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MILITARY FORCE AND CULTURE CHANGE: SYSTEMS, NARRATIVES, AND THE SOCIAL TRANSMISSION OF BEHAVIOR IN COUNTER-TERRORISM STRATEGY

by

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March 2006

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US national security strategy calls for the use of military force to shape cultures beyond US borders. However, the relationship between the use of force and changes in cultural processes is poorly understood. Operationalizing culture as socially transmitted behavior, and treating culture systematically using open systems theory, best allows us to understand the perils and prospects of acting upon culture with force. In particular, this thesis explores the narrative and storytelling dimensions of culture, offering a theory of story that can be used to drive innovative counter-terrorism strategies and structure general principles for prevailing in the "story war." Using case studies from the British Iraqi Mandate on the failure to treat culture systemically and from Hizballah on the generation of surrogate consciousness and alternate identity, the analysis derives general guidance for strategists and policymakers concerned about the force and culture equation. It can be used to generate new research programs in counter-terrorism (such as exploring the neural mechanisms undergirding radicalization), fill in gaps in intelligence collection and analysis, and pave the way for modeling and simulation of the force/culture interaction for the purposes of planning good effects-based operations.

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MILITARY FORCE AND CULTURE CHANGE: SYSTEMS, NARRATIVES, AND THE SOCIAL TRANSMISSION OF BEHAVIOR IN COUNTER-TERRORISM STRATEGY

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US national security strategy calls for the use of military force to shape cultures beyond US borders. However, the relationship between the use of force and changes in cultural processes is poorly understood. Operationalizing culture as socially transmitted behavior, and treating culture systematically using open systems theory, best allows us to understand the perils and prospects of acting upon culture with force. In particular, this thesis explores the narrative and storytelling dimensions of culture, offering a theory of story that can be used to drive innovative counter-terrorism strategies and structure general principles for prevailing in the "story war." Using case studies from the British Iraqi Mandate on the failure to treat culture systemically, and from Hizballah on the generation of surrogate consciousness and alternate identity, the analysis derives general guidance for strategists and policymakers concerned about the force and culture equation. It can be used to drive new research programs in counter-terrorism (such as exploring the neural mechanisms undergirding radicalization), fill in gaps in intelligence collection and analysis, and pave the way for modeling and simulation of the force/culture interaction for the purposes of planning good effects-based operations.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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I.   FORCE, CULTURE CHANGE, AND STORIES:
AN OVERVIEW

A.   THE PROBLEM OF FORCE AND CULTURE

According to Carl von Clausewitz, war—the use of force so as to impose your will on an adversary—is an extension of politics. When non-coercive methods fail to allow potential adversaries to reach political accommodation, and where the stakes are high enough such that at least one party to the dispute is willing to use force so as to authoritatively allocate value, then the application of violence to resolve the conflict will be inevitable. The professional soldier, airman or sailor will be especially skilled at applying violence systematically so as to achieve the desired coercive effect; this constitutes the warrior profession's *raison d'etre*. Deterrence, dissuasion, and the other various terms of art wielded by these professionals to characterize the proximate effect of using (or possessing the capacity to use) force are all subordinate to this ultimate coercive purpose.

This is a persuasive story regarding what end military force can and does serve; however, in a complex and multi-faceted security environment, it is far from being the *entire* story regarding those ends. In a world presently dominated by a sole superpower (the United States), the goals served by the application of force are yet more subtle. Unfortunately, the theoretical apparatus required to allow us to be able to make sense of just how the use of force achieves results in these other realms has not kept pace with the desire of both state and non-state actors to use violence to achieve these extended and more complex objectives.

In the case of the United States, many aspects of our current national security strategy—especially in the counter-terrorism domain—are essentially clarion calls for the use of military force to change, influence and shape culture. For example, the Greater Middle East Initiative announced by President George W. Bush in 2002 calls for U.S. support (direct and indirect) for democratization in Southwest Asia. Given that the process of democratization consists in large part of changing how political society functions in a given sovereign area, it is not a stretch to argue that this initiative, and

aspects of it which have made their way into both the U.S. National Security Strategy and Counter-Terrorism Strategy, are at their core calls for the use of force to change the nature of cultures elsewhere.

The problem, however, is that we have not sufficiently articulated a workable theory of culture, one that describes both what a culture is—its objects and processes, its "moving parts"—and how military force could interact with it to produce some desired outcome. The essential problematic for this thesis is to make headway in this space: offer a strategically useful theory of culture, focus on a particularly important piece of it (narrative and storytelling), and limn the prospects for using military force to shape that piece.

This charter is, of course, far too broad to constitute a thesis-length research question; exploring these problems in depth is a project for several books, not just a few pages. The next few sections delimit the problem further and offer a preview of what will be discussed in the remaining chapters.

B. DELIMITING THE PROBLEM

For the purposes of understanding the relationship between the application of military force and the shifting of a culture, "culture" itself is best operationalized as *socially transmitted behaviors and the processes which reproduce them*. This allows us to distinguish between those aspects of human behavior which are driven by brute biological causes (the fact that human beings mostly breathe air is not a cultural phenomenon) and those determined by the social environment (the fact that members of the military salute each other when outdoors is a fact about military culture).

Even so, the range of human behaviors encompassed in this problem set is tremendous; everything ranging from where and what we eat to whom we respect to how we react to violence is at least partially a result of the influence of culture upon behavior. By necessity, this thesis will focus on those aspects of culture which are (1) most salient to national security issues, (2) have been relatively neglected in the security literature, and (3) are especially innovative or exciting. While I will discuss several aspects of culture, the thesis will dwell mostly upon the narrative and story-telling dimensions of

national security and culture, for reasons that will become obvious over the course of the discussion. Moreover, by dint of the author's background in terrorism and political violence, most of this thesis will focus on cultural issues most salient to formulating effective counter-terrorism, counter-insurgency, and management of violent social movement strategy. It would be a quixotic quest indeed to catalog the full array of possible interactions between the instruments of state power and human socially transmitted behaviors. Instead, the patient reader will have to settle for my admittedly eclectic selection of issues.

C.   METHODOLOGY

This thesis is driven by a combination of deductive and inductive methods. On the one hand, when there is independent reason to believe that a well-accepted theory has explanatory power for a particular phenomenon, providing inductive justification for the theory is otiose. It would be more useful instead to just apply the machinery of the theory to the domain in question to see if interesting results can be generated. On the other hand, these interesting results bear out first-pass empirical examination. Selected case studies, and references to longitudinal studies from other researchers which provide support for the derivation of the counter-intuitive result, will accomplish this goal. Since the causes of human behavior are myriad, so too will the disciplines which we bring to bear to understand those causes be. While this thesis is an exercise in political science, results from the contemporary cognitive sciences, neuroscience, social psychology, economics, political psychology, sociology and biology will be used often. Since the proximate cause of all non-reflex human behavior is the brain, the extant sciences of the mind will be especially important.

D.   PREVIEW

Chapter II of this thesis offers a theoretical backdrop for thinking of culture systematically. Culture ought to be treated as socially transmitted behavior. The mechanisms responsible for this transmission, and the behaviors which result, should be treated as an open system a la Ludwig von Bertalanffy: as consisting of parts which interact to realize certain functions, all the while exchanging matter and energy with their

surrounding environment. Treating culture systematically, in this technical sense of the term, will enable planners and strategists to ensure they neither ignore a critical part of the system of culture nor reify other less-well developed approaches to culture present in the literature. After setting up this theoretical scaffolding, chapter two uses a case study from 1920's Iraq both as proof of concept and to demonstrate empirically what can happen when military strategists fail to treat culture as a system, and hence fail to take it seriously.

Chapter III delves into much more detail about a particular aspect of the system of culture: those processes responsible for the formulation and promulgation of stories and narratives. Consideration of the narrative aspects of culture can shed light on multiple problem areas in contemporary security policy. The first half of the chapter offers a nascent theory of story: using Gustav Freytag's concept of the Freytag triangle, which leads to an exploration of how stories can influence such politically important concepts as identity, and how they can especially be used by terrorist organizations and groups for purposes ranging from recruitment of new members to the shoring up of stakeholder support. Using previous work accomplished by colleagues, the chapter briefly applies systems theory to terrorist organizational life-cycles. In addition, it offers a framework for thinking about the efficacy of stories: the neo-Aristotelian notion of ethos, logos and pathos. Finally, it discusses how these theoretic considerations could usefully lead to what James Russell and Troy Thomas have called "counter-narrative strategies," which are briefly outlined.

Chapter IV adds more cultural meat to the storytelling skeleton. It examines the evolution and development of Lebanon's *Hizballah* from the perspective of narrative theory, arguing that Hizballah has been hard at work developing surrogate consciousness on behalf of the Palestinian plight among Hizballah's core shia faithful, and that the process of storytelling has been critical in achieving this objective. This chapter briefly discusses what implications these developments might have for the future of Hizballah and the region.

Chapter V combines these tools into a new index which strategists interested in political violence can use to forecast and possibly even predict the emergence of violent

non-state actors and organizations. The At-Risk Group Identity Index (ARGI Index) also usefully highlights the nature of the risk which decision-makers face when confronting a violent social movement: they can be "fast burning" or "slow burning" depending upon where they fall in the two dimensional ARGI space. This has entailments for how their emergence can be prevented, and what can be done to control their ontogeny if they do arise nonetheless.

Finally, Chapter VI offers some final thoughts on what strategists can learn from taking the force and culture equation seriously. These include importing ecological thinking into counter-terrorism strategy, and otherwise being humble in some respects with regards to what can be accomplished, but quite hopeful in others. In addition to overarching principles for winning a culture change struggle, it discusses in some detail how the neurosciences might prove especially useful for helping us understand culturally important psychological phenomena in strategically important detail. The conclusion is cautiously hopeful: while we can't expect military force to be useful in many culture-change related circumstances, we can also see how force can usefully shape the environment so as to make some types of socially transmitted behavior more likely than others. Hopeful humility should frame our approach to the use of military force to shift culture. Understanding when the shift is possible and when it can only be influenced, and at least in the case of stories how culture and force interact to produce some changes rather than others, is critically important if we are to retain the moral high-ground when it comes to the appropriate application of military power.

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II.   TREATING CULTURE AS A SYSTEM: LESSONS FROM THE BRITISH ADMINISTRATION OF THE IRAQ MANDATE

A.   INTRODUCTION

The United States and its coalition partners have been militarily involved in Iraq since March 19, 2003, when Operation Iraqi Freedom I began. Three years later, Operation Iraqi Freedom I has ended, "major combat operations" have ceased, and Operation Iraqi Freedom II is now in full swing, with coalition forces attempting to stabilize the country until full sovereignty for Iraq becomes a practical reality. Aside from traditional generic concerns about nation-building, one could be forgiven for thinking that there would be relatively little that region-specific recent history might have to offer coalition forces as they confront a nascent Iraqi insurgency; but less than 80 years ago, America's closest coalition partner—Great Britain—had similar experiences in the same country during their governance of it as a mandate. British lessons from the 1920s—when Iraq was first founded—are more pertinent for us than ever. This chapter argues that British "lessons learned" can be summarized in one sentence: *during occupation and reconstruction, imperial powers must be sensitive to the fact that culture is a system.* If political realities are to shift and nations are to be built, or at least reconfigured, then we must take into account political and social mechanisms operative on the ground in the region we wish to influence.

To make this case, the chapter serves three purposes. First, it will briefly establish a theoretical framework for thinking about "culture as a system," moving beyond Talcott Parson's mid-twentieth century model to a more subtle biological *cum* psychological conception of cultural processes. Second, it will discuss two major accounts of British experiences with the Iraqi mandate—that of Toby Dodge in his 2003 opus *Inventing Iraq: The Failure of Nation Building and a History Denied* (New York: Columbia University Press), and that of Charles Tripp in his recently revised 2000 book *A History of Iraq* (New York: Cambridge University Press). It will focus in particular on Dodge's account of five factors the British failed to take into account, arguing that Dodge's concluding chapter does not do full justice to the lessons that actually follow from taking his theses seriously. This sets the stage for an examination of one critical

portion of culture—the narrative and storytelling aspects—in the next chapter, and also foreshadows some of the lessons learned from taking culture seriously discussed briefly in the concluding chapter.

B.   CULTURES AND SYSTEMS

What would it mean to treat culture as a system? To answer this question, we must have some idea of what 'culture' is and what 'systems' are. This is not merely a semantic matter, as both these terms are theory-laden to the hilt. Culture is often thought to refer to social practices that are peculiar to a region or people; for instance, it's part of American culture that we place our index finger against our thumb while saying "A-OK" in order to let someone know we approve of their actions, while in some parts of Southwest Asia the equivalent gesture is offensive as it is seen as an attempt to curse the recipient. On this (shallow) view, to understand another culture means things like "don't eat with your left hand" or "don't show the sole of your foot" when traveling in Iraq. However, culture consists of far more than customs and courtesies.[1] In this respect, the best working definition of culture uses Franz Boas as a starting point (Boas was an early twentieth century German cultural anthropologist)—"The system of shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviours, and artifacts that the members of society use to cope with their world and with one another, and that are transmitted from generation to generation through learning."[2]

This working definition highlights several important things about "culture." First, culture is something that is shared between people; second, culture is primarily psychological, or the material manifestation (such as produced artifacts) of psychological processes[3]; third, culture is essentially adaptive (it will almost always be useful to ask

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[1] I am not saying we should ignore these components of culture. On the contrary, they can in some contexts be critically important. As William Graham Sumner notes in *Folkways and Mores* (New York: Schocken, 1906), 3, culture results from "…the frequent repetition of petty acts."

[2] Daniel G. Bates and Fred Plog, *Cultural Anthropology, 2nd Edition* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1980), 7.

[3] I realize this goes against the grain of contemporary sociological thinking. So be it. An elaborate defense of the reducibility of sociological facts to facts about group and individual psychology is beyond the scope of this paper. An intuition that there is no such thing as "social aether" is all that is needed at this point. In many respects, my approach is like that of Durkheim's, but I explicitly reject any unjustified dualisms, preferring a token reduction of the sociological to the psychological.

"What is this for?" or "Why do they do this?"); and finally, culture is learned and transmitted through some process. These distinctions are important, especially for military planners.

The intensely social nature of culture will mean that one way to shift cultures is to enter into the social arena, and this will often require more people than would otherwise be the case (you can change the nature of a social entity by changing the amount of endogenously-inserted social creatures within it). The primacy of the psychological means that culture change will primarily (though not *only*, as we will discuss later) be a psychological operation. The adaptive nature of culture means that in the long run even if you are not able to change a culture internally, you may be able to get it to change by shifting the environment in which it evolves. Finally, since culture is learned (and not innate or genetically specified), that means it is part of an *open system*: with appropriate instruments, we can change the inputs and processes so that a different set of cultural norms, values and beliefs are output. *Ex hypothesi*, this is a good thing, as arguably Operation Iraqi Freedom is all about shifting a culture so that it embraces democracy and shuns extremist militancy (even if it is not a good thing, this framework is useful because it helps us understand why that would be the case).

The tools we can use to shift culture are myriad, although it is beyond the scope of this paper to examine them in any detail. Still, how cultures evolve *in generica* is useful to think about. Richerson and Boyd[4] discuss several mechanisms. *Random forces* include things like cultural mutation (e.g., someone misremembers an item of culture), cultural drift (effects caused by statistical anomalies in small populations; for example, if someone specializes in boat-building and that person dies owing to a chance event then the culture of boat building will disappear from that society). *Decision-driven forces* include guided variation (nonrandom changes driven by transformations in social learning), and biased transmission (such as direct bias, where individuals are more likely to remember or perform culture based on content; frequency-based bias, where

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4 Peter J. Richerson and Robert Boyd, *Not by Genes Alone: How Culture Transformed Human Evolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

commonness or rarity of a cultural variant influences choice; and model-based bias, where cultural traits are chosen based on who is exhibiting the trait).[5]

Now that we have some idea of what culture is and how it changes over time, we can discuss what it would mean to treat culture as an open system.[6]

Systems theory serves as the diagnostic model for culture. This approach, derived from the general systems theory of Ludwig von Bertalanffy, conceptualizes a system as an organized cohesive complex of elements standing in interaction. Interaction refers to two generalized patterns of behavior: 1) the relationships among the "complex elements," or subsystems of culture; and 2) the relationship between the complex whole of culture and its environment (the super-system). The former constitute the transformational processes of culture, telling us how culture is produced and changes, while the latter draws attention to the reality that cultures are open systems, continually exchanging information and energy with their surrounding environment.

As Thomas notes, "[a]s systems theory has matured, its benefits have been clarified. Thomas G. Cummings summarizes the positive "fallout" from systems thinking in his foundational book, *Systems Theory for Organizational Development*."[7] While Cummings is talking about how systems thinking has improved our ability to design and influence *organizations*, his thoughts apply equally well to *cultures*. Systems thinking 1) enables thinking about cultures at a higher level of abstraction; it requires thinking in terms of general characteristics rather than thinking about a particular organization or similarities between particular organizations; 2) transcends the branches of science; 3) provides a common language for understanding organizational phenomena; 4) enables thinking in relational terms rather than things, leading to a process oriented and contextual views of cultures; 5) stimulates holistic appreciation of whole properties of cultures; 6) leads to an appreciation for two kinds of meaning explanation, the first

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[5] There is so much of importance I'm omitting from this paragraph, including the symbolic nature of culture and its relationship to individual meaning. These are topics for future papers.

