encourage attacks, such as those that took place in Nice and Paris, France; Istanbul, Turkey; and most recently in London and Manchester, England.

ISIL remains a threat because of its ability to metastasize in other countries, such as Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines, in addition to its ability to support isolated attacks in Western Europe. While a formal caliphate does not currently exist in Southeast Asia, efforts to extend its reach through proxy organizations persist. In a sense, ISIL presents a hydraulic-like capability: as it is compressed by anti-ISIL forces in Iraq and Syria, it goes to those areas where opportunity exists. In the West, access to end-to-end encrypted communications apps, such as Telegram Messenger and WhatsApp, enable these transitions to other locations and the ability to plan and execute operations.[3] In the case of Southeast Asia, space and material support provided by

organizations such as ASG and others who assimilate ISIL ideology through local conditioning also help ISIL maintain existence and pose a potential security threat.

Security concerns presented by ISIL-influenced radicalized groups include attempts to dismantle, or weaken, governments in Malaysia and Indonesia, and to establish an Islamic State along the lines sought by historical precedents in the region such as Darul Islam. The potential threat of ISIL-influenced radicalization is challenging in Southeast Asia because of the vast populations' diversity in the region, a lack of regional consensus regarding unified security countermeasures, and ISIL's ability to incorporate tried technologies, such as mobile messaging applications, especially Telegram Messenger, to facilitate recruitment and radicalization among possible adherents.

An additional concern for Southeast Asian governments is Iraq- and Syria-based ISIL veteran returnees to Southeast Asia, should they survive operations in Syria and Iraq. Historical precedents for this phenomenon occurred when former members of the Afghan Mujahideen returned to Southeast Asia to establish JI in Indonesia and the ASG in the Philippines.[4] Clearly, the region remains a viable region for terrorist recruitment, especially among Indonesian, Malaysian, and Philippine nationals.[5]

Indonesia

When Indonesia achieved independence in 1949, it confronted "guerrilla war, communist revolt, political extremism combined with religious fanaticism, and separatist movements in some of the various island territories that made up the new republic."[6] Guerrilla war and communist revolt passed, but the latter problem of political extremism remains, and religious fanaticism remains problematic. However, while Muslims constitute 87.8 percent of Indonesia's population, the Indonesian public's perception of ISIL is overwhelmingly negative. According to a December 2015 survey conducted by the Kompas Media Group, 0.3 percent of respondents supported establishment of ISIS in Indonesia and only 0.8 percent indicated even general support for ISIL.[7]

Despite this lack of support, as of March 2016, Indonesian Government authorities and media reporting indicated that from 250–1,000 ISIL members existed in Indonesia, while the U.S. Department of State *Country Report for Terrorism in Indonesia* estimated 800 Indonesian foreign terrorist fighters operating in Iraq and Syria.[8] Due to these relatively low numbers in terms of Indonesia's massive Muslim population, the Indonesian Government is successful in managing its civil society organizations, and for non-interference with the large majority of Muslim organizations which condemn ISIL. However, while there were stronger counterterrorism and antiterrorism laws pending in the Indonesian legislature as of mid-2016, current counterterrorism laws remain weak. Notably, laws criminalizing travel to join terrorist organizations and providing material support to terrorists remain uncodified in Indonesian law as of mid-2016.[9]

Even as early as 2014, Indonesian counterterrorism experts stated that ISIL recruitment occurred in 16 Indonesian provinces, with Aceh as a central region for recruitment.[10] Where radicalization has been successful, the prison system and propaganda

distribution through social media, specifically YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter, were force multipliers for radicalized members. Radicalization within prisoner networks, not surprisingly, relies on visitor access to convicts and those visitors' dissemination of messages on behalf of inmates. Abu Bakir Bashir, the spiritual head of JI and leader of Jamaah Ansharut Tauhid, for instance, was visited by an estimated nine hundred individuals during 2015. Despite publicly pledging his allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in August 2014, Bashir "was allowed to receive visitors and often gave lectures which were recorded and presumably passed outside."[11]

As of February 2016, however, terrorists such as Bashir and Aman Abdurraham were moved from Kembang Kuning prison to Pasir Putih prison and were confined to isolation.[12] Abdurraham is particularly important because his organization, Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD) disseminated ISIL propaganda and conducts ISIL recruitment under his direction even though he remains incarcerated. This is notable because JAD messaging was also disseminated to violent extremist groups that splintered from JAD including the Eastern Indonesia Mujahid (MIT) and Western Indonesia Mujahidin (MIB). As a source of information operations on ISIL's behalf, radicalization within the prison system indicates that prison reform deserves serious consideration as an important security challenge in Indonesia.[13]

Prisons, particularly those founded by administrations during the colonial era, historically provide primary sites for radicalization and recruitment. This occurred in past cases ranging from incarceration of communists and nationalists in Vietnam, to radicalized religious adherents in Indonesia.[14] Current ISIL leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, infamously, was incarcerated and further radicalized during Operation *Iraqi Freedom*. The phenomenon of prison-based radicalization presents, therefore, a problematic and long-standing legacy. In the case of French operations in Algeria in 1958, for example, American historian and Professor Emeritus at Princeton University's Institute of Advanced Study, Peter Paret noted that internment of Front Liberation National (FLN) members in Algeria typified this problem. In describing prison camps, Paret observed:

> *Many camps lacked funds to institute sufficient work and study programs, so that the men had too much time to themselves. All this was conducive to the establishment of FLN networks in the camps, and even if an inmate could evade rebel control there, he would find it difficult to escape the power of the parallel hierarchies once he had been released.*[15]

Current literature on prison-based radicalization cites numerous prisons, such as those on the Indonesian island of Nusakambangan on Java, where potential ISIL recruits are detained. This is problematic because, as the U.S. Department of State *Country Report on Terrorism in Indonesia* claims, Indonesia's most hardened terrorists and ideologues are also incarcerated on the island.[16] Radicalized and potentially radicalized inmates are co-located and inmates form a foundation of networked relationships when released. Not surprisingly, Nusakambangan and potentially all prisons offer ripe opportunities for radicalization.

Laws guiding prosecution of potential ISIL adherents are also insufficient and problematic. In one case, which demonstrated a critical loophole after successful arrests by Indonesian authorities, thirty eight suspected militants were released within twenty four hours because authorities cannot arrest individuals based only on detection of a radical network. This is problematic, particularly since those released possessed weapons, ISIL flags, and training materials but had not yet committed a crime or, in ISIL's terms, an operation.[17]

The Waiheru Detention Center in Ambon, Indonesia demonstrates a more recent case and is similar to the radicalization process Peter Paret described in 1958 in Algeria. The Center was known as a planning site for an attack on a Christian village, named Loki, which occurred in May 2005. This attack was carried out by KOMPAK, an Indonesian acronym for the Crisis Action Committee, a "charity" set up by the Indonesian Islamic Propagation Council. An individual incarcerated in the facility named Abu Gar led proselytizing discussions with inmates and communicated with the known radical jihadist, Aman Abdurrahman. According to an Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict report published in 2016, these inmates "also held religious study sessions (*pengajian*) once a week after dawn prayers via handphones with Aman Abdurrahman, himself in prison outside Jakarta. All the extremist inmates attended."[18] The implications for ISIL to graft itself onto established, already radicalized networks, even those incarcerated, is clear for potential ISIL-based expansion in the region.

Majmuah al-Arkhabiliy—Katibah Nusantara

Among the most pivotal indicators of ISIL-related radicalization in Indonesia is the development of Majmuah al-Arkhabiliy (MA), formerly known as Katibah Nusantara. This group is ISIL's Malay Archipelago combat unit based in al-Shadid in the Syrian province of Hasaka.[19] Established in September 2014, the organization developed to meet the needs of Malay-speakers fighting in Iraq and Syria. Its name attempts to evoke a pan-Malay concept of nationalism and the organization seeks to complete recruitment, training, and propaganda-related tasks on behalf of ISIL, and it attempts to connect with established local terror groups.

A key task of Kantibah Nusantara consists of supporting ISIL's administration of an Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, and serving as a potential "forerunner for ISIL's extension into Southeast Asia." In this regard, however, this phenomenon differs from the historical case of former Malaysian/Indonesian Mujahidin returning from Afghanistan in the 1980s. Those returnees, known as the "Afghan Alumni," formed a core node within JI. As suggested earlier, ISIL supporters who return to Southeast Asia would likely return due only to defeat in Syria and Iraq. Survival of ISIL members, particularly in light of ongoing military action targeting ISIL members in Syria and Iraq, makes the "returnee" thesis, however, difficult to sustain and it is more likely that many go to Syria and Iraq with no intention to return to their points of origin.

Katibah Nusantara's physical presence in Malaysia or Indonesia is not verified but the possible establishment of this organization within Southeast Asia is important to

anticipate. Jasminder Singh, an analyst at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies in Singapore, pointed this group out after they successfully captured five anti-ISIL, Kurdish-held locations in Syria which then formed the basis for a propaganda effort among Indonesian and Malay language social media sites.[20] Importantly, Katibah Nusantara also translates ISIL material from Arabic into Bahasa Indonesia, the national language of Indonesia, and works with the Islamic State's al Hayat Media Centre to subtitle extremist videos. Thus, the organization serves as a cultural/linguistic intermediary to facilitate ISIL's globalizing efforts in Southeast Asia. Furthermore, it potentially serves as a model for organizations with pledged support to the Islamic State such as Boko Haram and al-Shabaab.

Jemaah Islamiyah

ISIL recruitment and the consolidation of allegiance is a dynamic process. In the case of JI, procedural steps are described in the general guide of *Jemaah Islamiyah, The Struggle Guide Series (II)*, a source released by the Central Leadership Council of JI.[21] The guide articulates doctrinal procedures for the establishment of the Jemaah (group) as it builds internally and as it seeks to join with other groups to form a broader Islamic State in Southeast Asia. These steps form the conditions in which the broader "Caliphate" potentially connects to "Islamic States" in the Sahel, the Maghreb, the Levant, Afghanistan, Somalia, and Nigeria.

In the case of JI, recruitment of individuals and other groups occurs within a fundamental stage towards the establishment of the JI Islamic State. According to *al Manhaj al Harakity Li Iqomatid Dien* (The Methodology to Establish the Religion), recruiting and collaboration constitutes an important step in JI's methodology.[22] This process, for example, constitutes a period between offense and defense and focuses on strengthening the organization. It is roughly analogous to the Maoist principle of equilibrium, or shoring up, required before sustained offensive operations. In this component of JI's doctrine, establishing itself as an Islamic State, or declared affiliate at least, is a primary step. The second stage is the development of strength. These steps precede offensive operations to include warnings of actions and armed jihad. This foundation of group development and reinforcement of strengths (organizationally and materially) is required to coordinate and collaborate with other "Islamic States".

Assimilating multiple groups into a unified Caliphate presents significant and historically-based obstacles. These include overcoming differences in motivations for joining; wide variances in material resources and capabilities; variances in challenges by law enforcement; divergences in grievances, and others. In Malaya and Indonesia, for example, Islamic groups consistently failed to coalesce when fighting forces, such as those of the Portuguese or the Dutch, from the 16th century through decolonization. In the Malacca Strait, for instance, commercial interests rather than Islamic principles to expand the *ummah*, or other religious imperatives such as jihad, historically shaped conflict concerning maritime control.[23] This is a powerful indicator that economic motivation, versus ideological drivers, perpetuates ISIL radicalization in the region. Whether ISIL can achieve sustained unification among radicalized populations in

Southeast Asia remains unknown, particularly as divergent interests potentially conflict with ISIL guidance.

Malaysia

In Malaysia, the government appears successful in thwarting ISIL radicalization and recruitment. While this is partially due to diverse and disconnected potential recruits who do not possess networks comparable to those in the Philippines or Indonesia, administrative capacity is notable. This assessment is based on Malaysian Government action including counterterrorist legislation. *The Prevention of Terrorism Act* enacted on September 1, 2015 in particular, provides a useful example of relatively strong legislation in the region.[24] Alert governmental action and active partnership building with the United States, such as a terrorist watchlist sharing agreement and cooperation with regional partners, also contains ISIL recruitment. Like the Indonesian Government, Malaysia additionally appears successful in building cooperative counter radicalization and recruitment efforts within the Muslim community and in developing flexible legislation and judicial efforts to review and act upon cases of alleged and suspected terrorism. For these reasons, Malaysia appears successful in its efforts to address the challenges of ISIL radicalization.

While small in number, a U.S. Department of State *Country Report for Terrorism in Malaysia* from 2016 cites 72 Malaysians as members of ISIL.[25] With regard to recruitment populations' motivations, Malaysians who join ISIL, or attempt to join the group, represent a highly diverse mix in contrast to potential ISIL adherents in Indonesia. While religious ideology is an important component for Malaysians supporting ISIL's operations, potential members appear to include highly educated secular-oriented individuals, but also unemployed members of society, drug addicts, and thrill seekers.

An important consensus in the literature on this subject acknowledges ISIL's appeal to individuals for non-ideological and non-religious-based reasons. Additionally, the perception of ISIL's past success contributes a prominent motivation for many potential recruits. Economic factors, such as unemployment however, do not explain strong support for ISIL. As Mohamed Nawab Mohamed Osman, a professor at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, explains, "the Salafi jihadist-type is one that we need to understand."[26] Notably, however, analysts differ on the degree and scope of ISIL presence in Malaysia. Peter Chalk, in a late 2015 Australian Strategic Policy Institute report, viewed Malaysia as possessing a greater ISIL presence than that perceived in Indonesia and the Philippines. In contrast, other analysts perceived ISIL related efforts in the Philippines as the greatest counterterrorism threat in the region.[27]

Religion is still a defining factor for many recruits when deciding to support the group. However, for this population, ignorance and poorly formed understandings of Islam, especially as it pertains to the purpose of jihad, often lead to the easy manipulation of recruits.[28] An example of this effort includes important social responses to manipulation of Islam by the Malaysian National Council for Islamic Religious Affairs. On October 23, 2014, and, again on April 20, 2015, the organization issued *fatwas* prohibiting Malaysian Muslim support for

ISIL.[29] The government also appears proactively efficient in blocking ISIL recruitment and in effectively responding to cases of alleged ISIL activity. It is not surprising that much literature on the subject of radicalization emphasizes the need for indigenous, local, community-driven anti-radicalization supported, but not dictated by, the Malaysian Government. In a similar case, Indonesia's Nahdlatul Ulama, the country's largest Muslim organization, provides a positive example of counter radicalization. In December 2015, for example, it produced a documentary entitled "*Rahmat Islam Nusantara*" (The Divine Grace of Islam Nusantara), which emphasized the validity of religious pluralism and acknowledgment and acceptance of other religious views.[30] Similarly, in Malaysia, the Malaysian Islamic Development Authority, which overseas Malaysian mosques and clerics, initiated an anti-ISIL media campaign in 2015.[31]

Despite these counter-ISIL efforts, it is critical to remember that, in the case of Malaysia, the government forbade "non-Sunni practice of Islam, barred Muslims from converting to another religion, and imposed fines, detention, and canings on those classified under the law as Muslim who contravened sharia codes."[32] Additionally, according to the U.S. Embassy's *Malaysia 2015 International Religious Freedom Report*, "National identity cards specify religious affiliation, and are used by the governments to determine which citizens are subject to sharia."[33] The document indicates that the Department of Islamic Development of Malaysia (JAKIM) also propagates anti-Christian and anti-Shia messages through Friday sermons. Additionally, it implements and regulates sharia law while government officials, such as the Minister of Education, make "anti-Semitic and in some cases, anti-Christian, statements." It is important, therefore, to recognize anti-ISIL statements in the context of Malaysian state control over the practice of Islam. It is useful to keep this in mind and not perceive anti-ISIL messaging as simply a matter of geopolitically minded benevolence on the part of the Malaysian government to counter-ISIL messaging or as some form of unified, global approach to counterterrorism.

Government efforts, even if the motivations do not always line up with western counterterrorism preferences or principles of religious freedom, still matter significantly. Counter-ISIL lines of operation include counterintelligence efforts within the Royal Malaysian Forces (RMF); development of a regional information operations center to counter radical messages; continued cooperation with Muslim religious authorities; and government legislation and adjudication.[34] Regarding legislative efforts, in April 2015 the Malaysian Parliament strengthened counterterrorism laws and supported increased funding to review court cases involving ISIL-related arrests. As an example, "four High Court judges in Kuala Lumpur and one judge in Sabah had been assigned to hear ISIL militant and security cases. They were reported to have been trained in particular areas of the law that involved security."[35]

The question remains, however, how much does ISIL ideology resonate and lead to radicalization in Malaysia? Radicalization factors unique to Malaysia appear unclear and evidence for radicalization depends primarily on qualitative data such as interviews with potential recruits and individuals in academia, government, and law

enforcement. Current literature on radicalization suggests that individuals who seek to join ISIL are motivated by perceptions that ISIL is successful whereas other groups have failed. Certainly, this is a dynamically changing view based on the erosion of ISIL in Syria and Iraq. On one hand, the best method to diffuse ISIL's appeal is continued successful targeting of ISIL personnel and resources, and continued and increased efforts to challenge its narratives, particularly by Islamic-credentialed authorities. On the other hand, a less satisfactory answer is that radicalization remains a difficult process to map empirically in Malaysia. This is because of the diverse population base of potential recruits, their understandably secret routes to potentially joining ISIL, and the fact that it is a relatively small number of individuals who seek to join. ISIL, when it posited Mosul and Raqqa as symbolic sites, set conditions for its failure since it tied its future to enduring in those environments. The most pressing question becomes how it will evolve elsewhere. In Southeast Asia, as this article suggests, ISIL's future is largely dependent on the efficacy of local and national government.

The Philippines

The extent of the ISIL presence in the Philippines remains disputed among academics, independent researchers, and Philippine Government authorities, particularly the military. However, evidence of ISIL infiltration in Mindanao exists and, as of October 2014, a Philippine Army brigade, an estimated 1,500 soldiers, increased support for intelligence collection in Mindanao, the second largest island in the Philippines.[36]

CIA World Factbook

Map of Indonesia and neighboring Malaysia, with portions of the Philippines depicted.

Additionally and most recently, operations in Marawi City clearly indicate ISIL-related vitality. The debate over ISIL's presence in the Philippines however centers on individuals and small groups (20 or less) inspired by ISIL, and those who publicly swore allegiance to ISIL in the hope that it may elicit the attention and support of the mother organization. With ISIL's defeat in Iraq and Syria, this dynamic is quickly changing to the detriment of ISIL supporters.

What role, if any, does past, non-ISIL related, conflict between the Philippine government and Filipino Islamic groups, particularly in Muslim Moro-dominated Mindanao, potentially contribute to willingness to support ISIL ideology or expansion? One way of looking at this includes assessing previous splits among insurgent groups on Mindanao. In one case, conflict broke out between the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and splinter groups due to disagreement on the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB), a peace accord signed in March 2014 between the Philippine Government and the MILF. This agreement served as the basis for the Bangsamoro Basic Law, a power sharing agreement between the MILF and the Philippine Government in the proposed "Bangsomoro Autonomous Region" of western Mindanao that as of summer 2016 was not yet enacted into law.[37]

However, the greatest issue at stake for the Philippines is not in Southeast Asia or between groups disagreeing over accords with the Philippine Government. The subject of overseas workers is a concern since more than 2.5 million Filipinos reside in the Middle East; 1.2 million in Saudi Arabia; 930,000 in the United Arab Emirates; and an estimated 200,000 in Kuwait and Qatar, each.[38] This is an issue for three reasons: first, the Philippine Government is unable to provide security should a hostage crisis occur. This issue has precedent from 2004 in the Angelo de la Cruz incident.[39] As a result of this incident, Filipino journalists called for the Philippine Government to avoid public support for U.S. Government operations against al-Qaeda in Iraq. Third, radicalization of Filipinos returning to the Philippines, specifically overseas Filipino workers, is a serious concern. In one case from September 2015, a Syrian expatriate, Yasir Muhammad Shafiq-al-Barazi and a Filipino woman, Joy Ibana Balinang were arrested in Saudi Arabia for manufacturing explosive belts. Balinang was reported as an overseas Filipino worker who quit employment earlier in 2014.[40] This case presents a quandary: are such incidents an outlier or a precedent for radicalization and recruitment for "lone-wolf" operations in the Philippines?

ISIL Motivation in Southeast Asia

A fundamental reason for ISIL-related radicalization and recruitment in Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines was the perception among adherents that ISIL successfully administered a state. Building upon the prophesied "al Sham" and historic caliphate, "ISIL is seen to be the one group that accomplished what other groups only set out to do but failed to achieve: maintaining and governing territory."[41] With ongoing events in Syria and Iraq, this dynamic is changing rapidly although it is reasonable to expect that some ISIL adherents will move to other regions. In its broader, strategic plan, ISIL focuses its efforts primarily on provocation, a trend likely to continue. According to this strategy, in the view of Andrew Kydd, a

professor of Political Science at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and Barbara Walter, a scholar at the University of California, San Diego, terrorists attempt to draw a violent government response that potentially, and ideally, harms local citizens and drives the population away from government support and services.[42]

For ISIL, motivations driving recruitment and radicalization are two-fold: first, they seek replacements for the dwindling numbers of personnel due to battlefield loses in Syria and Iraq; second, their recruitment success depends on the perception of an expanding caliphate. Their destruction in Mosul and Raqqa, and elimination elsewhere, hinders this expansion. Still, expansion, even if not in significant numbers, demonstrates ISIL's reach beyond the Middle East and other regions where terrorism has long held sway, such as Somalia and Nigeria, and into other countries where lone-wolf attacks occur. The perceived success, or failure, of ISIL in Syria and Iraq critically contributes to this phenomenon and it is likely that many other groups, such as the Bangasmoro Islamic Freedom Fighters, and more splinter groups may adhere to, or depart from, ISIL's mission for these reasons. For analysts focusing on pro-ISIL radicalization and recruitment, it is useful to keep in mind the historical networks and contexts which preceded ISIL's split with al-Qaeda as much as the network infrastructural changes in ISIL-infected areas.[43]

ISIL Social Media Operations in Southeast Asia

Social Media

The Taliban were among the first terrorist groups to use Twitter to broadcast their 2011 attacks in Kabul as part of the spring Badr offensive that year.[44] Since 2011, social media and encrypted messaging services have dynamically complicated and expanded challenges posed by terrorist recruitment and radicalization. As a tool for recruitment and radicalization, similar patterns and processes exist among users in the Middle East and in Southeast Asia.[45]

A typical path to recruitment includes a simple process: information in Facebook directs individuals with interest in ISIL to other channels for vetting and private channels for further proselytizing or conversion. Users may quickly create, delete, or alter social media accounts on Facebook, Twitter, and other sites, at no cost. Facebook and Twitter also serve as points of entry towards radicalization and receipt of pro–ISIL messages. As an important countermeasure in Southeast Asia, the Indonesian Minister of Communications and Information blocked seventy ISIL-connected websites and blogs at the request of the country's National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT).[46] Although this was a positive action, social media is transient in nature and ISIL-related content consistently reconstitutes on new sites.

