

60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition

THE BEST OF FPRI'S ESSAYS ON  
**National Security**

✦ 2005-2015 ✦



**FOREIGN POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE**



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# The Best of FPRI's Essays on National Security, 2005-2015

Program on National Security

September 2015

FOREIGN POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

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In Memory of  
Dr. John M. Templeton Jr.  
1940-2015

## About the Foreign Policy Research Institute

The Foreign Policy Research Institute was founded in Philadelphia in 1955 by Robert Strausz-Hupé on the premise that a nation must think before it acts. Thus, FPRI brings the insights of scholarship to bear on the development of policies that advance US national interests. Strausz-Hupé is credited with introducing “geopolitics” into the American vocabulary with the publication in 1942 of his book *Geopolitics: The Struggle for Space and Power*. Simply put, geopolitics offers a perspective on contemporary international affairs that is anchored in the study of history, geography and culture, or, as FPRI’s James Kurth has put it, in the study of the “realities and mentalities of the localities.” Strausz-Hupé embedded that perspective in FPRI and it remains today our method or, to use the contemporary lingo, our “brand.” With the world in such turmoil, that mission and method have never been more needed than they are today.

## About FPRI’s Program on National Security

More than a decade after the 9/11 attacks the world remains a complicated and dangerous place. The crises in Syria and Iraq and Ukraine are clearly destabilizing and China’s actions in the South and East China Seas have potentially deleterious consequences for Asian regional security. The United States faces dynamic threats from non-state threats (e.g., terrorism, cyber threats, pandemics, etc.) as well as the reassertion of a more competitive international state system. While such matters may not pose as severe a threat as what the Cold War posed, today’s complexities are compounded because of domestic political differences in the U.S. that question what should, or should not, be the Nation’s role in international security and the resources that should, or should not, be allocated to deal with these problems.

The FPRI’s Program on National Security seeks to help illuminate and address these issues and trends by examining contemporary and emergent concerns for American and international security through a wide aperture by bringing expertise to bear in publications, media appearances, and briefings. The Institute’s location in Philadelphia outside of the shorter attention span of Washington policy debates allows the Program to look at current and emergent problems with a longer-range view. In particular the program focuses on:

- American grand strategy
- The current and future global geopolitical environment that affect the U.S. and its interests
- The ends (strategies), ways (organization and methods of force employment), and means (force structures and capabilities) that impact the use of military force
- Counterterrorism and homeland security
- Development, diplomacy, and informational (particularly in the realm of what we describe as competitive soft power) issues that contribute to the holistic implementation of strategy.



## Volumes of Related Interest

FPRI's has produced several volumes such as this one along the years, focusing on specific issues of perennial interest. Readers of this particular volume on national security may also be interested in:

Robert Strausz-Hupé et al., *Protracted Conflict: A Challenging Study of Communist Strategy* (New York: Harper Colophon Books edition, 1963).

John F. Lehman and Harvey Sicherman, eds., *America the Vulnerable: Our Military Problems and How to Fix Them* (FPRI, 2001).

Stephen Gale, Michael Radu, and Harvey Sicherman, eds. *The War on Terror: Collected Essays, 2001–2006* (FPRI, 2007).

Paul Herbert and Michael P. Noonan, eds. *American Military History: A Resource for Teachers and Students* (FPRI E-Book, 2013).

*The Best of FPRI's Essays on National Security, 2005-2015*, which has been compiled in honor of FPRI's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, is part of a series being produced by each of FPRI's research programs throughout 2015.

Tally Helfont, ed. *The Best of FPRI's Essays on the Middle East*. Philadelphia: FPRI, March 2015. E-book.

Maia Otarashvili, ed. *The Best of FPRI's Essays on Democratic Transitions*. Philadelphia: FPRI, July 2015. E-book.

Ronald Granieri, ed. *The Best of FPRI's Essays on America and the West*. Philadelphia: FPRI, July 2015. E-book.

## FOREWORD

*By Michael P. Noonan, Director, Program on National Security*

September 2015

Matters of national security have concerned the Foreign Policy Research Institute (FPRI) ever since its founding in 1955. They are especially concerning during times of war—as the United States has been every day since September 11, 2001. But today’s national security threats are not solely related to matters of terrorism. The contemporary geopolitical environment contains myriad threats and challengers to the United States and its interests.

National security is a complex and multifaceted topic. This book demonstrates this reality by presenting both breadth and depth across topics ranging from grand strategy to military culture, from nuclear deterrence to irregular warfare. While the articles offer snapshots of individual events over the past ten years, the overall coverage should, like Janus, allow the reader both to look back in time and also to contemplate the future.

Such looking forward and backward will be essential for coping with the challenges the United States confronts against threats and challengers such as, to name just a few, the Islamic State, a revanchist Russia, or a rising China. Legitimate questions will also arise over what the nation’s priorities should be and what areas of the budget should be well funded and which areas should be less well funded. Those are points of genuine debate. This work will have succeeded if it spurs such debate and promotes civic literacy on the broad topic of national security.

This volume honors the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Institute by presenting a collection of writings published by FPRI and produced by both FPRI and non-FPRI scholars over the past decade. It is a large collection of writing. It has to be because much has happened. The layout of the sections here should allow those readers not interested in reading the entire volume to jump around to particular authors or subjects of interest. If you enjoy what you find here, visit us on the web to read, see, and hear more—or even better, become a member, a member at a higher level, or a partner, and support the sustained production of quality scholarship and analysis on national security.

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# PART I: GRAND STRATEGY

# HISTORY AND STRATEGIES: GRAND, MARITIME, AND AMERICAN

*By Walter McDougall*

November 2011

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*Of sea-captains young or old, and the mates, and of all intrepid sailors,  
Of the few, very choice, taciturn, whom fate can never surprise nor death dismay.  
Pick'd sparingly without noise by thee old ocean, chosen by thee,  
Thou sea that pickest and cullest the race in time, and unitest nations,  
Suckled by thee, old husky nurse, embodying thee,  
Indomitable, untamed as thee.  
—Walt Whitman, “A Song for all Seas, all Ships”*

A classic treatise on grand strategy specifically addressed the geopolitics of the Pacific Rim in the aftermath of the First World War. Its cautionary conclusion warned that great powers drawn to compete for commerce and empire in the vast vacuum of the North Pacific invariably over-reached. Bids for hegemony by Spain and Portugal, then Britain and Russia, had already been thwarted and the likelihood in the 20th century was that Japan would be tempted to overreach followed, perhaps, by the United States. The author of that prescient analysis was none other than Karl Haushofer, whose reputation is that of a leading proponent of continental geopolitics fixated on the quest for hegemony over the Heartland of Eurasia, which his English counterpart Halford Mackinder dubbed the World Island.

Haushofer's first career as an artillery officer climaxed in 1908-10 when he served as an attaché in Japan and even met the Meiji emperor. The seven-sided scramble for imperial concessions in the Far East transfixed him, even after he left active duty, earned a doctorate, and began a second career focused on Germany's geopolitics. Haushofer's very first book, in fact, was an analysis of the geography driving Japanese expansion and his second book was the grand geopolitics of the Pacific. Moreover, he never imagined in his land-power studies to follow that a single empire could impose a hegemony on the World Island. Rather, he

suggested Germany seek an alliance with Russia to control the heartland and alliances with Italy and Japan to secure its maritime flanks. [1]

Haushofer's closet navalism proves how ubiquitous was the sway of the American Naval War College Professor A. T. Mahan. His *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History* "went viral" after 1890 and helped to persuade the leaders of almost all the great powers to join the global race for blue water navies, global markets, and colonies. But the very fact that the Mahanian thesis about the decisiveness of sea-power stoked a nearly universal navalism really testifies to the folly and pride of the leaders in those Great Powers that lacked the endowments Mahan identified as the bases of sea power. They included: "I. Geographical Position. II. Physical Conformation, including, as connected therewith, natural productions and climate. III. Extent of Territory. IV. Number of Population. V. Character of the People. VI. Character of the Government, including therein the national institutions." [2] To the extent that a nation scored high in those categories (and Mahan's America certainly did) it might confidently venture forth on the high seas. Yet a nation, no matter how large, populous, rich, or industrial, that lacked one or more of these features—for instance, access to open seas from defensible ports—must content itself with a maritime strategy limited to coastal defense. That pride-wounding caveat was lost on Russia, Italy, and Germany, among others.

In retrospect, it has been argued that Mahan's theories were oversimplified and accepted all too uncritically. His analysis of 18th century British economics and strategy was essentially correct, but analogizing them to late 19th century America was not. His fixation on command of the seas through decisive fleet engagements ignored many other important maritime roles. In retrospect, the best theorist of the era (and one even the Naval War College would teach in the 1920s) was Sir Julian Corbett, precisely because he stressed maritime, not just naval power, by de-emphasizing big battleship determinism and stressing the roles of blockades, amphibious operations, logistics, and army-navy combined arms. [3] Navies have always been about "jointness" as we call it today, which is why, as Hugh Strachan observed, an almost unconscious distinction is drawn between strategy and naval or maritime strategy. The former is usually restricted to land warfare in the manner of Clausewitz and leans down toward operations, while the latter embraces land, air, and sea and thus stretches up toward grand strategy. [4]

The era of nearly universal naval and colonial competition spelled crisis for the world's long-standing naval, colonial, financial, and commercial leader. Throughout the many decades when Britannia ruled the waves, her Admiralty boasted of a Two-Power Standard (the Royal Navy should exceed the next two largest navies combined) and her Foreign Office boasted of Splendid Isolation. But the rise of many competitors rendered those luxuries unsustainable. Especially vexing were the Franco-Russian Alliance (1894), Germany's High Sea Fleet program (1897), the appearance of America's Two-Ocean, Blue-Ocean Navy (1898) and Russian and



Japanese fleets in Northeast Asia (1901). No longer able to enjoy command of the seas everywhere at once, the British hedged against potential rivals by concluding an alliance with Japan (1902) and ententes with the U.S. (1901), France (1904), and Russia (1907). In retrospect, Britain's maritime hegemony was bound to end sooner or later as other nations industrialized (just as America's post-World War II hegemony had to erode over time). When at last "normal" competitive times returned and several peer competitors arose in various global theaters, the British sought partners to help police the seas (just as the U.S. Navy seeks partners today).

Yet Wilhelmine Germany stubbornly raced, even after H.M.S. Dreadnought raised the stakes after 1906. Admiral Tirpitz assured the Kaiser that the German fleet did not need to equal, much less defeat, Britain's North Sea fleet, because once it reached a critical mass the British would gladly make imperial concessions rather than risk all in a war. That "I dare you" strategy of extortion inspired a classic exchange of memoranda in the Foreign Office which diplomatic histories invariably cite (most recently Henry Kissinger's *On China*) to illustrate the conundrums posed when a suddenly rising power challenges an established one.

On New Year's Day 1907 Eyre Crowe, a brilliant newcomer to the Foreign Office, penned the following minute on a Foreign Office document reviewing European affairs. [5]

*Second only to the ideal of independence, nations have always cherished the right of free intercourse and trade, in the world's markets, and in proportion as England champions the principle of the largest measure of general freedom of commerce, she undoubtedly strengthens her hold on the interested friendship of other nations, at least to the extent of making them feel less apprehensive of naval supremacy in the hands of a free trade England than they would in the face of a predominant protectionist Power. This is an aspect of the free trade question which is apt to be overlooked. It has been well said that every country, if it had the option, would, of course, prefer itself to hold the power of supremacy at sea, but that, this choice being excluded, it would rather see England hold that power than any other State (italics added).*

That passage is justly famous and felicitous, at least to Anglo-Americans. We believe in a liberal, open world order, hence other nations can trust us to exercise a benevolent hegemony. But to stop there and conclude that Crowe was a hawk vis-à-vis Germany ignores the dilemma posed by a rising new power's intentions. Indeed, Crowe continued with an either/or:

*Either Germany is definitely aiming at a general political hegemony and maritime ascendancy, threatening the independence of her neighbours and ultimately the existence of England; Or Germany, free from any such clear-cut ambition, and thinking for the present merely of using her legitimate position and influence as one of the leading Powers in the council of nations, is seeking to promote her foreign commerce,*

*spread the benefits of German culture, extend the scope of her national energies, and create fresh German interests all over the world wherever and whenever a peaceful opportunity offers, leaving it to an uncertain future to decide whether the occurrence of great changes in the world may not some day assign to Germany a larger share of direct political action over regions not now a part of her dominions, without that violation of the established rights of other countries which would be involved in any such action under existing political conditions. In either case Germany would clearly be wise to build as powerful a navy as she can afford (italics added).*

Thus, Germany's naval program might be a weapon designed to overthrow the world order or a tool to help her forge a larger (responsible) stake in that order. But Sir Thomas Sanderson, a brilliant veteran just retired from Whitehall, responded to Crowe with a sigh. He bade him (and by extension his chief, Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Gray) to see world politics from Germany's point of view:

*It has sometimes seemed to me that to a foreigner reading our press the British Empire must appear in the light of some huge giant sprawling over the globe, with gouty fingers and toes stretching in every direction, which cannot be approached without eliciting a scream.*

In short, Sanderson argued that Britain's empire and its maritime lifelines could be secured better through accommodation of a rising peer competitor than by arrogant outrage and dogged defense of the status quo. The parallels to the United States and China today are obvious. But in retrospect what ought to surprise historians about the Crowe-Sanderson exchange is that both took German naval ambition for granted. That is, neither one concluded that since Germany was functionally land-locked it was either foolish or malign for the Kaiser to challenge Britain's maritime supremacy. Indeed, the Kaiser's High Seas Fleet really weakened Germany by turning Britain and all her new friends into enemies and thus imperiling even Germany's supremacy on land. One can only surmise that Crowe and Sanderson, being British, took for granted the delicious appeal of sea power and were not surprised Germans wanted some, too. But you can't argue with geography. The Germans could not get away with pursuing world power in the same manner as the British, just as the Japanese could not get away with claiming a "Monroe Doctrine" in the same way as the Americans. That was because geography allowed the U.S. to arrogate to itself the Caribbean without stepping on any gouty fingers and toes, whereas geography ensured that any similar claims by Japan in the northwest Pacific were bound to elicit screams from Russia, China, Britain, or the United States.

One need not be a geographical determinist to conclude from the historical narrative of the modern era, at least, that every bid for hegemony by a terrestrial empire was doomed. From the Holy Roman Empire of Ferdinand II and to the France of Louis XIV and Napoleon to the

Germany of the Kaiser and Hitler to the Russia of the tsars and commissars, all such bids were defeated by rival coalitions orchestrated and supported by one or more maritime powers. Indeed, the Duke of Wellington himself confessed, “If anyone wishes to know the history of this war, I will tell them it is our maritime superiority gives me the power of maintaining my army while the enemy are unable to do so.” [6]

By contrast, those nations that pursued the most successful grand strategies, that garnered global power and pelf, and *pari passu* advanced human rights, international law, commerce, science, and culture, have been self-contained, self-governing, mostly Protestant federations including the Netherlands’ United Provinces, which served as a model for the British Isles’ United Kingdom, whose union of England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland for the pursuit of power abroad served as a model for the 13 American colonies’ United States. Indeed, the integral story of modern history is not so much the struggle between hegemony and balance of power, or between land power and sea power, but between the reigning maritime supremacy and its successor. Mahan’s history made that explicit for the 17th century by pushing the wars of religion and Bourbon France into the background while concentrating on the Anglo-Dutch wars for control of the seas. A similar focus on the 20th century might stress America’s swift supplanting of British power for which the hot and cold wars against the dictatorships were the occasions.

Equally instructive is a study of the Great Powers that tried and failed to compete on the high seas. Russia has built many fleets from Peter the Great to Admiral Gorshkov, and every one ended up rotting, rusting, or sunk in battle. A nearly land-locked or choke-point constrained empire, no matter how big and rich, just cannot aspire to a first-rank blue water navy. France, by contrast, was bigger and richer and almost as oceanic as Britain throughout modern history, yet the French repeatedly squandered their assets by trying to be dominant on land and on sea simultaneously. They invariably lost out in both theaters. Imperial Germany was as bottled up as Russia since the British could plug the North Sea, yet the Kaiser bought Admiral Tirpitz’s theory that once a German High Seas Fleet reached a critical mass, the British would not risk a war and instead would grant Germany global concessions. That strategy of threat and extortion only ensured the encirclement of Germany by a hostile alliance. But sea powers can also make mortal blunders. Japan enjoyed regional naval supremacy, indeed a sort of Japanese Monroe Doctrine, from 1904 to 1937. But rather than seeing insular Japan as the Asian mirror of Britain and privileging naval power, the Mikado saw Japan as the Asian mirror of Germany and privileged the Army. Hence, Japan exhausted itself in a suicidal bid for a mainland empire. One might even say the British, too, lost their maritime supremacy by engaging in two exhausting world wars on land. One might even wonder whether the United States is in danger of squandering its supremacy through a series of discretionary land wars in Asia.

The purpose of this long preface is to sketch in the elaborate backdrop to our contemporary tensions over the rise of Chinese offshore military ambitions and so render more plausible short assertions regarding some of the questions addressed in this CNA conference. First, all truly grand and successful strategies have been essentially (if not exclusively) maritime. Second, no nation's rise to world power has been more swift and complete than that of the United States. Third, therefore, America's rise must have reflected one or more maritime strategies, hence the United States must ipso facto be able to do grand strategy. Of course, we can introduce lots of complications regarding definitions, parameters, and operational features of grand strategy, not to mention how consistent, codified, or even how conscious a grand strategy must be. For a lengthy discussion of the question "Can America Do Grand Strategy?" see my essay published in *Orbis* (Spring 2010).

Americans' bias toward maritime strategy is in fact over-determined. The geographical location, expanse, topography, and resources of North America make it the real World Island and thus by far the best suited to nurture a maritime supremacy. Indeed, the United States ranks first or close to it in all six of Mahan's fundamentals for sea power. But the fact that the United States is history's largest and most successful thalassocracy (Greek for "rule by the sea") is attributable to cultural traits inherited from Great Britain as well as innate material and spatial endowments. Thus did the classic naval historian Clark Reynolds define the purpose of thalassocracy as "control of the sea lanes and islands by one state to insure its economic prosperity and thus its political integrity." But the manner of control, commerce, and polity most conducive to maritime supremacy just happens to foster more independent (he calls it "national privacy"), liberal, entrepreneurial, individualistic, representative, curious, diverse, cosmopolitan, and creative people and institutions than do rigidly hierarchical extractive land empires. ("Isn't it funny," he cites John Marin, "that Dictators never never never live by the sea?") Moreover, navies cannot occupy or plunder provinces in the manner of armies and so pose little threat to civil liberties. Navies are expensive and take a long time to build, but can quickly decay or be lost, hence they tend to be conservative. Yet they venture forth on a chessboard claiming 71 percent of the earth's surface and serving as highways to all civilizations of mankind, hence navies tend to be cosmopolitan. Thus, whereas armies and their historians tend toward a narrow, national perspective, naval historians tend to be universal in their perspective, stressing and generally (if guardedly) optimistic about the progress that seafaring peoples have bestowed upon civilization. [7]

America's true policy, as George Washington and Alexander Hamilton phrased it, was to preserve the incomparable blessing of her insulation from Europe's broils through a foreign policy of neutrality and a naval strategy of coastal and commercial defense. So long as Americans did not throw away their geographical advantages, then their natural growth born of liberty and prosperity would surely make them in time a continental empire greater than any in history. But the original U.S. strategy was also maritime for reasons of political culture.

Consider Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution. It grants to Congress the power “To raise and support Armies, but no Appropriation of Money to that Use shall be for a longer Term than two Years,” and the power “To provide and maintain a Navy”—period, no restrictions. That very conscious distinction derived from the knowledge that a standing army posed a potential threat to the liberties of people at home whereas a navy was by definition offshore and a threat only to foreigners. Hence the John Adams administration and Congress created a cabinet-rank Department of the Navy (1798), whereas Washington had founded a Department of War rather than Army on the assumption that there would be no sizeable army except during war! That dispensation reflected the experience of the English Civil War during which both Crown and Parliament fielded armies to wrest political power from each other. So it was, in the wake of that conflict, that King Charles II christened Britain’s maritime forces the Royal Navy with the blessing of Parliament, whereas no monarch dared speak of a Royal Army, because it is understood that the British army belong to Parliament. [8]

Those distinctions are now lost on us, first because American armies never have threatened civil supremacy, and second because the Cold War arms race obliged the United States to go on a war-footing even in peacetime. But in our early national era it was understood that all the United States needed for a long term grand strategy was a respected naval force plus militias, because its strategy was maritime. [9]

The first grand strategy was the Federalist vision promoted by Hamilton through the Constitution, Federalist Paper #11, Washington’s Farewell Address which he mostly drafted, and the naval construction program that produced our nation’s first fleet of sturdy frigates. [10] President John Adams employed them to good account in the Quasi-War against the French Republic and Jefferson against the Barbary corsairs. Indeed, what made this grand strategy permanent was the fact that it outlasted the Federalist era and won over Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, and Andrew Jackson, who against all expectation proved to be a naval enthusiast. The four great traditions of 19th century U.S. diplomacy which I described in my book *Promised Land, Crusader State*, all depended upon and in turn supported the maritime strategy of “separate spheres” between the Old World and New first expressed in Tom Paine’s *Common Sense* and made explicit in the Monroe Doctrine drafted by John Quincy Adams. Those principles included Exceptionalism, which meant civil and religious Liberty, Independence, and Unity at home so as to unleash the creative powers of the people to grow the nation; next, Unilateralism or Neutralism which was anything but Isolationism, because Washington’s maritime strategy insisted that the United States would seek friendship and commerce with all nations while shunning alliances except in emergencies; next, the American System of post-colonial republics envisioned in the Monroe Doctrine; and finally the fruit of it all: Expansionism or Manifest Destiny that no power on earth could prevent (at least after the Louisiana Purchase held up) except the American people themselves. Hence the greatest crisis of our first grand strategy was the Civil War in which the Union was saved and Europe



narrowly kept from intervening, by General Scott's Anaconda Plan, a maritime strategy for victory based on coastal and riverine blockades to strangle the Confederacy.

