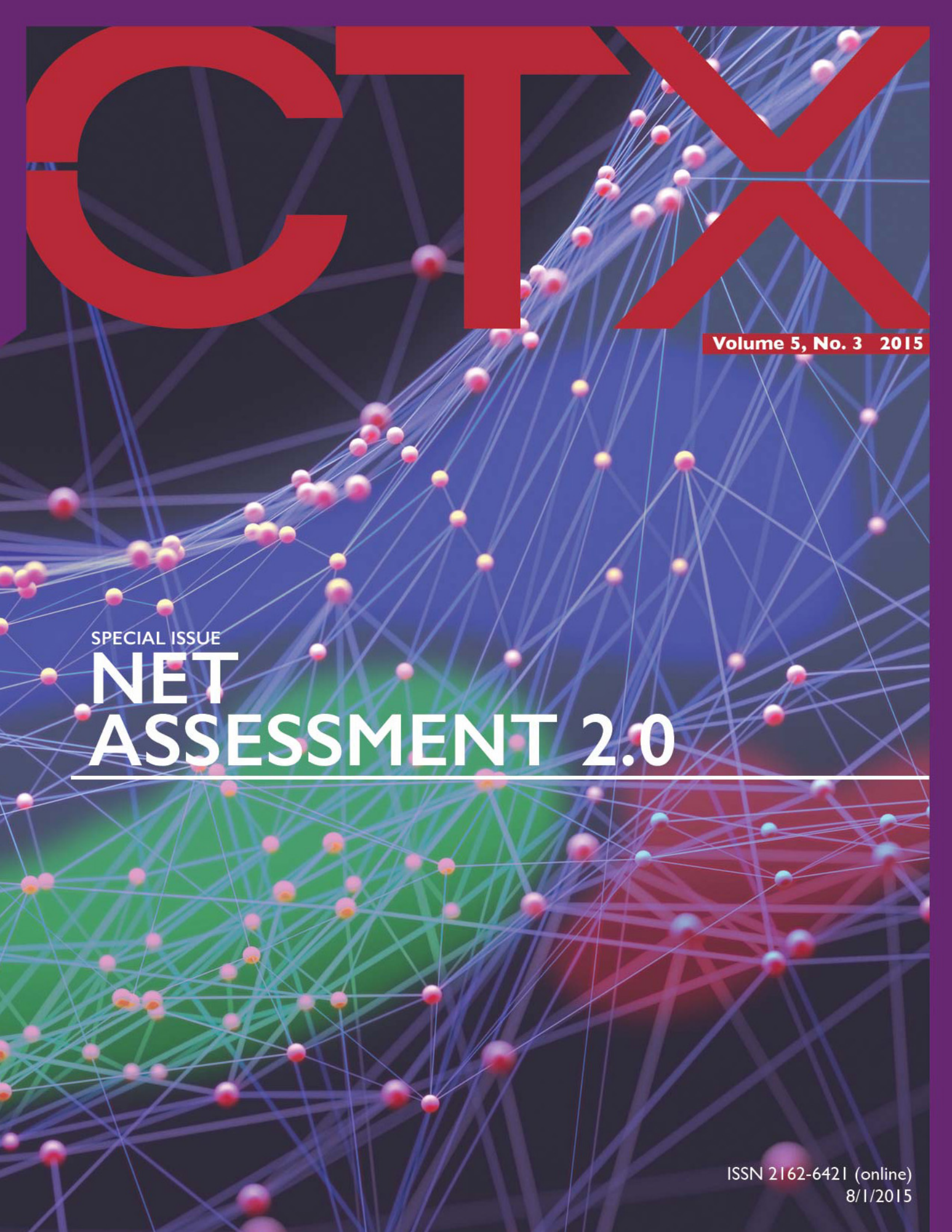

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Preface to the Special Edition

The analytical process known as counterterrorism (CT) net assessment anticipates our ability to counter threats and thus provides a perspective on the factors that could define success or failure for US CT policy that is fundamentally different from other methods. CT net assessments help decision makers understand what is truly important about an issue by balancing desired outcomes and anticipated policy effects in the face of struggle. It is called a "net" assessment because it considers how we fare in removing obstacles, overcoming resistance, and exploiting opportunities to achieve our desired outcomes. Some threats might appear great but can largely be mitigated with current policies and capabilities, while others that seem more minor might turn out to be inexorable and actually pose a greater net concern.

Anticipating what is coming over the next ridgeline—be it cyber attacks, terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, or something not yet considered—is not a trivial endeavor. The simultaneous interactions of networks, technology, information, and politics combine to produce a potentially sinister, dauntingly complex strategic brew. Getting a handle on this strategic complexity requires a broader knowledge base than ever before to understand how varied and seemingly unrelated parts interact with one another—at dizzying speeds—to create new possibilities.

CT net assessment offers unique information that helps its users to achieve and sustain a competitive advantage. Such assessments require a strong and accurate diagnosis of the causes that underlie strengths as well as weaknesses, and how these causal factors interact and coevolve. A good diagnosis will provide the necessary "sense-making" to guide appropriate action in full cognizance of the long-term consequences of both action and inaction, in terms of potential threats and opportunities across a range of policy choices. A bad diagnosis can lead to policy choices that are inefficient, ineffective, and potentially tragic.

A CT net assessment process that considers and anticipates the emergence of new threats and the transformation of current ones challenges the traditional, static "war on terror" paradigm. Because new threats arise and old ones mutate, a theory of victory needs to focus on managing threats, similar to the strategic model used by police agencies as opposed to a World War II–style model of submission and defeat. The need for new thinking about the contours of success is especially obvious when one considers that CT activities in themselves greatly influence the emergence and evolution of violent non-state actors.

Rather than examining our own capabilities and limitations, or assessing the implications of the multifaceted strategic environment, most intelligence focuses on evaluating the capabilities of our adversaries. We need to expand beyond that approach and consider the net effect of the coevolutionary interaction of three

complex dynamics: ourselves, the environment, and the adversary. The information produced through CT net assessment can help decision makers to focus and prioritize policies and resources to achieve advantage and hedge against uncertain future developments. Understanding our sources of advantage and those of our adversaries helps us to determine our leverage in a given situation and the conditions in the strategic environment that favor loss and opportunity.

We anticipate that this special issue of the *Combating Terrorism Exchange* will help the National Counterterrorism Center's net assessment practitioners and our colleagues in other agencies and other countries refine our craft as we continue to evolve in our thinking about and approach to net assessment. ❖

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Foreword

Dr. John Arquilla,
US Naval Postgraduate School

In 1942, not long after the United States entered World War II, Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox gave a speech in which he said, "Modern warfare is an intricate business about which no one knows everything and few know very much." He spoke at a time of great adversity, when the German Army's *blitzkrieg* on land and the Imperial Japanese Navy's aircraft carriers at sea had transformed the face of battle. U-boats were decimating shipping along the East Coast of the United States, and Stuka dive-bombers had already turned many European cities into rubble. To Knox, whose battle experience was as a member of Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders in the Spanish-American War back in 1898,[1] the technology of war had made quite startling advances and brought to life remarkable, if vexing, new military doctrines.

But one thing had not really changed: the nature of the adversaries. The Axis powers were still recognizable nation-states, with finite production possibilities and manpower. This made strategic assessment relatively easy, because it was possible to reckon the potential of the threats clearly and to map out a design for victory along the well-known, well-worn paths of previous wars. Thus, if the Germans were able to win the Battle of France in 1940 with no more than 10 panzer divisions in the field, then the United States would deploy more than double that number of its own armored divisions—which it did. If the *Luftwaffe* could keep just a few thousand fighters and bombers in the air, then American aircraft production would rise to tens of thousands annually. In December 1941, the US Navy had just seven aircraft carriers, but by the summer of 1945 it had built a hundred carriers—many times more than Japan could produce.[2] And this was just the *American* contribution; the other Allies were producing mightily as well. Thus it became clear that, no matter the skill of German panzer generals and Japanese carrier admirals, they were going down in utter defeat. As historian John Ellis so succinctly described the German dilemma, "Once Hitler arrayed himself against the material might of both Russia and the USA, his battle, even for mere survival, was hopeless."[3]

This simple, reassuring straightforwardness about strategic affairs was bound not to last.

In the 70 years since the end of World War II, the process of assessment has become much more difficult. This may be less true for nation-vs.-nation calculations, in which numbers of tanks, planes, ships, and missiles are still thought to matter to some degree, but it has been the reality in the area of "peoples' wars," in which irregular concepts of operations and the sheer grit of committed insurgents swept the world clean of colonial rule during the postwar decades. This first wave of anticolonial nonstate actors proved able to fight on—and more often than not, to win—despite deep material deficiencies. Today, they are being followed by a second wave of guerrilla and terrorist movements that is particularly distinguished by its networked organizational forms. These violent networks are, to borrow David Weinberger's very elegant phrasing, "small pieces

THESE VIOLENT NETWORKS ARE "SMALL PIECES LOOSELY JOINED."

Syrian Kurds flee Kobane as Islamic State forces approach.

Protest against Boko Haram terrorism

loosely joined."[4] They pursue common goals with little central control or even coordination. They are hard to detect and track, much less to disrupt or destroy. They include al Qaeda and ISIS, Hezbollah and Hamas, Boko Haram and the Houthis, Jemaah Islamiyah and the Moros. The Taliban, too. If the Muslim thread that runs through these groups suggests that religious zeal is a source of strength, then one might ponder why the vast numbers of the world's devout Muslims, who actively oppose and vastly outnumber the jihadis, have had so little effect to date in quelling them.

But religion is simply one aspect of culture. Given that, from the seventh to the seventeenth centuries, successive Muslim powers were both aggressive and highly innovative, there may be some value in assessing insurgent and terrorist jihadi networks today in light of the amazing achievements of their forebears. For example—and this is perhaps the single best example—consider the half century of Islamic expansion after the Prophet's death (in 632 CE), which featured loose-jointed, highly flexible military formations that won an empire stretching from the Strait of Gibraltar in the west to Samarkand, more than 6,000 km to the east in Central Asia. Field Marshal Viscount Bernard Montgomery, in his sweeping *History of Warfare*, ascribed this stunning success less to *force majeure* than to "morale, mobility, and endurance."[5]

THE RESILIENT MORALE OF INSURGENTS & TERRORISTS IS UNDOUBTEDLY CRUCIAL TO THEIR SUCCESSES.

These same qualities have been very much on display across the violent jihadi networks that have bedeviled allied armies in Afghanistan and Iraq over the past decade, against which technological and material advantages have proved of little value. Indeed, the fact that current-era networks of jihadis have sustained protracted campaigns from West Africa to Southeast Asia—and have been able on occasion to mount strikes much farther afield—is *prima facie* evidence that these groups' opponents must develop newer, fresher approaches to strategic assessment in order to fully understand and ultimately counter them. Here, too, there are lessons to be drawn from seventh-century events, when the two most advanced militaries of the time, those of the Persian and the Byzantine empires, were bowled over by the armies of Islam—the former being conquered outright and the latter rocked to its roots. In the words of Sir John Bagot Glubb, who did some soldiering with Arab armies in his time, the first Muslims "swept irresistibly forward without organization, without pay, without plans, and without orders. They constitute a perpetual warning to technically advanced nations who rely for their defence on scientific progress rather than the human spirit."[6]

Glubb thus prefigured Montgomery's first factor for success: morale, an element which itself goes far toward explaining his third factor, the sheer persistence of these fighters. The implication is that strategic assessment processes today must focus on the psychological dimension of irregular warfare with both energy and insight. Although the fighting spirit of German and Japanese soldiers late in

Resident under a destroyed market, Ukraine

Masked Hamas activists demonstrating martial arts

World War II remained high even when defeat was inevitable, this factor was less important to the outcome of that material-driven conflict. Today, by contrast, the resilient morale of insurgents and terrorists is undoubtedly crucial to their successes in the field, and understanding the foundation of this tenacity—which is likely to be more than just blind religious zeal—may prove to be the single most important task of strategic assessment.

Present-day jihadis seem to be as much motivated by the real power of a compelling narrative about reducing the shadow cast by infidel influence over the Muslim world as by the promise of Paradise. When this narrative makes explicit links to the great victories of the early caliphs, the later Muslim triumphs over Crusaders and Mongols, and more recent successes against the Russians in Afghanistan, the Israelis in Lebanon, and so on, including the fights that are ongoing, the strength of the story grows exponentially.

NATION-STATES MAY ENTER INTO DARK ALLIANCES WITH NON-STATE NETWORKS OF TERRORISTS.

As to the remaining key factor mentioned by Montgomery, the sheer capacity to get around, insurgent mobility today is more a product of stealth than of the swift horses and durable camels that took the soldiers of the early caliphates across such a wide swath of the world in such a short time. If the jihadi today cannot be detected and tracked early on, then he can "ride the rails" of globalization to get wherever he wishes to go, whether by turning a commercial airliner into a long-range cruise missile, or traveling by whatever varied means to reach the fight in some far-off land. Stealthiness destroys distance—yet another factor that turns classic strategic assessment on its head. Again, think back to the Second World War. Both the Germans and the Japanese conquered vast territories, but the farther they went, the harder their efforts were to sustain, and the more utterly vulnerable they became to counterattacks. The Axis reverses at Stalingrad and Guadalcanal were no mysteries; they were the consequences of overextension. Not so today. The greater the geographic spread of contemporary jihadis, the greater the problems they pose for counterterrorist forces. This, too, is an area in which concepts of assessment must evolve.

Clearly, traditional modes of strategic assessment do not work well when it comes to understanding the capabilities of non-state networks of insurgents and terrorists. The further possibility that nation-states may enter into dark alliances with such networks—including ones that prey upon the world in and from cyberspace—complicates the assessment of more traditional adversaries. One cannot view pro-Russian actions in Crimea and eastern Ukraine without great concern for the possibility that nations are opening up a whole new form of covert aggression by linking up with and motivating networks of non-state actors. What is more, both Russia and China have shown remarkable perspicacity in cultivating hacker networks.

Thus, in addition to the eruption of the world's first great war between nations and jihadi networks, ongoing since 9/11, there is yet another conflict emerging, one in which coalitions of nations *and* networks will increasingly face off against each other. Not a cold war, but a "cool war." Unlike the Cold War arms race to build nuclear weapons, however, the principal dynamic is now an "organizational race" to build networks. Hoping to understand and master this new dynamic, many researchers in our Defense Analysis program at the Naval Postgraduate School, along with colleagues at Pennsylvania State University and at the National Counterterrorism Center, are looking at new ways to assess non-state actors.

THE PRINCIPAL DYNAMIC IS NOW AN "ORGANIZATIONAL RACE" TO BUILD NETWORKS.

This special issue of *CTX* is a major step that may help to guide the process of developing an innovative, much-needed new approach to the whole process of strategic assessment of non-state actors. Both the potential of and the challenges to this undertaking are well exposited by the authors herein. At this point, I can only add that, in addition to the value of the many substantive insights to be found in this issue, our hope is that a real sense of urgency will arise about the need to develop more network-oriented modes of assessment. It has been almost 20 years since David Ronfeldt and I first pointed to the rise of this threat from networks, and to the odd new mode of conflict that would come along with them. As we put the matter then,

> Power is migrating to actors who are skilled at developing networks, and at operating in a world of networks. Actors positioned to take advantage of networking are being strengthened faster than actors embedded in old hierarchical structures that constrain networking. ... Non-state adversaries—from warriors to criminals, especially those that are transnational—are currently ahead of government actors at using, and at being able to use, this mode of organization and related doctrines and strategies.[7]

We lag far behind in an "organizational race" in which non-state actors have been given quite a head start. Now it is time to start catching up. ❖

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NOTES

1 Before Theodore "Teddy" Roosevelt became the 26th president of the United States in 1901, he led a regiment of irregular cavalry in the Spanish-American War. Their most famous engagement was a bravado charge at the Battle of San Juan, an act that made the Rough Riders and Roosevelt national heroes.

2 For details on carrier and other ship production, see Samuel Eliot Morison, *History of United States Naval Operations in World War II,* vol. 15, *Supplemental and General Index* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1962), 29–35.

3 John Ellis, *Brute Force: Allied Strategy and Tactics in the Second World War* (New York: Viking Press, 1990), 30.

4 David Weinberger, *Small Pieces Loosely Joined: A Unified Theory of the Web* (New York: Perseus Books, 2002).

5 Bernard Montgomery, *A History of Warfare* (Cleveland: World Publishing Company, 1968), 138.

6 Glubb trained and led Transjordan's Arab forces between 1939 and 1956. John Bagot Glubb, *The Great Arab Conquests* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1963), 359.

7 John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, *The Advent of Netwar,* MR-789-OSD (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 1996), 43.

Introduction to the Special Issue

Dr. Scott Sigmund Gartner, Pennsylvania State University

The rapid rise of the Islamic State (ISIS) seemed to stun American leaders. US President Barack Obama stated, "There is no doubt that their advance, their movement over the last several months has been more rapid than the intelligence estimates and, I think, the expectations of policymakers both in and outside of Iraq,"[1] an observation echoed by Director of National Intelligence James Clapper.[2] There is a widespread view that US intelligence agencies were surprised by the meteoric rise of ISIS and its effectiveness at acquiring territory: "Intelligence agencies were caught off guard by the speed of the extremists' subsequent advance across northern Iraq."[3] Many see this as an intelligence failure: "We got caught flat-footed. Period."[4] These views raise fundamental concerns about US intelligence agencies' ability to accurately assess the capabilities, interests, and actions of violent non-state actors (VNSAs).

Net assessment "looks at the strategic match between the two sides' strengths and weakness."[5] Integrating highly disparate factors into a single calculation represents a considerable challenge.[6] But without assessments, it is impossible to adopt and adapt effective security policy.[7] The question then is, How should we conduct *net* assessments of violent non-state actors in a way that addresses these inherent challenges? As we see with ISIS, a comparatively distant, nonexistential threat can monopolize the focus of a government's security, intelligence, and political apparatuses. It has never been more vital to be able to anticipate the rise and decline of these violent groups.

WITHOUT ASSESSMENTS, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO ADOPT AND ADAPT EFFECTIVE SECURITY POLICY.

Having the ability to develop a complete and accurate picture of violent non-state actors is not just a US concern, but represents a critical capability for all nations. The current era, characterized by asymmetric warfare and the scourge of transnational terrorism, has seen a rise in intrastate conflict coincident with a dramatic decline in the occurrence of interstate wars. In each case, groups, not nations, represent the threat. Or, as John Arquilla warns in the foreword to this special issue, "There is yet another conflict emerging, one in which coalitions of nations *and* networks will increasingly face off against each other." It is vital for the security of the world's nations to be able to determine which of those groups are more capable and threatening, which areas are likely to see the greatest emergence of violent non-state actors, and how environmental factors influence the insurgent-counterinsurgent dynamic. Net Assessment 2.0 thus represents an essential global concern.

Net assessments by the US government have traditionally focused on state-vs.-state competitions, such as a long-term focus on the Cold War rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union.[8] The most important of these net assessments was conducted by the Pentagon's Office of Net Assessment (ONA), led by Andrew Marshall.[9] The job of the ONA was to "analyze the relative power

Andrew Marshall

of the United States and the Soviet Union—that is, to assess how the two nations' strengths and weaknesses netted out."[10] Marshall developed a complex and comprehensive methodology for acquiring information and transforming divergent factors into comparable metrics.[11]

The ONA's challenge, however, pales in comparison to that which analysts face when assessing VNSAs. States have comparatively static boundaries, slowly changing populations, fixed resource endowments, predictable interests, and sluggishly adaptive institutions. By contrast, non-state actors such as terrorist and insurgent groups rapidly emerge, change, and die, and have widely varying capabilities, interests, and behaviors.[12] These groups even "change their policies and shift back and forth between violent and nonviolent strategies, occasionally adopting both at the same time."[13] The physical resources of a transnational terror group like Boko Haram are miniscule compared to those of even a small state.[14] VNSAs lack clearly observable features like roads, mines, missile silos, factories, and ports that can be counted, weighed, and assessed. These factors make comprehensive net assessments of VNSAs extremely challenging and possibly even unachievable.[15]

THE KEY IS TO UNDERSTAND HOW THESE GROUPS MANIPULATE INFORMATION AND PERCEPTIONS ACROSS NETWORKS.

Producing net assessments of VNSAs requires that we both borrow from and expand beyond the traditional approach to threat analysis. "By definition, a comprehensive terrorism assessment must include more than just a threat evaluation."[16] Given the relative lack of physical resources commanded by VNSAs, the key to countering them is to understand how these groups manipulate information and perceptions across networks to gain recruits, manipulate policy, and instill fear.[17] This new method must not only range beyond the traditional parameters of the ONA protocol,[18] but must also include fresh and innovative approaches.

In 2013, a small cadre from the National Counterterrorism Center's Directorate for Strategic Operational Planning created a Net Assessment Branch. This new team began a multiyear project to produce a new way to conduct net assessments that could apply to non-state actors. The goal of this special issue of the *Combating Terrorism Exchange* is to introduce new ways of thinking that challenge the epistemology of how net assessments have been conducted for the past 50 years. These articles make a strong case against "business as usual" when it comes to producing net assessments of non-state actors. The essays reveal innovative concepts and insights, some of which clearly must be incorporated into how the United States and its allies assess new threats, and all of which demonstrate the value of thinking creatively about security in the twenty-first century.

The seven essays begin with "Characteristics of Terrorism Hotspots" by James A. Piazza, which shows that places with high levels of human rights abuse are

especially likely to see the emergence of terrorism. In their essay "The Blue-Green-Red Metaphor in the Context of Counterterrorism: Clarifications and Anthropological Emendations," Lawrence A. Kuznar and Carl W. Hunt take on traditional "blue–red–green" approaches to net assessment and suggest instead a new interdisciplinary perspective that examines disruptive and constructive functional capabilities. In a collaboration formed expressly for this issue, Matthew M. Mars, Judith L. Bronstein, and Patricia L. Sullivan—experts on ecosystems, biology, and political violence, respectively—use their article, "The Ecosystem of Dark Networks: A Biological Perspective," to describe an ecological approach to militant violence that highlights the critical role of "keystone" actors within an ecosystem. Many researchers view identity formation as one of the most critical factors driving VNSA emergence. Michael Vlahos explores how national and group identities are constructed, and the particular circumstances of the American identity, in the article "America: Imagined Community, Imagined Kinship." In "One Arm Tied Behind Our Backs? Assessing the Power of the United States to Combat Global Threats," Leo Blanken and Jason Lepore look at the constraining role that politics and norms play in national security and make a strong case for including these political norms in net assessments. Melvin J. Konner explores the powerful role that metaphors and conceptual models play in influencing the way we conduct net assessments and cautions about an overreliance on predictive modeling in his essay, "The Weather of Violence: Metaphors and Models, Predictions and Surprises." Finally, in "Trapped by the Paradigm: Why Net Assessment May Not Contribute to Countering Terrorism," two-time US ambassador Dennis Jett questions the value of the entire net assessment enterprise, suggesting we look instead at how to encourage the development of democratic institutions and norms in unstable countries.

Terrorism generates both fear and confusion, which can easily lead to overreaction by its targets, and in the end, this overreaction represents the true existential threat. During his US Civil War campaigns, Confederate General Stonewall Jackson drove to "always mystify, mislead, and surprise the enemy if possible." Developing improved ways to conduct net assessments of violent non-state actors represents a major step in demystifying this type of threat and taking greater control of our global security. As CAPT Todd G. Veazie notes in the preface to this issue, the stakes are high. "A good diagnosis will provide the necessary 'sense-making' to guide appropriate action in full cognizance of the long-term consequences of both action and inaction, in terms of potential threats and opportunities across a range of policy choices. A bad diagnosis can lead to policy choices that are inefficient, ineffective, and potentially tragic." ❖

IN THE END, OVERREACTION REPRESENTS THE TRUE EXISTENTIAL THREAT.

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Characteristics of Terrorism Hotspots

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WHAT TYPES OF COUNTRIES ARE MORE LIKELY TO EXPERIENCE TERRORISM? This seemingly simple question is crucial when conducting a net assessment of the environment in which terrorist activity occurs. Understanding which countries are terrorism-prone—what might be called "terrorism hotspots"—helps experts understand the conditions that are conducive to terrorist activity.[1] In this article, I discuss five factors that appear frequently in empirical research as contributors to terrorist activity both within countries and across borders. These include the socioeconomic status of the country, such as its level of poverty; political qualities such as whether the country's governing regime is a democracy or a dictatorship; the government's respect for human rights and the degree to which it uses repression in response to dissent; the treatment of ethnic and religious minorities; and whether the country has experienced a foreign military intervention. Each of these five factors has figured prominently in the national discussion about terrorism and counterterrorism among US policymakers and scholars since the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Empirical research on them reveals patterns that can inform the net assessment of violent non-state actors.

In this article, I discuss each of these five factors in turn by examining the evidence from the available empirical research. I then use some descriptive statistics to examine the factors' influence on terrorist attacks in countries in the post–9/11 era, and conclude by producing a composite profile of a terrorism hotspot. But first it is necessary to define some terms.

What Is Terrorism?

Terrorism is a politically freighted, emotionally provocative, and highly contested term that has eluded attempts by policymakers and scholars to develop a universally accepted definition for it.[2] I prefer the operational definition used by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism at the University of Maryland: terrorism is "the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation."[3] In this article I consider two categories of terrorism: domestic terrorist attacks that occur within a single country, and transnational terrorist attacks perpetrated by the citizens of one country against another country. These categories allow me to compare the factors of the country in which an attack occurs with the factors of the country or countries the terrorists hail from. For example, if I were to evaluate the factors within the United States on 11 September 2001 that facilitated the attacks, such as intelligence or policing failures, I would also examine the political, social, and economic features of the countries that the 9/11 hijackers came from to better understand their motivations.

TERRORISM IS A POLITICALLY FREIGHTED, EMOTIONALLY PROVOCATIVE, AND HIGHLY CONTESTED TERM.

What Causes Terrorism? The Five Factors

What specific internal conditions might make a country more likely to experience terrorism on its soil? What domestic conditions might cause the citizens of a country to be more likely to commit terrorist attacks against another country? Empirical research on the causes of terrorism have burgeoned since the 9/11 attacks, and some tentative patterns have emerged.

Poverty

In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, US President George W. Bush famously linked poverty with terrorism, remarking, "We fight against poverty, because hope is an answer to terror."[4] Bush was joined in this assessment by a wide assortment of politicians and public figures. The relationship between poverty and terrorism makes some intuitive sense. People living in conditions of economic deprivation can develop strong grievances that they have no hope of resolving and might resort to political violence as a way of calling attention to their situation. The immiseration accompanying poverty may attune people to radical beliefs and extremist movements that seem to offer change.