Pro–ISIL websites appear anachronistic in contrast to social media and mobile messaging. Specific sites are relatively easy for governments to block and investigate, although groups such as the Taliban, as well as even more recently established groups

such as MA/Kantibah Nusantara in Indonesia and Malaysia, still host and promote websites. In both cases, these platforms may serve as a type of clearing house that translates pro–ISIL propaganda into local languages and generates promotion of generalized propaganda including profiles and operational narratives.

It is useful to remember that social media sites are not merely communication channels. Most users of Facebook and Twitter, among other sites, use the media to remain in or enter a community and do not actively communicate or participate with other non-community users. Although virtual, relationships and a sense of belonging are central to social media participation. It is easy to regard social media and mobile messaging as only nefarious forms of signal communication, but it is also critical to understand the sense of community these forms of media provide users and how grievances brought to such forums serve as basis for potential radicalization.

In cases where users are isolated from others in their day-to-day reality, the potential of lone wolf radicalization is apparent, particularly in light of recent terrorist attacks such as those in Jakarta, Orlando, Nice, London, and Manchester. The online community, regarded as the "Baqiya family," is an important example of this development. Best considered as a loose network of ISIL supporters, members form support groups, develop friendships, and share and develop mutual ideologies, although steeped in pro-ISIL radicalized Sunni Islam. As Amarnath Amarasingam, a researcher at the University of Waterloo, Ontario, explains, "If we continue to focus simply on the content put out by the Islamic State, and I'm sure future jihadist movements, we are overlooking a major part of what is going on."[47]

In addition to providing a sense of community, the Baqiya family also readily adapts to changes in communications technology. In a way, it provides an internal form of crowdsourcing for coding and as a vehicle for updating others on technological developments in software sharing and encryption. An example of this includes the dynamic development and use of mobile messaging platforms, especially Telegram Messenger and WhatsApp.

Mobile Messaging

Commercially available applications that allow anyone to send encrypted text and voice messages have become important tools for communication among insurgent and terrorist groups. In the case of the attacks in Brussels in 2016, terrorists used communication encryption applications to keep analysts from tracking their efforts.[48] Telegram Messenger, an application of great importance to ISIL, was a central communication platform for the January 2016 Jakarta terrorist attack.[49] ISIL is a primary proponent in this development and ISIL-inspired propaganda expanded significantly in late 2015 in Southeast Asia, particularly in Indonesia.

Encryption training for ISIL operatives in Raqqa was formerly overseen by Abu Mohammad al-Adnani, an individual formerly referred to as a principal ISIS spokesperson.[50] Al-Adnani was detained in Iraq by coalition forces in 2005 but then released in 2010. After 2011, he became a "principal architect in ISIL's external relations" and "coordinated the movement of ISIL fighters, directly encouraged lone-wolf

attacks on civilians and members of the military and actively recruited" before he was killed in Aleppo, Syria in late August 2016.[51] As a core-member of ISIL, al-Adnani trained others to conduct attacks without direct tactical guidance and he utilized encryption software to coordinate efforts without his presence. According to Michael Smith of Kronos Advisory, this capacity "really plays into the larger theater of terrorism. It amplifies the fear factor when we realize that this group can communicate with people around the world in ways that intelligence services cannot quickly identify and ascertain what is contained in the correspondence."[52]

Potential ISIL supporters in Southeast Asia increasingly turn to mobile messaging applications for detailed guidance, typically after demonstrating interest through media such as Facebook. Notably, Facebook acquired WhatsApp in February 2014 and, as the most popular messaging application worldwide, had more than one billion users by early 2016.[53] WhatsApp, however, provides inadequate levels of privacy protection; that may be a key reason motivating violent extremist organizations to use Telegram Messenger which provides a high-degree of privacy through encryption.[54]

End-to-end encryption relies on technology utilizing mathematical operations run on digital data to ensure privacy. In most cases, this technology does not allow the app developers to open or decrypt messages; this seriously challenges law enforcement and intelligence services. For users, it obviously provides an end-to-end secure communication chain since all that matters, to them, is the privacy such encryption provides. Telegram also offers a feature entitled Secret Chats technology. This feature allows users to program messaging for automatic self-destruction by programmed devices, so that only intended recipients can read messages. Also important are extended sharing apps, such as broadcast lists. Broadcast lists enable users to create digital dissemination of content for up to five thousand members that, in turn, distribute links for further message dissemination. Additionally, Telegram includes channel messaging which may reach unlimited numbers of users. However, in November 2015, the messaging service blocked 78 ISIL-related channels in twelve languages.[55]

In November 2016 through its Telegram-based Khilafah News Channel—one of the very channels blocked by Telegram—ISIL addressed communication security issues among its members in response to warnings issued by the hacker group Anonymous after the Paris attacks that month.[56] This incident highlights the importance of adaptation and adjustment among both terrorists and law enforcement and intelligence agencies seeking to contain them. It is likely, therefore, that similar processes will continue as other messaging services and platforms evolve for communication.

Conclusion

In Southeast Asia, Foreign-Trained Fighters (FTF) returning from Iraq and Syria pose a threat to countries such as the Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia. Regionally, however, ISIL's failure to publicly affirm pledged allegiances of Southeast Asian groups such as MA, ASG, and JI is notable. Instead, ISIL offers only indirect operational guidance and well-developed propaganda, although it does demonstrate highly experienced information operations guidance.

This article argued that ISIL's reach to, and reception in, Southeast Asian countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines is a credible but not an existential threat for these countries. While ISIL could potentially establish a small province in Southeast Asia, it appears unlikely, especially with the demise of ISIL in Iraq and Syria. Nevertheless, there are at least two significant challenges ISIL still poses to the region. First, it is critical to address the dynamic increase of social media based communication and messaging applications that, at this point, no longer need direct ISIL involvement for recruitment and radicalization for pro–ISIL or similar ideologies. The second challenge, where solutions are potentially achievable, concerns the content of ISIL messaging. Continued cooperative efforts, such as those between governments and Islamic communities in particular, are perhaps the most important measures towards challenging the ideological potency of ISIL. On this point, Southeast Asian countries, and especially those with moderate religious constituencies, appear to be on the right track.

Based on the governments of Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines' demonstrated interest in strengthening rule of law and increasing counterterrorism capabilities, the best way forward is increased capacity building and cooperative efforts with the United States and others. Admittedly, this is often difficult because of political pressures and challenges to continued collaboration yet opportunities exist. In the case of Mosul's destruction, assisting in the rebuilding of the city provides a small-scale "Marshall Plan" type of opportunity for the United States to help facilitate Iraqi administrative capacity for reconstruction. A similar, much smaller-scale related case may exist for Marawi City in Mindanao. The example of "rebuilding" contrasts significantly with the nihilism advocated by ISIL, wherever it exists. The United States and its regional partners, in all cases, share Southeast Asia's regional security concerns and in building individual nations' capacity to ensure domestic security. The best solutions for these countries, in their efforts to counter-ISIL recruitment and radicalization therefore, is continued support for viable, local initiatives. Another step is continued provision of technical and culturally aware institution building assistance when feasible. This will be much more successful than tarnished neocolonial-like notions that guidance should stem from altruistic imperatives driven by liberal internationalism. PRISM

Notes

[1] "ISIS—The End of The Sykes-Picot Agreeent," May 27, 2015, available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MSNCPj7s6vI >.

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Photo

Page 90. "Bombing on Marawi City" available at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Marawi#/media/File:Bombing_on_Marawi_City.jpg, licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0. < https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>. Produced unaltered.

Widespread corruption has permeated the highest levels of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

Fighting for Legitimacy in Afghanistan

The Creation of the Anti-Corruption Justice Center

BY CHAD BROOKS AND CRAIG TREBILCOCK

This article recounts the efforts of international stakeholders who, working with a small number of Afghan officials, threw the equivalent of a geopolitical "hail Mary" in 2015 to reverse the culture of corruption and impunity that permeated the highest levels of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA). The NATO-led *Resolute Support* (RS) Mission's efforts in Afghanistan to rejuvenate counter- and anti- corruption lines of operations with the creation of the Anti-Corruption Justice Center (ACJC) is worth examining.[1] The ACJC is not a magic talisman that will eliminate all corruption but, if properly resourced, the Center can help the GIRoA regain political legitimacy in the eyes of its people, its soldiers, and the world.

The Stage is Set

In late 2015, many were skeptical of the survivability of the GIRoA. Afghan civilians viewed the GIRoA and the leadership of the National Unity Government (NUG) as illegitimate because of widespread corruption within all levels of the government, to include the judiciary—a belief supported by the unwillingness of international stakeholders to commit additional manpower or donations. Afghan soldiers, in turn, realized that, while they were fighting, their leaders had embezzled their salaries and supplies. Many U.S. and NATO military leaders, as well as international stakeholders, failed to see the correlation between poor performance and corruption,

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and their central focus remained on the kinetic fight, with the presumption that with battlefield success, political stability would follow.

Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani, seeking to hold together the shaky NUG with one of his political opponents as a partner, seemed to lack the will or ability to pursue counter-corruption policies without fracturing his own power base. He had successfully, but controversially created the National Procurement Authority (NPA) as an anti-corruption measure, although he had to personally oversee its activities, as he did with too many projects in which his underlings lacked the will to reform. Apart from the famous Kabul Bank case that failed to recover lost funds, the Attorney General's office had not brought a serious corruption case to trial in years.[2]

It is easy to point to the many weaknesses of the GIRoA and unbridled self-interest within its institutions as the reason for lack of progress on counter-corruption initiatives. However, while the Afghans have perpetuated many of their problems, reasoning that solely places blame on them is a convenient and self-serving rationale. International stakeholders had for years enabled inaction—their poor oversight on donor expenditures has been well-documented by the Special Inspector General for Afghan Reconstruction—and their lack of will to tie aid to corruption reform further fueled the problem.

Initial Reforms

The predecessor of the NATO-led RS Mission—the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)—did attempt to tackle corruption with the creation in 2009 of the Major Crimes Task Force (MCTF) and the Combined Joint Interagency Task Force–Shafafiyat, commanded by then U.S. Army Brigadier General H.R. McMaster.[3] However, the international community engaged in counter-corruption activities largely abandoned these efforts by 2013 after the failed Salehi and Kam Air cases, which prompted then Afghan President Hamid Karzai to gut the MCTF and the High Office of Oversight and Anti-Corruption for daring to reveal corruption within his regime.

RS, when it transitioned from ISAF in 2015, kept only a token unit strictly limited to anti-corruption activities with Afghan inspectors general in the Ministries of Defense (MOD) and Interior (MOI). The Mission justified this retreat on two bases: counter-corruption activities undermine donor confidence, potentially at risk of turning off donations altogether; and any anti-corruption initiative must be "Afghan-led"—a school of thought that was not a consensus view.

Leading into 2015, some nations advocated an Afghan-led approach, viewing monetary sanctions for noncompliance as infringing upon Afghan sovereignty, while others believed that accountability was necessary since Western aid was being stolen. Within this this latter group, USAID, the International Narcotics and Law Enforcement, and other U.S. Embassy stakeholders advocated against moving too quickly, advocating for counter-corruption training programs that they projected would yield results sometime after 2020. International law enforcement offices and some at RS, however, saw an immediate need for action. To them, Afghan-led was a polite euphemism for doing nothing in a country

where preserving the status quo lined the pockets of the nation's elite with hundreds of millions of dollars in misappropriated coalition aid.

Beyond policy differences, personnel rotations and the constant bleeding of institutional knowledge remained significant challenges to anti-corruption reforms. As Western personnel rotated in and out of Kabul on 6-month or 1-year tours, little incentive existed for new arrivals to take ownership of an issue that everyone wanted someone else to own.

Against the web of conflicting policies, intransigent stakeholders, and Afghan resistance, by the middle of 2015 the deterioration of the security environment and decline in donor resolve presented the need for RS to turn matters around regarding confidence in GIRoA within months, not years. A few personnel at RS who possessed a historical understanding of corruption in Afghanistan, recognized it as an immediate existential threat—Afghan security forces were waning in their resolve because of corrupt leaders, as were the donors whose funds fueled GIRoA.

However, the differences in western timelines and philosophies muddied political priorities, and conflicting messaging to the Afghans clouded efforts to try to develop priorities for counter-corruption initiatives. For example, in late 2015 Western military advisors reinforced to their counterparts at the Afghan Palace that future international support and funding was at-risk unless the justice system held the corrupt accountable. At the same time, however, embassy personnel from some of the same Western nations conveyed that such prosecutions were politically risky and could undermine stability. To elements within GIRoA who were profiting from skimming a steady stream of Western funds, this conflicting messaging permitted them to repeatedly obfuscate and delay their Western counterparts by playing the two groups against each other.

A New Approach—the ACJC

In 2015, RS determined it needed to eliminate communication gaps between the ministries responsible for administering justice—the police, the prosecutors, and the courts—in order to cut the bureaucracy and gamesmanship hindering reform. The processing and transitioning of corruption cases among these groups allowed for bribery to stop any attempts at prosecution. Efforts to create an insulated investigative and prosecutorial fusion center began in late 2015 at an event at the British Embassy, where diplomats highlighted how London had directed fighting corruption in Afghanistan as the Embassy's first priority for 2016. The event serendipitously brought together some experienced veterans from the RS and the British National Crimes Agency (NCA) who had worked together on corruption reform in the past. All agreed a specialized jurisdiction to prosecute high-level corrupt actors was needed. The NCA suggested expanding the mandate of the existing Afghan Counter Narcotics Justice Center (CNJC) to include high-level corruption cases. The CNJC, a fusion center of law enforcement and prosecutors co-located with an independent court and oversight from the international community, enjoyed a 95 percent conviction rate and routinely handed out 20-year jail sentences to drug dealers. All agreed, and with that a rough plan

established the groundwork to create an insulated counter-corruption institution, which would be renamed the ACJC.

All parties also agreed that the key to the ACJC's success would then be to appoint and retain independent prosecutors and judges on board that were insulated from bribery, intimidation, and murder.[5] The MCTF had traditionally worked closely with RS and the international community and was selected as the police arm of the ACJC since, after a recent leadership change, it was the most trustworthy and potentially capable of Afghan police forces. In moving forward to insulate the ACJC from illicit external influences, it was key to understand the source of the corruption threat.

Widespread belief among the few at RS and in the international community willing to acknowledge that corruption flourished in 2015 was that the GIRoA had been co-opted by malign actors via a series of independent criminal patronage networks, and that the GIRoA as a fledging state was not powerful enough to address this problem. A small group of other Afghan veterans took a different view, that Afghanistan was a fully organized vertically integrated kleptocracy, run as a criminal enterprise.[6] An alternative view, espoused by the authors, was a mixture of the two: the Karzai Administration used corruption as a coalescing force for GIRoA to draw power brokers into the government to vest their interest in its survival. The credit for this theory belongs to McMaster.[7] Former President Karzai and others in power at the time protected power brokers for a fee, resulting in a web of loosely connected criminal networks that all embezzled from the system, and extorted the Afghan public.[8]

By winter 2015–16, the authors managed, with the strong support of the Commander Combined Security and Transition Command–Afghanistan, Major General Gordon "Skip" Davis, to convince RS leadership of a plan that allowed for a change of course. General John Campbell, Commander RS, then ordered the pre-existing rule of law and anti-corruption elements within RS to take the steps necessary to reinvigorate the MCTF and create the ACJC.[9] These RS elements then established a working group of stakeholders to include eight countries, the European Union (EU), the United National Assistance Mission Afghanistan (UNAMA), and RS with the NATO mission as lead. The U.S. Embassy publically supported this, but behind the scenes in Afghanistan key powerbrokers within the Embassy actively opposed it as a rushed, destabilizing initiative. Despite its inherent political weight, the U.S. Embassy was unable to persuade most members of the international community, who recognized the GIRoA would fail if course corrections were not made.

In addition to making the ACJC initiative an international-led effort, a core group from within the larger working group made up of the authors, representatives from the British Embassy, a few seasoned veterans from NCA, the rule of law team from UNAMA and select anonymous entities was established. This core group decided to put the international community as lead and agreed to have RS personnel help steer the effort as a partner rather than as a leader. Initially, the effort truly included the entire international community, with meetings being held at the EU compound, the British Embassy, or one of UNAMA's compounds, but this large

working group became too fragmented and unwieldy; and the core group agreed that an ambassador was needed to honcho the effort. British Ambassador Dominic Jermey then took the lead and began to coordinate efforts. His representative, as a member of the core group, was perfectly positioned to seamlessly convey our needs and issues that required engagement at the Ambassador's level. This pivotal action solved many problems that plagued the early stages of the ACJC by giving us unity of communications with other ambassadors, a high-level diplomat readily available to push the Afghans on tough issues, and a senior diplomat who would quell concerns of other ambassadors. Ambassador Jermey was able to enlist other ambassadors to help with the cause and to hold a regular monthly meeting with a dozen or more ambassadors on corruption.

Throughout spring 2016, the core group communicated daily and met frequently to discuss how to proceed with the mission of establishing the ACJC, as well as how to defend the Center against corrupt Afghans seeking to co-opt it, or those within the international community who disagreed with it. In this manner, the group worked through jurisdiction, likely budget, logistics issues, proposed locations, personnel issues, etc. in a matter of weeks, as opposed to letting the process last months or years. All of these issues required detailed work with various subject matter experts, and compromise amongst the interested parties in the core group. The broader international community working group and the GIRoA were involved on an ad hoc basis, depending on the issue. Despite the complexity of the issues, time did not permit delay owing to the need to bolster morale. Afghan soldiers were being denied food, medicine, pay, and ammunition as a result of corruption. Additionally, two major NATO donor conferences for the international community were scheduled in the upcoming months to decide whether to continue financially supporting the GIRoA.

In May 2016, President Ghani announced the establishment of the ACJC at the London Conference on anti-corruption. This announcement was everything the core group had worked for—the result of months of behind the scenes work primarily by the core group with Afghan officials, supported by ambassadors and on occasion other leaders. However, skeptics of the GIRoA's survivability viewed the President's announcement as window dressing before the NATO donor conferences scheduled for June in Warsaw and Brussels in October. They did not expect follow up action, having heard similar proclamations from former Afghan President Karzai, as well as bombastically false claims of prosecutions since 2008 from the office of the Afghan Attorney General. But this time, action followed.

After President Ghani's announcement, the core group had to make the ACJC happen. In mid-July Ambassador Jermey committed an estimated $2 million for the startup of the Center, at a time when no other Western embassy would commit funds, owing to 15 years of undelivered promises by the Afghans to fight corruption. The British Embassy did not freeze into inaction—it conveyed that perpetuating a system built upon the theft of international funds was not stability, but a slow path to the ultimate withdrawal of international support to Afghanistan by donor nations who were feeling political pressure at home to account for progress. The significance of British

support to the successful creation of the ACJC cannot be overstated, as it changed international opinion that Afghanistan was beyond redemption.

Efforts to get the ACJC operational slowed that summer with a seemingly endless succession of Afghan holidays, Afghan cancelled meetings, and Afghan requests for information. This period was difficult and discouraging for the core group, and it seemed as if the Afghans were having a moment of buyer's remorse. However, in the fall of 2016 the ACJC became a clear priority for the Palace. In the week preceding the NATO donor conference that October, President Ghani instituted the ACJC; designated a compound in Kabul as the Center's new site; evicted the current police unit to create space for the ACJC; moved the Attorney General's prosecutors on-site; delivered furniture to make it operational; renovated the site's utilities; and began bona fide operations. These initiatives were performed without the slightest involvement or support from the Coalition.

What had changed to spur the Afghans into action? Some attributed the action to an attempt to convince donors prior to the NATO donor conference that the Afghan President was committed to countering corruption. An element of that may hold truth; however, the new Attorney General and new security ministers had made the President aware of the corrosive impact of corruption on his government's survival. Regardless, the fast pace set by the Afghans continued after the conference. That fall the MCTF arrested two major generals (one from the MOI and one from the office of the Attorney General) in separate incidents of alleged bribery. In the past, such police actions would have resulted in the immediate release of the perpetrators as parliamentarians intervened politically on their behalf and routine bribes were paid. This time, however, that did not occur. Both have since been prosecuted and sentenced to multi-year terms at the ACJC.[10] The arrest within the MOI led to suspensions of eight other high-placed ministerial officials who were alleged co-conspirators of the bribery scheme, and the prime suspect was held in detention prior to his trial. Further the ACJC, based on information exposed during these trials, ordered subsequent investigations and the Center has since successfully prosecuted powerbrokers who interfered with corruption investigations in Herat.[11]

Special Assistant to the U.S. President for National Security Affairs Lieutenant General H.R. McMaster during his trip to Afghanistan in April conveyed to the GIRoA that the United States expects the NUG to take firm action on corruption, which emphasizes the importance of ACJC for the future of Afghanistan and legitimacy of the GIRoA as it is the only functioning court that addresses serious corruption. This importance and the efficacy of the Center was further highlighted in May, when two ACJC employees were fatally shot on their way to work.[12]

The Promising Future

The RS cannot create a stable Afghanistan with a legitimate government merely by killing insurgents. It must focus on building Afghan capacity to provide services, security, and rule of law to its people. The NATO-led mission must commit to the ACJC for the duration of their stay in Afghanistan—the Center is the only true means by which the RS can deter the theft of donor funds and

help remove corrupt Afghans from government. The ACJC has the potential to replace the parade of special commissions and bodies that have not returned results, and which have, in fact, insulated those in power from accountability. If corrupt officials infiltrate the ACJC then it likely will fail, and further erode waning support for Western financial assistance. Constant vigilance including pre-employment polygraphs and other background checks is key to the Center's success. Transparency is also key, as is continued resolve. Any complacency on these points or any distractions by the "next good idea" could also cause failure.

The benefit of long-term, specialist personnel, like those within the core group, cannot be overstated. After 16 years of conflict, the war in Afghanistan has taken a back seat to events in Iraq and Syria, leading to a military personnel replacement system that accepts the next available "warm body."[13] Only those few civilian and military personnel with either enough prior experience in Afghanistan, or an in-country network, could accomplish anything as complicated as the ACJC. Several of the individuals in the core group had been involved in the Afghan mission for 3 or more years—some as long as 8—and had worked together on prior deployments.

Leaders must be willing to listen to, leverage, support, and perfect the initiatives of the individuals who have in-country experience—real time and historical—with the institutions in Afghanistan. For the U.S. military, few programs apart from the AFPAK Hands program allow for the training and repeat deployments to the same mission that is necessary to build the experience and the contacts to have any real mission impact.[14] Yet, that program is being trimmed and those who enroll in it are viewed as being at a career disadvantage. For civilians at the U.S. Department of State, Afghanistan is a volunteer assignment, and those who volunteer often are motivated by the likelihood of a comfortable assignment in a more desirable location after their deployment.

The road ahead will be difficult since the culture of corruption is institutionalized. President Ghani must balance competing interests, and remain on-guard and involved in ACJC activities. Should the President choose a hands-off approach, it would potentially allow for corrupt influences to stack the ACJC with self-interested prosecutors and investigators—a practice that has contributed to instability these past 16 years. Alternatively should the palace assume too great a role in ACJC operations, it will carry the specter of presidential interference and potentially politicize the judicial process. Media, journalist, and watchdog groups are essential to insulating the ACJC from cooption attempts by corrupt actors. As is the placement of mentors who have experience in establishing and reforming court systems—a type of international support that was always part of the ACJC plan.