The second American maritime strategy, which was initially devised to reinforce the nation's original grand strategy under new circumstances, flourished from roughly 1880 to the aftermath of the Great War around 1920. It was anchored, literally and figuratively, on the vision of a two-ocean, blue water, steel, coal- and then oil-fired navy whose missions were to enforce the Monroe Doctrine and shelter America's growing foreign trade during the dangerous heyday of industrialism, the so-called New Imperialism, naval arms races. This grand strategy was, needless to say, explicitly and overwhelmingly maritime as it was conceived and promoted by Secretary of Navy Benjamin Tracy, Naval War College founder Stephen B. Luce, Navy Captain and author A. T. Mahan, and Assistant Secretary of the Navy Theodore Roosevelt. The Republican Party midwived the new strategy, but Progressives in both parties nurtured it, not least Woodrow Wilson, who pledged to build a United States Navy "second to none." The Great White Fleet, Panama Canal, overseas naval bases and colonies, and first big military-industrial complex were themselves only the naval expression of a self-conscious grand strategy for the United States that included promotion of exports, assimilation of immigrants, regulation of interstate and overseas commerce, national standards, public education, and big government mediation between big business and labor. These were the Progressive Era's responses to the novel challenges of globalization, industrialization, urbanization, imperialism, and navalism. [11]

The third American grand strategy emerged during World War II and mutated into its final form during the early Cold War. It was a strategy aimed at global—truly global—power projection but not, repeat not, territorial occupations in Europe or Asia. It was conceived by that "former naval person" Franklin Roosevelt and his Congressional paladin Carl Vinson. FDR imagined a postwar United Nations keeping the peace, but really run by his Four Policemen each with its own "beat" or implicit sphere of influence. He also imagined a truly global and open economic system bankrolled and managed by the United States. America's modes of enforcement in this New World Order were to be sea, air, and financial power, which is why Roosevelt spoke at Yalta of pulling American troops home from Europe within eighteen months of a German surrender. Instead, the Truman administration sharply reinforced U.S. ground forces in Europe and Asia in response to the Berlin Blockade and Korean War. But President Eisenhower devised a Cold War Containment strategy "for the long haul" by stressing nuclear deterrence plus air and naval supremacy. And, just as FDR had envisioned, that maritime supremacy based on sea and air power also patrolled the global commons in the interest of an open and prosperous economy.

The fourth American maritime strategy (but still within the grand strategy of Containment) was the 1980s response to the rapid Soviet naval buildup dramatized in the early Tom Clancy

novels. But it really ought to be dated to 1969 when the Nixon Administration began the long withdrawal of American ground forces from South Vietnam. In a speech at the very apt location of the island of Guam (following the splashdown of the Apollo 11 astronauts), the president proclaimed the Nixon Doctrine to the effect that henceforth the United States would assist peoples threatened by aggression with all manner of military and economic support except ground combat units. “Asian boys must fight Asian wars,” he said. The doctrine was made explicit and operational in the post-Vietnam era by the ancillary doctrine promulgated by Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger and elaborated by Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Colin Powell, which specified stringent conditions under which U.S. ground forces should or should not be deployed in combat. Taken together these doctrines signaled a very strong bias toward an offshore balancing strategy that came to define America’s posture during the third and last stage of the Cold War. Its most perfect expression was the New Maritime Strategy launched in 1981 by Ronald Reagan’s Navy Secretary John Lehman. In it, America found her way partially back to Washington’s “true policy” or at least what Washington’s rule implied in an era of global Cold War and nuclear deterrence. The U.S. Navy was tasked with defending the whole world’s sea lanes and choke points against any Red Navy breakout, securing the U.S. Navy’s submarine-based portion of the nuclear triad, and guaranteeing logistical and fire support for the Air/Land Battle operations plan in case of a NATO/Warsaw Pact war in Europe. All that added up to the ambitious goal of a 600 ship Navy. It was never achieved due to the collapse of the Soviet Union, but the New Maritime Strategy survived as a template for post-Cold War planning. [12]

The first efforts at such, including the 1992 plan “From the Sea...” and 1994 plan “Forward... From the Sea” were tentative and sterile due to the defense budget cuts and general complacency following the 1991 Gulf War. Thus, American strategy was most adrift during the very years when the United States enjoyed maximal freedom of action. [13] The Global War on Terror after 2001 brought a host of new distractions born of protracted counter-insurgency warfare that violated American grand strategic doctrine and conjured more budgetary woes born, this time, of profligacy rather than penury. By mid-decade visionary officers, most prominently Admiral Mike Mullen, seized the initiative to educate the Pentagon, politicians, pundits, and public about the new or magnified maritime challenges in the 21st century and measures to meet them. At the International Sea Forum in December 2006 Admiral Mullen floated the bold idea of a Thousand Ship Navy to be deployed by an alliance of nations devoted to securing the global commons, not only from state aggression, but piracy, smuggling, human trafficking, illegal immigration, terrorism, and transport of WMD. [14] Then, in October 2007 the Marine Corps and Coast Guard joined the Navy in sponsoring A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower (“CS 21”) similar in some respects to 1980s plan, but focused on today’s geography, enemies, and weaponry. [15] Like the Lehman conception the Cooperative Strategy must be “forward, global, allied, and joint ... must also fit the nation’s grand strategy, must be multilateral, must be effective in peacetime

and limited wars, must be affordable, and must be public.” The latter is a subtle point. If the purpose of a strategy is to deter and keep the peace, then not surprise but publicity is mandatory. [16]

Finally, the rise of China, a potential peer competitor in the western Pacific, has inspired an elaborate and sophisticated operational concept called “Air-Sea Battle: A Point of Departure,” itself echoing NATO’s “Air-Land Battle” plan of the 1980s. Drafted by the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessment, the document’s scenarios assume that China seeks the capability and may someday reveal the intention to deny the U.S. Navy access to air and sea out to the first island chain off the Chinese coast and perhaps even the second chain. The document urges the Navy and Air Force to collaborate on the planning and execution needed to ensure that U.S. and allied forces can deny China the ability to deny access to its seas (what James Kurth coded as D and D2 and the document codes as A2/AD). But the authors insist repeatedly that the purpose of the “Air-Sea Battle Point of Departure” is not to coerce or provoke or win a war against China, but simply to deter aggressive behavior and “sustain a stable, favorable, conventional military balance throughout the Western Pacific region.” [17]

Can the United States devise and execute wise grand strategy in the present era of geopolitical flux and financial constraint? The answer is a highly conditional Yes ... if the factions within each armed service can make common cause; if the services as a whole can rally behind a grand strategy, if the Joint Chiefs can market the strategy to the Administration and Congress that will take office in 2013, and if the economy and public opinion can support any new strategic initiatives during an era of penury. [18]

From my perspective on world history and American political culture, the New Maritime Cooperative Strategy and the Air-Sea Battle operational concept meet the nation’s needs perfectly and should be especially appealing in the wake of the Iraqi and Afghan ordeals. But even a vigorous and intelligent maritime strategy cannot be assured of success. In past conflicts the United States prevailed thanks to its strategic depth, productive power, and capacity to adapt in the fog of war, not because its prewar strategy proved right. War Plan Orange never was executed. World War I at sea had no use for the Great White Fleet. Likewise, World War II turned on carriers, submarines, and strategic bombing rather than fleet actions, while the enemy targeted by the 1980s maritime strategy just imploded. All one can do today is make educated guesses about the threat matrix of the next twenty years, the future intentions of the Chinese regime or for that matter its very survival, while the complex alliance diplomacy on which the Cooperative Strategy would depend, injects an additional range of (if you’ll pardon the expression) Unknown Unknowns into the equation. [19]

Still, it is far better to think about future strategic contingencies than not to think about them. As Ike famously said, “In preparing for battle I have always found that plans are useless, but planning is indispensable”; and “failing to plan is planning to fail.”

In conclusion I would just add that knowledge of—and respect for—the history of maritime rivalries and geopolitical realities should put us on guard against the natural impulse to over-promise or obfuscate in our efforts to “sell” strategies and weapons systems. A seemingly innocent case in point is the stated purpose of Air-Sea Battle Point of Departure, which is not roll-back or containment or a war-winning strategy or even the defense of Taiwan or other specific asset, but simply to minimize Beijing’s incentives to achieve its goals through aggression and thus “to sustain a favorable, conventional military balance throughout the Western Pacific.” As a sales pitch I like it. As a diplomatic demarche I like it. But as a grand strategic plan it begs every important question. To spend the next twenty years racing to devise countermeasures sufficient to deny the Chinese ambition to deny us access to seas out to some unspecified limit (first island chain, second island chain?) is not a formula of stability, but for the sort of perpetual competition for technical and diplomatic advantage that increases the chance of miscalculations and the incentive for preventive strikes. We must not forget the wisdom of Basil Liddell-Hart that the object of military strategy “is a better state of peace, even if only from your own point of view.” [20]

Thus, while the Cooperative Maritime Strategy and its Air-Sea Battle corollary may prove to be of critical value in some future operational contingency, its grand strategic value must not be to punish or even deter bad Chinese behavior, but to encourage good Chinese behavior within some portion of its coastal seas which they are or soon will be certain to deny others access. What is more, to tell the Chinese in words or deeds that external powers either will not or cannot permit them to have any power projection beyond their coast is to reprise Opium War-style imperialism of the sort they have been patiently frantic to end! In sum, the ultimate goal of the Cooperative Strategy and Air-Sea Battle should be stand-off enforcement of a diplomatic accord under which China agrees to police the seas and protect legitimate shipping within some designated “zone of control” in return for which the Cooperative Strategy partners agree to police the seas and protect Chinese shipping beyond the zone.

I risk being keelhauled for this, I know, but my rationale in supporting the proposed maritime strategy and naval build-up is to push the status-quo powers and rising power, not toward confrontation, but toward accommodation of the sort pursued by the 1921-22 Washington Naval Conference. Of course, the three great multilateral treaties produced by that conference failed in the end to stabilize East Asia, cap naval armaments, or tame a rising Japanese Empire. But that failure was not the result of flawed ends or means. Rather, the arms control, non-aggression, and Open Door pacts were killed by China’s anarchy and xenophobia, America’s insouciance toward Japan’s needs, Japan’s vulnerability to military rule, and everyone’s

collapse during the Great Depression into autarky and either militarism or isolationism. None of that history, sobering as it is, precludes the design today of a multilateral Asian/Pacific treaty regime rendered durable through realistic sanctions for violation and mutual interest in compliance.

On the contrary, a new “Washington Conference system” would be much stronger in our era precisely because no single power enjoys the regional naval hegemony that Japan did in the interwar years, and no power has an interest in sacrificing globalization for conquest. Finally, what’s the alternative to seeking a modus vivendi with China: straining to prolong in perpetuity the artificial post-1945 status of the Pacific Ocean as an American lake? To do that would only invite, sooner or later, the “fühlbare, sichtbare Strafe” (tangible, visible punishment) that Haushofer warned awaits all nations that overreach in the Pacific.

Accommodate China’s blue water aspirations? Accept a Chinese “zone of control” that U.S. and allied forces dare not contest except in extremis? Abandon long-standing friends in Northeast Asia to some sort of tributary status vis-a-vis Beijing? Hints that a positive answer to those questions may even be up for discussion elicit accusations of “appeasement” and invocations of Munich. [21] The implication is that to imagine a Chinese sphere of influence out to the first island chain (and therefore inevitably half way to the second island chain) is to consign South Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines (with the Spratly Islands), perhaps even Okinawa to some kind of Finlandization. But the question of just how much American maritime dominance is enough and therefore just where to draw a new “Dean Acheson defense perimeter” line through the seas of China’s oceanic “near abroad” will be addressed, like it or not, sooner or later. The challenge for Sino-American diplomacy is to figure out how to raise those questions voluntarily, in an atmosphere of conciliation rather than crisis, and in a regional rather than bilateral forum. Would accommodation of any sort feed the appetite of the authoritarian, nationalistic Beijing regime such that it grabs for control over more blue water in East and South China seas? The historical record strongly suggests that Chinese dynasties, even when strong, tend not to go abroad in search of monsters to destroy. But we need not trust in history, culture, or economic ties to keep the peace in the Pacific so long as the (still far superior) U.S. Navy and its friends beyond the first island chain, plus the Indian navy and its friends beyond the Straits of Malacca, are on station to keep China honest.

In short: speak softly and carry a big stick. That way the Chinese are the ones obliged to prove they can be responsible stakeholders. That way the Chinese are obliged to make the strategic choice of what kind of neighborhood they wish to inhabit.

*“In political activity, then, men sail a boundless and bottomless sea: there is neither harbour for shelter nor floor for anchorage, neither starting-place nor appointed destination. The enterprise is to stay afloat on an even keel; the sea is both friend and*

*enemy; and the seamanship consists of using the resources of a traditional manner of behaviour in order to make a friend of every hostile occasion.*”

—Michael Oakeshott, *The Voice of Liberal Learning*

## Notes

1. Karl Haushofer, *Das Japanische Reich in seiner geographischen Entwicklung* (Vienna: L.W. Seidel, 1921) and *Geopolitik des pazifischen Ozeans* (Berlin-Grunewald: Kurt Vowinckel, 1924). His literal warning was that all nations who overreached in the Pacific were sure to experience “*fühlbare, sichtbare Strafe*” – tangible, visible punishment, like a whipping (p. 234). Haushofer returned to the study of maritime power with a vengeance in *Weltmeere und Weltmächte* (Berlin: Zeitgeschichte Verlag, 1937). I discovered these earlier maritime works by Haushofer while researching Walter A. McDougall, *Let the Sea Make a Noise.... A History of the North Pacific From Magellan to MacArthur* (New York: Basic Books, 1993).
2. A.T. Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History 1660–1783* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1957 <1980>), p. 25.
3. Clark G. Reynolds, *Command of the Sea: The History and Strategy of Maritime Empires* (New York: William Morrow, 1974), pp. 402-15; Philip A. Crowl, “Alfred Thayer Mahan: The Naval Historian,” in Peter Paret, ed., *Makers of Modern Strategy from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age* (Princeton University, 1976), pp. 444-77. In addition to *Influence* see Mahan, *The Interest of America in Sea Power: Present and Future* (Boston: Little, Brown 1897) and *The Problem of Asia and its Effect on International Policies* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1900). Julian Corbett’s masterpiece was *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy* (London: Longman’s, Green, 1911).
4. Hugh Strachan, “The Lost Meaning of Strategy,” *Survival* (Autumn 2005), p. 37, cited by Timothy D. Hoyt, “The United States and Maritime Strategy: A Parochial View from the U.S. Naval War College,” *Orbis* 51:4 (2007): 577-84.
5. From the *British Documents on the Origins of the War*. For a complete on-line text see Memorandum on the Present State of British Relations with France and Germany↔
6. Wellington cited by Clark G. Reynolds, *Command of the Sea: The History and Strategy of Maritime Empires* (New York: William Morrow, 1974), p. 276.
7. Reynolds, *Command of the Sea*, esp. pp. 1-16, and *History and the Sea: Essays on Maritime Strategies* (Columbia: University of South Carolina, 1989); “thallasocracy”

and “control of the sea lanes,” p. 20; “national privacy,” p. 6; “Isn’t it funny,” p. 21. Reynolds knows he is bucking the conventional wisdom about “the American way of war” and its emphasis on mass, materiel, and attrition dating back at least to U.S. Grant. But he insists the big land wars have been the exceptions, not the rule, in American history. Stressing national history and land warfare, scholars like Russell F. Weigley falsely concluded that “the history of usable combat may be at least reaching its end” in the nuclear era, whereas it only made the world safe for more limited war. He believed American strategic history also suffered from a serious and closely related shortcoming until quite recently, namely the subordination of naval doctrinal history to Army’s (and Air Force’s) Not until 1956 did any survey of American military doctrines offer a balanced treatment of the Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps. That was Walter Millis, *Arms and Men: A Study in American Military History* (New York: Putnam, 1956), although Harold and Margaret Sprout, *The Rise of American Naval Power, 1776-1918* (Princeton, 1939) was “something of a turning buoy to a new course.”

8. England’s sea power dates from Henry VIII who informally referred to his personally financed warships as the Navy Royal. Charles II flipped the words, made them official, and applied them to all government-owned and -conscripted ships. For a survey of war powers in American history see Walter A. McDougall, “The Constitutional History of U.S. Foreign Policy: 222 Years in the Twilight Zone” at: <http://www.fpri.org/pubs/2010/McDougall.ConstitutionalHistoryUSForeignPolicy.pdf>.
9. The following descriptions of U.S. grand/maritime strategies owes much to the lectures of Karl F. Walling. See his article, “A Backward Look at Some Forward-Thinking Maritime Strategists,” *Joint Force Quarterly* 50: 3 (2008): 130-39.
10. Although I don’t believe I used the term grand strategy, the fact that the mutually supportive, internally consistent American foreign policy traditions bequeathed by the great statesmen of the early republic amounted to a grand strategy is self-evident in Walter A. McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State: The American Encounter With the World Since 1776* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997). I certainly describe them as such in a lecture and essay produced last year for the Temple University/Foreign Policy Research Institute Consortium on Grand Strategy. See Walter A. McDougall, “Can America Do Grand Strategy” *Orbis* 54: 2 (2010): 165-84.
11. On Progressive Imperialism see McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State*, chapter 5. On the rise of the new steel blue-water navy see inter alia the recent works by Henry J. Hendrix, *Theodore Roosevelt’s Naval Diplomacy: The U.S. Navy and the Birth of the American Century* (Annapolis: Naval Institute, 2009); Kurt Hackemer, *The U.S. Navy*

and the Origins of the Military-Industrial Complex, 1847-1883 (Annapolis: Naval Institute, 2001); and Mark R. Shulman, *Navalism and the Emergence of American Sea Power, 1882-1893* (Annapolis: Naval Institute, 1995; as well as the classics Richard D. Challenger, *Admirals, Generals, and American Foreign Policy 1898-1914* (Princeton University, 1973), and Robert Greenhalgh Albion, *Makers of Naval Policy, 1798-1947* (Annapolis: Naval Institute, 1980).

12. Norman Friedman, *The New Maritime Strategy* (London: Jane's, 1988).
13. I remember well the fruitless debates of those years because I was editing *Orbis* at the time and wondering, with Harvey Sicherman, how long the United States could get away with such drift. A good snapshot of the mood of those years is Norman Friedman, *Seapower as Strategy: Navies and National Interests* (Annapolis: Naval Institute, 2001), because it was published just prior to the September 11 attacks. He introduced his subject with three postulate (pp. 1-4). "At the dawn of the twenty-first century the U.S. Navy is the foremost instrument of U.S. military diplomacy." Next, "Since basing and aerial rights cannot be taken for granted, Navies are the only truly sovereign military instruments." Finally and for the ages, "About four centuries ago, Francis Bacon wrote that 'he that commandeth the sea is at great liberty and may take as much or as little of the war as he will.'" Friedman concluded that maintaining its superior seapower was the top priority of post-Cold War America and its first line of defense because "A deployed fleet tends to keep problems at arm's length."
14. The concepts of global commons, strategic restraint, and offshore balancing have been popularized and eloquently defended by Barry R. Posen. See the brief summary of them in Posen, "Stability and Change in U.S. Grand Strategy," *Orbis* 51:4 (Fall 2007): 561-67. His cutting conclusion rightly insists that the worst way to "spread democracy" is to attempt to do by force and label it "Made in U.S.A." In the same issue, pp. 569-75, Geoffrey Till, "Maritime Strategy in a Globalizing World," describes the tension in recent maritime strategy between the ongoing requirements of international competition born of the modern "Westphalian state system" (in which the oceans are *res nullius* belonging to no one), and the requirements of international consensus born of postmodern Globalization (in which the oceans are a global commons belonging to all).
15. A particularly pithy yet thorough comparison of the maritime strategies of the 1980s and 2000s is James Kurth, "The New Maritime Strategy: Confronting Peer Competitors, Rogue States, and Transnational Insurgents," *Orbis* 51: 4 (2007): 585-600.
16. Norman Friedman, *The US Maritime Strategy* (London: Jane's Publishing, 1988), pp. 3-4.



17. The Center for Strategic and Budgetary Analysis, “Air-Sea Battle: A Point of Departure” (May 2010):<http://www.csbaonline.org/publications/2010/05/airsea-battle-concept/>  
 On the People’s Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) see Bernard D. Cole, *The Great Wall at Sea: China’s Navy in the Twenty-first Century* and Toski Yoshihara, *Red Star over the Pacific: China’s Rise and the Challenge to U.S. Maritime Strategy* (Annapolis: Naval Institute, 2010).
18. Kurth, “The New Maritime Strategy,” op.cit., is especially shrewd in its analysis of inter- and intra-service rivalries and preferences with regard to enemies, roles, and missions.
19. Donald Rumsfeld re-popularized the phrase in *Known and Unknown: A Memoir* (New York: Sentinel, 2011), but I became familiar with the concept way back in the 1980s while researching the space program. Variables and problems that will have to be overcome in a project but as yet have not even been identified are simply a vexing fact of life for scientists, engineers, and systems analysts engaged in research and development, not least the topic of my book back then: aerospace engineers. See Walter A. McDougall, *...the Heavens and the Earth: A Political History of the Space Age* (New York; Basic Books, 1985), p. 439.
20. Sir Basil Liddell-Hart, *Strategy*, 2 rev. ed. (London: Faber & Faber, 1967), p. 338.
21. For instance, June Teufel Dreyer, “Why Taiwan Matters,” Foreign Policy Research Institute E-Note (July 2011) at <http://www.fpri.org/enotes/2011/201107.dreyer.taiwan.html> summarized her testimony before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs that critiqued such articles as Bruce Gilley, ‘Not so Dire Straits. How the Finlandization of Taiwan Benefits US Security’. *Foreign Affairs* 89:1 (2010): 44-60, and Charles Glaser, “Will China’s Rise Lead to War? Why Realism Does Not Mean Pessimism,” *Foreign Affairs* 90:2 (2011): 80-91. But see also James R. Holmes, “America’s ‘Munich Moment’?” (<http://the-diplomat.com/2011/07/17/america-s-‘munich-moment’/>) rebutted the claim by Senator James Webb (R., Va.) that the U.S. is “approaching a Munich moment with China.”

# GEOPOLITICS REBORN

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July 2013

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Ever since the United States became the world's only superpower over twenty years ago, there has been a tendency to lose sight of the geopolitical conditions underlying American national security. We have been told that economic interdependence, multilateral institutions, technological change, global democratization, the rise of non-state actors, and Barack Obama's personality will have a transformational effect on world affairs, rendering irrelevant the traditional patterns of international power politics. Yet none of these nostrums have had the fully pacifying impact promised by their most enthusiastic advocates, and we are left drifting into an era where geopolitical competition between major world powers obviously continues, without a firm understanding of it on the part of Western opinion.