POOR AND UNDERDEVELOPED COUNTRIES ARE NOT NECESSARILY TERRORISM HOTSPOTS.

Furthermore, poverty, unemployment, and lack of access to education could reduce the opportunity costs associated with engaging in terrorism. People suffering from economic deprivation would seem to have less to lose by joining or supporting terrorist movements than those with a greater stake in their society and its economic opportunities. Researchers, however, have not generally found poor people to be more likely to engage in terrorism, or terrorism to occur in poor countries or terrorist acts to become more frequent during economic downturns or crises.[5] Most indicators of economic development, such as gross domestic product per capita, are unreliable predictors of terrorist activity. Some studies even suggest that, although there is not strong evidence showing that poor countries incubate terrorism, wealthier countries are more likely to be targeted by terrorists.[6] There is a logic to this proposition. In addition to being a tactic used to garner attention and to communicate to a larger audience, terrorism is a tool of weak actors that face strong adversaries. Thus, weak domestic or transnational non-state opponents of a wealthy country may opt to engage in terrorism rather than use conventional force. Wealthy countries contain more and better targets for terrorists, are more likely to have well-developed media, and are militarily stronger than poor countries. Finally, rich countries are symbols of the global status quo, which increases their desirability as targets to antisystem actors like terrorists. Therefore, poor and underdeveloped countries are not necessarily terrorism hotspots.

Lack of Democratic Rule

As the justification for the 2003 US invasion of Iraq transformed from a policy intended to prevent Saddam Hussein from acquiring and deploying weapons of mass destruction to democracy promotion, terrorism researchers turned their attention to the relationship between authoritarian rule and terrorism. Conventional wisdom suggested that the absence of democratic rights and freedoms, particularly in regions like the Middle East, promoted terrorism because in such polities citizens are denied nonviolent legal routes to redress their grievances. Moreover, democratic regimes are assumed to produce fewer social grievances in

the first place, to be more politically stable, and to produce nonviolent norms of political behavior, all of which dampen terrorist activity.[7] Democracies, however, also have many features that aid terrorist movements. In addition to fostering free media that can be used to amplify the propaganda value of terrorist attacks, many democracies afford their citizens freedoms of assembly, association, and movement; guarantee the legal rights of the accused; and put limits on police power. This produces real vulnerabilities for democracies and constrains their counterterrorism policies.[8]

The empirical evidence on democracy and terrorism has generally failed to vindicate the "democracy promotion as counterterrorism" hypothesis. Many studies have found that democracies do not experience fewer terrorist attacks or produce fewer terrorists.[9] Nevertheless, there are some nuances in the literature. For example, some research indicates that specific features of democratic rule, such as broad political participation, reduce terrorism while others, such as restraints on executive action and limitations on policing and surveillance, increase its likelihood.[10] Still other research finds that recently democratized regimes are at a higher risk for terrorist activity than more mature, established democracies.[11] This latter finding has clear implications for US efforts to democratize countries like Iraq and Afghanistan, which I discuss in more detail in the conclusion to this article.

Human Rights

Though democracy is not a simple antidote for terrorism, a feature associated with liberal political rule—the preservation of human rights—seems to be closely associated with reduced levels of terrorist activity. Countries whose governments abuse the human rights of their citizens tend to experience significantly more terrorism in the years subsequent to a crackdown, and this is found to be particularly true when abuses are widespread.[12] This is a cross-national empirical finding that conforms to much of the case literature on the subject. During crackdowns against dissent, protest, and political violence, official tolerance of the human rights abuses committed by security forces—including torture of suspected terrorists and their supporters and arrest and detention without trial—frequently produced terrorism backlashes. In countries like France during the Algerian War (1954–1962), Britain during the early years of the Troubles in Northern Ireland (1968 through the 1980s), Egypt in the early 1980s after the assassination of President Anwar Sadat, and Turkey during the Kurdish conflict in the 1990s, such abuses substantially worsened domestic terrorist activity. In each of these cases, human rights violations by governments radicalized detainees; alienated critical civilian populations; fueled the propaganda, fundraising, and recruitment efforts of terrorist movements; and weakened international counterterrorism cooperation.

Minority Status

Another persistent finding in the empirical literature is that countries where ethnic or religious minority groups occupy a lower status in society compared to other groups are more likely to both experience and produce terrorism. This is particularly the case when those disadvantaged groups experience economic discrimination or are excluded from political power.[13] Exclusion and/or discrimination help to create and deepen ethnic or religious groups' grievances against the

state, the majority population, and the status quo, while also fostering a sense of "otherness" within the minority community. At best, this weak social integration hinders government attempts to elicit the cooperation of civilian members of the minority group. Successful counterterrorism policy relies heavily on intelligence from members of the community within which terrorist groups operate. At worst, such alienation can solidify loyalty within the minority community to the terrorists themselves.

It is critical to note that mere ethnic or religious diversity within countries has not been found to be a contributing factor to an increased risk of terrorism or political violence. The necessary ingredients are exclusion and discrimination. Moreover, empirical studies of large numbers of countries over time show that a low political or economic status for minorities is particularly likely to lead to terrorism and insurgency when oil wealth is present in the region in which they dwell and when the minority group is either geographically concentrated or has kin in other countries.[14]

FOREIGN MILITARY INTERVENTIONS INCENTIVIZE THE ADOPTION OF EXTREME VIOLENCE.

Foreign Military Interventions

Since 9/11, the United States, along with other countries, has launched several military interventions abroad to disrupt terror networks or to topple regimes accused of supporting terrorism.[15] These include large-scale military incursions, with subsequent long occupations, in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as less-intrusive aerial and drone attacks against al Qaeda affiliates in Yemen and Pakistan and the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq.[16] The result of such interventions, according to some empirical studies, has been to incite more terrorism and to worsen the tactics terrorist groups use.[17] Specifically, foreign intervention typically produces a nationalist backlash within the country that experiences the intervention, a reaction that is easily exploited by terrorist movements and extremists to garner support and to operate with greater impunity. Moreover, because they tend to further tip the balance of conventional power away from domestic insurgents, foreign military interventions and occupations incentivize the adoption of suicide bombings and other forms of extreme violence, particularly when such attacks are being directed against the occupying forces and their allies in the local government.

The research on the use of drone attacks to fight terrorism, a tactic that has become more popular in the wake of costly direct post-9/11 military interventions, has had mixed findings. Some research suggests that, in general, the use of drone attacks has failed to degrade al Qaeda and other militant groups active in Pakistan, and has served to weaken the legitimacy of the US-backed government in Pakistan, as well as in Somalia and Yemen.[18] Other preliminary work found some short-term benefits from drone attacks in Pakistan, at least in terms of reducing the severity of subsequent terrorist activity.[19]

Characteristics of Terrorism Hotspots

Given the body of empirical research on terrorism since 9/11, and what scholars have learned about the causes and patterns of terrorism, what does the composite picture of a terrorism hotspot look like? Does the presence of a high level or an increase in the level of these factors exacerbate a country's likelihood of experiencing or producing terrorism, and if so, by how much? To help make

sense of these questions, I present some simple statistical information about the individual influence of the five factors discussed in this article.

To accomplish this, I compiled a database of measures (post-9/11, from late 2001 through 2012) for the five factors in 173 countries and observed the impact on both domestic and transnational terrorism produced by comparing their "low" (below median) to their "high" (above median) values.[20] To measure poverty and economic development, I used the United Nations Human Development Index.[21] For democratic rule, I used an indicator of the political participation rate in elections in countries, produced by the Finnish Social Science Data Archive.[22] To assess the human rights picture, I drew on data from the CIRI Human Rights Data Project on the occurrence of human rights abuses, specifically killings and physical abuse, within each country in my dataset.[23] The numbers on minority discrimination, which measures the exclusion of minority community members from executive branch political power, come from the Ethnic Power Relations dataset.[24] Finally, I drew data for the fifth factor—the impact of a foreign military intervention on levels of terrorism—from the International Military Intervention data project, which tracks interventions between the years 1946 and 2005. I used two different sources of data to compile the numbers on terrorist attacks: a count of all attacks occurring within a country[25] and a count of attacks attributed to the perpetrators' country or countries of national origin.[26] The results of this process are presented in Table 1.

FIRST AND FOREMOST, A TERRORISM HOTSPOT'S REGIME IS A HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSER.

Table 1. How the Five Factors Affect Terrorist Attacks

Factors	Effect on Terrorist Attacks within a Country[a]	Effect on Terrorist Attacks by Nationals against Other Countries[b]
Human Rights Abuses[c]	+412.8%	+366.4%
Political Exclusion of Minorities[c]	+233.6%	+170.3%
Foreign Military Intervention[c]	+227.3%	+160.5%
Economic Development	+187.2%	-12.4%
Democratic Participation	+215.1%	-.9%

Notes:
Percentage impact on counts of terrorist attacks in sample of 173 countries from 2001–2012 obtained by comparing below median for sample ("low") to above median for sample ("high").

[a] Source: GTD
[b] Source: ITERATE
[c] Indicates that the factor is a statistically significant predictor of terrorist attacks in the full model

What does a terrorism hotspot look like? First and foremost, its regime is a human rights abuser. Countries whose governments commit higher levels of human rights violations and use physical oppression against their citizens and residents experience, on average, five times the level of terrorism of countries with better human rights records, and they see their nationals commit attacks abroad at four and a half times the rate of their less abusive counterparts. No other factor is such a reliable predictor of terrorist activity. It is important to note that an examination of the effect of human rights abuses on future terrorism produces similar results: abuse

in one year produces higher rates of terrorism in the following year(s). Second, such a regime is likely to treat its ethnic and religious minorities poorly. Countries that exclude minorities from representation in the government both experience domestic terrorist attacks and export terrorism at a rate that is three times that of less repressive regimes. Third, countries that are the target of foreign military intervention experience and send abroad approximately triple the number of terrorist attacks of countries that do not endure an intervention.

Neither of the other two factors, economic development and democratization, seem to have as strong or significant an effect on the terrorist activity in countries, yet both figure prominently in current US counterterrorism policy.[27] Wealthier countries experience more terrorism at home, in line with some of the empirical evidence discussed previously. However, wealth only modestly decreases the rate of transnational terrorism that countries produce. Countries with higher levels of democratic participation than the global median, on the one hand, actually experience three times the rate of domestic terrorism of those countries that have below-median participation rates. On the other hand, increased political participation has essentially no effect on the rate at which a country produces transnational terror attacks.

Conclusion

WEALTHIER COUNTRIES EXPERIENCE MORE TERRORISM AT HOME.

The results of this study have some potential implications for US counterterrorism policy. Though the promotion of economic development and democratic reform are worthwhile goals in and of themselves, and should figure prominently in US foreign policy, we should not consider them to be good tools for reducing terrorism per se. Rather, a more efficacious counterterrorism policy might be the promotion of human rights, the enhancement of civil rights and political integration for minority groups, and a more selective application of the use of force abroad.

The case of Iraq after 2003 is illustrative. As an occupying force, the United States orchestrated democratic elections in both 2005 and 2010 and showered Iraq with $60 billion in reconstruction and development aid, in the hope that these actions would reduce terrorist activity. At the same time, the US government assigned a lower priority to the promotion of human rights and minority-group enfranchisement, and maintained its military occupation of Iraq until 2011. The democratically elected and US-supported government of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki excluded the primary sectarian minority, Sunni Muslims, from national power and engaged in significant human rights abuses, which included torture, disappearances, and extrajudicial killings by Iraqi security forces. Moreover, the fledgling Iraqi government remained heavily dependent on US military forces to project internal power. As a result, terrorist activity increased in Iraq by 83.6 percent between the 2005 and 2010 elections, and has increased by a further 26.6 percent since 2010, rendering Iraq one of the most terrorism-ridden countries in the world today.[28] ❖

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NOTES

1 The analysis used in this study differs from the terrorism hotspot analysis found in Alex Braithwaite and Quan Li, "Transnational Terrorism Hot Spots: Identification and Impact Evaluation," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 24, no. 4 (2007): 281–96. In the Braithwaite and Li study, the authors apply a technique to identify countries that experience high levels of terrorism by looking at the patterns of attacks occurring in "neighborhoods" of countries to which they belong. In this study, I examine specific factors within countries that make them likely to experience high levels of terrorism.

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21 The Human Development Index is available from the United Nations Development Programme, n.d.: http://hdr.undp.org/en . The Human Development Index is a three-digit index that combines countries' gross domestic product per capita, literacy, and life expectancy rates to produce a measure of overall economic development and human economic wellbeing.

22 Tatu Vanhanen, "Measures of Democracy, 1810–2012," University of Tampere, Helsinki, Finland, 2012: http://www.fsd.uta.fi/en/data/catalogue/FSD1289/meF1289e.html

23 David Cingranelli, David Richards, and K.C. Clay, "The CIRI Human Rights Dataset," Version 2014.04.14. You can download a PDF of the dataset at http://www.humanrightsdata.com/p/data-documentation.html . Note that the specific indicator used here is the Physical Integrity Rights dataset, which uses Amnesty International reports to measure how widespread torture, political imprisonment, extrajudicial killings, and disappearances are in the country. To simplify the interpretation of the results, I invert the Physical Integrity Rights index in the data so that the scores range from 8, indicating widespread violations of all four rights, to 0, indicating support for all four rights.

24 Andreas Wimmer, Lars-Erik Cederman, and Brian Min, "Ethnic Politics and Armed Conflict: A Configurational Analysis of a New Global Data Set," *American Sociological Review* 74, no. 2 (2009): 316–37. The specific indicator I use is the logged excluded minority population.

25 START, *Global Terrorism Database.*

26 Edward F. Mickolus, Todd Sandler, Jean M. Murdock, and Peter Flemming, "International Terrorism: Attributes of Terrorist Events (ITERATE), 1968–2013" (Ponte Vedra, Fla.: Vinyard Software, 2014).

27 It is important to note that these two factors are also not statistically significant as predictors of terrorism when included in models controlling for previous terrorist attacks, country population, and a dichotomous variable coded 1 for whether or not the country is in the Middle East. Results of these models are available from the author.

28 START, *Global Terrorism Database.*

Oklahoma City bombing, Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, April 1995

The Blue-Green-Red Metaphor in the Context of Counterterrorism: Clarifications and Anthropological Emendations

Lawrence A. Kuznar, Indiana University–Purdue University Fort Wayne, and Dr. Carl W. Hunt, Pioneer Cyberspace Strategies, LLC

METAPHORS ARE UNIVERSAL IN HUMAN LANGUAGES AND PERVASIVE IN the language used by national security experts. For instance, power can be "soft," diplomacy can be a "lever," and war can be a "fog." Metaphors, when well defined and understood, can facilitate communication, but they will create potentially dangerous confusion if they are poorly defined or misunderstood.

An often-used metaphor in national security affairs is that of the Blue actor (typically conceived as "us": the "good guys"), the Red actor (the adversary opposed to Blue), and at times, Green actors (unaligned and/or ambivalent populations that might be swayed either way); hereafter, we refer to this as the *BGR metaphor*. Green is especially relevant in the context of counterterrorism because those we label terrorists emerge from populations that formerly may not have had a Blue or Red orientation—they were Green. The individuals who swell the ranks of terrorist organizations undergo a process of radicalization that transforms someone who may never have thought about Blue into someone who is Red. Counterterrorism operators are often thrust into situations where the Red actors are obscured within a sea of Green. Being able to discern who in that sea is tending toward Red is vital to the operators' survival and the success of their missions. Understanding the causes of terrorism, and developing strategies and executing operations to combat terrorists, require an understanding of what turns a Green actor Red, and perhaps what can turn a Green actor Blue.

The Blue-Green-Red metaphor used in counterterrorism and other national security arenas, however, is used inconsistently to refer to entities, their properties, or their processes. The ambiguity in applying this metaphor only creates confusion in a domain—counterterrorism—where confusion can be misleading and dangerous. The purpose of this paper is to explore what Green means in the context of counterterrorism, and what its most effective definition and use should be. We also illustrate how the "color" of an entity can be practically measured and has significance for counterterrorism strategy and operations. The problem we address is that, currently, Green is thought of as (1) an entity (Green actors), (2) an orientation (Green is neither an ally nor an opponent of Blue or Red), or (3) processes that create Blue and Red actors.[1] We demonstrate that these multiple definitions confuse what Green is, and by extension, make defining Red, and even Blue, difficult. Such confusion can have serious implications for national security research (i.e., what is or is not Green?) and policy (should we be dealing with actors, orientations, or processes?). We conclude by showing that the most useful way to think of Blue, Green, and Red is as an *orientation* to other actors and that, therefore, the color metaphors should not refer to an actor or a process. We use an analysis of Afghan insurgent messaging to illustrate the implications of the more narrowly defined BGR metaphor for social entities relevant to counterterrorism and to show how BGR as an orientation can be measured. Our example also highlights the importance of recognizing that orientation is a property and makes clear how failure to do so can lead to critical national security failures.

TERRORISTS EMERGE FROM POPULATIONS THAT FORMERLY MAY NOT HAVE HAD A RED ORIENTATION.

The Historical Use of the BGR Metaphor

Perhaps the clearest exposition of the BGR metaphor is in a series of RAND reports on a computer-based war-gaming simulation called Green Agent, developed in the 1980s. The purpose of Green Agent was to "represent non-superpower (third-country) responses to superpower crises and conflicts."[2] Here, already, the seeds of confusion were sown, because both an entity (the nation-state) and a behavior (its response) were being referred to by the metaphor *Green*.

Blue and Red in Green Agent represented the diametrically opposed United States and Soviet Union, respectively, but there was ambiguity in what the colors represented there as well. "The *Red* and *Blue* Agents model the decision making processes of the Soviet Union and the United States, respectively [italics in original]."[3]

Clearly, Blue was the United States and Red the Soviet Union, but in this seemingly clear statement, the colors did not really represent these nation-state entities, but rather their respective decision processes. Within the first few pages of the RAND report, the authors used color to refer to a social entity, an orientation, and a process all at once, and the BGR metaphor continues to be used in these multiple ways. The conceptual use of the BGR metaphor and its practical application for strategy and policy require a clearer definition of what BGR refers to. Failure to do so leaves the "what" and the "how" of counterterrorism equally ill-defined.

BGR as a Property

Treating BGR as a property provides the most scientifically valid, logically coherent, and practically useful way to define what each color means. Furthermore, treating BGR as a property allows for a more realistic and flexible use of color to characterize the competing interests a single group may have and the complex ways different groups relate to Blue interests.

It is important to recognize the relativity of interests, which also underscores the importance of identifying the social entities whose interests are being characterized. For the national security purposes of a large, pluralistic society such as the United States, it is important to characterize Blue as a current interest, policy position, or value professed by the US government. First, counterterrorism is a state function; therefore, state officials decide what interests they wish to defend on behalf of the state and its people. Second, the state represents, but cannot embody, all of the varied interests, positions, and values of the American people. The United States as a social entity is a swirling mix of its people's orientations—mostly Blue, but also many shades of Green, and even some Red—toward their government. Third, apart from foundational constitutional principles, the interests and values of the US government change to some degree with administrations, the evolving values of its people, and current geopolitical realities. Conceiving BGR as a property can thus make US decision makers aware of these changing national interests and their ramifications.

Red characterizes interests, policies, and values that are, to varying degrees, opposed to Blue interests, policies, and values. A single group may not be entirely Red toward the United States. In modern interstate relations, China and the United States cooperate in some arenas like trade and containment of North

Korea, and compete in others like the status of the Senkaku Islands and cyber war. In other words, China is not all Red to the United States' Blue.

Green is essentially an orientation that is neither Blue nor Red. The closer in orientation to US Blue interests, the more Blue-Green it is; the farther from US Blue interests, the more Green-Red it is. Thinking of BGR as a continuum rather than a fixed status allows analysts to make a more realistic determination of just how close or distant another group will be to US Blue interests. In fact, the RAND Green Actor simulator actually modeled these continuous states, despite its ambiguous definitions.

> Each non-superpower is modeled parametrically by Green Agent; factors of interest include generalized measures of sociopolitical orientation, alliance relations, military strength (including nuclear capability), and national decision making character and resolve. ...Each actor's behavior is characterized along these dimensions.[4]

In the domain of counterterrorism, some terrorist groups, such as Hamas, are opposed to US allies in their region but do not threaten direct attacks against the United States. Others, such as al Qaeda Central, al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), and the Islamic State of Iraq and ash-Sham (ISIS, aka ISIL or the Islamic State) have threatened, attempted, or carried out attacks directly against the US homeland. In our estimation, these latter groups are a deeper Red than Hamas. Similarly, Hezbollah does not currently appear to be planning any direct attacks on Americans and is even fighting in Iraq against ISIS, which is clearly a deep Red enemy of the United States. But Hezbollah is also fighting against the Free Syrian Army, a purported US ally, in Syria. In this way, Hezbollah is Bluish (or at least Green-Blue) with respect to the US interest of defeating ISIS, but Red with respect to the US government's desire to see Bashar al-Assad driven from power in Syria.

IN MODERN INTERSTATE RELATIONS, CHINA IS NOT ALL RED TO THE UNITED STATES' BLUE.

Later in this essay, we illustrate one way that color can be measured on a continuum and why it can be critically important to do so, but for now we want to make the point that using the color metaphor for orientation enables strategists, planners, and even tacticians to more realistically portray the orientation of other groups toward a specific Blue interest.

Another challenge that counterterrorism presents is how to characterize the entities whose orientations need to be measured. The types of organizations that pose terrorism threats are remarkably diverse, and in the next section, we offer some useful perspectives on them from the field of anthropology.

A Property of What? Social Science Entities Relevant to National Security

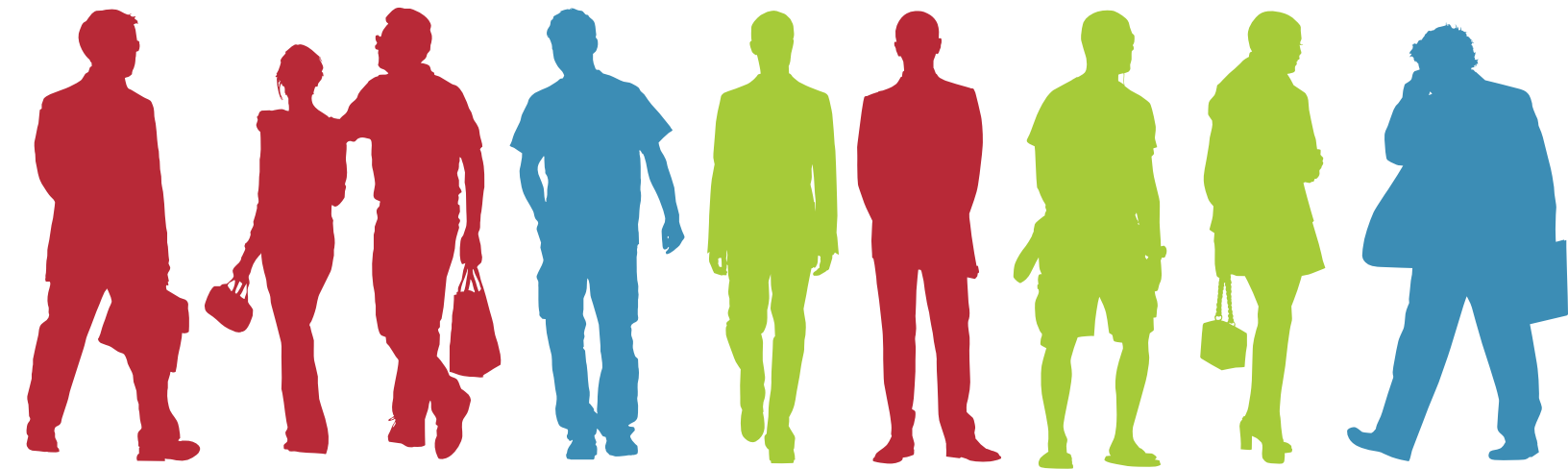
If BGR is a property, then we must first answer the question "a property of what?" because an interest is Blue, Red, or Green only relative to the particular social entity that is evaluating it. The original formulation of BGR defined the "what" as the nation-state, which was entirely appropriate for modeling the Cold War contest between the Soviet Union and the United States, and the orientations of most potential allies and enemies. In the context of counterterrorism, however, it is necessary to have a taxonomy that can cover the wide range of social organizations that we label "terrorist." Currently, such groups may be labeled as terrorists, violent non-state actors (VNSAs), or networks, while the leaders of some organizations are referred to as warlords.[5] Each of these classifications of terrorist entities brings certain insights to the organizations and how they function. Further work is necessary, however, to more adequately characterize the organizations that are the focus of counterterrorism.

THE MOST RELEVANT ANTHROPOLOGICAL CATEGORIES FOR CT ARE TRIBES, CHIEFDOMS, AND STATES.

Standard categories from the field of anthropology can help to accurately describe terrorist organizations and lend useful insight into how a Red entity might be countered or how a Blue entity might be enabled. The best use of these anthropological categories is not for static classification, but rather to explore, in conjunction with other categories (e.g., networks, warlords, VNSAs), how various terrorist organizations might function and what their various strengths and weaknesses might be. The most relevant anthropological categories for counterterrorism are *tribes*, *chiefdoms*, and *states*.

Tribes

Anthropological characterizations of kin-based societies are especially relevant to US policy given recent deployments of the US military in regions where kin-based societies are the norm. *Tribes* are kin-based societies, usually formed from an alliance of several lineages (extended families) that cooperate for mutual defense.[6] Tribes have recognized leaders, usually labeled "headmen" by anthropologists, and sometimes differentiate between the more administratively and judicially responsible "peace chiefs" and the "war chiefs" who organize raids. While headmen and these chiefs enjoy some innate authority by virtue of their position, they gain functional authority primarily through leading by example. Because of the competing interests of allied lineages, tribes tend to be unstable and can effectively disappear in the absence of greater outside threats. For example, the Haqqani network, with its strong roots in the Zadran tribe within the Pashtun ethnic group, definitely has tribal elements to its organization, which



operates jihadist, criminal, and other enterprises along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border.[7] Because tribal leaders typically lead by example, they are particularly vulnerable to being killed by tribal enemies.[8] The instability of tribes also makes characterizing their orientation to US interests difficult because there is no central authority in a position to dictate the terms of the relationship. In other words, tribes should not be regarded as monolithic entities. Instead of trying to discern a single orientation for a tribe, it would be better to identify competing factions within the tribal structure and attempt to monitor their particular orientations.