The Center is part of a menu of solutions that address related, but distinct challenges to Afghan stability. Complementary efforts such as the creation of a mechanism to recover the funds already siphoned off to illicit accounts worldwide, and anti-money laundering and counter-threat finance efforts are required to interdict the flow of funding to the enemy on the battlefield. These initiatives must coexist and complement but not dominate the other. Counter-threat finance accomplishes little if

over-the-horizon the GIRoA implodes through the avarice of its own bureaucrats.

The roots of graft run deep in Afghanistan. Those in charge of cleaning up the culture of impunity have been some of the most flagrant pilferers of the national treasury and international aid. Corrupt actors intimidate those who seek reform—"The Americans will not be here forever" is a veiled threat. Those influenced by the whispers fail to grasp that any effort to stop corruption is not for the Americans or the international community—it is a conscious choice by Afghans to lift themselves out of poverty and establish an economy and infrastructure needed for long-term stability. The ACJC is a step-off point from which rule of law can spread. If Afghan leaders have the vision and courage to place the good of the nation above personal profit, the GIRoA has a chance to succeed as a nation-state. PRISM

Notes

[1] See also "Counter and Anti-Corruption Theory and Practice from NATO Operations." NATO Joint Analysis and Lessons Learned Center (June 2013); "Operationalizing Counter/Anti-Corruption." Joint and Coalition Operational Analysis (February 2014); "Corruption in Conflict: Lessons from the U.S. Experience in Afghanistan." Special Inspector General for Afghan Reconstruction (September 2016). To clarify, counter-corruption refers to actions taken against corruption once it has occurred, directed at deterring future criminal conduct—investigations and prosecutions. Anti-corruption refers to those efforts made to prevent the possibility of corrupt activities by improving systems and processes within GIRoA—inspections to ensure resource accountability or other measures to prevent the opportunity for corruption. Collectively, these operations are referred to as the CAC line of operation, a subset of Rule of Law (RoL) operations. See also: Chad Brooks "The Counter and Anti-Corruption Mission in Afghanistan: An Asymmetric Mission Failing." (master's thesis, National Intelligence University, 2015).

[2] The Afghan Attorney General had previously tried to bring several corruption cases to trial with little or limited success due to political interference or conflicting agendas between the international community's desire to address corruption and the need to work with corrupt Afghan who were otherwise effective. These include the case against Kabul Bank officials, the case against Mohammed Zia Salehi aid to former President Karzai, and the embezzlement cases concerning the National Military Hospital.

[3] The FBI and DOD jointly worked to create the Major Crimes Task Force in 2009 as a small, well-trained, Afghan unit with international mentorship to investigate Afghan corruption. ISAF created Combined Joint Inter Agency Task Force–Shafafiyat as a Deputy Chief of Staff unit, reporting directly to the Commander of ISAF, to formalize its nascent counter- and anti-corruption effort in 2010.

[4] The international community primarily involved in counter-corruption activities were CJIATF–Shafayit, Task Force 2010, Task Force Nexus, Task Force Spotlight, the FBI, U.S. Treasury via the Afghan Threat Finance Cell, British National Crimes Agency, and various disparate mentoring efforts form foreign Embassies and the European Union Police Mission (EUPOL). The High Office of Oversight and

Anti-Corruption (HOOAC) was created by President Karzai in 2008 as a result of international pressure on him to address corruption. Initially the HOOAC had broad authority to address corruption however, over the years President Karzai reduced this authority, which rendered the HOOAC a hollow institution.

[5] The judges and prosecutors were regularly killed in 2016 by those who sought to destabilize GIRoA.

[6] Sarah Chayes, *Thieves of State: Why Corruption Threatens Global Security* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2015).

[7] Chad Brooks, "The Counter and Anti-Corruption Mission in Afghanistan," 54–56.

[8] President Ghani's staff later confirmed this in a March 2016 working paper that was provided to the international community before a palace dinner that was arranged to discuss anti-corruption initiatives in Afghanistan. The paper explained that, "[o]ver time this model of using corruption to bind power holders into the government was institutionalized. Corruption was no longer a matter of individuals breaking the law, but a matter of entire sectors operating on the basis of informal rules and practices that placed opportunities for making money over achieving public results." Author Unknown, Afghan Presidential Palace White Paper, "Anti-Corruption Strategy Brief.", March 23, 2016.

[9] CSTC–A is a command under RS, which included various subordinate units and is responsible for the administration of financial support from the U.S and NATO, as well as other train, advise, and assist responsibilities.

[10] "Top Afghan General Jailed for 30 Months by Anti-Corruption Tribunal," accessed March 5, 2017, available at <http://www.kabultribune.com/index.php/2016/11/20/top-afghan-general-jailed-for-30-months-by-anti-corruption-tribunal/>. MOI General Gets 14 Years in Prison for Taking a Bribe, accessed March 5, 2017, available at <http://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/moi-general-gets-14-years-prison-taking-bribe>.

[11] The provincial council chief of Herat province, Karan Alizai, was sentenced to 2.5 years in prison by the ACJC on March 27, 2016 for coercing prosecutors of the Attorney General's Office into releasing a corruption suspect under threat of violence. Accessed April 20, 2017, available at <http://1tvnews.af/en/news/afghanistan/28606-herat-provincial-council-chief-sentenced-to-prison>.

[12] Pamela Constable, "Finnish woman may have been abducted by insurgent group," *Washington Post*, May 22, 2017, 8, available at < https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/german-woman-afghan-guard-killed-in-kabul-guest-house-attack/2017/05/21/8301da10-3e05-11e7-9869-bac-8b446820a_story.html?utm_term=.7d1f87e5a346 >. For information on additional attacks see: "Two ACJC's Employees Shot Dead in Kabul", accessed April 10, 2017, available at < http://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/two-acjc%E2%80%99s-employees-shot-dead-kabul>.

[13] For example, at one point in April 2016, an accountant and a Pentagon business manager staffed the Rule of Law section of RS under its director. RS constantly experienced problems with personnel in the Essential Functions involved with establishing the ACJC who had been sent as temp fills, for a short tour or were inadequately trained for the mission.

[14] The AFPAK Hands program is a joint program initiated in 2009 to create a cadre of advanced mission capable professionals, trained in culture, language and special military skills, who are committed to the regional mission for a longer period of time, which enables them to ensure a degree of mission continuity.

Stomac/Wikimedia

In Kazakhstan's expansive and austere terrain, logistics play a critical role.

DEEP Into Kazakhstan

Developing a Western Operational Logistics Course

BY GEORGE TOPIC AND ROBERT BREWER

Operational logisticians are in high-demand across the globe, irrespective of country, since their specialty is a critical enabler of military capability. It is difficult, however, to design relevant training and to develop the next generation of logisticians who are skilled in the art of planning and managing logistics at the operational level. Within the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) the questions of what to teach, how to optimize student learning, and even who to teach are all difficult to answer—across the armed services and joint organizations there is very little agreement. Coursework design for other nations must accommodate differences in culture, language, and teaching methodology from that of the United States, and relate instruction to the host country's national security strategy and defense priorities.

In 2014, the Kazakhstan Defense Ministry requested assistance from the United States and NATO in developing a Western operational logistics course for a graduate degree program at their National Defense University (KNDU) that had the support of the President of Kazakhstan. Educators from KNDU, NATO, and the United States have since produced an effective course that will enhance the development of Kazakh logisticians for many years to come. For those contemplating the possibility of undertaking such an initiative, our experience can assist in the effort and prevent pitfalls. Make no mistake—even under the best circumstances with highly motivated and talented leaders, this is a challenging undertaking but a great investment.

Mr. George Topic is the Vice Director of the Center for Joint and Strategic Logistics at U.S. Army Ft. McNair. From 2006–09, he served on the Joint Staff as the Deputy Director for Strategic Logistics. Lieutenant Colonel Robert Brewer is the Chief of the U.S. Office of Military Cooperation in Kazakhstan.

Course Content

This project was executed under the auspices of a unique collaborative program known as the Defense Education Enhancement Program, or DEEP. The Program is designed to support military education and development efforts in partner nations—an estimated 20 countries, principally members of the NATO Partnership for Peace (PfP) Consortium—and draws upon the voluntary time commitment of faculty members and experts at U.S. and NATO partner military and civilian institutions.

When this project started in November of 2014, neither the KNDU faculty nor the U.S.–NATO assistance team had more than the vaguest idea of what the Kazakh Defense Ministry envisioned or needed. The KNDU faculty was not familiar with much of the material taught in Western institutions and the DEEP team was unfamiliar with Kazakhstani military logistics, their organizational structure and processes, or even the status of U.S.–Kazakh logistics engagement efforts. Consequently, the first of four weeklong meetings at KNDU in Astana, Kazakhstan was spent framing course objectives, requirements, structure, and pedagogy. A broad array of potential subject areas was developed, which we ultimately narrowed down to six subjects that overlap and reinforce one another during this weeklong (45 hour) course:

- planning and managing joint logistics operations;
- supply chain management;
- life cycle systems management (total cost of ownership);
- comparative analysis of NATO/Western logistics;
- deployment and expeditionary logistics;
- humanitarian assistance and disaster relief logistics.

Course Development

The course is part of a graduate degree program, so teaching methods and assessments were important considerations. We proposed—and KNDU accepted—a plan that included lectures, seminars, case studies, academic problems, a table top exercise, and even a field trip to a local commercial firm. Providing reference material, readings, and teaching resources was a major undertaking for our team. Prominent western books and articles, case studies, and even a relatively old but excellent supply chain management textbook were great resources. As was the Russian edition of the *NATO Logistics Handbook* and relatively recent documents from Russian sources.

Innovation in instructional methodology is rarely easy, but attempting to transform pedagogy from the "Soviet style" to one based on modern Western techniques is a special challenge. While the KNDU faculty was anxious to use case studies and Socratic teaching methods, this is a new skill for most of their instructors. Additionally, encouraging students to challenge one another or especially higher-ranking faculty was not always met with success.

The second and third trips to Astana essentially continued with enhanced dialogue not only with the faculty and students of KNDU but also, significantly, with a number of senior officers from the service headquarters and Defense Ministry. Their

participation was crucial insofar as it enabled us to frame the academic issues around real-world, relevant challenges and requirements. Moreover, the mutual support of the operational and academic organizations will pay off in many ways. One obvious benefit is the development of student research projects that can have tangible benefit to the Kazakhstan Defense Forces.

In addition to working on the course design, the DEEP team was also requested to teach a series of "master classes" for both the faculty and students. This was especially valuable, as it gave us an opportunity to assess the effectiveness of both course material and our recommended teaching techniques. The strong and consistent support of NATO's Multinational Logistics Coordination Center was not only important, but was also enthusiastically received. Czech Army Colonel (ret.) Roman Dufek—one of NATO's premier logisticians—presented several classes that were of great interest to faculty and students alike. Additionally, his briefings generated a number of insightful questions that significantly improved the overall course design. Kazakhstani logisticians also more easily related to NATO examples as they included countries that have transformed towards Western logistics methods and are on a more relatable scale than DOD. The importance of the U.S.–NATO partnership in this program cannot be overstated.

In the spring of 2016, after the third meeting in Astana, KNDU faculty were able to make two visits to the United States. Their trips included a multinational logistics conference at U.S. Army Fort Lee, and a series of activities at the National Defense University, Defense Logistics Agency, and Army Logistics University. They were able to sit in logistics classes, observe wholesale distribution operations, and interact with a variety of faculty and logisticians. These visits proved very fruitful, as they were able to witness firsthand what and how we teach, as well as the implications of our courses for U.S. and NATO logistics operations. After these visits, KNDU faculty also felt confident that they would be able to successfully execute their pilot western operational logistics course.

The most recent DEEP visit to Kazakhstan in September 2016 allowed the team to observe and participate in the delivery of the pilot course. Additionally, the KNDU–DEEP team was able to refine and enhance the course and work on a couple of key gaps that required additional focus. During this visit, one serendipitous opportunity came up as part of a coincidental discussion with the General Staff representatives about Kazakhstan's recent deployment of an estimated 500 soldiers to England for Exercise Steppe Eagle in July 2016. The challenges they faced—and ultimately overcame—were classic examples associated with any major international deployment. We have since included a related case study in the curriculum which, judging from student interest thus far, is certain to become one of the most important components of the entire course.

The fourth visit is envisioned to be the last "formal" engagement for this project, but by no means the end of the support and the partnership between all of the participants. U.S. and NATO representatives will continue to provide material, field questions, and seek out opportunities to assist KNDU.

Considerations

Each program, project, and initiative is unique and must be tailored to produce the best possible outcomes for our partners with the time and resources available. Political, cultural, economic, and bureaucratic influences are but a few of the exogenous factors that will affect the planning and execution of such engagements.

The most important consideration is perhaps the most obvious—that the relationship between the "customer" and the "provider" is paramount. All parties need to be as clear as possible on requirements, and communications need to be as open, clear, and direct as possible. In our dealings with KNDU, for example, all communications apart from face-to-face contact were passed through at least two intermediaries that made coordination quite cumbersome. There are many reasons why shortfalls might exist, not the least of which is changes to guidance or priorities that occur during the execution of a project which typically require a couple of years to complete. Flexibility, adaptability, and empathy on all sides are important attributes of a successful multinational education program.

Closely related to this is the importance of consistency; relationships built during multiple visits exponentially increase effectiveness. This proved especially true when KNDU faculty were able to visit the United States. While it is difficult to secure a long-term commitment from academics or anyone to make several visits to a distant partner nation, the payoff is significant. This is especially true when you are executing such a program using essentially volunteer labor.

A third area of special emphasis is the linkage between the military academic communities and the operational forces. In many countries this relationship is tenuous and in some cases almost nonexistent—even in the United States and NATO we often struggle to keep this connection strong. We worked hard to encourage the operational staffs to join us for each of our sessions at KNDU, and they attended almost every one: that greatly enhanced the outcomes. Conversely, the Defense Ministry staffs have recently offered to include KNDU logistics faculty in future exercises, operational efforts, and planning activities. It should also be noted that in fall 2017, KNDU will solicit feedback from military commands regarding their spring logistics course graduates to ensure that the course met the requirements of the operational force; updates will be made as necessary.

Another challenging but important objective for effective education engagements is to work on the institutional or defense institution building (DIB) aspects of those subjects being taught. For U.S.–sponsored projects such as DEEP, in many cases there is a complementary DIB effort also working in or with the partner country. Integration or at minimum coordination of these efforts, helps to develop leaders who have a broad perspective and a deep understanding of how to think about systems, processes, and managing change in a strategic context. One caution—it is imperative that visiting faculty do not interfere or involve themselves in operational or strategic debates within the host country. External subject matter experts are often very highly regarded and an offhand comment, poorly informed

assessment, or even simple misunderstanding can have a significant impact.

Programs like DEEP are collective efforts and offer opportunities for all participants. Our team learned a great deal from our work with the Kazakhstan defense forces, and we are confident that we helped KNDU produce a course that will prove valuable for their logisticians. As a collateral benefit—much of the material we developed with our Kazakh partners can easily be tailored for use by and with other nations.

The most important outcome from programs such as this is the sense of partnership and relationship building engendered by the process. In this instance, there are opportunities for a significant increase in logistics engagements, a revitalization of the professionalization initiative for logisticians, and the development of a mutually beneficial long-term logistics partnership. We are hopeful that our work together will foster even more involvement in the PfP Consortium and help establish Kazakhstan as one of the PfP leaders for logistics.

As we reflect, it is also important to help ensure that such efforts are tightly woven into the overall plans of the Combatant Commands including the U.S. Transportation Command, Special Operations Command, and others as well as the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and the Joint Staff. Additionally, we need to ensure we are working in concert with the U.S. Department of State—the in-country teams as well as the regional and functional bureaus in Washington. This is easier said than done and requires many players to share information and synchronize efforts. Finally, our work with other (host) nations ought to be complementary to the work of our partner nations with those host nations. There admittedly is room for improvement in this area, which mostly reflects how structures and processes have evolved for different purposes. It is clear to everyone who works in the international arena that we must take full advantage of every engagement opportunity, and leverage every possible connection, to assist our friends and allies around the world.

All those who support such programs—not just the faculty but also those who provide administrative, planning, and coordination support—contribute to efforts that can have significant strategic impacts. The team of professionals at the PfP Consortium, the NATO staff, the contributing schools, and many other organizations all deserve great praise for their efforts to make a difference and build a safer and more secure future for all our nations. The result of all this hard work is a win for everybody. PRISM

U.S. Air Force/Francisco V. Govea II

In 2010, a soldier provides security outside an Afghan Police checkpoint in Taktehpol, Afghanistan.

Learning from U.S. Efforts to Assess Counterinsurgency and Stabilization Operations in Afghanistan

BY NATHAN WHITE

American assessment practices proved to be inadequate for U.S.-led operations in Afghanistan. The type of conflict in which America and its allies would eventually find themselves engaged did not necessarily fit neatly within any of the primary civilian and military mission sets. U.S. military assessment practices are largely meant to support a traditional conventional war paradigm in which Joint Force combat overmatch and the defeat of a state adversary's military forces has been increasingly treated as the definitive factor in achieving victory. The assessment practices at U.S. civilian agencies, in particular the U.S. State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), generally are designed to measure success in activities, projects, and programming associated with their traditional missions such as development, diplomacy, democracy promotion, human rights, and disaster relief.

As early as 2009, senior U.S. officials—civilian and military alike—recognized an urgent need for a significant change to U.S. assessment practices in Afghanistan. This article analyzes the 2009–11 period when American personnel worked to apply new assessment practices that were meant to be more suitable for the requirements of Afghanistan operations. Even though these new practices directly targeted the main aspects of the identified assessment gap, institutional deficiencies within U.S. Government (USG) organizations ensured that requirements for assessments in Afghanistan remained unmet. Even perfectly designed approaches and

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frameworks for assessment will continue to fall short in future operations if these institutional deficiencies are left unaddressed.

Background

Assessments in war serve two primary purposes: to measure progress and to inform adaptation. In so doing, they enable decisionmakers to make decisions that increase the likelihood of achieving U.S. objectives.[1] The associated planning, direction, collection, monitoring, and evaluation activities that make up assessments must measure performance, outcomes, and the status of the operational environment in relation to mission goals.[2] Assessment activities are continuous, but assessments themselves are a snapshot in time and ideally represent the highest quality analysis given all of the available information collected, processed, and analyzed to date.[3]

A requirement for new assessment approaches in Afghanistan followed a shift in strategy led by General Stanley McChrystal who expressed an urgent need for a significant change to the U.S-led strategy and the way the force thinks and operates. In his 2009 review of the Operation *Enduring Freedom* campaign he wrote:

> *Success is achievable, but it will not be attained simply by trying harder or "doubling down" on the previous strategy. Additional resources are required, but focusing on force or resource requirements misses the point entirely…We must conduct classic counterinsurgency operations in an environment that is uniquely complex…Our strategy cannot be focused on seizing terrain or destroying insurgent forces; our objective must be the population…In the struggle to gain the support of the people, every action we take must enable this effort. The population also represents a powerful actor that can and must be leveraged in this complex system. Gaining their support will require a better understanding of the people's choices and needs.*[4]

Civilian and military leaders recognized that the shift to a counterinsurgency and stabilization approach in Afghanistan required changes to how the USG assessed its operations. For instance, in his guidance to U.S. civilian personnel in Afghanistan in August 2010, Ambassador Karl Eikenberry wrote: "Assess the impact of our efforts… Always emphasize effects, not just inputs and outputs."[5] In 2011, USAID Administrator Dr. Rajiv Shah also recognized the need to adapt assessment approaches:

> *While stability is a necessary precursor for our long-term development goals, stabilization programming often has different objectives, beneficiaries, modalities, and measurement tools than long-term development programming. Our training, planning, metrics, labeling, and communications efforts, among others, must reflect both the differences and the linkages.*[6]

The USAID Stabilization Unit in Kabul appears to have taken Shah's guidance to heart by 2012, when it stated that "monitoring, evaluating and assessing the impact of stabilization programs in a counterinsurgency context requires a mixture of creative, flexible, pragmatic, and contextual thought that extends beyond traditional monitoring

and evaluation practices in terms of scope, approach, and methodology."[7]

Reflecting on the missions in Iraq and Afghanistan then Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff General Martin Dempsey in a January 2015 interview at the National Defense University implied that perhaps one of the main requirements for assessments in counterinsurgency is the need to more thoroughly account for societal factors in the operational environment. He explained that in applying the military instrument against state actors, the military differentiates itself by "size and technology." He contrasted this with operations in Iraq and Afghanistan:

> *…We were fighting an insurgency on behalf of Iraq and an insurgency on behalf of Afghanistan, simultaneously trying to restore their abilities to govern. In that kind of conflict, the use of military [forces] against nonstate actors, I think size and technology matter, but what matters more is the rate at which we innovate…The rate of innovation becomes a better predictor of success than the force management level, for example. Size matters, but the rate at which we can innovate, adapt, and respond to changes in the environment matters more…You have to understand the factors that would cause you to need to innovate, and they largely reside in societal factors."*[8]

If societal factors were more important to understand in such conflicts, then assessment practices would have to account for those factors as well as more traditional metrics.

The Assessment Gap

The shifting nature of assessment requirements for counterinsurgency and stabilization operations in Afghanistan highlighted a gap in U.S. capabilities—assessments failed to account for the many nuances, in time and space, of the complex counterinsurgency environment.[9] Specifically, they did not account for relevant aspects of the operational environment; neglected to facilitate a common operating picture among U.S. and allied organizations; overlooked what mattered for the campaign at hand; failed to provide useful information for measuring progress toward mission objectives; and did not inform the identification of opportunities for adaptation. Several mutually reinforcing deficiencies contributed to this.

Requests for Information (RFIs) Overwhelmed Field Personnel

The massive numbers of information requirements, many of which were irrelevant to the mission at hand, took a toll on field personnel—operators and analysts alike—who were already busy completing tasks associated with counterinsurgency and stabilization in the field. These personnel often became overwhelmed with RFIs from higher headquarters, which led to poor information and analysis for the sake of speed. In many cases, personnel made up results to "satisfy the beast." And, in some cases, the requirements simply were never met.[10]

Organizations Employed Unique Methodologies

Organizations often employed their own unique methodologies based on different

conceptualizations of progress, often simultaneously, in the same area. Assessment approaches varied significantly with each International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) commander and among different organizations such as Congress and the National Security Council.[11] This led to great confusion and it taxed limited analytic resources, which hurt assessment quality.[12]

Assessments Often Took a Centralized, Top–Down Approach

It was not uncommon for national-level metrics to be mistakenly assumed as relevant for the entire country, at detriment to area-specific nuances.[13] The USAID Stabilization Unit in Kabul concluded in 2012 that, "While past efforts to provide quantified and scientifically rigorous measures of stabilization impact have met with some success, a more data-rich and geographically detailed approach is necessary to systematize our understanding of stabilization in the context of Afghanistan."[14]

Operationally Relevant Factors Were Overlooked

Security metrics such as troops trained, numbers of significant activities (SIGACTs), and numbers of improvised explosive device (IED) incidents are examples of the kind of blanket metrics that were commonly collected across the country. For development, roads built, children educated, and the number of people provided healthcare were often measured. On the governance side, government posts filled, government officials trained, and the number of people who voted in an election were all considered acceptable metrics. Although all three sets of metrics hypothetically could prove useful, their relevance and significance is not uniform across the operational environment. For instance, what if SIGACTs and IED numbers went down because insurgents had moved out of a given area on their own accord or U.S. forces had shifted their patrolling to areas where militants were not present? Without context, the drop in numbers of SIGACTSs and IED incidents could lead to false conclusions about security progress, and result in the misallocation of resources and manpower.