The word geopolitics is often taken to have a kind of reactionary, outmoded, or even sinister quality. In reality, geopolitics is simply the analysis of the relationship between geographical facts on the one hand, and international politics on the other. These geographical facts include essentially unchanging natural features, such as rivers, mountains, and oceans, along with elements of human and political geography such as national boundaries, trade networks, and concentrations of economic or military power. In other words, geopolitical conditions are the facts on the ground, prior to our policy decisions. As such, a refusal to recognize or understand geopolitical factors in world politics is not so much ethical, as foolish - like an insistence on playing chess without learning the rules.

Classical geopolitical analyses contain a number of enduring truths, as follows. The international system is a competitive arena in which great powers play a disproportionate role, struggling for security, resources, position and influence. Military force is a critical indicator and fundament of that influence. Given their essential autonomy, states fear their own encirclement by other powers, and try to break out of it through strategies of counter-encirclement. The realities of geography and material capability set very definite constraints on foreign policy decision-makers which they ignore at their peril. At the same time, there is considerable room for human agency and political leadership to respond to these constraints

and defend worthwhile values with skill, courage, and success. Despite technological and institutional changes over the years, these underlying features of world politics have never really changed all that much. This is one reason the study of history is instructive for statesmen. What has changed, among other things, is the specific distribution of power within the international system. Today, it is China's economic and military power that is rising, not only on land, but at sea. Yet the basic patterns of its rise are not entirely without precedent. So it is appropriate that we go back to the classical geopolitical theorists, to deepen our understanding of current international trends and how to manage them. Three such classical theorists in particular stand out: Alfred Mahan, Halford Mackinder, and Nicholas Spykman.

U.S. admiral Alfred Mahan was the preeminent theorist of maritime power in world politics. Disturbed by the lack of governmental or popular attention to the state of the U.S. Navy, in 1890 he published his greatest work, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660-1783*. In it, he argues that sea power is central to the rise and decline of great nations. Sea power is defined by Mahan as not simply a strong navy—although it certainly includes that—but also a national orientation toward the ocean, in terms of geographical position, commercial shipping, maritime production, and intelligent policies. The military essence of sea power, for Mahan, is the concentrated possession of numerous capital ships, with well-trained and aggressive crews, capable of defeating enemy navies in battle. The possession of such naval forces, when properly led, carries the immeasurable benefit of driving the enemy's fleet and commerce from the open seas. Mahan refers to this type of naval predominance as command of the sea. In wartime, command of the sea allows for maritime powers to intervene decisively on land, whether through naval blockade, or in direct support of allied armies. In peacetime, command of the sea allows for the operation of friendly maritime trade, which in turn gathers wealth to finance the maintenance of the navy. Maritime shipping, a strong navy, and the benefits of seaborne commerce thus operate in a kind of virtuous circle for the leading naval powers, giving them a great advantage over nations whose capabilities are bound mainly to the land.

Mahan argued that the self-reinforcing nature of sea power was best demonstrated in modern times by the rise of Great Britain, which defeated the navies of Spain, Holland, and France in turn, and rose to worldwide preeminence through command of the sea. But he worried that modern democracies were not sufficiently attuned to the necessity of maintaining sea power. His own United States, in particular, he viewed as preoccupied with internal matters, and neglectful of its navy. He therefore recommended not only the expansion of the U.S. battle fleet, but the careful development of naval bases, canals, and coaling stations overseas, so that the oceans would act as a strategic opportunity for America rather than as a liability in the face of more aggressive competitors. Effective control over vital maritime chokepoints, bases, and ocean lanes would allow the seagoing nations to project their influence inland while

constraining the expansion of great land powers such as Russia - but that control would have to be exercised and maintained energetically.

If Mahan was confident that Anglo-American command of the sea could be used to check the consolidation of great land powers in Europe and Asia, Halford Mackinder was much less so. A British parliamentarian and founder of the geographic discipline, Mackinder formulated his core argument only a few years after Mahan's appeared. In a *Geographical Journal* article from 1904, and later in a book entitled *Democratic Ideals and Reality*, Mackinder asked his readers to think of Europe, Asia, and North Africa as one great continent, which he called the "world island." This single world island, Mackinder pointed out, contained much greater human and natural resources than the rest of the planet's islands and continents combined. Moreover the world island's "Heartland"—at its maximum extent including Russia, Mongolia, Iran, Tibet, Central Asia, and Eastern Europe—had the great advantage of virtual inaccessibility to sea power. Historically, it was not so unusual for land powers to defeat and overcome sea powers. After all, sea power was ultimately based upon the land. Were the European and Asian continents ever to fall under the domination of a single political entity emanating from the Heartland, that entity would necessarily overpower through sheer weight the outer crescent of insular maritime nations such as the United States, Great Britain, Australia, and Japan. In this sense, the most relevant precedent for the future might not be European maritime dominance, but the sprawling Mongol empires of the 13th century.

Mackinder suggested that starting in about 1500 AD, with the launch of what he called the Columbian era, Western European nations had been able to employ specific naval and technological advantages to explore, penetrate, and colonize the rest of the world. The Asian Heartland had thereby been outmaneuvered. But by the start of the twentieth century, that era was coming to an end. The surface of the earth had been largely navigated and partitioned by **Europe's great empires; the international system was now closed, without more possibilities** for external discovery. Furthermore, railways now crisscrossed massive distances, bringing new advantages to trade, transport, and communication by land. The future tendency would therefore be toward the consolidation of continental-sized land powers in Eurasia, raising the danger of Britain's relative decline and encirclement. The aftermath of the First World War, including the Bolshevik Revolution as well as Germany's failed bid for continental dominance, **illustrated Mackinder's argument that the Eurasian landmass could not be allowed to fall** under the control of a hostile authoritarian power. His specific response was to call for the **creation of an independent tier of East European buffer states, at the Heartland's perimeter, to** guard against either German or Soviet expansion. But like Mahan, Mackinder feared that modern liberal democracies were not inclined to think strategically over the long run. Indeed **Woodrow Wilson's brainchild, the League of Nations, was an excellent contemporary** example of legalistic liberal rather than sound strategic or geopolitical thinking in relation to

world politics. Mackinder urged the West's great maritime democracies to defend themselves by establishing favorable balances of power on land; Wilson, by contrast, created the League with the utopian intention of outmoding balances of power altogether.

The failure of the League of Nations to prevent fascist aggression led to a new wave of Western geopolitical thought, of which Nicolas Spykman was the leading author. A Yale professor of Dutch origin, Spykman built on Mackinder's work and modified it significantly through two fine books written during the early 1940s: *America's Strategy in World Politics*, and *The Geography of the Peace*. In particular, Spykman introduced the concept of the "Rimland," a belt of nations stretching from France and Germany across the Middle East, to India, and finally to China. What distinguished Rimland powers, for Spykman, was their amphibious nature: they were neither purely on land nor sea. But taken together, it was these Rimland powers—and not Mackinder's Heartland, as such—that contained most of the human population and economic productivity on the planet. Spykman therefore characterized the great geopolitical struggles such as the Second World War as contests not of sea power versus land power, but rather as conflicts between mixed alliances - each on sea and land - over control of the Rimland. And since the Rimland contained most of the world's wealth and population, control of the Rimland meant control of the world.

Spykman renamed Mackinder's outer crescent of maritime powers the "Offshore Islands and Continents." A purely naval and/or isolationist approach is always appealing to offshore islanders. Aware of the intense reluctance of many Americans to engage in military conflicts overseas, Spykman nevertheless denied that an isolationist policy was a viable option for the United States, either during or after World War Two. If the U.S. did not exercise effective control over the airspace and sea lanes of the two oceans on either side of it, then somebody else would. Specifically, Spykman pointed out the southern cone of South America was so far away from the United States that German influence there was a real possibility if Hitler was permitted to win the war in Europe. U.S. hemispheric defense would then inevitably collapse into something even more impoverished and constrained, allowing the Axis powers to completely dominate vital resources from Europe and Asia. Altogether, the Rimland's combined potential meant there was simply no safe resting place in geographic isolation for Americans on this side of the water. The U.S. would have to ensure, through serious and costly effort, that the resources of the Old World were not combined and mobilized against the New World. Compared to Mackinder, however, Spykman was more optimistic that this could actually be done, not only through the exercise of a forward strategic presence, but because of the development of modern American air power. He further warned, in anticipation of World War Two's conclusion, that from the perspective of the leading Offshore Continent (i.e., America) a Rimland dominated by the Heartland (i.e., Russia) was no improvement on a Heartland dominated by the Rimland (i.e., Nazi Germany and Japan.)

For both Spykman and Mackinder, the geopolitical nightmare for the West was an autocratic Heartland-Rimland conglomeration able to dominate the Old World to such an extent that the seagoing Anglo-American democracies would be outmaneuvered. This dire scenario has often been dismissed over the years as a highly improbable one. But in fact, the great struggles of the twentieth century, including two world wars and one cold one, were fought specifically to prevent that scenario from fully materializing, and without American intervention there is good reason to believe that either an authoritarian Germany or the Soviet Union would have made the nightmare a lasting reality.

The other way in which Mackinder's 1919 book, especially, appears to have been prophetic, was in its prediction of a long-term power shift from West to East, reversing the trend of previous centuries. During most of the modern era, Europe was at the center of international politics, with the world's most capable militaries, its most dynamic economies, and its most assertive foreign policies. Even during the Cold War, when Rimland nations in Western Europe were finally overshadowed by the actions of external superpowers, the European continent—particularly Germany—remained the supreme geopolitical prize for which those superpowers contested. The end of the Cold War was taken gratefully by much of liberal opinion to mean the end of geopolitics. But in reality, it introduced a new distribution and ranking of great powers, characterized by a predominant America, a resentful Russia, a strategically incoherent European Union, and a rising set of Asian nations. As economies like China's have grown very quickly, allowing them to build up and modernize their armed forces, there has been a massive shift in relative economic and military capabilities from the Atlantic toward the Pacific. The chief focus of international great power competition is now clearly along the eastern, rather than the western end, of Spykman's Rimland. And the single most dramatic development within that zone has been the rise of Chinese power—economically, diplomatically, and militarily.

In geopolitical terms, China is not a Heartland but a Rimland power. That is to say, it is accessible by sea and land, with security concerns in both directions. The collapse of the Soviet Union represented a windfall for China, reducing the threat from the north. Starting in the 1990s, Beijing also resolved many of its border disputes with neighboring countries on land. This has sometimes been taken as an indication that China has few aggressive intentions. But in fact the resolution and security of China's vast land frontier—an exceptional achievement, by historical standards—allows Beijing to be more assertive and expansionist at sea. And it has been. In recent years, aware of American preoccupations with economic recession and counterterrorism, China has begun throwing its weight around in the South and East China Seas quite aggressively, triggering a series of dangerous maritime incidents as it presses up against Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, and Vietnam, as well as U.S. surveillance ships. At the same time, China has built up and modernized its navy, both to lend greater weight to its diplomatic assertions in the region, and to protect its extensive and growing

merchant marine. In fact numerous Chinese naval strategists reference Admiral Mahan and his concepts of sea command, explicitly. The practical Chinese goal appears to be effective mainland command over the South China Sea. Admittedly, China's navy—or People's Liberation Army Navy, as it is called—is still not comparable to the U.S. Navy in overall **quality or scope, but then again it doesn't have to be.** By building up large numbers of land-based missiles, frigates, and submarines, ready to attack U.S. forces in unorthodox fashion—for example in concert with cyber strikes—China has created a new correlation of forces in nearby waters which an American president might well be reluctant to challenge during a crisis situation. The purpose of the Chinese naval buildup is not to go looking for war with the United States, but precisely to coerce and deter the U.S. from acting in the region, notably in the defense of Taiwan. Securing control of Taiwan would constitute not only a sweeping national accomplishment for the Chinese Communist Party, but a dramatic improvement in **China's geopolitical situation at sea.** What Chinese strategists call the "first island chain," stretching from Japan to Malaysia, would then be breached. Beyond that, the Chinese themselves may not know how they plan to use their newfound sea power. But the history of such matters suggests that they will continue to define their maritime interests more expansively, as they acquire greater and greater maritime capabilities.

All told, China is increasingly in a position to challenge the U.S. for predominance along the East Asian littoral, and has considerable interest in doing so, especially given its grinding sense of historical grievance. Indeed for the Chinese such a challenge would only be a return to the natural order of things, whereby the Middle Kingdom leads within East Asia. The Russians, for their part, share with China a long-term desire to expel American influence from their immediate spheres of influence. The most persuasive accounts of Sino-Russian cooperation tend to suggest that this cooperation is opportunistic and pragmatic. Still, from an American point of view, this is not exactly reassuring. If these two massive and authoritarian powers are able to cooperate pragmatically and case by case against American interests, the U.S. will face a severe geopolitical challenge in much of Eurasia. When Rimland powers are able to secure their borders by land, as China seems to be doing, and then take to the seas convincingly, this is exactly what should worry offshore powers such as the United States.

President Obama came into office hoping for cooperation with China on a range of issues such as climate change and arms control; the conduct of a sustained Sino-American strategic competition was probably the last thing on his **mind.** He soon discovered that **praising China's** growing power, as he did upon visiting Beijing in 2009, only encouraged its more confident self-assertion. As America's Asian allies grew increasingly concerned by Chinese aggressiveness at sea, the Obama administration eventually announced a strategic "pivot" toward Asia. But the pivot has been under-resourced. Even as the administration claims to be pivoting to East Asia, it has cut U.S. naval capabilities significantly—capabilities that must obviously be central in any American effort to balance Chinese influence. Indeed Obama went so far during

a 2012 presidential election debate as to mock concerns over America's shrinking Navy. In strategic terms, under this administration, the U.S. response to a rising China has simply not been adequate.

It is neither unusual nor necessarily irrational for great powers to engage in long-term geopolitical competition during peacetime. But a crucial first step, conceptually, is to realize that this is exactly the situation we are now in with regard to China. Competitive strategies do not rule out the possibility of cooperation in certain areas, such as trade, but they do seek to leverage our strengths against a competitor's weaknesses over a lengthy period of time.

One of the explanations for the lack of any truly competitive U.S. strategy toward China today is the tacit and widespread assumption that American power is in relative and irreversible decline, while China's rise to predominance is more or less ordained. But popular arguments regarding America's decline are overstated these days, just as they have been before. The United States still holds a range of capabilities and advantages that no other power—including China—possesses. These advantages include the world's **largest single economy**, its **most capable armed forces by far**, its leading universities, a persistent edge in technological innovation, an unusual attractiveness for immigrants, vast natural resources on a continental scale, deep financial markets, underlying political stability, a tremendous capacity for resilience, and a set of international alliances that center on the U.S. rather than on any other country. China does pose a serious geopolitical challenge, and it may be expanding quickly, but Beijing does not hold most of these advantages, and Chinese leaders know it. The United States has immense capacities to develop and implement seriously competitive foreign policy strategies, if and when it chooses to do so. Since the capabilities exist, this is mainly a question of political choice and will. Americans still have the ability to choose whether or not they want to play a leading role in the world. If they choose to abdicate that role, there is very little reason to think their most likely international successors will be friendlier to democratic values or to U.S. interests.

A central insight of Mahan, Mackinder, and Spykman alike is that without robust balances of power in the Old World, the liberties of the New World cannot be maintained. It has often been characteristic of liberal opinion in Anglo-American countries to assume either that such balances are self-executing, or that they are no longer necessary, given advances in multilateral interdependence. But this periodic and blasé lack of interest in long-term security threats is itself possible only because of the basic geopolitical condition undergirding American liberal democracy, namely, a physical separation from typical dangers by two great oceans. If the balance of great powers within Eurasia is not monitored and preserved with genuine vigilance from the outside, this will eventually have concrete implications for U.S. prosperity and security—perhaps sooner rather than later. In other words, you may not be interested in geopolitics, but geopolitics is interested in you; American freedoms, in the long run, quite



literally rest upon a fragmentation of power in the Old World. This country's founders understood as much, and recognized it in their words and actions as they navigated the treacherous waters of international power politics with both the wisdom of serpents and the innocence of doves. Geopolitical thinking can provide some of the necessary wisdom of serpents, as Americans continue to navigate those treacherous waters today.

# PRINCIPLE AND PRUDENCE IN AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

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January 2014

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U.S. foreign policy is in shambles, characterized by drift and incoherence. It is at best *a-strategic* at worst *anti-strategic*, lacking any concept of how to apply limited resources to obtain our foreign policy goals because this administration has articulated no clear goals or objectives to be achieved. The foreign policy failures of the Obama Administration are legion: the Russian “reset” that has enabled Vladimir Putin to strut about as a latter-day czar; the betrayal of allies, especially in Central Europe, not to mention Israel; snatching defeat from the jaws of victory in Iraq by failing to achieve a status of forces agreement (SOFA) that would help to keep Iraq out of the Iranian orbit; the muddled approach to Afghanistan; our feckless policy—or lack of policy—regarding Iranian nuclear weapons, not to mention Libya and Benghazi, as well as Syria. President Obama has said that he was elected to end wars, not to start them, as if wars are fought for their own purpose. Ending wars is no virtue if the chance for success has been thrown away, as it was in Iraq.

Observers disagree about the causes of the Obama failures in foreign policy. Some attribute them to indifference, others to incompetence—although the two are not unrelated. Still others contend that the results we are seeing represent the desired outcomes of more insidious motivations. **But no matter the cause of Obama’s dysfunctional foreign policy, the result is the same: weakness that opens the way for those who wish America ill.** Winston Churchill’s 1936 characterization of the Stanley Baldwin government as Hitler gained strength on the Continent echoes ominously today: it was, said Churchill, “decided only to be undecided, resolved to be irresolute, adamant for drift, solid for fluidity, all-powerful to be impotent.”

To the extent that it has any intellectual foundation, the Obama foreign policy represents a species of “liberal internationalism,” which holds that the actors in the international political system (IPS) tend towards cooperation rather than competition. Liberal internationalists contend that the goals of actors within the IPS transcend power and security; they also see an

important role for actors in the IPS other than states, including international institutions such as the United Nations.

It is easy to criticize the foreign policy of the Obama Administration, but what are the alternatives? Some, citing war weariness, have succumbed to the siren call of strategic disengagement offered most consistently by Senator Rand Paul. Others call for a return to traditional realism in foreign policy which emphasizes the international balance of power, the careful coordination of diplomacy and force, and the international (rather than domestic) behavior of other states. Still others, for instance Senators John McCain and Lindsey Graham, reject what they see as the utopianism of liberal internationalism but nonetheless have supported U.S. intervention in Libya and Syria.

The United States has been most successful when it has followed a foreign policy of what might be called “prudent American realism,” which links American *principles* with Aristotelian *prudence*. On the one hand, this approach is based on the recognition that American realism differs from the realism taught as part of academic international relations courses: American realism has always fused the features of traditional realism—power and security—with prosperity and the preservation of American principles. George Washington articulated this unique American realism in his Farewell Address:

*If we remain one People, under an efficient government, the period is not far off, when we may defy material injury from external annoyance; when we may take such an attitude as will cause the neutrality we may at any time resolve upon to be scrupulously respected; when belligerent nations, under the impossibility of making acquisitions upon us, will not lightly hazard the giving us provocation; when we may choose peace or war, as our interest guided by justice shall Counsel.*

On the other hand, Aristotle called prudence the virtue most characteristic of the statesman. Prudence requires the statesman to always maintain a clear vision of what needs to be achieved—the *ends* of policy—while maintaining flexibility regarding the *means*. Successful American foreign policy, for example that pursued by Ronald Reagan, fused American power and American principles in order to ensure the survival of those principles.

Prudent American realism, as opposed to a more traditional realism, recognizes that the internal character of regimes matters and that foreign policy must reflect the fundamental principles of liberal democracy. And unlike liberal internationalism, which holds that international law and institutions alone are sufficient to achieve peace, prudent American realism understands that there are certain problems that can be addressed only through the prudent exercise of power. Thus, the strategic objective of prudent American realism is to maintain a liberal world order characterized by freedom and prosperity.

Prudent American realism represents a species of primacy. Primacy is based on hegemonic stability theory, which holds that a “liberal world order” does not arise spontaneously as the result of some global “invisible hand.” Instead, such a system requires a “hegemonic power, a state willing and able to provide the world with the collective goods of economic stability and international security.” The United States, as Great Britain before it, took up the role of hegemon not out of altruism but because it is in its national interest to do so.

Primacy can be caricatured as a “go-it-alone” approach in which the United States intimidates both friends and allies, wields power unilaterally, and ignores international institutions. But prudent American realism is a “benevolent” primacy, an approach in keeping with the liberal political tradition of the United States but which recognizes the world as a dangerous place in which a just peace is maintained only by the strong. The form of primacy embodied in prudent American realism is based on the idea that U.S. power is good not only for the United States itself but also for the rest of the world. Yet, the desired outcome is not motivated by altruism but by the recognition that the United States can be fully secure, free, and prosperous only in a world where everyone else is also secure, free and prosperous. The mere existence of liberal institutions is not sufficient. A liberal world order is possible only if the United States is willing and able to maintain it. In the words of the late Sam Huntington,

*the maintenance of U.S. primacy matters for the world as well as for the United States....*

*A world without U.S. primacy will be a world with more violence and disorder and less democracy and economic growth than a world where the United States continues to have more influence than any other country in shaping global affairs. The sustained international primacy of the United States is central to the welfare and security of Americans and to the future of freedom, democracy, open economies, and international order in the world.*

According to the theory of hegemonic stability, the alternative to U.S. power is a more disorderly, less peaceful world. The precedent for the United States is the decay of *Pax Britannica*, which, many believe, created the necessary, if not sufficient conditions for the two world wars of the twentieth century. As British hegemony declined, smaller states that previously had incentives to cooperate with Britain “defected” to other powers, causing the international system to fragment. The outcome was depression and war. The decline of American power could lead to a similar outcome.

In addition to fusing principle and power, a foreign policy of prudent American realism must recognize certain operational principles. First, it needs to distinguish between friends and allies, on the one hand, and enemies and adversaries, on the other. For the last six years, the Obama Administration has failed to make this distinction, causing our allies to lose faith in

the United States, while emboldening our enemies. Second, any attempt to spread democracy abroad must be limited by considerations of prudence. For one thing, “democracy” is not always *liberal* democracy. For another, U.S. resources are finite, and good strategy requires the United States to prioritize among the goals it wishes to accomplish.

Third, the United States must return to the more classical connection between force and diplomacy. For too long, American policy makers, motivated by the assumptions of liberal internationalism, have acted as if diplomacy alone is sufficient to achieve our foreign policy goals. But as Frederick the Great once observed, “Diplomacy without force is like music without instruments.” Prudent American realism recognizes that diplomacy and force are two sides of the same coin. Finally, the United States should not hesitate to use its economic power as an instrument of foreign policy. The changing geopolitics of energy provides an opportunity for the United States to counter the likes of Putin, and others in the world who have wielded the energy weapon against America in the past.