Chiefdoms

Chiefdoms are larger kin-based societies, ultimately derived from tribal conflict where a particular tribe comes to dominate other tribes.[9] Chiefdoms have clear rulers who often claim to rule by divine right. Chiefs have coercive power and use it to extract tribute from sub-chiefs (often the headmen of dominated tribes). Chiefs then redistribute their wealth strategically to loyal sub-chiefs and subjects. Many groups whose leaders are labeled *warlords* may be similar to chiefdoms, especially if they retain kin as the basis for membership and if the warlord-leader fulfills a chief's redistributive function. A chief's ability to redistribute wealth and access to power is vital to the chief's own hold on power, which means that interference with these flows of patronage directly affects not only a chief's ability to function but the very stability of the organization (in this case, the chiefdom). Because chiefs and warlords often hold authoritative power over their subjects, it may be more feasible to measure a chiefdom's orientation by focusing on the chief or warlord's views of Blue interests.

States

States are large organizations that require governance by a class of administrators—or bureaucrats—to run the affairs of state, and a formal system of taxation for supporting this bureaucracy.[10] Most, if not all, terrorist organizations represent social entities that are not states. Organizations characterized as terrorists typically disrupt but fail to govern.[11] Consequently, the tools that are effective for understanding terrorist entities are different from those that are used to analyze hostile states. The more state-like a terrorist organization is, however, the more likely it is to have official organs for disseminating its views, and these sources (such as official speeches by leaders, or press releases from spokesmen) provide valuable information for evaluating the organization's orientation to Blue policies and interests.

Our research suggests that these three anthropological categories can be used along with other social science categories, such as networks, warlords, pirates, and traffickers, to provide a richer characterization of terrorist organizations and their factions and aid in evaluating these groups' strategic orientations.

Example: Measuring the Color of an Entity

Identifying the "what"—the type of social group that has an orientation toward a US interest—is a necessary step in deciding what US policy should be toward that organization. However, the critical question remains: How is that group (or individual for that matter) *oriented* toward a US interest, and how strongly? In this section, we use a case study of Pashtun mujahedeen to illustrate a method by which this can be done and demonstrate that such a study is not only possible

but also well within the current capabilities of US government resources and the brain trust of the nation.

Thematic analysis is a method that identifies language that resonates with an audience.[12] Rhetorical devices are ways of using language to amplify a positive or negative sentiment that is expressed toward a group or individual. Examples of such rhetorical devices include repetition, hyperbole, and the use of metaphors.[13] Co-author Kuznar has developed an approach to thematic analysis that yields a metric of positive "in-group" and negative "out-group" sentiment as expressed through language by multiplying the number of times an issue (or group) is mentioned in a text by the number of rhetorical devices used in conjunction with that issue, normalized for document length. We applied this metric to data gathered in a study of Afghan Pashtun mujahedeen writings from the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan (1979–1989) and Taliban writings from 2010.[14] Soviet-era writings were represented by 27 articles and poems published in the journals *Qalam* and *Qiyami Haq*. These journals were published in Pakistan for a Pashto-speaking Afghan audience and were intended to inspire mujahedeen fighters.[15] Taliban writings were represented by the online journals *Elham*, *Shahamat*, *Tanveer*, and *Srak*, published in 2010 for a Pashtun audience and intended to inspire Taliban fighters and encourage popular resistance to the International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF). *Shahamat* is the Taliban's official website and continues to remain active.

AMERICAN FORCES WERE OFTEN REFERRED TO AS "ENEMIES," "INVADERS," AND "ATTACKERS."

In this paper, we focus on only those documents in which a Pashtun author mentioned US groups in order to illustrate how Pashtun fighters have oriented toward the United States and its interests. There were 16 documents in the corpus (15 Taliban, one mujahedeen) that mentioned at least one of three US groups (US military forces, the US government, or the American people). The United States was viewed negatively in all cases, but to differing degrees. In these writings, American forces were often referred to as "enemies" (*dushman/dukhman*), "invaders" (*yarghalgar*), and "attackers" (*ishgalgar*), all of which carry strong connotations of invaders who are both unclean and unjust to Pashtun readers. The writers also used rhetorical devices (such as repetition, in particular of pejorative terms like *dushman*) to reinforce their audience's negative sentiment toward US forces.[16]

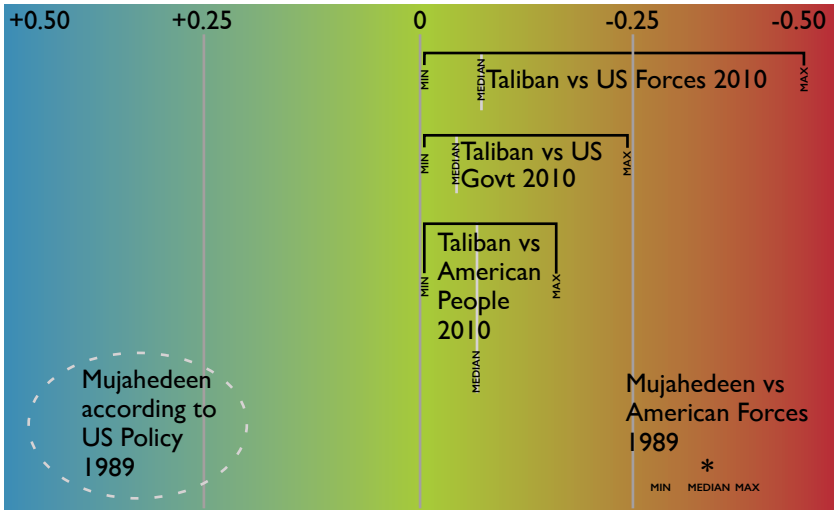


Figure 1: Sentiment Score

The median, minimum, and maximum sentiment scores expressed toward the three US groups are depicted on the BGR heat map in Figure 1.

It is important to realize that, in 2010, the Taliban were not as monolithically Red as they were typically characterized by US media and government officials but expressed a range of sentiments from mildly Red to extremely Red. This nuance demonstrates how operationalizing BGR can provide a more accurate representation of views toward Blue interests. Operationalizing BGR can also expose critical failures in a decision maker's perception of others' orientations. In 1989, according

to US policy, the Afghan mujahedeen would have been considered Blue. At least one Pashtun tribesman in our corpus, however, expressed extremely Red sentiment toward the United States at a time when Washington was actively supporting his cause.[17] Figure 1 and the data manipulations behind it demonstrate that measuring BGR is possible.

Understanding the "what" of these organizations enhances our appreciation of the significance of their orientations toward US interests. The mujahedeen were in the process of driving the Soviets out of Afghanistan in 1989, and while most were still tribally based, the mass influx of arms during the war actually eroded many traditional tribal institutions as warlords and their entourages amassed power through the control and use of arms, at the expense of chiefs and tribal leaders.[18] Arguably, the Taliban has existed as a network of tribal warlords since their regime was toppled in 2001 by allied forces. The Taliban's capacity for violence is clear to us today. Perhaps the danger that the mujahedeen posed for US forces could have been appreciated back in 1989, had Pashtun orientations toward the United States been empirically measured on a BGR scale.

Conclusion

In this essay, we suggest a narrow definition of BGR that clarifies what the metaphor means, and a way to empirically measure political orientation using BGR that can facilitate sound decision making for national security. In counterterrorism, it is imperative that analysts understand the diverse forms of social organization that VNSAs may take, from loose networks of like-minded individuals to tribal entities, warlords, and proto-states. These forms imply differences in the ways that groups and organizations develop their orientations toward Blue. Once the types of organizations are identified, a close analysis of the language members use in public and private messages enables the analyst to identify group concerns and measure how strongly members feel about those concerns. The position a group takes and the strength of its members' sentiment define how closely it is aligned with US (Blue) interests.

The current situation on the Arabian Peninsula is an example of why such a nuanced, but empirically measurable, BGR metaphor is necessary. The variety of non-state actors in the region ranges from tribal groups (Sunni sheikhs and their constituents in Anbar) and criminal networks that buy ISIS oil, to religious groups (the Houthis of Yemen), jihadist networks (al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, the Nusra Front), and state-like organizations such as ISIS and Hezbollah, to name only a few of the hundreds of groups that are destabilizing the region. Many of these groups have interests that are very localized, and their loyalties shift easily depending on how closely their interests align with those of others. A consistent application of the BGR metaphor to interests rather than entities would make it easier for analysts to realistically characterize the orientation of these many groups to US interests and support cogent decision making. ❖

THE POSITION A GROUP TAKES AND THE STRENGTH OF ITS MEMBERS' SENTIMENT DEFINE HOW CLOSELY IT IS ALIGNED WITH BLUE INTERESTS.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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Dr. Carl W. Hunt is the research director for the Net Assessment Branch of the National Counterterrorism Center.

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NOTES

1 "NCTC [National Counterterrorism Center] net assessments will assess the competitive balance between actors aligned with core US interests and goals (Blue) and violent non-state actors (Red)—taking into account the past and present and seeking insights into the future—by studying the associated balances and interactions within a complex, dynamic environment (Green). The interaction of Blue, Green, and Red is conceptualized as a co-evolutionary ecosystem of competing interests and ideas where threats and opportunities abound." See "What Is Net Assessment," NCTC Working Paper, 2014 (available on request from the National Counterterrorism Center Net Assessment Branch).

2 Yoav Ben-Horin, Mark A. Lorell, William Schwabe, and David A. Shlapak, "The RAND Strategy Assessment System's Green Agent Model of Third-Country Behavior in Superpower Crises and Conflict," RAND Note N-2363-1-NA (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 1986), v.

3 Ibid., 2.

4 Ibid., vi.

5 Cindy C. Combs, in *Terrorism in the Twenty-First Century*, 3rd ed. (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 2003), sticks with *terrorist*; Troy S. Thomas, Stephen D. Kiser, and William D. Casebeer, in *Warlords Rising: Confronting Violent Non-State Actors* (Lanham, Mass.: Lexington Books, 2005), opt for *VNSA* and *warlord*; while John Arquilla, David Ronfeldt, and Michele Zanini prefer the concept of *networks* in "Networks, Netwar, and Information-Age Terrorism" in *Countering the New Terrorism,* eds., Ian O. Lesser, Bruce Hoffman, John Arquilla, David Ronfeldt, Michele Zanini, and Brian Michael Jenkins (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 1999), 39–84.

6 Elman R. Service, *Primitive Social Organization: An Evolutionary Perspective* (New York: Random House, 1962).

7 Jeffrey Dressler, "The Haqqani Network: A Strategic Threat," Afghanistan Report 9 (Washington, D.C.: Institute for the Study of War, 2012): http://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Haqqani_StrategicThreatweb_29MAR_0.pdf . Editor's note: *CTX* published an article describing the Haqqani network's operations in the November 2013 issue. See Lars W. Lilleby, "The Haqqani Network: Pursuing Feuds under the Guise of Jihad?," *CTX* 3, no. 4 (November 2013): https://globalecco.org/the-haqqani-network-pursuing-feuds-under-the-guise-of-jihad

8 Napoleon A. Chagnon, "Life Histories, Blood Revenge, and Warfare in a Tribal Population," *Science* 239, no. 4843 (February 1988): 985–92.

9 Robert L. Carneiro, "A Theory of the Origin of the State," *Science* 169, no. 3947 (August 1970): 733–38; Robert L. Carneiro, "What Happened at the Flashpoint? Conjectures on Chiefdom Formation at the Very Moment of Conception," in *Chiefdoms and Chieftaincy in the Americas*, ed. Elsa M. Redmond (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998), 18–42; Service, *Primitive Social Organization*.

10 Allen W. Johnson and Timothy Earle, *The Evolution of Human Societies: From Foraging Group to Agrarian State*, 2nd ed. (Redwood City, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2000).

11 Headquarters, Department of the Army, *Counterinsurgency*, FM 3-24/MCWP 3-33.5 (Washington, D.C.: HQ, Dept. of the Army, December 2006): http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/Repository/Materials/COIN-FM3-24.pdf

12 Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, "Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology," *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3, no. 2 (2006): 77–101.

13 Teun A. van Dijk, "Politics, Ideology and Discourse," in *Encyclopedia of Language & Linguistics: Politics and Language*, 2nd ed., ed. Ruth Wodak (New York: Elsevier, 2006), 728–40.

14 Lawrence A. Kuznar and Mariah Yager, "Analysis of Pashtun Narratives: Report on Results What Cues Do Pashto Speakers Use in Understanding How to Draw In- and Out-Group Distinctions?" (unpublished manuscript, report prepared for Air Force Research Laboratory SAMOA Project [FA8650-10-C-6106], Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, 2012).

15 Shaista Wahab at the University of Nebraska Omaha Library's Arthur Paul Afghanistan Collection provided access to their Pashto collections and valuable insight into the documents and Pashtun culture. Dr. Thomas Gouttierre of the University of Nebraska Omaha's Center for Afghanistan Studies facilitated access to the Arthur Paul collections and provided background.

16 Kuznar and Yager, "Analysis of Pashtun Narratives," 141.

17 This particular Pashtun author was writing against the US bombing of Libya in 1986 and the former US involvement in Vietnam. Without generalizing from this one example, it is fair to say that the US government either misread Pashtun tribesmen entirely, or at least failed to recognize that they harbored a range of opinions—at least one extremely negative—regarding the United States.

18 Homayun Sidky, "War, Changing Patterns of Warfare, State Collapse, and Transnational Violence in Afghanistan: 1978–2001," *Modern Asian Studies* 41, no. 4 (July 2007): 849–88.

The Ecosystem of Dark Networks: A Biological Perspective

Dr. Matthew M. Mars, University of Arizona, Dr. Judith L. Bronstein, University of Arizona, and Dr. Patricia L. Sullivan, University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill

ORGANIZATIONS INCREASINGLY BELONG TO COMPLEX NETWORKS that enable them to work together in support of shared and complementary goals. To understand this trend, scholars, policy makers, and leaders regularly seek new viewpoints from which to explore the conditions and complexities associated with human networks and organizational systems. Sociologists have developed a range of analytical models for identifying actors and organizations within formal and informal systems, and for explaining the various relational ties that link these organizations together.[1] Social network analysis (SNA) has been used to describe the formation of and communication patterns within and between terrorist cells, as well as to predict the outcomes of particular cell activities.[2] Many questions remain, however. Organizational scientists have begun to recognize the power of biological concepts to explain the dynamics that foster and sustain linkages between actors and organizations.[3] Here, we look to the field of ecosystem ecology for insights into the conditions, relational dynamics, and complexities that underpin and sustain violent non-state actor (VNSA) networks.

We are not the first to turn to biology in an attempt to understand the factors that shape and influence organized violence. For example, Darwinian evolution has been used to frame the challenges nation-states face when responding to rapidly changing strategies deployed by terrorist groups and networks.[4] We do not aim here to apply a grand biological theory to the overarching problem of violence and instability. Instead, we focus on identifying and describing certain parallels between biological ecosystems and human networks. In doing so, we challenge common assumptions about the nature of militant group networks, and propose a new framework for investigating the broader implications of removing particular militant groups from violent conflict systems.

We first introduce biological ecosystems and the concept that "keystone species" exist within them. We note the diversity of outcomes that have been observed once keystone species are removed, as well as the difficulties of identifying keystones in non-disrupted ecosystems. Next, we describe how these concepts can be applied profitably to human networks (i.e., organizational ecosystems), which we extend to militant networks. Finally, we offer three possible implications of modeling violent conflict systems as ecosystems. While we do not argue for a complete parallel with biological systems, we contend that a framework that can explain patterns and processes in nature offers an exciting lens through which to view the sociological underpinnings of violent instability.

WE DESCRIBE CERTAIN PARALLELS BETWEEN BIOLOGICAL ECOSYSTEMS AND HUMAN NETWORKS.

Biological Principles

Ecology is the study of the relationships between organisms and the biological and non-biological components of their natural environments. Ecologists consider natural systems to be organized in a nested structure. In a given locale, there are individual organisms, groups of organisms of the same species (populations),

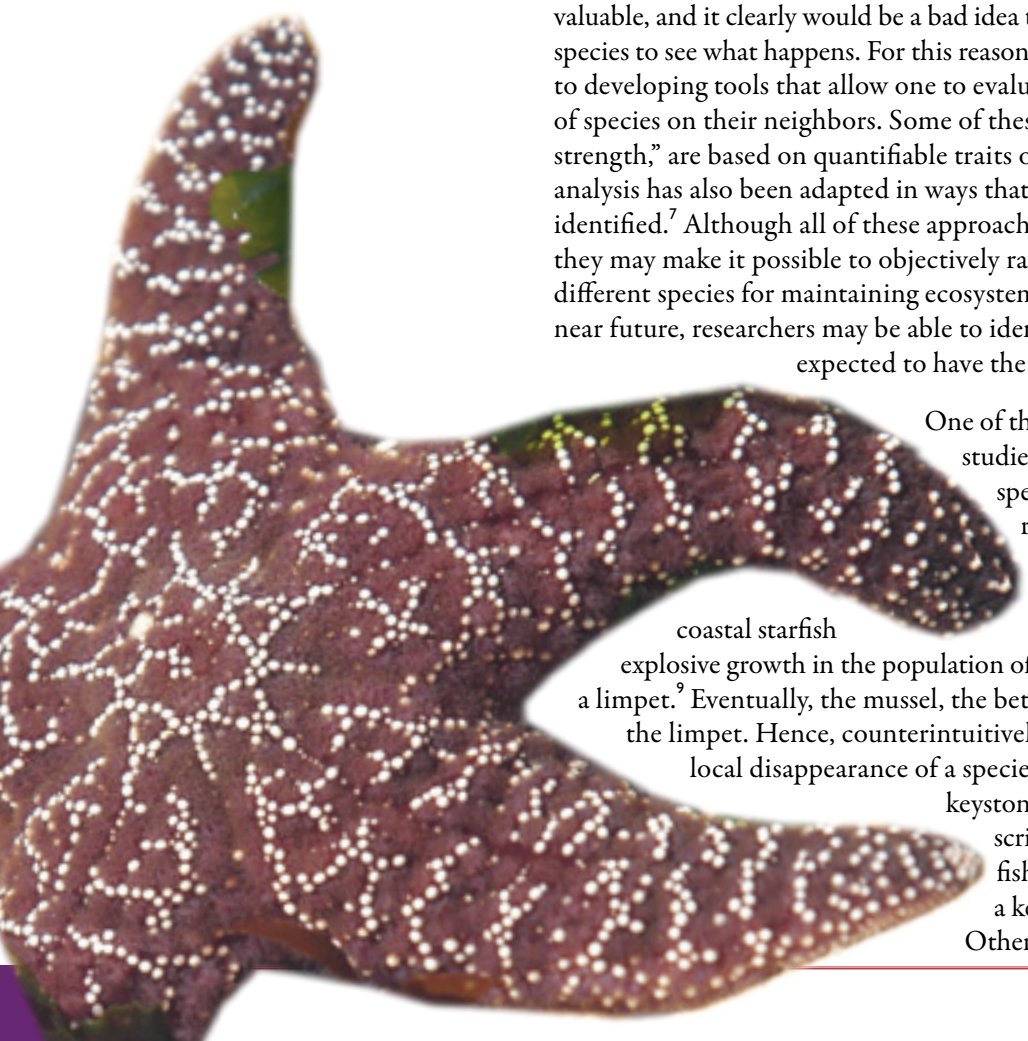
antagonistic or cooperative interactions among groups of species (communities), and interactions among communities and the non-biological environment (e.g., air, water, and sunlight). We refer to these latter units as *biological ecosystems* to distinguish them from human organizational structures, networks, and systems, which we refer to as *organizational ecosystems*.

HUMAN NETWORKS CAN BE TREATED AS ECOSYSTEMS WHEN THEY EXHIBIT FIVE SPECIFIC FEATURES.

Ecosystems can be characterized as follows: First, they consist of a set of "nodes" within which multiple players function and interact. Second, these nodes are linked to each other by flows of information and resources. Third, not every node is linked to every other node; links may vary in strength and can impart positive, neutral, or negative effects. Fourth, nodes grow and shrink over time; they can be lost without the ecosystem as a whole necessarily being lost. Fifth, and most importantly for our argument, no "designer" exists; nodes and links emerge from the bottom up and either persist or fail based in part on the links that emerge among them. Thus, all ecosystems are dynamic. In the next section, we argue that human networks can be treated as ecosystems when they exhibit these same five features.

In biological ecosystems, nodes are *different species* (i.e., each node is a collective of individuals of the same species). Biological ecosystems can contain hundreds or even thousands of species, but certain species—*keystone species*—play outsized roles in structuring them. Generally speaking, keystone species are those whose removal can be expected to have exceptionally strong effects on other members of the community, and hence on the functioning of the ecosystem as a whole.[5]

Who are the keystone actors within a biological ecosystem? Intact systems are valuable, and it clearly would be a bad idea to answer this question by removing species to see what happens. For this reason, extensive research has been devoted to developing tools that allow one to evaluate objectively the relative impact of species on their neighbors. Some of these, such as measures of "interaction strength," are based on quantifiable traits of putative keystones.[6] Network analysis has also been adapted in ways that permit putative keystones to be identified.[7] Although all of these approaches have drawbacks, cumulatively they may make it possible to objectively rank the relative importance of different species for maintaining ecosystem structure and function.[8] In the near future, researchers may be able to identify species whose removal can be expected to have the most profound effects.



One of the clearest results from ecosystem studies is that the removal of individual species can have a surprisingly wide range of effects. For example, naturalist Robert Paine showed that the removal of a species of California coastal starfish from a section of habitat resulted in explosive growth in the population of its two prey species, a mussel and a limpet.[9] Eventually, the mussel, the better competitor for space, excluded the limpet. Hence, counterintuitively, removal of a predator led to the local disappearance of a species that it ate. This starfish is a classic keystone and indeed was the first species described using that name. This same starfish does not, however always assume a keystone role within its community. Other researchers used similar experiments

to show that it is only on wave-exposed rocky shores that starfish control diversity in the manner Paine described.[10] More generally, a goal of ecologists is to understand how, when, and why the effects of keystone removal depend on the local setting.

Ecosystem Science and Militant Networks

Matthew Mars, Judith Bronstein, and Robert Lusch outlined the primary similarities and differences between biological and organizational ecosystems.[11] Some of these are particularly relevant to debates over strategies for eliminating militant groups and disrupting terrorist networks. In this section, we briefly introduce and contextualize ecological principles that we believe have application to the counterterrorism effort.

Like biological ecosystems, organizational ecosystems exhibit a nested structure. In organizational ecosystems, the linked nodes are *different groups of humans*. In the context of the political violence we are addressing, the nodes consist of VNSAs, a term we use interchangeably with armed opposition groups and militant groups. Although there are important differences in the way these terms are used in various literatures, the argument we are making is generalizable to a broad class of non-state organizations that use organized violence in opposition to the established political order. As in biological ecosystems, militant group nodes are linked by flows of information and resources, typically operational intelligence and finances. Interactions between and among armed opposition groups form militant networks (communities), and interactions among these groups and the larger environment—both natural and human constructed (e.g., government institutions)—form the violent conflict ecosystem.

LIKE BIOLOGICAL ECOSYSTEMS, ORGANIZATIONAL ECOSYSTEMS EXHIBIT A NESTED STRUCTURE.

The fifth characteristic of ecosystems—the serendipitous nature of their emergence—is central to the approach we propose. Although most terrorism scholarship has focused on individual, group, and dyadic-level analyses, scholars have begun to apply organizational theory and SNA to study terrorist collectivities.[12] To our knowledge, however, these approaches have not applied ecosystem ecology's crucial insight that biological ecosystems are *emergent*, as opposed to purposefully designed. This, we argue, provides a powerful representation of the nature of "dark networks."

While humans, unlike other species, have the capacity to intentionally and strategically design complex systems, many organizational ecosystems, like their biological counterparts, emerge organically. This is especially likely to be true of systems composed of illicit organizations. Individuals may deliberately create and rationally design militant groups as organizations of individuals to achieve a collective goal. Leaders of these organizations may also attempt to forge connections to like-minded groups and create larger structures intended to increase the effectiveness and resilience of a movement. But networks of extralegal VNSAs face many barriers to sustaining complex systems for collective action toward long-term goals. Unlike legal organizations, militant groups are not embedded within institutional settings that can enforce contracts; they do not benefit from the norms and institutions that allow legal organizations to overcome barriers to collective action and make credible commitments. Due to the clandestine nature of their activities, violent opposition groups also face constraints on their ability to communicate with other groups, monitor the behavior of other actors, and develop reputations for honesty or reliability. The volatility of violent conflict systems lowers the expectation of repeated interaction, and therefore reciprocity, thus obviating effects that can sometimes facilitate cooperation among self-interested actors.

Implications for Counterterrorism

Given that VNSA systems emerge and evolve as a result of myriad lower-level interactions among groups and that militant groups are primarily motivated to ensure their own survival rather than to protect and enhance the collective condition of the system, a biological ecosystem framework may have more explanatory and predictive power than SNA. Taking an approach derived from biology challenges core assumptions from the academic and practitioner literature on political violence. Below, we develop three key implications of the biological ecosystem analogy for counterterrorism.

First, VNSA ecosystems are likely to follow patterns distinct from, and more complex than, the ones we observe among social networks that comprise licit organizations. In a network approach, "theories of structural balance

(or transitivity) hypothesize that only certain patterns of positive (affect) and negative (enmity) ties can exist among three nodes. ...Essentially, the friend of my friend is my friend, and the enemy of my enemy is my friend."[13] But a glance at the ever-shifting constellation of alliances, mergers, splits, and rivalries among militant groups in the Middle East and Central Asia quickly reveals that interactions among groups frequently violate this pattern. Militant groups may cooperate for a time, even if many of their long-term strategic objectives are incompatible, as long as all groups believe the relationship increases their own power and prestige or advances a short-term goal. Alliances dissolve and groups split as soon as severing ties with, competing with, or even preying upon a former ally becomes advantageous, regardless of shared ideologies or stated objectives. In Iraq and Syria, for example, the past decade has seen the rise and fall of at least one hundred Sunni militant groups claiming to represent the same population and pursuing closely aligned strategic objectives. Despite their shared interests and the obvious benefits of collaboration, the Islamic State first allied itself with and then became a rival of Ansar al-Islam; al Qaeda Central broke ties with the Islamic State, whose leader had pledged a loyalty oath to Osama bin Laden in 2004; and the Nusra Front, which initially aligned itself with al Qaeda against the Islamic State, may now be abandoning its affiliation with al Qaeda.[14]

NETWORKS OF EXTRALEGAL VNSAS FACE MANY BARRIERS TO SUSTAINING COMPLEX SYSTEMS.