Underlying Drivers of Conflict Were Overlooked

Assessments failed to adequately account for the underlying drivers of conflict—a crucial step for identifying what to measure and for assessing progress. In 2010 a report from the Wilton Park Conference 1022 concludes that, "There is an urgent need to ensure that the new 'population centric' counterinsurgency strategy is evidence based, and does not continue to uncritically assume that development aid 'wins hearts and minds' and/or promotes stability. Priority should be given to assessing stabilization effects of projects, rather than assuming impact based on amounts of money spent or the number of projects implemented." The report continues, "Greater emphasis should also be given to understanding drivers of conflict, as aid projects can only be effective in promoting stability objectives if they are effectively addressing the main causes of instability."[15]

Assessments Were Overly Focused on the Actions by the United States and its Allies

In any given operational area, much occurs that is independent of U.S and allied activities that impacts mission progress. U.S.

assessments often failed to consider these developments because they were overly focused on the performance and impact of U.S. and allied activities to the neglect of other developments in the operational environment that potentially could impact the mission. For example, assessments did not always account for factors like local political disputes or intra-tribal conflicts that altered the stability of a given area, but were not directly related to any particular action by the U.S.-led coalition.[16]

Emphasis was Placed on Inputs, not Outcomes

Assessments focused primarily on measuring inputs versus outcomes, often characterized as a tendency to measure performance versus effectiveness or impact. Common measures of performance used in recent conflicts include: money spent, projects completed to standard, programs ongoing, adversaries captured or killed, troops trained to standard, and successful management of a development budget. Measures of impact are different. Examples of this include: the corresponding impact of various projects, programs, kinetic actions, and other initiatives on the calculus of locals regarding whether or not to support an insurgency, or the willingness and capability of an indigenous military that has been trained by the United States to effectively combat an insurgency.

A Lack of Critical Thinking and Structured Analysis Led to Flawed Findings

Assessments lacked sophistication and often proceeded from flawed assumptions.[17] The practice of color coding areas on a map in accordance with perceived levels of stability—a.k.a. "coloring book assessments"—for example, hampered understanding of the nuanced counterinsurgency environment and led to findings that were incomplete, inaccurate, or both.[18] Another example is that assessments prioritized demonstrating linear progress on various issues as the primary indicator of success. As William Upshur, Jonathan Roginsky, and David Kilcullen observe of their time conducting assessments in Afghanistan:

> *Even in gathering and analyzing all [of] the data within reach, assessment cells generally put too little energy into information design. Operational assessments are usually presented on a linear scale with a marker to represent progression from left to right, or from 'very bad' to 'very good.' Yet with near universal agreement on the complexity of counterinsurgency, and conflict environments in general, it would be difficult to find anyone who thinks that linear visualizations actually describe changes in the environment in an operationally useful way.*[19]

Lack of Critical Thinking also Allowed Room for Politicization and Other Contamination

Metrics that policymakers viewed as important for justifying the expense of blood and treasure often took precedence over indicators that were relevant to progress in the counterinsurgency and stabilization mission. Similarly, commanders in the field were under tremendous pressure to ensure their assessments showed results on their organizations' preconceived notions of success

metrics, as opposed to progress on those metrics required for mission success.

New Approaches to Assessment in Afghanistan

In response to the shift to a counterinsurgency and stabilization approach for Afghanistan in 2009, civilian and military organizations adopted (to varying degrees) new assessment approaches that were meant to address the various components of the assessment gap.[20]

Measuring Progress in Conflict Environments (MPICE)

This framework was first utilized in the field in 2007 in support of the Haiti stabilization initiative. Initially developed on the heels of a series of workshops held from 2004–05 by the United States Institute for Peace and the Center for Strategic and International Studies, MPICE by 2010 gained the attention of some U.S. officials, including several working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on Afghanistan operations.[21] MPICE is underpinned by the belief there are three objective states that exist with regard to conflict: imposed stability, assisted stability, and self-sustaining peace. It measures "the drivers of violent conflict against the ability of indigenous institutions to resolve conflict peacefully.[22] Institutional performance includes the formal institutions of government and informal societal practices."[23] The framework assesses five predetermined factors that are deemed by USIP's "Framework for Societies Emerging from Conflict" to be essential in conflict resolution: safe and secure environment; political moderation and stable governance; rule of law; sustainable economy; and social well-being.[24] The measures are then adapted to, "the specific policy goals, conflict dynamics, and cultural peculiarities relevant to each conflict setting."[25]

Interagency Conflict Assessment Framework (ICAF)

Military and civilian personnel in Afghanistan utilized the ICAF to a limited degree since it was developed in 2008. This tool enables interagency teams to assess conflict situations systematically and collaboratively, and plan for conflict prevention, mitigation, and stabilization.[26] The ICAF is comprised of two overarching processes—diagnosis and planning—with four steps involved with diagnosis:

- evaluate the context of the conflict;
- understand core grievances and social/institutional resilience;
- identify drivers of conflict and mitigating factors;
- and describe opportunities for increasing or decreasing conflict.

The planning process is less defined and largely situation specific, but is meant to ensure the diagnosis informs planning.[27] If focused on the same geographic area, ICAF assessments eventually will highlight changes in the environment, new challenges that have emerged, and other information that can be used to determine progress and inform refinement and adaptation of U.S. approaches.[28]

Tactical Conflict Assessment and Planning Framework (TCAPF) and the District Stability Framework (DSF)

TCAPF and its successor, DSF, were the two new frameworks employed most in Afghanistan.[29] USAID first tested TCAPF/DSF in the Horn of Africa in 2006. It was employed by British and American forces in Afghanistan, starting in Helmand Province in 2009, to help facilitate more impactful development programming and reduce the multitude of programs that had limited impact. The process consisted of asking four questions:[30]

- Have there been changes in the village population in the last year?
- What are the most important problems facing the village?
- Who do you believe can solve your problems?
- What should be done first to help the village?[31]

These questions were intended to yield information that could then be analyzed to provide enhanced understanding of relevant aspects of the operational environment, with an emphasis on identifying sources of stability and especially instability.[32] Additionally, the process was meant to help measure and understand progress, and whether or not programming was achieving the desired impact on the operational environment. And if not, to inform adaptation of operational and tactical approaches to achieve that desired endstate.[33]

Region South Stabilization Approach (RSSA)

RSSA emerged in 2010 in Afghanistan, based on a recognition that a process was needed to integrate civilian and military planning, develop a common operating picture, and establish an interagency system for monitoring progress in Regional Command–South.[34] The process identifies a "stability continuum" to assist with planning for the allocation of security, development, and governance assets across participating agencies.[35]

The Lingering Assessment Gap

Despite all of the many efforts to improve, by 2012 the assessment gap was far from resolved. A civilian advisor to ISAF Joint Command (IJC) captured this best in an email from 2012 to the author regarding U.S. assessment practices in Afghanistan:

> *I'm still out in Afghanistan, now at IJC for a week before heading out. [I] was in a discussion with a [senior officer][36] here about stability vs. instability, how we measure it, are we looking at things the right way, etc. My inclination is to say no.*[37]

That year a USAID study on the impact of its efforts in Afghanistan found that TCAPF/DSF had failed to resolve the assessment problem.[38] Another document from USAID reports that as of 2013, the Agency was introducing an entirely new assessment methodology known as the Stability Analysis Methodology, which again seemed to target the same five aspects of the assessment gap.[39]

Institutional Constraints

These examples highlight a lingering problem that begs the question of why methodologies designed to target the various components of the assessment gap were not successful. To investigate the source, the research for this article looked more in depth at the most commonly utilized (and probably the most well-known) assessment

approach—TCAPF/DSF—and traced the history of the approach in Afghanistan from its initial implementation. A less rigorous review of the experience with implementing the other frameworks was also conducted.

In reviewing the evolution of the TCAPF/DSF, this author found that thousands of American, allied, and indigenous personnel were trained to use the framework. In spite of many complaints about the observer effect of the interview-based survey approach employed for TCAPF/DSF and the complexity of the data management process, many civilian and military personnel reported that the approach was useful for counterinsurgency and stabilization in Afghanistan.[40] A more cursory review of the other assessment approaches revealed similar reporting about their utility.

Yet the research also found that none of the new frameworks utilized in Afghanistan were actually implemented as designed. This was less the result of any particular issue with the framework methodologies themselves. Instead, it was more the result of institutional constraints within the USG that prevented the frameworks from being utilized properly.

Ambiguous Mission, Strategy, and Desired Endstate

The U.S.-led civilian and military force that was fielded in Afghanistan never achieved clarity of purpose.[41] Thus, although some found TCAPF/DSF and other frameworks useful, the frameworks' utility was questionable from the start because they were used to measure progress against the user's own unique interpretation of the mission, strategy, and endstate which, of course, differed depending on the user. When the mission, strategy, and endstate are unclear, even the best assessment processes never have a chance of achieving their purpose—measuring progress and informing adaptation. In such cases, it is unclear what progress is being measured toward and to what intermediate objectives and endstate assessment information can inform adaptation to achieve.

Insufficient Conceptualization of Strategy

Stability requires a strategic approach that integrates the lethal and nonlethal tools of state power to influence relevant actors to behave in a manner that contributes (actively or passively) to stability. Yet the U.S. approach to strategy is frequently divorced from human decisionmaking and behavior.[42] The United States approached strategy in Afghanistan as numerous lines of effort (e.g. security, governance, and development, often with subsets within each of these three lines) as if they were separate stovepipes.[43] What tended to occur was that technocratic objectives and metrics for success within the lines of effort would become the focus, as opposed to goals of shaping relevant actor behavior in a manner that achieved mission success.[44] Special Assistant to the U.S. President for National Security Affairs Lieutenant General H.R. McMaster, refers to this assessment deficiency as "the confusion of activity with progress."[45] All of the frameworks listed are meant to assess the environment, better understand drivers of instability, and inform the adaptation of operations to address them and achieve more stabilizing behavior among relevant actors. For the new frameworks to have succeeded, the USG would have needed to conceptualize strategy in a manner that was relevant to

influencing human behavior in accordance with U.S. objectives.[46]

Multiple Chains of Command

A lack of unity of command and especially unity of action meant that even when one part of the whole-of-government force in the field embraced a framework, it was very common for others operating in the same area not to.[47] Without a single chain of command, multiple frameworks were often utilized alongside one another. There were usually no mechanisms in place by which the interagency force would be mandated to align and develop a common operating picture and a shared concept of how best to plan and execute the mission, measure progress, and adapt the force for enhanced success.

Continuity of Effort

Turnover among units and individuals challenged those few frameworks that gained traction among multiple USG organizations, as was the case for Regional Command–East.[48] Assessment approaches changed drastically during the various tenures of the ISAF Commanders. Similarly, TCAPF/DSF went from being the primary framework for tactical assessment 2009–11 to being far less utilized by follow-on units. Even when TCAPF/DSF was integrated into General David Petraeus' counterinsurgency qualification standards, inconsistency still occurred.

Knowledge Management

Finally, there was no strategy for optimizing the utility of the information and making sure all who could benefit received the information in a usable form that suited their purposes; various organizations purchased their own information technology support packages for knowledge management.[49] Compounding this, limited attention was given to how deployed personnel and their replacements could maintain and update assessments for others to access.[50] A catalogue of previous assessments did not exist, which made it difficult for newly serving policymakers, operators, and analysts to understand the evolution of the campaign and led to further unnecessary taxing of the RFI system.

Conclusion

The assessment gap that persisted in Afghanistan had little to do with deficiencies in the new approaches that were attempted. Rather, the gap persisted as a result of institutional barriers within the U.S. national security system that prevented the implementation of the new approaches as designed. Success in the assessment of counterinsurgency and stabilization missions requires more than just sound assessment approaches and methodologies. They must be accompanied by a plan for how they will be implemented as designed so as to achieve their purpose. These challenges persist within the USG today. Unless they are addressed, even the most promising new assessment approaches will continue to fall short of their potential to improve mission effectiveness. PRISM

Notes

[1] See Jason Campbell, Michael O'Hanlon, and Jacob Shapiro, "How to Measure the War," *Policy Review*, 157 (2009), 15–30; and Stephen Downes-Martin, "Operations Assessment in Afghanistan is Broken: What Is to Be Done?," *Naval War College Review* 64, no. 4 (Autumn 2011). Also, fitting within the context of the two overarching purposes, Dr. Jonathan Schroden, explains that assessments, "inform commanders' decisionmaking (e.g., on resource allocation); completing the planning or design cycle (i.e., "observe plan-execute-assess," or "design-learn-redesign"); recognizing changing conditions in the environment; stimulating and informing adaptation and innovation; reducing uncertainty and bounding risk; showing causal linkages between actions and the achievement of objectives; documenting the commander's decision-making process; and evaluating performance of subordinate units." See Jonathan Schroden, "Why Operations Assessments Fail: It's Not Just the Metrics," *Naval War College Review* 64, no. 4 (Autumn 2011). For further analysis of U.S. assessment practices in post–9/11 operations, See Frank Hoffman and Alex Crowther, "Strategic Assessment and Adaptation: The Surges in Iraq and Afghanistan" in *Lessons Encountered: Learning from the Long War*, edited by Richard Hooker and Joseph Collins (Washington, D.C.: NDU Press, September 2015), 89–164, available at <http://ndupress.ndu.edu/Portals/68/Documents/Books/lessons-encountered/lessons-encountered.pdf>.

[2] This third factor is critical, as much occurs in the operational environment that is not the direct result of U.S. actions. An assessment process that only focusses on U.S. performance and the outcomes of U.S. activities risks missing other important developments in the environment that could potentially impact (positively or negatively) the success of the mission.

[3] Although outlined in Joint Doctrine in 2013, these conclusions were drawn in a November 2011 conference the author observed in Tampa, hosted by U.S. Central Command.

[4] General Stanley McChrystal, "COMISAF Initial Assessment," September 21, 2009, available at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/09/21/AR2009092100110.html>.

[5] Ambassador Eikenberry's Strategic Guidance to U.S. Civilian personnel in Afghanistan; August 30, 2010.

[6] Rajiv Shah, USAID Administrator's Stabilization Guidance; January 2011, available at <http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PDACQ822.pdf>.

[7] USAID Assessment Contract from the USAID Stabilization Unit in Kabul, March 2012, available at <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1871/AID-306-TO-12-00004%20MISTI%20Task%20Order-redacted.pdf>.

[8] Chairman Martin Dempsey, interview conducted by Richard D. Hooker Jr., and Joseph J. Collins, January7, 2015, published *Joint Force Quarterly 78* (July 2015), available at <http://ndupress.ndu.edu/Media/News/NewsArticleView/tabid/7849/Article/607296/jfq-78-from-the-chairman-an-interview-with-martin-e-dempsey.aspx>.

[9] For additional information on the assessment gap, see statements by former CENTCOM planner John Agoglia and the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy made during the "Framework for Success in War-Torn Societies Workshop" hosted by the United States Institute for Peace; 2010, available at <http://www.c-span.org/video/?294439-1/measuring-progress-stabilizing-wartorn-societies&start=3182>. Also see Ben Connable, "*Embracing the Fog of War: Assessment and Metrics in Counterinsurgency*," (Washington DC: RAND, 2012), available at <http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2012/RAND_MG1086.pdf>.

[10] Interviews conducted by the author in 2011 at the Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) showed that the staff was overwhelmed by requirements for information to feed the assessment process. See also Ben Connable, "*Embracing the Fog of War*."

[11] Dr. Kristian Knus Larsen, *Substitute for Victory, Performance Measurements in Vietnam, the Gulf War, and Afghanistan* (Københavns Universitet, Institut for Statskundskab, 2014).

[12] Finding derived from analysis of interviews conducted by the author in 2011 at the Kandahar PRT.

[13] One reviewer of this article observed that assessments may have been, "reflective of the centralized, top–down nature of the U.S. campaign and the centralized, top–down nature of the solution foisted on Afghanistan," and that perhaps then, "assessments were a reflection of the overall U.S. approach to the war." See also: Ben Connable, "*Embracing the Fog of War*", Jan Frelin and Anders Noren, "Recent Developments in Evaluation & Conflict Analysis Tools for Understanding Complex

Conflicts," (Swedish Defence Research Agency, May 2012).

[14] USAID Assessment Contract from the USAID Stabilization Unit in Kabul, March 2012, available at <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1871/AID-306-TO-12-00004%20MISTI%20Task%20Order-redacted.pdf>.

[15] Report from Wilton Park Conference WP1022, "Winning 'Hearts and Minds' in Afghanistan: Assessing the Effectiveness of Development Aid in Counterinsurgency Operations," March 11–14, 2010, available at <https://www.wiltonpark.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/wp1022-report.pdf>. The paper goes on to assert that the replacement of the international community's "enemy centric" approach with a "population centric" military strategy emphasizes the need for a sober assessment of what motivates people to rebel, and a deliberate incorporation of these observations into the design of a more effective strategy that addresses the underlying causes of unrest.

[16] Author discussion with an assessment practitioner at a 2015 development workshop for the Joint Concept for Human Aspects of Military Operations, McLean, Virginia.

[17] Wiliam Upshur, Jonathan Roginski, David Kilcullen, "Recognizing Symptoms in Afghanistan, Lessons Learned and New Approaches to Operational Assessments," *PRISM* 3, no. 3 (2012), available at <http://www.ndu.edu/press/lib/pdf/prism3-3/prism87-104_upshur-roginski-kilcullen.pdf>. See also: Ben Connable, "*Embracing the Fog of War*."

[18] Wiliam Upshur, Jonathan Roginski, David Kilcullen, "Recognizing Symptoms in Afghanistan." See also: Ben Connable, "*Embracing the Fog of War*."

[19] Wiliam Upshur, Jonathan Roginski, David Kilcullen, "Recognizing Symptoms in Afghanistan." To fix the problem, several have posed an alternative mental model based on theories of complex adaptive systems. See Cynthia Irmer, "A Systems Approach and the Interagency Conflict Assessment Framework (ICAF)," Cornwallis Group, 2009.

[20] A proliferation of new approaches occurred. Interestingly, although many attempts at developing assessment practices specifically for Afghanistan did take place, several of the most commonly utilized new approaches were not developed specifically for the Afghanistan mission. Instead, they were based on a broader perceived gap in USG assessment practices for stabilization missions.

[21] MPICE was initially developed on the heels of a series of workshops held between 2004-05 by the USIP and the Center for Strategic and international Studies, in response to a perceived gap in U.S. interagency capability to measure the outcomes of various efforts in conflict environments. The working groups had a goal to, "define the major requirements and make recommendations for those who strive to measure progress in war-torn, weak, and failed states." This process eventually led to a report which called for a framework to, "measure progress toward reducing the means and motivations for violent conflict and building local capacity to resolve conflict peacefully." See Craig Cohen, "Measuring Progress in Stabilization and Reconstruction," USIP Special Report (2005), available at <https://www.usip.org/publications/2006/03/measuring-progress-stabilization-and-reconstruction>. The first use of MPICE in the field came in Haiti starting in 2007 to support the Haiti Stabilization Initiative. See David C. Becker and Robert Grossman-Vermas, "Metrics for the Haiti Stabilization Initiative," *PRISM* 2, no. 2, 145–58. For information on the usage of MPICE by the U.S Army Corps of Engineers please see: Edited by John Agoglia, Michael Dziedzic, Barbara Sotirin; *Measuring Progress in Conflict Environments (MPICE): A Metrics Framework* (Washington, D.C: USIP, 2010), available at <http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a530245.pdf>. At the time, USACE was becoming increasingly concerned that it could not adequately explain whether or not the projects in which it was engaged were having their desired effect on the outcome of the ISAF mission.

[22] Craig Cohen, "Measuring Progress in Stabilization and Reconstruction," USIP Special Report, 2005.

[23] John Agoglia, Michael Dziedzic, Barbara Sotirin, Measuring Progress in Conflict Environments (MPICE).

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid.

[26] The Interagency Conflict Assessment Framework; U.S. State Department Document (2008), available at < http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/187786.pdf>.

[27] Ibid. Note that the U.S. State Department describes the purpose of ICAF as, "to develop a commonly held understanding, across relevant USG Departments and Agencies of the dynamics driving and mitigating violent conflict within a country that informs US policy and planning decisions. It may also include steps to establish a strategic baseline against which USG engagement can be evaluated." It utilizes a process by which an interagency team will

identify societal and situational dynamics that are shown to increase or decrease the likelihood of violent conflict.

[28] Dr. Cynthia Irmer is credited for the eventual ICAF framework that resulted. Outlining the logic behind ICAF, she describes a requirement to shift the mindset of interagency teams from, "using linear problem/solution metaphors such as 'lanes of operation, 'clear, hold, build' and 'unity of command/ unity of effort'" toward a "complex, adaptive system frame," rooted in, a better understanding of the system itself as opposed to being based on the previous, "experience or knowledge of US civilians or military personnel." The result, she says, is an, "improved, because better informed and better thought- through, collective understanding of the situation and basis for going forward with coordinated whole-of-government strategic planning or individual agency program design."

[29] Most consider DSF to be TCAPF "rebranded" and, for the purposes of this article, are therefore referred to as one. An interviewee knowledgeable about the TCAPF and DSF development process recalls that in January 2010, USAID and the Counterinsurgency Training Academy in Kabul revised the TCAPF to create the DSF. The revision kept the DSF model and retained the survey methodology. However, DSF also emphasized the importance of other sources of information regarding sources of instability, and the use of an "integrated Tactical Stability Matrix" (TSM) for the development of (primarily non_kinetic) lines of effort to address sources of instability. DSF also placed added emphasis on the importance of standing up a stability working group, which was to include all relevant interagency partners, as well as indigenous stakeholders, for enhanced coordination.

[30] 2011 interview with an individual knowledgeable about the TCAPF and DSF development process. For more info on TCAPF/DSF, also see Robert Swope, "Improving the Effectiveness of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) District Stability Framework (DSF) in Afghanistan"; December 14, 2012

[31] Military Operations Research Society (MORS) Annual Symposium, DSF Briefing under Chatham House Rule, 2011. TCAPF/DSF training emphasized all four questions should be followed by questions of "why." In a 2011 interview, the interviewee explained the utility of TCAPF/DSF. He said that the military would see Taliban cells clustered in a particular area. They would approach this problem by trying to identify how best to remove the cells. He explains that using TCAPF/DSF a stabilization approach, "would seek to understand what was normal for a given area and what led to/enabled the Taliban cells to be present in the area. By focusing on causes rather than symptoms and devising solutions that addressed these underlying issues in a manner that made sense for the locals in question, sustainable long-term fixes were more likely to be developed."