President Obama’s foreign policy has been a disaster, not only for the United States but also for the hopes of those who desire a more free and prosperous world. Only an approach such as prudent American realism can stanch the loss of American power, influence, and credibility. As the passage from Huntington makes clear, it matters who the hegemonic power is. For those who desire freedom and prosperity, there is no alternative to the United States.

# RETRENCHMENT CHIC: THE DANGERS OF OFFSHORE BALANCING

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August 2015

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Retrenchment is all the rage in the academic strategic studies community. [1] In recent years, a growing number of scholars—including prominent international-relations “realists” like Stephen Walt, John Mearsheimer, and Christopher Layne—have argued that Washington should retreat from the ambitious strategy it has followed since World War II, and that it should embrace a far more austere approach to world affairs. In particular, they have contended that America should pursue a minimalist approach known as “offshore balancing.” In brief, offshore balancing envisions rolling back U.S. force posture and alliance commitments abroad, and significantly reducing the overall assertiveness of U.S. policy. Offshore balancing “is an idea whose time has come,” writes Walt; in the post-Iraq War and post-financial crisis context, dramatic retrenchment has become both desirable and imperative. [2]

Arguments for offshore balancing are premised on a less-is-more logic: that reducing U.S. commitments and activism can actually lead to greater security and influence at a far lower financial price. After more than a decade of expensive and inconclusive wars, such logic can seem quite appealing. Yet upon closer inspection, offshore balancing loses its luster. The financial and geopolitical benefits of that strategy are significantly overstated, while the probable dangers and costs are often obscured. Offshore balancing effectively promises the best of all worlds, but if implemented it would likely endanger the international influence and stability that the United States has long enjoyed, and render the country vulnerable to higher longer-term risks and costs. Retrenchment chic must therefore be carefully scrutinized: as America considers its grand strategic course in coming years, it should steer clear of offshore balancing.

## Why Try Offshore Balancing?

Since World War II, the United States has pursued an ambitious and engaged strategy in global affairs. It has sought to foster an international environment conducive to the spread of free markets and democracy, and to uphold a favorable global balance of power in which no hostile power can dominate one of the three regions—Europe, East Asia, and the Persian Gulf—of critical economic or strategic importance to the United States. To attain these goals, in turn, America has made numerous overseas security commitments, and substantiated those

commitments through the forward deployment of military forces. The precise timing and nature of these commitments has varied by region, of course, but the basic logic has always been the same. U.S. commitments have functioned to prevent any rival from exerting control over a vital area, and to mute destabilizing regional security competitions. They have promoted the climate of reassurance in which democracy and market economies could thrive, and restrained nuclear proliferation by reducing the insecurity of key U.S. allies. Beyond all this, U.S. commitments have pushed American power and influence deep into critical regions. In numerous ways, security guarantees and forward deployments have been the backbone of postwar U.S. strategy.

For many decades, this strategy has served America well. Yet since the end of the Cold War, and particularly in the last decade, many academic analysts have claimed that the strategy has outlived its usefulness. They argue that there is no longer the same danger of a hostile power like the Soviet Union overrunning a vital region, and that Washington—amid post-financial crisis austerity—can no longer afford such extensive commitments. They also argue that a strategy designed during the Cold War has caused myriad geopolitical problems in the post-Cold War world. It has enabled endemic free-riding by U.S. allies, while antagonizing key regional powers—like Russia and China—who view American presence as a threat to their own security. Likewise, offshore balancers contend that the strategy actually encourages jihadist terrorism by placing American troops on Muslim holy ground, and that U.S. assertiveness fuels—rather than restrains—nuclear proliferation by menacing the very survival of countries like Iran and North Korea. From this perspective, it is American strength, and not American weakness, that incites so many of the security challenges the country currently confronts. [3]

These critiques have informed the widespread academic appeal of offshore balancing. Like most mainstream observers, offshore balancers agree that U.S. policy must prevent any unfriendly power from dominating Europe, East Asia, or the Persian Gulf. Yet they believe that permanent U.S. force deployments and security guarantees are not needed to achieve this goal. Rather, offshore balancers think that Washington can rely on local actors to contain most threats in these regions, supporting them with economic, diplomatic, or indirect military aid (like arms sales) as necessary. Only when a crucial regional balance threatens to collapse altogether—only when a hostile actor threatens to overrun or otherwise control that area—should Washington intervene by going onshore with its own military forces. Once the aggressor is defeated and the balance restored, U.S. forces should return offshore again.

In practical terms, offshore balancing therefore entails a marked retrenchment of U.S. presence overseas. Offshore balancers have argued that America should withdraw from NATO's military command, for instance, or at least withdraw all permanently stationed U.S. troops from Europe. They have urged forswearing onshore peacetime deployments in the Gulf, and

relying on “over-the-horizon” capabilities should trouble erupt. In East Asia, most offshore balancers favor preserving strong naval/air forces to deter a rising China. Yet they have also advocated, variously, withdrawing U.S. troops from South Korea, ending the ambiguous security commitment to Taiwan, modifying or terminating the alliance with Japan, or removing U.S. forces from that country.

All of this retrenchment would be accompanied by significant cuts in force structure, and by a far more modest approach to foreign policy writ large. Democracy-promotion and other “ideological” objectives would be sharply downgraded; the use of force for anything other than preservation of a critical regional balance would be strictly avoided. In essence, offshore balancing calls for a rupture with the postwar pattern of American strategy, and a reversion to an earlier type of approach. Prior to 1945, the United States generally eschewed peacetime commitments in Europe or in East Asia, intervening only to prevent or reverse the conquest of those regions during the world wars. That strategy worked well then, offshore balancers argue, and it would work equally well today.

In fact, offshore balancers contend that their strategy would produce a host of financial and geopolitical benefits. It would slash U.S. defense costs, and compel key regional players—Japan, Saudi Arabia, Germany—to shoulder greater responsibility for preserving international order. It would give Washington greater flexibility and influence in global affairs, by freeing it from needless commitments and allowing it to focus on core balance-of-power issues. Finally, offshore balancing would reduce key threats to American interests, by easing the blowback that U.S. policies have created. Retracting the U.S. security footprint in Europe and East Asia would reduce tensions with Russia and China, for example, while retrenchment would also address the root causes of nuclear proliferation by easing the insecurity of states like Iran and North Korea. The same goes for terrorism: scholars like Robert Pape contend that an end to U.S. troop deployments in the greater Middle East would assuage Muslim anger and largely defuse the jihadist threat. [4] Across an entire range of key issues, then, retrenchment could markedly improve U.S. fortunes. Indeed, if taken at face value, offshore balancing seems to be a nearly ideal grand strategy for America.

### **Not Such a Bargain...**

The allure of offshore balancing is largely illusory, however, and the issue of financial cost starts to demonstrate why. One purported advantage of offshore balancing is that it will help liberate the country from unbearable financial strains. Offshore balancers argue that there will be significant economies achieved by avoiding “wars of choice,” and that offshore balancing will permit dramatic cuts in overseas basing and force structure. (One scholar predicts, for instance, that offshore balancing would permit 50 percent cuts in ground forces, and 25-33



percent cuts in air and naval forces. [5]) Yet in reality, those savings would likely be far less than advertised.

For one thing, the existing U.S. strategy is not actually that expensive by historical standards. Total defense spending (including money for overseas wars) has averaged between 3 and 4 percent of GDP since the mid-1990s, rising to 4.7 percent in 2010 but falling to roughly 3.5 percent in 2014. [6] When we compare this spending to Cold War-era budgets that sometimes reached over 10 percent of GDP, it quickly becomes apparent that the current strategy is not nearly so economically backbreaking as sometimes portrayed.

Nor would offshore balancing be so cheap. An offshore-balancing type military must still be capable of intervening decisively in regional conflicts, and forcing its way back onshore if the balance breaks. It also must have the air and naval power needed to dominate the global commons and push into contested areas in time of crisis. An offshore-balancing military would therefore still need to be capable of rapid, decisive global power-projection, with all the massive costs that endeavor entails. Even closing overseas bases and stationing U.S. forces closer to home would not greatly mitigate such costs: one RAND Corporation study points out that relocating two squadrons of F-16s from Italy to the United States would reduce operational costs by just 6 percent annually. [7]

When these issues are considered, offshore balancing no longer seems such a bargain. And one must also weigh the possibility that modest savings now might lead to higher costs later. After all, when the United States practiced a version of offshore balancing toward Europe and East Asia during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it ended up having to fight major wars to restore regional balances that had either collapsed or were in severe peril of doing so. Staying offshore might save money in the short-term, but the more economical long-term strategy is to make those onshore commitments that can fortify the regional balance and keep the peace.

#### Exaggerated Security Benefits: Terrorism and Proliferation

What about the purported security benefits of offshore balancing? Here too, those benefits are exaggerated and the costs understated. When it comes to terrorism, for instance, offshore balancers are actually right that the U.S. troop presence in Saudi Arabia after 1990 was a principal cause of al-Qaeda's attacks against American targets, and that the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq also acted as a magnet for terrorist attacks. In this sense, there is something to the claim that onshore presence in the Persian Gulf has sometimes attracted extremist violence. Yet the corollary—that offshore balancing would largely solve the problem—remains dubious, for two reasons.

First, the stationing of U.S. troops in Muslim countries is only one of many causes of anti-American terrorism. Others include anger at U.S. support for authoritarian Middle Eastern

regimes, Washington's relationship with Israel, and Western "cultural imperialism" in the Middle East. U.S. military withdrawal from the Middle East would not ameliorate these other grievances, and it might actually inflame them further. For if the United States embraced offshore balancing, it would presumably become more reliant on friendly Arab dictators—as well as Israel—as bulwarks of stability in a volatile region.

Second, offshore might undercut counter-terrorism in other ways, as well. Forsaking U.S. forward presence would deprive the country of the overseas bases and contingents that American forces have repeatedly used in counter-terrorism operations over the past 30 years. It would also deprive the country of crucial diplomatic and intelligence leverage. U.S. forward deployments and commitments have long provided influence that Washington has used to evoke greater cooperation on what Robert Art calls the "quieter phase of fighting terrorism"—intelligence-sharing, diplomatic partnerships, and other behind-the-scenes measures that are crucial to fighting terrorist groups. [8] Were America to slash its security posture, this influence would presumably shrink, as well. Offshore balancing, then, is no panacea when it comes to counter-terrorism. It holds some advantages, but significant dangers lurk just below the surface.

The same is true of proliferation. Offshore balancers are right that U.S. policy can appear threatening to its adversaries, and that some countries—China during the Cold War, Iran and North Korea since the 1990s—have sought to develop nuclear weapons in part as a way of countering American pressure and coercion. The trouble, however, is that shifting to offshore balancing would hardly rectify the situation. After all, academic research indicates that there are numerous reasons why "rogue states" seek nuclear weapons, from desires for international or domestic prestige to desires to wield the bomb as a tool of offensive or coercive leverage. [9] The causes of proliferation, like the causes of terrorism, are quite complex, and so altering U.S. policy would touch only one piece of the problem.

In fact, it would probably make that problem far worse. What offshore balancers frequently forget is that, far from being an overall stimulant to proliferation, U.S. force presence and security commitments have, on aggregate, massively impeded that phenomenon. U.S. security guarantees have reduced the perceived need for America's allies to seek nuclear weapons, while giving Washington powerful influence that it can use to dissuade prospective proliferators. In numerous cases since the 1950s—from Germany and Italy, to South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan—these aspects of U.S. policy have proven central to limiting the spread of nuclear arms. Were the United States now to terminate or dramatically reduce its overseas commitments, it stands to reason that it would also lose this non-proliferation leverage. Offshore balancing would therefore likely result in a more proliferated, and more dangerous, world.

## Less Influence, More Instability

These issues touch on a broader problem of offshore balancing—that contrary to what its proponents claim, it is likely to cause greater international instability and reduced U.S. global influence. The reason for this is quite simply that both international stability and U.S. influence have long been thoroughly interlinked with America’s forward presence. Regarding influence, the protection that Washington has afforded its allies has also given the United States great sway over those allies’ policies, just as American-led alliances have served as vehicles for shaping political, security, and economic agendas across key regions and relationships. Regarding stability, the “American pacifier” has suppressed precisely the competitive geopolitical dynamics that can so easily foster conflict and violence. U.S. presence has limited arms races and counter-productive competitions by providing security in regions like Europe and East Asia; it has also soothed historical rivalries and provided a climate of reassurance more conducive to multilateral cooperation in these areas. Overall, American presence has induced caution in the behavior of allies and adversaries alike, deterring aggression and checking other types of destabilizing behavior. As even John Mearsheimer has acknowledged, Washington “acts as a night watchman,” giving order to an otherwise anarchical environment. [10]

If Washington abandoned this role, the most likely byproduct is that U.S. influence and global stability alike would suffer. The United States would effectively be surrendering its most powerful source of leverage vis-à-vis friends and allies, and jeopardizing its position of leadership in key regions. It would also be courting pronounced turmoil in those areas. Long-dormant security competitions might revive as countries felt forced to arm themselves more vigorously; historical rivalries between old enemies might resurge absent U.S. protection and the reassurance it offers. Even more dangerously, countries that aim to challenge existing regional orders—think Russia in Europe, or Iran in the Middle East—might feel more empowered to assert their interests. If the United States has been a kind of Leviathan in key regions, one scholar notes, then “take away that Leviathan and there is likely to be big trouble.” [11]

Looking at the global horizon today, one can readily discern where such trouble might occur. In Europe, Putin’s Russia is already destabilizing and threatening its neighbors, and challenging the post-Cold War settlement in the region. In the Gulf and broader Middle East, fears of Iranian ascendancy have stoked region-wide tensions and rivalry, even as U.S. partners also face a profound threat to regional stability in the form of the Islamic State. In East Asia, an increasingly powerful China is rubbing up against the regional status quo, raising concerns among its neighbors—many of whom also have historical grievances against one another. In these conditions, removing the American pacifier would not produce low-cost stability, but rather increased turmoil and upheaval.

Over time, such turmoil and upheaval could conceivably lead to a scenario in which a hostile power threatened to gain primacy in a key geopolitical region. Yet even if this nightmare scenario did not come to pass, increased geopolitical instability could be quite damaging to U.S. interests. It is not hard to imagine, for instance, how increased conflict might undermine the multilateral cooperation that is required to address transnational threats from piracy to pandemics. Nor is it hard to imagine how a complex and interdependent global economy might be disrupted by escalating geopolitical competition in regions of great commercial and financial importance. Nor, for that matter, is it hard to imagine how increased global tumult might prejudice prospects for the continued international spread—or consolidation—of democracy. Were a turn to offshore balancing to produce a less stable global environment, a whole range of essential American goals and objectives could easily be jeopardized.

## Conclusion

Offshore balancing is an alluring idea because it promises that less can be more—that the United States can actually improve its security and international position by slashing its overseas commitments. Things that seem too good to be true usually are, however, and upon closer scrutiny offshore balancing no longer appears so appealing. The benefits of that strategy are not as great as often advertised; the risks and dangers, by contrast, are quite significant. Offshore balancers may claim that their strategy offers a path to cut-rate security and stability for the United States, yet the more likely consequences would be to *jeopardize* the stability, security, and influence that U.S. policy has long afforded, and to trade moderate short-term savings for higher long-term dangers and costs.

To be clear, this is not to argue against any sort of flexibility or adaptation in U.S. strategy, or to argue against the idea of strategic recalibration (such as the Obama administration has pursued) within the broader framework of continued, energetic global engagement. Such adaptation and recalibration has long been a feature of postwar U.S. strategy, and it will continue to be essential in the years ahead. What will be equally important, however, is to avoid the extreme of dramatic retrenchment—and to reject the false allure of offshore balancing.

## Notes:

1. This essay is adapted from Hal Brands, “Fools Rush Out? The Flawed Logic of Offshore Balancing,” *Washington Quarterly*, Summer 2015; and Hal Brands, *The Limits of Offshore Balancing* (Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, forthcoming). These longer studies are more extensively sourced than the present essay; readers interested in the underlying source material are advised to consult those longer studies.

2. Stephen Walt, "Offshore Balancing: An Idea Whose Time Has Come," *Foreign Policy*, November 2, 2011.
3. Major texts on offshore balancing include Christopher Layne, *The Peace of Illusions: U.S. Grand Strategy from 1940 to the Present* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 159-192; Christopher Layne, "Offshore Balancing Revisited," *Washington Quarterly* 25, no. 2 (Spring 2002), 233-248; John Mearsheimer, "Imperial by Design," *National Interest* (January/February 2011), 16-34; Eugene Gholtz and Daryl Press, "Footprints in the Sand," *American Interest* (March/April 2010), 59-67, Barry Posen, "Pull Back: The Case for a Less Activist Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs* 92, no. 1 (January/February 2013), 116-129; Barry Posen, *Restraint: A New Foundation for U.S. Grand Strategy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014); Stephen Walt, "The End of the U.S. Era," *National Interest* (November/December 2011), 6-16. My description of offshore balancing draws on these and other sources.
4. Robert Pape, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism* (New York: Random House, 2005), esp. 237-250.
5. Posen, "Pull Back."
6. For post-Cold War figures, see "Military Expenditure (% of GDP)," World Bank, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.XPND.GD.ZS?page=3>
7. Patrick Mills et al., "The Costs of Commitment: Cost Analysis of Overseas Air Force Basing," RAND Corporation Working Paper, April 2012, esp. 13, 21-22.
8. Robert Art, *A Grand Strategy for America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 201-202.
9. See Scott D. Sagan, "Why Do States Build Nuclear Weapons? Three Models in Search of a Bomb," *International Security*, Vol. 21, No. 3, Winter 1996/97, 54-86; Hal Brands and David Palkki, "Saddam, Israel, and the Bomb: Nuclear Alarmism Justified?" *International Security*, Vol. 36, No. 1, Summer 2011, pp. 133-166.
10. Mearsheimer, "Why is Europe Peaceful Today?" *European Political Science*, Vol. 9, No. 2, September 2010, esp. 388.
11. Mearsheimer, "Why is Europe Peaceful Today?" 389.

## PART II: DEFENSE POLICY

# SECURITY CHALLENGES ARISING FROM THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRISIS

*By the Hon. Dov S. Zakheim*

March 2009

*The Hon. Dov S. Zakheim is an FPRI trustee and former Undersecretary of Defense. This is the text of remarks delivered on March 11, 2009, before the House Committee on Armed Services.*

Chairman Skelton, Mr. McHugh, it is a distinct privilege for me to appear again before this Committee. Like you, I am deeply concerned that the economic crisis that has affected the United States in particular and the international community generally poses a major threat to American national security interests. That threat is likely to manifest itself in four, and possibly five, distinct ways.

First, it will create major pressures on the defense budget, most notably the acquisition—that is, the procurement and research and development—accounts. Second, it will likely result in a further contraction of defense spending, and therefore operations as well and modernization, on the part of key allies and friends. Third, it could prompt nations that are ambivalent about their relationship with America, most notably China and Russia, to act in ways that are deleterious to American interests. Fourth, it could prompt even more hostile behavior on the part of nations such as Iran and Venezuela that already bear deep antipathy toward the United States. Fifth, it could further destabilize states that are already vulnerable to internal unrest. Finally, it could spur further international criminal behavior that could undermine internal American stability.

## The Defense Budget

Economists have long debated whether measuring defense spending as a percentage of the GDP has any real utility. Among those who do see this measure as having economic and/or political significance, some have argued that defense spending is too high a percentage of GDP, others have taken the opposite view. Whatever the validity of all of these arguments during “normal” times, during the current economic crisis, in which the GDP is slipping far more sharply than was predicted even two months ago, the issue must be seen in a very different light. Increasing the percent of GDP spent on defense when GDP is declining may mean nothing more than not standing still, or worse, declining with the GDP itself.

The defense budget is already under pressure as a result of the economic crisis. Real growth in defense spending, excluding the wartime supplemental, is but 1.7 percent. If the supplemental is included, the growth in spending is some 1.4 percent, because next year’s supplemental is

lower than the planned total of supplemental expenditures in FY 2009. These figures represent a sharp drop in the growth of annual defense spending over the past eight years, which averaged 4.3 percent in real terms.

Moreover, the lower rate of defense budget growth will manifest itself most sharply in the acquisition accounts, procurement and R&D. It has been by means of spending funds from these accounts that America has been able to assure itself of long-term military superiority, regardless of the capabilities of a potential foe. When these accounts were assaulted, as they were in the late 1970s, not only did our leading adversary, the Soviet Union, become far more reckless, invading Afghanistan, but others, like Iran, also exploited what they perceived to be American weakness and introversion. We were saved from a similar fate in the 1990s because the Soviet Union had collapsed, and because the defense budget recovery of the 1980s enabled us to put powerful forces in the field from Operation Desert Storm onwards. If we do go through another reduction in defense procurement spending, however, can we say with confidence that in **one or two decades' time no powerful adversary will act upon a perception of American weakness and threaten one of our vital national interests?**

It is a truism that, since World War II, virtually every war we have fought was unforeseen. It is equally true that we have consistently structured our future force posture on the basis of a war we had recently fought, or were still fighting. I worry that we are falling into the same trap today; the result could well be, as in Korea, or Iraq, many years of bloodshed and lost treasure until we righted ourselves, or, as in Vietnam, outright failure. The opportunity cost of reductions in planned acquisition budgets are therefore exceedingly high, and, if not reversed, will far outweigh any supposed short-term benefits from budget savings.

Cuts in procurement in particular will have more immediate repercussions as well. They will result in the loss of jobs, in particular, employment for skilled blue-collar workers, engineers, and physicists, the very people who earn far less than \$250,000 a year, and at whom the Administration claims it is targeting its recovery plan. Moreover, it is most likely that as jobs **dry up, firms will apply the traditional "last-in, first-out" principle. In other words, those who have benefited from the most up-to-date education and training will be lost to the Nation's vital defense industrial base.**

Ironically, even as young American engineers in particular will find themselves unable to contribute to our national security, the United States will continue to train foreign students in the engineering and the hard sciences, thereby enabling them to contribute to military modernization in their own countries. In particular, it is well known that brilliant young Chinese students are populating the top science and engineering programs of our major universities. While American graduates of those programs will find the doors of defense



industry closed to them, China's expanding military will welcome Chinese graduates of these programs with open arms.

Members of the committee might also consider that the impact of a flattening of acquisition spending will be unevenly distributed around the country. Those states with major defense industrial activity, including hard-hit areas in Michigan, the Northeast and the South, will suffer more than other parts of country. Surely, this cannot be what the Administration intends as it pours hundreds of billions of dollars into job creation programs.