Second, militant group networks are likely to be more volatile and less resilient than other social networks. There has been increasing interest in, and concern about, cooperation among terrorist groups in what is sometimes referred to as a global jihadi threat. Just as in nature, however, the mere existence of a network is not sufficient evidence of a healthy, functional, and persistent ecosystem.[15] Terrorism scholar Martha Crenshaw observes that "the global jihadist 'movement' is actually extremely fractured."[16] Accordingly, the apparent momentum of the jihadist movement, as signaled by escalating acts of terror and newly forged alliances, does not necessarily indicate a strong, organized, and stable system of global terrorism. Rather, illicit networks are prone to spontaneous failures when they come under stress as a result of insurmountable collective-action problems and security vulnerabilities.[17] Attempts by the leaders of VNSA groups to forecast future conditions and strategically design the larger system of connections among groups to increase the odds of a broader movement's effectiveness and survival are unlikely to be sustainable over time. We should not expect to see militant groups designing resilient networks to advance a common cause, because illicit actors cannot credibly commit to upholding bargains when component groups could benefit from unilateral defection. Analyst Chad Serena maintains that between 2003 and 2008, the Iraqi insurgency created a tremendous amount of chaos and terror but failed to achieve its primary strategic objectives—overthrowing the central government and pushing coalition forces out of the country—because, without a centralized, hierarchical leadership, discord and competition among the multitude of militant organizations that made up the insurgency limited the network's ability to coordinate activities toward a common purpose. Serena notes that "being decentralized and networked is really effective only in the short term or if minimalist organizational goals are sought."[18]

Third, the ecosystem-level effects of eliminating a node within the system, especially a suspected keystone, should not be ignored. As described above, the removal of a keystone species is expected to jeopardize the persistence of a biological ecosystem. Hence, the goal in biology is to *retain* the putative keystones. Conflict ecosystems also have keystone actors—militant groups, state sponsors, or financiers—whose removal has stronger effects on the system than the removal of other less critical actors. The goal in this case, one might presume, would be to *eliminate* the putative keystones.

Keystone removal could be central to a strategy for reducing or preventing acts of organized violence. There are, in fact, multiple studies that attempt to determine whether, and under what conditions, leadership decapitation degrades or destroys terrorist groups.[19] The assumption is that eliminating a violent extralegal organization will decrease violent attacks and have a net positive effect on human security in regions plagued by militant activity. As highlighted earlier, however, ecosystem scientists have discovered that keystone actors are not easy to identify *a priori*. In the context of conflict ecosystems, as in biological ecosystems, keystone actors may not in fact be the most public figures, the most lethal actors, or the largest groups. Moreover, the reality is that the effects of

keystone elimination on a system that has emerged from interactions among a multitude of individuals, groups, governments, and their environments is largely unknown. Just as in biological ecosystems, the removal of keystone actors from violent conflict systems can result in a variety of outcomes. The United States and its allies achieved a large measure of success in disrupting and dismantling al Qaeda Central, but consequently (and unintentionally) facilitated the rise of the Islamic State. The removal of Libya's leader Muammar el Qadafi, a longtime foe of the United States and a state sponsor of terrorism against Western interests, likewise created an opening for the Islamic State to gain a foothold in Libya. The 2007 coalition surge in Iraq exacerbated organizational cleavages and severely degraded the operational capacity of key nodes—both individuals and groups—of the Iraqi insurgent network. These tactical successes limited the insurgency's ability to achieve its long-term strategic goals but also likely resulted in an escalation of random, chaotic violence—often primarily victimizing civilians—and made the enemy less predictable.[20] While removing a keystone (whether a group or a specific leader) eliminates acts of violence by that actor, we have not yet developed systematic methodologies for identifying keystone actors or predicting the system-wide effects of eliminating individuals and groups.

Conclusion

There are many potential applications of ecosystem models, but we are particularly excited about the potential for applying principles discovered by ecologists studying the effects of species extinction to develop testable hypotheses about the effects of eliminating particular militant groups within the VNSA organizational ecosystem. There are a number of crucial questions that could be explored using this framework. In the context of a region with multiple militant groups (pursuing a variety of goals, sometimes competing and sometimes cooperating, some more directly threatening to the United States than others, some using more brutal tactics than others), what traits identify groups that play a keystone role within the broader violent conflict ecosystem? How would eliminating a particular group affect the intensity of violence within the system as a whole? What are the effects—both beneficial and detrimental—on other VNSA nodes within the system and on the system as a whole? What other qualities of the broader environment condition the consequences of eliminating an actor within the system? There has been a tendency in both academic and policy circles to focus on the effectiveness of strategies designed to disrupt and destroy militant organizations while ignoring the wider system-level effects of eliminating any particular actor within the system. But counterterrorism strategists should be concerned with the potential unintended consequences of eliminating militant groups, as removing one node from a system clearly can have a wide range of effects. ❖

REMOVING KEYSTONE ACTORS FROM VIOLENT CONFLICT SYSTEMS CAN RESULT IN A VARIETY OF OUTCOMES.

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America: Imagined Community, Imagined Kinship

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KINSHIP DRIVES CULTURE, AND CULTURAL RULES SHAPE SOCIETY. National community in modern times is shaped by imagined kinship and the need for collective belonging and identity. Modern nations construct kinship through the belief that all citizens are related, and thus committed, to one another, and the state itself becomes the central meditative and celebratory agent for the affirmation of national kinship, especially in war. This core dynamic of modern society—the process of building imagined kinship—is projected outward through a nation's relations with other societies, whether they are peaceful or hostile. The nation most dependent on invented kinship as the basis of its politics is the United States, and this characteristic confers both advantages and limitations for the conduct of foreign policy.

THE NATION MOST DEPENDENT ON INVENTED KINSHIP IS THE UNITED STATES.

The advantage of invented kinship is that Americans can theoretically pick and choose both whom in the world we call kin and the importance that their kinship has for our national identity. The limitation of invented kinship is that America's ties of kinship to other societies have a life of their own, waning or deepening over historical time.[1] At present, the United States faces a global smorgasbord of kinship needs and clinging legacies, a feast of opportunities and obligations it can neither completely swallow nor walk away from.

Imagined kinship is the foundation of national community. It is the cultural process that permits people in a national society to believe collectively that they belong to each other—that they are part of the same kinship construct—even though most of them are likely to be strangers to each other. Imagined community also makes the state the trusted manager of this process, powerfully affirming our connection and commitment to each other in, for example, a time of war. Thus, the collective kinship construct is essential to the very idea of a modern nation-state.

Yet this thought departs radically from the traditional idea of the state as initially developed by political "theorists" in early Victorian times. In the late nineteenth century, just prior to the world wars of the early twentieth century, the nation could not be conceived as anything like a cultural construct. How could such an overwhelming force as the nation—this great living reality that completely enveloped and defined the lives of its citizens—be no more than people's own expressions of mere collective belief?

The "nation-state" of that time was the ultimate cultural expression: fully real, a living thing, and a force of nature. We belonged to it only by continuously reaffirming our loyalty and allegiance, as exemplified by the daily recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance in American public schools.[2] Nation-states apparently existed as entities wholly outside of their citizens: we petitioned to be part of them. Even if we were a microcosmic part of them, they nonetheless had their own inherent consciousness. The state was the head (the English words *capital* and *capitol* come from the Latin *caput*, meaning head), and the nation was the

"body politic."[3] Political theorists further declared that this entity had a will of its own as well: "Nations have interests," they all intoned. Who was to question such postulation? The nation exists, it speaks and acts, and what it says and does—in the form of policy and strategy—is therefore in the pure pursuit of the "national interest."

By the time political theorist Benedict Anderson first described his theory of the nation in 1983, many big wars had chipped away at nation-state authority. Anderson used a cultural construct, community as a form of kinship, to describe the nation as an "imagined community."[4] How is it imagined? Anderson explained, "It is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion."[5]

Think of the nation and its state as just such an inhabitation, a kind of architecture: peoples as nations, each in a great edifice managed by the state, look out across a larger global reality. But these national architectures of constitution and institution collectively have fashioned something no more "real" in itself than the boundary membrane holding our collective belief, which is *belief in its reality*. Together, from generation to generation, people of all nations spend the energies of their lives sustaining the ongoing harvest and ever more bountiful treasure of this imaging of themselves, the fulfillment that comes from belonging to one another, from being a part of something grand and giving and human: a nation. We may have made such imaging real, but its reality is still sustained only by our belief in one another. Nations remain together, and belong together, because people believe, at some level, that they are a clan, a tribe, a family.

NATIONS REMAIN TOGETHER BECAUSE PEOPLE BELIEVE THAT THEY ARE A CLAN, A TRIBE, A FAMILY.

Human imagination is very big. When we were just a gaggle of human bands in constant peril on the great savannas of the Serengeti, we recognized each other only by our blood relations. Five million years later, we "know" each other—just as surely as we imagine reality itself—when we embrace as fellow Russians or Italians or Americans.

The nation is indeed a wonder: citizens can act toward other citizens like brothers, but at the same time also make incredible collective sacrifices in wartime. In the French Revolution and the wars of Napoleon Bonaparte, Frenchmen fought with unprecedented frenzy for the ideals of *liberté, égalité, fraternité*.[6] We also see this fraternal energy in the fated French *poilus* in World War I, loyal soldiers who obediently continued to serve even as the state bled the nation nearly to death.

But if the nation, however amazing and wondrous, is simply a collective human artifact, then the nation-state is a construct within a construct. The state, arguably, is even more dependent on conscious collective loyalty than is the nation, its mother.

This judgment has been proven throughout modernity—the epoch of the nation-state. Nations since 1789 have overturned state regimes and their establishments by the hundreds. Hence, it is understandable, even necessary, that the state accomplish three things to ensure its perpetuity. First, it must cement the conviction that the nation and its state form a unitary body, which the state rules as the head (the *caput*), and the nation lives as the body: a true "body politic"

that is necessary only to support the ruling life and thought of the head.[7] Second, the state must arrange the civic—even the daily personal life—of the nation so that it is always ritually and symbolically reminded in public display that the body serves the state's sacred vision (again, the US Pledge of Allegiance is a prime example).[8] Finally, the state must seize constitutional power to claim the lives of its citizens in times of crisis, so that such authority over the body, however the idea is sold politically, is understood by all citizens to rest with the state.

The imagined community template for the nation tells us several things:

- First, the nation is a construct or artifact, but it is nonetheless a passionate artifact.
- Second, imagined kinship creates emotional ties as powerful as blood relations.
- Third, the state uses such passion and its controlling power to dominate society.

What Does Imagined Kinship Mean for the United States of America?

The United States is perhaps the ultimate imagined community, in two senses. First, its own identity self-consciously celebrates an American kinship that is dependent on people who have come here from other places. But, importantly, they have come here to join "us," to commit themselves to the American Idea. This means that they have renounced their former kinship with another community to become Americans. Second, American kinship—becoming one of us—requires a public act. This act is a civic-religious ritual in which the prospective new citizens (or originally, the colonists) both renounce their former identities and swear to embrace the American nation through a sacred oath.[9] Thus, the United States is a fully self-conscious community in the sources and authority of its imagined kinship. You are a fellow national if you swear the oath. Nothing else is required, and I will die together with you in battle as my fellow American.

The United States is one of the few national communities that lays existential terms of kinship right on the table. Moreover, this existential postulate of national identity is extravagantly reaffirmed, for example, in every American war movie, because each film is integral and, in effect, a restated paean to the national liturgy.[10]

The rest of this essay focuses on the American existential use of national kinship to construct its closest relations with other societies. What it shows is that US relations with the world are far from the postulates of the realist school of international relations theory, but are in fact driven by a desire to replicate kinship terms of relationship as they evolved within the American polity.

What Is Kinship?

Anthropologists describe kinship as a complex affair. Imagined or, better still, *invented* kinship is yet more sublime, and its terms are undefined.[11] Kinship as a concept central to the national polity and relations between states is still only partly acknowledged, and hotly debated, within the field of international relations.[12]

American identity depends on explicit kinship rituals and symbols. This stands in contrast to nations whose kinship is built on old roots like language and religion, in which belonging historically antedates the nation itself and certainly the state. These kinds of ancient bonds can make extending kinship to other societies, even to new citizens, difficult. The United States, in contrast to these older nations, is free to make kinship integral to its world relationships. Moreover, kinship can be almost wholly invented through the political arena. Anointing other nations as "relations" requires no more than identifying ties that establish the kinship bond. After that, we can rely on media to marshal the needed celebratory public rituals and symbols to cement the bond in our emotional gut.

KINSHIP CAN BE ALMOST WHOLLY INVENTED THROUGH THE POLITICAL ARENA.

The United States has established kinship relations with other societies through five alternative paths.

1. *Kinship as fraternal vision*. Kinship here revolves around two words sacred to the American ethos: *freedom* (originally, *liberty*) and *democracy*. First invoked with the French after 1789, this nascent international kinship also led to the new US republic's first kinship split, between the Jeffersonians, who favored France, and the Hamiltonians, who favored Britain.[13] In the twentieth century, non-Americans also learned to wield the fraternal-vision card to build up the alliance-worthiness of Britain, making much of its parliamentary democracy as they pushed the United States to take Britain's side in the world wars.[14] Today, Israel is constantly repeating the mantra that it remains "the Middle East's only democracy." In 2014, Ukraine tried to leverage antigovernment protests in Kiev's Maidan Nezalezhnosti to the same purpose.[15]
2. *Kinship as tribal tie*. Blood ties have always had a powerful pull in the establishment of global kinship ties, but with this caveat: the heart beats strongly only for those of the blood. Hence, for example, many Boston Irish wanted the US government to fully back the Irish Republican Army in its fight for independence from Britain, but they ended up having to fund their own campaign. Likewise, African-Americans lobbied hard for the League of Nations to free Ethiopia from its Italian invaders in 1935, but to no avail against a generally racist US electorate.[16] Yet race and blood kinship have worked triumphantly for the cause of Israel, and not within the American Jewish community alone. It was an imagined kinship felt by Christian evangelicals that turned the tide of US policy in favor of Israel in the 1980s.
3. *Kinship as mission*. "Succor the afflicted; champion the oppressed." This credo is the invented kinship of a particularly American mission rooted in divine redemption—the congregational community of the saved. When President Abraham Lincoln posited this cause at the end of the US Civil War, "the Negro" went from being chattel to being a brother through the act of redemption. This was a tradition that first took off

during the early nineteenth-century Protestant revival in the United States known as the Second Great Awakening, and it is a tradition that has since been repurposed in the pursuit of world relations. We saw it in the mid-twentieth century when US troops were sent to war to save part of Korea from communism, and we see it today in the American bond with the Kurds. However, invented ties served US interests poorly in Vietnam, and they were perhaps most cynically paraded in US President George H.W. Bush's sympathy-bid to free Kuwait from its Iraqi invaders in 1990. Such can be the pressure to invent and demonstrate kinship in foreign policy.[17]

4. *Kinship as parental responsibility*. If there is no more powerful kinship obligation than parent to child, then the United States made its strongest kinship claim in Asia. Imperial paternalism, a concept coined by William Howard Taft when he served as governor-general of the Philippines, was unfortunate from the start.[18] Yet the codependent bond that infuses both sides of a paternalistic relationship could still be reciprocal, as with America's continuing ties to the Philippines. The United States' relationship with prerevolutionary China, until 1950, was a blend of both the parental and the missionary. Once the Communists took over, however, kinship paternalism foreclosed that relationship for 30 years and severed longstanding ties. Even so, those ties were so close that, in time, they were easily restitched.
5. *Kinship as shared destiny*. Geopolitics is about verities, like the axiom that power is destiny: it is the fate of powerful nations to compete and fight. But Americans also believe in great power kinship. For example, in the 1860s, the United States saw imperial Russia as a vaguely kindred spirit: both nations were enormous, rough-around-the-edges, and destined for world greatness. Also, in tandem, the US president had freed the slaves just as the Russian czar had freed the serfs.[19] By the early twentieth century, at the end of the Victorian era, Americans began to see Brits as brethren rather than old enemies. Naval-power advocates like Admiral Alfred Mahan of the US Navy and geopoliticians like Britain's Sir Halford MacKinder pushed the vision of an Anglo-American destiny in which the brother nations would rule the future.[20] It can be argued that their shared vision did indeed became a shared destiny, borne out in World War II and the Anglo-American–led United Nations.[21] More recently, the United States has embraced the world's largest remaining communist regime and former pariah, the People's Republic of China, as a world partner.

IMPERIAL PATERNALISM WAS UNFORTUNATE FROM THE START.

Why do Americans treasure imagined kinship with other nations? First, Americans value trust, and what stronger trust is there than the trust possible within a

family? Second, the emotional bonds of kinship have the appearance of fraternal resilience. So, for example, if our dearest cousins, the Brits, do something that seems stupid to us, we may tell them what we think, but then we forgive and forget. Such trust is a deep and unspoken premise with the few nations Americans feel closest to. Third, kinship makes commitment to other nations less dependent on clinical rationalizations of national "interest."

Not-Kin as Antiphonal Kinship

Just as imagined kinship hinges on ritual celebrations of connection, "not-kin" is an equally imagined form of kinship that relies on similar, but flipped, ritual celebrations of the evil Other: one who is wholly alien to us, the very opposite of kin. Because all humans share the same DNA[22] and seek meaning and belonging in similar ways, this "otherness" must be posited so strongly that it overrides any lingering awareness of common humanity. Positing not-kin is an especially powerful strand in the American ethos and manifests itself in five incarnations.

1. *Not-Kin as the Dark Side of the Force*. The first US president, George Washington, invoked the Other for his American audience in his farewell address: monarchies are like Satan, he warned, and America is not to truck with them.[23] In more recent times, Bolsheviks and Nazis became not-kin. Above all, not-kin must be the opposite of what we share: not-kin are the inveterate enemies of freedom and democracy. However, looking back to 1796, the United States has been cozy with dark princes everywhere. Was Yoda right when he warned Luke Skywalker, "If once you start down the dark path, forever will it dominate your destiny"?[24]

See the image credits page 87 to read the blackboard copy.

Among the American political elite, has the Dark Side actually won? We can answer only with a useful America adage: the jury is still out.

2. *Not-Kin as the "Left Behind."* In their renunciation of the true path (i.e., freedom and democracy), the not-kin are likened to those who deny God and are left behind.[25] Resistance alone makes them enemies of the American idea. Hence, Islamists, Russians, and Cubans, for instance, are not simply evil but also lost to the paradise of freedom and democracy.[26] Meanwhile, the saved among them who convert and embrace American ideals are a living testament to American exceptionalism.
3. *Not-Kin as Pied Piper People*.[27] On the other side of the coin, Americans may perceive not-kin as people who, rather than being inherently evil, have temporarily been drugged or hypnotized by the music of evil. Ideology can thus be like the Pied Piper, seducing a people without their consent. Hence, the status of not-kin can represent a kind of ideological halfway house from which a people may yet be freed when they finally manage to lift the veil of their misguided beliefs or behaviors. American attitudes toward Colombia in the 1990s had just this sort of lofty ambivalence. We pitied those lashed by the drug lords and insurgencies and senatorial militias, but the society as a whole seemed to be slipping away. The Colombian people had to show us they could do better. Pied Piper people are not like left-behind people: they are still worthy and capable of reclamation. They know not what they do. There is hope for them, and that hope is America.
4. *Not-Kin as Lord of the Flies*.[28] This path to not-kinship tells us that a people (implicitly childlike) are now beyond our help. This is a kind of dispensation that permits us to throw up our hands and do nothing. The United States has invoked this dispensation many times in its history—as in Afghanistan in the 1990s—and will again. When rolling up our sleeves and pitching in to help pull a nation together was declared to be the necessary and right thing to do, America never shied away from even the most obdurate—many might say failed—situations, including Shi'a Iraq and what is left of pro-US Afghanistan today. But the United States summarily abandoned the very same Afghanistan after the Soviet withdrawal in 1989 without so much as a backward glance. Americans also have no trouble callously shrugging and saying: "Not worth our time."
5. *Not-Kin as the Demiurge*.[29] In this construct of the Other as a Manichaean or existential threat, the designation of not-kin is a declarative imperative according to which an opposing human reality must be completely crushed. Recent examples include the so-called Islamic State and the many manifestations of al Qaeda, Germany and Japan in World War II, and the Soviet Union in the early Cold War. But declaring such evil creates an impossible problem. Such absolute biblical pronouncements demand action, and in the American experience, action always seems to follow. In other words, you must destroy evil, or evil may destroy you.

KINSHIP CAN BE A FICKLE AND EMOTIONAL EMBRACE.

The not-kin ascription generally works as a satisfyingly simple classification for American policy making purposes, but there are two drawbacks to assigning not-kin status to nations. First, as with the "not-kin as the Demiurge" construct above, if we cannot destroy or coopt not-kin, the American idea begins to lose authority. Second, the not-kin ascription is inflexible. As US President George W. Bush intoned, "You are either with us or with the terrorists."[30]

Moreover, not-kin status is like an emotional foreclosure. What if we want to reengage an enemy that has changed and no longer poses a threat? What if changed circumstances make such an association suddenly desirable? Can we rule out a US relationship with the Islamic State sometime in the future? Or with Iran? The necessary emotional aspect inherent to not-kin status can foreclose options and opportunities in the national interest. This conundrum was apparent in the United States' refusal to acknowledge the existence of Red China in the early Cold War.

So how might we best understand the peculiar American idea of kinship?

1. *Kinship is as much an artifact as national community*. Kinship identification and belief, which are tied to deep kinship emotions, are at the core of American national belonging. Kinship with other nations is simply an extension of the central civic investiture in American life—the public

affirmation of each other as Americans, whether through the sacred venues of football and baseball, or an episode of *The Simpsons*.[31]

2. *Kinship is as important to relationships as "interests."* From the beginning, the United States has put kinship ahead of national interest in its world relations. At the same time, interest and kinship nearly always find a way to work together. This was true in Saudi Arabia, where American wildcatters and oilmen forged enduring, tribally intimate links with Bedouin leaders such Abdul Aziz in the 1920s and thus opened up vast oil fields to exploitation.[32] Although the United States seemed to have few of the more imperial claims in the Middle East that hung like sordid badges on Britain and France, these less visible, kinship-like connections had all the real substance of an imperial client relationship in the making. It is when special bonds of trust, reciprocation, and obligation are not present that American foreign enterprises are at risk.

3. *Kinship belief can grow or wane*. When France presented the Statue of Liberty to the United States in 1886, and when the United States fought to save France from conquest twice in the last century, American feelings of kinship with that nation were never stronger. Yet in the run-up to the 2003 invasion of Iraq, French abstention from the war led to invectives from US media and politicians, such as renaming French fries "freedom fries." The last time a popular American fast food item was angrily renamed was after the United States declared war on Germany in 1917, when wieners were renamed "hot dogs," and sauerkraut became "liberty cabbage." Kinship can be a fickle and emotional embrace.
4. *Kinship ties move across cultural dimensions*. Italy's relationship with the United States between 1905 and 1950 is a prime example of this dynamic. Over those five decades, Italy moved from having a limited tribal tie with the United States through emigration (represented by the Knights of Columbus and Columbus Day rallies),[33] to sharing a fraternal vision (as allies in World War I), to joining the Dark Side of the Force (when Mussolini allied with Hitler after 1935), to becoming an afflicted and oppressed beneficiary of the American mission (in the latter part of World War II), and finally, once again, to marching shoulder-to-shoulder in partnership once Italy joined NATO in 1949.
5. *Kinship can come to dominate a relationship*. The belief that we are all related as Americans has deepened. This means that emotional ties to other nations have also deepened over time. Kinship can become more

and more real, to the point where it dominates national strategy and policy considerations. In the early twentieth century, emotional investment shaped US ties to the British Empire. Even today, this kinship is called "the special relationship": "America has no truer friend than Great Britain."[34] Through this bond, Americans also regard Australians and Canadians as blood brothers. But the strongest ties can dominate American strategy to the exclusion of other "interests," as the Israeli-American bond demonstrates.

This anthropological concept of kinship is outside mainstream schools like realism and geopolitics. Yet a cultural vantage offers something that such standard old-school political theory cannot. The understanding of imagined kinship unlocks an elemental dimension in the political life of the nation that the romantic determinism of Victorian geopolitics and the power-driven assumptions of international relations theory have ignored. Overlooking kinship as a key dimension in modern state relations has meant turning a blind eye to the very sources of the conduct of foreign policy. Given the defining role kinship has played in US history, its absence from our national discourse has serious implications for the study of America's world relations. ❖

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NOTES

1 While acknowledging that citizens of Central and South America are equally Americans, I use the terms *America* and *Americans* in this essay specifically to refer to the United States. The popular appropriation of the title "America" itself is a potent token of how the United States presents its own theological claims of "American exceptionalism," as though the United States is the only national society that can call itself "American."

2 The Pledge of Allegiance currently reads: "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." It was first written in 1892 by a minister named Francis Bellamy. The words "under God" were added in 1954. See "The Pledge of Allegiance," USHistory.org, n.d.: http://www.ushistory.org/documents/pledge.htm

3 Richard A. Koenigsberg, "Hitler's Body and the Body Politic: The Psychosomatic Source of Culture," Library of Social Science, n.d.: https://www.libraryofsocialscience.com/essays/koenigsberg-hb-bp.html

4 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991).

5 Ibid., 6.

6 In English, "liberty, equality, brotherhood." See Richard Cobb, *The People's Armies* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1987).

7 See, for example, A.D. Harvey, *Body Politic: Political Metaphor and Political Violence* (Newcastle upon Tyne, England: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007); Antoine de Baecque, *The Body Politic: Corporeal Metaphor in Revolutionary France, 1770–1800*, trans. Charlotte Mandel (Redwood City, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1997).

8 Carolyn Marvin and David W. Ingle, *Blood Sacrifice and the Nation: Totem Rituals and the American Flag* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 25, 31, 38.

9 Ibid, 12, 25–28, 42.

10 Robert Fyne, *The Hollywood Propaganda of World War II* (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 1994).

11 Robin Fox, *Kinship and Marriage: An Anthropological Perspective* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1984), offers a still vibrant foundational starting point, while more focused treatments have aided me in establishing more culturally specific kinship patterns. For example, T.M. Charles-Edwards's *Early Irish and Welsh Kinship* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 21–88, helps to frame how kinship was expanded on after antiquity; also, see Chris Wickham's magisterial *Framing the Early Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean, 400–800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), especially the chapter "Political Breakdown and State-Building in the North." This is the sort of tracing necessary to track down the lineages of

what later became the basis for invented or "imagined kinship." David Hackett Fischer's *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989) is another rich extrapolative source. An extensive glossary of kinship terms is available from Michael Dean Murphy of the University of Alabama's Department of Anthropology in his work "A Kinship Glossary: Symbols, Terms, and Concepts": http://anthropology.ua.edu/Faculty/murphy/436/kinship.htm

12 The constructivist school of international relations explores a social, if not quite cultural, perspective. One of its leading and best known voices, Alexander Wendt, incorporates some culture-sourced concepts in the constructivist approach to the discipline, showcased in his marquee book *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1999). Realist critic Dale C. Copeland describes Wendt's core contention in that there are "intersubjectively shared ideas that shape behavior by constituting the identities and interests of actors," in "The Constructivist Challenge to Structural Realism: A Review Essay," *International Security* 25, no. 2 (Fall 2000): 187–202. However, any fuller exploitation of cultural concepts, as developed in the field of anthropology, has been circumscribed by the needs of the discipline to argue within the reality-lexicon of international relations theory.