[32] See Jason Alexander and James Derleth, "Stability Operations: From Policy to Practice;" *PRISM* 2, no. 3, 2012. Derleth and Alexander explain, "To stabilize an area, two simultaneous processes must occur. First, the sources of instability must be identified and mitigated. Second, societal and/or governmental capability and capacity to mitigate future sources of instability must be fostered. Simply stated, practitioners must diminish the sources of instability while building up the forces of stability. This process is the underlying foundation of the District Stabilization Framework."

[33] MORS Annual Symposium, DSF Briefing under Chatham House Rule, 2011; Also see: USAID Statement of Work for Contract # USAID Task Order AID-306-TO-12-00004, Management Systems International; Additionally, in a 2011 interview with an individual knowledgeable about the TCAPF and DSF development process, the interviewee explains that the foundational concepts behind TCAPF/DSF are greatly informed by Collier's work on stabilization vs. development.

[34] Interviews with members of the District Stability Coordination office at the Kandahar PRT in 2011. Similar to other frameworks, RSSA was not embraced by all partners in all parts of the area of operation. Some also criticized it for the lack of granularity and detail. Also note that an interviewee from a mobile training team for TCAPF/DSF in 2011 shared that some have argued that TCAPF/DSF would have been a natural complement to RSSA in the field, given the highly localized focus of the TCAPF/DSF approach. They argued that TCAPF/DSF was better for capturing overarching individual district assessments nested within the RSSA and that RSSA assessments lacked the data and structure facilitated by TCAPF/DSF at the district level and below.

[35] Interviews with members of the District Stability Coordination office at the Kandahar PRT in 2011.

[36] Restated to preserve anonymity.

[37] Email exchange between the Author and an IJC civilian advisor. Author has been authorized by

the advisor to use information without attribution by name.

[38] USAID Stabilization Unit Contract.

[39] "The Stability Analysis Methodology in Afghanistan: An Evaluation of Best Practices and a Recommended Method;" Caerus Associates, LLC, October 6, 2013, available at < http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00JN7D.pdf>. Note that the SAM was really a consolidation of different assessment approaches for all fixed regional command areas of operation.

[40] This observation was drawn primarily from a review of 22 after action reports on TCAPF/DSF implementation in the field provided to the author by a representative from the U.S. Department of State in an email, 2013.

[41] This finding is based on an analysis of more than 80 interviews with returning civilian and military personnel from Afghanistan as well as an estimated 20 interviews conducted by the author in Kandahar and Kabul in 2011; also note that there was no single conceptualization in the field of the mission, strategy, and desired endstate of the Afghanistan campaign and many of the views were very different and even contradictory among USG personnel and their allied and indigenous partners. Also, for an example of lack of clarity of mission and strategy in Afghanistan, see 2015 interview with General Stanley McChrystal, USA (ret.) conducted by Joseph Collins, Frank Hoffman, and this author.

[42] Kilcullen observes that counterinsurgent forces have a, "tendency to judge success based on progress in creating top-down, state-based institutions, while reposing less value and significance in bottom-up societal indicators." He goes on to note that analysts tend to, "give greater weight to events at the national level, or to elite-level political maneuvering, than to events at the grassroots, civil society level." Kilcullen, David ;"Intelligence," in *Understanding Counterinsurgency: Doctrine, Operations and Challenges*, ed. Thomas Rid and Thomas Keany (New York: Routledge, 2010). Kilcullen was speaking mainly about intelligence services, but he explains, "This pathology may not be confined to intelligence services. Rather, it seems to reflect wider Eurocentric attitudes to the process of state formation. Recent research suggests that the international community, including the vast international aid and development bureaucracy and the 'peace industry' associated with international organizations such as the United Nations and the International Monetary Fund, tends to have a strong preference for top-down state formation ('nation building') based on the creation of national-level, "modern," Western-style institutions of the central state." The failure to properly address human aspects has more recently been framed as a neglect of the human domain of war or the human aspects of military operations. For instance, Frank Hoffman and T.X. Hammes both note that the U.S. tends to "overlook human factors" in war and warfare, observing that the tendency, "has a long history, and reflects a tension in American strategic culture which values science, technology, and logistics over other strategic dimensions." They observe that the U.S. often emphasizes "technologically-produced solutions to what are inherently political challenges that can only be resolved in the minds and will of the social community that is challenged." F.G. Hoffman and T.X. Hammes, "Joint Force 2020 and Human Dynamics: Time for a new conceptual framework?" Institute for National Strategic Studies Research Paper (NDU Press: Washington D.C.:April, 2013).

[43] Integrated Civil-Military Campaign Plans for Afghanistan in 2009 (McChrystal/Eikenberry) and in 2010 (Petraeus/Eikenberry).

[44] Different agencies and entities within the USG were then put in charge of these various lines. For instance, the military was generally in charge of security, the Department of State led most governance initiatives, and USAID was in charge of most development, although the eventual spike in Commander's Emergency Response funding and the role of the military on PRTs and on Agribusiness Support Teams made the military a very active player in the development realm.

[45] See Erdmann, Andrew; "How militaries learn and adapt: An interview with Major General H. R. McMaster" McKinsey and Company, April 2013, available at <http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/public_sector/how_militaries_learn_and_adapt>.In it, then MG McMaster explains that in war, "... we often start by determining the resources we want to commit or what is palatable from a political standpoint. We confuse activity with progress, and that's always dangerous, especially in war. In reality, we should first define the objective, compare it with the current state, and then work backward: what is the nature of this conflict? What are the obstacles to progress, and how do we overcome them? What are the opportunities, and how do we exploit them? What resources do we need to accomplish our goals? The confusion of activity with progress is one final continuity in the nature of warfare that we must always remember."

[46] The various agencies and organizations were often much more concerned with demonstrating progress within their own lines of effort, which often did not have a link to a corresponding relevant actor behavior related outcome.

[47] Military fragmentary orders were issued ordering the use of TCAP/DSF in the field. However, the civilian agencies were not under the chain of command of the military battlespace owners and many civilians refused to embrace the framework alongside the military. Even within the civilian agencies and military organizations, there was great disagreement as to the relevance of TCAPF/DSF. The USAID Stabilization Unit in Kabul for instance promoted TCAPF/DSF, while many in the more mainstream bureaus of USAID either had never heard of the framework or did not support its use. Department of State and USAID personnel also did not agree on the utility of the frameworks at various times.

[48] Assessment approaches changed drastically over the various tenures of ISAF Commanders. Similarly, TCAPF/DSF went from being the primary framework for tactical assessment 2009–11, to being far less utilized by follow-on units. Even when fragmentary orders were initiated to use TCAPF/DSF and it was integrated into General Petraeus' Counterinsurgency qualification standards, inconsistency still occurred. Some paid lip service to TCAPF/DSF and simply filled out the assessment frameworks mindlessly as required. Others utilized the framework as the central mechanism by which to decide on where to focus their efforts throughout their deployments. Dr. Kristian Knus Larsen , "Substitute for Victory, Performance Measurements in Vietnam, the Gulf War, and Afghanistan," (Ph.D. diss, Copenhagen University, 2014).

[49] MORS Annual Symposium, DSF Briefing under Chatham House Rule, 2011; When asked if TCAPF/DSF had an IT support package with it, one TCAPF/DSF briefer said that "Afghanistan is where databases go to die." This is a fair enough point and perhaps a new database was not the answer. However, there was no strategy for optimizing the utility of the information and making sure all who could benefit received the information in a usable form that suited their purposes.

[50] Various military and civilian entities purchased their own IT support packages for knowledge management. Others tried to adapt the systems that they already had for the different types of information utilized within the new assessment approaches.

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STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVES 26

Asia and the Trump Administration: Challenges, Opportunities, and a Road Ahead

by James J. Przystup and Phillip C. Saunders

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http://ndupress.ndu.edu/Portals/68/Documents/stratperspective/inss/Strategic-Perspectives-26.pdf

U.S. State Department/ Erik Mehler

In 2010, the New Zealand Provincial Reconstruction Team participates in a tug-a-war challenge between teams from the various villages around Bamyan Province in Afghanistan.

Reinventing Social Science in the Military

Lessons Learned from the United States and New Zealand

BY P.S. LIEBER AND W.S. HOVERD

At first glance, the relationship between social science and the military may not be clear. A closer analysis of the opportunities that social science offers the military shows, however, that it provides a variety of research and educational capabilities to address the human dimensions of military organizations and their operational contexts. For instance, psychological and human performance criteria are firmly rooted in social science constructs within the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD).[1]

In New Zealand, this argument shifts toward education, notably whether social science should be taught as part of professional military education (PME) of senior officers. The New Zealand 2016 National Security System and 2016 Defense White Paper both emphasize whole- of-government approaches to defense and security, and that basic social science education can give aspiring commanders another tool to understand complexity, or the variety of horizontal, whole-of-society, institutional, political, structural, economic, and social dimensions of the nation's security threats and risks.[2]

Education and Training

Some military specialties logically embrace social science. In the United States, military information support operations (MISO) and operational research systems analysis (ORSA) functions require the application of social science concepts, albeit through a semi-rigid doctrine filter.[3] A common MISO conundrum lies in confident separation between what is needed

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for phenomena to occur (measure of performance) versus what increases/decreases effects of success for said phenomena (measure of effectiveness).[4] Similarly, ORSA professionals create assessment tools based on data requirements versus a theory. Regrettably, these tools are rarely designed to inform each other toward a common data picture, and neither rests on a sound theoretical base.

In New Zealand, a social science research methodology class was introduced in 2015 to its Command and Staff College. Former graduates had suggested this class to the college, believing it added a missing element to existing offerings in terms of providing a firm basis for establishing critical thinking in military education.[5] The teaching of social science methodology, as part of the qualification, is intended to provide two levels of education to empower its graduates to operate independently as both 1) consumer, with an understanding of what it entails to potentially be, 2) a producer of empirically based population centric research. According to the official New Zealand Defence Force website;

> *Officers today are encouraged to widen their outlook from specialist areas of technical expertise, towards a more balanced coverage of wider strategic issues, requiring a level of analytical and conceptual thinking. Whilst communication and staff skills remain important, greater attention is given to strategic issues and operational studies. The service orientation has become 'joint,' reflecting changes in the New Zealand Defence Force and trends overseas.*[6]

Within this PME curriculum there is a specific focus on encouraging officers to understand being "joint," and to excel in " …activities, operations, organizations, etc. in which elements of more than one service of the same nation participate."[7] Joint operations require an understanding of how to operate with others in new environments—whether they are other service arms, international, or national partners. A joint operational understanding also helps coordinate the delivery of military force and effect for a nation and internationally. This is even more important in New Zealand, where its services are smaller in size and are distinct in their specialist capability. For example, to conduct any form of airlift, its army must work jointly with the air force as the former lacks any air capability to conduct independent operations.

Leadership

In this smaller military, New Zealand Command and Staff College graduates are now expected to personally understand the utility and possibility of social science data and methodology for comprehending environments, trends, and populations. Effectively, these future commanders are consumers rather than producers of social science data. Still, a social science based education empowers those providing the data to know what questions their leadership can ask of other government officials they will have to partner with, as well as competently interpret the utility of data and findings intelligence professionals, research professionals, and policy makers put before them. Correspondingly, relevant professional military education in New Zealand aspires to supplement the student's existing specialist

expertise with a broader understanding of global and domestic security and insecurity. In this generalist national security space, one must ask: is there a role for social science in professional military education?

In the United States, perhaps no two military specialties embody advocacy for a generalist national security space than MISO and ORSA. Narrative, messaging, and target audience analysis are of utmost importance to a defense structure seeking ways to proactively limit adversary recruitment and radicalization.[8] Nevertheless, proper social science-driven integration of these specialties into overall military strategy creates an arguable disconnect with the DOD calculus for determining "success" in military planning. U.S. general officers can and arguably should favor actions linked to—or at minimum, predictive of—tactical outcomes. Understanding the theory behind the data is something most general officers have little time for. Consequently, academic social scientists can be seen as espousing higher level ideas but with little practical military fit.[9]

Still, social science as a methodology offers tools that supply an empirical, robust means to answer questions and make decisions about human complexity. At no point in military history has human complexity been so much at the front and center of the challenges facing the United States, New Zealand, and many other countries. For example, international terrorist movements communicating and operating across geographic and technological borders have altered the entire strategic playbook regarding how to prevent and predict adversary action and intent.[10]

An education in the basic principles of social science can inform senior commanders where to begin to approach such problems, also on what evidence basis they should be making critical decisions. These decisions will ultimately impact national security, in major and minor ways. These questions and areas can include:

Planning

- What are the right sorts of questions to generate knowledge of complex situations?
- How can one frame these questions so they are answerable?
- How can one generate empirical data to answer a research question?

Assessment

- How can one analyze data to provide as many answers as possible to the research question?
- What are known biases and how can one control for them?
- Are the question, method, and analytical tools robust, reliable, replicable, and relevant?

Utility

- Does answering these questions generate value?
- How does one balance the reliability of data analysis with timeliness?

A basic understanding of social science offers senior military officers the opportunity to draw upon an evidentiary, data-driven method of understanding human interaction to make better national security decisions. It allows individuals to ask questions about the evidence behind a particular state of affairs, it also empowers officers to actively understand when it is appropriate to favor or even ignore

the data completely when making decisions. Understanding that poor methodological design and sampling approaches can render even the largest dataset useless, this recognition allows individuals to properly interrogate and improve evidence-driven approaches to knowledge.

Tangibly, due to a lack of overseas engagements prior to 2003, New Zealand senior officers may have less operational but more political and whole-of-government experience than their U.S. counterparts.[11] Still, when New Zealanders are deployed on operations (i.e. the Provisional Reconstruction Team that was deployed to Bamyan, Afghanistan), they are nevertheless expected to similarly and effectively interact with local populations to deter threats from nonstate actors. This requires a robust understanding of the human environment and its complexity, one that is multidimensional. To accomplish these goals, New Zealand officers must therefore be informed consumers of social scientific research that sheds light on the issues they regularly encounter.

In both New Zealand and the United States, knowledge of social science principles can lead to increased understanding of the weaknesses and limitations of existing data sets. For agency-based researchers, the application of social science allows for an evidence-driven approach to demonstrating—through data—that the emperor has no clothes; and with it they can affect institutional change in the proper direction.[12] It also offers a needed buffer to control for a commander's known or unknown biases drawn from previous military experience.

Intelligence and Collections

Perhaps no military area or agency is more reliant on social science and data than those in the intelligence field.[13] Intelligence analysts are intentionally selected based on language, region, and/or cultural expertise to provide context to continuously gathered collections data. While intelligence analysts are conceivably the least wedded to doctrine, they are, however, expected to use social science methodology to justify findings as opposed to explaining them.[14] The end result, and akin to MISO, is that measures of performance and effectiveness can become jumbled in intelligence analyst reports.

To explain, intelligence analysts can only rely on what is available to them when writing reports, often under tight deadlines. When constructing these reports, most polling information becomes force-fit and repackaged as trends, with little attention given to the "why"—the social science—behind it. Disconnected trend data is chart friendly, simplistic (plus or minus in a certain direction) and can provide a myth of progress (presented as timelines) to leadership searching for any and everything to improve strategic and tactical decisionmaking.

This organization and presentation style can lead to over collection, and also very costly and redundant research programs. Wanting to do their due diligence, intelligence agencies continuously gather and monitor data on vulnerable populations.[15] Global terrorist organizations only fuel the fire based on their constant evolution, forming new identities, ideologies, and an always moving data collection target. Where does one entity begin, the other end? The answer: gather even more data to compensate.

Eventually the data pile up. Especially within the social media space, this produces far too much information for any team of analysts to properly analyze. Still, stopping the machine is seemingly an admission to military and government leadership of strategic defeat. Across interagency relationships and partners, the problem multiplies exponentially. Each intelligence organization typically possesses its own research program, with these rarely feeding into their own previous attempts to understand a problem let alone those of counterparts. The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, as an example, is well aware of this vulnerability. They reinvent, design information misdirection, and employ proxy actors and motives to exacerbate the problem.[16] When opportunities present themselves, these same enemies will likewise hack systems that attempt data integration, and with it neuter insights potentially gained via wider strategic perspective.

Military organizations must therefore revamp their approaches to employing social science in learning and decisionmaking processes. As a first step, survey research programs should be deliberately redesigned for compatibility with social science. This protects against the measures of performance/measures of effectiveness problem detailed earlier, also avoids dangerous errors of concluding false positives or negatives, based on outcomes. Reducing these errors also reduces the enemy's ability to capitalize on them.[17]

Importantly, this updated approach empowers operators and analysts to stop justifying data outcomes in favor of explaining them. Research programs and findings must be based in social science. Subject matter experts—especially within intelligence environs—are left only to rationalize the "why" behind the data, and with it directly capitalize on their strengths. Why did outcomes trend in a specific direction? Why did a population differ on the same construct, and so dramatically? Why are certain variables correlated or predictive into one another?

Implementation

While increased social scientific education can engender these outcomes, is this education requirement a bridge too far in an already busy defense college schedule (that must include core subjects such as command and leadership)? What are the reasonable limits of PME, and can this education be effectively stretched to also include a grounding in social science? And importantly, when (if ever) is it wise to introduce a questioning, critical, evidentiary, methodological skill set into a hierarchical (often political at senior levels), military organization?

Introducing a methodology and skillset that focuses upon knowledge innovation, data integrity, and a critical viewpoint should improve PME. Specifically—and using the New Zealand requirement above—it can produce senior officers better equipped to deal with complexity. This does not, however, address the practical reality that the value of providing such education will likely remain unclear to uniformed military decisionmakers.

Ultimately, the question of whether a social scientific education has intrinsic value for senior military officers boils down to whether their organizations can afford the money and workload required to add this capability. In both the United States and New

Zealand, it is the independent university–employed social scientist who must convince a military organization there is value in a social scientific education for its officers. This is no easy task.

Currently, when the New Zealand Defence Force needs to generate and analyze data on a particular human problem set, it must contract with external defense social scientific researchers to do this work.[18] Unfortunately, senior commanders rarely know the right methodological questions and/or limitations on scope to ask these entities if/when requesting research. While such an education will improve senior officers' ability to address the complexity of their local and regional environment and future tasks, chances of said education being sustained under fiscal and workload constraints are slender.

Benefits

A powerful argument for an increased social science presence within military environs is that it can and should be a sizable cost saver. A streamlined and more deliberate research program ensures better budgeting.[19] Gathering the right information in small doses provides significantly more strategic awareness versus the reverse. Rigor not sample size becomes paramount.

Moreover, a social science-friendly approach empowers operators and analysts to stop justifying data outcomes in favor of explaining them. A research program derived from theory creates a simple premise: data either supports or refutes a theory used to explain a population. Working off an established theoretical baseline, subject matter experts can instead turn their attention to offering invaluable data context—a much better use of their skillsets.

This reasons for a dramatic shift toward using data for strategic versus tactical effect. Such a shift would improve our understanding of emerging challenges such as the "gray zone" and phase zero, and of the drivers of conflict in such contexts.[20] This understanding also requires aptitude in social science, plus internal, defense-based social scientists who can educate and inform leadership on how social science approaches could and should drive key decisions. As the number of new top secret security clearances dwindles, these social scientists must be brought into the fold on a permanent basis before they can no longer be let in, period.[21]

By providing only contracted social science education and research, an employed academic can find him/herself advised against autonomy in providing services to the military.[22] Challenges around keeping participants anonymous and conflicts of interest must also be mitigated.[23] In terms of applying social science principles to the military environs, it is highly unlikely, however, that these problems can be completely avoided. There remains a struggle in applying social science to a military context, in that social science is—by design—skeptical of normative approaches to knowledge, which have within them conceptions of what is "good."[24]

Based on experience in the United States and New Zealand, social scientists across the interagency and partner nations must therefore formally collaborate, share information, and publicly work together toward common social science-based goals.[25] This deliberate display of unity reinforces the benefits of the approach, and likewise

ensures that a specific agency or select paradigm does not dominate social science discussion for the worst.

We recommend the following;

- Accept social science outcomes as relevant to strategic as well as tactical outcomes.
- Avoid over-simplifying theory and findings to fit a specific goal.
- Bridge gaps between existing and proposed military paradigms featuring social science.
- Transition social scientists to serve in an internal permanent capacity.
- Encourage a unified military/interagency social science community.

Conclusion

Importantly, one of the core strengths of social science is its ability to analyze and account for the complexity and messiness of the contemporary world. The purpose of this article has been to address the question of what role social science can play in the military, and what happens when that question is asked across national and international boundaries.

An international comparison—such as between the United States and New Zealand—allows one to reconsider internal constraints and challenges by placing them in light of the constraints and challenges of other nations. First, clearly the politics of linking social science to the military varies considerably between researchers and educators across contexts and continents.

Second, a comparison immediately shows that the value of social science is also dependent on the size of a military. In the United States, with a very large military, the question is how to better integrate social science research into decision-making. For New Zealand with one of the world's smallest, the question is how social science education can shape military officers to be better generalists. Third, one must also explore the tension that might exist between publicly and military funded social scientists, and their country's unique struggles to negotiate with and add value to their respective military establishments.

To answer any or all of these questions means accepting the difficult reality that current approaches are not up to standard. International comparisons provide useful recognition of this being a shared problem, albeit with different threads based on the scope and nature of each institution. They also serve as valuable lessons learned on efforts conducive to endurance as opposed to those serving merely as stopgaps.

Last, and most importantly, answering these questions requires the courage to accept and embrace social science within the military communities. New Zealand's social science PME push demonstrates solid recognizance, as does analysis of pre-conflict drivers in the United States. To make meaningful impact, military leadership must set the tone by advocating for the objective assessment social scientists can bring to an entity already knee deep in the problem. Leaders must also protect them from consequences of providing guidance potentially counter to current paradigms and prior experiences. Only through a combined, interagency, and international effort will these efforts stick. PRISM

Notes

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[17] A Type 1 error occurs when one falsely concludes the presence of a phenomenon, only it did not actually occur. The reverse presents itself as Type 2 error. In statistical terms, this is commonly notated as p<.01 or p<.05, meaning a finding statistically significant. These numbers imply statistical confidence that the same finding would or would not occur for a similar sample in 99 out of 100 (p<..01) or 95 out of 100 (p<.05) instances, respectively. In this example, it reasons for improving the rigor of survey programs to reduce the potentially dangerous likelihood of reaching seeming conclusions but ones inherently inaccurate by design.

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U.S. Marine Corps/ Mark Fayloga

In 2010, U.S. marines depart a checkpoint during a patrol around Forward Operating Base Geronimo, Afghanistan.

Reflections by General David Petraeus, USA (ret.) on the Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq

Can you tell us how your view of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan evolved during your various leadership assignments?

GEN Petraeus: When we were getting ready for what became the invasion of Iraq, the prevailing wisdom was that we were going to have a long, hard fight to Baghdad, and it was really going to be hard to take Baghdad. The road to deployment, which was a very compressed road for the 101st Airborne Division, started with a seminar on military operations in urban terrain, because that was viewed as the decisive event in the takedown of the regime in Iraq—that and finding and destroying the weapons of mass destruction.