Finally, because the Administration is ratcheting up the national debt so severely, once the economic turnaround does occur and there is a growing demand for dollars, and a resulting rise in interest rates on government paper, the cost of servicing that debt will rise dramatically. Budget deficits will increase sharply as a result, and the government will be forced to cut back on discretionary programs. Because defense accounts for more than half of the entire U.S. discretionary budget, and has been increasing its percentage of discretionary spending in the past eight years, it will be the most likely target for real cuts, not merely a flattening of the growth rate, in order to "manage" the ballooning deficit. The impact on our national security will be profound, and negative.

#### Defense Spending as an Economic Stimulus

In her testimony before the House Budget Committee on January 27, Alice Rivlin, who was Director of the Congressional Budget Office when I was an analyst there, underlined the difference between a short-term stimulus and what she called "a more permanent shift of resources into public investment in future growth." She went on to say that "the first priority is an 'anti-recession package' that can be both enacted and spent quickly to create and preserve jobs in the near-term, and not add significantly to long run deficits." The defense budget offers several ways to meet her prescription.

Fast spending, job-creating programs include:

- Reducing deferred maintenance, accelerating ship overhauls, and aircraft and ground vehicle rework
- Advance procurement of subsystems for major units like warships. Such procurement would preserve the second- and third-tier industrial base, which is most vulnerable to the current downturn
- Expanding and accelerating military construction and family housing programs.

Of these three elements, only the third is part of the \$787 billion stimulus package that the President signed on February 17. There is, of course, considerable merit in the \$7.4 billion in

defense programs that have been approved, most of which are directed at military construction and operations and maintenance at military facilities; family housing, military hospitals; and the Homeowners' Assistance Program for military families that must sell their homes when undergoing a Permanent Change of Station. But the stimulus does not go far enough in the defense realm, and additional programs to support both rework and overhauls, as well as advance procurement, will create and sustain critical jobs in hard-hit areas.

## Alliance Relations

The economic crisis is likely to further diminish the already weak appetite of allies and friends both to increase or even maintain their current levels of defense expenditure, and to contribute to coalition operations in Afghanistan. Few of our major allies and friends spend as much as 3 percent of their GDP on defense. Their GDPs, like ours, are in decline and in several cases, such as Japan, are declining at a far faster rate than ours. Korea and Taiwan, like Japan, are suffering from a drop in exports, notably in the automobile sector. Iceland's financial collapse has received widespread attention.

Economic constraints have at times been an excuse for allies not to do more for the common defense of the West; today, that excuse is being buttressed by reality. Whether excuse or reality, the net result will be exactly the same: the United States will be forced to bear an even heavier burden to defend Western interests, at a time when it will have fewer resources enabling it to do so.

The case of the F-35 provides a distinct example of the interplay between pressures on the US defense budget and alliance relationships. The F-35 program could be one of those affected by the redistribution of defense spending priorities. There are eight countries that currently are co-developing this aircraft, including key allies Britain, Canada and Australia, and many more planning to purchase it, among them Israel, Singapore, and many of the European allies that currently fly F-16s. Any slowdown of the program will increase its costs, and could put it beyond the purchasing power of several F-35 partners. It could also embitter states that have contributed to its development, furnishing them with yet another reason to be even less inclined to contribute to coalition efforts if Afghanistan, and potentially elsewhere, than they are today.

## Ambivalent States

The United States has a complex relationship with two of the world's most powerful states, China and Russia. Neither is an outright adversary, neither is an ally, or even partner, in the sense that describes the relationship of other countries that are not formal American allies. China is particular has significant leverage over the American economy, because of its trade surplus with the United States and its vast holdings of dollars. It has now surpassed Japan as

the single largest foreign holder of U.S. Treasury bonds, which totaled nearly \$696.2 billion by the end of 2008.

There has been much recent discussion regarding China's readiness to disrupt the American economy by refusing to accept American Treasury notes or dumping its dollars on the world market. China has done neither, and generally has behaved like a responsible partner as the world financial crisis has deepened, and even as its own GDP is declining from 8-9 percent to 6 percent and perhaps even lower. Yet China has taken some major steps to hedge against American economic trends. In particular, it has begun to move its dollar holdings into shorter maturities, giving it more flexibility should it choose to withdraw from the American market.

This flexibility could also enable China to buy into American industry in a major way. That process actually began a few years ago. Indeed, in 2007, well before the financial crisis seriously weakened the American economy, Chinese investments had jumped to \$9.6 billion from the previous year's \$66 million. In 2008 China continued to buy small and larger firms, though some have not played out well, such as the ill-fated stake in Bear Stearns, and underperforming investments in the Blackstone Group and Morgan Stanley. Nevertheless, China is likely to continue to buy American firms, which, when combined with its dollar holdings will give it the kind of economic leverage that it could easily translate into political leverage if it perceives that America's willingness to spend money on its national security is beginning to ebb.

In addition, China's military continues to expand and diversify its capabilities, which are becoming increasingly sophisticated. While China may not match the level of GDP growth it has sustained for nearly two decades, even if its military expands at the same rate as national GDP growth, its modernization program will continue apace.

Russia has not nearly the same economic relationship with the United States as China, and little economic leverage to speak of. But Russia has become increasingly assertive on the international scene. The cyber bullying of Estonia in May 2007, the August 2008 invasion of Georgia, the naval exercises with Venezuela in the Caribbean in November, and the successful pressure on Kyrgyzstan to close the American airbase at Manas all point to a Moscow that is determined to recover its former superpower status and to do so at the expense of the United States and its allies.

Russia cannot yet be called an adversary, and there are many areas where American and Russian interests converge, most notably countering international terrorism and Islamic extremism. Nevertheless, its international behavior is troubling, and even if its oil revenues fail to meet projected levels (Moscow's budgets assumed \$70/barrel, far higher than current prices), it might still choose to continue the military modernization program it recently began.

In particular, Russia appears ready to continue its nuclear modernization, which in absolute terms consumes fewer resources than modernizing its conventional forces. Indeed, only last Thursday deputy defense minister, General Valentin Popovkin explicitly stated that the government would not permit the current financial crisis to slow down its plan to accelerate the modernization of its nuclear forces and its anti-satellite capabilities. He also said that Moscow would procure new missiles to deploy near Poland if the U.S. proceeded with its plans to deploy missile defenses in Poland and the Czech Republic. His statements can hardly be seen as reassuring in the context of a cutback in American military modernization.

## Hostile States

The economic crisis, and in particular, the drop in the price of oil, might be expected to limit the military expansion of states unfriendly to America. Yet that need not be the case at all. As appears to be the case with Russia, and as it was with the Soviet Union, a weak economy **nevertheless can sustain a military threat to American interests.** North Korea's economy has been a basket case for decades; that has not inhibited Pyongyang from sustaining a nuclear weapons program and maintaining a military that, while weaker than its South Korean counterpart, could still inflict significant damage on the ROK if it chose to do so.

Iran's economy likewise has been out of balance since the 1979 revolution, and its heavy dependence on petroleum revenues that are in decline will no doubt slow down its conventional force modernization. Whether it will truly slow down its nuclear program is quite another matter; previous slowdowns have been due to technical difficulties rather than resource constraints.

Resource constraints also are unlikely to prevent Iran from pursuing its policies of supporting terrorist groups like Hamas and Hezbollah. Indeed, as the financial crisis begins to affect the Middle East, Iran may encourage more unrest among minority Shia populations throughout the region, most notably in states like Bahrain, which has a Shia majority. Again, any indication of American downsizing of its own defense efforts will simply serve to encourage **Iran's destabilizing policies.**

Venezuela, like Iran, has an unbalanced, petroleum-driven economy. It too is feeling the pressure of declining oil prices. Like Iran, however, it can be expected to continue, and even intensify its efforts to destabilize states that are friendly to the U.S. and are suffering from the **consequences of the world economic meltdown.** Hugo Chavez' leftwing populist economic agenda, coupled with his anti-American diatribes, may resonate well with the less well privileged classes in Colombia and elsewhere in Latin America who will suffer most from the effects of the economic crisis and will blame America for it. Chavez already has acolytes in the presidential palaces of Ecuador and Bolivia. There can be little doubt that he will seek to

expand his influence in other Latin American states affected by the crisis, to the detriment of American economic and national security interests.

### Threats to Marginally Stable States

The majority of America's most recent military interventions have resulted from instability in states that had failed or were failing: Haiti, Somalia, the Balkans, and to a great extent, Afghanistan, all fall into this category. The economic crisis is likely to exacerbate the political vulnerability of many other states, and lay them open to the kind of destabilizing activities that are practiced by Iran and Venezuela.

Mexico is already in the throes of a major crisis prompted by the increasingly brazen activities of drug lords. The decline in oil prices, coupled with a declining level of oil production, a reduced level of remittances from the United States, and a decline in manufacturing will further weaken the central government's ability to fight the drug lords both directly with its military and police forces, and indirectly through programs that would improve the lives of its people.

Pakistan's internal stability has always been tenuous. For the past few years its growing economic strength provided the government a vehicle with which to counter the rising power of Islamists not only in the Federally Administered Tribal Area, but throughout the country. The economic downturn has already weakened the government's hand vis-a-vis the Taliban, and will continue to undermine the government's ability to assert its control over the country. Given Pakistan's nuclear arsenal, and its continuing friction with India, which the Islamists continue to fuel, the prospect for a major conflagration in South Asia is very real.

Over the past eight years, the Bush Administration poured considerable resources into Africa; its programs won bipartisan support. America's initial successes in many of the continent's unstable countries are likely to be undermined by the economic crisis. The conflicts in Sudan and Central Africa continue to rage on, while tensions in oil producing states, notably Nigeria, are likely to intensify. One area where American defense spending could have a direct impact on African stability is that of piracy off the Horn of Africa. A stretched U.S. Navy must have sufficient funds to continue its anti-piracy operations, even as it is called upon for other missions, both long standing deployments, and potential new operations, such as enhancing Israel's missile defense capabilities in the face of a potential Iranian nuclear threat.

### International Criminal Activity and the Economic Crisis

An April 2008 report by the Department of Justice highlighted the many ways that international organized crime poses a strategic threat to the United States. These include criminal penetration of global energy and strategic material markets that are vital to American

national security interests; logistical and other support to terrorists and foreign intelligence services; weapons smuggling into and out of the United States, often in support of terrorist organizations and corrupting public officials in the U.S. and abroad.

The current international financial crisis is likely to facilitate these and other criminal activities, particularly if declining national budgets in friendly states result in cutbacks in law enforcement capabilities. All too often, criminal activities are viewed in a different compartment from that of national security. Today and while the economic and financial crisis persists, they must be seen as part of a seamless whole that must be addressed in an integrated fashion.

## Conclusion

The national security implications of the economic crisis are both broad and profound. They will affect our alliance relationships, our interactions with major states whose intentions toward us remain unclear, the behavior of unfriendly states, the stability of weak and failing states, and the prospects for fighting international organized crime. Most importantly, the economic crisis could have a major and deleterious impact on our national defense budgets, and therefore, our national security posture, which would complicate, and indeed exacerbate, the relationships we have worldwide. Whether the crisis indeed has such an impact on our defense posture remains very much in the hands of America itself. We can forge ahead with defense modernization. We can protect the jobs of our young engineers and skilled blue collar workers. We can continue to signal our determination to fight for our values and freedoms. The budget is policy. And the policy choice is ours, and our alone.

# TOWARDS A BALANCED AND STABLE DEFENSE

*By Frank G. Hoffman*

March 2009

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In a notable essay in *Foreign Affairs*, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates has directly challenged his strategists and the military chiefs, declaring that the defining principle of the new National Defense Strategy is “balance” and announcing that throwing money at the Department of Defense’s problems was no longer acceptable. [1]

Secretary Gates’ insistence that the DoD return to the basics of strategic planning rather than using nearly limitless resources is heartening. Too often in Washington, the meaning of strategy is lost. We have apparently forgotten how to “choose realistic goals or craft strategies likely to achieve our objectives at affordable costs in the face of various constraints.” [2]

The greatest imbalance in our national security framework is the distinct lack of relationship between the Pentagon’s coffers and the resources that the nation is willing to apply in a sustainable way. Walter Lippmann once declared that “foreign policy consists in bringing into balance, with a comfortable surplus of power in reserve, the nation’s commitments and the nation’s power.” [3] This is known as the famous Lippmann Solvency Test. By that standard, U.S. foreign policy and military posture is close to bankruptcy. Our fiscal commitments and our economic base are in shambles, and we have expended our military to the point where it is certainly strained. We have no “comfortable surplus of power in reserve,” and the prospects for rebuilding the military are at risk. Whatever grand strategy the Obama administration seeks to craft, its principal task is to get us out of the red—strategically, militarily, and fiscally.

How Much Is Enough?

Gauging America’s defense needs has never been easy. The proverbial “how much is enough?” question has never been answered with any scientific prediction. The current security environment comprises emerging powers, Islamic fundamentalism, rogue nations with hopes of becoming nuclear states, and transnational terrorists adept at attacking the sinews of modern societies. Our national security strategy and our military forces must prepare for this broadening set of missions.

The most common measure of defense spending compares a country's budgetary resources against those of other countries. The United States nearly outspends the rest of the world combined. According to the International Institute of Strategic Studies, U.S. military spending exceeded that of the next 24 countries in the world in 2006. [4] Very few of these countries represent potential adversaries. Even combining Russian and Chinese defense budgets, we outspend them by a factor of three.

Another common measure of defense spending is to assess how much of the nation's gross domestic product (GDP) is being extracted for defense. A number of defense analysts have been calling for a defined level of investment—a floor of 4 percent of GDP—for defense spending. [5] This is far lower than during earlier eras, where 8 to 12 percent of our total economic output was applied to defense. Admiral Michael Mullen, the Chairman of the JCS, has supported this proposal.

For reference, excluding direct war-related supplemental funding, today's Pentagon absorbs nearly 3.7 percent out of a \$14+ trillion economy. Adding the funding provided via supplemental funding brings today's level up to 4.2 percent. [6] So, the proposal to lock in a "four percent for freedom" would lock in the Bush administration's defense mobilization and also add the current war's supplemental funding into the Pentagon's baseline budget. This would be roughly \$600 billion a year and would add at least \$200 billion a year to the budget deficit.

### Greater Discipline

There are a number of arguments raised against this specific level of spending:

*Astrategic.* If there is one lesson from the ongoing Long War, it is that there is more to national security than armed might and traditional warfighting capabilities. Our diplomatic and development tools are anemic, and homeland security is thin. Accordingly, it is incumbent upon our nation's leaders to understand and act upon this lesson wisely. It is astrategic to simply assign a flat percentage to the armed services in the face of these competing demands.

Simply stated, the nation's GDP is a measure of our capacity to invest; it does not reflect what the requirements are, or what the nation's overall strategy should be. It's a crude measure of what we can afford to pay as a nation. What we paid in the past for defense is relevant, as long as we understand the context today. We spend far more today for energy, health care, and social entitlements, and thus we are no longer able to make simplistic comparisons.

*Inaccuracy: Relative vs. Absolute Spending.* The impression has been created that the nation is not spending enough on defense. Some want the American taxpayer to believe that the military has been badly shortchanged for years.



It is *not* accurate to say that defense spending has declined. We are spending less in relative percentage terms of the total resources the country has than in the past. It is true that we spend relatively less of our total national economy and a smaller percentage of our federal budget for military purposes (dropping from 40 to 20 percent since Vietnam). Thus, we are spending less relatively than we could, but this does not equate to spending less. It means that we can afford to spend more, not that we are spending less in absolute terms.

When one examines the defense budget in constant dollars (adjusted for inflation) in these same time periods, one sees a different story. Defense spending in real and absolute terms has grown. In fact, the last administration made a concerted effort to build up the armed forces, and the FY2009 baseline budget for DoD represented a 44 percent increase in real or inflation-adjusted resources. The fact of the matter is that defense spending, in real terms (inflation-adjusted dollars), has *increased over time*. While the Pentagon's share of the federal budget has declined, its real or absolute resources have increased. The total top line for DoD has increased from \$452 billion to \$589 billion in constant budget dollars. So the declining defense argument needs a bit of clarification. In real terms, we spend more today, over 40 percent more. [7]

*Rewarding Mismanagement.* A widely cited study by the Government Accountability Office shows that many of the Pentagon's major hardware programs turned out to be far more expensive than initially projected and late in delivery. The average cost escalation in research and development rose 40 percent over the last eight-year period, and total acquisition costs rose 26 percent. The total acquisition costs of the military major programs grew by nearly \$300 billion over its initial estimates since 2000. The Pentagon's processes for estimating costs and overseeing weapons systems has been described as "fragmented and broken." [8]

Examples abound. The Marine's Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle has experienced 168-percent cost growth during its lengthy development. The Air Force F-22 program, expected to produce 341 fighters at a cost of \$180 million back in 2000, ended up producing 184 airframes at an increased unit cost of \$350 million each. The end result of these cost overruns is a serious strategic challenge for DoD. The cost overruns have robbed our troops of nearly three years worth of recapitalization funding. In view of this record, giving the Pentagon extra money does not force its program acquisition experts to fundamentally change the way Pentagon plans and buys.

## Towards Solvency

Gaining an appreciation of where we stand is an important first step. Our national debt has grown nearly 80 percent over the last eight years, rising from \$5.7 trillion to \$10.6 trillion. This now represents about 80 percent of GDP, and it is projected to grow to 120 percent of GDP

over the next five years, back at the level we were after World War II. This large debt has been accrued by living beyond our means as individuals and collectively as a nation.

The situation is getting worse. On top of growing government spending for benefits, we have borrowed a trillion dollars to prosecute the GWOT, and another half trillion dollars to build up the military since 9/11. Additionally, we are borrowing another trillion to prop up our financial institutions and planning to borrow another \$0.8 trillion to shock our economy out of an incipient recession. This will substantially increase our annual deficit, which reached a new high last year at \$458 billion, and which will now be closer to a \$1.2 trillion for the next two years. This undercuts our ability to invest in economic and military security.

We need either to significantly increase taxes to pay for our security, or to downsize our strategy and investment levels to a more sustainable level. Given our insolvent base, a lower defense budget—closer to 3 percent of GDP or roughly \$460 billion—offers a more sustainable basis for America’s security. Continued government spending cannot continue at these levels indefinitely without undercutting the economic security of future generations.

#### Reprogramming for a Sustainable Strategy

Achieving a balanced and sustainable posture will require hard calls. We cannot borrow our way out of the problem. Proposed shifts in posture and investment include:

*A less assertive and less unilateralist approach to foreign policy and security challenges.* Such a strategy must realize that “No matter how powerful the United States is, it cannot effectively address these challenges alone.” [9] This is not a “strategy of restraint” or neo-isolationism, as some propose. [10] Instead, we should pursue a more discriminate and disciplined grand strategy. We need a more realistic approach to promoting democracy and freedom, one that relies more on example and less on force of arms.

*Reduced military forward presence,* especially in Europe and Korea where we have obtained strategic success. Fixed forward bases should be reduced to a minimum. Our approach to presence should be minimal footprint and maximum freedom of action by flexible and maneuverable forms of presence.

*Reduced strategic force structure levels.* This would include substantially reduced nuclear force levels, although more reliable warheads are viable. Cuts to national missile defense are also recommended, to emphasize research and testing rather than premature deployment.

*Reductions in planned acquisition levels for the Joint Strike Fighter,* which presently stand at some 2,400 airframes at a cost in excess of \$250 billion. Reducing the programmed acquisition objective to closer to 1,600 aircraft and investing in unmanned penetrators appears a better long-term investment.

*Reshaping the Army's Future Combat System* to emphasize ground maneuver, force protection, and ISR integration. This program has many components and appears to be well designed for a broader operational spectrum. However, at a price tag approaching \$200 billion, its ambitions outstrip any reasonable projection for available funding. Cuts to this program should be made in aviation aspects and focus resources on ground force protection.

*Reframe the Navy's Shipbuilding Priorities.* The Navy's long range 30-year ship construction plan is wildly ambitious, requiring nearly \$10 billion a year more than is projected for naval acquisition. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that executing the Navy plan will cost \$25 billion a year, far more than is projected by the Office of the Secretary of Defense and Congressional budgeteers. [11] **The Navy's programmed carrier fleet should be reduced from 11 to 9 carriers.** The CVN 21 *Ford*-class carrier, a 100,000+ ton nuclear-powered aircraft carrier designed to replace the *Nimitz*-class series, is estimated at \$11.2 billion each. At this cost, we are putting too many eggs into one basket.

*Resizing and Reshaping the Ground Force,* once current operations wind down. Both the Army and Marines are growing in size to address the strain of two simultaneous, manpower-intensive operations. Scaling our ground forces based on the Afghanistan and Iraq models is not consistent with a longer-range strategy that must address a range of threats. The force should be carefully shaped to emphasize prevention, and innovative organizational models should be explored. [12] A force estimated at 515,000 for the Army and 185,000 for the Marine Corps is sustainable and required, if properly shaped for tomorrow's threats and not yesterday's.

## Conclusion

Secretary Gates recognizes that we cannot eliminate all national security risks by simply approving higher and higher defense budgets. The Defense Department must set priorities, hedge and manage risks, and consider inescapable tradeoffs. It must discipline itself and extract better value out of its procurement practices instead of routinely relying upon the taxpayer's purse for a bailout. It must strike a balance for a sustainable defense.

Achieving a balanced *and* sustainable security posture will prove to be this administration's gravest challenge.

## Notes:

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# THE 2012 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN: TOWARD A DEFENSIBLE DEFENSE BUDGET

*By Frank G. Hoffman*

April 2012

*This essay originally appeared in E-Notes.*

Although national security has not been a major component of the election campaign so far, it will undoubtedly become a critical element of comparison between the two contenders as the campaign heats up this summer. President Obama and presumed Republican Party candidate Mitt Romney have laid out stark alternatives in terms of strategic priorities, defense investment levels, American involvement in global affairs, and in our continued role in Afghanistan.

The President is shifting from stabilizing the recession to more strategic aspects of the Nation's economic security. His national security strategy calls for a strategy of renewal in America's infrastructure and economic foundation. He has stated that he believes the time has come to rebalance our strategic budget outlays from protracted foreign adventures to "nation building at home." [1] There is a clear logic here to focus on reviving the globe's most dynamic economy. This is central to our global position and influence. As Brookings scholar Michael O'Hanlon has stressed in testimony, "No great power has remained great while its economy eroded." [2]

Mr. Obama and his defense team have re-scoped the strategic guidance for the armed forces. As part of this strategic rebalancing, the President has developed a drawdown of the Pentagon's planned spending by \$487 billion by the end of the decade. Moreover, the Administration has made it clear that the conflict in Afghanistan is considered a high cost/low payoff drain on the Treasury. The impact it has had on our military with repetitive deployments for ground forces and airframes is also a concern. The President has not yet engineered an equal contribution to strategic renewal from the rest of the federal government bureaucracy, although General Services Administration's Las Vegas "training conference" scandal may accelerate that.