[6] The discussion in the next two paragraphs owes much to Troy Thomas's research for the Thomas and Casebeer Institute for National Security Studies Occasional Paper *Violent Systems* (Colorado Springs: Institute for National Security Studies, 2003). See it (available online at http://www.usafa.af.mil/df/inss/occasion.cfm) for references and citations. Last accessed, 20 March 2006.

[7] Thomas et al, 7.

being traditional deductive analysis derived for logic and the second being pattern analysis from the "gestalt processes of the human mind;" 7) and gives the potential for world defining by the culture itself (a critical part of meaning creation).[8] In organizational theory, the term diagnosis means to employ systems thinking to assess a target organization's condition so as to improve it; for our working theory of culture change, diagnosis will mean understanding cultures from that perspective for the purpose of influencing their development or changing them.

Talcott Parsons is perhaps the best-known proponent of the idea that we should treat culture (indeed, all of sociology) as a system, and his work has usefully informed this paper. Parson's work is of uncertain status today; the functionalism that informs it is out of favor in many circles.[9] Still, his work is important, and my intuition is that nascent fields such as evolutionary psychology and cognitive neurobiology will put the teleology back into thinking, and that there will be a neo-Parsonian renaissance as a result. Even so, systems thinking has advanced since Parson's time; it is now biological more than mechanical, with fewer deterministic assumptions and more respect for developmental issues and holistic concerns. To summarize: treating culture as a system involves identifying culture's relationships to the environment, discussing the inputs, transformative processes and outputs that result in shared beliefs and values in a society; culture is thus both a process and a product, a verb and a noun. The next portion of this chapter summarizes the results of Dodge's research into the British Iraqi Mandate using this terminology, beginning with an overview of the historical backdrop.

C.   BACKDROP: THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE COLLAPSES & BRITISH IMPERIAL POWER WANES

The League of Nations awarded Iraq to Britain as a mandate in 1920. To understand why this happened, we need to grasp the large-scale historical forces at work at the time. First, the Ottoman Empire was collapsing, and the power vacuum produced by this collapse was being filled by imperial and colonial powers such as England and

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[8] Thomas et al, 6–8.

[9] For an introduction, see chapter 5 of Malcom Waters, *Modern Sociological Theory* (London: Sage Publications, 1994). For pointed criticisms, see 176–187 of Trevor Noble, *Social Theory and Social Change* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000).

France. Great Britain was busy occupying former Ottoman territory in Mesopotamia, such as Basra (taken in November, 1914), Baghdad (captured in March, 1917), and Mosul (occupied in November, 1918); given its strategic importance as a land bridge between the Mediterranean and India, British interest in the region was understandable. While this may give the impression that European imperialism was waxing rather than waning, that is not the case. Second, European hegemony, under-girded by notions of cultural superiority, was in the decline. Woodrow Wilson's League of Nations was busy planning how to ensure stability in a world where imperial interests had otherwise provided form and structure to the international environment. The Mandate system was an expression of the waning power of Britain and France rather than a vindication of it.[10]

These two facts more than anything else shaped the early history of Iraq. No longer an Ottoman protectorate, nor a straight-forward British Imperial possession, the new Mandate of Iraq had to be shaped into a nation-state capable of independence from its nominal protector Great Britain, replete with all the capacities required for self-rule and sovereignty. The League charged Britain with the responsibility of ensuring this transition took place with a minimum of fuss. But owing to British failure to treat culture as a system, the transition was to be anything but smooth.

D.   DODGE ON BRITISH MISUNDERSTANDINGS

Dodge contends that five factors contributed to the British failure to successfully manage Iraq's transition to sovereignty. First, British administrators wore "conceptual blinders" regarding the nature of the Ottoman legacy in Mesopotamia; they romanticized 'untainted' and 'incorruptible' rural tribal leaders and vilified the 'sleazy' effendi and city-dwelling remnants of the Ottoman Empire. Second, and for related reasons, the British thought of Iraqi society as being deeply split between urban and rural populations, with the urban population unfairly stifling the agency of those living in the desert and countryside. Third, Britain misunderstood the role of the Shaikh in the region's culture, using this pre-modern figure as a channel for Herbert Simon-style bureaucratic *cum* rational administrative methods when they should have chosen other actors. Fourth, the British misunderstood the "social meaning of land" by implementing European-style land

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[10] Summary ideas taken primarily from Dodge's opening chapter.

tenure, elevating the Shaikh/Tribe over the Mallak/Sarkal, which backfired given the shaikh's tenuous political authority. Finally, British use of airpower reinforced Iraqi perceptions that the British were despots, undermining their ability to influence the culture.[11] I'll discuss each of these in turn in more detail, contrasting Tripp's take on events when it differs from Dodge's interpretation.

Dodge's first point boils down to the familiar objection that the British were in the grip of Orientalist delusions about the nature of Ottoman rule. Stereotypes were reinforced by the lack of empirically grounded knowledge about Ottoman governing structures. Two central stereotypes were: first, that the Ottoman Empire was superstitious, violent and corrupt; and second, that Iraq was fundamentally divided between tainted urbanites and Ottoman administrators and pure uncorrupted country-folk (the second is discussed more in the next section). As a result, the British thought of themselves as clearing away a "bad" Ottoman administrative apparatus so that a "good" British one could be put in place.

The literature of the time from those involved in British administration reinforced this impression. Consider British administrator–scholar Stephen Longrigg's statements in his book, written while serving in the British Expeditionary Force in the country: over 400 years of stagnant Ottoman rule, Iraq had changed little; the Ottomans had let the Iraqi people down in every respect, forsaking their "essential duties," failing to secure liberty and rights for the "…governed (however backward)".[12] This misimpression did great harm to Britain's ability to staff the revamped nascent Iraqi administration, as most of those who were educated enough to run the institutions had in fact been trained by the Ottomans, and it also reinforced the other factors Dodge discusses as complicating Britain's situation.[13]

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[11] This final point could be the basis for an entire book, supremely relevant to contemporary Air Force planners in Iraq.

[12] Paraphrased from Dodge, 47.

[13] Tripp's discussion of the British Mandate in chapter two of his book is curiously devoid of any references to Orientalism or British attitudes (the word "orientalism" does not even appear in the index). There are a few passing references to British condescension towards Iraqi ability to self-govern, but aside from this there's no substance along which to compare Tripp and Dodge on this axis. Of course, this is in itself telling.

The second factor influencing Britain's ability to manage Iraq is closely related to the first. The British tended to treat Iraqi citizens as immature children (indeed, Gertrude Bell wrote in 1907 that "The Oriental is like a very old child…")[14]. Those who were capable of self-rule were, unfortunately, already corrupted by the Ottoman influence. This made it easy for Great Britain to marginalize the opinions of the Iraqi public and to paint native administrators as being licentious overly sensual creatures. The demonization of rural centers and the elevation of rural leaders oversimplified the political culture of Iraq, making tribes the monolithic and dominant entity when in fact they were not.

This led to the third factor contributing to British difficulties: their choice of the "strategic Shaikh" (original thesis verbiage) as the critical lever of political power. The British misconstrued the role that tribal shaikh's played in Iraqi life. A shaikh's community was fuzzy and oft-times ill defined, and the "shallow foundations" of a shaikh's power sometimes became all too visible when the British attempted to overlay a rational-bureaucratic form of social organization onto this organic community.[15]

Tripp's take on Britain's use of tribal shaikhs is not as explicitly critical. He implies only indirectly that the British attempt to use shaikhs as power-laden intermediaries changed the shaikhs motivations.[16] Tripp argues that the spread of the 1920 revolt against the British was fueled in part by how local leaders though British policies were influencing their power (as would be expected, tribal sheikhs in places like Kut and 'Amara did *not* join the revolt, while the marginalized urban Sunni notables actively encouraged it), which is indirect evidence for some of Dodge's points.[17]

Directly related to Britain's "bureaucratization" of shaikh power was their misunderstanding of the social meaning of land (Dodge's fourth factor). Managing land ownership and taxation is a critical part of nation-building, so it's no wonder that a British misapprehension here would have problematic consequences. In order to make taxation rational, all land parcels had to be divided up and assigned to individuals or

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[14] Dodge, 64.

[15] Ibid., 87.

[16] See the discussion on p. 42 of Tripp.

[17] Tripp, 44.

institutions (this was how it became possible to know from whom to collect revenue). In the pre-colonial world, communal ownership, or flexible seasonal occupation, were usually the norm; "…individual ownership was often an alien concept."[18] In order to correct this shortcoming in efficiency to ensure that land was both owned by someone and farmed efficiently by them, the British Mandate staff had to choose between two approaches: focusing on the role of the shaikh or focusing on the role of the *sarkal*. The former was seen as reinforcing communal bonds, whereas leveraging the sarkal (the sarkal was the tenant or foreman in charge of organizing farming operations; he worked for the *mallak*, or landlord, who had the right to demand *mallakiyah*, or rent)[19]. Since the British had already thrown their governance lot in with the sheikhs, it was only logical they would do so again when it came time for land reform. This was, ultimately, a *political* call on the part of the British—it would have been more efficient to collect taxes from the mallaks and sarkals than from other intermediaries.

Some British figures pointed out that it was an error to assume so much power and responsibility devolved to the shaikh or tribal figurehead (see, e.g., Major S. E. Hedgcock's concerns, discussed on p. 115 of Dodge). But this did not stop the overall thrust of British policy from remaining shaikh-centered; for this reason (as Dodge elaborates during his discussion of the unrest in Muntafiq), the British did "ontological violence to Iraqi society."[20] What's worse, tax collection policy was rendered inefficient, which hindered the establishment of a capable Iraqi state. As a result, British imperial power manifested itself most starkly in the form of airpower.

This is the fifth major factor Dodge considers: the use of British airpower to impose order and enforce the collection of land taxes led to the perception of British Mandate officials as being despotic in their use of force. Rather than being seen as paternalistic, British instruments of state power were perceived as being despotic and indiscriminant. The "cost free" nature of bombing, surveillance from the air, and air "triumphalism" (all of which led to the RAF taking responsibility for order in all of Iraq in October 1922) contributed to Iraqi perceptions of the British as being the new

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[18] Dodge, 105.

[19] Ibid., 109.

[20] Ibid., 129.

imperialists rather than old friends.[21]   Interestingly, when Tripp discusses airpower he does so not in the context of despotism, but rather by noting that ex-Ottoman officials viewed airpower as being of little use without "boots on the ground"; this informed debates about the necessity of conscription in the new Iraqi state.[22]

Ultimately, airpower, while authoritative, was despotic; it needed a political intermediary on the ground in order to be effective, and Britain's chosen intermediary of the shaikh was not up to the task for the reasons already discussed.

The British shortcomings Dodge discusses directly contributed to the multiple revolts and insurgencies faced by Great Britain during the mandate period (see pp. 31 – 37 in Tripp for an effective summary; as we are pressed for space, this chapter will not discuss in detail the chronology of revolts and insurgencies), reaching its peak in 1920, and spending itself in Shaikh Ahmad of Barzan's revolt in 1931 and 1932. Are there lessons the U.S. can learn from the British Mandate experience and their dealings with insurgency and revolt?

Dodge himself argues in his (useful but all too brief) concluding chapter that we need to focus more on the development of trust in Iraqi civil society, that we need better intelligence, and that we should have a better grasp of the structure of Iraqi society. All these recommendations are sensible; however, treating culture—and insurgency—as a system actually leads to recommendations that are more *broad-reaching* than these. The final chapter of this thesis briefly discusses what follows from treating insurgencies and violent movements from a systems perspective so as to add fuel to Dodge's fire. For now, however, we have accomplished our limited aims of articulating a workable theory of culture that reduces it to socially transmitted behavior, analyzed using an open systems theory backbone. Via the use of a historical case study—British administration of Iraq during the mandate period—using two recent histories we were able to find evidence that many of the troubles encountered by Great Britain were driven by their failure to treat culture systematically and seriously. The next chapter expands in more detail upon one particular aspect of culture that deserves great attention: the processes responsible for

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[21] Dodge, 147–149.

[22] Tripp, 61.

shaping and producing the narratives and stories which can in turn serve the purposes of organizations committed to the use of indiscriminant violence for resolving political problems.

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III. CULTURE AND STORIES: TOWARDS A COUNTER-NARRATIVE STRATEGY

A.   SETTING THE STAGE

According to the current US National Security Strategy, the Global War on Terror is our number one security priority.[23] While billions have been spent prosecuting some aspects of this war (for example, by attacking state sponsors of terrorism), other aspects have been neglected. This chapter argues that grand counter-terrorism strategy would benefit from a comprehensive consideration of the stories terrorists tell; understanding the narratives which influence the genesis, growth, maturation and transformation of terrorist organizations will enable us to better fashion a strategy for undermining the efficacy of those narratives so as to deter, disrupt and defeat terrorist groups. Such a "counter-narrative strategy" will have multiple components with layered asynchronous effects; while effective counter-stories will be difficult to coordinate and will involve multiple agents of action, their formulation is a necessary part of any comprehensive counter-terrorism effort. Indeed, a failure on our part to come to grips with the narrative dimensions of the war on terrorism, and with the larger concept of culture of which it is a part, is a weakness already exploited by groups such as Al Qaeda; we can fully expect any adaptive adversary to act quickly to fill story gaps and exploit weaknesses in our narrative so as to ensure continued survival. More than giving us another tool with which to confront terrorism, though, narrative considerations also allow us to better deal in general with the emerging security threat of violent non-state actors and armed groups. A critical portion of the system responsible for the production and replication of socially transmitted behaviors will be that which deals with narratives and stories.

Justifying the need for and exploring the components of a counter-narrative strategy is a task for a book; this chapter briefly sketches only the basics, discussing: (1) the psychological aspects of counter-terrorism and why stories will play a critical role in the ecosystem of violence, (2) the essential components of a story, (2) a typology of narratives offered by nascent terrorist groups throughout their development, (3) a simple

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[23] See the most recent version, released March 16 2006, and available here:
http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/03/20060316.html. Last accessed, 20 March 2006.

Aristotelian rhetorical model for evaluating story success, (4) principles to guide the formulation of counter-narratives, and (5) complications and provisos, as well as a consideration of the institutional implications of our position. This summary is intended to provoke thought about new counter-terrorism tools.

Why think that storytelling has anything to do with terrorism and counter-terrorism? Consider the ineliminable psychological aspects of terrorism: there are multiple reasons why people choose to form or join organizations which use indiscriminant violence as a tactic to achieve their political objectives, all of them dealing at some point with *human psychology*. People feel alienated from their surroundings; they are denied political opportunity by the state; the state fails to provide basic necessities; they identify with those who advocate the use of violence; they are angered by excessive state force against political opponents; their essential needs are not being met; they feel deprived relative to peer groups elsewhere; and so on. These have all been offered as "root causes" of contentious politics in general, and terrorism in particular. My purpose here is not to defend any particular position about root causes, but instead merely to point out that all these causes have a proximate psychological mechanism—they exert influence by affecting the human mind/brain. If stories are part and parcel of human cognition, we would also then expect consequently that stories might affect how these causes play out to germinate, grow and sustain terrorism.

B.   WHAT IS IN A STORY?

Discussion of stories and narratives is hampered by the fact that there is no widely accepted definition regarding just what a story is. Indeed, an entire school of thought in literary criticism ("post modernism") is predicated on the fact that there is no such thing as a necessary and sufficient list of conditions a piece of text must meet so as to be a story (be it verbal, written, merely thought in the mind of a target audience, etc.). We can agree with the postmodernists that defining "story" is difficult without thinking, however, that the concept plays *no* useful purpose. In that sense, the concept "story" is like the concept "game"—there is no list of necessary and sufficient conditions for what it is to be a game, but that does not mean the concept is useless, or that there cannot be "family resemblances" between games that it would be useful to consider.