There was the expectation of those who were presumably thinking about the Phase IV plan, after-hostilities, that the invasion would lop off the top level of the Saddamists, and then we would relatively expeditiously be able to hand off the responsibilities of governance to some new governing entity, which would exercise governance through the existing institutions of the state, albeit without the Saddamists. By Saddamists, I mean the true loyalists—this would not go down to Ba'ath party level four. It would be Saddam, level one, level two, perhaps some of the level three. But the professionals, if you will, the governing class, would largely remain in place, and there would be functioning governmental institutions that would resume their respective tasks.

When I was in Kuwait, we had a final gathering of commanders on the eve of battle. At the end of this discussion, they asked for questions. I raised my hand and said, "Excuse me, I got it about the fight to Baghdad and taking down Baghdad, but can you go into a little more detail on what happens after that?" And one of the ORHA [Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance] guys stood up and replied, "Dave, don't you worry about that. You

This interview was conducted by Dr. Joseph Collins and Mr. Nathan White for Lessons Encountered: Learning from the Long War, which was published by NDU Press in November 2015.

just get us to Baghdad, and we'll take it from there." And I reflected on that many times subsequently.

In fact, when we got to Najaf (about half way to Baghdad), which the 101st eventually liberated, cleared, and then occupied, we got into a really tough fight. It was a sustained, 72–hour fight, and then all of a sudden it collapsed. I called Lieutenant General (LTG) Wallace, the V Corps Commander, and said, "Hey boss, there's good news and bad news. The good news is we own Najaf." And he responded, "Great, congratulations!" In fact, we had convinced him that we needed Najaf; I had argued that we needed to take it down rather than just contain it, because you could not contain these places forever. We needed to give it a shot and learn from this for when we get to Baghdad. The 3rd Infantry Division (3ID) was in the lead and bypassing all these places, as you recall. Then LTG Wallace asked, "So, what's the bad news?" And I explained, "The bad news is the same as the good news: we own Najaf. What do you want us to do with it? I've got a whole brigade combat team tied up securing it, and we're already focusing on the fight to liberate Karbala" (the next city that 3ID had bypassed).

And so I asked, "Where are these [ORHA] guys? Why don't we get them to practice here in Najaf?" And he answered, "You've got to wait a bit, as they're still getting organized down in Kuwait." So instead of being able to immediately open the airfield, immediately bring in civil affairs, and bring in people who were going to take over the administrative functions—we had to do it all ourselves, tying down nearly one third of our ground combat power. Because of that—being spread so thin—and because of a number of other factors that kept us from having sufficient forces in Baghdad, the looting ended up being as bad as it was. If you do not impose order right away and don't maintain it, and you do not get functions being performed right away, people realize the situation, and they start to take advantage of it as only mobs can. Ultimately, when Baghdad fell, the mobs were in the hundreds of thousands of people on the streets. Not only was the situation out of our control, we could hardly drive down the streets it was so chaotic.

The 3ID took down Baghdad in a really high-risk, gutsy, and courageous thunder run that ultimately unhinged the place and precipitated the regime's collapse. In the meantime, the 101st Airborne had liberated Karbala and then Hillah along Route 1. We then moved into Baghdad, and that's when this orgy of looting really was ongoing. It was also when I realized that the whole concept of Phase IV had really been invalidated. Then the ORHA guys came in, and of course, they had nothing [to work with]—very little of their own assets and few if any Iraqi partners from the institutions that had just collapsed.

I will offer this as one key lesson—that you should always use existing organizations as the foundation for the elements that are going to carry on a mission in a situation like Iraq. Instead of inventing the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), we should have gone right to an embassy structure.[1] And if you want to have multiple countries' embassies, coalition embassies, you can bring them together as we did, ultimately, with the United States in the lead. Establishing an embassy means that you have existing standard operating procedures, regulations, laws, funding, lawyers, contracting teams, development experts, etc.—all tied to an

existing structure from which to get policy guidance, support, and so on. If you want to do engineering, do not create a CPA engineering group, whose head is going to rotate every three months. Bring in the [Army] Corps of Engineers; or bring in the Air Force—they also have an engineering program; [just] bring in something that exists… Do the same for contracting. Build the train and equip mission and headquarters for other efforts around existing units, too. Frankly, we created a lot of one-offs.

Some of these were reasonably successful because you could create them over time. One arguably was the Multi-National Force–Iraq (MNF–I), which evolved from the Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF)–7, which was built on the basis of the V Corps. Still you had to bring in a Corps headquarters to ultimately be the Multi-National Corps–Iraq (MNC-I), over time.[2] Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq (MNSTC–I), though, was very painful to build.[3] We built it basically around a handful of individuals. We were slapping more and more people onto it, and in a sense making it up as we went along. The challenge was that we did not have an organization that was really ideal for that. If you did, you could have given it and that mission to a division commander. That is one of the five strategic lessons that I will detail later.

In Baghdad, we realized that the whole of what had been briefed down in Kuwait—that the Iraqi Army would stay intact, it would surrender in the barracks, and it would be around you if you want to use it [along with other institutions]—all that just collapsed. People stayed in some cases, so you had some people from the institutions, but the damage to the infrastructure was so substantial that even if we had the people, say, from the Ministry of Finance—we had no unlooted Ministry building left. That was a massive setback in the sense that the state no longer existed. And the social contract, which really is the essence of an organized society, a law-abiding society, went out the window, too. There was nobody to honor that contract anymore, and everyone in a sense almost reverted to primal behavior. You see a case of the so-called Hobbesian world without the Leviathan to impose order.

It started to become very clear that establishing a harmonious assembly of Iraqi leaders, many of them, of course, who had been exiles, was wishful thinking. We had a huge number that came back, not just [Ahmed] Chalabi, but [Ayad] Allawi, and of course the Kurdish leaders who hadn't been fixtures in Baghdad; all of them had been somewhere other than in Iraq proper. That's when we started to see what Pete Mansoor describes well in his book, *The Surge*, as the struggle for power and resources—that continues, I might add. It was a struggle between ethnic and sectarian groupings; between Sunni and Shia; between Arabs and Kurds. It was a struggle within those groupings. It was a struggle even within political parties, and certainly between them as well. So all of that was very problematic. And of course, in our case, after bringing order to an area of Baghdad, we were then ordered north to Mosul on very short notice.

What month was that?

GEN Petraeus: It was around April 20th, as I recall, and we had the first election up there, on May 5th. Within two weeks of arriving, we had a caucus. We ensured to the

best of our ability that every element of society was represented: every district; every tribe; and every ethnic and sectarian grouping. And keep in mind that it's a real melting pot up there… We actually had representatives for retired military officers, for the university, and we had the business community, and so on.

They started to pull together, and under our guidance, sometimes very direct steering guidance, all of a sudden we had some Iraqi helpers who actually understood Nineveh Province, (which no American I could ever find could teach me anything about, including the CPA representatives—nobody had ever actually set foot in Nineveh). Then we got hit by a double whammy; first, firing the entire military without telling them what their future is—and that was the key. The issue was not really disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR). It was about not telling them what their future was, as they needed to know what they were going to have to do to feed their families, etc. Now, let me be clear—the Saddam military had to be demobilized at some point, but do you have to do it without telling them what their future is? That was a terrible idea, and we then had five weeks of increasingly violent demonstrations to the point that, by the fifth week, you have people being killed in riots outside Baghdad.

Second, we had de-Ba'athification without an agreed process for reconciliation. De-Ba'athification also had to be done. The two big questions were: why go below level three to level four—because you now have introduced tens of thousands of additional people. And second, why do it if you do not have an agreed process of reconciliation? The level four members were exactly the kind of people we needed to run the country. That was where the Western-educated people were. They apparently had to be Ba'ath party members to go to college or grad school in the United States. We had 120 tenured professors in Mosul University alone who were level four members, and they were our kind of people. They were generally progressive and somewhat secular. And what replaced them, ultimately, after *our* effort at reconciliation in Mosul (approved by Ambassador Paul Bremer, as an experiment)—that went well for a period, but was ultimately not supported in Baghdad—is what now we would call the Muslim Brothers, a very heavily Islamist grouping for whom religion was much more central to their existence than it was for most of those they replaced.

That is another strategic lesson—before you decide to conduct an initiative, an operation, or a policy, ask whether that policy or initiative will take more bad guys off the streets than it creates by its conduct. If the answer to that is no, you should not do it. Clearly, firing the military without telling them what their future was, until five weeks later when we pressed CPA to announce a stipend program (that was equal parts humiliating in its execution and slightly reassuring), and de-Ba'athification without an agreed reconciliation process created hundreds of thousands of individuals who not only had no incentive to support the new Iraq, they actually had every incentive to oppose it. We created hundreds of thousands of enemies in the end with those two policies. Now, you do have to be nuanced about this. There had to be de-Ba'athification. The question is, should it have gone to level four? And the bigger

question is, should you do it at all if you do not have a reconciliation process already agreed, recognizing in hindsight how difficult it was going to be to get that done, especially with Chalabi being given that portfolio?

De-Ba'athification, disbanding the Army, and ending the search for an interim Iraqi Government; Lieutenant General Jay Garner, USA (ret.), the OHRA chief, briefed Rumsfeld, and said those were three tragic decisions.

GEN Petraeus: It's just perplexing. That actually created the seeds that grew into the insurgency, and created fertile soil for the planting of those seeds. Now, what we were able to do in Mosul, as you will recall, was get approval from Ambassador Bremer for a process of reconciliation that would be run by Iraqis who were non-Ba'athist, supported by the U.S. staff judge advocate, other teams, intel folks, etc. That process went very well. We started with 120 professors at Mosul University. They could not become a college President again, but they could have tenure. You had to give them incentives to support Iraq or else they would oppose it. You can not throw somebody out of his job, his retirement, his house, his car, his administrative assistant, his guy to make tea, everything, take away his dignity and expect him to support you.

Or even tolerate you in some cases.

GEN Petraeus: Yes, that's right. We were able to do that, and with a considerable degree of success. It's a major reason why Mosul went so well for as long as it did. We had some pretty skilled guys. We had a lot of people who were veterans of Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo, and stability operations writ large.

How long were you in Mosul—from April 2003 until when?

GEN Petraeus: I left in February 2004. We stayed on for a while after all the 101st units departed to get the Task Force Olympia that came in behind us; a reinforced Stryker brigade under the I Corps Tactical Command Post. People say it was one-third of what we had, but I think it was a good bit more than that. I think they started with at least 10,000 while we had 20–22,000 total. But then they also cut them down a bit, which was not wise.

By the time we left, we had been training Iraqi security forces, had rebuilt the police academy, and rebuilt the police stations. We established a multi-ethnic, multi-sectarian "Army;" I think we called it the ICDC [Iraq Civilian Defense Corps]. We built all this and things began going pretty well. But then these policies [from CPA] came down and though we were able to get exceptions to run reconciliation, eventually it began to be clear that Baghdad [Dr. Chalabi] would not support the results of our process, and the air began to go out of the tires even in our area.

It was in the wake of the firing of the military without telling them their future, and also de-Ba'athification without reconciliation, that the insurgency started. You saw it in Anbar Province, you saw it in Salah-ad-Din and Tikrit, and it gradually crept up into Mosul as well. Especially when it was clear that the reconciliation process was not going to be honored by Dr. Chalabi, even though we flew him up and he said he was fully with us, and that he supported it.[4] We flew a

Chinook helicopter full of files to Baghdad in the fall of 2003, but he took no action. It was very clear, when I came back as a three-star the next year, perhaps even by February before we left, that Chalabi was not going to do that. And people sensed that and started to lose hope. They lost their incentive to support the new Iraq.

I went home in February 2004, but came back on very short notice two months later; General Abizaid, then Commander of U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), asked me to come back in mid-April, and I returned for a couple of weeks to do an assessment of the Iraqi security forces, which had generally performed very poorly during the Sadr uprising in March. The only place that they had done reasonably well was Mosul, where we had employed a completely different concept from the rest of Iraq—we treated them like soldiers, it was not military daycare. They did not commute to work, they were on bases, with us or right next to our bases, they operated with us, and we had a process where they had to gradually take on more tasks from us, and we'd gradually give up more, but we were always there. So, we linked arms. We had uniforms for them, good food, we had scrounged up decent weapons somewhere.

Anyway, after two weeks traveling around Iraq and assessing what had transpired in March, we debriefed General Abizaid and then Secretary Rumsfeld, and my reward for that was to be told to change command, return to Iraq, and implement our recommendations—largely based on the approach the 101st had employed—nationwide.

So I returned in very early June 2004 and we established MNSTC–I. Shortly thereafter, General George Casey took over from Lieutenant General Ricardo Sanchez as the overall commander, and he built what ultimately became the kind of organizational architecture we actually needed. We had a strategic level headquarters [MNF–I], an operational level headquarters [MNC–I], and the multi-national division headquarters. He built the detainee task force—Task Force 134, I think it was. We ultimately developed a Corps of Engineers organization, because engineering is critical. We were spending billions of dollars on reconstruction, rebuilding entire industries—electrical, the oil industry, everything. We established a contracting command that was very important for the billions of dollars' worth of contracts. There was the Rule of Law Task Force which we should have had earlier. We put together MNSTC–I and, generally, I think the concepts guiding the overall campaign were fairly sound from there until, probably, early 2006 in hindsight.

The effects of the February 22, 2006 bombing of the Samarra Mosque were devastating and manifested themselves in the growing sectarian civil war, or what could have escalated into a full-blown civil war. There was enormous sectarian violence. By this time, as the CAC [the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center] Commander back at Fort Leavenworth, we were working on the U.S. *Counterinsurgency Field Manual* and completely overhauling the road to deployment.[5] We had this whole endeavor ongoing, but I was watching the campaigns very carefully, Iraq in particular, because I had been told, "This is your breather, but you're going to be back in the fight." I thought I would be going back in the summer of 2007; ultimately, it was early February 2007.

Somewhere in there, in the late summer of 2006, I started to realize that the concepts [in Iraq] were no longer valid, yet those concepts were still guiding the effort. In fact, the concepts continued throughout the year. In fact, if you look at the Amman agreement, in Jordan, in mid-to-late-November, after the U.S. elections in November, Bush went to Amman, Jordan, met with [then Iraq Prime Minister] Maliki, and they agreed, basically, to do faster what they'd been doing, which clearly was failing. They agreed to have the U.S. forces hand off faster to the Iraqi security forces, who had shown that they could not handle the levels of violence, and had actually been getting worse—sheer degradation. We had agreed to get out of the cities, and consolidate on big bases; to get out of the face of the people. Again, I believe there was a conviction by CENTCOM and the MNF–I that we were the sand in the oyster, but that oyster wasn't producing a pearl. They wanted to accelerate the development of the Iraqi Security Force and a handful of other actions, like releasing detainees faster, clearing and then handing off, and so on. Every single one of those concepts, we ultimately reversed as part of the Surge.

The Surge should be understood as the surge of *ideas*, not the surge of *forces*. We added basically 25–30,000 U.S. troops to an existing roughly 140,000; we went up to about 165,000 at the high-water mark. The additional troops enabled us to implement the new approach more rapidly, but what really made the difference was the change in strategy. We had been living with the people in some cases: the 101st in Mosul, we saw it with H.R. McMaster, we saw it with select Marine units, and other brigades.[6] But even though living with the people was taught at the counterinsurgency center, it was never

U.S. Army/Sean A. Foley

In 2007, U.S. soldiers take cover during a firefight with guerilla forces in the al-Doura section of Baghdad.

actually implemented, because of the decision to get out of the cities, to consolidate on big bases.

I should back up a little bit and note that I remember reading an article in the late summer, early fall of 2006 in the *New York Times* that was titled, "Driving Around Baghdad, Waiting to get Blown Up." It was by a sergeant saying that this is what we're doing—"We just go out and drive around in the neighborhood a couple of times every day and sooner or later we get blown up." It was very clear that he recognized the futility of this approach. Remember Operations *Together Forward 1* and *Together Forward 2?* Major General Peter Chiarelli had an offensive into Baghdad, violence goes down quite dramatically, especially in that neighborhood; but within a few weeks, you hand off to the Iraqis, you leave the neighborhood, and the violence goes up, even worse than before. That was what some of the troops called, "clear and leave," or, "clear and handoff," as opposed to "clear, hold with Iraqis, build, and then transition," which is what we ultimately went to. And then, there was the reconciliation component of this, which was very important. Certainly there were examples of reconciliation beforehand starting with the 101st and a number of other places in 2003. In Anbar in 2004 and 2005, again with H.R. [McMaster] and others, but none of them ever took [hold] because we never had support in Baghdad. But now, [in 2007], I was in Baghdad, so I could do that.

When I went back as the commander of the Multi-National Force, the violence was far worse than I thought it was, and I thought it was very bad. In December 2006, there had been 53 dead civilians because of the violence every 24 hours; horrific levels of violence, in the capital of the country. The NGOs had largely gone home. Even the UN temporarily closed. The damage was just staggering. We went to certain neighborhoods that I knew very well from either my 101st or MNSTC–I days, and it was just breathtaking to see how bad the situation had become. We had already been talking to the people who had created the concepts behind the Joint Security Stations, and very quickly we spread those concepts throughout the whole theater; frankly, what [General] Ray [Odierno] and I did was push it faster.[7]

We had to go faster because we had to cap the violence; we had to separate the warring sectarian factions. We had to drive down the level of violence for a whole variety of reasons. First of all, just to reduce the loss of innocent life. Also because the institutions were once again getting damaged. The third reason was that Ambassador Ryan Crocker and I had to have demonstrable progress by the time we returned to Washington in September 2007 to testify [before Congress]. Otherwise, it was going to be game over, lights out.[8]

People forget how narrowly we averted a congressional cessation of funding, or some other action that would have severely circumscribed what we were able to do. We were very, very low on support on Capitol Hill for Iraq, and even for the Surge, until it started to show progress. I think we had a sense of what was needed and how things could move forward, how to achieve reconciliation between the sects and agreements between the ethnic groups—between Baghdad and Erbil. If we could keep Iraq together and drive the violence down, we could get the oil infrastructure going again, electricity and all the rest of that. And you

can see how this could end ultimately with us gradually transitioning tasks to the Iraqis across the board, with a very comprehensive civil-military counterinsurgency campaign concept guiding what we were doing. That's what ultimately happened and the level of violence was reduced by some 85 percent.

When did you leave Iraq?

GEN Petraeus: September 2008—a 19 and a half month tour. The issue for Iraq then was to make sure that the haste of the drawdown was not so rapid that it unhinged the recent progress. President Obama showed himself to be quite pragmatic, eventually deciding on a slower drawdown than he had proposed during the campaign. In fact, when I met with him in Baghdad when he was the candidate, my advice to him was to preserve as much flexibility as he could because he might find that useful.

At this point though, the challenge in Afghanistan was emerging very quickly. Even before the U.S. election in 2008, Afghanistan was going seriously south. I had conducted an assessment in Afghanistan in September 2005 on the way home from my second tour in Iraq. It was ostensibly a look at the train and equip mission, having come from one that was seemingly doing quite well—MNSTC–I. There were all kinds of challenges, frankly. You had situations that were just forehead-smacking.

For example, in one of the multi-week police training courses, the training schedule had marching in the morning and in the afternoon, but didn't actually have time for shooting practice. I said, "I'll concede that marching can be physical training, but we're not going to out-march the enemy, the Taliban. They're not going to be impressed by our drill and ceremony." They would be more impressed by marksmanship. And yet these were the policemen who would be dealing with the insurgency. This is not normal policing, but what was stunning wasn't just that they were doing it—rather, what was astonishing was that it was actually on the written documents from the training schedule and no one in the chain had objected. That just jumped off the page for me—why are they marching for two or two and a half hours each day! It was just staggering.

In my report, the first slide in the briefing was titled, "Afghanistan does not equal Iraq." I then laid out ten or so factors and showed how Afghanistan was arguably more challenging in a number of them at the very least: a lack of revenue generation; the major export crop was illegal; the effects on rule of law; the corruption problems; illiteracy; lack of infrastructure, etc. But the biggest factor was that the leaders of the Taliban and the other insurgent elements had sanctuaries in Pakistan that put them largely beyond our reach. These were issues that really did have to be dealt with.

In part, of course, I was to blame for Afghanistan a bit because I had kept asking for everything for Iraq. You know that Admiral Mullen quote about Afghanistan: "In Iraq we do what we must; in Afghanistan we do what we can." Iraq was first priority. But by this time, late 2008 and early 2009, we had to start to shift to Afghanistan. Even before President Bush left office, he commissioned the Lute study, which resulted in a few thousand additional troops.[9] It was a start.

Keep in mind, you could not do in Afghanistan what we did in Iraq. In fact, as

CENTCOM Commander and in my confirmation hearing to be commander in Afghanistan, I said we would not be able to "flip" Afghanistan as we had been able to do with Iraq. Even if we had the commitment, we could not rapidly deploy tens of thousands of additional troops. For starters, there was no infrastructure to support them. Every time we did something we had to build more infrastructure. And we did not have the Afghan infrastructure to house more Afghan Security Forces. We were constantly scrambling just to stay ahead in terms of where we were going to base them, how to bed them down when they're on a base, how to feed them, provide water, resupply them.

We enter a pretty intensive period in 2009. Again, President Obama was quite pragmatic on Iraq. That process there was going quite well. Maliki seemed to be, still, an imperfect, but not unreasonable partner. (Keep in mind that it was Maliki who ordered the operation, however impulsively, that resulted in the destruction of the Shia militia in March–April 2008, which is ironic, considering that he later played to the Shia base.)

The Charge of the Knights?

GEN Petraeus: Yes. Into Basrah, and then the Battle of Sadr City as well. And the Battle of Kadhimiya, and a variety of others.

But back to Afghanistan, early in the Obama Administration, we contributed to the study led by Brookings' Bruce Riedel.[10] As CENTCOM Commander, I participated fairly regularly in that. That resulted in another 20,000 troops.

That became an issue because the Obama Administration approved 17,000 and then, when the final memos and orders came up, there were 21,000, and the people in the White House felt like they were getting played.

GEN Petraeus: Yes, well, "welcome to the real world." And then [General] McKiernan left Afghanistan in the early summer of 2009 and [General] Stan McChrystal took over, and did his analysis. That started quite a lengthy process; it was really quite impressive. There were eight or nine full National Security Council (NSC) sessions, in addition to however many Principal Committee and Deputy Committee meetings prior to them.[11] The President was present at each of them, and the result was that he ultimately decided to send an additional 30,000. [Defense Secretary] Gates had an additional 10 percent authority—another 3,000—to him if he needed it; he wouldn't have to go back to the President. There was also a commitment to get the rest of the minimal amount that Stan felt was needed—the balance of the 40,000—from NATO and coalition forces.

I want to talk a bit here about what I think should guide the big ideas of military advice to civilian leaders. During that period there was concern that Admiral Mullen, Stan [McChrystal], and I were attempting to shape the debate through public remarks—to box in the President… Shortly before the study commenced, Mullen testified on Capitol Hill and said essentially that progress in Afghanistan would require a comprehensive civil-military counterinsurgency campaign. The way this played out was that the President had made the decision on the Reidel report back in May or June. It then

took the NSC staff something like three months to issue the promulgating instructions—I think it was July or August of 2009.