Moreover, the Nation has yet to face up to the fact that its appetite for "entitlements" and government programs exceeds its willingness to pay for them. This is all compounded by the voracious increase in health care costs, which when combined with the demographic changes of our population, are simply not sustainable. One economist has noted that the average taxpayer is getting several times more out of Medicare than is being invested. [3]

Mr. Romney's platform stands in stark relief to the President's in several areas. Instead of withdrawing from Afghanistan and husbanding U.S. power, Mr. Romney wants to assure success and will rely on the inputs of the field commanders. Instead of reducing defense spending by nearly half a trillion dollars, the assumed challenger to the current Administration wants to increase defense spending, perhaps to a fixed rate of 4 percent of GDP that raises the defense budget to roughly \$600 billion a year. In rough terms, this could be an increase of at least \$500 billion dollars by 2020.

Mr. Romney stated that the policies of his Administration would be guided "by one overwhelming conviction and passion: that this century must be an American Century." The United States would continue to hold its leadership role in the world and military supremacy. "In an American Century, America has the strongest economy and the strongest military." This is not simply a reflexive desire to stay on top, but a conviction that this policy generates a more stable and secure world for ourselves and partners. "Without American leadership, without clarity of American purpose and resolve," Mr. Romney stated in his most noted foreign policy speech, "the world becomes a far more dangerous place, and liberty and prosperity would surely be among the first casualties."

*He promised not to surrender America's role or place in the world, and to reverse President Obama's "massive defense cuts." He found no efficiency in unpreparedness and absorbing risk. "Time and again," he stated, "we have seen that attempts to balance the budget by weakening our military only lead to a far higher price, not only in treasure, but in blood."*

Mr. Romney has also signaled that he would substantially invest in naval shipbuilding which is presently in decline to buttress the Navy's dwindling warship inventory. [5] It was heartening to hear a candidate recognize the critical importance of seapower to America's strength. The challenger appears more willing to tackle the plethora of federal goodies and programs that taxpayers and special interest groups have come to expect from Washington. He is also willing to publicly challenge our non-discretionary "entitlements" system. Mr. Romney's endorsement of the Paul Ryan budget proposal, which focused on tax reform and major government program cuts, is further evidence of the distinctive options being offered to the electorate this time around. The Ryan budget proposal restored almost half of the Administration's planned military cuts. [6] To address the distinction between the candidates and their positions, I will present a number of facts and issues in a dialectic argument in the remainder of this E-Note:

THESIS. *America has an enormous lead in all forms of national power and can afford to reduce its guard in order to focus on renewing its economic prosperity.*

- We have the world's best military power, with human capital, advanced space and intelligence systems, lethality and reach that are the envy of every nation.

- We outspend almost the rest of the world combined. When you factor in our treaty partners, our most reliable allies, it represents more than 75 percent of all military spending on the planet.
- America’s military has a huge head start on potential rivals. As noted by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), ‘The USA has increased its military spending by 81 percent since 2001, and now accounts for 43 percent of the global total, six times its nearest rival China.’ [7]
- SIPRI reports that U.S. military spending equals the next 19 countries in the world combined. [8]
- Our current spending levels represent higher than Cold War levels of spending even after accounting for inflation—despite the absence of an existential threat such as the Soviet Union.
- We do not currently face the proximate potential of an existential threat or combination of threats that suggests we should be spending more than Cold War-levels to secure ourselves.
- The Administration’s drawdown plans are deliberately measured over a longer period of time than most post-conflict descents, and are more modest than previous plans. Most build-downs have been 30 percent and the current plans are only half of that. [9]
- Defense reductions were not taken from current budgeted levels but from planned increases to the Pentagon’s top line. In FY17, the end of the Defense Department’s budget will still equal where the Pentagon was in the middle of the last decade when we had the world’s finest force.
- According to GAO, our major systems have experienced cost overruns of over \$447 billion since their inception; over 3 years of investment capital for our warfighters lost due to either poor costing or mismanaged programs. [10]
- We just spent well over \$2 trillion since 9/11 on two wars, evenly divided between building up the military and to support overseas campaigns. Every dime was borrowed, and has to be paid with accumulated interest at some point. [11]
- Retrenchment would give us the breathing space to reinvest in ourselves. “A reduction in U.S. forward deployments could mollify U.S. adversaries, eliminate potential flashpoints, and encourage U.S. allies to contribute more to collective defense.” [12]

ANTITHESIS. *America faces a perfect storm of increased challenges to its interests and values, and should preserve its preponderance of power in the face of these threats.*

- China is a major power in Asia at this time, and both an emerging economic competitor and increasingly a destabilizing factor in the South China Sea. China's assertive behavior, evidenced in incidents with Japanese, Vietnamese and Philippine vessels, in both territorial and international waters, is indicative of a non status quo power that finds the crass application of intimidating military behavior to be a beneficial tool.
- China has increased its defense spending by over 12 percent a year for a decade. "The ongoing accumulation of arms by Beijing is a development with far-reaching and potentially dangerous implications." [13]
- Our defense spending ratio with China is really less than 3:1 if you factor in purchasing parity and their reduced manpower costs. China's security obligations are not as global as ours and they do not have the science and technology (S&T) infrastructure or strategic mobility requirements we have.
- Both Iran and North Korea continue to employ illegal and unconventional methods to defy the international community, and to pursue nuclear weapons. Both of these states are internally weak, but they threaten U.S. treaty partners in their respective regions and some of our best friends.
- The continued presence of violent extremist Islamists will continue to require security investments in intelligence, special operations forces, and security assistance efforts in the Third World.
- The democratic urges and self-determination inherent to the Arab Spring could produce numerous autocratic backlashes in the Middle East, including more Syrias, as well as a number of illiberal "democracies" that could generate threats to friends like Israel.
- Austerity in areas like southern Europe may also prove to be threatening to order. The discontent created by broken promises and shattered dreams has only cost a few lives so far, but watch out for major riots and civil violence in the next few years and the breakdown of social order in numerous cities.
- New domains of conflict including space and cyber security will continue to require serious study and substantial resources.



- Due to a decade of persistent conflict far from our shores, the military in general, and the Army and Marines in particular, need to be reset and reconstituted. Furthermore, elements of both the Navy and Air Force are aging badly and needed modernization.
- The cost of our advanced weapons systems reflects their cutting edge technology and our ability to apply integrated solutions to generate short and decisive conventional conflicts. This is costly, but not necessarily costly compared to long wars with many military and civilian casualties.

### Synthesis: How Much Is Enough?

Several years ago, I tried to answer the proverbial “how much is enough?” for defense spending, and thought that the Cold War average of \$464 billion (in constant FY 2009 dollars) was adequate (or about \$484 in today’s FY12). This would have been a substantial reduction for defense. However, subsequent studies from the Defense Business Board proved that this level did not sufficiently account for personnel benefits, especially the dramatic increase in health care costs. To account for these, at least another \$30 billion would have to be added. [14] Even holding the Pentagon’s annual budget to \$500B a year would pressurize spending for new challenges in space, cyber security, homeland defense, and special operations.

Thus, I have readjusted my estimates and accounted for inflation since my original calculations. Something above the \$500 billion (in FY 12 constant dollars) range appears warranted unless you have a dramatically different strategy and a higher risk tolerance. My reassessment finds that the defense cuts the President has engineered with his Defense team are doable and prudent. Anything much higher than the planned nearly half a trillion dollars of reductions brings about the need to craft a less engaged strategy that generates more risk and encourages others to fill power vacuums. Other Washington think tanks and scholars have come to the same conclusion. [15] More cuts may be reasonable under certain assumptions and if our allies continue to stand with us. But they should not be considered risk free. I would not be sanguine about cutting Defense by a trillion dollars as outlined in the contrived sequestration plan or by some scholars. [16]

The new defense guidance admits that we’ve historically been pretty poor at predicting the future. [17] Accordingly, the Pentagon’s planners are trying to hedge and mitigate risks where possible. I think they’ve done a good job of balancing ends and means. But they cannot eliminate risk and our new, leaner Pentagon will not be able to put the finger in every dike, even with contributions from our allies and friends, or from advanced technologies. We should not create “strategies for heroes” or a delusion that tomorrow’s Soldiers, Sailors, Marines and Airmen pay for with their lives.

Mr. Romney's plans to increase defense spending does a lot to reduce security risks, and the increase in naval shipbuilding makes particular strategic sense. But there is a social dimension to strategy, and privileging the Pentagon with extra funding while our citizenry makes all the sacrifices and while we continue to wallow in debt could worsen the social contract and is considered politically unsustainable.

On the flip side, others are more comfortable with our current standing, and think that retrenchment is warranted. Some believe that reducing our forward presence and global posture will actually help stabilize flashpoints and crisis areas, and push reluctant allies to invest more in their own defense. Quite the opposite is more likely, and the purpose of U.S. military posture is not to mollify potential aggressors or elongate response times for U.S. policymakers. We can reduce forward deployed forces in Europe, but other withdrawals will generate flashpoints not reduce them. Nor is "soft power" and inexpensive diplomacy and development assistance a good tradeoff. The efficacy of soft power against China, North Korea and Iran has not been rigorously tested.

Arguments for more cuts are looking at today's current posture rather than future challenges. These recommendations are more likely to embolden challengers and increase risks. They ignore America's overseas interests and commitments, reducing deterrence against aggressors, and do little to reassure partners and allies. Nor do they resolve what the current Chairman calls our "security paradox," a world with fewer threats but with greater horizontal and vertical proliferation of advanced lethal means to small states and non-state actors. [18]

These analysts are correct about our current position and the need to invest in diplomacy and development, but they deflect attention from the real domestic fiscal problem. Spending on our major three entitlement programs already consumes more than \$2 trillion in 2012 or 50 percent of the federal budget. These mandatory programs, as enacted, will cost just over \$3 trillion by FY19 and increase our national publicly held debt to \$19.5 trillion, well over 100 percent of GDP. Interest payments on the burgeoning national debt, a mandatory expense, will reach \$578B in FY19, potentially equaling defense spending. [19]

The Defense Department budget is not the central problem of our poor economic state. Nor is that budget big enough to provide the solution to the rapidly cresting federal debt tsunami. Our problems are a function of past poor discipline, demographics and health care trends. We cannot do much about the past, but health care which consumes nearly one sixth of our economy and half of federal expenditures. This presents options. As I noted in *Orbis* back in 2009, "the government's focus should be reducing the insolvency in our mis-titled "mandatory" or "entitlements" programs. They remain the greatest threat to our future security." [20]

But for political purposes, and for long-term sustainable commitment from the American people, DOD is going to be part of the solution. But it should only be a small part of an overarching grand bargain, which neither contender has yet framed. The onus is on the Presidential candidates to ensure that they offer concrete options that preserve our security interests, rebuild America's economic foundation, maintain an adequate safety net for the less fortunate, and ensure we don't handcuff future generations. We cannot borrow our way out of the problem. Nor should we shamelessly pass it on to our children.

Clearly some risk will have to be accepted since we can no longer afford to spend our way out of every problem. As former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates noted before he left office, "The United States cannot expect to eliminate national security risks through higher defense budgets, to do everything and buy everything. The Department of Defense must set priorities and consider inescapable tradeoffs and opportunity costs." [21] The same can be said with greater urgency about the rest of government, particularly medical costs.

## Conclusion

Admiral Mike Mullen, USN, the recently retired Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, once famously quipped that our debt was the greatest threat to our national security. He was almost correct, but we can handle our current debt. It is the impending mountain of new debt that will produce a crisis. We have choices about what role we want to play in world affairs, the means needed to fulfill that role, and how we pay for those means without borrowing trillions from foreign bankers. We should not continue to hide these choices or the tradeoffs in the coming debates. If that happens, the fault will be ours. I think the greatest threat to our national security is *not* the debt, nor a dysfunctional political process, but our failure to be honest with ourselves.

The coming election is a perfect opportunity to pose serious questions to the country. Will our contenders rise to the challenge or stick to banal talking points?

The choice is fairly simple. Retrench and retreat, or continue to lead and rebuild without degrading our defense? Do we want a very costly government that exists largely to redistribute income and benefits? Do we want to move forward together and reclaim the American dream of security and prosperity for subsequent generations or wallow in debt, doubt and decline? The choice is ours and we should demand that our Presidential aspirants frame options so that this election frames exactly what path each leader wants as a mandate.

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10. For details on the Government Accountability Office's findings see <http://timemilitary.files.wordpress.com/2012/04/gao-03-2012.pdf>. See Appendix II, p. 171.
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# SIDEWAYS: AMERICA'S PIVOT AND ITS MILITARY BASES IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC

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The state of America's strategic "pivot" or "rebalancing" toward the Asia-Pacific has taken on a renewed importance with the recent North Korean military threats against not only its neighbors in Northeast Asia, but also the United States. Over the last half decade, Washington has trumpeted its foreign policy shift toward the region; but it has become increasingly clear that the military resources it has devoted to the region have not kept pace with its political engagement. As Admiral Samuel J. Locklear, the current commander of U.S. Pacific Command, flatly stated: he expects no new military bases in his theater. [1] Indeed, despite the seeming flurry of activity over American base structure and force posture in the region, one can track almost all of it back to strategic choices made over a decade ago, rather than any recent policy pivot or rebalance.

Though new technology has somewhat diminished their significance, military bases abroad are still important manifestations of national strategy. Politically, their presence can demonstrate the depth of solidarity between countries and deter potential adversaries in a way that occasional force deployments cannot. Militarily, they extend combat capabilities by serving as platforms from which a country can monitor threats and project power and influence. And because of these factors and the expense needed to build and sustain them, they can reveal more about the real intentions of national security policy. [2]

Certainly, North Korean threats against specific American bases in South Korea, Japan, and Guam call attention to their importance to America's position in the Asia-Pacific. All three American armed services are present there in force. The Army's bases in South Korea are home to forward components of the U.S. 2nd Infantry Division and other units. The Navy maintains a major presence in Japan with the U.S. Seventh Fleet at Sasebo and Yokosuka and the U.S. 3rd Marine Division on Okinawa. And the Air Force has long stationed several fighter and

support squadrons in both countries as well as Guam. From these bases, the United States can rapidly respond to military challenges all along the Asia-Pacific periphery, as it has in the past. During the Korean Conflict, American bases in Japan were vital as staging and supply areas for forces fighting on the peninsula. During the Vietnam Conflict, Guam played a prominent role in America's long-range bombing campaigns (Operations Rolling Thunder and Linebacker). [3] But today, even these rear area bases may become the frontline, as North Korea's threats to launch ballistic missile strikes against them have underlined, potentially making their concentration and forward presence vulnerabilities, rather than strengths.



Throughout the Cold War, the United States maintained a network of military bases across the Asia-Pacific to support its interests in the western Pacific Ocean and defend its Asian allies. But as the threat of Soviet attack receded in the early 1990s, the United States began to reassess its need for many of those bases. Some policymakers sought to rapidly consolidate or close many of America's Asia-Pacific bases to reap the budgetary benefits of the “peace dividend” and reinvest those resources at home. Others argued that a continued American military presence in the region—coupled with engagement with China—would create the foundation for regional stability by reducing the tensions associated with a rising China, lowering the possibility of a regional arms buildup, and providing a hedge against future contingencies. The contentions of these two camps framed the debate over American base configuration in the region for much of the latter half of the 1990s.

But by the early 2000s, other factors started to influence the discussion, the biggest of which stemmed from Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's desire to transform America's forward presence around the world—one facet of the so-called “revolution in military affairs”—and his need to support combat operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. Rather than rigidly array troops, as they have been along the Korea's Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), he sought to create more deployable forces by maximizing the use of communications and technology. The United States would meet future threats with smaller “forward operating bases,” which he envisioned would provide American forces with greater flexibility and mobility. [4] At about the same time, a second, more tactical, factor has influenced American basing considerations in the Asia-Pacific: the vulnerability of its forward bases to ballistic missile attack. Since the 1990s, China and North Korea have continued to develop their ballistic missile capabilities. China dramatically expanded its arsenal of conventionally-armed ballistic missiles over that time and demonstrated its willingness to use them in barrages during the Taiwan Strait crises in 1995 and 1996. Meanwhile, North Korea continues to test ballistic missiles with ever longer ranges; and in April 2013, it threatened to use them against the United States. With sufficient numbers of them (like those in China), such missiles could saturate American anti-ballistic missile defenses and put American bases at risk.

#### SOUTH KOREA AND JAPAN: THE DRAWDOWN

Most American military bases in the Asia-Pacific are clustered in South Korea and Japan, a legacy of the Cold War. But since that time, those bases have come under increasing scrutiny from their host countries, as the repeated involvement of American servicemen in accidents and criminal activities have stirred local opposition to them. In one famous 2002 case a training mishap killed two South Korean girls and ignited widespread protests. While the need to soothe local resentments surely hastened negotiations, the realignment of American bases was already underway. In South Korea, Rumsfeld had chosen to shift most of the 36,000 American troops then stationed there away from the DMZ and remove one-third of them from the peninsula altogether. Doing so would put American forces beyond the immediate range of North Korean artillery and free up resources needed to support combat operations in the Middle East. Also during that period, Washington and Seoul agreed to transfer wartime operational control of their forces from the American-led Combined Forces Command to the South Korean military. And while the transfer has been delayed twice—first from 2007 to 2012 and then to 2015—this year's major joint military exercise will fall under South Korean, rather than American, command for the first time. [5]

In the meantime, American bases in Japan have also become a hotly contentious issue. While Japan's national government embraces a continued American presence (particularly in light of its ongoing row with China over the Senkaku Islands, or Diaoyu Islands if you are in China), the civilian population of Okinawa—the Japanese island where the majority of the 40,000



American troops stationed in Japan are based—is less sanguine. They resent the disruptions caused by military exercises and the occasional accidents, assaults, and rapes involving American servicemen. After one such incident in 1996, the Clinton administration offered to relocate the huge Futenma Marine Corps Air Station to another site on the island. But local opposition to any other site bogged down negotiations ever since. At one point, the United States even proposed to build a floating base offshore, but Japan turned it down over environmental grounds. Still, a resolution seemed at hand in 2005. Washington agreed to shift some of its forces on Okinawa and remove the rest. In exchange, Tokyo would assume a greater military role commensurate with its economic stature and gain local agreement for a new base. But local opposition has remained steadfast. As a result, American forces continue to use Futenma and their other bases on the island, albeit under increasingly restrictive conditions. Recently, those forces had their equipment upgraded to include MV-22 VTOL transport aircraft, sparking a new round of controversy. [6]

## GUAM AND AUSTRALIA: THE BUILDUP

As discussions over how to trim American military bases in South Korea and Japan proceeded, Guam and Australia were considered as alternate basing options. The former is an American island territory in the central Pacific Ocean and the latter a long-time American ally. In fact, one could say that the current American military buildup on Guam started in 2000, when the U.S. Air Force transferred 64 of its most advanced AGM-86 air-launched cruise missiles to the island's Andersen Air Base. A few years later, B-1 and B-52 bombers began to rotate through the base and billions were spent to upgrade and extend its facilities. Simultaneously, the U.S. Navy began to refurbish Naval Base Guam and permanently stationed three of its Los Angeles-class nuclear attack submarines there. From Guam the submarines could stay on station in the western Pacific Ocean twice as long as those based in Hawaii while lowering deployment costs. Further, the Navy prepared the base to host Ohio-class guided missile submarines—each armed with as many as 154 UGM-109 land-attack cruise missiles.

Over the course of the last decade, more forces arrived on Guam, including a helicopter squadron and supply ships, and preparations were made to accommodate the thousands of Marines expected to relocate from Okinawa. That included dredging Apra Harbor to accommodate deep-draft amphibious assault ships which provide mobility for the Marines. And recently, the Navy has begun to expand a wharf to accommodate at least one aircraft carrier. The Air Force constructed hangars for three RQ-4 unmanned long-range surveillance aircraft and has occasionally rotated F-22 fighters from Hawaii and Alaska to the island. Finally, in response to recent North Korean threats against the island, the Army is immediately deploying (two years ahead of schedule) a Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense battery to Guam to defend it from intermediate-range ballistic missile attack. [7]

Farther south, Washington embarked on discussions with Canberra over a larger American military presence in Australia in anticipation of some resolution over its Okinawa bases. Australia and the United States have enjoyed a close alliance since the darkest days of World War II. That relationship drew closer still after the September 11 attacks when Australian commandos were among the first to see combat alongside American special forces in Afghanistan. **Early to hedge China's rise, Australia** has sought to strengthen its security cooperation with the United States (even as its mining industry does a brisk raw materials trade with China) over the last decade. And so, the two allies eventually selected Darwin to host a new joint training facility for Australian and American troops in late 2011. A few months later the first detachment of 200 Marines arrived; they were the first of some 2,500 who will periodically rotate through the facility. But unlike Guam, Darwin has barely begun to prepare **its port infrastructure to support the Marines' amphibious assault ships**. Once fully developed, the extended presence of American forces in Darwin—only 800 km from Indonesia and Timor-Leste—will enable the United States to respond more quickly to contingencies in Southeast Asia than it could from either Guam or Japan. [8]

#### SOUTHEAST ASIA: OPPORTUNISM REALIZED

As has been the case with the pace of its political engagement, the United States can only move as fast with its military relationships with the countries of Southeast Asia as the sentiments in those countries will permit. **Certainly that has been true of America's post-Cold War experience with the Philippines**. In 1991, the Philippine Senate abruptly voted to close **America's two largest military bases** in the Asia-Pacific: Clark Air Base and Naval Base Subic Bay. In a little over a year, the last American forces left (their departure accelerated by the Mount Pinatubo volcanic eruption that laid waste to much of Clark). The Mutual Defense Treaty between the Philippines and the United States remained, but became basically dormant as American and Filipino forces no longer exercised together.