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A good beginning, then, at a theory of stories comes from the nineteenth century German writer Gustav Freytag. Freytag believed that narratives followed a general pattern: there was some beginning, a problem presents itself that leads to a climax, which resolves itself into an ending. A coherent unified story could thus be as short as three sentences (consisting of setup, climax, resolution), such as "John was hungry. He went to the store and bought a sandwich. It was delicious." Of course, this *particular* story is not very interesting or compelling, but it nonetheless *is* a coherent narrative. This "Freytag Triangle," depicted below, captures the general structure of a story:
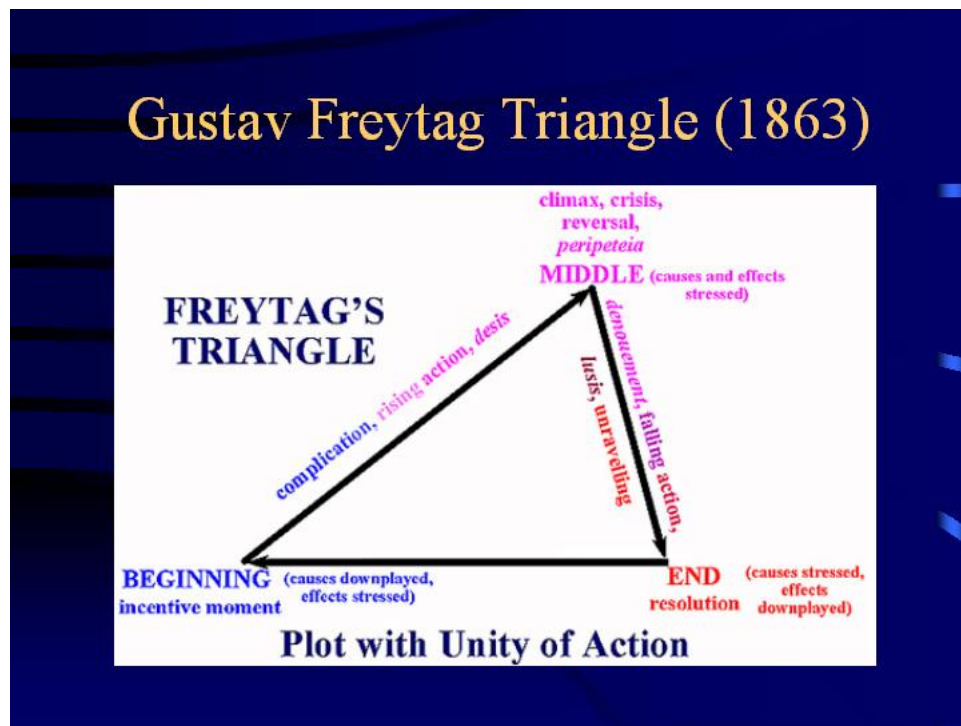
Figure 1.   The Freytag Triangle[24]

Contemporary literary theorist Patrick Hogan amplifies on the basic Freytag structure, pointing out that most plots involve an <u>agent</u> (normally, a *hero* or protagonist) striving to achieve some <u>goal</u> (usually despite the machinations of an antagonist, or *villain*)--there is a person (or group of persons) and a series of events driven by their

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[24]See Barbara McManus, a teacher of literary theory, at her website about Freytag for more detail http://www.cnr.edu/home/bmcmanus/freytag.html. Last accessed, 20 March 2006. I am indebted to Dr. McManus for allowing me to use her Freytag Triangle graphic.

attempts to achieve some objective. This familiar analysis is supported by the study of mythology (recall Joseph Campbell's analysis of the structure of most famous legends from antiquity, which involve striving on the part of a hero, a test of some kind, and a return to the point of departure with new knowledge and greater self-understanding), and by consideration of most forms of story telling, be they oral, written, traditional, or contemporary.[25],[26]

C.   STORIES AND HUMAN PSYCHOLOGY

Using this working "theory of story," we can gain insight into why stories are so important for structuring human thought. First, note that stories often are rich in metaphors and analogies; metaphors, in turn, affect our most basic attitudes toward the world. For example, suppose we think of "Islamic fundamentalism" as a disease; a simple narrative about fundamentalist Islam might be: "We want world communities to respect human rights. Fundamentalist Muslims disrespect some of those rights. We can prevent them from doing more harm by taking action now." This implies a whole series of things which 'ought' to be done in reaction to fundamentalism (combat its spread, focus on this "public health problem" by inoculating people against it, consider those who try to spread it as 'evil agents up to no good'—or at the very least, as modern day "Typhoid Marys," etc.).[27]

Reasoning by metaphor and analogy, a research program explored by Mark Johnson, George Lakoff, Giles Fauconnier, and Mark Turner, argues that our most complex mental tasks are usually carried out not by the "classical mechanics" of rational actor theory (where stories really have no place, or are, at least relegated to the background), but rather by a set of analogy making and metaphor mapping abilities that

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[25] See Patrick Colm Hogan, *The Mind and Its Stories: Narrative Universals and Human Emotion* (Cambridge University Press, 2003).

[26] For an interesting (and extremely controversial) take on the role of narrative in "The Arab Mind," see Raphael Patai's book of the same name (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1983, revised edition).

[27] Again, I don't think the contagion metaphor is necessarily appropriate, even for morally objectionable forms of fundamentalist Islam. But compare some of the rhetoric from Daniel Pipes on his website (http://www.danielpipes.org/ Last accessed, 20 March 2006). For interesting responses to this rhetoric, see any of the essays from *The New Crusades: Constructing the Muslim Enemy*, edited by Emran Qureshi and Michal A. Sells (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).

form the core of human cognition.[28]   Exploration into the "story-telling mind" is a research program that combines metaphor and analogy into an examination of the powerful grip narrative has on human cognition; narratives can restructure our mental spaces in ways that profoundly affect our reasoning ability and, ultimately, what we make of the world. Think of the grip that the "Jihad versus McWorld"[29] narrative has on Al Qaeda and how this affects the way they think about the future.[30] As Mark Turner notes, "Story is a basic principle of mind. Most of our experience, our knowledge, and our thinking is organized as stories."[31]

But even if making stories foundational to thought seems a stretch, there's *ample* evidence that stories influence our ability to recall events, motivate people to act, modulate our emotional reactions to events, cue certain heuristics and biases, structure our problem-solving capabilities, and ultimately perhaps even constitute our very identity.[32]   Any of these aspects of narrative would be fascinating and important to examine in detail.

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[28] Classic works here include George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), Dedre Gentner, Keith Holyoak, and Boicho Kokinov, *The Analogical Mind: Perspectives from Cognitive Science* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2001), and Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner, *The Way We Think: Conceptual Blending and the Mind's Hidden Complexities* (New York: Basic Books, 2002).

[29] This is the structuring metaphor of Benjamin Barber's "clash of the world views" book *Jihad vs. McWorld: How Globalism and Tribalism Are Reshaping the World* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1996). See also Huntington's (in?)famous *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (Simon and Schuster, 1998).

[30] See Fauconnier and Turner, or Turner's *The Literary Mind* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

[31] Turner, 1. See also groundbreaking work here by Anthony Patton, unpublished manuscript, *The World as Story*, 2002.

[32] See, e.g., Alicia Juarero, *Dynamics in Action* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), Thomas, Casebeer and Kiser, *Warlords Rising: Confronting Violent Non-State Actors* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2005) or Thomas and Casebeer, *Violent Systems* (INSS Occasional Paper, 2003), Graesser, A. C., & Nakamura, G. V. (1982), "The impact of a schema on comprehension and memory." in H. Bower (Ed.), *The Psychology of Learning and Motivation*, 16, 59–109 (Academic Press, 1990), Maybel Chau-Ping Wong, "The effects of story schemata on narrative recall," available online at (Last accessed, 20 March 2006) https://repository.ust.hk/dspace/handle/1783.1/1337 (2004) and Daniel Dennett, "The Self as Center of Narrative Gravity," available online at http://ase.tufts.edu/cogstud/papers/selfctr.htm (1992).

Now that we have a basic understanding of what narratives are, and have reason to believe they are influential in acts of human cognition salient to terrorist group formation, we can examine the role stories play across the life cycle of terrorist organizations.

D.   NARRATIVES AND TERRORIST ORGANIZATION LIFE CYCLES

Terrorist organizations have life cycles. They have a genesis point, they grow, reach maturity, and eventually transform (by dying, being co-opted by the state, morphing into a peaceful non-state actor, etc.). As Thomas and Casebeer[33] have pointed out, different organizational structures will develop during this life-cycle, with some being more important than others depending on where the organization is in its development; as Martha Crenshaw has noted, during maturity terrorist organizations will develop survival as a goal, and this organizational consideration can help us understand why they take some of the actions they do. The life cycle concept follows naturally from thinking of the conditions which give rise to terrorism: there is an environment conducive to the formation of violent non-state actors (VNSA hereafter). These environments are typified by failures in governance, pre-existing identity cleavages, resource scarcity and deprivation, and lack of political opportunity. When these "push" factors result in the genesis of a potential VNSA (usually at the behest of a foundational "identity entrepreneur"), the stage is set for the growth and maturation of a nascent organization. At maturity, a VNSA will have developed a suite of functions it must implement if it is to maintain its existence as an organization; these include 'support' (get resources, cultivate stakeholder relations, etc.), 'maintenance' (sanctioning defectors from the organization, rewarding loyal service, etc.), 'cognitive' (planning, learning and control, etc.) and 'conversion' (production of terrorist acts, provision of social services to the community, etc.) processes. A mature organization that is functioning well will have smooth "fit" between these processes (this is called "congruence") and will also have 'stores of fat' waiting in the wings in case the inputs from the environment turn sour or can no longer

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[33] See their "Strategic Insights" here (Last accessed, 20 March 2006) (http://www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/si/2004/mar/casebeerMar04.asp) and here (http://www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/si/dec02/terrorism2.asp), as well as their Institute for National Security Studies Occasional Paper "Violent Systems," available here (http://www.usafa.af.mil/inss/occasion.htm).

support the organization (these stores constitute what is called "negative entropy"). The following schematic summarizes this understanding:
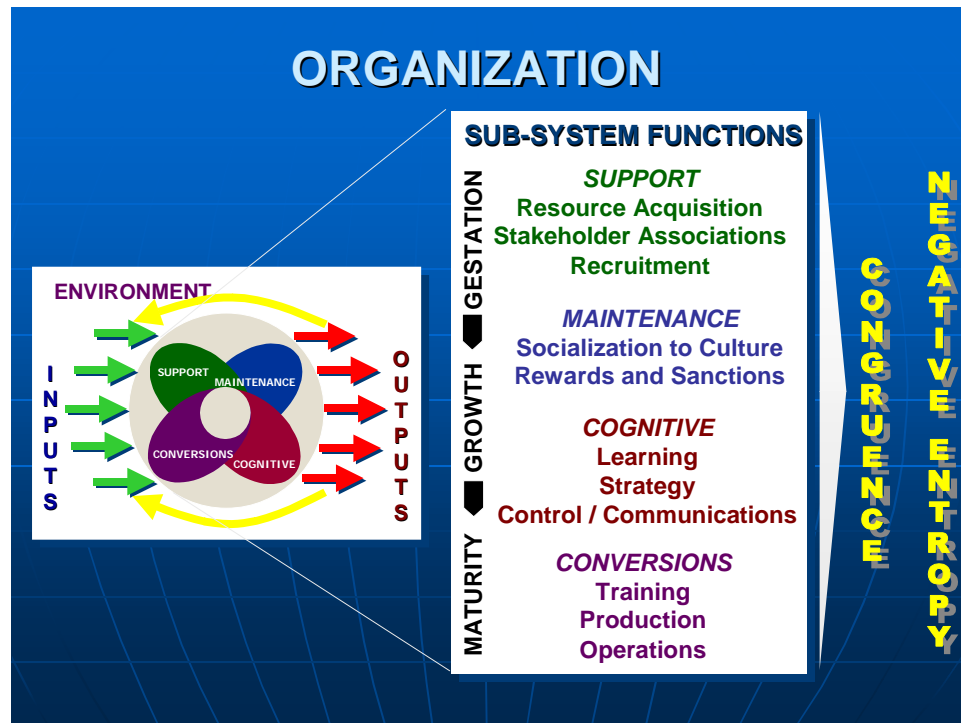
Figure 2.   Sub-System Functions in a Terrorist Organization

For present purposes, it is important to note the multiple critical roles narratives play throughout this life cycle. During genesis/gestation, stories (1) provide *incentives for recruitment*, particularly by providing justice frames which serve to mobilize discontent, (2) help *justify the need* for an organization to the community in which it will be embedded, and to first-round stakeholders, (3) *reinforce pre-existing identities* friendly to the nascent organization, (4) *create necessary identities* where none exist, (5) *set the stage for further growth* of the organization, (6) *solidify founding members into leadership* roles, and (7) *define the possible space of actions* as the organization blossoms.

During growth, narratives do all this and also (1) *reinforce role-specific obligations* so as to ensure group members continue to accomplish their functions, (2) *provide "fire walls"* against attempts to discredit foundational myths, (3) *articulate*

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ideological niches for the organization, and (4) *make salient to organization members the environmental conditions* conducive to organizational growth.

During maturity, in addition, stories will (1) be *linked into the command and control system* of the organization for tweaking and updating, (2) *serve as insulation* against environmental change, (3) *actively support operations* by motivating organizational members and channeling organizational thought down pre-set canals useful for the group, (4) *be used as "top cover"* to allow the organization to adapt, change goals, or otherwise modify structure and function so as to ensure continued survival.

During transformation, narratives will (1) *smooth the transition* to new organizational forms, (2) help *ease the organization into a different set of stakeholder relationships*, (3) provide the *foundation for the revivified identities* which will be used in whatever new form the organization adopts, and (4) serve to *demobilize* those portions of the organization which have served their purpose or are no longer needed.

These purposes deserve elaboration. No doubt empirical examples come to mind for many of them. A thorough defense would require inductive justification, but for now intuitive plausibility must do.

E.   A NARRATIVE TYPOLOGY

While the diversity of purposes served by stories in terrorist organizations makes a typology of stories difficult, there are still useful camps into which the stories can be grouped. For instance, foundational myths can be *transactional* or *transcendental*. Transactional/pragmatic foundational myths emphasize transactional or instrumental considerations: if you join our terrorist organization, our use of violence will enable you to achieve certain materially realizable individual and collective goals (together we will make money; together we will found a new state; together we will change an unjust practice). Transcendental foundational myths emphasize otherworldly goals that it is not plausible to expect to see realized or that reject worldly manifestation altogether (together we will find paradise in God's bosom, together we will convert every soul in the world to

scientology). Both can be used in concert, of course. Al Qaeda's foundational myth involves elements of both: transactional pragmatic goals and transcendental religious goals.

What is the basic structure of some of these stories and narratives? In his paper "Terror's Mask: Insurgency Within Islam," political scientist Michael Vlahos identifies four elements of Al Qaeda-style narrative tropes: (1) a heroic journey and a mythic figure, (2) the rhythm of history captured as epic struggle and story, (3) the commanded charge of renewal, and (4) history revealed through and enjoined through mystic literary form.[34]

According to Vlahos, the foundational mythic figure for Islam is (of course) Muhammad. Bin Laden, then, taps into this theme when he portrays himself as following in the footsteps of Muhammad; he too is making a heroic journey, struggling against great odds, in a way that makes him almost as mythic in stature (and hence all the posters and stickers praising him in places like Pakistan or Afghanistan). Part of the reason why he is mythic is because of the second element: bin Laden argues that he is part of a grand struggle against Western imperialism and decadence. His actions are part of a *story* that is linked to the very fabric of Muslim history (and given the fact that this history was in actual fact laced with Orientialism and colonialism, it's no surprise that charges of *neo*-Orientalism and *neo*-colonialism stick so easily). The third aspect of the story is important: it is only by struggling against these dark forces that one can be *renewed*. To fail to struggle is to *fail* to play your part in a narrative that ends with Islam triumphing over the infidel West. Finally, owing to the fourth element, the story contains built in "insulation" from temporary tactical successes on the part of occupying forces: the mystical element of the narrative (especially its otherworldly component involving things like rewards in the afterlife's paradise) means that temporal success won't necessarily 'defuse' the logic of the story…resistance can and should continue even if the security

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[34] Occasional paper, Joint Warfare Analysis Department, Applied Physics Laboratory, Johns Hopkins University, May 2002. Available online (Last accessed, 20 March 2006) at http://www.oss.net/dynamaster/file_archive/040429/50b2e2a45cf24e5cd381ca9033eace97/Terror%20s%20 Mask%20-%20Insurgency%20within%20Islam%20-%20Michael%20Vlahos%20(JHU-APL%20May%202002).pdf. Again, note the similarity to parts of Campbell's corpus.

situation improves in the short term (although brute facts about human psychology may undermine the effectiveness of that story in the long run in the face of improvements in the procurement of basic needs).

Closely related to Vlahos's ideas about the essential elements of the Islamic fundamentalist narrative is sociologist Mark Juergensmeyer's theory of "cosmic war."[35] Juergensmeyer suggests that religious tropes are more likely to play a narrative role if the confrontation between two groups can be characterized as a cosmic struggle or battle. This is most likely in the following circumstances:

1. If the struggle is perceived as a defense of basic identity and dignity.

2. If losing the struggle would be unthinkable.

3. If the struggle is "blocked" and cannot be won in real time or in real terms.[36]

To amplify: in cases where the struggle is over extremely basic questions of identity and where basic human rights are at stake; if losing the struggle seems Armageddon-like (e.g., you would tell a *very* bad story if your resistance failed); and if the struggle is perceived as being hopeless in concrete terms (e.g., it is impossible to see how we could beat the occupiers using traditional "force-on-force" confrontations), then it is very likely that the struggle can more easily be framed in religious and robustly metaphysical terms as a "cosmic" struggle, in which case recruitment into organizations becomes easier for certain target populations (those predisposed to accept transcendental foundational myths).

There are no doubt multiple narrative structures at play in terrorism, but hopefully this brief survey has motivated the idea that breaking them up into different types can help us better understand how we can render inert the role they play in terrorist organizational growth. How do we go about countering these stories?

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[35] Critically, this is one of the characterizations of Islam that Qureshi and Sells object to in the first essay in their edited collection.

[36] See especially chapter eight of his *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence, 3rd Edition* (University of California Press, 2003).

F.   COUNTER-NARRATIVE STRATEGIES

To address this practical question, we will first discuss counter-narrative strategies in generic terms, and then offer guidance that is more concrete. Important generic principles for counter-narrative strategy will include: competing myth creation, foundational myth deconstruction, creation of alternative exemplars, metaphor shifts, identity gerrymandering, and structural disruption.