The NSC signed out the memo that went first to the Pentagon, and ultimately came to CENTCOM. We were still studying this memo at this point in order to correctly execute it. The NSC memo called for, "a fully resourced civil-military counterinsurgency campaign." That was in the back of Mullen's mind when he testified, and that was in the back of my mind when I gave an interview to the *Washington Post*'s Michael Gerson, who I did not know was one of Bush's former speechwriters. To be truthful, I also thought it was "on-background." Anyway, this ended up in an "on-the-record" interview. Mullen testified on the Wednesday or Thursday. The day after that, I did the interview. Frankly we were a little surprised because again we had just received the NSC memo. We later realized that the President was unaware of the NSC memo. He presumably thought a memo was sent out right after the Riedel report. Instead it took three months for [National Security Advisor] Jones to sign it out, and the President was already leaping ahead to the review process, which had been announced, I think, but had not yet begun.[12]

We, the military were sort of looking a little bit back. The President was looking forward, already thinking in his own mind that he did not want to do a "fully-resourced civil-military campaign." We had to constrain the campaign somehow—as there was a sense that "fully-resourced" meant trying to turn Afghanistan into Switzerland in ten years or less, which was not our intent at all. Anyway, do not get me wrong, I did think this was going to require a comprehensive civil-military counterinsurgency campaign that was reasonably well resourced, albeit not necessarily fully resourced, which is what I recall the NSC memo having said.

I felt the approach that Stan brought in was the right one. I have also said, though, that, through no fault of his [McChrystal], it still took us until late 2010 before we had the inputs right in Afghanistan. And by inputs, I mean the different concepts and strategy, the right organizational architecture, and most of the elements to carry out that strategy. Remember we didn't even have a U.S. forces headquarters in Afghanistan. The U.S. forces functions were dual hatted to the RC–East commander, and thus he, in theory, should have been running Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) operations. The Commander, International Security Assistance Forces (COMISAF) was a NATO commander and in theory, had no legal authority over JSOC, although he was a four-star U.S. officer. We did not have a reintegration/reconciliation program. We did not have the concepts, process, and organization for transition, which is a pretty complicated endeavor. You have to have an intellectual endeavor. You have to have metrics. To these three I would add the anti-corruption task force, and the Afghan Local Police program, as well. We should have done all that much earlier.

All of this, in Iraq, got solved very quickly.

GEN Petraeus: Generally correct. There were a couple of pieces that we had to build in Iraq when we commenced the surge but, other than the reconciliation policies, structures, and processes (which were hugely significant), they were not the big pieces. We just didn't have the big pieces right in

Afghanistan. Lines of authority were confused in some cases. When I was the CENTCOM commander, having served with CENTCOM in several different roles, I said: "a fighting combatant command like ours, a command at war, has two huge tasks that it must get right. First is getting the mission statement right, and understanding that mission statement correctly. Second is identifying the proper tasks and purposes of each of the subordinate commands." And that must be done in a way that understands which elements can actually war fight and which cannot. Then you have to get the organizational architecture right to enable conduct of those tasks. And that does not hit you on the head fully formed, like Newton's apple. You really have to marinate in it. After I got to Afghanistan, it took another three months before we finally had a wire diagram that actually captured OPCON, COCOM, NATO relations, TACON, the national command lines, and all the organizations in the theater. It was a very complex theater.[13]

And then there was Helmand province—"Marineistan." We had to create some additional elements there. We had to tweak the application of the rules of engagement. But the bottom line was that it's not until late 2010 that we even had the inputs roughly right. Because I don't think we really still had all the forces we arguably needed. We did have a lot more resources, but then we started the drawdown process in July of the subsequent year.

I thought then, and I still think now, that Afghanistan was doable. I thought we'd lost a huge amount of time, and therefore a huge amount of momentum. And frankly, the relationship with President Karzai had eroded dramatically. It was not ever just one commander. In the end, Karzai was at a point where the accumulated blows and strains made his behavior inexplicable at times. And you just have to work your way through that. The whole reason we went into Afghanistan was to ensure it never again would become a sanctuary for al-Qaeda or other transnational extremist organizations, the way it had been under the Taliban when the 9/11 attacks were planned there. We were accomplishing that mission, and I think we still can—and must. In my view, there is only one way to accomplish that mission—to enable the Afghans to secure themselves and to govern themselves in an "Afghan good enough" fashion. That did not mean getting Afghanistan to be like Switzerland in a decade or less; rather, it meant rule of law in an Afghan context.

I generally felt before I went over there, and even after being there a year, that this was an endeavor in which we could achieve our objectives, but it was going to take a sustained commitment, albeit one that could be reduced quite considerably from the surge period. And by the way, another huge strategic lesson—perhaps the top one—is that a counterinsurgency campaign is inordinately more difficult if the host nation leadership is less than cooperative, and if the enemy enjoys significant sanctuary outside areas in which you can operate.

In fact, I will diverge now and give you the final lesson. I have given you four already: Before you invade a country, you have to truly understand the country in a granular and nuanced way, and need to have thought through all of the conceivable outcomes—"how does it end?" Existing organizations ought to be used, whenever possible, at a minimum as a foundation [during stage IV operations]. And you have to ask,

"Will this operation or policy take more bad guys off the street than it creates by its conduct?" And the last one is: the art of coalition command involves enormous amounts of coalition sustainment and management, sensitivity to national sentiments as well as national caveats. And it requires the commander to organize the force in a way that capitalizes most effectively on what each coalition member provides, and, perhaps most importantly, uses U.S. resources to compensate for shortcomings that virtually every coalition partner has. I might note that there was no country in Afghanistan that did not have caveats, British protestations notwithstanding.

At the end of your command, there was that famous incident where the President said, "Okay, we're on schedule, we're going to pull the surge forces back." You had recommended an extension at the time. Can you talk about that?

GEN Petraeus: I had not recommended an extension, and this is where we will get into my views on what a senior leader should base military advice to civilian leaders on. We were asked to develop several options and a recommendation for the President for the initial drawdown of forces that would commence in July, and then for the pace of the full drawdown of the 30,000 surge forces during the subsequent 18 months or so.

At the first meeting, we offered several options, and the President said, "No, that's too small upfront, and it's too long overall. I would like you to analyze the following." And he gave us a scenario that was much more significant upfront. It would have begun in the current fighting season, which started in July, and it would have ended in the late spring of the next year when we were right in the middle of the fighting season.

The President chaired a second meeting a few days later, and we evaluated his proposal against all the missions and tasks that we had been assigned by the President and our chain of command. I said that, if we did that, we would not be able to accomplish our mission. I laid out why in a fair amount of detail. He said, "Ok, let me think on that, and we'll come back." In the third meeting, he announced his decision and split the difference; it was more troops coming out than I recommended in the first period of months, and the period before the final drawdown didn't go as long as I recommended. I think the phrase ultimately was, "late summer." It could be extended, perhaps, was the implication. In other words, you are almost through the fighting season, but it would not get us all the way through it.

The President asked if I was okay with it and I responded, "My advice to you is based on my understanding of the mission you've assigned to us, given the facts on the ground, informed by an awareness of all the other issues which you have to deal with that are beyond my purview. In fact, I acknowledge that at every level above me the perspective is broader until it ultimately gets to you, where you have to understandably be concerned about domestic politics, coalition politics, fiscal deficits, strain on the force, programs, you name it." But, I said, "My advice is only informed by that, but it is driven by the facts on the ground. And, with great respect, there has been no change in the facts on the ground during the past week while we have been deliberating this; so, my recommendation remains the same." I added, "I will fully

support your decision, when announced, but my recommendation remains the same."

That was an interesting moment. You could feel the oxygen go out of the situation room pretty quickly. I said, "By the way, you know, your Congressional liaison team set up my confirmation hearing to be the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), which happens to be tomorrow, and the ex-officio members of the SSCI [U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence] are the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC). And the SASC Chairman—and likely the ranking [Republican] member of the SSCI, undoubtedly will ask me to provide what my best professional military advice was in this case, and I will have to answer." (Mullen prepped things on the Hill a bit by doing a hearing for the next morning, where he sort of put out the facts.) What I told the President I would do was, "When I am asked about my best professional military advice, I will be obliged to say that, 'I fully support the President's decision. The force and I will do everything we can to implement it successfully and appropriately. But it does represent a more aggressive formulation of the drawdown than what I recommended.'" And that's indeed what I said the next day when Senator Chambliss from Georgia and Senator McCain asked me about this.

That's also where I had a spirited discussion with Senator Levin, who sat through the entire hearing so he could observe, "But of course you didn't think about resigning over this." I said, "No, Senator, but I've been waiting 37 years for someone to ask me about the concept of resigning, and I'd like to actually talk a little bit about that." I explained that, "In a case like this, I don't think it's appropriate to resign. This is a more aggressive formulation than I recommended, but the troops don't get to quit if they get a mission that they don't whole-heartedly embrace, and I don't think I should get to quit either. Nor should I even contemplate it." We had a very interesting back and forth if you want to look at it. But I do think that it is very important for military leaders to have guiding principles for the advice they're going to give, because if you are one of those who says, "We should consider all the political ramifications and everything else," and allow that to begin driving your recommendations, rather than informing them, you're on a slippery slope.

I think it's hugely important that you have in your mind, again, the concept that will guide the advice that you will provide to these guys. I generally think that it's this notion that I've talked about where you want thinking driven by the facts on the ground, informed by an awareness of the factors beyond you, to guide your recommendations.

During my early months at the CIA, I generally still thought that Iraq was okay, although some issues were starting to emerge in early fall 2011.[14] It was not until mid-December 2011 that Prime Minister Maliki influenced the Judiciary to press charges against Vice President Tariq al-Hashemi. I was there at the time, in mid-to-late-December; I was out seeing our officers at the Station in Baghdad, and trying to consummate an agreement with Prime Minister Maliki that had been supported by the President and that would have provided certain assets to the Prime Minister that would not have required a SOFA [Status of Force Agreement] or uniforms or anything

else. It would have been very helpful, but it never materialized. It was slow-rolled by Maliki for fear that people would find out he still needed help from the Americans despite all of his pronouncements about Iraq being on its own two feet.

We then saw the beginnings of his policy to play to the Shia base (in advance of parliamentary elections) by taking action against the senior Sunni political leaders, thus consolidating his power with the Shia base. That then unhinged Iraq—that story, tragically, is known. Beyond that, Maliki replaced good commanders with sectarian loyalists, many of whom I had insisted be fired and put on the sidelines during the Surge before we would reconstitute their units. All of the police special operations division leaders—the three-star, both two-stars, and every brigadier—were replaced before we agreed to reconstitute the force. Many of these guys reappeared in late 2011 and early 2012, and they replaced good, competent Iraqi leaders, Shia as well as Sunni, with whom we had fought side-by-side, and who ultimately ended up in the United States or Europe. And then on top of that, he inserted the office of the Commander in Chief into the chain of command in a way that almost rendered it dysfunctional.

What Iraq most needed in the face of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) was a chain of command that could respond rapidly with orders to counter the ISIS offensive; however, what we had instead was one that was just not functioning. Tragically, the initial unit did fight for 24 hours or so, but ultimately when the troops saw the commander fly off to a "meeting with higher headquarters," they decided to follow him out the back door. Then it became infectious, and we saw the collapse of the Iraqi Army in northern Iraq, having not done all that well in Anbar either.

Prior to that, we also saw Maliki's forces violently putting down Sunni Arab peaceful protests and using the judiciary to go after their opponents. So the Sunni Arab community was once again alienated and feeling that they needed to oppose the new Iraq, rather than to continue to support it. Maliki's highly inflammatory sectarian activities enabled the resistance, almost similar to what happened to the CPA when it alienated so many Iraqis as well. Maliki was fostering the establishment of fertile ground for the planting of the seeds of extremism, not unlike what CPA did with its catastrophic decisions to disband the army and the Ba'ath Party. We had to invest an enormous amount to overcome that; and contemporary Iraq has had to do likewise, with considerable support from U.S. advisors, trainers, and enablers in intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance; precision strike; and fusion of intelligence.

One former senior official said that the real problem with Iraq was not that we didn't leave enough forces. The real problem was that people stopped watching those details you just mentioned—we took our eye off the ball.

GEN Petraeus: I am not sure I buy that totally, as I think we saw the threat of ISIS gathering; however, it is accurate to observe that there was much less attention to and emphasis on Iraq—vastly less, e.g. than the attention given to it during the final years of the Bush Administration. I did observe in an interview the other day that I would have

liked to have seen 10,000 troops left behind to test the proposition that the troops would have given us influence to keep Malaki from taking the actions he took, though I'm not absolutely certain that numbers of troops would have provided that. But what was cut out of the interview was that I was confident that 10,000 troops would have enabled us to much more rapidly help the Iraqi forces launch counteroffensive operations against ISIS. But, at the end of the day, this was about influencing Maliki, and I am not at all certain that he could have been influenced.

The bigger issues comes back to, "Should we have allowed Maliki to be the Prime Minister in the 2010 election when he finished one delegate behind the Allawi collation?"—and that is a very, very tough question to answer. Even Ambassador Jim Jeffries—no Maliki fan—has explained how it was inevitable that Maliki would again be Prime Minister.

I remember you and I once talked generals and statesmen—particularly the narrow view which has strong support in the United States—that the military should give advice, shut up, and salute.

GEN Petraeus: As a practitioner, I think the Commander of the MNF–I, or the Commander of ISAF in Afghanistan, has to have the skills to be both a statesman and general. As a commander, he has to be a warfighter. He has to have confidence in that—you cannot do that as on the job training. The truth is, at a certain point, there are only a handful of officers who have the attributes and experience for something like this. Having said that, there is no question that the individual also has to have skills of a statesman. After all, the general has to understand his role, the Ambassador's, and the roles of all of the different civilians he will encounter.

The Commander has to focus on providing military advice based on the facts on the ground, as I have discussed, and informed by an awareness of the realities with which the President has to deal. But again, driven by the facts on the ground and his understanding of the mission and the troops available—the usual factors. If one allows political considerations to drive a recommendation, I think you erode the integrity of your military advice. What the President wants is military advice; he can do the political analysis. And I say this having been the only general who commanded two wars and then was the Combatant Commander who had those two wars under his command.

The War on Terror, how will it end?

GEN Petraeus: The big idea here is that the War on Terror is not going to end with a bang. What will happen is what happened during the Surge, about a year or so in, where one day the nightly news in the United States said "the news today from Iraq is that there is no news." Gradually more days of no news will follow.

I think one of the lines we may have to use is that war is not a problem to be solved but more a condition to be endured and managed, because at the root of what we are all involved in is a tremendous war inside the Islamic peoples.

GEN Petraeus: I think you are accurate to say that this is not only a clash *of* civilizations, if it is indeed even that. It is more accurately a clash *within* a civilization, and this is within Islam, and you are right that elements of that clash can only be resolved by those of the Muslim faith. But, having said that, we nonetheless have a mission to make sure that violence does not visit itself on our homeland, or our allies, or our citizens around the world. In other words, it does not so destabilize parts of the world that the global economy is also destabilized. PRISM

Notes

[1] The CPA in Iraq was established in 2003 to serve as the transition government after the destruction of the Ba'athist government.

[2] V Corps helped carry out Operation *Iraqi Freedom*. CJTF–7 directed the U.S. effort in Iraq from June 2003–May 2004. Multi-National Forces–Iraq (MNF–I) took over command for CJTF–7 in May 2004 to handle all strategic level operations for coalition forces contributing to Operation Iraqi Freedom. Multi-National Corps-Iraq (MNC–I) was also established that May as the operational-level headquarters overseeing multinational divisions and forces in Iraq.

[3] In June 2004, Multi-National Security and Transition Command–Iraq (MNSTC–I) was established to assist in forming Army and police battalions throughout the country.

[4] Dr. Chalabi served as Interim Minister of Oil in Iraq in 2005 and then Deputy Prime Minister from May 2005–May 2006.

[5] General Petraeus here is referring to his efforts while serving as the Commander, U.S. Army Combined Arms Center (CAC), to transform the Battle Command Training Program (BCTP).

[6] Lieutenant General H.R. McMaster is now the Special Assistant to the U.S. President for National Security Affairs. McMaster's Iraq experience includes Commander, 3rd Armored Calvary Regiment in Iraq from June 2004–06, and as special assistant to Commander, MNF–I from February 2007–08.

[7] General Raymond Odierno, USA (ret.) assumed command of MNF–I from General Petraeus in September, 2008—less than seven months after completing a 15-month deployment to Iraq, during which he served as Commander, MNC–I.

[8] Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker served as the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq from 2007–09.

[9] Lieutenant General Douglas Lute served as the Deputy National Security Advisor in President Bush's National Security Council as an overseeing director for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

[10] Bruce Riedel served various roles in the CIA including that of Special Assistant to the U.S. President until his retirement in 2006, where he then served as a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution. He has published on the effects of the Iran–Iraq War and terrorism in the Middle East and the United States.

[11] The NSC meets at the direction of the President. The Principal's Committee *generally* includes the President and Vice President; Secretaries of Defense, Energy, and State; the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Director of National Intelligence; National Security Advisor; Attorney General; as well as the President's Chief of Staff. The Deputies Committee, established under President George H.W. Bush, *generally* was comprised of the deputies or undersecretaries to the senior Cabinet Members.

[12] General James L. Jones, USMC (ret.) served as the Commander, U.S. European Command and as Supreme Allied Commander, Europe from 2003–06. General Jones from 2009–10 also served as the U.S. National Security Advisor to President Obama.

[13] TACON refers to tasking authority over limited missions (tactical control).

[14] General David Petraeus, USA (ret.) served as Director of the Central Intelligence Agency from 2011–12.

The Big Stick: the Limits of Soft Power and the Necessity of Military Force

By Eliot A. Cohen
Basic Books, 2017
304 pp., $16.98
ISBN-13: 978-0-46504-472-6

REVIEWED BY
JOSEPH J. COLLINS

The Big Stick is an excellent book that does what its title advertises. Eliot Cohen, a dean of American strategic thought and a former counselor to U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, dissects American military power, analyzes the threats that power faces, and the rudimentary rules for its usage. This is a rare book that appeals to both the expert and the dedicated citizen looking for a guide to future strategy. It reminds us that "to go far" in this world, we must "speak softly and carry a big stick," a saying popularized by Theodore Roosevelt before he became President. Cohen analyzes the stick and tells the reader how and when to swing it with a tenor and vigor that President Roosevelt would appreciate.

Cohen confronts his critics upfront arguing that the world is not becoming more peaceful, and pushes aside those scholars who would have us believe in "pacific realism," neglecting the dynamics of regimes, values, and religion, and believing that the greatest threat to the United States is its own intervention policies. Cohen finds softer forms of power such as sanctions to be useful but limited in their effects, and he criticizes those who would characterize our efforts as incompetent. He offers that "the use of force is always fraught. But so too is passivity; it is also a choice. In 2012–16, the Western states refused to intervene in the Syrian civil war, which then metastasized into a much larger Middle Eastern conflict." Finally, Cohen reminds those interested in "nation building at home" that military spending is actually a modest portion of our national product and does not preclude more investment in American infrastructure.

In his second chapter, Cohen assesses our past 15 years at war—a barrier to thinking clearly about the future of American military power. *The Big Stick* joins other recent books in highlighting the U.S. and allied failure to understand our friends and enemies.[1] Cohen criticizes our slow adaptation to conditions on the ground, and the mixed blessing of help from our allies, some of whom were short of being fully engaged. He describes progress in Afghanistan as fragile and the Iraq War as a mistake, but reminds us that we should not forget the benefits brought to the people in both of those countries, as well as the accomplishments of the overthrow of Saddam Hussein's murderous regime and the tyrannical Taliban in Afghanistan.

Cohen then launches into an effective inventory and assessment of U.S. military power, complete with six longitudinal tables. He finds the structures to be externally familiar but internally much changed. Cohen sees our greatest strength in "global logistical infrastructure" and capabilities. He highlights

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U.S. tactical prowess but at the same time he notes that "strategic thinking about the nature of war, and how to align military means with political ends, is a very different matter. There, arguably, it has done poorly." He finds the lack of excellent strategic thinking to be connected to the ineffectiveness of the nation's war colleges, which he cites for poor control over their student input, short-tenured senior leadership, excessive administration, and a lack of attention to faculty research. The student population has remained the same as the force has shrunk, which he describes as tantamount to watering down the quality of the student body. He concludes that "in an era of growing strategic complexity and uncertainty," the need to improve strategic education "is one of the more important tasks faced by the American military."

The next four chapters of *The Big Stick* concern the threats to the United States posed by China; radical Islamic terrorists, whom he calls *jihadis*; the dangerous states—Russia, North Korea, and Iran; and ungoverned spaces and the commons. These chapters are uniformly excellent, but the treatment of China stands out for its insight and import. Cohen warns against the exotic "Fu Manchu conception of Chinese military power." He argues for taking the Chinese seriously, conducting insightful analysis, and working toward a full understanding of Chinese strategic culture and battlefield behavior, a subject he has previously addressed in detail in his 1990 book with John Gooch on *Military Misfortunes: the Anatomy of Failure in War*.[2]

In his chapter on the War on Terror, Cohen advocates continuing direct action; capturing and turning terrorist leaders; dividing the jihadi opposition; and winning the war of ideas. He then highlights the importance of securing and stabilizing territory taken from terrorists and reminds the reader of our failure to do so in Libya, where we delivered the population from oppression into chaos. Wars begin with political factors and must end with them as well.

Cohen's treatment of Russia, Iran, and North Korea is short but nuanced. In the end, he recommends four measures for dealing with them: deterrence; the reassurance of allies, especially in Europe; improving our capabilities against sub-conventional conflict; and finally, inextremis, building capabilities to disarm Iran or North Korea preemptively, "if they ever seem likely to make use of their nuclear weapons."

The Big Stick concludes with Cohen's recommendations on how and when to use force. He carefully reminds us of the role of "accident, contingency, and randomness that pervade human affairs" and make war the province of chance. He finds the Weinberger doctrine wanting. Cohen abjures detailed grand strategies in favor of conceptual white papers and recommends some basic principles. In his terms, they are: understand your war for what it is, not what you wish it to be; plans are important but being able to adapt is more important; prefer to go short, but prepare to go long [duration]; engage in today's fight, but prepare for tomorrow's challenge; adroit strategy matters [but] perseverance matters more; and a president can launch a war [but] to win it, he or she must sustain congressional and popular support. While these bits of wisdom are simple, they are also profound, and backed

up by dozens of more concrete recommendations in this work.

The readers of this book—expert and novice alike—will find it nicely written, carefully thought out, and forcefully argued. It will spur lots of criticism, especially from the neorealists who will not hold back their fire. The Big Stick is both an enduring principle and a superb book, one that will inspire imitators and critics alike. PRISM

Notes

[1] For example, Ben Barry, Harsh Lessons: *Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Changing Character of War* (London: Routledge for IISS, 2017), 75–84. See also: Richard Hooker and Joseph Collins, eds., *Lessons Encountered: Learning from the Long War* (Washington, DC: National Defense University, 2015), 71–4.

[2] Eliot A. Cohen and John Gooch, *Military Misfortunes: the Anatomy of Failure in War* (New York: Free Press, 1990, reissued 2006).