13 Francis D. Cogliano, *Emperor of Liberty: Thomas Jefferson's Foreign Policy* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2014).

14 J. Lee Thompson, *Politicians, the Press, and Propaganda: Lord Northcliffe and the Great War, 1914–1919* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 2000).

15 The Maidan Nezalezhnosti in Kiev, Ukraine, was the square in which the 2014 Ukrainian Revolution began. *Maidan* has proto–Indo-European roots meaning "town square" or "central meeting place." From the more modern Arabic, the term highlights Ukraine's history as a borderland crossroads of cultures and empires. "Senators McCain, Murphy Join Massive Ukraine Anti-Government Protest, Threaten Sanctions," Fox News, 15 December 2013: http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2013/12/15/senators-mccain-murphy-join-massive-ukraine-anti-government-protest-threaten/

16 Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932–1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 112–13; William R. Scott, "Black Nationalism and the Italo-Ethiopian Conflict, 1934–1936," *Journal of Negro History* 63, no. 2 (April 1978): 118–34: http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/2717305?sid=21105946802051&uid=3739680&uid=3739256&uid=2&uid=4

17 See Nayirah al-Sabah's testimony to Congress on 10 October 1990. "Faked Kuwaiti Girl Testimony," YouTube video, 6:07, posted by "guyjohn59," 15 June 2010: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LmfVs3WaE9Y

18 James Bradley, *The Imperial Cruise: A Secret History of Empire and War* (New York: Back Bay Books, 2010).

19 See, for example, the extended visit of the Russian fleet to New York in the winter of 1863 in Rick Beard, "The Russians Are Coming!" *Disunion* (blog), *New York Times,* 8 November 2013: http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/11/08/the-russians-are-coming/?_r=1 ; Patrick Laurentz, "Visit of Russian Squadrons in 1863," *Proceedings Magazine* 61, no. 5 (May 1935): 387: http://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/1935-05/visit-russian-squadrons-1863

20 Halford J. MacKinder, *Democratic Ideals and Reality: A Study in the Politics of Reconstruction* (New York: Henry Holt, 1919): http://mercury.ethz.ch/serviceengine/Files/ISN/139619/ipublicationdocument_singledocument/eda9e313-7e1b-41f3-a9d7-44b84da4ae5f/en/1942_Democratic_Ideals_Reality.pdf

21 M. Todd Bennett, *One World, Big Screen: Hollywood, the Allies, and World War II* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

22 A map of the world pathways of human DNA can be viewed at "Family Tree DNA," n.d.: http://www.coussins.org/Family/DNA PAGE 2 map.jpg

23 Felix Gilbert, *The Beginnings of American Foreign Policy: To the Farewell Address* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1965).

24 The diminutive and wise Jedi master Yoda appears in the *Star Wars* film series. See "Quotes for Yoda," IMDb, n.d.: http://www.imdb.com/character/ch0000015/quotes

25 This refers to the Biblical Rapture, when Jesus comes back to rule the Earth and the righteous go up to Heaven, leaving nonbelievers behind. See Matthew 24 in the New Testament for the most detailed passage on this idea.

26 For the origins of American antipathy, see Louis A. Pérez, *Cuba between Empires, 1878–1902* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1998).

27 *The Pied Piper of Hamelin* is a German folk story in which a magical pipe player lures a town's children away forever after the townspeople refuse to pay him for ridding the town of rats and mice. For one rather sensational version, see "The Disturbing True Story of the Pied Piper of Hamelin," Ancient Origins, n.d.: http://www.ancient-origins.net/myths-legends/disturbing-true-story-pied-piper-hamelin-001969

28 William Golding, *Lord of the Flies* (Oakville, Canada: Capricorn Books, 1954). Golding's novel became a Western metaphor for the stripping away of civilization's veneer and the ever looming return to the primitive. This deeply rooted fear was easily transported to Western attitudes toward former—often African—colonies that seemed to eschew their veneer of imposed imperialist "civilization."

29 The Platonic creator, literally *artisan*, of the universe. See John Arendzen, "Demiurge," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1908): http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04707b.htm

30 See President George W. Bush's address to Congress on 20 September 2001. "CNN 9/11 Live TV Coverage (9/20/01) (President George W. Bush Addresses Congress Part 2 of 2)," YouTube video, 13:18, posted by "the9112001," 10 February 2012: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0bNNoAEvmBQ

31 *The Simpsons* is an animated television show that lampoons American middle class culture. It debuted in 1989 and began its 26th season in the fall of 2014. See the website *Everything Simpsons*: https://www.simpsonsworld.com

32 Anthony Cave Brown, *Oil, God, and Gold: The Story of Aramco and the Saudi Kings* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999).

33 Peter G. Vellon, *A Great Conspiracy against Our Race: Italian Immigrant Newspapers and the Construction of Whiteness in the 20th Century* (New York: NYU Press, 2014).

34 "CNN 9/11 Live TV Coverage (9/20/01) (President George W. Bush Addresses Congress Part 1 of 2)," YouTube video, 14:59, posted by "the9112001," 10 February 2012: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0bNNoAEvmBQhttps://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4xo7X6lAzFQ

One Arm Tied behind Our Backs? Assessing the Power of the United States to Combat Global Threats

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Americans were left bewildered in the wake of the Vietnam War (1964–1975). "How is it that the 'greatest power in the world' could suffer defeat at the hands of ... [bandits] 'in black pajamas?'"[1] A phrase, both explanatory and palliative, was often proffered for this puzzle: *We fought with one arm tied behind our backs.* The imagery of this term is compelling: a pugilist who is struggling not only against an opponent but also against unfair constraints has the weapons he needs to win but cannot bring them to bear. Over the last decade, many Americans have found themselves dealing with similarly overwhelming feelings of frustration. The United States currently spends massive amounts of money on national security to produce the most professional and technically advanced force the world has ever seen.[2] Why, then, does this colossal investment seem unable to produce desired outcomes against barely trained, meagerly resourced, seemingly ad hoc opponents around the world? Does the country indeed fight with one arm tied behind its back?

In this article, we postulate that liberal states are increasingly bound by normative limitations on the acceptable uses of force[3] and that this effect is exacerbated in discretionary wars (i.e., wars of choice). In other words, a state may have a fully "combat effective" national security apparatus that it cannot bring to bear due to socially constructed norms of acceptable behavior.[4] If these points are valid, then they have enormous implications for the strategic assessment efforts undertaken by a liberal democratic nation engaged in a landscape that consists of noncritical threats. A state may have an exceedingly impressive national security apparatus that remains "tied behind its back." Therefore, we suggest that anyone tasked with analyzing US power in the current global threat environment must be very sensitive to these points and temper their analysis of US capabilities accordingly.[5]

We develop this argument in three parts: First, we critically examine the literature that links investment in military forces to the concept of national power. Second, we look at the "arm tied behind the back" puzzle more closely by identifying increasingly constraining normative expectations on the use of violence. Third, we describe the implications of this argument for making realistic assessments of US capacity to successfully engage the current global threat environment. In doing so, we show that any net assessment of non-state actor threats must be reconsidered to take into account normative constraints on force and avoid the danger of miscalculating capacity. We conclude by linking this discussion to specific policy concerns and call for new approaches to operations planning.

LIBERAL STATES ARE BOUND BY LIMITATIONS ON THE ACCEPTABLE USES OF FORCE.

Military Force and the Concept of Power

As a starting point, we need to discuss why some nations are regarded as "powerful" and why this concept is considered by many theorists to be paramount to the functioning of the international system. It is standard to assume that the international system is anarchic.[6] If it is true that no higher authority exists above system actors, then these actors must secure themselves to survive. The

common narrative for this process is that states—the key actors in the global system—maintain sovereignty over a given territory and population, from which they extract resources and build a military force.[7] This ability to leverage authority and resources thus determines the relative power of the actors in the system.[8] The question then is, how is military force linked instrumentally to the political fortunes of the state? Despite the myriad weapons and tactics that have been utilized across time and space, most scholars agree that actors get utility out of military forces through two basic means: their actual use (fighting) or their potential use (threatening). In other words, actors either wage war to achieve desired outcomes, or they engage in bargaining with implicit or explicit threats of war in the background as leverage.[9] In fact, for those who profess the world-view known as Realism, it is the underlying distribution of military power that provides the structure necessary for the international system to function at all.

> Lurking behind the scenes, unstated but explicit, lies the military muscle that gives meaning to the posturing of the diplomats. ... Coercion, therefore, is to a political framework what a political framework is to a market: the necessary but not the sufficient precondition for its effective functioning.[10]

Furthermore, this is frequently assumed to be a positive relationship: "the more a state allocates to the military, the stronger it becomes *ceteris paribus* and the more likely it is to prevail in any conflict."[11] For the Realist, investment in military forces promises both victory in war and successful negotiation in peace. If this line of reasoning is valid, then the United States today should be able to prevail over almost any threat it confronts.[12]

Does this parsimonious model seem sound? Or are there conditions under which increasing the allocation of resources to the military fails to increase the power potential of the state? Critics such as David Baldwin argue that military forces are often unable to shape outcomes in the system due to the fact that military forces are far less fungible than is commonly believed. This goes beyond the argument that resources are being allocated inefficiently ("using the wrong strategy") but says that the instrument of military might itself is simply unusable in many arenas of competition. Offering a simple but evocative analogy to illustrate his point, Baldwin observes that it is not a case of "'he had the cards but played them poorly,' but rather, 'he had a great bridge hand but happened to be playing poker.'"[13] In other words, weapons and soldiers do not radiate an intrinsic and inexorable "power" but are instruments whose utility is extremely context-dependent. We agree with Baldwin's assessment and focus in the next section on one emerging aspect of contextual constraint: norms of acceptable behavior.

Normative Constraints on the Use of Force

The Realist argument sketched in the previous section is predicated on military force being used without constraint, a condition that accords with a strict adherence to the assumption of anarchy. Carl

von Clausewitz's early thinking on the topic emphasized the unlimited nature of war in an anarchic environment where, all things being equal, the more extreme application of violence would prevail: "The impulse to destroy the enemy ... is central to the very concept of war. ... War is an act of force, and there is no limit to the application of that force."[14] This position was articulated almost comically by the colorful Victorian British Admiral Sir John "Jacky" Fisher:

> The essence of war is violence! Moderation in war is imbecility! ... If you rub it in both at home and abroad that you are ready for instant war ... and intend to be first in and hit your enemy in the belly and kick him when he is down and boil your prisoners in oil (if you take any) ... and torture his women and children, then people will keep clear of you.[15]

This quote is striking in its anachronistic feel. Such an idea simply could not be articulated today by any type of democratic state official (who intends to keep his or her job). Why is this the case?[16]

The "Liberal Dilemma" is a well-documented phenomenon: nations that nominally abhor war as a tool of policy must at times engage in it because "the role of enlightened reason will not be disseminated throughout the world through the peaceful operation of some hidden hand. It needs muscle behind it."[17] This tension lies in the liberal state leadership's need to accomplish policy goals while maintaining the popular support necessary to stay in power.[18] Thus, these leaders must consider the opportunity costs of any potential military action. Undertaking military actions that contravene accepted norms can create substantial costs and undermine the fortunes of political leadership by (1) alienating the global community and inciting international disapproval, and/or (2) raising domestic disapproval and lowering domestic political support. In the first case, a state that is highly integrated into the global community in terms of economic activity and international security must consider these international norms very carefully because transgressions affect international relationships. In the words of political scientist Martha Finnemore, "Force must be coupled with legitimacy for maximum effect. ... The goal must be seen as legitimate, and force must be viewed as a legitimate means to that goal."[19] In the second case, the internal political institutions of the democratic state are paramount to policy makers. Democratically elected leaders are highly sensitive to maintaining a foreign policy that is palatable to their domestic constituents.[20] Under such circumstances, it follows that norms will be more constraining in liberal states.[21]

Constraining norms become even more difficult to observe in discretionary "wars of choice." Lawrence Freedman, a foreign policy and defense expert, explains why this is the case.

> When the security of the state is threatened by a large and self-evidently hostile enemy, then all social and economic resources can be mobilized in response. When, by contrast, there is a debate to

> be had about the nature of the threat and whether matters are made better or worse by direct military action, military operations appear to be more discretionary and national mobilisation on even a modest scale becomes more difficult.[22]

In other words, when threats are seen as nonexistential, normative constraints loom larger. Domestic constituents are willing to bear fewer direct costs, and critics at home and abroad are less circumspect in their censure:

> The intervening states' apparent sympathy for the population should lead them to take extra precautions to protect it during the prosecution of the war. ... On the other hand, if the political leaders justify the wars by reference to altruistic motives rather than to national interest, they may find it difficult to permit any unnecessary risk to their own country's soldiers.[23]

Thus, liberal countries' wars of choice generate contradictory pressures: the need to minimize target nation casualties while simultaneously minimizing their own forces' casualties, all while executing complex and demanding missions against a relatively unconstrained enemy. This point of view is expounded most directly by Gil Merom, an international security specialist who argues that "democracies fail in small wars because they find it extremely difficult to escalate the level of violence and brutality to that which can secure victory."[24] If this is true, then we can expect that liberal states faced with nonexistential threats will find it increasingly difficult to gauge their ability to apply adequate resources and affect outcomes in the international system. We now turn to the difficulties of assessing threats and outcomes for liberal democracies.

"DEMOCRACIES FIND IT DIFFICULT TO ESCALATE THE LEVEL OF VIOLENCE TO THAT WHICH CAN SECURE VICTORY."

The Challenge of Assessment

The ability to realistically assess potential outcomes is a fundamental requirement for actors in an anarchic system because bargaining over any issue is done with the specter of conflict, however remote, in the background. Each actor must regularly calculate how its forces would fare in a prospective conflict, a reality that conditions the scope of national ambitions, the weighing of recalcitrance and acquiescence, and the ultimate choice of whether to resort to violence. These positions can be founded only on assessments of each actor's relative power.[25] Combined with the normative constraints on policy described in the previous section, it follows that creating a valid assessment scheme for the United States in its current threat environment is going to be difficult in the extreme.

Some areas of competition are relatively symmetric and straightforward; others can be more complicated. The naval arms racing of the pre-carrier capital ship era, for example, provided relatively straightforward metrics of national power.[26] As strategist Emily Goldman points out, however, when competitors choose to offset, rather than match, their opponent's investments through asymmetric weapons and tactics, things become more complex.[27] The current global security environment, characterized as it is by fluid networks of nefarious non-state threats, epitomizes such "off-setting" strategic contests. Fringe actors seek to dethrone the liberal world order in a number of arenas—political, social, cyber, and cultural—yet not in battlefield dominance, where US strength lies. This profound asymmetry makes assessing relative power problematic. In the parlance of net assessment, the relevant attributes of "red" (the opponent) are not easy to compare to those of "blue" (ourselves).[28]

The difficulty of measuring this environment goes beyond mere complexity, however. Building on our preceding discussions, the capacities of liberal states are further limited by their inability to bring their military investments to bear on many types of threats. This problem is compounded by the fact that wealthy liberal states, such as the United States, have increasingly relied on advanced technology and stand-off weaponry to dominate battlefields, but wars are being fought in cities and villages, not on traditional battlefields.[29] Current internal assessments of military capability are skewed to heavily weight such expensive platforms and their supporting systems. As we noted earlier, however, such weapons can play only a minor role against the security threats that liberal democracies currently face. Therefore, standard assessment

frameworks may be heavily biased toward overestimating the capacity of such states to effect outcomes in the international system, and lead to overly ambitious policy and the ready resort to force.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The United States finds itself in a world full of concerns, none of which currently threatens the existence of the nation. Our discussion highlights the fact that, ironically, the *lack* of an existential threat creates its own host of problems for policy makers. More specifically, in such an environment, a "powerful" liberal nation, such as the United States, may be essentially powerless to bring its national security investments to bear on the existing threats. We demonstrate that the militarily most powerful nation in the world is indeed struggling with one arm tied behind its back, a fact that policymakers and planners must bear in mind. What are some of the implications of this situation?

First, the constraint of social and political norms on military execution is a fundamental consideration in any decision regarding the discretionary uses of force. Simply basing decisions on the array of impressive assets available to policy makers has and almost surely will lead to grief. Normative constraints should be acknowledged at the outset of mission planning, yet the nuts and bolts of operations are normally developed in a vacuum, divorced from the broader social and political context. This situation needs to change.

NORMATIVE CONSTRAINTS SHOULD BE ACKNOWLEDGED AT THE OUTSET OF MISSION PLANNING.

Second, if, after careful consideration, military force remains the best option, then the types of units selected for missions are critical. On the one hand, conventional military forces are purpose-built to effectively destroy enemy units in an unconstrained environment. But on the other hand, the current array of irregular conflicts is not merely a "lesser included" subset of such missions. Small packages of specially selected and trained forces may not only be more effective than larger conventional units at operating in complex "human terrain" but also are less likely to garner the media attention that mobilizes normative critics.

Finally, using military force as a policy tool in today's threat environment requires a fundamental reworking of our outdated, Cold War–legacy planning mechanism. A new perspective on military planning is necessary to build and equip forces that can operate in politically constrained settings against nonstate opponents. Such a new approach should consider combat effectiveness as only one attribute of a viable force structure, while simultaneously taking into account normative political constraints. In doing so, we can avoid building expensive arms that remain tied behind our back. ❖

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NOTES

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The Weather of Violence: Metaphors and Models, Predictions and Surprises

Dr. Melvin J. Konner, Emory University

Metaphors (figures of speech) are a common part of the English language, and official speech about war, terror, foreign policy, and defense, including the net assessment of violent state and non-state actors, is no exception.[1] We talk about hawks and doves, predators and prey, boiling over, coming to a head, pressure cookers, cat and mouse games, and the spread of viruses or cancer. In just the second half of March 2015, US leaders and commentators used these metaphors to describe sectarian violence:

- 17 March, General Mark Welsh, Air Force Chief of Staff: "I use a NASCAR analogy. ... If the car trailing you has been behind for a couple of laps but [you are] consistently slowing ... you cannot keep them from passing."[2]
- 18 March, US Representative Nicola Tsongas: "I liken [fighting ISIS] to a multidimensional chess game";[3] and Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter: "The ISIL phenomenon is metastasizing."[4]
- 23 March, David Adesnik of the Foreign Policy Initiative: "If it's March Madness [college basketball playoffs], if it's the NFL [National Football League], you usually want to play a home game. In war, it's better to play an away game."[5]
- 26 March, retired Admiral James Stavridis speaking of Afghanistan: "There are ... microclimates"[6] of sentiment in local populations. About troops fighting Ebola: "Life is not an on-off switch. We don't fund this magnificent military just to be in combat. ... It's a rheostat between hard power" and soft. "We can dial that rheostat toward the soft power."[7] He showed the on-off switch with his finger, the rheostat, by turning his hand.
- 28 March, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, addressing the Arab League Summit: "Gaza remains a tinderbox."[8]

Some metaphors work better than others at enlightening the listener.[9] Does Gen. Welsh's NASCAR image in the example above improve the listener's understanding of a fighter pilot being out-flown by a better plane?

If metaphors are brief, evocative figures of speech, analogies are extended parallels in which one unfamiliar thing is compared to another more familiar thing in order to enhance understanding. For instance, terrorism is often described in terms of a disease process, for which self-damage (the autoimmune response) is a risk of response. In other words, we are not just comparing a terrorist network

SOME METAPHORS WORK BETTER THAN OTHERS AT ENLIGHTENING THE LISTENER.

to, say, a virus, but we are also comparing different aspects of counterterrorism to the body's natural immune response and the doctor's treatment of the illness. Some analysts develop models, which are in essence elaborate analogies (which can take the form of diagrams on paper or algorithms on computers) that, at their best, can be manipulated mathematically to test hypotheses about real-world systems. To take another common example, the label "Hawks and Doves" generally refers to some population composed of aggressors (Hawks) and nonaggressors (Doves) and became a quantifiable game theory model in evolution and other fields. "Metastasizing," the cancer metaphor used by Secretary Carter, can be made part of an organismal model, although, as I demonstrate later on, that model can become confusing. Is ISIS a virus or a cancer attacking the body politic? The implications are different because the analogies imply different pathologies and types of treatment.

IS ISIS A VIRUS OR A CANCER ATTACKING THE BODY POLITIC?

A rheostat (one of the metaphors used by Admiral Stavridis) changes resistance to electricity, as with an electric light dimmer switch, and in engineering models, may be a part of systems that are simple or complex, closed or open. But to make the term useful as a model, we would have to decide whether we want to model the entire electrical system including the rheostat, or whether we want to use the analogy of a rheostat in isolation in order to bring a fresh perspective to people's minds. Finally, the term *microclimate*, also used by Stavridis, suggests either an analogy or a model of populations parallel to the way we model climate, weather, and other natural systems. In some ways, climate and weather can be predictable and cyclical, but in other ways, they can be formally chaotic and emergent.

I discuss some models and their possible value later in the article, but first I consider a basic view of human violence with regard to the rise of violent non-state actors (VNSAs), seen from the perspective of evolutionary anthropology. This is a discipline that makes regular use of metaphors, analogies, and models. For example, Lawrence Kuznar and Carl Hunt (in this issue) discuss the Blue-Green-Red metaphor and turn it into a model with measurable components.[10] But they also discuss VNSAs as tribes or chiefdoms, terms that are much closer to the reality of many of these groups. If al Qaeda is compared to a tribe and ISIS to a chiefdom, the parallels are more precise and elaborate than is the case with the color metaphor, and anthropologists have testable models for how tribes may evolve into chiefdoms.

More importantly, tribes, chiefdoms, and VNSAs are human groups that must be understood in a deeper evolutionary context because their dynamics are not only analogous to but also consistent with and resulting from a long evolutionary

history. The members of these groups follow known scientific laws and exhibit biological and behavioral processes that are not metaphoric but real. I first describe these processes before considering the value of some often-used models for describing terrorists and counterterrorism. I conclude that studying the thing itself (i.e., a particular VNSA or network) remains a superior route to understanding, instead of relying on models or analogies.[11] I also describe some general principles that may help guide a common-sense approach to net assessment.[12]

A View from Evolutionary Anthropology

Evolutionary anthropology sees human nature as real and definable, resulting from evolution by natural selection.[13] Statistically, historically, and biologically, violence is part of our nature but much more for males than females—a difference with deep evolutionary and genetic roots.[14] This includes individual as well as group violence, ambush and raiding, and deadly as well as ritualistic conflict. Tribal conflicts are especially intense because the absence of state or other higher-level authority encourages almost continual war. Examples of perpetual tribal conflict include the Enga of highland New Guinea, the Yanomamo of Amazonia, the Ilongot of the Philippines, the Nuer of southern Sudan, and the tribes of the British Isles between CE 800 and 1200.[15] The possession of women has frequently been a source of violence among men, and the seizure and accumulation of women was pervasive in ancient times. Reproductive inequality among men intensified with the rise of empires because the most powerful men could accumulate many more wives and concubines than ordinary men, but rape has always been a part—often a goal—of war.[16] This behavior transcends time, space, religion, and ideology. One analysis of Y-chromosome DNA (inherited only through males) shows that rape has long been a successful reproductive strategy for some men at the expense of others, and of women.[17]

Proportional to population, violence has declined by many measures, owing to the rise of the state, the spread of democracy, and a general improvement in women's status.[18] Violent organizations like Boko Haram, Al Shabaab, the Lord's Resistance Army, and ISIS[19] resemble tribes or chiefdoms, emerging in weak states where young men's violent tendencies and desire for women can gain free expression. Violent actors may operate in small groups where individuals goad each other (the "bunch of guys" thesis)[20] or in larger groups resembling whole tribes, but either way, fictive kinship among members is important, and prestige is a common goal. Our brains, it turns out, are not very good at distinguishing fictive from real kinship or the prestige that leads to reproductive success from the fatal kind that does not.[21]

Anthropologist Kuznar describes the limits of rationality in conditions where potential gains in prestige exceed likely losses (a sigmoid model of motivation). Such a situation can trigger a primitive brain response (in the limbic or emotional brain) in young men who are anxious to gain prestige, and it is at this point that such men are likely to act.[22] Social media have proved to be effective means for worldwide recruitment by extremist groups that exploit this emotional vulnerability. As recent research has shown, poverty and lack of education do not explain terrorism, a finding that James A. Piazza, writing in this issue, confirms.[23] Piazza adds that new democracies may experience a rise in acts of terrorism, while more mature democracies are at a lower risk. He points out the three factors that most strongly contribute to a rise in terrorism: human rights abuses, the exclusion of minority groups from civil institutions and access to political power, and foreign military interventions, all of which pit domestic groups of some kind against each other.[24]

Groups in conflict, regardless of size, mirror and escalate each other's violence, a process called *mimetic rivalry*. "Sacrifices" in war become literally that: making the cause sacred with one's blood.[25] Religious motives intensify these processes but are not necessary for violence to intensify.[26] As Michael Vlahos has demonstrated, groups are always fighting for identity, among other goals.[27] When a global *civilization* (e.g., ancient Rome, today's advanced Western world) faces a *tribal* group with a stronger identity, the less well-defined civilization may lose. But war strengthens identity and the sense of kinship. According to a study published in 1968, of 3,421 years of recorded history to that date, only 268 years saw no war anywhere in the world.[28] Since 1968, there have been no war-free years.[29]

All this violence is carried out mainly by males, although women often participate.[30] Women do become terrorists as well, but infrequently enough that they can be enumerated and named; they often become involved through romantic or family relationships with men, which suggests ways to track their involvement.[31] Surveillance must not ignore women, but men, especially young men, form the core, the main leadership, and the great majority of almost all violent groups' members.

MANY IN THE WEST ARE IN DENIAL ABOUT THE INNATE QUALITY OF VIOLENT BEHAVIOR.

Why should we consider human nature when analyzing terrorist violence? Many in the West, including many intellectuals, are in denial about the innate quality of violent behavior and hold a naïve view of the current extremist violence as a political response to overreach by a hegemonic West.[32] One result of this misinterpretation is the defunding of surveillance and defense agencies within governments. Furthermore, since young men account for the overwhelming majority of violence in all cultures, any psychological or psychobiological analysis must focus on them.[33]

Metaphors or Models?