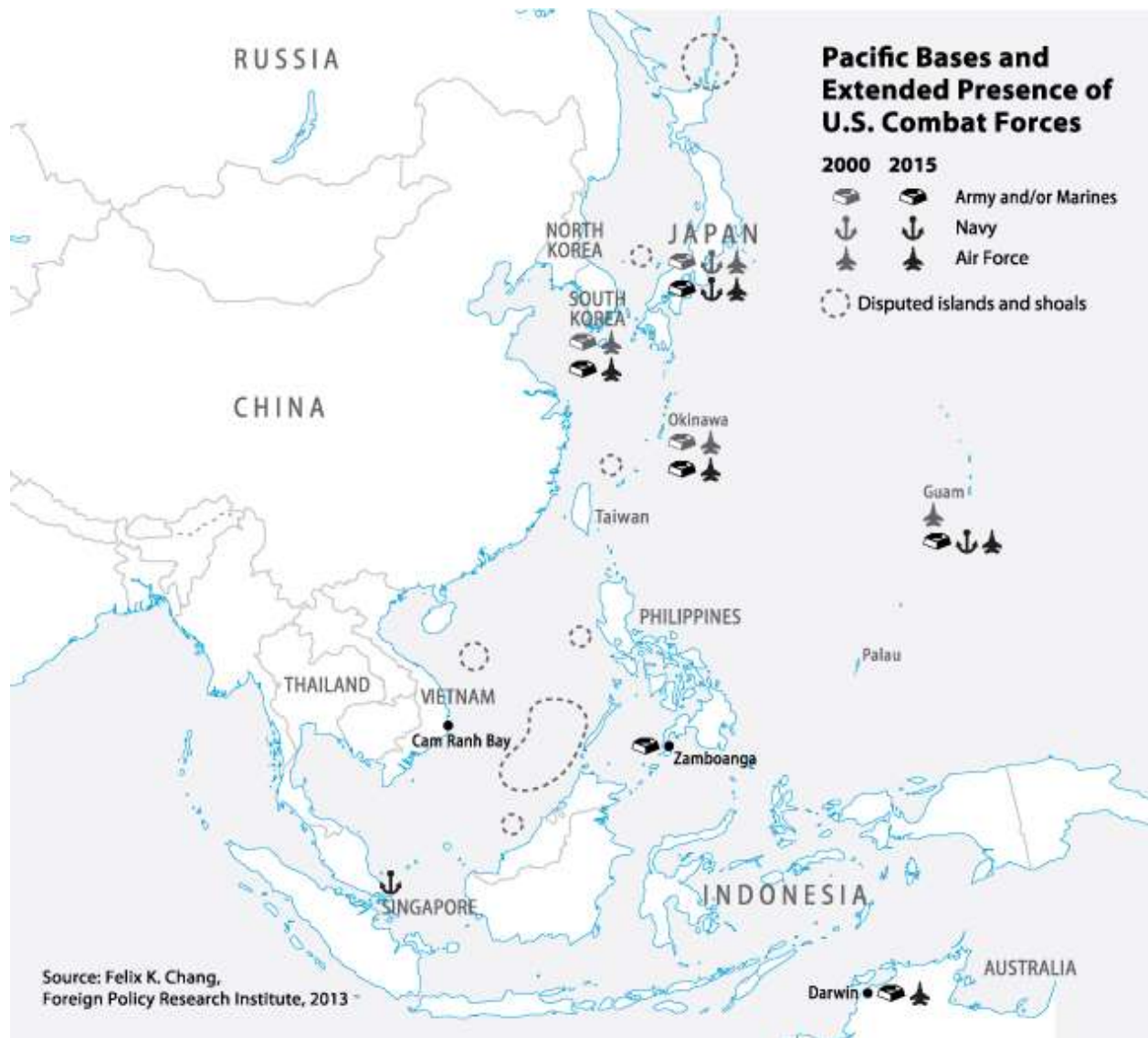
But after Chinese occupation of Philippine-claimed Mischief Reef—one of the many disputed islets in the Spratly group—in 1995, Manila reconsidered its relationship with the United States. Ties were reestablished in the late 1990s and since 2002 several hundred American troops have maintained an extended presence near Zamboanga on the southern island of Mindinao, mainly to help defeat Al-Qaeda and other Islamic militants there. But after a months-long standoff over Scarborough Shoal between Chinese and Philippine patrol boats in early 2012, Manila drew even closer to the United States—not only welcoming more frequent American warship visits, but also permitting Subic Bay to warehouse American military materiel and provide logistics support to the U.S. Navy. [9]

In Singapore, the United States has long had a small military presence, mostly to handle logistics, but that **has now grown with Singaporean concern for the region's stability**. While

Singapore hosts dozens of American warships every year, the U.S. Navy will homeport four of **its new littoral combat ships at Singapore's Changi Naval Base**. Conceived of in the early 2000s, the ships are designed to operate in shallow coastal waters, like those around the South China Sea. From Singapore, they would be well positioned to interdict the Malacca Strait, though for the time being they lack key combat capabilities and would have limited utility in high-intensity naval combat without the support of additional warships. [10]

Even Vietnam has warmed to the United States. **China's recent assertive behavior in its South China Sea maritime disputes** has put Vietnam on edge, especially because in 1988 China fought and won a naval skirmish against Vietnam in which 70 Vietnamese sailors were killed. And so, Vietnam took special notice when Chinese surveillance ships cut the seismic cables of two Vietnamese oil exploration ships in 2011 and 2012. In response, Vietnam has started a major recapitalization of its air and naval forces. That has included the renovation of its Cam Ranh Bay Naval Base, which Hanoi has opened to foreign navies, including that of the United States. [11]

For over a decade, Washington has been interested in forging deeper strategic relations with Southeast Asia. **But it was not until China's assertiveness roused enough anxiety among Southeast Asian governments** for them to welcome a more visible, if still small, American military presence in the region. **Perhaps China's March 2013 naval exercise around James Shoal**, at the southern end of its maritime claim near Brunei and Malaysia, will nudge those countries in a similar direction. Surely Secretary of State Hillary Clinton tried to capitalize on the opportunity by creating new political channels of engagement, such as the American-led **Lower Mekong Initiative and American participation in several of the region's Association of Southeast Asian Nation forums**. But even with the extended presence of American forces in the Philippines and Singapore, American capabilities in Southeast Asia remain limited. And so U.S. Pacific Command must make the most of what it has. As Admiral Locklear put it, his command does not expect to hold any new military exercises, but rather intends to make the ones it does hold more prominent.



## NATIONAL STRATEGY

From a military standpoint, it is clear that America’s strategic shift toward the Asia-Pacific has been the product of a lengthy process of reconfiguration and consolidation of American basing structure and force posture, rather than any recent pivot or rebalancing. The U.S. Department of Defense’s 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review supports that view when it already then stated that the Navy’s “fleet will have greater presence in the Pacific Ocean, consistent with the global shift of trade and transport. Accordingly, the Navy plans to adjust its force posture and basing to provide at least six operationally available and sustainable carriers and 60% of its submarines in the Pacific to support engagement, presence and deterrence.” [12]

But as successful as the United States has been in capitalizing on China's assertiveness to enhance its diplomatic profile in the Asia-Pacific, some are concerned that the continued consolidation of American bases in South Korea and Japan will give China more strategic space in the western Pacific Ocean and signal a weakening of long-term American commitment. Surely there will be fewer American forces in Northeast Asia, but those who favor the consolidation contend that those remaining forces will be better equipped and therefore have a comparable level of capabilities.

Still, parceling out American forces across the Asia-Pacific creates new challenges. The four littoral combat ships in Singapore, far from the U.S. Seventh Fleet in Japan, would be vulnerable in a crisis and could probably do little to delay a Chinese advance through the South China Sea. Meanwhile, the concentration of American forces on Guam, as the United States' only central Pacific base, raises the possibility that China will build more medium-range ballistic missiles to reach the island or target it with land-attack cruise missiles from its new nuclear attack submarines. The United States would do well to develop a secondary air base and anchorage in the central Pacific Ocean from which it could mount operations, should China successfully disrupt Guam or American surveillance satellites. Places like Palau and Chuuk (better known as Truk to historians) could assume a renewed importance for American military planners.

Today, America's strategic watchword in the Asia-Pacific is "rebalancing." While it may effectively telegraph to China and other countries in the region that the United States intends to devote more attention there, tracing the changes in American military presence across the region reveals less of a recent strategic realignment. The biggest changes to American posture have been in the works for well over a decade. So even though the Obama administration may wish to broadcast those changes in order to lend substance to its diplomatic efforts, its pivot or rebalance toward the Asia-Pacific has actually been more of a continuity with past American strategy than a departure from it.

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## PART III: CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS

# MIND THE GAP: POST-IRAQ CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS IN AMERICA

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August 2008

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On October 15, 2007, FPRI's Program on National Security held a conference on American civil-military relations, hosted and co-sponsored by the Reserve Officers Association in Washington, D.C. Mackubin T. Owens, Frank G. Hoffman, Michael P. Noonan, and Robert Feidler, director of Strategic Defense Education at the ROA, served as panel moderators. In attendance were more than 100 individuals from academia, government, NGOs, the media, the military, and the public; nearly 300 individuals from several continents participated by live webcast. The conference papers will be published in *Orbis* and other outlets in 2008. Overall, most participants seemed to agree that American civil-military relations were troubled even before the Iraq war, which conflict has only exacerbated frictions.

FPRI thanks W.W. Keen Butcher, Robert L. Freedman, Bruce H. Hooper, and Dr. John M. Templeton, Jr. for their support of this conference. The views expressed herein are those of the speakers and should not be construed to represent any agency of the U.S. government or other institution.

## Keynote Address

The Hon. Ike Skelton (D-MO), chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, delivered the keynote address [1] focusing on the role of Congress in civil-military relations.

## The Military and Society

Capt. John Allen Williams, USNR (ret.), professor of political science at Loyola University and president of the Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society, addressed military-societal relations at the broadest level. His paper refined a typology first developed in a 1999 volume he co-edited with military sociologists Charles Moskos and David Segal. [2] In their model, civil-military relations are shaped primarily by the threats the military deals with, though colored by societal characteristics. Modern militaries are “heavily into reality” and sometimes have difficulty dealing with civilian societies. This, in Williams’ view, generally produces some degree of a civil-military gap. Williams’ new, post-9/11 model focuses on the hybrid threats posed by international, transnational, and subnational trends and actors—from peer competitors to terrorist threats to homeland security.



The military remains a (relatively) small professional force dependent upon a reserve component that is no longer a strategic reserve but an operationally ready one—indeed, the National Guard and federal reserves accounted for 20 percent of the combat fatalities in Operation Iraqi Freedom. The dominant professional archetypes include the combat leader and manager, soldier-statesman, soldier-scholar, and the soldier-constable. The differences in skill levels between officers and enlisted ranks are decreasing, and the military is moving more towards a flattened hierarchy. But the expected use of such forces in domestic missions may prove problematic for American civil-military relations in light of the Posse Comitatus Act and under worst-case scenarios like a WMD attack.

Public support for the military remains strong. Williams was concerned nonetheless that in recent surveys the most democratic branch of government, Congress, is “grossly unpopular compared to the most undemocratic part of the government, the military.” Meanwhile, while the embedding program has improved military-media relations, this trend is uncertain moving forward. More problematic has been the use of civilian contractors on the battlefield. While some functions (food service, etc.) are acceptably contracted out, other areas (such as security-oriented activities) deserve reconsideration.

Williams foresees a day when there will be full integration of women and homosexuals in the military due to changing societal norms and predicts that recruitment patterns, due to a lack of support for national military service, might evolve to a program of what he calls “supplemented volunteerism” where there would be both civilian and military service options.

Thomas E. Ricks, military correspondent of the *Washington Post* and author of *Fiasco* and *Making the Corps*, observes a lack of harmony between the military and the executive and legislative branches. The danger is not a coup but rather poor war planning, strategy, and implementation. He worries about an emerging “stab in the back” narrative over Iraq arising from the military where “Congress betrayed us, the media undercut us, and the American people lacked the stomach, the nerve, and the will to see it through.” Ricks also noted the problems with the use of military contractors. The overuse of such forces causes ambiguity for our troops on matters such as rules of engagement, may open the door for other nations to use contractors for military operations not to our liking (say, China using military contractors in Africa), and may lead to unintended political consequences for the countries of returning third-party nationals (e.g., what happens in El Salvador with the return of cohesive, trained Salvadoran contractors?).

Elizabeth Stanley, assistant professor in the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service and the Department of Government at Georgetown University, and a former Army officer, observed that Williams’ initial analysis had omitted strategic culture. America’s technocentric strategic culture has become maladaptive, not because of technology itself, but because of the

way it is used to implement grand strategy. She outlined several symptoms of the “cult of technology” which denigrate our strategy and capabilities: misallocation of resources, poor strategic assessment due to overestimation of capabilities, decreased ability to work with allies, increased vulnerability to potential allies, psychological insecurity, outsourcing and privatizing security, misunderstanding the nature of networks, and the technical bureaucratization of the military profession. Moving a technocentric culture into balance with a more human-centric approach “is the major change for post-9/11 civil-military relations, the military profession, and the way strategies should be done in this country.”

### The Interagency Process

Bernard Carreau, senior fellow at the Center for Technology and National Security Policy at the National Defense University, formerly an advisor with the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) and a deputy assistant secretary of Commerce, addressed the tactical and operational level civil-military relations of the interagency process—particularly the relationship between the Departments of State and Defense. Tensions emerged with the liberation of Kuwait, he said, and grew with the interventions in Somalia, Haiti, Rwanda, Bosnia, and Kosovo. September 11 created a momentary consensus within the government, but the invasion of Iraq elevated DoD over State on intervention matters. “The resources, authorities and missions of DoD have continued to grow while State’s resources have either stagnated or actually decreased.” The largely military composition of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan and Iraq and programs such as the Commander’s Emergency Response Program (CERP) have added to the civil-military imbalance on the ground. [3] It is not that foreign policy has been militarized; rather, DoD has been much more transformational due to the necessities and realities it has faced in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In Iraq, however, DoD, State, and USAID disagreed on priorities, especially on how to spend the initial \$18.6 billion in reconstruction projects once the CPA stood up with its “dual chain of command between the military and the civilian sides.” DoD favored big-budget infrastructure projects, while State wanted to focus on governance and market liberalization and USAID wanted to focus on institution- and capacity-building. None of these things produced stability.

Carreau argued that there needs to be delineation between situations where the U.S. is a belligerent and where it is a third-party intervener. Where the U.S. is a belligerent it needs to focus on pacification and the population, and when it is a third-party, its approach might be much less belligerent depending on the facts on the ground. Furthermore, there needs to be a government-wide doctrine on stability operations and something needs to be established along the lines of the Vietnam War-era Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) program with an integrated civil-military command. Moving between phases of the

joint operation (where phase III is military, phase IV is stabilization, phase V is a viable host government on the ground, etc.) depends on the particular details. If there are still 140,000 troops on the ground, operations are still in phase IV. Furthermore, interagency actors need to be trained and resourced to produce population- and culture-focused stabilization skills and be held accountable through a White House directive or Congressional action.

Nadia Schadlow, a senior program officer in the International Security and Foreign Policy Program of the Smith Richardson Foundation and a member of the Defense Policy Board, suggested that the interagency process is an integral part of civil-military relations because **command and control is “where the strategic issues that we talk about are actually hashed out on the ground.”** History and expedience have made the military and civilian agencies resistant to developing core competencies at stabilization operations, a missing piece from our foreign policy toolkit. Stability and reconstruction operations cannot be divided into civil or military spheres, but often must be integrated and simultaneous in order to achieve the desired strategic effects. Unity of effort is not enough, however; unity of command and its resulting accountability are really needed. Schadlow referenced a 2006 study comparing schools built by CERP and USAID funds in Afghanistan, which found that the CERP funds were used more efficiently, strategically, and in a more accountable fashion because of Lt. Gen. David W. Barno’s **unified command and control.** Schadlow argued that **commanders’ stability and reconstruction efforts would need to come from the military because most stability operations involve activities in contested areas and such operations are inherently a part of war.** “The phenomenon of the military needing to manage the end-state of an intervention in a political way has always been a part of American history.” In more permissive environments command relationships might vary due to requirements for a different mix of skill sets.

A. Heather Coyne, senior program officer at the U.S. Institute of Peace and an OIF military and civilian veteran, stated that neither her three-year deployment to Iraq nor her time in the Office of Management and Budget gave her much confidence that we are on the right track yet in either field capability or the overarching interagency management. Neither the government nor the international community has the capability to undertake stability operations, she said. The U.S. generally lacks the knowledge base to develop effective strategies and policies and the right skilled people in the field to implement them. The question is whether the military can prepare itself for such missions.

She also noted three problems with CERP funds: (1) they are not for sustainable development, (2) there is a lack of knowledge on budgeting and contracting in their use, and (3) they are **generally employed with a “lack of integration with other projects to create a sense of building momentum.”** What civil affairs can provide in the field is overestimated; too often the requisite skill sets and individuals are not available. The military should not have the lead role for governance, development, economic assistance, and state building, where partnerships

with NGOs, IOs, and the private sector are essential. The military's lead role can send the wrong message. However, civilian organizations possess no better capability or expertise for dealing with these issues. Furthermore, interagency coordination, which is optimized for advisory and information purposes, breaks down due to bureaucratic hurdles when it plays a directing role. "Interagency will always lose to a system that is created for agency decision-making," expressed Coyne. Without a dedicated agency with doctrine, training, equipment, materials, organizational culture, institutional memory and relationships, "you're not going to see anything but marginal improvements, or, more likely, continued failures."

### Operation Iraqi Freedom and Civil-Military Relations

Lt. Col. Frank G. Hoffman, USMCR (ret.), a non-resident senior fellow of the FPRI and a research fellow at the Center for Emerging Threats and Opportunities (CETO) in Quantico, Virginia, stated that the protracted war in Iraq "has uncovered profound cracks in some of the dysfunctional elements that are inherent to American civil-military relations." The precarious nature of the nation's civil-military relations contributed to poor policymaking and ineffective execution. Civilian control of the military is firmly grounded constitutionally, structurally, and historically, but civil-military relations—the interface between policy leaders and military officers—are more complex and less structured. "Ultimately, it's about the interchange of viewpoints, and the production of effective strategies and decisions about the use of the military instrument." A narrow focus on control leads to overlooking the overall purpose of the use of force and can denigrate the quality of the decision-making process, the outputs of which are what are really at issue. During recent conflicts the climate and context of the civil-military relationship has not been open to rigorous discourse. Needed inputs for military officers and others were "either ignored, muzzled, intimidated, or cut out of the process."

Hoffman noted that problems in civil-military relations are embedded in several myths. One myth is that there has been a clear, inherent division of labor between the military and civilians since Vietnam: civilians set political objectives and then get out of the way. This overlooks what Eliot Cohen has called the "unequal dialogue," where civilian leaders probe the military and the military asks the same about the ends and means of policy. [4] "Separating policy from strategy and operations is simply an extremely poor alternative to the intense and admittedly uncomfortable interaction of policy desires and military realities that needs to occur inside the White House and inside the Pentagon."

Repairing the "rent fabric" of contemporary U.S. civil-military relations will require a sustained and comprehensive effort. One key element will be to address professional military education from pre-commissioning through the war college levels. Civil-military relations are too silent a theme throughout the military educational system. Among the services, for instance, only the Army and Marine Corps have civil-military relations books on their

professional reading lists. Another element that is needed is an explicit code for the military profession. The code would define the fundamentals of the professional officer “dedicated to this republic’s values and institutions,” distinguish between the professional military and the National Guard and reserves, denote the rights, privileges, and obligations of retired senior officers, define the expectations for loyalty, obedience, and dissent in clear terms, and clarify for both branches of government the necessity for the institutional integrity of the armed forces of the United States above reproach. Once established, it needs to be taught to the military and civilians alike and enforced. “We all realize that civilians have a right to be wrong in our system, but we devote too little study to minimizing the frequency of its occurrence.” A national commission on the American military ethic, said Hoffman, should also be established to define and complete the ethical codification, with bipartisan political, civilian, and military representation.

In conclusion, Hoffman stated, “Unless serious efforts are made to rectify the components that constitute the entire relationship between the nation and its uniformed servants, expectations for improved performance are low, and my expectation for greater volatility between institutions of government is high.” Our leaders failed us in the planning and conduct of the conflict in Iraq, and while this may not comprise a “dereliction of duty,” it is a failure nonetheless. “If we continue to ignore the difficulty inherent to the uneasy dialogue that supports the ultimate decision about going to war, and we fail to educate future leaders about the duty and professional obligation inherent to that decision, we are going to continue to pay a high price,” argued Hoffman.

Peter D. Feaver, the Alexander F. Hehmeyer Professor of Political Science and Public Policy at Duke University, Director of the Triangle Institute for Security Studies (TISS), and former special advisor on the National Security Council Staff, generally agreed with Hoffman that Iraq has had a corrosive impact on American civil-military relations. Mistakes were made on both sides of the civil-military line, and one cannot assume that the military would have done a better job had it been given more authority over decision-making and implementation—the “naive delegation thesis.” All sides of the debate over Iraq find this argument useful and invoke it (e.g., we should have listened to General Shinseki or General Petraeus, etc.) when it serves their purposes. The issue for Feaver is how one adjudicates between competing military advice when things are going badly in a war zone and there is partisan fighting taking place at home. Many of these issues are inherently political judgments that are not necessarily shaped by experience. He argued that more information, especially providing more information to the president, is probably the best solution. He also was concerned how we can preserve a marketplace of ideas in a wartime environment. Feaver sees the need for vigorous debates over the wisdom of policies. There has been too little accountability and oversight of the national debate on Iraq, but he noted that lack of press coverage does not mean that there is little internal debate within the administration. This is particularly damaging, however, for civil-

military relations because bureaucracies get so much information from the press and thus the lack of coverage on decision-making then feeds back into misunderstanding.

Richard H. Kohn, professor of history at UNC-Chapel Hill and Executive Secretary of TISS, posited that we will not know the full extent of civil-military problems until we know the result in Iraq. But he had doubts about the likelihood of success there. Unlike Hoffman, he doubted that civilian control could be divorced from civil-military relations. The difficulty with implementing the “uneasy dialogue” model, he said, is operationalizing it and avoiding overly politicizing the military in the process. He is most discouraged by the emerging belief among some military and civilian leaders that “the military knows more, it is better educated, it is privileged by its service, and particularly by experience in combat to know and speak on policy with an authority that the civilians cannot muster.” He believes that the military should only engage in political discussions privately, within the executive branch. Going public with disagreements will cause military leaders to be chosen on the basis of loyalty to future administrations, and that will continue to feed into the lack of trust deleterious to civil-military relations that has existed for the last fifty years. The solution is not just study and education, but a renewal of military professionalism and recognition by both civilians and the military that conflict is inherent and needs to be worked through. “There has to be some effort of open candor and dialogue, and maybe that requires a renewed understanding that you save your disagreements in public for your memoirs, and some renewed understanding on the part of the politicians that you step up to your responsibility and be accountable for your authority, and you don’t hide behind the military; you don’t start pointing fingers when things go badly.”