Myth creation involves the weaving together of the narrative elements of a story with facts about past and present situations to create an emotionally compelling background that very often directly influences the susceptibility of a population to manipulation by "myth mongers." The fanatical devotion shown by al Qaeda operatives stems in large part not from any rational deliberative process but rather from the success Osama bin Laden and others have had in fashioning a coherent and appealing foundational myth. The events of September 11 can be thought of as the punch line of a chapter in an epic that sets "the warriors of God" against an "infidel West." This myth did not propagate itself via rational actor channels, but instead was indoctrinated via a multi pronged effort on the part of fundamentalist strains of Islam (such as Saudi Arabia's Wahhabis). Successful myth creation may very well leverage heuristics and biases cognitive scientists tell us are present in human cognition; they certainly takes advantage of the availability heuristic, as this heuristic probably undergirds human propensity to form stereotypes.

Myth creation usually involves the effective use of narrative. As we formulate an "affective strategy," we should keep the elements of a narrative in mind, for it is only by disrupting the story that you can interfere with myth creation. Good stories need protagonists, antagonists, tests for the protagonist, a promise of redemption, and a supporting cast of characters (at the very least). Disrupting al Qaeda's foundational myth may involve undermining the belief that we are the antagonists in the narrative bin Laden is constructing. Therefore, either we can undermine the foundational myth being used to drive VNSA development, or we can construct an alternative myth that is a "better story" than the one being offered by the myth mongers. Examples of myth creation in action in fiction include the stories told by the rulers of Plato's ideal city (the "Republic") that

were designed to motivate members of the different classes,[37] and in fact the foundational myths that supported the violent actions of *both* the Hutus and the Tutsis during the Rwandan massacres of 1994.[38]

For a more benign example, consider the conscious mythmaking that has taken place in Israel, such as the "transformation of the 1920 defense of a new Jewish settlement in Tel Hai into a national myth," turning a defeat into a symbol of national revival.[39]

Closely related to myth making is the strategy of creating alternative exemplars. Members of an at risk population often become at risk because of a failure to identify with a member of a *non violent* non state actor or a member of the *government or occupying power*. VNSA "identity entrepreneurs" can exploit existing ethnic, racial, economic, or social political differences by elevating someone who shares the same characteristics as the exploited class to a position of prestige or power. Members of the at risk group then come to identify with that exemplar and may feel compelled to adopt the violent strategies advocated by the exemplar's VNSA. Creating alternative exemplars that share the salient characteristics who nonetheless do *not* advocate violence or who can show the way towards a non-violent solution to the issues that are fueling VNSA emergence can go a long way towards interrupting the VNSA life cycle. Alternative exemplar creation may involve symbolic acts on the part of the government that tap those elements of "hot" emotion-laden cognition and heuristics and biases mentioned earlier. An example of the alternative exemplar creation strategy in action is the praise and warm endorsement heaped upon John Garang, the leader of the Sudanese guerrilla faction of the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA), during his visit to Washington just before

[37] See Book Four of Plato's *Republic* (translated by Robin Waterfield, New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

[38] For more about these myths, see Ryszard Kapuscinski's *The Shadow of the Sun* (New York: Vintage Books, 2001). Owing to the (mostly fabricated!) "early history" of the region, the Tutsis were viewed as being pastoral patrons (read: rulers) who preside over their clients (read: slaves), the Hutu agriculturalists. Under colonial rule by both the Germans and the Belgians, this foundational myth was reinforced, with separate identity cards being issued for both peoples. The Belgians even went so far as to argue that the Tutsi were, racially speaking, more closely related to white people, and were hence a superior race, putting in place a quite different but nonetheless related foundational myth. Needless to say, these myths played a large part in the violence that erupted in 1994. For more, see the report from "Africa Action" on the world wide web: http://www.africaaction.org/bp/ethcen.htm. Last accessed, 20 March 2006

[39] See Yael Zerubavel's *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition* (Chicago, the University of Chicago Press, 1995). Quoted text is from the back cover.

Christmas of 1995; such endorsement was critical for the recruitment and logistics boost the SPLA received that enabled Garang's forces to recapture crucial cities in southern Sudan soon thereafter.[40]   In this case, we encouraged the growth of a VNSA by cultivating an exemplar saliently different from the leaders of the Sudanese regime.

An alternate affective strategy includes fomenting a metaphor shift that affects the way in which at risk populations or members of a VNSA frame their actions. Given the power of metaphor to shape human thought, it should come as no surprise that shifting metaphors people use to frame worldviews and guide decisions could cause a change in their reasoning about the situation. For example, to convince someone that "cluster of cells" is a more appropriate metaphor for an unborn embryo than "young human" may very well change their stand on the issue of abortion.[41]   Shifting metaphors requires making connections between the way people presently view a situation or issue and the way you would like them to frame the situation or issue.[42] The common refrain, "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter," is a simple example of metaphor shift; if you can make the charge of "you are not a freedom fighter" (or "you are not actually crusading on behalf of true Muslims") stick, you go a long way toward defusing certain narratives.[43] Even the patriotic revolutionaries participating in the Boston Tea Party were viewed as criminals and dangerous insurrectionists by many of their fellow colonialists.

Manipulation (nothing necessarily nefarious is meant by this term…ethical issues in counter-narrative strategy are another fascinating topic altogether) of existing identities (be they national, tribal, ethnic, etc.) is yet another affective strategy.[44]   This does not

[40] See Bill Berkeley, *The Graves are Not Yet Full: Race, Tribe and Power in the Heart of Africa* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 224–225.

[41] See Paul Churchland's "Toward a Cognitive Neurobiology of the Moral Virtues*"* (as reprinted in Branquinho's (ed.) *The Foundations of Cognitive Science* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001)). See also William Casebeer's "Moral Cognition and its Neural Constituents" (Nature Reviews Neuroscience 4, 2003) and chapter five of William Casebeer, *Natural Ethical Facts: Evolution, Connectionism, and Moral Cognition* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003).

[42] See Fauconnier and Turner for more advice here regarding how to enable these "frame shifts."

[43] Consider, for instance, the conceptual shift that occurs in members of the Israeli army when they start thinking about Palestinian teenagers as being an enemy rather than a peer. See chapter 5 of Eyal Ben-Ari's *Mastering Soldiers: Conflict, Emotions, and the Enemy in an Israeli Military Unit* (New York, Berghahn Books, 1998).

[44] Daniel Byman has an excellent discussion of this process in his book *Keeping the Peace: Lasting Solutions to Ethnic Conflicts* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 100–124.

necessarily require creating new foundational myths or alternate exemplars; instead, skillful use of existing cleavages can decrease a VNSA's stock of negative entropy. This is the "flip side" of the identity entrepreneur's efforts that are often part of the genesis and growth of VNSA. For example, the Masaai warriors in Tanzania have skillfully manipulated existing identity cleavages so as to elevate the *warrior* aspect of Masaai culture over other aspects (*pastoral herder* or *Tanzanian citizen*). This involved the creation of camps for young Masaai; following their circumcision ritual, Masaai males attend the camp, learn compelling stories, and become engaged in foundational myths about ancient Masaai warriors while cultivating their hunting and combat skills. The Tanzanian government, if it wished, could exploit *other* aspects of Masaai history, including the fact that their lineage includes an important pastoral element, so as to de-emphasize the violent aspects of Masaai culture to ensure they remain a peaceful non-state actor.[45]

For an Islamic example, consider Bassam Tibi's position that moderate members of the Islamic faith (especially Sufis) could best confront malignant forms of fundamentalism by emphasizing strands in Islamic narrative history that highlight very different exemplars. As he says:

> …I am a Sufi, but in my mind I subscribe to *aql*/reason, and in this I follow the Islamic rationalism of *Ibn Rushd*/Averroes. Moreover, I read Islamic scripture, as any other, in the light of history, a practice I learned from the work of the great Islamic philosopher of history *Ibn Khaldun*. The Islamic source most pertinent to [my] intellectual framework is the ideal of *al-madina al-fadila*/the perfect state, as outlined in the great thought of the Islamic political philosopher *al-Farabi*. *Al-Farabi*'s "perfect state" has a rational, that is, secular order and is best administered by a reason-oriented philosopher…A combination of these Islamic sources, the Sufi love of *Ibn 'Arabi*, the reason-based orientation of *Ibn Rushd*, the historicizing thought of *Ibn Khaldun*, and *al-Farabi*'s secular concept of order, seem to me the best combination of cornerstones for an Islamic enlightenment.[46]

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[45] Various interviews, Masaai nationals in Tanzania, June 2002. For more background on Tanzania's history, as well as detail on the Rwandan situation, see also Taisier Ali and Robert Matthews (eds.), *Civil Wars in Africa: Roots and Resolution* (Montreal: McGill Queen's University Press, 1999).

[46] *The Challenge of Fundamentalism* (Berkeley, The University of California Press, 1998), xv.

To get yet more concrete, consider the elements of typical narratives offered by Islamic insurgents. For Vlahos, those included a heroic journey and mythic figure, an epic historical struggle, a charge of renewal, and a mystic interpretation of history. Any action (*including a speech act*…merely saying things differently might be enough in many cases!) we can take that would decrease the probability that bin Laden could be interpreted as a hero, that diminishes the likelihood that we could be cast as the antagonist in a historical struggle, that makes it seem less likely "resisting" us would lead to Islamic renewal, or that diminishes bin Laden's ability to sell a *mythical* interpretation of the struggle, would be effective at defusing the power of the story. For example, part of the reason why Brigadier General David Petraeus's 101st Airborne has been so successful in northern Iraq has to do with the careful manner in which they have carried out police raids, going so far as to rebuild house doors busted down even when those doors were on houses that did in fact contain things like insurgent weapons. This has done much to disarm the justice frames at play in the story-sphere there.[47]

Or consider Juergensmeyer's list (is the struggle over basic identity?, is losing the struggle unthinkable?, and can the struggle not be won in real terms?). Are there actions we can take, or speech acts we can engage in, that lessen the threat our presence poses to Islamic identity? Can we assure the populations of a country or region we are occupying that successful occupation would not imply the destruction of cherished values? Can we engage in "cultural confidence building measures" that ensure target populations they can achieve many of their goals even within the context of occupation or reconstruction? These actions may be as simple as avoiding certain terms in our speech (such as "crusade"), while other actions required to see a story through may be quite complicated.

Of course, in many cases the *tactical* success achieved by taking action we know full well may feed a malignant narrative may nonetheless justify them. But even then, we should be aware of the impact our actions are having on the "telling of stories" in the backstreets and communities of at-risk populations so that we can, where possible, mitigate any negative upshot.

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[47] Author's oral interview, 2005.

G. A SIMPLE EVALUATIVE MECHANISM: ARISTOTLE'S RHETORICAL MODEL

In practice, effective counter-narrative strategy will require understanding the components and content of the story being told so we can predict how they will influence the action of a target audience. In other words, we need a sophisticated understanding of strategic rhetoric. This is difficult to come by. Nonetheless, even well-worn and simple models of this process, such as that offered by the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle in his *Rhetoric*, can be very useful for structuring our thinking. Aristotle would have us evaluate three components of a narrative relative to a target audience: (1) what is the *ethos* of the speaker/deliverer?, (2) what is the *logos* of the message being delivered?, and (3) does the message contain appropriate appeals to *pathos*? Consideration of ethos would emphasize the need for us to establish credible channels of communication, fronted by actors who have the character and reputation required to ensure receipt and belief of the message. "You have bad ethos" is merely another way of saying "You won't be believed by the target audience because they don't think *you* are *believable*." Consideration of logos involves the rational elements of the narrative: is it logical? Is it consistent enough to be believed? Does it contain (from the target's perspective) non-sequiters and forms of reasoning not normally used day-to-day? Finally, pathos deals with the emotional content of the story. Does the story cue appropriate affective and emotive systems in the human brain? Does it appeal to emotion in a way that engages the whole person and that increases the chances the story will actually motivate action?

Thomas Coakley summarizes the Aristotelian model in his paper on the Peruvian counter-terrorism experience:

> **Ethos:** these are appeals the speaker makes to the audience to establish credibility. Essentially, ethos is what a speaker uses—implicitly or explicitly—to ensure that the audience can trust him or her. An example in advertising is an athlete endorsing an athletic product. In war, examples include a history of adherence to LOAC and an assertiveness of willpower.

> **Pathos:** these are appeals the speaker makes to the audience's emotions. An example of this would be an advertisement for tires that emphasizes safety by portraying an infant cradled within the circle of the tire. In war, pathos might be displayed by showing the "average" guy on the adversary's side that the US position is better.

Logos: these are appeals to facts. More doctors recommend toothpaste X than any other brand. In war, there is no greater logic than firepower, but as insurgencies demonstrated throughout the twentieth century, firepower (logos) alone will not win wars, and will win very few arguments.[48]

Some of these Aristotelian considerations will be affected by structural elements of the story (Is the story coherent? Is it simple enough to be processed? Can it be remembered? Is it easy to transmit? If believed, will it motivate appropriate action?)[49]; others will be affected by content (Does the narrative resonate with target audiences? Is the protagonist of the story a member of the target audience's in-group? Is the antagonist of the story a member of a hated out-group?).[50]

Needless to say, ascertaining how these issues interact to ensure success in counter-narrative efforts is a complex process. In general, though, consideration of these ideas leads us to this non-exhaustive list of basic strategic principles for the formulation and application of counter-narrative strategy, some of which we've already briefly discussed.

H.   NARRATIVE   "STRATEGIC   PRINCIPLES,"   AND   SOME COMPLICATIONS

Effective counter-narrative strategy will be guided by these strategic principles:

1)   **Target audience characteristics are critical.**   Formulating a narrative without understanding the culture of the population you wish to influence is a recipe for ineffectiveness at best and in the worst of cases can backfire altogether.

2)   **Darwinian competitiveness counts.**   Stories will be more likely to be received and understood if they are fit for the environment in which they are expected to

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48 Thomas Coakley (Captain, US Air Force), "The Argument against Terror: The Peruvian Experience, Globalization, and US Policy" (Institute for National Security Studies research paper, 2003).

49 Indeed, some structure and content of stories may cause narratives to act as primary reinforcers—that is, just like food, drugs, or sex. A fascinating neurobiological exploration of this process of successful "cultural messaging" is being carried out by Casebeer and neuroscientists such as Read Montague, head of the Baylor College of Medicine's Human Neuroimaging Laboratory. Innovative new techniques such as 'hyperscanning' allow social cognition to be studied *in vitro* at the neural level using functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging.

50 It may very well be that some aspects of narrative are evaluated in exactly the same way that theories in the sciences are evaluated: according to their simplicity, output power, explanatory power, justificatory power, coherence, breadth, clarity and psychological plausibility.

flourish. Some basic considerations include whether or not stories take advantage of heuristics and biases (for example, memorable events will be easier for a target audience to recall; hence, memorable events should form the skeleton of a story).

3) **Aristotle is better than nothing.** Considerations of ethos, logos and pathos are simplistic. But they are better than not bothering to evaluate the storyline at all. Relative to a target population, an "E/L/P analysis" can provide a baseline for predicting and controlling narrative flow over the course of a conflict.

4) **There are two important story sets: the ones our adversary is telling, and the one being told implicitly and explicity by us.** Terrorist organizations have instrumental incentives to "get out the story"—this is a necessary part of their continued survival and enables their goal achievement. We need to consider not only whether our story is being told well, but also how both our actions and storytelling affect the plausibility of the stories they are introducing into the environment. To do this well requires getting inside the "narrative OODA-loop" of our adversary.

5) **Tactical success may require overriding strategic story considerations.** While grand counter-terrorism strategy will require counter-narrative considerations for success, it may very well be that strategic story considerations will be overridden in many circumstances by demands for tactical or short-term success. Understanding this tension will nonetheless enable us to build stories that will be only minimally affected by such reversals.

6) **Stories with firewalls are better than stories without defenses.** Our narratives need to come equipped with an immune system. Some stories are more resilient than others to changes in the environment; the best of stories will make sense come what may…to use Karl Popper's language, it will fail to be falsified. We should think about what we can do to firewall our stories to prevent their destruction or cooptation.

7) **Adaptability and flexibility are important.** The story environment is fluid; our stories should be too. While it would undermine our ethos to change stories often, our logos may demand that we do so at times. Anticipating this, we should create grand narratives that have some built-in adaptability and flexibility. Protagonists and

antagonists change. Basic plot lines shift. Culmination points move. Critical identities are fluid. This environmental uncertainty makes adaptability in stories all the more important.

Application of these strategic principles for story formulation will be difficult. At any given time, there will be myriad target audiences. We can expect their reactions to be shaped dynamically. For example, a grand narrative that was perfectly plausible before Abu Ghraib may be rendered perfectly inert afterwards. A few critical slips by key public representatives may entrench an antagonistic narrative, leaving us no choice but to abandon a counter-narrative put in place to combat it. Understanding the temporal mechanics and dynamics of story flow will be a messy, learn-as-you-go business. Recognizing this fact, however, and considering what impact this has for our plans, programs and policies, is *far superior* to the alternative of letting our adversaries occupy the narrative high ground.

I.   INSTITUTIONAL IMPLICATIONS

Doing the things just discussed requires (at the least): an awareness of the characteristics of target audiences, knowledge of the narratives and stories at play in their culture, a model of how our actions will interact with the characteristics of those narratives to produce certain results (even the relatively mundane Aristotelian model just discussed is a fine place to start) and a willingness to then coordinate actions inter-governmentally so that we present a unified narrative front to the target audience.