War and the Art of Governance: Consolidating Combat Success into Political Victory

By Nadia Schadlow
Georgetown University Press, 2017
344 pp., $32.95
ISBN-13: 978-1-62616-410-9

REVIEWED BY RONALD E. NEUMANN

War and the Art of Governance is an important book for looking beyond the frequently cited mistakes of Afghanistan and Iraq to put the very serious problems of stabilization and governance into a larger historical framework. The book is somewhat weakened by an almost total focus on the military and organizational aspects of the problems without adequately exploring the political dimensions of the many case studies it focuses on. Nevertheless, its concentration on the need to radically alter certain deeply ingrained habits of both the Army and of policymakers is an important contribution to policy and doctrine.

Ms. Schadlow's primary thesis is that from the Mexican War to the war in Iraq, America has consistently grappled with:

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the problem of reconstituting political order during and following combat. U.S. political and military leaders resisted taking the steps needed to institutionalize the lessons of governance operations. The army remained reluctant to embrace these operations as an integral part of war. And U.S. political leaders reinforced that reluctance and remained hesitant to allow military forces to serve as the main instrument for political consolidation. [This] has resulted in a denial syndrome that precludes effective war planning and perpetuates unpreparedness for this aspect of war.[1]

Throughout 170 years of war, a consistent lack of adequate political guidance or clear formulation of war goals from Washington often left the army to improvise. The improvisation was frequently brilliant, particularly early although less so later on. Civilians repeatedly resisted military control and yet, when the military sought assistance from the State Department and other agencies, the resources to provide the assistance were lacking. Schadlow argues that in these situations only the army has the resources to tackle the immediate problems.

However, the Army has just as consistently failed to recognize that governance is a part of war. It resists political interference and demands full control during combat but relegates civil affairs work and professionals to a separate career that is always secondary to the Army's war fighting focus. One result is the artificial division of war into phases where stabilization, phase IV, is seen as coming after combat operations end—something Schadlow calls a "basic fallacy." Another result is the repeated attempt of the Army to turn over reconstruction to civilians before the civilian staff, resources, or policy has been adequately developed to assume the work. The shift from unity of command to unity of effort in Afghanistan and Iraq is clearly shown to have major problems that are unlikely to be fixed without altering basic doctrine and policy guidance. I agree with these conclusions, based on personal experience in our most recent wars as well as extensive work in the broad area of stabilization.

The military focus of the book precludes exploration of the many political issues that would expand the discussion of what needs to change. In post–World War II Germany Schadlow notes that the military "created new political authorities, organized and held elections, and encouraged the development of more democratic ideals through the reform of Germany's judicial and educational system" but she provides almost no detail on the nature of the reforms or evaluation of their effectiveness. In the case of Korea there is an important discussion of the tension between civil affairs as playing a combat support role versus shaping a political outcome. However, the discussion of structure largely overshadows the analysis of how the differences were settled or whether military decisions forwarded the desired political outcome. The Army did a commendable job in Korea of rebuilding, but there is no analysis of how effective their projects were in restarting the economy or introducing economic reform. We are told that there was "fierce fighting and diplomatic sparring with the UN over control" of political and economic reconstruction, but we know nothing of what the issues were or whether the military's demand for control

had important political ramifications. Did it make a difference? We don't know.

In the case of Panama there is a tantalizing reference to General Maxwell Thurman's placing the U.S. Embassy in charge of a civil-military task force. It would have been useful to have some analysis of how this interesting experiment actually worked. Also, there was a functioning embassy in places throughout the operation with, one assumes, some political knowledge of Panama. We are told that the Army had to make a major effort to develop its own political understanding of the country. But did they not receive support from the embassy? Was the support inadequate? We do not know whether there were lessons to be learned. These questions are important because if, as Schadlow recommends, more control for governance is to be turned over to the military then it is important to examine the record in terms of success in meeting policy goals as well as actions taken to meet challenges.

One example of the need for deeper analysis comes from Iraq. There, after the turnover of sovereignty to an Iraqi government, control over American economic reconstruction was split between the Iraq Reconstruction Management Office (IRMO), which reported to the embassy, and the Project and Contracting Office, which was directed by the Department of Defense (DOD). Schadlow is correct that this was a flawed arrangement. However, there is no discussion of some of the politically complicating factors that led to this decision including ongoing projects funded by other donors who were willing to continue work under IRMO but not under DOD direction. I was only peripherally involved in this decision but enough so to know that it was more complicated than the book's presentation of civilian resistance to military oversight.

While this list could be expanded, and more consideration of how civil and military authorities actually worked together in several cases would have strengthened the book, the problem does not detract from the basic soundness of the analysis.

Schadlow concludes with five recommendations for reform. The first of these is that the political purpose that the war is to achieve must become far more central to both planning and the initiation of combat. She repeatedly demonstrates that even when political objectives were declared they were unable to significantly enter war planning or early operations. In this she is clearly correct.

Her second recommendation is for unity of command. This is as much a recommendation about how Washington needs to overcome the obstacles imposed by our large and diverse bureaucracy as it is about field command. It echoes themes developed at length in many other studies of Iraq and Afghanistan.

The third recommendation is that while civilians formulate policy they must "acknowledge that civilian organizations are not capable of operating in conflict zones in sufficient scale over time." Because the military has all the advantages of "scale, logistics, communications and experience in managing large institutions" the Army must be given "operational control over governance operations in war." There is a logic to this recommendation that is undeniable. But it is also fraught with problems that are not explored.

Sometimes the military's ability to improvise without guidance produces brilliant results. Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs Lieutenant General H. R. McMaster's earlier work in the Iraqi city of Tel Afar is a well-known example, which the book cites; however, not all initiatives work out this well. In the early days in Iraq division commanders moved on their own to set up local security forces. In southern Iraq, these often led to the strengthening of local Shia militias that dominated the local forces. Some of them turned against us in the April 2004 Shia revolt (I was shot at in Najaf by troops still wearing the uniforms we had provided and using the arms we had supplied). Later some of the forces so organized were merged into the Iraqi national security forces and became involved in sectarian cleansing, torture, and executions.

Military funding—mostly from the Commander's Emergency Response Program—built many projects, but while some were extremely good, many others were constructed without reference to how the Iraqi government would maintain or supply the schools and clinics and fell into disuse.[2] This was even truer in Afghanistan, where the government had no financial resources to pick up the schools and clinics that were built without being incorporated into ministerial budgets. In my many visits to Afghanistan since I retired, I have found a pronounced lack of understanding about local power dynamics in our military commands. This problem was extensively covered in 2010 by then Major General Michael Flynn, Captain Matt Pottinger, and Paul D. Batchelor in a paper on "Fixing Intelligence: A Blueprint for Making Intelligence Relevant in Afghanistan" published by a Washington think tank.[3] Six years later the issue has not been fixed in any organizational way.

None of these problems refute the absolutely correct conclusion that the civilians lack the scale of resources to do the job themselves. But they do point out that if the military is to take over all governance functions, there are serious issues of how the military will acquire the local understanding and political guidance to take on the governance function effectively.

A related issue, but not one explored in the book, is the difference between operating when the military has control, as in Germany or the early occupation of Iraq, and operating alongside a sovereign state government. The latter situation adds enormous political complexity to an already difficult problem. To the extent that anyone has training for managing such issues it is the diplomats, not the soldiers. And that brings us back to the starting problem of resources, or their lack of management. An alternative solution, to empower the ambassador in combination with the military was offered in an article on "Fixing Fragile States" that I co-authored with admirals Dennis Blair and Eric Olson in 2014.[4]

The fourth recommendation, that civilian policy leaders "not be seduced by the idea that they can achieve policy objectives from afar by kinetic means alone," is undoubtedly correct. Unfortunately, we often seem to be going in the opposite direction, defining objectives in military terms alone in Syria and Iraq. One can only hope that when we know more of the new strategies for combatting the Islamic State this impression will prove too dour.

The fifth, and final recommendation is extremely important and is at the heart of many of the lessons that could and should be learned from the case studies. This is a call for the military to develop the capabilities and organizations that are prepared to conduct key governance tasks. Military interventions with a requirement for governance have been a recurring phenomenon for nearly 170 years. Every post–World War II administration since Truman has had such an experience. It is hubris to assume that we will not repeat the experience. Accordingly, Schadlow calls on the Army to "reject the narrowly circumscribed view of the profession of arms as the management of violence."

The army has and is making progress in developing new concepts. Consolidation is a term that has been added to doctrine and expanded the concept of combined arms according to the author. But there remains a need to fully overcome what Schadlow calls the "denial syndrome" and recognize that the planning for how to achieve political objectives must be fully integrated into both war planning and operations. What might be added, and is probably even more difficult, is the need for both military and civilian professionals to insist that political leaders properly and fully define such objectives before launching military operations. This requirement goes well beyond either the book or what can be achieved by doctrine and training alone. Yet without clear political policy goals it will be difficult to make use of the lessons of the past. PRISM

Notes

[1] Nadia Schadlow, *War and the Art of Governance: Consolidating Success into Political Victory* (Georgetown University Press: March 2017).

[2] The CERP program was designed to allow local commanders in Iraq and Afghanistan access to additional financial assets to respond to urgent humanitarian and reconstruction requirements on behalf of locals.

[3] Michael T. Flynn, Matt Pottinger, and Paul D. Batchelor, "Fixing Intelligence: A Blueprint for Making Intelligence Relevant in Iraq," *Center for New American Security*, January 4, 2010, available at <https://www.cnas.org/publications/reports/fixing-intel-a-blueprint-for-making-intelligence-relevant-in-afghanistan#.VBcy7S5dXCl>.

[4] Dennis Blair, Ronald Neumann, Eric Olson, "Fixing Fragile States," *The National Interest*, August 27, 2014, available at <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/fixing-fragile-states-11125>.

Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides's Trap?

By Graham Allison
New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2017
384 pp., $18.30
ISBN-13: 978-0-54493-527-3

REVIEWED BY LAWRENCE FREEDMAN

It is conceivable that one day the United States and the People's Republic of China will go to war. There are a number of possible scenarios involving a disturbing range of countries—Taiwan, the Philippines, Vietnam, India, Japan, and the Koreas—that could draw the two countries into a fight. None of this is news, as tension has been evident for some time. Whether or not there is a conflict will depend on how far China pushes to assert its interests, for example in the South China Sea. In other cases, the risks revolve more around actions that might be taken by others, for example a formal secession by the Republic of China (Taiwan) from China.

Graham Allison, former Director of the Belfer Center at Harvard University, describes these concerns in a lively, readable, and in some respects alarming, book. "On the current trajectory," he warns, "war between the United States and China in the decades ahead is not just possible, but much more likely than currently recognized." Fortunately it is not "inevitable." To explain the extent of the danger he gives the niggling set of potential conflicts a wider context. Behind the particularities of the various scenarios there are three larger and related issues shaping Chinese behavior and American responses. The first is that China knows what it is like to be powerless and humiliated. Its treatment at the hands of the great powers from the late 19th century left its mark. Now that it has economic weight, military strength, and consequential political power Beijing sees this as a time to demonstrate that the country can no longer be pushed around and that past grievances must be addressed. The second is that China has a distinctive civilization, with a culture and outlook very different from that of the Western world, which risks producing a clash of the sort described by Samuel Huntington in the early 1990s. Third, not only does China now have an opportunity to act upon its sense of grievance and entitlement but it also is coming to the point where it can push to take the leading position in the international system. Even if this is not its aim, the fact that it is no longer unrealistic raises the stakes for the United States. China has to be viewed as its most significant rival, challenging American predominance, threatening the role it has been playing since the 1940s.

Allison concentrates on this feature of the developing relationship between the two great powers. It provides his big idea—the "Thucydides Trap." The idea of the trap comes from the famous explanation by the Greek historian of the Peloponnesian War in the 5th century BC: "It was the rise of Athens and the fear that it instilled in Sparta that made war inevitable." These words are repeated many times throughout the book.

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So important is this big idea to Allison that much of *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides's Trap?* is taken up with providing a quasi-theoretical foundation for the existence of the trap as an historical phenomenon as well as consideration of how it might apply in this case. He identifies 16 cases where a rising power came to challenge the position of a dominant state, and notes, disconcertingly, that 12 of these ended in war. Thus the danger in the current situation comes not from the very real possibility of a crisis developing over one of the known flash points but because of the historic moment as the United States confronts a fundamental challenge to its position in the international hierarchy. Allison's idea caused something of a stir since it was first mooted in an Atlantic Monthly article in 2015, and was even discussed at a summit between U.S. President Obama and President of the People's Republic of China Xi Jinping, when they vowed not to be trapped.

It is always a good test of any theoretical proposition, whether in a Ph.D. thesis or a book by an eminent scholar, to ask whether much elsewhere would need to be altered if this proposition were excluded. Had the Thucydides Trap never been mentioned, most of the arguments and concerns in this book would still be relevant and deserve careful consideration (although I would go a bit easier on the Clash of Civilizations). The trouble with the big idea is that it elevates this clash of the titans to the exclusion of many of the other key strategic relationships in the Asia–Pacific region involving China.

The case studies deployed by Allison tell us very little of value. There are debates about whether Thucydides was accurately translated in the first place, because he was certainly not precluding other factors in conjunction with a shifting power balance. His main objective may have been to protect the reputation of his hero Pericles for some poor strategic calls in the runup to the war. The power of Athens had not actually been increasing significantly. A better way of viewing the origins of the war may be mismanagement by Athens of its alliances. A similar point might be made about Allison's other major case study, the origins of the First World War. It was true that this had been preceded by an Anglo–German naval arms race, but that was over before July 1914, and at any rate the origins of the war lay in the dispute between Austria and Serbia, and its mismanagement by their allies, Germany and Russia. One factor might have been Germany's fear of Russia's rising power. A failure to act in 1914 would have made war even riskier when the next crisis came along.

If lessons are to be drawn from past power struggles, perhaps the most relevant would come from the Cold War is that the avoidance of a hot war in this case had something to do with nuclear weapons. The nuclear issue might also encourage caution between China and the United States. The other instances come from times when issues of war and power were viewed differently than they are today, and their implications are not compelling. To try to find lessons from 15th century Portugal and Spain, or 17th century England and the Dutch Republic is unlikely to be fruitful.

Another problem is that China is involved in a complex set of power relationships. If the Thucydides Trap referred to a persistent phenomenon then it would also be necessary to address Sino–Soviet tension (where nuclear deterrence again might have

been relevant) or, looking forward, Sino–Indian tension. In 2014, when thoughts were turning to parallels with the First World War, it was Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe who wondered aloud about the disturbing similarities with the situation in Europe then and Japan's dispute with China over the Senkaku Islands, (claimed by China as the Diaoyu Islands). The issue for China is not just a struggle for power with the United States, which comes into the frame largely as an ally of countries threatened by China, but also possible conflicts with all the other big players in the region.

In addition, China has form when it comes to conflicts. It has been to war with India (1962) and Vietnam (1979), and had skirmishes with the Soviet Union (1969). In 1950 Chinese and American troops fought during the course of the Korean War. The point about these fights is that they took place when China was relatively weak. The fact that it is now well on its way to becoming the world's largest economy and is building up its armed forces means that it is in a far stronger position to take on the United States, and others, but also that it has a lot more to lose.

China's main interest has always been its regional position, and if that is the case, then there are strong arguments for it to show patience, as its economic pull becomes progressively stronger, while the American position becomes questioned because of the effort required to back a complicated set of allies with interests with which Washington may not always be in sympathy. The various missteps of the Trump Administration—first appearing to favor Taiwan and then backing away, complaining about trade deals with South Korea as a crisis was building up with the North, preparing to denounce China as a currency manipulator and then suddenly being able to forge a warm and constructive relationship at the U.S. President's Florida retreat—may steadily subvert confidence in American's guarantees and encourage a gradual willingness to put Beijing's wishes to the fore rather than Washington's. That is as likely a future as a U.S.–China war, accepting the caveats about the risks of an otherwise minor crisis being poorly handled. China, like the Soviet Union at the start of the 1970s, may also conclude that it is better to have the United States closely involved in the region as a stabilizing force, given what individual states, such as Japan, might get up to if they no longer felt that they could rely on Washington.

All this leads to the conclusion that the Thucydides Trap is an unhelpful construct. It only takes a smidgeon of realism to recognize the importance of power balances and to acknowledge that their calculation by states influences behavior. That is not at issue. The question is whether the U.S.–China relationship can be understood as one of a rare set of occasions—of which there have been only 16 up to now in all of international history—when an upstart power challenges the established power for top position. The key point is that the United States with its local allies remains far superior to China so long as it takes care of its relationships. Managing its regional alliances is not straightforward, but so long as this is done the United States will still remain the stronger. China's security dilemma lies in the number of potential rivals who might combine together against it in a number of ways. This adds to its incentives to play a long game.

Allison's technique is to draw a very bleak picture, not out of fatalism but to demonstrate that it is possible to avoid the worst outcomes. If the various and generally sensible policy prescriptions he offers are followed then all should be well, and we can relax. He has used the same technique before. In 2004, Allison explored the possible ways in which terrorist groups might be able to get hold of a nuclear device or build their own and then use them to cause carnage. He reported his "considered judgment, on the current path, a nuclear terrorist attack on America in the decade ahead is more likely than not." Without determined action, largely to make sure that weapons and fissionable material were kept secure, a disaster was almost certain. With the right action the catastrophe could be prevented. This formula has an evident attraction as a way to dramatize dangers and influence policy, for no one wishes to be accused of complacency on such grave matters as these. But it also risks playing down the numerous factors that already make any great power war incredibly risky and exaggerating the differences that sensible policy initiatives can make when something happens that neither side wanted but soon escalates out of control. PRISM

A World in Disarray: American Foreign Policy and the Crisis of the Old Order?

By Richard Haass
Penguin Press, 2017
312 pp., $28.00
ISBN-13: 978-0-39956-236-5

REVIEWED BY MARK MEIROWITZ

Richard Haass, President of the Council on Foreign Relations, is an innovative thinker in the field of American foreign policy and international relations. In his recent work, *A World in Disarray: American Foreign Policy and the Crisis of the Old Order*, Haass proposes updating the current world order—that has been with us seemingly since time immemorial, having originated with the Peace of Westphalia in 1648—to help alleviate world disorder.

In this new world order, respect for sovereignty and the inviolability of borders would be supplemented by "sovereign obligation," whereby states would be responsible for developments within their borders that affect other states, such as terrorism, nuclear proliferation, climate change, and cyberhacking. Haass views sovereign obligation as a form of realism, the emphasis of which is "less on what another country is (or does within its borders) as it is on what it chooses to do beyond its borders,

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that is, in its foreign policy." Governments would be "expected not just to live up to agreed upon behaviors but also [to] make sure that no third party carried out prohibited actions from their territory and that any party discovered to be so doing would be stopped and penalized."

It is indisputable, as Haass argues, that "states individually or collectively have not just the right but the obligation to act against terrorism as well as against states that harbor or otherwise support terrorists." There is an element of common benefit that will work—and which sounds very much like the concept of collective security. In the context of international organizations, and establishing coalitions to deal with vexing and dangerous cross border issues, states can work together effectively without giving up sovereign rights.

Haass believes that for countries to implement sovereign obligation, governments need to forge coalitions of countries as well as nonstate actors. The United Nations is not a practical venue because its concept of sovereign equality—one country one vote—at the General Assembly is not representative of global strength and power. Furthermore, the Security Council excludes not just nonstate actors but also significant countries, such as India and Germany, and no major power will submit a matter for disposition by the Council that would, in effect, diminish that major power's sovereignty. Haass instead advocates the use of consultations to help build legitimacy for sovereign obligation. For example, Haass suggests that it would be essential to include Apple, Microsoft, Google, and Facebook as participants on cyber issues, as well as involving nonstate actors such as major domestic pharmaceutical companies and nongovernmental organizations on global health issues.

In a world in which Russia regularly violates the sovereignty of other states, including by cyberhacking and outright invasion, and North Korea brazenly launches missiles in contravention of international law, it is difficult to see how sovereign obligation can be implemented or enforced. Arguably most states would perceive sovereign obligation as a limitation on their sovereign rights, and regretfully in failed states such as Syria sovereign obligation does not have efficacy. Further, one wonders how these ideas can be applied to nonstate actors such as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, the Taliban, and al-Qaeda.

Haass' proposed new world order appears to be very limited in scope regarding the enforcement of human rights within sovereign states. He favors overlaying a system similar to the Helsinki Accords (or the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) on the Asia–Pacific that would, among other things, reduce the chance of accidental military incidents and escalation. However, Haass does not want the human rights provisions of the Helsinki Accords to be replicated for the Asia–Pacific region since this would not be acceptable to China and other countries and "if pushed on them could make it that more difficult to put into place arrangements that would reduce the odds of conflict in the region." This is especially disappointing because the Accords, as well as the use of sanctions, have proved effective in achieving significant human rights gains—even in a world of sovereign states.

After discussing regional responses to world disarray, Haass turns to the United

States, which he believes will likely remain the most powerful country in the world. He argues that "a large portion of the burden of creating and maintaining order on the regional or global level will fall on the United States" and that America cannot remain aloof. Haass argues, however, that the United States must put its own house in order. He then proceeds to discuss various domestic issues, including the need to address America's debt problem, which urgently require resolution. It would appear that this is a reprise of Haass' previous book, *Foreign Policy Begins At Home: The Case for Putting America's House in Order*. The basic premise was "either the United States will put its house in order and refocus what it does abroad, or it will increasingly find itself at the mercy of what happens beyond its borders and beyond its control." So perhaps Haass is suggesting that the United States and other countries cannot move forward with sovereign obligation without first resolving their domestic issues.

A World in Disarray was written prior to the U.S. Presidential election in 2016 and, accordingly, does not account for momentous developments since the election of President Trump, to include Haass' depiction (on a cable TV program) of the "unstructured informality" of President Trump's foreign policy. The impact of Brexit, the bombing of Syria by the United States, the rising threat posed by North Korea, and the increasing influence of Russia, among other developments, have significantly altered the world political scene.

It would appear from President Trump's emphasis on "America First"—retreating from trade commitments and climate obligations—together with the uncertain futures of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the European Union, that the tendency is clearly far from the direction of the United States adopting (or encouraging other states to adopt) sovereign obligation. On the contrary, the reliance on traditional sovereign rights as a shield for aggression and violence seems to be increasing worldwide, rather than receding.

What is needed is the strengthening of the collective security principle which has underpinned the post–World War II period; Haass also is right that the United Nations needs to be reformed. Even if limited, sovereign obligation has the potential, at the very least, to reduce world disarray if applied discretely and effectively. United States policy will of course be a key element in determining whether Haass' proposed new world order can in fact be effectuated. PRISM

The NDU's Center for Complex Operations

The United States Congress in 2009 authorized the establishment of a Center for Complex Operations (CCO) in response to a widely perceived need for interagency interoperability in analysis of, planning for, and intervening in complex operations worldwide. These include reconstruction, stabilization, counterinsurgency, and irregular warfare—operations that demand support from all elements of national power to succeed.

Created within the Department of Defense as a collaborative initiative with support from the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development, the aim of CCO is to:

- **enable more effective networking, coordination, and synchronization of preparations for deployment of U.S. government personnel for**
- **complex operations;**
- **compile best practices and lessons learned;**
- **identify training and education gaps, and then facilitate efforts to fill those gaps;**
- **and to serve as a feedback and information conduit to senior U.S. leaders within the defense, diplomacy, and development arenas.**

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