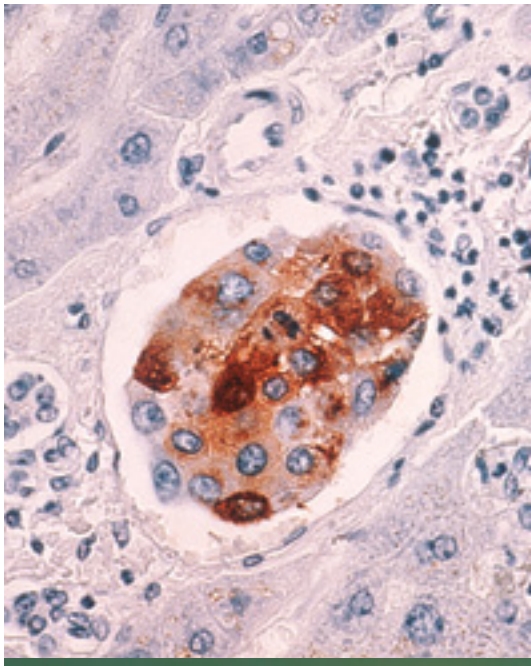
If violence is a fundamental, ever-present danger, can we predict or at least minimize it? The ability to predict and/or prevent is one purpose of models, and it is how they should improve on metaphors or analogies, which only emphasize a point or, in the worst cases, distract from it. Models should clarify thinking, be quantifiable, and make testable predictions. Of these three goals, models that apply to VNSAs have often accomplished the first and sometimes the second, but rarely the last.[34] In this section, I briefly summarize three models commonly used in the study of violence: the Hawk-Dove game theory model; the general systems model; and the chaos, emergence, and complexity model. All three have figured in discussions of international order, making them potentially relevant to net assessment, but not all have proven to add analytical value to common-sense approaches.

The Hawk-Dove Model

Some models began as metaphors. In evolutionary theory, Hawks and Doves are actors in a mathematical game-theory model.[35] Consider a population with two genetic types: one that always fights for a resource (Hawks) and one that always yields (Doves). If the entire population consists of Doves, then an aggressive Hawk mutant that emerges within the population will thrive, and over generations its genes will spread. But under reasonable assumptions about the cost in death and damage that comes with fighting, and the value of the arbitrary resource—food, territory, opportunities for reproduction, and so on—Hawks will not completely eliminate Doves because, at a certain point, Hawks will usually encounter

other Hawks, and the fight will be a costly mistake instead of an easy win. (Note that, like all models, this one requires certain simplifying assumptions, such as an inability to know in advance how the adversary will behave.) In a population consisting primarily of Hawks, Doves will gain fewer resources but lose much less by not fighting, thus gaining an evolutionary advantage. Equilibrium is reached when it is no longer advantageous for either Doves or Hawks to increase in number; this is called an *evolutionarily stable strategy*, and the equilibrium point depends heavily on the assumptions about the damage from fighting versus the value of resources.

To expand the predictive value of the model, we can add intermediate types, called *Retaliators* (who attack only when attacked first) or *Bourgeois* (who act like Hawks when they already hold the resource to be fought over but like Doves when they do not). Again, the outcomes depend on the arbitrary values of costs and benefits that have been assigned by the researcher to test hypotheses and variables. But these models can successfully predict animal behavior and may suggest some general strategic principles. For example, non-Hawks of various types could benefit from two Hawks fighting; this might suggest that if two or more of the United States' potential adversaries are in conflict (e.g., the Soviet Union and China prior to 1990, Iran and Iraq before 2003, or Shi'a and Sunni Muslims), watchful waiting may be more adaptive than intervention. Other (often metaphoric) game theory models, such as "Chicken," "Tit-for-Tat," or "The Prisoner's Dilemma," have helped clarify thinking about competitive relationships, but no game is better than the assumptions of its creator.



The Organismal Model

The idea that a society is an organism has long had intense appeal for researchers, but is this a model or just a metaphor?[36] Either way, it has two big problems: members of a society are not genetically identical, and they often secede from one social "organism" to join another. The functional integration of society is therefore transient, and a society can be regarded as an organism only metaphorically. To some extent, every individual in a society is at odds with every other member in the competition for resources and status, however closely they are allied.[37]

Still, some extensions of the metaphor, or analogies, do seem useful. An exception among our body's otherwise genetically identical cells is the cancer cell, which mutates to grow without restraint. No longer genetically identical to the host, it multiplies at the expense of other cells—and eventually the entire organism. The appropriate response is to cut the tumor out, or degrade and destroy it. The speed of a tumor's metastasis depends not only on the point of origin and the cell type of the cancer (e.g., breast or prostate), but also on the cooperation of whatever distant organ it potentially spreads to (such as bone, liver, or brain—the "seed and soil" hypothesis), just as viruses and other infections depend on host resistance.[38] Disease also can be a useful analogy to vulnerability to violence.

Equally interesting is the immune system extension, especially autoimmunity. The influenza epidemic of 1918 hit young adults hardest because they had robust immune systems: they were killed by their own bodies' response to the virus. Many symptoms of infectious disease, such as fever, are actually part of the body's immune response. In the same way, autoimmune diseases—including

allergies, multiple sclerosis, lupus, and rheumatoid arthritis—are inherently self-attacks and, therefore, hard to deal with, as is cancer, because they derive from the body's normal functions.

Counterterrorism professionals have appropriately been concerned about the damage that US responses to attacks have done—in blood, treasure, and freedom from government interference—to the United States. Triggering this kind of self-damaging response from their targets has been a goal of terror groups.[39] Controlling our responses to terrorist attacks may be analogous to withholding antibiotics where they are inappropriate or limiting the body's immune attack on itself when trying to fight an infectious or autoimmune disease.

Systems Models

Systems models, which originated in engineering and were extended to the biological and social sciences, have proven their predictive value in the physical world.[40] Closed, negative feedback (cybernetic) systems, such as a thermostat or a guided missile are straightforward, mathematically representable, theoretically generative accounts that offer testable predictions. In biology, examples of (relatively) closed systems include homeostasis (the tight autonomic regulation of body temperature or blood sodium), homeorhesis (developmental changes that return to a genetically guided path), and imprinting (the tendency of ducklings to follow the mother). These are not completely closed systems, because they all require the exchange of energy and substance with the environment, and imprinting requires initial learning, but they are in principle almost as simple as the thermostat and the guided missile.

ALL LIVING SYSTEMS MUST USE ENERGY AND INFORMATION TO RESIST THE DISORDER OF THE WORLD.

Still, strictly speaking, all living systems are open because they must acquire and use both energy and information to resist the disorder of the world (which is called entropy, one aspect of the second law of thermodynamics). In the process of evolution, living systems accumulate information that allows them to maintain their improbable order. In the 1950s, general system theory claimed to be able to provide models for everything from physics to economics, but after decades of effort, it is difficult to point to examples in general system theory that do with open systems what is readily done with closed ones: predict.[41]

The burden of proof is now on the proponents of these models to offer quantitative representations and predictions that are more useful than what we usually see on a "galactic radiator" PowerPoint slide: scores of boxes and arrows that tell us only that the system is very complex and not very predictable. The systems model is thus a metaphor, but not a sharp one. Theoretical biologist Ludwig von Bertalanffy wrote "that it took more than two hundred years before the intuitive world system of Copernicus and Kepler was transformed into the physics of high-school textbooks."[42] Counterterrorism cannot wait so long.

Chaos, Emergence, and Complexity

Complexity models have largely displaced general system theory, which they partly resemble.[43] Complexity models, however, try to describe what emerges from formal chaos, which is a new and important concept.[44] Identified in practical terms by meteorologist Edward Lorenz, chaos refers to a deterministic outcome that is technically unpredictable due to its extreme sensitivity to initial conditions.[45] A butterfly fluttering its wings in Japan might theoretically cause a storm in Mexico weeks later, but there would be so many causal steps, each amplifying the last, that even if we had all the data we needed to trace them, it would take a computer larger than the universe, with transistors more numerous than atoms, to do the calculation.

Something similar applies to predicting whether it will be raining in Washington, D.C., two weeks from now. Chaos theory explains why this prediction cannot accurately be made and may never be made. We can predict the *chance* of rain a few days out with some confidence, but as we move further out in time, the steps in the causal chain add up and error accumulates exponentially. We should recognize what we *can* predict, beyond the next few days. We can say with a high level of confidence that the temperature in Washington, D.C., will not reach 100 degrees Fahrenheit on any day in January in 2025, but it will probably be a couple of degrees warmer on average

during that month in 2125 (the whole world will be warmer, but local climates are less predictable). When will a devastating blizzard or Category 5 hurricane next hit the city? Good question.

Meteorologists know what they do not and cannot know. The worldwide network of climate scientists systematically shares data and maintains vigilance so that when an unpredictable disaster (including a natural one, such as an earthquake, tsunami, flood, tornado cluster, or volcanic eruption) does approach, it will be identified *as early as possible.* While doing the science, this network also broadcasts minute-by-minute information to billions of people. With this information, advanced countries and even many developing countries are able to build infrastructure to specifications that minimize damage, prepare evacuation and other response plans, and err on the side of caution in invoking such plans.

What about emergence and complexity? Slowly heating a viscous fluid initially produces formal chaos, but patterns eventually emerge, often around "strange attractors"—unpredictable points of organization. Emergence in turn can lead to stable complexity, a state that is intensively studied by mathematicians and scientists. Scientists once thought that the laws of chemistry would be derivable from physics, those of biology from chemistry, and so on up to economics and even history—but this is no longer the case. Even the structure of the ammonium ion (four hydrogen atoms around a nitrogen atom) cannot be predicted from physical laws one level down. In other words, "more is different."[46]

PATTERNS EVENTUALLY EMERGE, OFTEN AROUND "STRANGE ATTRACTORS."

So each level of complexity has *its own* patterns and laws, because the relationship between any level and the next higher up is one of unpredictable emergence. David Ruelle, one of the first physicists to apply chaos theory, wrote in 1991, "The physics of chaos, ... in spite of frequent triumphant announcements of 'novel' breakthroughs, has had a declining output of interesting discoveries. Hopefully, when the craze is over, a sober appraisal of the difficulties of the subject will result in a new wave of high-quality results."[47] In 2001, however, he remained skeptical.[48] John Holland, another pioneer, concluded in 2014 that physicists who study "complex systems are still primarily at the stage of collecting and examining examples."[49] Embracing complexity theory is to some extent a matter of taste, as with the other models, and even with metaphors or analogies; beyond the key discovery of formal chaos and its explanation of the limitations on prediction, there is no compelling scientific reason to adopt it.[50]

The Limits to Prediction

Citizens wonder why there have been so many US "intelligence failures," including the failure to predict the Tet Offensive (1968), the Yom Kippur War (1973), the Iranian revolution (1979), the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (1979), the fall of the Soviet Union (1989–1990), the second Indian nuclear test (1998), the 9/11 attacks, the absence of nuclear weapons in Iraq, and the Arab Spring, among others.[51] Some were failures of communication. US Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan predicted the Soviet collapse while then–CIA director Robert M. Gates loudly proclaimed the USSR's invulnerability.[52] The CIA warned the Jimmy Carter administration of Soviet military preparations throughout 1979, but because these warnings were downplayed, there was no high-level anticipation that the USSR would invade Afghanistan.[53] According to the 9/11 Commission Report, al Qaeda's attacks on New York and Washington "should not have come as

a surprise," and the failure to foresee them was due to "an overwhelming number of priorities, flat budgets, an outmoded structure, and bureaucratic rivalries."[54] A decade later, the same bipartisan group that wrote the report welcomed the implementation of its recommendations for improving intelligence processes but assessed the threats to be even more complex and growing, and asked "whether the United States is prepared to face the emergent threats of today."[55] Missing the "meteoric growth of ISIS" is US intelligence's most recent failure.[56] What are we overlooking or underestimating now: the international Islamist network Hizb-ut-Tahrir, working quietly but relentlessly for a worldwide caliphate;[57] the thousand non-Islamic hate groups in the United States;[58] Pakistan's instability; or perhaps a widening Saudi-Iran war?

MISSING THE "METEORIC GROWTH OF ISIS" IS US INTELLIGENCE'S MOST RECENT FAILURE.

It would help if mathematical models in organismal, general systems, or chaos/emergence/complexity theory could make specific or even general predictions that are better than common-sense conventional ones based on demography, economics, politics, and surveillance of current developments. There is little evidence as yet that these models can do this.

In net assessment, therefore, we can be skeptical about models as predictors, and focus on (1) making general and specific preventive and defensive preparations based on our best overviews of future war and terror; and (2) seeing emergent patterns as soon as possible.[59] "Big Data" may be more useful than big models,[60] although more modest models (e.g., the Hawk-Dove model, Kuznar's econometrics of prestige, and chaotic unpredictability) could help.

Using the weather analogy, we should push the predictive science, know where it stops being useful, and use systematic worldwide surveillance to detect emergent threats. In 2014 and 2015, ISIS, like the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, emerged as a major threat that we could have identified much earlier, better prepared for, and possibly prevented.[61] Meteorologists and other geoscientists agree on most of the methods and theories related to their fields, share information, and

disseminate their findings quickly and effectively both to the general public and up the chain of command. They are properly and predictably resourced, inspire confidence because they know the limits of their knowledge (the real contribution of chaos theory), and constantly improve surveillance. Imagine if we had a daily "weather of violence" report: a fast-paced one- or two-minute broadcast across media that featured a colored world map, hot spots around the world, and a summary of what was "happening now." People would get used to thinking about the occurrence of terrorism frequently and calmly.

This is not a nihilistic view of net assessment. If violence is a part of human nature, following *broadly* predictable patterns, then the United States must take the following actions:

- Defense and intelligence budgets must not be arbitrarily cut by sequester or fluctuate year to year.
- Information sharing among intelligence agencies must be smooth and reliable.
- Leaders must heed warnings, followers must be forthright about sounding warnings, and whistleblowers must be protected from retaliation.
- The United States must maintain a decisive military edge, a large professional human intelligence network, and cutting-edge cybersecurity and data integration. The United States must also be willing to station forces longer in some places, in peacetime as well as in combat.[62] Prevention is better than treatment.
- US spending for diplomacy and foreign aid should be increased as leverage against enemies that exploit vulnerable populations.[63]
- Diplomatic efforts should aim specifically to end human rights abuses, promote the rights of minority groups, and prevent invasions, three factors known to foster terrorism.[64]
- Programs that educate girls and empower women should be funded. They improve local and national economies, reduce violence in the long run, and are the best ways to spend an aid dollar.
- A naïve public must be educated about the clear and present danger of terrorism. They might be more willing to spend public money to support those who spy, fight, and die for them, and on the diplomacy and foreign aid that will help mitigate needless risk.
- Responses need to be measured: government officials and the public must neither overreact nor underreact to acts of terrorism.

Conclusion

Paul Bracken, in his 2006 "basic starter kit" for net assessment, expressed skepticism about mathematical models similar to those outlined here: "You can get many things right by just thinking about them a little bit."[65] He urged that we "*model simple and think complex*" (italics in the original), resist the "tyranny of small decisions," and reject "muddling through."[66] My list of needed actions, above, is very much in the spirit of Bracken's recommendations. Net assessment demands a longer time span than policy

makers commonly use. Like the fluttering butterfly in Japan, "change that is imperceptible from day to day can produce large effects viewed over time."[67] This applies to positive processes like education as well as negative ones like recruiting terrorists.

Finally, Bracken wrote, "An interesting metaphor for net assessment is to compare it to Wall Street. ... Time after time some players use information that is available to all to make a lot more money than other players."[68] As with investing, net assessment is neither an art nor a science but a practice; some investors, like Warren Buffett and John Templeton, have done very well using simple models. Gathering, sifting, and integrating information matters more than complex equations.

Common sense approaches to anticipating and reducing risk are vital because violence is inevitable and our ability to predict it is limited. Models that work may be more useful than metaphors, but so far, they continue to promise more than they deliver in practical predictions. US President Theodore Roosevelt borrowed a wise African proverb that became a useful metaphor for US foreign policy: *Speak softly and carry a big stick*. We can expand that now: *Speak softly, carry a big stick, make friends and strengthen them, scan the horizon constantly, and if you see something, shout your warning until you are heard.* ❖

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Trapped by the Paradigm: Why Net Assessment May Not Contribute to Countering Terrorism

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THIS VOLUME OF *CTX* IS DEVOTED TO DISCUSSING WAYS TO REFINE NET assessment concepts and address the complexity of the terrorism/counterterrorism dynamic. It might therefore seem heretical to question whether net assessment can make any contribution to countering terrorism, but that is what this article does.

Net assessment encourages a broad consideration of strategy instead of focusing only on the immediate tactical situation. As one article about net assessment's application to counterterrorism put it, "The answers are not as important as the process we use to determine them."[1] If the process leads to asking the wrong questions, however, those answers will not matter either, and they could lead to short-term tactical successes that culminate in long-term strategic failure. For that reason, when it comes to counterterrorism, those who apply net assessment need to do so with caution and be fully aware of its inherent limitations and assumptions.

Before considering the potential for net assessment to contribute to efforts against terrorism, it is necessary to have a clear definition of both terrorism and net assessment. It is also useful to ask why the question of whether to apply net assessment to terrorism has arisen in the first place.

Terrorism can be defined as the tactical threat or use of violence by non-state or subnational groups or individuals against noncombatants for purposes of political coercion. Terrorist groups are therefore different from insurgencies. Insurgents aim to foment revolution and overthrow a regime through the control of territory. Once they have accumulated sufficient manpower and weapons, insurgencies often engage the armed forces of the regime they are trying to overthrow in combat. Terrorists, by contrast, are typically far fewer in number, do not attempt to control territory, and seek a political victory through fear and coercion rather than by military means.

The line between the two types of groups is often crossed. If the military strength of a terrorist organization grows, and if the forces supporting the regime are weak, then the terrorists can begin to act like insurgents and move toward more direct military action. The Islamic State, or ISIS, for example, has existed for years, but the chaos in Syria and the discontent caused by the sectarian policies of the government in Iraq allowed ISIS to accumulate sufficient strength to achieve major military victories. Conversely, and much more frequently, insurgent groups that become weak militarily, or are forced to go underground by superior regime forces, may adopt the tactics of terrorists rather than risk annihilation. The Lord's Resistance Army, which began in the 1990s as an insurgency to overthrow the Ugandan government, has devolved over years of military defeats into a small, chronic terrorist cell without any apparent strategic goal beyond survival.[2]

> IF THE PROCESS LEADS TO ASKING THE WRONG QUESTIONS, THE ANSWERS WILL NOT MATTER.

Both groups may use violence against civilians as a means to achieve their aims, but terrorists use such means almost exclusively, while insurgents have broader goals than merely drawing attention to themselves and their cause. Insurgents usually want the support of at least some portion of the civilian population in order to expand their territory and power, so their attacks on noncombatants are normally directed against those who support the regime in power. Such distinctions are important because the group's objectives help determine which tactics should be used to defeat it.

For instance, on the one hand, once ISIS became more like an insurgent group than a terrorist group, a bombing campaign could potentially be effective against it. The primary defensive tactic of terrorists, on the other hand, is to be indistinguishable from noncombatants and blend in with the local population. Therefore, the use of air power against them will cause collateral damage that ultimately creates more terrorists than it eliminates. Because of its increased vulnerability to military power, therefore, ISIS may not have the staying power of a group like al Qaeda unless it is able to further evolve.

The distinction between insurgents and terrorists is important to understand, but it alone does not end the debate about what tactics are appropriate in each case. There is no "one size fits all" approach to insurgent movements. As political scientist Paul Staniland has pointed out, every insurgency is different and requires a different response.[3]

Defining Net Assessment

The need for a clear definition applies not just to terrorism but to net assessment as well. Different scholars have come up with a variety of descriptions for the technique. Paul Bracken of Yale University defines *net assessment* by listing its fundamental aspects: long-term thinking, looking at important problems in depth, considering socio-bureaucratic behavior, concentrating on strategic asymmetries, defining the features of good strategies, and remembering that a strategy is multifaceted and goes beyond rivalry and arms racing.[4]

For strategic analyst Eliot Cohen, net assessment is "the craft and discipline of analyzing military balances" where a military balance is a quantitative and qualitative appraisal of two or more military forces.[5] Harvard's Stephen Rosen describes it as "the analysis of national security establishments in peacetime and war."[6] Thomas Skypek, building on the work of Cohen and Rosen, offers the following description of net assessment:

> A multidisciplinary approach to national security analysis that is comparative, diagnostic, and forward-looking. More precisely, it is a framework for evaluating the long-term strategic political-military competitions in which states engage. Its aim is to diagnose strategic asymmetries between competitors and to identify environmental opportunities in order to support senior policy makers in the making of strategy.[7]

According to a 2009 Department of Defense directive, net assessment is the comparative analysis of military, political, economic, and other factors governing the relative military capability of nations.[8]

THE NEED FOR A CLEAR DEFINITION APPLIES TO NET ASSESSMENT AS WELL.

Before considering why these descriptions of net assessment pose problems when they are applied to counterterrorism, it is worth considering why this question comes up at all.

The US *Quadrennial Defense Review* (QDR) is a legislatively mandated report that requires the Department of Defense (DoD) to assess the threats and challenges that the nation faces and describe how the DoD will address them now and in the future. When the QDR was first published in 1997, terrorism was mentioned a number of times, but only in the context of being one of a number of possible threats from non-state actors.[9] In the 2006 QDR, terrorism and counterterrorism were mentioned 38 times, and winning the "war on terrorism" was described as the DoD's first priority.[10] By the 2014 QDR, combating terrorism came in fifth in the list of priorities after maintaining nuclear deterrence, defending the homeland, defeating any adversary, and providing a global stabilizing presence.[11]

Clearly, the events of 9/11 and the invasion of Iraq caused the threat of terrorism to achieve the prominence it obtained in defense planning. But just as the public never had any way to assess the false claims that Saddam Hussein was somehow involved in the 9/11 attacks, they also

had little ability to assess the magnitude of the threat posed by terrorism.

The reality is that as a cause of death for most populations, terrorism lies somewhere near the bottom of the list. In a typical year, as many American civilians die from falling furniture as from terrorism.[12] And yet government spending per death caused by terrorism is 50,000 times higher than for any other cause of death.[13] If the goal of government is to reduce the deaths of Americans, there are cheaper ways to do it. For instance, thousands of lives would be saved every year by simply raising the minimum age for buying cigarettes from 18 to 21.[14]

But in the wake of 9/11, any serious analysis of how to spend defense money efficiently and effectively gave way to the intense and overpowering fear provoked by the events of that day. Because of that fear on the part of the public, people's unwillingness and inability to calculate the real risk posed by terrorists and the influence of the military-industrial lobby, terrorism will continue to be overstated as a threat while far more serious dangers, like climate change, go unaddressed.

Why Net Assessment Might Not Work

Regardless of the size of the threat, there are a number of problems inherent in applying a traditional net assessment approach to counterterrorism. In the quote above, Skypek characterized net assessment as a framework for evaluating the long-term strategic political-military competitions in which states engage. Net assessment diagnoses strategic asymmetries between competitors and identifies environmental opportunities that help policy makers formulate strategies. That definition helps highlight the difficulties with regard to counterterrorism.

A Terrorist Organization Is Not a State

First of all, a terrorist organization is not a state and does not act like one. It is in essence a criminal gang with political rather than economic motives. Insurgents may try to act like a state in the territory they control, but terrorists don't worry about providing services to civilians or protecting them.

If net assessment is an appraisal of military balances, what happens when military might does not matter? Terrorists don't have a navy or an air force. They use light weapons because heavy weapons systems need to be maintained and supported, are hard to deploy, make an attractive target for regime forces, and reduce the ability of the terrorists to hide among the civilian population. Thus, there is no category of weapons in which terrorists are likely to have or even want to have superiority over regime forces. This includes weapons of mass destruction (WMD: nuclear, chemical, biological, and radiological devices).

AS MANY AMERICAN CIVILIANS DIE FROM FALLING FURNITURE AS FROM TERRORISM.

Many terrorists would like to obtain WMD because there is nothing that spreads terror more effectively than the threatened use of such a weapon.[15] But again, the military balance does not matter. The regime in power or its allies can have a thousand nuclear weapons or none at all, and it will not make a difference to the counterterror calculus. If a terrorist organization obtains even one such device, it has the tremendous advantage of being able to decide when, where, and how to use it.

Terrorist Groups Come and Go

Another aspect of net assessment that does not yield useful results for analyzing terrorism is the emphasis on long-term trends. There are no barriers to entry to terrorism. Any group, or even individual, who decides to commit an act of violence against innocent civilians for political purposes can join the ranks of the terrorists. Timothy McVeigh showed that all it took to destroy a federal office building was some fuel oil, fertilizer, and a rented truck.[16]

There is also no barrier to exit. Terrorists can decide to cease using the tactic at any time, for whatever reason. They can join the political process, for instance, as some of those involved in the Irish Republican Army did following the Good Friday Agreement of 1998.

Long-term planning is appropriate for assessing the security strategies of a state because the state's interests and options do not change rapidly. Bracken wrote that "the need to tie US defense policies with the anticipated reaction of opponents is absolutely fundamental to net assessment."[17] The problem with terrorists is that it is difficult to anticipate their reactions. They play by no rules, and they use their unpredictability as a major tactical element.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN MILITARY MIGHT DOES NOT MATTER?

The first page of the founding manifesto of the US Department of Homeland Security stated, "Today's terrorists can strike at any place, at any time, and with virtually any weapon." The essay noting that statement also quoted FBI Director Robert Mueller as saying, "The greatest threat is from al Qaeda cells in the US that we have not yet identified."[18] A dozen years after Mueller made that statement, no such cells have been identified. So how does long-term planning assist with formulating strategies against groups that have no long-term plans?