The organizations and processes needed to do this successfully are not (alas) in place. Cultural intelligence is only now getting off the ground. Awareness of the cultural and societal impact of occupation is being enhanced systematically relatively late in the game. It is not obvious where in the government's national security apparatus "narrative unification" and "story consistency checks" would take place (presumably at high levels such as within the National Security Council, or high-level working groups within the State Department). Given extant concerns about the misuse of psychological operations, and the public relations disaster of previous efforts in this direction (such as the proposed but hastily shelved "Office of Strategic Influence" in the Pentagon), this lack of

institutional inertia is perhaps understandable. Even so, we are slowly coming to realize the importance of counter-narrative strategies, as last month's Defense Science Board[51] report on "Strategic Communications"makes abundantly clear with its strong final recommendation (italics in original):

> *The Task Force recommends that the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy and the Joint Chiefs of Staff ensure that all military plans and operations have appropriate strategic communication components, ensure collaboration with the Department of State's diplomatic missions and with theater security cooperation plans; and extend U.S. STRATCOM's and U.S. SOCOM's Information Operations responsibilities to include DoD support for public diplomacy. The Department should <u>triple</u> current resources (personnel & funding) available to combatant commanders for DoD support to public diplomacy and reallocate Information Operations funding within U.S. STRATCOM for expanded support for strategic communication programs.[52]*

J.   CONCLUSION

Having in place effective counter-narrative strategies will not be a panacea. Nonetheless, if military force is to play the appropriate role in our national security strategy and the "Global War on Terror," we need a more comprehensive understanding of how a failure to tell good stories can lead to an increased risk of insurgencies, violent social movements, and terrorist action. While this paper has been far too brief to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between stories, identity, and violent action, I hope it has at least made plausible the case that we need to think much more carefully about the relationship between this rhetorical Clausewitzian trinity and state power. A grand counter-terrorism strategy that actually produces the results we desire rides on such a subtle psychologically informed understanding of narratives and terror.

Narratives also play a critical role in several other cultural phenomena relevant to the study of terrorism and insurgency; these include cultivation of shared group identities and surrogate consciousness. This exploration is the subject for the next chapter of this thesis.

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51 Available online at http://www.acq.osd.mil/dsb/reports/2004-09-Strategic_Communication.pdf. The report is well worth reading in its entirety. Last accessed, 20 March 2006.

52 *Strategic Communications*, 17.

IV. NARRATIVE, IDENTITY, AND SURROGATE CONSCIOUSNESS: THE CASE OF HIZBALLAH

A. FRAMING AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

There is little doubt that framing processes—those processes responsible for influencing how an actor views the world, such as the narratives discussed last chapter—play an important role in creating and sustaining social mobilization processes in the Middle East. More controversially, framing processes are also critical for sustaining organizational efficiency; when movements spawn formal organizations, those organizations will take advantage of some of the same processes used by mobilization leaders so as to shore up support from actors interested in seeing the organization achieve its goals. Moreover, when organizations find themselves in turbulent and problematic environments, they may shift their framing processes so as to cultivate new stakeholder relationships and broaden the base of those willing to provide material and moral support. Often, this will involve expanding the goals of the organization, providing existing members reason to support these new goals by developing a sense of shared responsibility for the fate of those affected by these new objectives—in short, by cultivating "surrogate consciousness" in their traditional membership.

Such, this chapter argues, has been the fate of Lebanon's Hizballah. This chapter argues for a series of linked hypotheses, all germane to the concept of strategically important culture. First, it distinguishes the concept of surrogate consciousness from related psychological processes involved in framing. Surrogate consciousness arises from the conjunction of empathetic responses with a 'thin' sense of shared identity (especially identities that arise from a recognition of common fate) even in the face of obvious and self-acknowledged out-group distinctions; it is different from the activation of either empathy or identity alone, and may deserve to be recognized as a significant category (akin to oppositional consciousness) in the mobilization literature, as it can play a critical role in broadening an organization's base of support. Development of surrogate consciousness is enhanced by consideration of the narrative elements of the framing process. Second, by analyzing official documents of Hizballah and the rhetoric of Hizballah leaders such as Sheikh Hussein Nasrallah and Grand Ayatollah Muhammad

Hussein Fadlallah—focusing in particular on how this verbiage has changed over time—the chapter provides evidence that the Party of God has broadened its goals; this in turn has led to narrative efforts designed to boost surrogate consciousness in the Shi'a of Lebanon for the plight of Palestinians in the occupied territories. Third, and only very briefly, it argues that whether this is a positive development remains an open question; on the one hand, these developments increase the chances Hizballah will continue to develop a bona fide constituency and moderate its goals so they become irredentist rather than millenarian, making it all the more likely those goals can be achieved by peaceful political means. This may have the pleasant upshot of marginalizing the militant wing of Hizballah. On the other hand, if Palestinians are unable to reach accommodation with Israel through non-violent means (such as the peace process), the surrogate consciousness could retrench Hizballah's militant elements, which would not be a favorable development. This is an ambitious set of hypotheses to develop and defend in one chapter. This chapter's aim is to provide enough explanation and evidence to at least make them plausible so as to motivate a more rigorous research agenda.

B.   SURROGATE CONSCIOUSNESS

First, an elaboration and defense of the idea of surrogate consciousness within the context of the framing literature. In general, mobilization (be it for peaceful or violent collective action) is thought to happen at the intersections of political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and framing processes.[53] There must be some form of *political opportunity* (or lack thereof)—for instance, a state crackdown on a spontaneous protest might open the political door for a full-fledged movement. *Mobilizing structures* provide resources for movements to grow and expand—for example, pre-existing social networks may serve as funnels for financial support for a nascent movement. Finally, *framing processes* can (among many other things) motivate individuals to join nascent movements, groups and organizations, and may reinforce certain identities so as to make

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[53] See, e.g., Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald, eds., *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), or Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly, "Toward an Integrated Perspective on Social Movements and Revolution," in Lichback and Zuckerman (eds), *Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture and Structure* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

mobilization easier.[54]   Critical to the importance of frames is the notion that they can *resonate* to greater or lesser degrees with target audiences.[55]

Generally, social psychological facts (such as the development of group identity, or of awareness of one's self as a part of a larger collective) are most likely to intervene upon the mobilization process via framing effects. Consider the idea of oppositional consciousness.[56]   Oppositional consciousness is one process whereby members of a persecuted or oppressed group become aware of themselves *as group members* for the purposes of spurring action. Oppositional consciousness—"…an empowering mental state that prepares members of an oppressed group to act to undermine, reform or overthrow a system of human domination…"—involves, according to Jane Mansbridge, "…identifying with members of a subordinate group, identifying injustices done to that group, opposing these injustices, and seeing the group as having a shared interest in ending or diminishing those injustices."[57]   Framing will affect all these facets of oppositional consciousness. Justice frames, for example, will make salient to a group the injustices being done to them; while motivational frames will increase the likelihood a member of the affected group will take action to end the injustice.

Surrogate consciousness is similar to, but separate from, oppositional consciousness.[58]   Like oppositional consciousness, surrogate consciousness will be

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[54] While I don't have space to defend this assertion here, "framing" probably really serves as a placeholder for *all non-rational psychological processes* involved in mobilization (the sociology and political science literature tends to call these "subjective processes," though this is a bit limiting as the psychological processes undergirding these phenomenon need have no experiential or phenomenological component, and are in many cases richly social). I suspect that there are more psychological processes worthy of consideration than those identified in the extant literature.

[55] See D. A. Snow and R. Benford, "Ideology, Frame Resonance, and Participant Mobilization," in B. Klandermans, H. Kriesi & S. Tarrow (eds.), *From Structure to Action* (Vol.1, pp. 197–217; Greenwich: JAI Press, 1988).

[56] For excellent discussion, consult A. Morris and N. Braine, "Oppositional consciousness: the subjective roots of social protest," in J. Mansbridge and A. Morris (eds.), *Social Movements and Oppositional Consciousness* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001).

[57] From the "Introduction," in Jane Mansbridge and Aldon Morris (eds.), *Oppositional Consciousness: The Subjective Roots of Social Protest* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 6. Also available online at: http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/prg/mansb/oppositional_consciousness.pdf. Last accessed, 20 March 2006.

[58] In order to confirm that surrogate consciousness was not already a commonly used concept in the mobilization literature, I skimmed multiple seminal articles from the framing and identity bodies of work. Also, a Google search turned up no academic uses of the phrase, nor did a JSTOR search turn up any salient references. My apologies to the original discoverer if the phrase does turn out to exist in prior art!

affected by framing. It will involve some of the same processes as oppositional consciousness, and in many regards functions just as it does—to prepare members of a group for action. But *unlike* oppositional consciousness, surrogate consciousness involves action by members of an out-group *on behalf of* another group that is being prosecuted. Oppositional consciousness involves the development of empathy, but such empathy is shared only with in-group members (indeed, this is what makes it oppositional rather than merely generally empathetic). In the case of surrogate consciousness, however, empathy is developed for another group *even when one recognizes that one is not in fact a member of that group*.

To summarize, according to our nascent theory, surrogate consciousness arises from the conjunction of empathetic responses with a very shallow sense of shared identity (especially identities that arise from recognition of common fate, which is probably the identity generating mechanism which generates the thinnest, most violable sense of identity[59]) whilst nonetheless recognizing the existence of obvious out-group

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[59] See Leonie Huddy, "Group Identity and Political Cohesion," in David Sears et al (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), for a review of major theories of the development of group identity. On the whole, social context is critically important for racial and ethnic acculturation vis-à-vis group identity. This is no surprise, as there is an entire theory (called "social learning theory") dedicated to the role that social and group interaction plays in the development of attitudes and skills. Social learning theory was most comprehensively articulated by Albert Bandura in the 1960s and 1970s. Bandura placed special emphasis on how new behavior is acquired through observational learning via cognitive processes. Social learning did not require that there be rewards and punishments for learned behavior to occur (as in the neo-behaviorist paradigm that dominated cognitive science in the early twentieth century); rather, all that was required were the "minimal components of attention to a behavioral sequence, retention of its form, and the ability to reproduce the behavioral sequence." The core components of personal *cum* group identity are learned, on this picture, and such behavior as prejudice or discrimination (or even a willingness to resort to violence to solve problems) is transmitted through various social groups—primarily via story telling—because children hear and see such attitudes in action in their peers, parents, and authority figures. It is easy to see how the development of prejudice, which may be a necessary (though not sufficient) condition for organized violence to be committed against out-groups, is contingent upon cultural and social factors themselves tightly related to narratives.

distinctions.[60]   Some homely empirical examples may help.   Steve notices that homosexuals are being subtly discriminated against in my neighborhood; despite the fact that Steve is a heterosexual, he nonetheless acts on the behalf of the gay community by attending gay pride parades and donating money to the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission, perhaps in part because he fears that he—as a member of a minority religion (let's stipulate that Steve is a Christian Scientist)—may eventually face the same persecution.   This would be a classic case of acting out of surrogate consciousness.

C.   HIZBALLAH: A POTTED HISTORY

The task for the next section of this paper, then, will be to demonstrate that Hizballah has used different framing devices in their rhetoric in an attempt to develop surrogate consciousness in their traditional constituency for the purposes of expanding their base. Perhaps they hope to eventually be able to appeal to the members of the group on whose behalf they have developed surrogacy.   The group in whom surrogate consciousness is being developed includes the traditional subjects of Hizballah: the people of occupied southern Lebanon, especially Shi'a. The group on whose behalf the consciousness is being developed includes Palestinians living in the occupied territories.

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[60] Huddy, 518-521, points out that the four major theoretical approaches regarding the construction of group identity (which consist of the cognitive approach, realistic interest approaches, social identity theory, and social constructivist theory) all make somewhat different predictions regarding sources of commonality and critical issues around which members may mobilize. A thumbnail sketch of these approaches will help us understand her conclusion. The *cognitive approach* to formation of group identity emphasizes the importance of self-perception in the development of cohesive groups: individuals become group members because they identify with the group and wish to emulate typical group members. *Realistic interest approaches* stress the common interests that groups share and advance; common fate is thus especially critical…if all of Islam is threatened, and we are Muslims, then it is more likely that we will become cohesive so as to achieve the common objective of protecting the shared interests of our group. *Social identity theorists* emphasize the importance of symbolic interactions between groups and potential members; group members endorse group memberships because of a need to achieve a positive sense of social identity that will differentiate their own group from others. *Social constructivism* takes social identity one step further: concepts derive their meaning from social practices; this theory stresses how social identities form even among strangers so long as enough shared interactions can occur to generate the construction of the group as a group. Huddy, 521, rightly notes that "The cognitive approach predicts cohesion among the members of any salient group; realistic interest theory confines cohesion to groups whose members share a common fate; social identity theory points to unity among widely stigmatized groups, such as low-status ethnic or racial groups, religious sects (etc.), whose members cannot easily pass as belonging to a higher status group; and a social constructivist perspective predicts cohesion among members who share a common understanding of group membership." I'll briefly discuss these approaches later in the main text. Resolving the tensions between these various theories of group identification is beyond the scope of this chapter.

Part of the reason why Hizballah is taking this action was to prepare the way for being acknowledged as a legitimate actor, not just in the Lebanese political scene but also in the larger Southwest Asian political arena, and not just for Shi'a, but for all groups that have faced injustice in the region. Or so I hope to demonstrate in the next section.

Some background on Hizballah is in order. Hizballah is Arabic for "Party of God"; it is a Shi'a political organization that has a militant and sometimes terrorist wing; aboriginally, it articulated three main objectives. First, Hizballah would like to establish a Shi'a state in Lebanon modeled directly upon the Islamic Republic of Iran. Hizballah also shares the goal of the destruction of Israel, as well as the objective of neutralizing U.S. influence in the region.[61]

In the realm of violent militant action, Hizballah's activities have included several high profile terrorist incidents. In addition to multiple kidnappings in the 1980s, the infamous Beirut truck bombing of US Marines, the 1985 hijacking of TWA Flight 847, and attacks on Jewish community centers and buildings in Argentina in 1992 and 1994, Hizballah has launched a series of suicide bombings in the occupied territories.[62] This pre-9/11 chart demonstrates how successfully they executed suicide bombings, being the second largest group in terms of aggregate attacks (though it is critical to note that Hizballah has since denounced the use of suicide bombings following their involvement with them in the mid-1980s)::

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[61] See the Council on Foreign Relation's report on Hizballah at http://www.cfrterrorism.org/groups/Hizballah.html. Last accessed, 20 March 2006.

[62] A useful source here is Bruce Hoffman's "Recent Trends and Future Prospects of Iranian Sponsored International Terrorism," *RAND Report R-378-USDP*, March, 1990.

Martyrdom's Global Reach

Suicide Attacks by Terrorist Organizations, 1983-2000

Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam	171
Lebanese Hezbollah and Amal	25
Other Lebanese groups	25
Palestinian Hamas	22
Kurdistan Workers' Party	21
Palestinian Islamic Jihad	8
Chechen separatists	7
Qaida (Osama bin Laden)	2
Kuwaiti Dawa	2
Egyptian Islamic Jihad	1
Egyptian Islamic Group	1
Algerian Armed Islamic Group	1

Figure 3.   Suicide Attacks by Terrorist Groups, 1983–2000[63]

In order to carry out these attacks, Lebanese Hizballah has developed a large and robust organization. It consists of approximately 300 – 500 elite fighters, 3,000 – 5,000 part time insurgents, and about 15,000 reservists.[64]

This infrastructure developed in part owing to the group's ties to the Islamic Republic of Iran. In addition to the obvious ideological commonalities given the group's revolutionary goals, Hizballah receives substantial financial support from Iran. Also, the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps has been extensively involved in training and organizing Hizballah (their foundational involvement in the early 1980s was critical during the group's initial organization). Via a series of Syrian airfields, Iran has air supply connections to the group.[65]

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[63] From "Rational Fanatics," by Ehud Sprinzak, *Foreign Policy*, No. 120 (Sep–Oct 2000), 66–73.

[64] See the Council on Foreign Relations report, as well as multiple publications by Anthony Cordesman.

[65] The Wikipedia entry on Hizballah is excellent, and provides a good table of organization, background, and historical review: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hizballah. Last accessed, 20 March 2006.

Social movement theory provides us with insight into how the conditions for Hizballah's genesis developed (in large part, as a reaction to the Shah's program of Westernization). "Identity entrepreneurs," such as the group's spiritual leader Sheikh Fadlallah, were instrumental in establishing the organization and moving it through the growth phase. During maturity, the organization carried out militant action; however, as some of its realizable political goals were achieved, and as it gained a larger constituency via the provision of social services such as education and health care, the organization broadened in terms of goals and functions. Eventually, Hizballah came to have a political face, and today the Secretary General of Hizballah is Sheik Nasrallah. As others have noted, "Hezbollah is an active participant in the political life and processes of Lebanon, and its scope of operation is far beyond its initial militant one. In 1992, it participated in elections for the first time, winning 12 out of 128 seats in parliament. It won 10 seats in 1996, and now holds 8."[66]

A stakeholder analysis reveals traceability between developments in Hizballah capacities and patronage from one of the major stakeholders—Iran. For instance, Imad Munniyah came to dominate the security apparatus of Hizballah, and with his ties to Iranian intelligence, he almost certainly used organizational methods from Iran to radically increase Hizballah's effectiveness in the 1980s. Solid organizational techniques and good traceability between activities led to Hizballah's increasing effectiveness as a militant organization, but it also led to their broadening into an organization with a legitimate political face as well.

Classic reinforcing actions were also taken by Hizballah as they eventually became the largest single provider of social services in southern Lebanon, displacing competitors such as the government of Lebanon (though in many cases the government welcomed Hizballah's assumption of these responsibilities); "niche construction" activities like the delivery of health care and food aid are critically important, as they can lead to the development of a stable constituency, which in turn may help moderate an organization's more militant tendencies, as I will briefly discuss later.[67]

[66] Wikipedia, Hizballah.

[67] See, e.g., Judith Harik's "Between Islam and the System: Sources and Implications of Popular Support for Lebanon's Hizballah," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol 40 , No. 1 (March, 1996), 41–67.

This potted and all-too-brief summary of Hizballah is intended to establish two main points: first, that the organization's goals have broadened as time has passed, becoming more politically realistic; and second, that Hizballah has developed a bona fide political constituency, whom they represent both in the Lebanese parliament and regionally. These modifications have required Hizballah to broaden their base, which in time has led to the articulation of a new narrative designed to generate surrogate consciousness. Before providing textual evidence for this last point, a detour into narrative theory will help provide foundations for understanding tropes and themes emphasized in Hizballah's media presence.[68]

Any of these aspects of narrative would be fascinating and important to examine in detail; for the next few paragraphs, however, I focus on the relationship between stories and identity mobilization, as this is a critical aspect of "narrative ecology."

D. THE FORMATION OF IDENTITY AND SHIFTS IN HIZBALLAH RHETORIC

In order to understand how and why individuals in places like Lebanon eventually become members of Hizballah, we need to better grasp both how individual identity is formed and how individual identities interact with groups and cultures to shape a sense of collective identity. The literature on both identity formation and identity interaction is voluminous; however, some key points from it can usefully inform our analysis.

Groups of individuals that feel they share a common fate, possess a common identity, face a common threat, or have communal needs, are abundant in most environments. In conditions of violence, where governments are failing to provide basic safety/security needs (think of Lebanon in the aftermath of the civil war), these sometimes latent or "weakly felt" identities are prone to even greater mobilization, with the individual increasingly identifying with the competing identity group *rather than* the political state. That is, in the right kinds of environments, it's relatively easy for identity entrepreneurs—the tellers of stories that speak to questions of fundamental identity—to

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[68] Several of these paragraphs are taken from portions of an article I co-authored with James Russell for "Strategic Insights," as is most of chapter two of this thesis; the full article can be found here, and portions used in the next few pages were written by me: http://www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/si/2005/Mar/casebeerMar05.asp. Last accessed, 20 March 2006.

make headway in motivating people to act in defense of a group, or play a critical role in a plot that includes the group as protagonist and some other power as antagonist. This is especially the case when we are told certain stories throughout the formative periods of our lives that can easily be recast to provoke a backlash to things like government failure, occupation, or reconstruction.[69]

The brief review of Hizballah's history from a few pages ago gives us *a priori* reason to think the narratives they use to do things like shore up stakeholder support have evolved over the years. There is also textual and other media-based evidence for this, and some of the narratives seem to have the purpose of creating surrogate consciousness. Consider first an interview with Fadlallah (the spiritual leader for Hizballah) from a 1987 issue of the *Journal of Palestine Studies*; in the interview, Fadlallah discusses the tensions between Palestinians and Shi'a in Southern Lebanon in the early 1980s, openly acknowledging that "…there was political, material and spiritual weariness; and chaos dominated the south as a result of the disorderly Palestinian political expansion which interfered both in the internal struggle between political parties and in family matters…".[70] This was in response to a question from the *Journal* regarding why it was that some Shi'a in the south apparently viewed the Israel arrival in a positive light. While disputing that all Shi'a felt this way, Fadlallah nonetheless acknowledges that the "…Palestinians were expanding in a disturbing way…"[71] and that it is in the nature of some regional actors to "score points"[72] against its rivals in Palestinian-Arab political disputes by turning a blind eye to actions they would otherwise condemn (e.g., the Israeli invasion of Southern Lebanon).

Later, Fadlallah is even more explicit that he believes "…that the Arab political scene, and particularly the Lebanese scene, is moving to free itself from the burden of the Palestine problem."[73] While Fadlallah discusses in this interview that Hizballah has

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[69] See the literature review in Troy Thomas, Stephen Kiser and William Casebeer's *Warlords Rising: Confronting Violent Non-State Actors* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Press, 2005). Of note, in the right circumstances, most any belief system can be radicalized (Christian, Jewish, secular, etc.).

[70] Fadlallah (1987), 4, "Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah: The Palestinians, the Shi'a, and South Lebanon," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 16, No. 2, 3 – 10.

[71] Fadlallah, 3.

[72] Ibid., 3.

[73] Ibid., 6.

goals that include the essential elimination of Israel as a political force, and uses this to distinguish Hizballah from Amal (which had more limited goals of freeing Southern Lebanon from Israeli occupation), he nonetheless is careful to disentangle Hizballah from direct connection to the Palestinian cause as such.

Considerations like this place Hizballah in a bind. On the one hand, the fact that Israel actually completed their withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000 gave Hizballah enormous prestige, as Hizballah's resistance had arguably led to the first successful case of resistance against Israeli territorial aggression in the region. On the other hand, this also meant that Hizballah had to find other goals to justify its continued existence as a regional political actor; this was complicated by the fact that their provision of social services, education, and medical care had broadened Hizballah's base and contributed to their emergence as a political force in Lebanon replete with explicit representative duties.

In 1991, Hizballah founded their television station, al-Manar ("the Lighthouse"). Al-Manar is extremely popular regionally, ranking second only to Al-Jazeera in popularity in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.[74] Al-Manar broadcasts numerous motivational videos with stirring slogans and professionally produced graphics and music. These polemic videos serve several purposes, one of which, I contend, is the facilitation of surrogate consciousness for the Palestinian plight in Lebanese viewers. Al-Manar station manager Nayef Krayem says as much, stating that the station has links to multiple militant Palestinian groups (including the military wing of Fatah's Abu Musa faction and the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades), and that part of the station's mission is to generate material and moral support for the Palestinian struggle against Israeli occupation.[75] Hizballah deputy secretary-general Sheikh Naim Qassam told Lebanese Future Television that Hizballah provides "…national support to the Palestinians through

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[74] For more background, see Avi Jorisch's *Beacon of Hatred: Inside Hizballah's Al-Manar Television* (Washington, DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2004). Of note, I disagree with many of the policy recommendations Jorisch floats in this book, and I recognize that the Washington Institute has a "not-so-hidden" agenda. Even so, the book offers valuable background information, and the CD it contains has numerous video clips from station broadcasts which are very interesting and useful.

[75] Jorisch, 34.

al-Manar television,"[76] and Hussein Nasrallah's rhetoric in multiple venues has included consciousness raising on behalf of the Palestinian struggle.[77]

Consider, for example, a video broadcast which includes images of a suicide bomber destroying an Israeli checkpoint. Or in another case, a video shows footage of Israeli bulldozers knocking down Palestinian dwellings. A third video details Palestinian suicide bombers who have died while killing IDF members. These videos emphasize the themes that would need to be developed if surrogate consciousness were to appear. Recall that (in the case of the development of related oppositional consciousness) the group would need to become aware of injustices, identify with the group being repressed, and feel the need to redress the injustices; in the case of surrogate consciousness, feeling of group belonging does not need to be present, or if it is present it is sustained only by common fate considerations and will also probably involve recognition that one is not actually a member of the surrogate group. Videos like these lay the groundwork for *all* these things by raising awareness of injustices done to the Palestinians, by providing a means of redressing them (al-Manar broadcasts bank account information for those who wish to donate to organizations which support violent action in response, and also provides sometime material and moral support to Palestinian organizations such as Hamas), and by laying the emotional groundwork for support for things like the second Intifada via the use of resonant music and emotion-laden images.[78]

One objection is that to assume any particular broadcasts reflect shifts in strategic goals of Hizballah would be unjustified; this is probably the case. For instance, there are links between themes emphasized in al-Manar programming and short-term political goals related to the Lebanese elections. Consider, for instance, the period between May and September 2000, in which the tone and content shifted to emphasize the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon, Hizballah's successful military campaign, and Israeli military weaknesses. The "triumph over Israel" theme was probably related not just to facts on the ground about the Israeli/Lebanon situation but also to the upcoming September 2000

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[76] Jorisch, 34, quoting from an October 22, 2002 document about the broadcast.

[77] Jorisch, multiple videos contained on CD.

[78] Jorisch, 67–70. I realize these examples don't necessarily disprove the null hypothesis; they are suggestive, however.

Lebanese parliamentary elections.[79]   Even so, the shift in tone and content about the Palestinian plight has sustained itself for long enough that the conclusion that this change from the attitude of practiced distant concern of the mid-80's is more than a tactical political development has first-pass plausibility. It passes the sniff test.

E.   UPSHOTS OF SURROGACY

Whether this is a positive development remains an open question; on the one hand, it increases the chances Hizballah will continue to develop a bona fide constituency and moderate its goals so they become irredentist rather than millenarian, making it all the more likely those goals can be achieved by peaceful political means. This may have the pleasant upshot of marginalizing the militant wing of Hizballah. As Baylouny points out in her *Strategic Insight* "Democratic Inclusion: A Solution to Militancy in Islamic Movements?"[80] involvement in democratic institutions has a moderating influence even on those who have anti-system goals. Cultivation of a bona fide constituency tends to decrease the likelihood of violent political action, as such cultivation usually involves the formation of moderate organizations and institutions designed to minister to the needs of this constituency.

On the other hand, if Palestinians are unable to reach accommodation with Israel through non-violent means (e.g, via the resurgent peace process), the development of surrogate consciousness could retrench Hizballah's militant elements, which would not be a favorable development.[81]   Developing surrogate consciousness boosts the complexity and interconnectedness of the system; from a policy-making perspective, this can be both a good and bad thing, contingent upon how the system as a whole develops.

Before concluding, let's acknowledge the multiple limitations afflicting my thesis for this chapter. These include not only space limitations but also my radically incomplete survey of Hizballah rhetoric and propaganda, amplified by the complication

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[79] Jorisch,. 37.

[80] *Strategic Insights*, Vol. 3, Issue 4, April 2004, available online at http://www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/si/2004/apr/baylounyApr04.asp. Last accessed, 20 March 2006.

[81] Daniel Byman argues in "Hezbollah's Threat" that we should not crack down on Hizballah itself, but should instead focus on undercutting Iranian and Syrian stakeholder involvement. This, he contends, will maximize the chances that Hizballah will fully become a mainstream political actor. See his article in *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 82, No. 6, 64 – 66, November/December 2003.

that the author does not speak or read Arabic (this is being redressed in the long run). The necessary resources weren't available to distinguish between elite rhetoric and other layers of stratification in Hizballah's organization (a more in-depth study would discuss this in detail[82]). Nor did the chapter provide a comprehensive review of the political context in which Hizballah has been acting. On the whole, however, despite these limitations these linked theses are at least plausible and worthy of further investigation.

This chapter argued for a series of hypotheses. First, it distinguished the concept of surrogate consciousness from related psychological processes involved in framing. Surrogate consciousness arises from the conjunction of empathetic responses with a 'thin' sense of shared identity even in the face of obvious and self-acknowledged out-group distinctions; it can play a critical role in broadening an organization's base of support. Second, by analyzing official documents of Hizballah and the rhetoric of Hizballah leaders such as Nasrallah and Fadlallah and the al-Manar television station, it provided (admittedly slim) evidence that the Party of God has broadened its goals and that this in turn has led to narrative efforts designed to boost surrogate consciousness in the Shi'a of Lebanon for the plight of Palestinians in the occupied territories. Third, and most briefly, the chapter argued that whether this is a positive development is an open question. It contributes to Hizballah's maintenance of a constituency, which is a net positive, but it could also lead to identification with militant means of resolving disputes should the latest incarnation of the Palestinian/Israeli peace process fail. Irrespective of how political events in the Middle East shape—and are shaped by—Hizballah in the future, this chapter has driven home the importance of understanding the rhetorical and narrative "top cover" movements and organizations use; only by engaging in this endeavor in subtle (and sympathetic) ways can we hope to shift the story-telling atmosphere in such a manner that peaceful resolutions to political conflict become the norm in the region. In other words, a critical aspect of shifting culture will involve understanding how military force produces change in the narratives which shape

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[82] Consider, for example, Glenn Robinson's argument (in chapter six of his book *Building a Palestinian State* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997)), that Hamas and the PLO converged in their use of symbology even as animosity between elites in the organization persisted. While I would assume that Hizballah elites control al-Manar content, I am not familiar enough with al-Manar's production process to say that with complete assurance. An interesting and important project would be to analyze elite control over Hizballah rhetoric especially in light of use of media like call-in televised talk shows and the internet where centralized control of content becomes more difficult.

organizational development—this chapter has added empirical heft to the more theoretical generalizations of the previous chapter.

While of academic interest, how can we combine these insights into a useful tool for the strategic thinker or intelligence analyst? This will be the primary topic for the next chapter.

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V.   THE AT-RISK GROUP IDENTITY INDEX: A USEFUL TOOL FOR THE STRATEGIST AND ANALYST

A.   INTRODUCTION

Multiple categories can be used to conceptualize the political ontology of states in general, let alone those astride the "arc of conflict" in regions such as Southwest Asia; a standard example for the Middle East is "Shia dominated states" (such as Iran) versus "Sunni dominated states" (such as Saudi Arabia). The usefulness of any particular categorization varies dramatically with the problem the academician or policy-maker is concerned with. Someone worried about water wars in the Middle East may focus on hydrologic features as the touchstone for their conceptual scheme, while a theorist studying Arabic literature might focus more on the history of print technology to shed light on why some regions had flourishing written legacies while others did not. Even the idea that the thing we must be concerned with categorizing is "states" is laden with assumptions--true only in certain contexts--about the importance of the nation-state in understanding any particular political phenomenon. Here, this chapter argues that analysts concerned with the potential for non-state political violence ought to pay special attention to the group identities especially at risk for mobilization present in a given state; compressing the literature and case studies reviewed and discussed in the previous two chapters, "At-Risk Group Identity" will be the classification scheme, and it will allow us to array states (several are discussed in this essay, focusing especially on the Middle East) along a continuum from those containing group identities most ripe for mobilization to those where there are few politically salient in-group/out-group distinctions. Operationalizing this categorization is difficult, admittedly; this is an especially theory-laden proposed scheme. Even if the enterprise ultimately fails to convince, though, my hope is that it will nonetheless do so in an illuminating way.

B.   BASIC TERMS: "AT RISK" AND "GROUP IDENTITY"

We can begin by carving the scheme at its joints: what does "at risk" mean and how is it measured, and what accounts for the formation of "group identity" and how is it assessed? States with at-risk group identities will be those that measure high on both

these axes: there are strong heterogeneous group identities at play in the social and political ecology of the area, and these identities feed directly into the mechanisms and resources necessary to mobilize them (e.g., Egypt or Iraq). States with low at-risk group identities will be those that measure low on both axes: weak or homogenous group identities, little mobilization potential (Libya). States in between present interesting cases: some will possess strong heterogeneous identities with little currently at-risk vis-à-vis mobilization (Yemen), while others may have high risk factors with little current group identification (Kuwait). Consider first the "at risk" part of the scheme.

The social mobilization literature offers an interesting perspective on what it means for a state to be "at risk" for emergence of a violent non-state political actor. At its core, this body of work postulates three factors which contribute to social mobilization: lack of political opportunity, availability of mobilizing resources, and presence of mobilizing frames (especially "justice frames"). The first component of my proposed classification scheme focuses on an aggregate measure of these three factors; in some cases, this may confound understanding as a state could offer lots of mobilizing resources but not be susceptible to a mobilizing frame (arguably, several of the Gulf states fit this mold), or vice-versa (Sudan). While much more synthesis of the literature is needed, for present purposes these factors will be weighted in this order: lack of political opportunity, mobilizing frames, and then resources. The theoretical reason for this owes to the importance of "pull factors"—if there's no political opportunity and a great framing story to be told, the actors in question will proactively seek to acquire the resources necessary to foment mobilization. Setting aside this ordering for the time being, however, we can think of "at risk" on a zero to one scale. The three factors I just mentioned will each be rated from zero to one and then multiplied by each other, giving a total at risk rating that drops to zero if any of the three factors drops to zero.

The second part of the categorization is the "group identity" notion. Again, to bastardize a considerable literature, we can operationalize group identity as "a subjective sense of membership usually involving attachments related to social identity or realistic interdependence"[83] Generally, group identity will evolve via four mechanisms: cognitive

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[83] See Shelley Taylor, "The Social Being in Social Psychology," in Gilbert et al's *Handbook of Social Psychology, Fourth Edition: Volume One* (Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill, 1998), 66.

(self-perception of group membership is emphasized, usually with an affective emulation related component—think of the "I wanna be like you" song from the animated *Jungle Book*), realistic interest (groups which may initially see themselves as separate which nonetheless share a common fate will come to see themselves as being part of the same group), social identity (which stresses the importance of interaction between group and non-group members for group formation, and usually emphasizes the psychological need for a positive sense of identity), and social constructivism (which takes social identity a step further and stresses the constructed nature of all aspects of identity).[84] For a first hack, then, we could ask which states have histories and experiences which make it likely that groups would self-consciously attempt to emphasize in-group/out group distinctions (this would be at play in circumstances where colonial powers attempted to set up proxy groups which vied for power…think of many of the Southwest Asian monarchies), where groups of people were forced to share a common fate (certainly at work with Kurdish identity), where certain markers of identity become especially salient (envision any checkpoint along the Israeli/Palestinian Authority border), and where social forces are at work to actively construct and reinforce identity every day (think of tribal affiliation in Yemen, where weekly *qat*-chewing parties are *de rigueur* and tend to reinforce group-related affiliative bonds) . So, the "group identity" axis will also range from zero to one, with two factors being multiplied together to produce it, both of them weighted from zero to one: one factor is whether or not the society is homogenous (= 0) or heterogeneous (= 1), and the other is whether or not group identities are weakly held (= 0) or strongly held (= 1). At this point, the general outline of the scheme should be clear, even if a lot of academic hand-waving is still needed to translate it into an actionable category.