Measures of Military Balance in Asymmetric Warfare Are Misleading

Governments are always going to have a resource advantage and a tactical disadvantage when it comes to combating terrorist organizations. Looking at military balances, therefore, is not going to produce any useful understanding of the problems or opportunities that might guide policy makers. It would be like using net assessment to determine how the police should combat crime. The militarization of the police force is not the answer, although those who observed the official reaction to the recent disturbances in Ferguson, Missouri, might be excused for thinking that approach has already been undertaken in parts of the United States.[19]

In addition, defining a problem as military in nature implies there is a military solution to it. An inappropriate military approach, however, has the potential to make a situation worse, not better. As Daniel Grazier has pointed out,

commanders in Iraq and Afghanistan who struggled to find ways to decrease the level of enemy activity did so "without considering how their mere presence in the battle space drove insurgent activity."[20] Cornelia Beyer argues that "economic and political constraints should be considered as root causes for international terrorism," and that "imperialism, understood as control and intervention, enhances human insecurity in the Middle East, and therefore endangers global security."[21]

An excellent example of Grazier and Beyer's points is the so-called "surge" of US troops in Iraq in 2006. There are those who say the surge won the war and that US President Barack Obama has now forfeited that victory by withdrawing American troops.[22] That is nonsense. The troops were withdrawn as provided for under the Status of Forces Agreement negotiated by the preceding George W. Bush administration. No Iraqi government would agree to let them stay on Iraq's soil unless they were subject to the Iraqi judicial system, and no American president would agree to such a condition. More to the point, the surge only "won" a temporary lull in a civil war. That was not because of the additional troops. It was a surge of American money. Some $400 million was spent to put over 100,000 insurgents on the government payroll.[23] The relative calm lasted as long as the insurgents were kept employed. When Americans stopped paying them and Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki failed to continue the practice, many of the erstwhile insurgents then resumed the insurgency. Most of the decision makers in the ISIS organization are former Iraqi military officers.[24] This outcome seems to indicate that political and economic solutions are essential for quelling the fighting over the long run. What is more, unless the ingrained culture of corruption and cronyism within the Iraqi security forces is dealt with, those forces will continue to fail.

IT WAS A SURGE OF AMERICAN MONEY.

Stability in Iraq cannot be achieved by a simple military solution. An opinion piece published in September 2004 by US General David Petraeus, then-commander of multinational forces in Iraq, does not, however, convey that understanding. Eighteen months after the initial invasion, Petraeus claimed that "Iraq's security forces are developing steadily and they are in the fight. Momentum has gathered in recent months. With strong Iraqi leaders out front and with continued coalition support, this trend will continue."[25] That assessment no doubt helped President Bush to get reelected six weeks later and Petraeus to earn his fourth star, but it was not a remotely accurate prediction of the future.

In 2014, the security forces trained by Petraeus's troops and organized by al-Maliki outnumbered ISIS fighters by at least 20 to 1, and yet they could not prevent ISIS from quickly taking over one-third of Iraq's territory.[26] In April 2015, the city of Tikrit was liberated from ISIS control, but this was accomplished by Shi'ite militias with Iranian advisors, not by US-trained Iraqi troops. It appears that al-Maliki's successor, Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi, may choose to rely on those militias rather than building an army capable of fighting.[27] If he does, then the civil war will continue without end. Even so, US soldiers found themselves back in Iraq in April 2015 trying to train the Iraqis to act like an army. They were stunned by the degree to which the security forces had deteriorated since the Americans had departed in 2011.[28]

A Stronger Military Is Not Always the Solution

Despite the obvious difficulty of creating an army with a will to fight, Petraeus is not the only military leader who sees military strength as the solution to Iraq's civil war. A 2010 article in *Foreign Affairs* by US Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, entitled "Helping Others Defend Themselves," is another example of how that approach has the potential to make the situation worse.[29] Gates characterized "the main security challenge of our time" as an attack on a US city that emanates from a state that cannot govern itself or secure its own territory. He recommended responding to this threat by expanding US efforts to build the governance and security capacity of other countries, especially those that have the potential to become failed states. Beefing up the militaries of all the governments at risk would be no small task. A 2010 article in *Foreign Policy* magazine noted that there were 33 wars currently underway in the world.[30]

During the Cold War, Jeanne Kirkpatrick, the US ambassador to the United Nations during the Ronald Reagan administration, argued that the United States should support authoritarian governments as long as they supported Washington's policies. She asserted that such governments could be led to democracy by example and were less repressive than revolutionary regimes. In practice, this led Washington to embrace repressive rightwing dictators

(e.g., Saddam Hussein of Iraq) and some vicious rebel groups (e.g., the Contras in Nicaragua) while undermining leftist democrats.

It is arguable whether getting into bed with dictators and warlords helped the United States win the Cold War. One thing this policy did do, however, was make a mockery out of any American claim of respect for human rights and democracy. The article by Gates is little more than an argument for using an updated version of the Kirkpatrick Doctrine to wage the so-called War on Terror. That cannot be done without embracing repressive regimes and leaving the rest of the world with the impression that America's values are jettisoned the moment the United States perceives any threat to its security or interests. Such a policy will encourage new recruits and additional support to flow to insurgent and terrorist organizations just as surely as the accidental killing of civilians in drone strikes has done.

A 2012 poll found that 74 percent of Pakistanis viewed the United States as their enemy, in no small part because of the use of drones to kill alleged militants.[31] Pakistan is officially an ally of the United States. How is any US strategy there going to work if three-quarters of the Pakistani population view Americans as the enemy? To successfully combat terrorism, it is essential to have the support of the civilian population. When the strategy, as Gates suggested, is to build up the militaries of states that are failing, it will be impossible to avoid climbing into bed with repressive governments, thereby undermining US credibility and interests worldwide.

TIKRIT WAS LIBERATED FROM ISIS BY SHI'ITE MILITIAS WITH IRANIAN ADVISORS.

The human rights organization Freedom House issues a report each year that divides the nations of the world into three categories—countries that are free, partly free, and not free—based on a comparative assessment of global political rights and civil liberties.[32] In the 2010 Freedom House ranking, 47 countries (24%) were rated not free, 58 countries (30%) fell into the partly free category, and 89 were deemed free (46%). If those rankings are compared with the 60 least stable countries on *Foreign Policy* magazine's Failed States Index, however, the picture becomes much starker.[33] According to the Freedom House survey, just under half of all failed states are not free, and just over half are partly free. In other words, there are no countries in the world that are both fully democratic and politically unstable.[34]

Any attempt to improve the situation in these countries through net assessment or any other analytical process should start with an unbiased evaluation of the political and economic realities that are destabilizing them, and an in-depth understanding of how those realities might render outside assistance not only ineffective but counterproductive. To put it most succinctly, helping "friends" like these defend themselves inevitably means helping the world's most repressive and corrupt governments defend themselves from their own people. And that effort will only create terrorists, not defeat them.

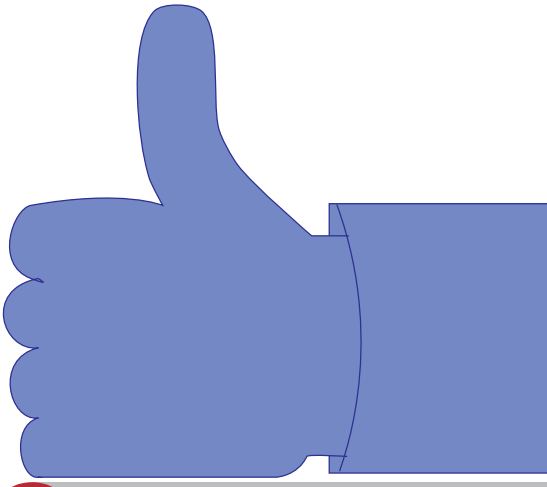
What Contribution Might Net Assessment Make?

Net assessment can contribute to an effective counterterrorism strategy if analysts and policy makers keep in mind that (1) a terrorist organization is not a state; (2) military balances and asymmetries don't matter; (3) long-term planning is probably impossible; and (4) effective policy has to be based on the political

realities within a country and on helping allies that are worth supporting. The character and culture of the US national security establishment is to view threats as military problems with military solutions. If net assessment reflects that approach, it is bound to fail as a tool for effective policy making. Instead, net assessment should contribute to a better understanding of what the real threats are and what the real possibilities, costs, and benefits of mitigating and if necessary, combating them might be.

This kind of assessment does not happen today. As analysts John Mueller and Mark Stewart put it,

> In general, counterterrorism agencies simply identify a potential source of harm and try to do something about it, rather than systematically thinking about the likely magnitude of harm caused by a successful terrorist attack, the probability of that attack occurring, and the amount of risk reduction that can be expected from counterterrorism efforts. Without considering such factors, it is impossible to evaluate whether security measures reduce risk sufficiently to justify their costs.[35]



POLICY MAKERS OFTEN WANT ONLY VALIDATION OF THE JUDGMENTS THEY HAVE ALREADY MADE.

Without fully taking into account the nature of the enemy and the nature of the threat, any attempted military solution will often be counterproductive. Policy makers should be willing to consider alternatives to military force. As Nauro Campos and Martin Gassebner observed, "One crucial goal of anti-terrorism policy must be the containment of violent conflict around the globe. However, recent experience suggests that direct military intervention can be counterproductive, while foreign aid might be effective in the medium to long term."[36] The budget of the Pentagon is 11 times that of the US Department of State, however, because US leaders are prone to assume that military solutions are always going to be more expedient and effective than diplomatic ones, even when there is no evidence to support that supposition.

Those who conduct net assessment should also resist the temptation to make the process into a number-crunching exercise. Each insurgency and each terrorist group is unique, and only a profound understanding of each case will enable analysts to find a policy to deal effectively with it. One aspect that should be assessed in comparative terms is the motivation of the terrorists versus that of the security forces of the government in question. As Iraq demonstrates, the security forces there are two years of training away from being effective—and always will be. That situation won't change until the country's political and military leaders become less corrupt and sectarian.

The fact that there are no unstable fully democratic countries would argue that the most effective way to combat terrorism in countries at risk is to support a strong civil society, an independent judicial system that is capable of promoting justice, a free press, and a fair democratic process. Doing so requires thinking that goes against the tendency of the national security establishment, politicians, and the media to hype the threat and exploit the fear caused by terrorist acts. If net assessment can help to put these concerns into a clearer perspective, it will assist those who argue for a more effective approach to counterterrorism. If it does not, it will only contribute to a problem that has already cost far too much in blood and treasure.

Policy makers often only want validation of the judgments they have already made, rather than any truly informative new analysis. Too often they make decisions based on personal political gain rather than an honest evaluation of what will work to achieve a goal and what will not. For instance, drone strikes have been popular with the current administration because using them puts no US troops at risk and publicly demonstrates resolve in combating terrorism. Five hundred such targeted strikes have already been conducted, resulting in an estimated 3,674 deaths, including 473 civilians.[37] As the opinion poll in Pakistan demonstrates, one more casualty of this policy has been the standing of the United States in many parts of the world. Strategies that seem convenient can entail significant costs, but this unwelcome truth may be difficult to point out to those with a stake in the status quo. Perhaps the most important contribution that an honest net assessment can make is to speak truth to power. But anyone who thinks that is easy to do or that it automatically brings results has never tried it. ❖

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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THE CTAP INTERVIEW

Interviewed by Amina Kator-Mubarez,
US Naval Postgraduate School

Dr. Cécile Fabre, Oxford University

ON WHAT GROUNDS SHOULD WE MAKE A DECISION TO GO TO WAR?

This interview is taken from the collection of the Combating Terrorism Archive Project (CTAP).[1] Dr. Cécile Fabre is a professor of philosophy at the University of Oxford and a senior research fellow at All Souls College, Oxford. She specializes in the ethics of war and has written most recently on that topic in her book *Cosmopolitan War* (Oxford University Press, 2012). On 11 February 2015, Amina Kator-Mubarez sat down with Dr. Fabre to discuss her research on the ethics of warfare and how cosmopolitan theory relates to military personnel and operations.[2]

AMINA KATOR-MUBAREZ: Dr. Fabre, please briefly explain cosmopolitan theory and what significance it has for military personnel.

CÉCILE FABRE: *Cosmopolitanism* is the view that an individual's fundamental rights and obligations are completely independent of national and political borders.[3] According to cosmopolitans, all human beings, whoever they are and wherever they happen to live in the world, have a set of basic rights and obligations towards all other human beings, whoever those other human beings are and wherever they happen to live in the world. By way of example, if I, a French national, have a choice between saving the life of another French national and saving the life of someone from Afghanistan, a typical cosmopolitan principle is that I cannot justifiably use the fact that I am French as a reason to give priority to the life of the French national over the life of the Afghan person.

National membership is irrelevant to the cosmopolitan, particularly when it comes to life-saving decisions. I thought it would be interesting to look at cosmopolitanism's theory of the just war because, when we talk about war, it is very tempting and intuitively plausible to regard nationality and political membership as being very relevant. Most people take the view that, in war, a community is entitled to privilege the life of its own citizens over the lives of even enemy civilians, let alone enemy soldiers. Cosmopolitanism has reemerged as a very dominant political theory in the last 30 years or so. Alongside it, war has reemerged as a very important field of inquiry, but the two really haven't been looked at together. In the book, therefore, I ask, If you are a committed cosmopolitan—as in fact many fellow moral and political philosophers are—what does that mean with respect to how we should conduct ourselves in war? Indeed, on what grounds should we make a decision to go to war?

KATOR-MUBAREZ: Your account of just war theory, as you state in your book, relies on "the right to kill in self-defense and the right to kill in defense of others," yet there is extreme controversy among present-day just war theorists about whether self-defense is a promising justification for killing in war.[4] What would your response be to this?

FABRE: There is an instance in which appealing to self-defense is not controversial, and that is the view that says states are like individuals. So, in the same way

that individuals have the right to defend their own lives by killing those who threaten them, states have the right to defend their integrity by attacking other states in national defense. I don't think that is right because I don't think states have a personality and a status that is separate from the personalities and status of individual members of that state. When we look at war in general, and wars of defense in particular, at the end of the day, I think we really have to assess whether individual members of states have the right to kill in defense of their own interests. Of course, you could object that political actors, especially in a democracy, decide to wage war as representatives of the people—that is, of the group whose state it is. But even if that is correct, it still is not the same as the claim, "Britain kills enemy soldiers to defend itself." And in fact, that claim is odd. Britain is not a person, *it* does not kill, *it* does not have interests. Rather, British individuals have interests, insofar as they are members of this community, and British individuals—in other words, soldiers—kill. That is what we ought to say. That is the first point to make.

Such a view is thought to be very controversial because it implies that there is a profound difference between the morality of killing in war on the one hand and the morality of killing in an interpersonal context on the other hand. A lot of people say that war is different, and that the norms that govern killing in war are very different from the norms that govern killing in an interpersonal context. I, and many other people as well, disagree with that view, which you could argue is the "orthodox" position on killing in war. Once the war has started, this thinking goes, there is no longer any moral difference between the soldiers who fight on either side of the war, irrespective of whether they are fighting for the right causes and pursuing the right kind of aim. From that view, if you think about it, as soon as Germany invaded Poland in September 1939 and the war started, the German soldier who killed in pursuit of his country's invasion of Poland was as entitled to kill a Polish soldier in self-defense as a Polish soldier was entitled to kill that German soldier in defense of his own country and his own life.

WAR IS NOT RADICALLY DIFFERENT FROM INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE.

Now, we wouldn't apply that sort of model in an interpersonal context. In the interpersonal context, if I am under attack by someone who has no business attacking me, I am absolutely entitled to kill him in self-defense. But even at the point at which I start defending myself, even though my attacker's life is under threat from my counterattack, he is not entitled to try to kill me. What he has to do is surrender. If he were to succeed in killing me, even if at that point he did it in defense of his own life, most jurisdictions would hold him liable for murder. This is why people who disagree with my point of view say, "Well, war is different, because in war the German and the Polish soldiers are morally on a par." But in interpersonal situations, the wrongful attacker is not on a par with his victim. From my view—a view that others like David Rodin and Jeff McMahon have defended as well—there is no good reason to think of war as being radically different from interpersonal violence, in these particular respects, at any rate.[5]

KATOR-MUBAREZ: Do cosmopolitan theorists receive a lot of criticism?

FABRE: Well, we do receive a bit of criticism. But interestingly, we receive less criticism from serving soldiers than I would have expected. This particular view I just described, which I defend in the book and which other people have defended too, we call the revisionist, or neoclassical, account of killing in war.

I have talked to soldiers about the revisionist account, and in particular I have pressed the thought that soldiers have to think about the reasons why they are agreeing to go to war. They have to ask themselves, When I go off to Iraq to kill Iraqi soldiers, do I have any business doing this? When we press this question, we are met with much more sympathy by serving soldiers than we would have expected before we engaged in that kind of dialogue.

KATOR-MUBAREZ: What do you mean by sympathy?

FABRE: What I mean is that a surprising number of the serving soldiers I have spoken to have been willing to say, "Yes, you are right. Of course we have to ask ourselves whether an order to deploy is a just order. If we conclude that the order is not a just order, we have to accept that, if we go to kill enemy soldiers, there is a sense in which what we are doing is wrong." Now, quite often the soldiers evoke other reasons, overriding reasons, to justify going to war nevertheless. But they are more open than I thought they would be to the possibility that there is one sense in which this particular act of killing, carried out in prosecution of an unjust war, is itself morally problematic.

KATOR-MUBAREZ: How do you think they reconcile that choice within themselves?

"WE HAVE TO ASK OURSELVES WHETHER AN ORDER TO DEPLOY IS A JUST ORDER."

FABRE: The reason I have heard put forward most often by serving soldiers is loyalty to their mates. I had a British soldier actually tell me, "It was wrong for me to go to Iraq in 2003, I shouldn't have done it in some respects. It was wrong of me to kill those Iraqi soldiers, but I did it because of my mates, because they had trained with me, they had become dependent on me, and I was dependent on them. In the end, I decided that the bond of loyalty I had with them was more important than my duty not to go and kill those Iraqi soldiers. But I can see there is a sense in which killing those Iraqi soldiers was wrong, although not as wrong as betraying my comrades."

KATOR-MUBAREZ: Special Forces operators often have increased autonomy in their work. Does this increase their ethical challenges on the battlefield? If so, how?

FABRE: Well, I think it does, because if they are more autonomous, then it seems to me that they cannot as easily invoke the fact that they were given a very prescribed and precise set of orders with which to comply. It seems to me that greater autonomy on the battlefield means they actually have more scope to exercise their own private, individual judgment about the legitimacy of what they are doing. In that respect, one might argue that Special Forces have a luxury that other soldiers don't have: the choice of how exactly to fight. They are treated as autonomous agents to a greater extent than soldiers who serve in other branches of the military.

KATOR-MUBAREZ: Do you think the idea of autonomy is easier for US military personnel to put into practice than for international military personnel?

FABRE: I am not an empiricist; my research is in philosophy, not in political science. But I wouldn't be surprised if, generally, the armed forces that serve in democratic cultures would find it easier than the armed forces that serve under dictatorships or authoritative regimes to question the legitimacy of what they

are doing, if only because personnel in democracies might find it easier to find information. The media, for example, are powerful allies when it comes to questioning what the government is doing. Let me give you an example from the British context. When Britain was deciding whether to go to war against Iraq alongside the United States in 2003, General Mike Jackson, who took over as Chief of the General Staff of the British Army six weeks before the invasion, went on the record to say that he, of his own authority, had decided to seek legal advice as to whether the invasion would be lawful. If the invasion turned out to be unlawful, it would count as a crime in international law, and Jackson didn't want to risk being prosecuted for it.

Now, there are two things to consider about this. First of all, Jackson took advice from a lawyer who was, in fact, the government's senior lawyer. So a number of people said, "Well, why did he not seek completely independent opinions?" But the point I want to make is that Jackson did feel that he could at least take advice, but more importantly, that he could say publicly that he had to reassure himself that what he had been ordered to do was the legal thing to do. I very much doubt that the head of the army in—take your pick—Pakistan, or Iraq under Saddam Hussein, or Syria right now, would be able to say, in public in his own country, "Well, you know what? I am going to check it for myself before I agree." In fact, if the advice Jackson received had said the invasion was unlawful, Jackson always said he would have resigned, and I believe him. I believe he would actually have been true to his commitment not to act in a way that was illegal, and resigned. So I imagine that soldiers in the United States would find it easier to take those sorts of steps in public than would soldiers in countries where the sense that you really have to do whatever you are ordered to do is much more deeply rooted.

CULTURES CAN HAVE DIFFERENT UNDERSTANDINGS OF WHAT COUNTS AS IMMINENT DANGER.

KATOR-MUBAREZ: Current US policy seeks to build a global network of Special Forces operators. Are there additional ethical concerns when building partnerships that may span many cultures and political systems?

FABRE: I think that is a very interesting question. I would imagine that the most obvious concern is twofold. The first task is to make sure that the rules of engagement are the same for all members of that particular network. The second is to ensure that when there is a conflict between the rules of engagement that are being used by that network and the rules that are internal to a particular military culture, the former will prevail. This is the kind of difficulty we have witnessed when it has come to multinational peacekeeping forces, where cultures can have different understandings, for example, of what counts as imminent danger. I think that is one of the deepest challenges for coalitions.

I suppose the other challenge arises for any network that claims to be global but whose various participants are vastly asymmetrical when it comes to the resources available from each member to that particular network. Any such network would face the challenge of trying to be a genuinely multilateral network as opposed to being a network funded and operated by the most powerful backer or contributor, under the guise of multilateralism. For the individual soldiers taking part in such a network, this raises specific difficulties. For example, suppose that you belong to the army of the less powerful member of the network. The rules of engagement are dictated by the powerful backer and are much more strict, or much more lax, than the rules you are used to. How should you behave in this case? What if following those new rules means that, by your lights, you would commit a criminal offense (if those rules are more lax), or, on the contrary, would end up not engaging with the enemy at all, at some risk to yourself or others (if those rules are more stringent)? So these are the two potential problems that come to my mind at this point.

KATOR-MUBAREZ: You wrote a paper discussing the ethics of war termination. The United States has had two recent instances, in Iraq and Afghanistan, in which it could unilaterally time its withdrawal. What is your perspective? Could the Iraq withdrawal have been done, or can the withdrawal from Afghanistan be done, more ethically?

FABRE: Well, I am not the only one to worry that the withdrawals are happening—or did happen—too early. The situation the Americans left behind in Iraq is not one that is conducive to a durable and overall just peace. That always is the worry when you decide to withdraw. So I

CAN THE WITHDRAWAL FROM AFGHANISTAN BE DONE MORE ETHICALLY?

do think that the coalition forces were right not to leave Iraq as early as 2005 or 2006. I can't help thinking that a more sustained effort, and in particular a more sustained effort at ensuring that the rule of law could genuinely be implemented in both countries, would have been desirable. There is still a major attack at least once a month somewhere in Iraq. That is not a country that has been left stable.

Now, the counterargument goes like this: Well, look, the coalition forces are not the only ones responsible for the mess. There is a sense in which the Iraqis as a society have to take responsibility for the enduring power of insurgent groups to destabilize the country. I can see the force of that argument. I am not yet persuaded, though, that there was nothing more that the United States and its partners could have done to help the legitimate Iraqi armed forces, and enforcement mechanisms in particular, to get stronger.

KATOR-MUBAREZ: With the impending withdrawal from Afghanistan, do you think Afghans will blame the United States for failing to leave the country in a stable state?

FABRE: They might blame the United States, but in a way, the question is not so much will they blame the United States—or Britain, for that matter, since Britain is about to withdraw as well. The question is whether we really did all that we could have done to ensure, for example, that the Taliban do not come back into power and devastate the country the way they did for a few years, some time ago. To ensure that young girls and women do enjoy genuine opportunities for a decent life. To ensure that the Afghan economy does not continue to be as dependent as it has been on the culture of poppy, for example.

KATOR-MUBAREZ: Thank you for talking with us.

FABRE: Thank you. ❖

ABOUT THE INTERVIEWER

Amina Kator-Mubarez is a research associate in the Defense Analysis Department at the US Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California.

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NOTES

1 The Combating Terrorism Archive Project (CTAP) aims to collect and archive knowledge on strategy, operations, and tactics used by military and other security personnel from around the world in the twenty-first–century fight against global terrorism. Collectively, the individual interviews that CTAP conducts will create an oral history archive of knowledge and experience in counterterrorism for the benefit of the CT community now and in the future.

2 This interview was edited for length and clarity. Every effort was made to ensure that the meaning and intention of the participants were not altered in any way. The ideas and opinions of all participants are theirs alone and do not represent the official positions of the US Naval Postgraduate School, the US Department of Defense, the US government, or any other official entity.

3 For a detailed explanation of cosmopolitanism's history and the variety of its manifestations, see Pauline Kleingeld and Eric Brown, "Cosmopolitanism," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* Fall 2014 ed., ed. Edward N. Zalta: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/cosmopolitanism/

4 Cécile Fabre, *Cosmopolitan War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012): 55.

5 David Rodin and Jeff McMahan are two of the most prominent just war theorists. For more on their work, see David Rodin, *War & Self-Defence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); and Jeff McMahan, *Killing in War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

ETHICS AND INSIGHTS

Making Decisions, Taking Ethical Responsibility, Part 2: Recalibrating the Job, Reconsidering the Tool

George Lober,
US Naval Postgraduate School

In my previous column, I called into question the self-definition expressed by some military officers, that they are merely "tools." Such a perception, I wrote, implies that these officers see themselves not necessarily as independent ethical agents but rather "simply as instruments—the 'tools'—of a greater organization, and the means by which some directive or policy or strategy or law will be carried out."[1] As I stated in that column, such a self-image disturbs me because it suggests the forfeiture of personal moral responsibility. It also raises the question, "Why does a tool need to be bothered about ethics?"

SUCH A SELF-IMAGE SUGGESTS THE FORFEITURE OF PERSONAL MORAL RESPONSIBILITY.

To illustrate my point, I offered two cases. The first was of a patriotic Swiss police captain, Paul Grüninger, who chose to ignore a Swiss law mandating that Jewish refugees attempting to escape the Nazi annexation of Austria in 1939 by crossing illegally into Switzerland be denied entry. Grüninger realized the refugees would likely be killed if they were returned to Austria, and so he not only disobeyed the law but did everything in his power to help the refugees.[2] As a result, he is credited with saving an estimated 3,600 lives.

However, once his efforts were discovered, Grüninger was put on trial, convicted, and fined. He lost both his position and his career, and he and his family suffered penury and ostracism for the rest of his life. Yet until his death, he insisted that he had no choice but to fulfill his "human duty" to help the refugees.[3]

The second case involved Captain Luc Lemaire, a Belgian military officer who led a contingent of 90 Belgian soldiers in Rwanda at the outbreak of the 1994 genocide. As the killing spread, hundreds of Tutsis and moderate Hutus sought refuge at the school site in Kigali where Lemaire and his men were posted, and within days the number of refugees had swollen to over 2,000. Lemaire and his soldiers maintained their protective guard while members of the murderous Hutu Interahamwe circled the school in vehicles, taunting the Tutsis inside. When Lemaire received an order to pull his men from the school, however, he decided to obey that order and abandoned those under his protection. Approximately 2,000 Tutsis were massacred at the school shortly after the Belgians left. Five years later, in a televised interview, Lemaire, like Grüninger, would claim that he "had no choice."[4]

I wrote in my earlier column that, in some ways, the two cases struck me as eerily similar. Both Grüninger and Lemaire were confronted with individuals who came to them seeking shelter and protection from almost certain death. Both men were officers who had the capability to provide that protection. Both men were under orders not to provide protection, but one of them refused to follow that directive, while the other chose to obey. Unlike Grüninger, however, Lemaire suffered no official consequences when he returned home and continued to receive military promotions. A facile analysis of the difference between the two men's responses to their orders might suggest that Grüninger saw himself as

a human being first and not as a tool, while Lemaire may have seen himself as a tool of policy first and a human second. Nevertheless, I speculated in my column that the situation was likely far more complicated than that.