C.   MINI CASE STUDIES: EGYPT, YEMEN, AND IRAQ

To demonstrate the usefulness of this scheme, this chapter will briefly make the case for how two contemporary states—Egypt and Yemen—rate using it. It will also discuss a historical case study, that of Iraq and its colonial experience, so as to demonstrate its explanatory power. Keep in mind that the purpose of this category is not

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[84] See Taylor, 65–70, for more detail; see also Thomas et al, *Warlords Rising: Confronting Violent Non-State Actors* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2005), 74–80.

to explain *all* of the events in Middle Eastern history, but rather to enrich understanding of why certain groups become politically active and violent at one point rather than another. While the framework is theoretically rich enough such that it should explain much of the political violence in the region, also keep in mind that it is not intended to explain state-on-state organized warfare, and it may "fall down on the job" as states in the region become more democratic (while beyond the scope of this paper to justify or discuss in detail, it is likely that the relatively "thin" identities generated in broadly inclusive democratic polities, especially those which resist the temptation to violently crackdown on nascent political violence, will not be sufficient to marry-up with the mobilization factors in an interesting way).

Egypt rates high on the "At-Risk Group Identity" scheme. On the "at risk" side, despite the recent Presidential elections (in which opposition candidates, nine in all, were allowed to run for the first time), political opportunity is very low. While it is a Revolutionary Republic, and hence would be more concerned about representation if it were an exemplar of the type, Egypt's Mubarak has resisted attempts to make elections multi-party and has generally stifled opportunities for political dissent; even civil society opportunities are closely monitored, and violent responses to the peaceful provisioning of health and medical services by Hassan al-Banna's Muslim Brotherhood were the norm rather than the exception. Mobilizing frames are also plentiful; the government's failure to provide adequate social services—witness their impotence even in the capital city of Cairo following the 1992 earthquake—makes it easy for Brotherhood members to frame their political activity as encompassing an issue of justice, especially when cronyism and corruption are present in the government. Finally, mobilizing resources are available, ranging from a professional class that can be siphoned for skills and expertise to an economy that, while stagnant, nonetheless provides enough citizens with a standard of living such that political engagement is within the realm of conceivability.

On the "group identity" side, Egypt also rates high. Given the secular nature of the government, an Islamic in-group/out-group distinction is easy to perpetuate, drawing on the shared fate and cognitive aspects of the formation of group identity. Muslim Brotherhood activity has led to multiple one-on-one encounters in situations where Brotherhood members provide needed services to the poor…the affective component of

these relationships reinforces Islamic identity. In addition, the government's dependence on US aid funneled to governmental elites makes it relatively easy to perpetuate a class divide (despite Egypt's roots in Nasserian socialism), and there may be synergy between these class issues and other minority group identities which have been reinforced via socialization mechanisms (e.g., Coptic Christians). The poor living in the City of the Dead are a group ripe for mobilization if their access to mobilizing resources were to be enhanced by external stakeholders.

Compare Egypt to Yemen, on the other hand. Yemen ranks relatively low on the "at risk" axis. Mobilizing resources are not generally available owing to the poverty of the nation and its lack of an educational infrastructure; moreover, where mobilizing resources are available, they are generally siphoned off to extra-Yemeni organizations (such as al Qaeda), such that an indigenous social movement in Yemen never really gets traction. While political opportunity is lacking, Yemen is still recovering from a civil war fought in the aftermath of reunification, and the nominally democratically elected government is led by a coalition consisting of the leaders of both the former North and South Yemen; distractions exist for the population such that perceived political opportunity is relatively high. Finally, the frames at play in Yemen tend not to pit the government against the polity but rather tribe against tribe, or, in some cases, Yemeni against Saudi (the two countries have had multiple skirmishes along their ill-defined border). This may be changing in light of the government's dalliance with the United States post 9-11 (and with their involvement in violent police crackdowns on the kidnapping of tourists), though. On the "group identity" axis, Yemen ranks medium at best; while tribal identity is strong, especially in the Hadramaut region, these identities generally do not mesh well with any of the mobilizing resources on the at-risk axis. In addition, the mechanisms responsible for cementing in-group/out-group distinctions have the perverse upshot of sapping the energy of the participants, as *qat* party attendees can attest.

In addition to helping us predict the likelihood of identity-motivated political violence in Yemen, this categorization can shed light on past events in the region as a move further north to Iraq demonstrates, where British colonial administration of the Mandate serves as an interesting case study. An intelligence official working for the

British government in 1920 would have had no problem ranking Iraq "high" on the ARGI (At-Risk Group Identity) scale. On the identity side, Faisal had already stoked Arab sentiments during his resistance to Ottoman rule; on the "at risk" side, owing to the intrigues of Sykes-Picot, mobilizing frames involving colonial themes would be all too easy to draw upon. While mobilizing resources were hard to come by, they were available, and would (perversely) actually be increased by British presence in the Mandate as the British cultivated a *sheikh*-related proxy class (itself actually ill-suited to accomplish the economic reforms the British had in mind). Political opportunity was limited owing to British paternalism, and to Orientalist blinders that prevented the British from engaging politically with some of the most important actors on the politico-economic side (such as *sarkal* intermediaries in native marketplaces). When indiscriminant British airpower reinforced despotic frames at play among the disaffected population, multiple rebellions were spawned.[85] Viewing the region through an ARGI lens could have enabled British planners to better prepare for a humane Mandate administration, and hence the connection between this index and the case study discussed in much more depth in chapter two of this thesis.

However, more so than most, the categorization of "At-Risk Group Identity" is loaded with conceptual baggage, as this all-too-brief summary makes clear. It is rather precarious, as critical turns of events can quickly change, for example, the efficacy of frames used to mobilize group identities towards political violence. This makes it a difficult and contentious category to use. But on the other hand, for academics and policy-makers concerned with non-state political violence, this category is of critical importance—it points out (especially for those charged with wielding instruments of state power) the importance of psychologically rich concepts such as "identity" and "framing" for helping us come to terms with the history of the Middle East so as to forecast and influence its future development. In addition, in an ironic upending of the concept of Orientalism, this category may enable us to recognize similar factors at play in our American political history and hence may boost awareness that our own story is of a

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[85] An excellent reference here is Toby Dodge's *Inventing Iraq: The Failure of Nation Building and a History Denied* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2003). See also William Casebeer & Barak Salmoni, "The Importance of Treating Culture as a System," *American Intelligence Journal*, forthcoming 2006.

piece with those of the people of Southwest Asia, even if it differs greatly in historical detail; this recognition may prevent overly ambitious (and probably false) "clash of civilization"-style worldviews from driving policy.

D.   THE ARGI INDEX

The substance of this chapter can be summarized in the following slide, taken from a presentation the author gave at a terrorism conference in November, 2005: the "x" axis represents being at risk (AR), and consists of the multiplication of the inverse of political opportunity available (INV(PO)) by the availability of mobilizing resources (MR) by the presence of mobilizing frames (FR). The "y" axis represents salient group identities (SGI), and consists of the multiplication of a measure of identity heterogeneity (HET) by a measure of the strength of group identification (GI).
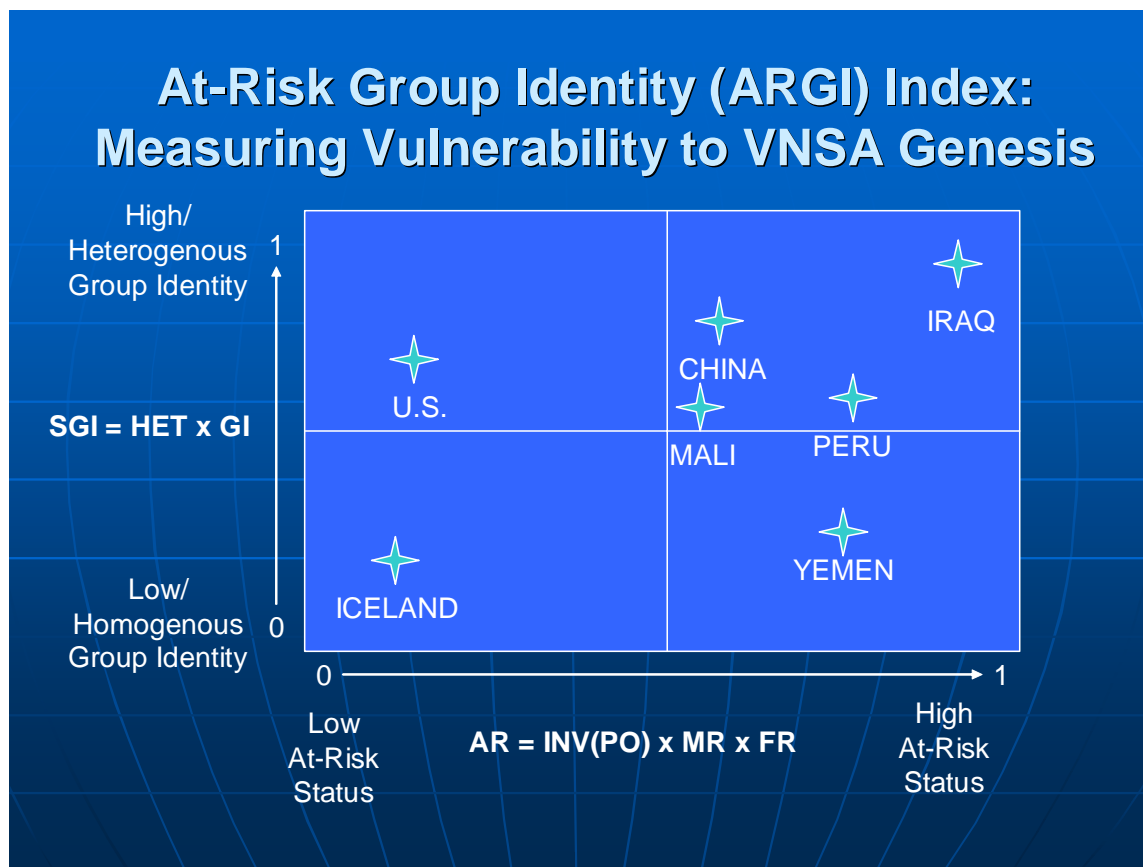

Figure 4.   At-Risk Group Identity Index

61

There are several interesting things to note about this graph. First, the nations identified in the upper right hand quadrant (the "one/one" states) face active or incipient violent non-state organizations (multiple insurgencies for Iraq, a resurgent Sendero Luminoso for Peru, the Uigher rebellion for China, and simmering Tuareg and salafist Islamic activity for Mali). Second, the nations in the lower right quadrant face latent *slow-burning* non-state violence, while those in the upper left hand quadrant face latent *fast-burning* non-state violence. The slow-burners will move in fits and starts into the active quadrant only because (generally) the manipulation of identities is a process that takes many years—a sudden influx of finances, for example, would not immediately change the identity dynamic at play in Yemen. On the other hand, the fast-burners are already "pregnant" on the identity axis, so a sudden influx of mobilizing resources, or a gestalt shift in the "frame game" (brought on by a critical event or a harsh government crackdown) could put those identities at risk very quickly. To be provocative, the analysis places the United States in this category just to demonstrate that identity politics still are a factor in domestic political machinations; if we as a polity were to suddenly go insane and repeal parts of the constitution concerned with equal protection of the law, and then elect a David Duke equivalent to office, we could (justifiably) experience domestic rebellion. Finally, The "zero/zero" states, one example of which is Iceland—a relatively homogenous state with very few justice frames at play—have no violent non-state actor (VNSA) activity.

The ARGI index also highlights policy options for diminishing the likelihood of non-state political violence. For example, in present day Iraq, one of the most important things we could do to de-motivate the Sunni-based aspects of the insurgencies is to elevate Sunni perceptions that they will be given a genuine chance of political opportunity in the new Iraqi regime. Or, we could ensure that credible regional actors with ethos with Sunni target audiences diminish the effectiveness of the justice frames which are driving Sunni rebellion.[86] Tackling mobilizing resources may be more difficult but is nonetheless one facet of a comprehensive counter-insurgency strategy (e.g., by interdicting financial networks related to Sunni VNSA activity, or by identifying

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[86] See Casebeer and Russell's March 2005 "Strategic Insight" on counter-narrative strategies, available here: http://www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/si/2005/Mar/casebeerMar05.asp. Last accessed, 20 March 2006.

and isolating individuals with IED construction expertise). On the identity axis, there are actions policymakers can take to consolidate and develop common identities that make the development of in-group/out-group divisions more difficult, whether that be by emphasizing common aspects of history or ensuring the development of robust social capital.

The ARGI index is one useful tool in our counterterrorism and counterinsurgency "bag of tricks." It can usefully help us inform our analysis regarding what nations and regions are at risk for the development of non-state political violence, and can also point out alternative methods for influencing the genesis of violent non-state actors via non-traditional uses of the instruments of state power. While much work remains to be done to realize its promise, this index may prove to be a pivotal concept for helping us understand political violence in general. But even if not, it at least forces us to think creatively about the causes of political violence, and hence may be useful even if overly simplistic.

The final chapter of this thesis discusses how this framework leads to two innovative research programs: one dealing with the neuroscience of terrorism (which articulates a research agenda linking cultural issues to the manifestations of culture at the neural level), and another concerned to offer practical big-picture guidance for strategists and decision-makers tackling the force and culture problem.

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VI. THE NEUROSCIENCE OF TERRORISM, AND STRATEGIC FORCE AND CULTURE PRINCIPLES: BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

A. INTRODUCTION

Many of the phenomena discussed in the previous chapters are implemented in the human mind/brain. For example, the bulk of a framing process takes place in human "mental space"—the mind/brain complex is where much of interest in socially transmitted behaviors takes place. As mentioned before, narratives—and the processing of narratives—are mental through and through. It would be useful, then, prior to articulating general principles that bring together force, culture and terrorism, to briefly consider how a research program which takes into account the neuroscience of culture—especially the radicalization process—would be useful to strategists and planners.

This chapter has two tasks: first, to articulate a research program into the neuroscience of terrorism for the purpose of spurring innovation in academic exploration, and second, to bring the material of the last several chapters together so as to articulate general principles useful in the force and culture change equation.

B. A RESEARCH PROGRAM: THE NEUROSCIENCE OF TERRORISM

Baldly put, studying the neural mechanisms involved in terrorist recruitment, stakeholder support, and small group dynamics may enable improvement of counter-terrorism activity at the strategic, operational and tactical levels. Multiple empirical "proofs of concept" exist. Accomplishing this integrative work in the cognitive neurosciences, the political sciences and the military arts and sciences requires seed money and personnel support, though there is the potential for a large payoff on a small investment.

Exploring terrorist psychology is critical for confronting it effectively. We need to enhance current counter-terrorism tools and develop innovative new ones; arguably, much current effort is focused on killing/capturing leaders and financial interdiction strategies. While effective, this is a limited perspective. Insights from all levels of analysis are needed. The causes of terrorism give primacy to the psychological level:

terrorists are human beings; their actions are driven by psychological cum neurobiological processes. All of them are important, but three especially so: recruitment, stakeholder reinforcement, and small group dynamics leading to radicalization. Understanding the neurobiology of these psychological acts may lead to new and effective strategies and tactics to reduce recruitment rates, engender stakeholder defection, and prevent group member radicalization. Low-hanging fruit exist.

In terms of understanding recruitment: what target populations are vulnerable to recruitment efforts? Why do recruitment efforts succeed? What elements of recruitment efforts are responsible for successful recruitment and prevention of defection? Answering these questions will involve understanding cultural messaging. How do marketed messages of many forms affect the neural mechanisms responsible for choice behavior? "Neuromarketing" is a nascent science, but multiple examples exist of provocative and successful explorations of these questions. The Human Neuroimaging Lab at the Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, TX, has conducted experiments identifying the neural signature of marketing effects in a "Coca-Cola versus Pepsi" task. These signatures correspond to the successful insinuation of a marketed message into reward processing machinery in the brain responsible for everything from addiction to motivated choices. Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging—a brain scanning technique that detects increases in the flow of oxygen to the active parts of our neural system—has been critical in this effort. Designing experiments to extend this work to the system of terrorism is possible. What terrorist messages serve as the most successful "marketing strategies" and why? Work in progress is identifying the processes responsible for causing some narratives and stories to have such a grip on decision-making in the human mind. These story probes are pregnant for variation along multiple axes of interest so we can plumb the persuasive force of terrorist messages.

In terms of understanding stakeholder reinforcement: how do terrorist stakeholders (such as state sponsors of terrorism, sympathetic communities, and key terrorist group members ranging from leaders to foot soldiers) become involved, and how do terrorist organizations reinforce this involvement so it continues? Proof of concept here is in the form of unpublished work on the neural mechanisms responsible for preference of certain visual stimuli; initial results indicate simple metrics like frequency

66

of exposure may explain certain preferences. Frequency of contact may correlate directly with degree of sympathy and serve as a reinforcer. Understanding the neural mechanisms of this process could lead to new strategies for causing role-specific defection (think of the dividends to be had by increasing the likelihood that key terrorist financiers leave terrorist organizations) and diminishing stakeholder support across multiple levels.

Finally, in terms of small group radicalization: there is a strong relationship between social isolation and the social networks produced by going underground and the potential for radicalization in an organization. Why? What neural mechanisms are responsible for this relationship? How do terrorist cell leaders encourage radicalization and develop the trust and charisma that are part of this process? Proof of concept here exists in the form of experiments demonstrating the neural mechanisms of trust formation. Bargaining games in a social setting have led researchers to discover possible neural signatures related to the formation of trust and will help researchers understand what factors enhance or diminish trust and social-bond formation and maintenance. This may eventually link to the environment of the social encounter and relationship to reputation in interesting ways.

Understanding the neural mechanisms of recruitment, stakeholder reinforcement and small group radicalization will enable us to enhance and expand existing counterterrorism tools and provide new options at the strategic, operational and tactical levels. Recruitment is a critical driver in terrorist group genesis and growth; diminishing the effectiveness of recruitment stories and environments will have a large impact on the likelihood of terrorism. Stakeholder reinforcement is critical for maturing terrorist organizations; encouraging role defection among key group members can diminish terrorist operating capacity and undercut important sources of support. Preventing small group radicalization from happening, and modifying the environments of operation for such groups will diminish the chances that disaffected groups will actually choose indiscriminant violence as a tactic. This work lays the basis for conducting defense in depth by potentially making another profiling tool available to homeland security teams and intelligence collection experts.

C.   FROM THE NEURAL LEVEL TO BIG-PICTURE FORCE, STRATEGY AND CULTURE CONSIDERATIONS: SYSTEMS, CULTURES, AND TERROR

The final major section of this chapter briefly discusses what follows for strategy from treating insurgencies and violent movements from a systems perspective and with requisite sensitivity to culture.

To ensure we consider the full range of policy options available for confronting political violence, the chapter offers the following list of bullets. None (of course) are "magic" bullets, but taken together, they (hopefully) provide a coherent and workable alternative to a counter-insurgency strategy sometimes hobbled by a failure to think *system*atically about the nature of violent non-state organizations and their relationship to cultural millieus.

(1) *Force on force confrontations are only a small part of the "confrontational equation."* Non-state actors often embrace asymmetric warfare: the forces they field are non-traditional, striking in ways that maximize the effect they can produce on far larger forces while using only minimal resources. Confronting such a force with yet another force (e.g., using soldiers to stop suicide bombers) can work, in the short term; but to have this as the primary or only aspect of your strategy is to play directly to the strengths of asymmetric confrontations (this is why insurgencies choose this tactic to begin with). We must be more asymmetric than our adversaries, and that involves coalition members striking in ways that maximize the effect *they* can produce using only minimal resources.

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld expressed much this sentiment in a portion of the infamous two-page memo to his staff (including the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Richard Myers, and Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz) that was leaked to USA Today on October 22, 2002:

Does the US need to fashion a broad, integrated plan to stop the next generation of terrorists? The US is putting relatively little effort into a long-range plan, but we are putting a great deal of effort into trying to stop terrorists. The cost-benefit ratio is against us! Our cost is billions against the terrorists' costs of millions.[87]

In the long-run, culture change considerations may be relatively inexpensive (for example, they may involve relatively simple educational reform in a given region), and can help us close the asymmetry in cost with violent non-state actors (VNSA).

(2) *Insurgents can be deterred.* Violent non-state actors are often thought to be irrational. For that reason, critics contend, it's impossible to deter them…they can only be destroyed. However, an open systems perspective on VNSA development reveals multiple opportunities we have to influence VNSA ontogeny in a way that uses proximate psychological mechanisms to preclude action contrary to our interests. Broaden our notion of deterrence and of psychology, and use those expanded notions to deter VNSA when they can be deterred. If culture is primarily a psychological phenomenon, and insurgencies interact with cultural institutions during their growth and development, then we should be able to prevent insurgencies from forming, or deter them when they do, by having an appropriately subtle understanding of that complex system.

(3) *We should all become ecologists.* A critical insight for counter-insurgency strategy is that webs of environments, interactions and processes both contribute to and constitute VNSA growth. Those involved in formulating anti-terror strategy need to be experts in these webs of structured interactive relationships. We could do worse than taking our cues from those who manage eco-systems such as foresters, farmers, and artificial life theorists. Or, as UCLA research fellow Raphael Sagarin maintains,

The real challenge is to apply evolutionary thinking to homeland security in a more structured, broad-based manner. Evolutionary biologists, ecologists, and paleontologists understand better than anyone the evolutionary successes and failures of genes and species and what it takes to survive in the natural world. Officials prosecuting the war on terrorism should bring experts on evolution into the discussion.[88]

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[87] See the original article in *USA Today* of 22 October 2003 available at http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/executive/rumsfeld-memo.htm as of 10 January 2004, or the excellent summary of the incident from *Slate Online Magazine* at http://slate.msn.com/id/2090250/ available as of 10 January 2004.

[88] See his "Adapt or Die: What Charles Darwin can teach Tom Ridge about homeland security," *Foreign Policy* (September/October 2003), 68–69.

The members of the military profession involved in combating VNSA directly should, at the end of the day, be part of a transformed cadre of military professionals, possessing a very different set of skills not traditionally associated with the warrior profession: this is not our grandfather's security environment. Biology, rather than physics, might be the operative structuring metaphor. Culture, rather than firepower, may be the key center of gravity for achieving desired endstates.

(4) *VNSA are not monolithic, nor do they exist in splendid isolation.* VNSA do not spring onto the international scene fully formed and made of solid granite. They develop over time, and as they do so, they articulate parts that have functions. VNSA are (thankfully) neither *hermetically* nor *hermeneutically* sealed. They exist as part of an open system and the parts of a VNSA are constantly exchanging matter and energy with that system; more, the meanings VNSA leadership use to reinforce group and role-specific identity, are not water-tight. Undermine a VNSA's "story," and you go a long way toward winning the hermeneutic struggle.[89] VNSA are not granite-like rocks that can only be crushed. Instead, they are more like extremely porous stones—pour in the right kind of liquid at the right temperature, let it sit overnight, and the rock disintegrates from the inside, slowly falling apart. The cultural milieus in which VNSA thrive are a critical part of counter-terrorism strategy; when we can't get at the violent organization itself, we should think about influencing the culture which surrounds it in ways which hamper the organization's operations or encourage their transformation into a legitimate non-violent actor.

(5) *Confrontation happens in many ways.* There are multiple paths towards successful confrontation with VNSA and the environments that generate them. We should not think of the war on terrorism or the Iraqi counter-insurgency effort as consisting only in armed struggle. Rather, aspects of this war may be more like the "war" on illiteracy—war-like in the sense that we take (or ought to take) the root causes of illiteracy very seriously and struggle mightily against them, but not war-like in the sense that we shoot bullets at people who can't read. Effective use of the multiple instruments of state power is not to shrink from confrontation, nor to handle VNSA with kid gloves;

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[89] For elaboration, see the Casebeer and Russell *Strategic Insight* from March, 2005, available here: http://www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/si/2005/Mar/casebeerMar05.asp. Last accessed, 20 March 2006.

rather, it is to boost our ability to successfully shape the international security environment in a maximally efficacious manner.

(6) *Effective, possibly non-traditional, intelligence aimed squarely at culture is critical.* Doing this all well is an intelligence intensive enterprise. Much of our intelligence, especially military intelligence, is geared towards traditional battlefield-style warfare. The sources and methods used to gather this intelligence will be useful, but perhaps more useful will be improved *warning analysis* and *forecasting* related to the root causes and transformative processes discussed in the first third of the book. Much of this intelligence will be open-source, but will be manpower intensive and require a rich conceptual infrastructure in order to organize effectively. Actionable intelligence needs to be placed in boxes that bear a clear connection to policy and strategy; open-systems theory does some of this work for us. Most importantly, highlighting the failures of theorists to come to grips with the *culture* they want to influence from a systemic perspective cues us to the critical need for solid cultural intelligence. This intelligence will be all about the inputs, processes, and outputs of the culture in which insurgents and VNSA "swim" and will consist of so much more than facts about customs and courtesies (recall our definition of culture at the start of this paper).

The implication is not that none of these points are factored in to our current national security posture; on the contrary, seeds of them can be found scattered throughout our national security apparatus and in our reactions to events in contemporary Iraq and Afghanistan. Rather, my contention is that (in the main), we have *tended* (again, not in every case) towards output confrontations, ignored deterrent options, undervalued ecological insights, treated VNSA monolithically and without due regard to their meaning-laden nature, defaulted to a narrow sense of confrontation rather than a broad sense, and not focused effectively on the appropriate cultural intelligence tools. Moreover, our expertise is centered on specific groups, thus demanding a policy so nuanced that it lacks the cohesion required to synchronize the instruments of power. This is understandable, given the lack of a comprehensive framework for thinking about such organizations. If we are to overcome some of our disappointments with the results obtained thus far in our war on terror, though, we would do well to embrace systems thinking. If the experience of the British with the Iraqi Mandate is to inform policy, we

would do well to think of culture as a system so we can examine the system with open eyes and in a scientifically rigorous manner, something the British manifestly failed to do. We also need to understand the feedback relationships present with systems of culture (this would, in the best of worlds as prediction is always a mostly unachievable gold-standard, have enabled the British to predict how the coercive use of airpower would be viewed by the population of Iraq).

D.   RESEARCH AGENDA: WHERE TO NOW?

In this thesis, we've visually scanned the visible portion of the culture, force, and terrorism iceberg, touching only its tip. Ninety percent of an iceberg, alas, lies underwater. Our brief survey, and attempt to formulate a synoptic theory of systems and culture, unearths multiple research programs and questions that beg for further exploration if we are to truly understand this security challenge. Here are some suggestions regarding where, corporately, we ought to go next:

(1) *Use the open systems approach to structure our thinking about culture and security*. Currently, there exists no unifying paradigm that allows us to think and speak coherently about culture and violence. While there are some advantages to having a piece-meal approach to a topic, there are considerable benefits to be gained by structuring conversations across milieu using a common vocabulary. My guess is that we can gain even deeper insight into many phenomena already well-discussed in the violent non-state actor literature by rethinking some positions in light of open systems theory. The conceptual system we use to make sense of the world affects our ability to cope with it (compare the raw capacity of any five year old with that of any twenty year old), and the strength of open systems concepts as applied to terrorist groups and insurgencies lies in the explanatory unification and increased insight that results from using them. With insight comes the ability to *control* a system. Piece-meal approaches are useful, especially at the beginning of inquiry, but on the other hand nothing beats theoretical unification for increased prediction, control, and influence (and we'd like to do all these things for many cultural systems).

72

(2) *Validate factual assumptions about the state of the super-system.* Have we appropriately identified the aspects of the international environment that are conducive to VNSA formation? Can we more precisely state the relationship between globalization and the rise of more porous cultures? What is the relationship between state failure and radicalization of a culture (the British Mandate experience is suggestive here)? Are there other interesting respects in which VNSA can construct environmental niches, or in which states can engage in niche destruction? These are all open questions. Our assumptions, while plausible and reflecting a broad consensus in the literature, nonetheless require further exploration to boost our confidence level and to gain insight into the web of ecological relations that is the international environment.

(3) *Validate our initial take on super-system, system and sub-system relationships.* Cultures are very complex dynamic systems. While the general concepts we've used to discuss parts and relationships are sound, they require further investigation. Many relationships between system variables have not been explored in any detail (the general shapes of the curves that define those relationships are not even known in many cases, as we haven't thought to frame questions in this way). Ninety percent of the iceberg remains unexplored (and in this paper, in any case, all I attempted was a definition of culture from the perspective of a system…aside from implying that Dodge was talking about aspects of socio-political culture in his book, I did not actually identify in any systematic way the inputs, processes and outputs that constitute culture; that is a task for a book or two).

(4) *Boost rigor; drive quantitative analyses.* Some of our insights are driven by case-study based analyses. These are useful, but have their shortcomings. Ideally, some relationships which we discuss in qualitative terms could be expressed rigorously in a quantitative manner. This would allow us to more thoroughly "reverse engineer" cultural change, working backwards from observed behavior to infer interior system structure and relationships. Possessing this capacity is important for the articulation of a good culture change strategy or counter-insurgency operation.

(5) *Develop species-specific functional architectures.* VNSA are alike in the critical respects (in much the same way that people are alike in the critical respects,

73

which is why it is possible to have a science of medicine); however, there are probably species-specific differences in functional architecture that space considerations have prevented us from exploring in any detail. For example, certain types of VNSA (e.g., religious movements) will leverage charismatic identity entrepreneurs for their continued influence more so than others (e.g., crime networks). This may result in crucial differences in the authority and maintenance sub-systems. Knowledge of these differences will be critical for driving C-VNSA strategy formulation.

(6) *Develop the allied intelligence tools and architecture required to validate the model and use it effectively.* To exhaustively validate some of the assertions made in our book will require a more theory-driven intelligence architecture than is in place at the national level currently. There is a fundamental shortage of methodologists in the intelligence community. We are not collecting against some of the variables and relationships necessary to gain full insight into culture systems and the VNSA system. Our framework offers insight that will allow us to drive indications and warning decks, for instance; identifying VNSA signatures and growth profiles will cue us to potential areas of concern. The quality of our warning and threat estimates could increase if the thinking about them were structured in this way. Systems insights may drive more effective forecasting tools. Ideally, they could even allow us to answer Donald Rumsfeld's demand for a way to know whether we are winning the war on terror.[90] Developing the intelligence tools and architecture that makes the most sense for confronting VNSA given our framework is extremely important. Recall our earlier discussion of the critical importance of socio-cultural intelligence for an understanding of cultural systems.

(7) *Put computational bite into the theory.* I've stressed the dynamic nature of the VNSA threat, and how our strategy should be sensitive to *diachronic* (across-time) concerns. One way in which these arguments could be made more rigorous and useful is to translate them into workable computer models that allow analysts to accomplish

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[90] Rumsfeld asks: "Today, we lack metrics to know if we are winning or losing the global war on terror. Are we capturing, killing or deterring and dissuading more terrorists every day than the madrassas and the radical clerics are recruiting, training and deploying against us?"

forecasting, engage in stem and branch decision analysis, and stress test strategic options *in silico* before trying them on for size in real life.

Much else remains to be done, as we've only scratched the surface in this paper. Open systems analysis of the culture/insurgency relationship is a *progressive* research program, capable of solving some of the anomalies that traditional approaches leave untouched.

E.   PARADIGM   SHIFT: RESOLVING   ANOMALIES,   SECURING PROGRESS

The philosopher and sociologist of science Thomas Kuhn is famous for articulating the idea of a paradigm shift.[91] Kuhn postulated that all science is conducted with the boundaries of a paradigm: fundamental assumptions about what we should count as real and how we come to possess knowledge about those things. From paradigms fall such items as testing procedures, methodological considerations, and vocabularies. Eventually, paradigms may enter a crisis stage because of their inability to resolve anomalies. For instance, the Newtonian paradigm eventually entered crisis because of its inability to explain multiple stellar phenomena, including the precession of Mercury. When a new paradigm emerges that explains away the anomalies that the paradigm in crisis could not, is it oft-times adopted, becoming the new and normal way of doing science. Progress occurs by the successive replacement of failing paradigms with more expansive explanatorily fecund paradigms.

Current approaches to "forced culture change" have multiple anomalies. Defense decision-makers have complained that we have no comprehensive understanding of insurgencies as a phenomena; we have no way of knowing whether or not we are winning the war on terrorism or whether or not we are succeeding in Iraq. The way we best solve these anomalies is by shifting to a more comprehensive framework that gives us the tools, methods, and vocabulary we need to be able to make sense of them. That new paradigm

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[91] Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1962).

is the open systems framework, which can unify disparate approaches to force and culture change, providing us comprehensive insight into how we can manage this process so that it is effective.

There is much at stake here. The success of our national security posture (itself a manifesto for forced culture change abroad) rides on whether or not we are willing to think creatively and "outside of the box" about historical circumstances like the British Iraqi Mandate, Hizballah's development, or Afghanistan and Iraq. Taking insights from the force, culture and terrorism nexus and extending them so that we can ensure that instruments of state power are used in a way that actually achieves the desired effects remains our next great intellectual strategic challenge.

F.   CONCLUSION

The exploration of culture, systems theory, and narratives which sparked this thesis has covered a good deal of ground in a short period of time. In that sense, it is suggestive, and there are huge gaps within the nascent theory on offer which remain to be filled. Even so, this general exploration suggests that we ought to be pessimistic about large-scale culture change using force—it is very difficult to get the relationship between the use of force and changes in inputs, processes and outputs in socially transmitted behavior exactly right. On the other hand, this thesis suggests that force can indeed play a role in shifting socially transmitted behaviors in some contexts. We ought not to be pessimists across the board. In general, the intersection of military force, stories, and culture, lends itself to humility in aims, tempered with a meliorative attitude: while it may be difficult to get things right, in some circumstances, we can at least make things better. Where those circumstances obtain, military force has an appropriate role to play in shifting cultures. Where not, though, we as strategists and policymakers need to be keenly aware of the limitations which the nature of force places on what can be done to shift stories, influence identities, and otherwise influence some of the systems involved in perpetuating learned behavior. Getting this all right is complicated, but nothing less than success in grand national security strategy rides on it.

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