In the three months since I wrote that piece, I have researched the Rwandan case further and discussed both cases with various Special Operations personnel. In doing so, I have come to the conclusion that I could not have been both more right and more wrong in my speculation. I was right in that the situation at the Rwandan school was indeed more complicated than it appeared. The Human Rights Watch report *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda* details the fact that Lemaire had made the situation at the school perfectly clear to higher-ups in both the United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR) and the Belgian military command.[5] In the first days of the killings, however, the mandate for UNAMIR troops shifted significantly, from monitoring a peace agreement and supporting a transitional government to securing the safety and immediate evacuation of foreign nationals.[6] Sheltering Rwandans such as those at the school became a lesser concern. To his credit, Lemaire even sought the medical aid of Médicins sans Frontières for those under his protection, but the medical teams "could not get through to the post."[7]

IF HE WAS TO LIVE WITH HIMSELF AS A MORAL MAN, THAT OFFICER WOULD CHOOSE TO STAY.

In testimony three years after the Belgians abandoned the school, Lemaire asserted that "authorities in Belgium were aware that Tutsi at [the school site] were dependent on protection by Belgian UNAMIR troops and that they could have permitted their rescue had they provided for a longer stay by the evacuation forces."[8] Nonetheless, those authorities did not provide that possibility, and Lemaire would subsequently compare the situation at the school to a large fire for which he and his men possessed only a fire extinguisher, when what they required was "a fire engine."[9]

I was wrong, however, to imply that Lemaire's choice boiled down to one of merely obeying or disobeying an order. The Human Rights Watch report affirms how, from the early days of the genocide, Lemaire was deeply concerned about the fate of the Tutsis under his protection if and when his soldiers should leave the school, and he expressed that concern directly to those higher in command. Additionally, though, the report highlights an element in his ethical calculus that I neglected: his own sense of loyalty toward his men and his concern for their safety.

Over the past three months, as I have discussed these cases with individuals who faced similar choices during tours in Iraq and Afghanistan, two things consistently have been confirmed to me: first, Lemaire's tactical situation was untenable, and second, it is one kind of calculation to choose to imperil one's own life and career for an ethical choice, as in the case of Paul Grüninger; it is a far different calculation to risk the lives and careers of one's subordinates for that same ethical choice. As Human Rights Watch reported,

> [Lemaire] had tried to find a solution to the crisis himself. But, he said, escorting all the displaced persons elsewhere at one time would have required more men than the ninety available to him. If he had tried to move them in several smaller groups, the first group might have passed without difficulty, but later groups would probably have been attacked, and he did not have enough ammunition to defend them.[10]

As a consequence, when the security situation deteriorated and Lemaire became increasingly concerned with "the more and more serious pressure from the armed bands around the school,"[11] he requested permission to remove his men from the school. In essence, when it became clear that no additional help was forthcoming and that the lives of his own men were increasingly threatened, he chose as a leader to protect his subordinates and support the mission with which he was legally charged, rather than to protect those innocents neither under his command nor part of his mission. And no matter how you cut it, that's a lose-lose choice.

Seen in that light, I think I understand Lemaire's decision a little better. I understand that he couldn't legally or ethically order his men to risk their lives for a cause unrelated to their mission, and he couldn't order them to engage in a rescue strategy in which they would be unable to adequately defend themselves. If, as a leader, he cared about the men under his charge—their lives, their families, their demonstrated loyalty to him, the unit, and their country—then, I submit, he had an obligation to respect their lives enough not to endanger them for a moral cause of his personal choosing. That danger was all too real, given that 10 Belgian soldiers had recently been brutally murdered by the Interahamwe, while sentiment across Belgium for the withdrawal of the force was unanimous.[12]

But what, then, is the answer? Faced with such a horrible dilemma—an unsympathetic, unresponsive political bureaucracy, the likelihood of Tutsis under his guard being slaughtered, the likelihood of his own outnumbered and under-armed men being killed—is there anything Lemaire could possibly have done differently?

One option was offered to me recently by a combat-hardened officer who snarled, "There's no way I could leave those people [the Tutsis] to be killed. I'd tell my men they could leave if they wanted to, it'd be their choice. But I'd stay and defend those people with my weapon, even if it cost me my life." When he offered that pronouncement in a room of 20 officers with similar experiences, there was a respectful silence. In one angry swoop, he had touched on two fundamental ethical principles shared by many in that room: he could not—one should not—abandon unarmed innocents to be massacred, and in such a desperate, untenable situation, everyone under his command must be recognized as a separate moral agent entitled to make an independent existential choice. The men could stay and fight alongside him to protect the Tutsis, come what may. Or they could go. It was their call. But if he was to live with himself as a moral man, that officer would choose to stay.

It's a courageous, principled position, and one I'd never heard expressed before by a career officer. I have no doubt the man was absolutely sincere. But having said that, I do not fault Lemaire for failing to choose such a course. I believe the decision to stay is exactly the sort of position only those who have been tested and scarred by similar trials are qualified to take, and I am not remotely in that cadre. But it is a position I admire, if only for its Kantian strength in the face of political and bureaucratic calculation. It's also, in my opinion, the position of an ethical leader. ❖

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NOTES

1 George Lober, "Making Decisions, Taking Ethical Responsibility, Part 1: To Tool or Not to Tool," *CTX* 5, no. 2 (May 2015): 59: https://globalecco.org/ethics-and-insights-making-decisions-taking-ethical-responsibility-part-1-to-tool-or-not-to-tool

2 Eyal Press, "Disobeying the Law," in *Beautiful Souls: Saying No, Breaking Ranks, and Heeding the Voice of Conscience in Dark Times* (Kindle edition) (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012), 11–46.

3 Ibid., 43.

4 Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), "The Triumph of Evil (Transcript)," *Frontline*, 26 January 1999: http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/evil/etc/script.html

5 Alison Des Forges, "Ignoring Genocide," in *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda* (New York: Human Rights Watch, March 1999): http://www.hrw.org/legacy/reports/1999/rwanda/Geno15-8-01.htm#P6_46

6 United Nations, "Rwanda—UNAMIR: Background," n.d., http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/past/unamirS.htm

7 Des Forges, "Ignoring Genocide."

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

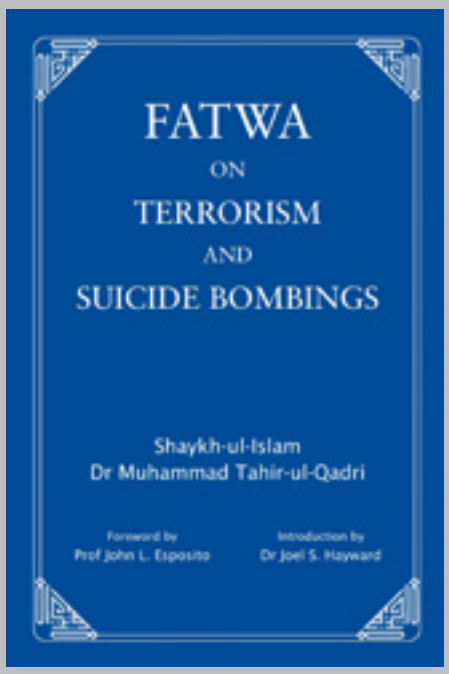
11 Ibid.

12 "The Ghosts of Rwanda," *Frontline* episode for PBS, directed by Greg Barker (Alexandria, Va.: PBS Home Video, 2004), DVD.

THE WRITTEN WORD

Reviewed by Capt Caleb Slayton

Fatwa on Terrorism and Suicide Bombings



Fatwa on Terrorism and Suicide Bombings

Shaykh-ul-Islam
Dr. Muhammad Tahir-ul-Qadri

London: Minhaj-ul-Quran International, 2010
ISBN-13: 978-0955188893
Hardcover: US$39.95
512 pages

Dr. Muhammad Tahir-ul-Qadri calls his book a "fatwa."[1] He carefully chose this title to complement the objective of the book's methodological approach and meticulously selected content. Tahir-ul-Qadri is a well-known Muslim scholar from Pakistan (the title Shaykh-ul-Islam means "scholar of Islam") who writes for Muslim and non-Muslim audiences alike in an ongoing effort to correct damaging misperceptions of Islam. Unlike the half-baked, paragraph-long "fatwas" of self-proclaimed Muslim jihadists, the author's first implicit point is that a legitimate fatwa (religious opinion) requires extensive research that pores over 1,400 years' worth of Muslim writings, with an emphasis on scholarly consensus, the Qur'an, and proper Sunna interpretation.[2] His second point is that, because the fatwas of violent jihadists lack the required background scholarship and logical rigor, the passionate conclusions of groups like al Qaeda, the so-called "Islamic State," and Hezbollah are completely unfounded.

Not all fatwas need be 400 pages long, of course. Tahir-ul-Qadri strives for an approach that Arabic scholars, Muslims, non-Muslims, and non-Arabic speakers alike can respect, although those of his audience who are not familiar with the Qur'an and the Arabic language may not necessarily benefit from the Arabic source texts he extensively cites for each quotation. Tahir-ul-Qadri provides his own English translation of these Arabic texts for the reader's benefit and the skeptic's advantage, a tactic which allows the author partial control over potential misinterpretations of these religious writings. Having some rudimentary Arabic training of my own, I noted that the author often uses bracketed translations to temper potentially extremist interpretations.

The book's preface grabs the reader's attention quickly, with a summary of the book's broad conclusions: Islam does not allow revolt against even unjust or oppressive regimes. Takfiri terrorists, those who accuse fellow Muslims of being apostates, have existed in every Muslim age and will continue to exist until the end times. Carefully, in short snippets with extensive source-document quotations, the author lays down his argument against any and every brand of terrorism, while expressing an extreme disgust for suicide. The author's erudition and extensive use of scholarly quotes are meant to be—and are—impressive, but instead of persuading the reader, the torrent might simply drown him or her into submission.

Tahir-ul-Qadri concludes that Islam mandates the safety, security, and peace of all who live within its spiritual walls. Punishment for breaking not just Islamic law but also a country's civil laws should be handed out fairly, regardless of religion, language, or race. Taking this argument further, the author claims that all who promote the violation of these principles should be regarded as rebels, who, along with the historical Kharijite sect, are not only criminals but mandated government targets.[3]

Tahir-ul-Qadri quotes Hadith (the sayings and teachings of the Prophet and his companions) to argue that the Kharijite ideas historically come from the Najd region (the area of modern-day Riyadh), but he is careful not to label all Kharijite teachings as Salafi (pertaining to the first three generations of Muslim teachers and followers). Salafism as an exclusive observance can lead to fundamentalism and extremism. But those early Muslim leaders of the Salaf era also witnessed Mohammed's methods firsthand. Therefore, possessing a deep understanding of the early Muslim era and its practices, respective of the modern context, is held in high regard by Muslims in general.

Many modern terrorists play the religious part well, appearing more pious in Muslim practice, prayer, and fasting than other Muslims. Tahir-ul-Qadri, also an active Sufi, says some terrorists in fact appear so devout that Hadith warns they would be difficult to target, because their pious works discourage any offensive against them.[4] The violent jihadists' mix of piety and attractive, grievance-based interpretations of political events, especially those that appear to be against the Muslim world, serves as both a powerful recruiting tool and a strong self-defensive measure.

MANY MODERN TERRORISTS PLAY THE RELIGIOUS PART WELL.

In Western media, academic circles, and especially military analyses, it has become increasingly difficult to separate (1) terrorism from Salafism; (2) the motive of political violence from that of religious fervor; (3) interpretations of the end times as espoused by Islamic State ideologues from the mainstream Islamic eschatological viewpoint; and (4) unlawful Islamic military offensives from what the shari'a prescribes as valid violent offensives. Through a very careful reading of historical texts, Tahir-ul-Qadri claims not only that terrorist teachings run counter to true Salafi ideals, but that he himself can disprove terrorist arguments using only the Qur'an and Hadith. The early Muslim era sets the standard in leadership practice and interpretation of shari'a; therefore, the Salafi approach to the Qur'an and Sunna exclusivity is an ideal that moderate scholars strive to obtain.[5] Tahir-ul-Qadri's goal is to reclaim from the terrorists a proper understanding of an era that they have twisted to justify their violent cause.

Tahir-ul-Qadri again shifts the balance unexpectedly when he looks at the issue of rewards for violence. He would give terrorists only Hell for a reward, not 77 virgins. But still, not to be outshone by the allure of Paradise for jihadis, he emphasizes the Hadith passages declaring that those who fight the terrorists will be richly rewarded and those who are killed by terrorists are the "best of those slain under the heavens."[6]

What makes the Islamic State different from other terrorist groups such as al Qaeda is its members' belief in the impending end times. Their interpretation of current events, reached through a selective and biased reading of Qur'anic texts and Hadiths, serves as an incentive for recruits to join "the winning side" as the end of earthly life as we know it draws near. In order to reframe Islam's end-times teachings, Tahir-ul-Qadri argues that the Kharijite movement itself, both historically and in its present extremist form, is a symbol of the end of the age, its strength waxing and waning until the second coming of the Messiah. There is legitimacy in the Salafi approach, the author affirms, and there are rewards for proper violence. There is a moderate end-times schemata to terrorist events. Finally, there is an obligation on all Muslims to adopt the author's dominant Sunni and mystical Sufi version of Islam to defend the Muslim world by word and sword against the Islamist extremism that, according to this Pakistani scholar, misrepresents Islam.

At multiple turns in the book, readers, especially those accustomed to doses of military intelligence and media descriptions of terrorism, will ask themselves, "Why don't I see this moderate brand of Islam?" Most pungent of all, if fighting terrorists is obligatory for all governments in Muslim lands, why does the Muslim world seem to be the least financially invested in the fight and the most condemning of foreign intervention? Does it not appear that the ideal of security and safety that this scholarly Muslim author ascribes to Islam is more prominent in non-Muslim liberal democracies? Could it not be argued that the equal justice and freedom of religion that Tahir-ul-Qadri mandates for Islam are more prevalent in Western Europe and North America than in the Middle East and North Africa?

The disconnect is twofold. First, Tahir-ul-Qadri represents the "orthodox," or, in religiously neutral terms, the central academic theology of Islam. The vast majority in the Muslim world, however, are more concerned with the day-to-day practice of Islam.[7] Despite the generous support from Western and non-Western scholars and politicians alike for Tahir-ul-Qadri's definition of Islam, it is a

fair critique to wonder at the actual praxis. Defining Islam does not define all Muslims any more than one definition of Christianity could encompass all forms of Christian practice. Second, it is still hugely difficult to come up with a definition of terrorism to which all would agree, given current political events and the intrigues of international relations.

In fairness to this author of over one hundred books, I'm certain Tahir-ul-Qadri's debating methods are more equitable in other works. But as it is, the long book under review here should be twice as long. The author expends barely a page's worth of ink on the terrorists' point of view. His research would be improved if it included an extensive review and correction of terrorist use of specific Qur'anic passages and Hadith exegesis. Without a balanced debate, the thesis is left half empty.[8] Additionally, Tahir-ul-Qadri condemns modern terrorists for being *takfiris*—it is a bold counterpunch to call the terrorists non-Muslims in the same breath. In a debate where all participants claim Salafi excellence, knowledge of end-times doctrine, and authentic Islamic credentials, it would appear that the "*takfiri*" accusations go both ways.

WITHOUT A BALANCED DEBATE, THE THESIS IS LEFT HALF EMPTY.

In the final chapters of this extensive scholarly work, the author tempers his call for violent offensives against terrorists with his deeper, long-term counterterrorism strategy: education. Before anyone else is to lose his life, he counsels, scholars, Imams, political leaders, and teachers must invite Muslims and non-Muslims alike to adopt Tahir-ul-Qadri's vision of Islam. Only when non-Muslim extremists and rebels explicitly reject widespread educational campaigns, and only if victory is assured, should Muslims target them as legitimate targets of proper violent jihad. To the moderate Muslim core, education is the best approach to counterterrorism. Interestingly, the book's author is implicitly asking the world to support Muslim missionary zeal in order to combat a global terrorist threat. This vision may not sit well with all military strategists, world leaders, or the rest of the world's non-Muslims.

As a student of African history, culture, and politics, I found it intriguing that today's moderate Muslim voices, so keen to support a more pacifist, inclusive, and tolerant Islam, represent the same form of Islam that nineteenth-century European colonizers actively encouraged and empowered for decades in the Sahel and the Sahara. To weaken the influence of contemporary violent jihadist movements, French and British policy encouraged coopting moderate Sufi leaders and elders and boosting their influence with mutually beneficial quids pro quo. Islam grew more rapidly during colonialism than at any other time in West African history.[9] While various Muslim authors chastised these coopted Muslim leaders at the time and accused the colonial powers of supporting a "timid" Islam instead of respecting the dominant Islam of Usman dan Fodio, El-Hadj Umar Tall, or the Mahdi of Sudan, Islamic scholarship is reverting to a similar strategy today.[10] We appear to have come full circle. Is Tahir-ul-Qadri suggesting that the colonizers had it right 150 years ago?[11]

Fatwa on Terrorism is an excellent read for the student of Islam. The sources, citations, biographical list of quoted scholars, and extensive lexical terms encompass a small library of Sunni Islamic thought. The counterterrorism argument is a subset of the debate within Islam on what it means to be Muslim. Tahir-ul-Qadri leaves out politics, current events, and international relations in order not to muddle his free-flowing elucidation of source documents. But preaching the teachings of Islam still misses the reality of how one billion people differ in the practice of their faith. Until the terrorist arguments are given a little more respect through equally rigorous scholarship, books like these will continue to preach barely beyond the choir.

As a final note to my own Special Forces work community, Tahir-ul-Qadri's Islam is an ideal that will take generations to form. A dominant peaceful, inclusive, democratic, and tolerant Muslim state would be a long-term counterterrorism solution. However, my Special Forces comrades live and work in the now. Orthodoxy and its corresponding orthopraxy live in the realm of religious scholarship, university studies, and top-level writings such as this book. To understand the reality of any religious practice, Islam included, operators are better off interacting directly with their diverse grassroots partners in whatever locality they find themselves. Shaykh-ul-Islam Dr. Tahir-ul-Qadri describes the Muslim world as it could be. Special Forces live in the diverse world where cultures actually live and sometimes struggle to survive. ❖

ABOUT THE REVIEWER

Capt Caleb Slayton is an active duty officer in the US Air Force.

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NOTES

1 Muhammad Tahir-ul-Qadri, *Fatwa on Terrorism and Suicide Bombings* (London: Minhaj-ul-Quran International, 2010).

2 The term "Sunna" refers to what the prophet Mohammed said and did, much of which was documented in the process of gathering Hadith. Tahir-ul-Qadri, as a Sunni Muslim, interprets Islamic theology and leader legitimacy differently from how a scholar of the minority Shi'a might. All Muslims emphasize the importance of Hadith, although again they may prefer different interpretations of certain passages.

3 *Kharijite* is an early Islamic label for a breakaway sect whose members practiced extreme piety through legalism. They condemned anyone outside their interpretation of Islam as non-Muslim. Non-Muslims, according to the Kharijites, were to be killed in order to weed out corruption and preserve the purity of Islam. This action of labeling someone a non-Muslim is called takfirism. Muslim scholars apply the label "Kharijite" to today's terrorists because they use similar intolerant and extremist acts to enforce their beliefs.

4 Sufism is an esoteric branch of Islam that emphasizes love of God as it manifests in one's own mind and consciousness.

5 Hadith and the Qur'an are the most important tools used to interpret Islamic law, known as shari'a. The earliest Muslims, the Salafs, however, lived in a different temporal, geographical, and technological era from all Muslims after them. Therefore the main Muslim schools of law use other tools such as analogy (*qiyas*), consensus of the scholars (*ijma'a*), and individual reasoning (*ijtihaad*) to help Muslims navigate the ever-changing Islamic landscape.

6 This quote used by Tahir-ul-Qadri is from the following Hadith: Sunan Ibn Majah 176.

7 Regular polls, interviews, and research think tanks confirm that only a small minority of Muslims (1–7 percent) support terrorist teachings. The majority of the world's Muslims, however, still practice their faith in a diversity of syncretistic and unique manners outside the "orthodox" definition. This is true of most religions.

8 This approach is becoming more mainstream, beginning last year with the "Open Letter to al-Baghdadi," in which mainstream Islamic scholars broke down one by one the Islamic teachings of the ISIS leader. See "Open Letter to Dr. Ibrahim Awwad Al-Badri, Alias 'Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi,' and to the Fighters and Followers of the Self-Declared Islamic State," 19 September 2014: http://www.lettertobaghdadi.com

9 Lansiné Kaba, "Islam in West Africa: Radicalism and the New Ethic of Disagreement, 1960–1990," in *The History of Islam in Africa*, ed. Nehemia Levtzion and Randall L. Pouwels (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2000), 189–208; and Dorothea Elisabeth Schulz, *Muslims and New Media in West Africa: Pathways to God* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), 30–31, 138–39.

10 The following authors are two examples of those who condemned the cooptation of moderate Muslim leaders: Mohamed Omer Beshir, *Terramedia: Themes in Afro-Arab Relations* (Khartoum: Institute of African & Asian Studies, University of Khartoum, 1982), 43; and Ali A. Mazrui, *The Africans: A Triple Heritage* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1986), 286. Usman dan Fodio was an ethnic Fulani living under Hausa rule in the area of modern-day Nigeria, Niger, and Cameroon. El-Hadj Umar Tall, influenced by Usman, carried out jihad in Guinea and Mali. Muhammad Ahmed of Sudan rallied against the Egyptian and British government, under the title *Mahdi*, or Messiah. None of these nineteenth-century jihads was a strictly counter-colonial movement. They were motivated by the perceived injustices of the existing political institutions, combined with distaste for the syncretism of local Islam, two grievances that are consistently invoked in today's jihadist recruitment initiatives. See Nehemia Levtzion, "Islam in the Bilad al-Sudan to 1800," in *The History of Islam in Africa*, ed. Nehemia Levtzion and Randall L. Pouwels (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2000); and Ibraheem Sulaiman, *The African Caliphate: The Life, Works & Teaching of Shaykh Usman dan Fodio (1754–1817)* (London: The Diwan Press, 2009).

11 See Beshir, *Terramedia*, 20, 43; Mazrui, *The Africans: A Triple Heritage*, 142–43, 284–86; and Ali A. Mazrui, *The African Condition: A Political Diagnosis* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 52, 123.

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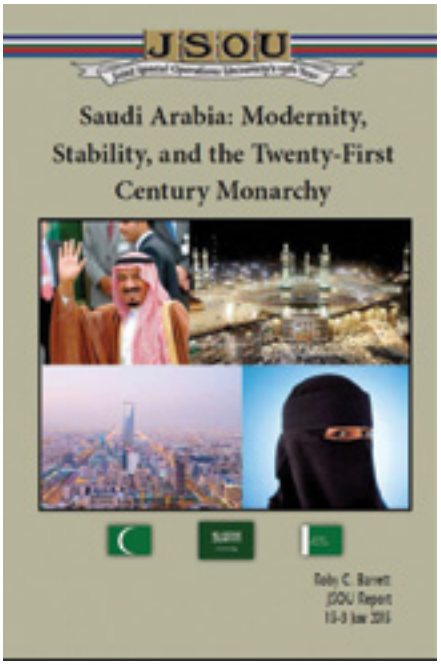

Saudi Arabia: Modernity, Stability, and the Twenty-First Century Monarchy
by Roby C. Barrett
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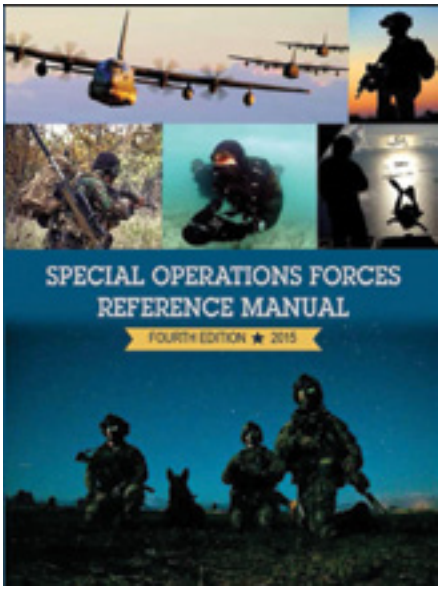
This essay by Dr. Roby Barrett will be of interest to any reader seeking a better understanding of the political and cultural history of Saudi Arabia. Special Operations Forces in particular need to appreciate the historical, domestic, regional, and other influences that affect the worldview and decision making of Saudi Arabia's leaders, particularly regarding the US-Saudi security relationship. Dr. Barrett's monograph is a fascinating, condensed history of Saudi Arabia that focuses on events and decisions that influence the modern political worldview of Saudi citizens. Examples include a history of tribes being ruled by outsiders; the pros and cons of alliances with the British and, more recently, the United States; the impact of global geopolitics (e.g., the Cold War); and the effects of regional neighbors' policies and international events on Saudi Arabia's domestic and foreign policies (including its relationship with the United States). This volume explains the importance of politically shrewd and pragmatic Saudi leaders and the ways in which Iran's ambitions and policies threaten Saudi Arabia's regional influence, as well as how the historical fracturing of the US-Iran relationship played well for Saudi Arabia.



Special Operations Forces Reference Manual
Issue Date: June 2015

This fourth edition of the *Special Operations Forces Reference Manual* was redesigned to support the Joint Special Operations University's academic mission. It provides general information on US Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force SOF. More specifically, this document is designed to accomplish three broad purposes:

1. Provide a single primary source of reference material on all SOF components.
2. Provide an overview of special operations and SOF to facilitate a broader understanding of SOF capabilities to academic institutions and personnel who may not routinely use this data.
3. Provide standard SOF reference data to SOF faculty members at professional military education institutions for use in their instruction.

The target audience for this manual spans from special operations staff officers and enlisted personnel at United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), its component and subordinate commands, the theater special operations commands, conventional force/unified commands and their staffs that may employ SOF in their areas of responsibility to partner-nation staffs, and both civilian and military educational institutions.

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