#### The Military Profession and Dissent

Col. Don M. Snider, USA (ret.), a professor of political science at the U.S. Military Academy, put forward a framework for how to think about the military profession. He advocated not using the term “professionalism” but rather speaking of a “profession.” “Professionalism,” he argued, “is in the mind of the beholder, and in those conversations we speak right by each other all the time, without ever getting to the specifics that will allow us to be either developmental or policy-relevant.” He focused on interactions within the land combat, maritime, aerospace, and emerging joint military professions, each of which is defined by its own expert knowledge. Professions certify their professionals; society decides whether a profession is a profession, i.e., not a bureaucracy or business under a set of market forces. A profession also gets a sense of identity from its autonomy. The military professions are not pure professions, but rather hierarchical bureaucracies that want to be professions. The colonels and generals determine whether the military profession is a profession or bureaucracy; “nobody else has the power or the authority to make the organizational culture one in which professionals can survive.”

The challenge to the military is whether the profession is dominating the bureaucracy or vice versa. “The quintessential practice of a profession... is a repetitive exercise of discretionary judgment.” Absent an environment that embraces this, military professionals become bureaucrats. But all professions have jurisdictions where they practice. The expert knowledge of the military professions can be split into four baskets: military-technical (how to fight wars), moral-ethical (how to fight wars rightly), political-cultural (how to operate in other cultures), and human (how to develop human talent). If the profession does not know the boundaries of its expert knowledge, it cannot predict the kinds of expert knowledge its client will need in the future. That causes the kinds of problems for the profession seen in Iraq in 2003, where the profession lacked expert knowledge on conducting counterinsurgency operations. A profession must forecast such needs and anticipate the need for expert knowledge.

Snider proceeded to discuss professional military dissent. Drawing upon the work of Lenny Wong and Douglas Lovelace of the Army War College’s Strategic Studies Institute, he noted that there were eight ways military leaders may dissent, depending on the resistance to their expertise from civilian leaders and the gravity of the threat to national security. [5] Resignation is the most extreme form of dissent. The relationship between the military profession and the society that it protects is deeply moral, and therefore professionals considering dissent must use a moral calculus and not just a policy calculus. This moral relationship has three components: (1) with the client (to protect the client and provide expert knowledge), (2) interpersonal trust relationships at the civil-military nexus, and (3) the military-to-military relationship, particularly with juniors. But dissent should only take place when there are grave concerns over issues and when the relevance of the exact point of disagreement over which the professional is preparing to dissent is grounded in the expert knowledge of the profession. The degree of sacrifice and the nature of the timing of the act of dissent are also important, and are especially significant to junior leaders.

Snider believes that any officer, active or retired, who uses a moral calculus on the costs of dissent can register their concerns publicly. Resignation should only be considered about 0.1 percent of the time, but taking it off the table entirely sends the message to the military profession that they are a bureaucracy with no moral space for their expert knowledge. The professional military ethic, in his estimation, needs “very little evolution” to endorse such dissent. “In fact, when I look back at the ‘revolt of the generals’, [6] my take is that I am struck with how little it accomplished in the short-term. I am struck, in the mid-term, with how far we have moved beyond it,” he said. Concluding his comments he stated, “I see no reason for any [additional] limits on dissent, professional dissent, that is arrived at by this type of moral calculus.”

Lt. Gen. Gregory Newbold, USMC (ret.), currently managing partner at Torch Hill Investment Partners and Director of Operations on the Joint Chiefs of Staff before retiring in 2002, thought that Snider's matrix was a good benchmark. He didn't believe that civilian control is at stake. He asserted that officers should render the best advice that they can on an issue and then obey the decision-makers' "direction to the very limits of your professional ability." But he objected to the notion that retired officers, unlike active officers (who he said should never speak out in public other than in front of Congress), had somehow given up their right to speak out on issues, particularly those relating to the use of force, in certain "extraordinary" circumstances—"99 percent of the time, it is generally inappropriate." Retired officers who align themselves with political parties also trouble him. He remains conflicted over the matter of his own speaking out, and stressed that he only did so because of the tragedies affecting those sent into harm's way without the military's full input to policymakers. He does not regret writing his April 2006 *Time* article, "Why Iraq Was a Mistake," even though he has paid a price for it, and noted that this conference was his first time speaking publicly since the article appeared. He also said that the current civilian leadership was much more open to listening to advice than the previous Pentagon team.

Peter Hegseth, Executive Director of Vets for Freedom, a National Guard infantry officer and an OIF veteran, noted that for junior officers the key issue on judging dissent is its timing. "I think *when* you make a decision about whether or not to speak up says a lot about... your moral character." He stated that a lapse in time between service and dissent could stir questions about the courage of such dissenters among their former subordinates. As long as the dissent, or open discussions of what service members saw, is seen as genuine, checked by public scrutiny, and within legal bounds, then he felt that it would improve public conversations. "But before going public, I also think there is a responsibility to do everything within the organization, before advocating, to ensure that you have sent [your] after-action reviews up your chain of command, that you have talked to the people you can talk to within your purview to make the necessary changes before deciding, 'All right, now it's time for me to speak out,' or, 'It's time for me to talk about how things are not going the right way.'"

## Conclusion

FPRI president Harvey Sicherman summarized five themes that he took away from the conference. First, civil-military relations are inevitably the consequence of the frictions built into our government. The military can easily get caught up in that friction, particularly between the executive and the Congress. Second, in recent history this friction has been harmful. Relations that were poor before Iraq are now much worse. Third, frictions have been exacerbated because "we lack the capabilities, both military and civilian, to conduct the kind of conflict that we have found ourselves conducting in Iraq." Fourth, to mend this rift, we must explore different aspects of the civil-military relationship—"not only control, but the



views of society, its participation, and finally, of course, the professional aspect of the military.” Fifth, the military profession involves both expert knowledge and discretionary judgment. Ultimately, “a mismanaged relationship between civilians and the military puts in jeopardy not simply the profession of the statesman, but ultimately the profession of the military, itself.”

#### Notes

1. See <http://www.fpri.org/enotes/200711.skelton.civilmilitaryrelations.html> for the complete text.
2. Charles C. Moskos, John Allen Williams, and David R. Segal, eds., *The Postmodern Military: Armed Forces after the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).
3. CERP provides operational commanders with short-term funds to respond to urgent humanitarian and reconstruction projects within their areas of responsibility. See Mark S. Martins, “The Commander’s Emergency Response Program,” *Joint Force Quarterly* (issue 37, 2nd quarter 2005).
4. Eliot A. Cohen, *Supreme Command: Soldiers, Statesmen, and Leadership in Wartime* (New York: Free Press, 2002).
5. Leonard Wong and Douglas Lovelace, “Knowing When to Salute,” Strategic Studies Institute Op-Ed, U.S. Army War College, 9 July 2007.
6. The so-called “revolt of the generals” of 2006 refers to dissenting public comments made by six retired general officers. See, for instance, Michael Duffy, “The Revolt of the Generals,” *Time*, April 16, 2006. Available at: <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1184048-1,00.html>.

## DERELICTION OF DUTY REDUX?

*By Frank G. Hoffman*

November 2007

*Originally published in E-Notes, this essay is drawn from Mr. Hoffman's panel presentation at the "Mind the Gap" Conference on Post-Iraq Civil-Military Relations in America co-sponsored by FPRI and the Reserve Officers Association held in Washington, D.C. on October 15, 2007.*

It is clear by now that the protracted war in Iraq uncovered fissures and dysfunctional elements involved in American civil-military relations. Indeed, there has been a dangerous undertow in civil-military discourse for some time. Before the war, Dr. Richard Kohn of UNC Chapel Hill concluded that relations were "extraordinarily poor" and that a tear in the national fabric existed. [1] One could argue that the fabric is now completely rent, but we can hope it is not beyond repair. The war has exacerbated the situation appreciably, enough to suggest that a sequel to Colonel H.R. McMaster's classic book *Dereliction of Duty* is in order.

The nation's leadership, civilian and military, need to come to grips with the emerging "stab in the back" thesis in the armed services and better define the social compact and code of conduct that governs the overall relationship between the masters of policy and the dedicated servants we ask to carry it out. Our collective failure to address the torn fabric and weave a stronger and more enduring relationship will only allow a sore to fester and ultimately undermine the nation's security.

"Civil-military relations" is exactly what the term suggests, a relationship between two institutions or parties. Civil-military relations are *not* a function of power or about control. Civilian control is not at issue, but civil-military relations, properly understood, *are*. Civilian control is constitutionally, structurally, and historically well grounded in America, but civil-military relations and effective strategic performance are not. History is replete with cases of strategic defeat attributable to dysfunctional relationships between statespersons and their generals. Iraq adds another case study to a long history.

Arriving at sound policy requires discipline, deliberate process, and interactive and continuous discourse. During recent conflicts, the climate or context for rigorous discourse was not established or maintained. Required and necessary inputs were ignored, muzzled, intimidated, or cut out of the debate. This has cost this country dearly in terms of lost standing among in the world, treasure wasted, and most importantly, by the ultimate sacrifice of many young Americans.

The growing narrative in the military pins the blame solely on poor, if not arrogant, civilian planning. Most of the blame in this tragedy is saved for former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. He made it clear from his arrival in December 2000 that he wanted to be in control; in fact, he is extremely sensitive to challenges to civilian authority. He came to the Pentagon armed with an agenda to transform the U.S. military, which struck at specific institutional interests of the Services.

Secretary Rumsfeld challenged the status quo at every turn, insisting on applying his own theories to military operations. He challenged the Joint Staff's planning efforts and its process for deploying military units during Operation Iraqi Freedom in March 2003. This micromanagement frustrated military commanders in Washington and at U.S. Central Command in Tampa and resulted in low troop levels and all the related occupation problems in Iraq.

The flip side of the indictment involves the professional competence of senior military advisors, who failed to provide candid military counsel because they were intimidated “yes men,” or who failed to recognize the complexity of the war. General Tommy Franks, the commander of Central Command in 2003, is accused of having been too deferential to Secretary Rumsfeld. This deference allowed Rumsfeld's perspectives on force levels to prevail, at odds with prevailing military doctrine of overwhelming force. The U.S. military is blamed for producing what Tom Ricks has described as “perhaps the worst war plan in American history.” [2] Senior generals are painted as pliable “yes-men,” [3] incapable of standing up to senior civilian masters, or incompetent officials who failed to plan past the initial battle and bring about the political end state sought by policymakers in the White House.

Because we lack objective historical evidence, it is difficult to judge the indictment and allocate blame for a war that has appreciably hurt U.S. security interests far beyond Iraq. But we need to examine the interaction of viewpoints involved in the strategy development process and resolve longstanding but now widening fissures in the ethical foundation of the military establishment.

The war has stimulated a needed debate on civil-military relations and the moral guidelines of our military. One scholar recently suggested that we return to the classical school of separate spheres. This compact, or division of labor, defined by Samuel Huntington in the seminal *The Soldier and the State* (1957), grants military professionals control over the operational and tactical sphere in return for their subordination and loyalty to policy and strategic decisions made by civilians. Michael Desch contends that separate spheres are “conducive to good civil-military relations as well as to sound policy decisions.” [4] Incessant and relentless questioning of “military policies” by civilians is seen as the problem, not the solution to effective strategic performance. He places the blame for the situation in Iraq today on the “willful disregard for

military advice.” He also argues that the alternative approach, as advocated by Eliot Cohen in his *Supreme Command* (2002), is intrusive and bound to exacerbate friction.

The problem with this is that it presumes away several egregious examples of narrow military perspectives and bad advice about U.S. interventions ranging from Vietnam, Panama, and Somalia to the endgame for Desert Storm. The bargain Desch advocates is counterproductive, as it separates a holistic appreciation for the nature of war and offers a linear and mechanistic alternative that has little relationship to the constant and iterative interaction between policy and strategy that should characterize the conduct of war. Worse, it continues the mythology and extends the American military’s **greatest professional blind spot: operating in what Prof. Hew Strachan has called “a politics free zone.”** [5] Separating policy from strategy is simply an extremely poor alternative to the intense and admittedly uncomfortable interaction of policy desires and military realities that Cohen called “the uneasy dialogue.” [6]

The separate-spheres argument also distorts the provision of military advice during the invasion and rewrites the history of CENTCOM’s planning failures during 2002 and 2003, as well as the conduct of postconflict operations in 2003. Desch would have us believe that the Joint Chiefs, left entirely upon themselves, could have planned the drive to Baghdad, knocked off Hussein, and would have precluded the emergence of any insurgency. He rightfully believes that, left to their own, the Chiefs would have authorized more troops, but overemphasizes what those troops could have accomplished. He wrongly presumes that the Joint Chiefs would not have mishandled Phase IV postconflict planning by themselves. Additionally, he neatly overlooks how U.S. forces failed to combat disorder and looting in the aftermath of the conflict, and their utter lack of doctrine and preparation for any form of postconflict problems or the subsequent insurgency.

There is little history to support Desch’s argument from the past, and his reading of the current conflict also falls short. Junior officers see this “stab in the back” thesis for what it is: a limp attempt to deflect blame. They have openly criticized their military leaders for trying to pin all the responsibility on Pentagon civilians “while we in uniform are depicted as the luckless victims of poor policy.” [7]

We need to reject an outdated normal theory of civil-military relations to a more historically grounded model that accounts for the overlapping and reciprocal interrelationships of ends, ways and means that leads to strategic success. We need to establish new norms that set up expectations for a decision-making climate that encourages candid advice and the rigorous exchange of views and insights. It is the duty of civilian leaders, in all branches of government, to establish that climate, and it is the moral obligation of military professionals to honestly and clearly present their best advice. This “uneasy dialogue” needs to ensure a tight correlation between ends, ways, and means.

When civilian policy masters will not establish the necessary conditions for strategic success, military officers can retire, resign, or request reassignment. Those who fail to provide candid advice, who fail in their duty to their immediate superiors, and stay in their posts are guilty of dereliction of duty to the president, the Congress, and their subordinates.

We need to clarify these expectations for the future civilian leaders, the armed services, and their ultimate client, the American people, who sustain them and provide the resources.

## Solutions

**Repairing the rent fabric of America's relationship with its military servants will require a sustained and comprehensive effort.** Some have offered *structural* solutions, recommending that the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff be appointed as member of the National Security Council or placed directly in the chain of command. These structural proposals might prevent civilian policymakers from playing off the views of the Chiefs against the theater commanders, and it might buttress a Chairman who suffers from an overbearing Secretary of Defense, but we cannot legislate moral character or spine.

Part of any effort will have to address the professional education of the military, which does not adequately instruct in this area. *The principal thrust of any solution set lies in codifying and enforcing the foundations of a professional military.* The normative values and ethic embodied in any profession are supposed to define its role and frame its purpose and limits. The military defines itself as a profession, and meets all of the characteristics of a profession, with the exception of a code of ethics. The professional military ethic that used to be implicitly operative in the officer's corps has faded from its collective memory. **In particular, the guiding principles and obligations requiring selfless service and apolitical behavior have eroded.** Re-codifying the professional military ethic and incorporating it in today's Professional Military Education system is vital.

This new code should define the fundamentals of a professional Officer dedicated to this nation's values and institutions. **It should distinguish between the professional military and our citizen soldiers in the National Guard, and define the rights, privileges, and obligations of retired senior officers.** It should also define the expectations for loyalty, obedience, and dissent in clear terms. This code should also clarify, for both branches of government, the necessity for the institutional integrity of the Armed Forces above reproach. The military should not be used as a passive or implied prop for political consumption. Once defined, we need to educate our military and citizenry on this ethic, our senior officers will need to model it, and the Congress and the profession writ large will need to enforce it.

Thus, a national commission or task force on the American military ethic is needed. This task force should be established by Congress, with bipartisan and joint representation. In addition

to crafting a formal code, the commission should be charged to produce a set of detailed case histories on policy and strategy development to illustrate the desired “running conversation” between policymakers and military professionals. These cases would be offered to the country’s civilian and military institutions of higher learning. The new professional military ethic will help define society’s expectations for its uniformed military and the case histories will highlight the benefits of extensive and if necessary intense interaction. These lessons need to be incorporated into the educational programs that prepare both civilian and military leaders for future crises.

## Conclusion

Despite the grave concerns noted by many scholars over the past decade, we have not paid enough attention to the topic of civil-military relations. Unless serious efforts are made to rectify the components that constitute the entire relationship between the nation and its uniformed servants, expectations for improved performance are low. More fundamentally, expectations for greater volatility between the institutions of our government will be high.

War is an audit of national will, institutions and leaders. It is difficult not to conclude that our leaders failed us in the planning and conduct of the current conflict. If we continue to ignore the difficulty inherent to the “unequal dialogue” that supports the ultimate decision regarding war, and fail to educate future leaders about duty and professional obligation, we will continue to pay a high price. That would constitute a true dereliction of duty—by all of us.

## Notes

1. Richard H. Kohn, “The Erosion of Civilian Control of the Military in the United States Today,” *Naval War College Review*, Summer 2002, pp. 9-59.
2. Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: America’s Military Adventure into Iraq*, New York: Penguin Press 2006, p. 89; “U.S. Military Operations in Iraq: Planning, Combat, and Occupation, SAIS-SSI, Nov. 2, 2005.
3. Mark Follman, “More Top Brass Blast Rumsfeld,” Apr. 25, 2006, at <http://www.salon.com/news/feature/2006/04/25/rumsfeld/index.html>
4. M. Desch, “Bush and the Generals,” *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2007.
5. Hew Strachan, “The Lost Meaning of Strategy,” *Survival*, vol. 47, no. 3, Autumn 2005, p. 47.
6. Eliot A. Cohen, *Supreme Command Soldiers, Statesmen, and Leadership in Wartime*, New York: Free Press, 2002, p. 209.

7. Daniel L. Davis, "To America's Generals," *Washington Times*, May 23, 2007.

# U.S. CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS AFTER 9/11: RENEGOTIATING THE CIVIL-MILITARY BARGAIN

*By Mackubin Thomas Owens*

January 2011

*This article was originally published as an E-Note.*

*There is no more important question facing a state than the place of its military relative to civil society and the roles that the military exercises. The reason is simple: on the one hand, the coercive power of a military establishment, especially a strong and effective one, makes it at least a potential threat to the regime. On the other, a weak military establishment also threatens the regime because of the likelihood that the former will fail to protect the latter. This is the central paradox of civil-military relations.*

*US Civil-Military Relations After 9/11 is primarily a work of synthesis that seeks to place events since September 11, 2001 in their proper historical context and to consider them in light of the character of American civil-military relations in general. Tensions in civil-military relations in America are not new. They have recurred periodically since the American Revolution.*

*Although the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan loom large in the book, U.S. Civil-Military Relations After 9/11 is not simply a rehash of the debates attending these conflicts. Questions concerning the actual conduct of these wars and who was responsible for various aspects of military planning have been addressed by several writers, including Bob Woodward, Tom Ricks, Bing West, Michael Gordon, and Bernard Trainor. The purpose of U.S. Civil-Military Relations After 9/11 is to examine the issues that these fine writers raise from the perspective of the theory and practice of civil-military relations, placing them in the context of the ongoing renegotiation of the civil-military bargain in America. The following essay is drawn from the book's introduction.*

The United States remains fortunate in that its military has defended the Republic successfully on the battlefield while avoiding threats to civilian control. The most extreme and dangerous threats are *coup d'état* and praetorianism. But tensions have always existed and demonstrate that periodically from the American Revolution to the present, civil-military relations in America essentially have constituted a bargain among three parties: the American people, the government, and the military as an institution.

The goal of this bargain is to allocate prerogatives and responsibilities between the civilian leadership on the one hand and the military on the other. Occasionally throughout U.S.



history, certain circumstances-political, strategic, social, technological, among others-have changed to such a degree that the terms of the existing civil-military bargain become obsolete. The resulting disequilibrium and tension have led the parties to renegotiate the bargain to restore balance in the civil-military equation. [1]

There are five questions that define the civil-military bargain. First, who *controls* the military instrument? Liberal societies often take civilian control for granted, but doing so begs several further questions: does civilian control refer simply to the dominance of civilians within the executive branch-the president or the secretary of defense? What is the role of the legislative branch in controlling the military instrument? Is the military establishment "unified," that is, does it speak with anything like a single voice vis-à-vis the civil government? What is the nature of military advice? Should military leaders "insist" that their advice be heeded? What courses of action are available to military leaders who believe the civilian authorities are **making bad decisions? In other words, is there a "calculus of dissent" that military leaders can invoke in cases where they believe civilian decisions are dangerous to the health of the country?**

Second, what degree of *military influence* is appropriate in a liberal society such as the United States? The extreme form of military influence in society is militarism; a state of affairs in which military values predominate and the military devours a disproportionate share of **society's resources. Although some authors have claimed that the United States has become more militaristic over the years, the evidence for this argument is thin. Nonetheless, it is still necessary to ascertain the proper scope of military affairs. In today's environment, what constitutes military expertise? Does it go beyond what Samuel Huntington, in his classic study of civil-military relations, *The Soldier and the State*, called the "management of violence?" Should it?**

To what extent should the military influence foreign policy? Has American foreign policy become **"militarized?" Do combatant commanders exercise too much power? Have they become the new "viceroys" or "proconsuls?" What is proper regarding the military and domestic politics? Should active duty officers be writing op-eds in support of particular programs or policies? Should retired officers get involved in partisan politics? What is the military's proper role in influencing the allocation of resources?**

Third, what is the *appropriate role of the military*? Is the military establishment's purpose to **fight and win the nation's wars or to engage in constabulary actions? What kind of wars should the military prepare to fight? Should the focus of the military be foreign or domestic? The United States has answered this question differently at various times and under different circumstances. For example, throughout most of its history, the United States Army was a constabulary force. It permanently oriented itself toward large-scale conflicts against foreign**

enemies only in the 1930s. The end of the Cold War and the attacks of 9/11 have suggested new answers, for example, a focus on “irregular warfare” (counterinsurgency and counterterrorism), as well as an openness to the use of the military in domestic affairs. What impact do such issues have on civil-military relations?

Fourth, *what pattern of civil-military relations best ensures the effectiveness of the military instrument?* All of the other questions mean little if the military instrument is unable to ensure the survival of the state. If there is no constitution, the question of constitutional balance doesn't matter. Does effectiveness require a military culture distinct in some ways from the society it serves? What impact does societal structure have on military effectiveness? What impact does political structure exert? What impact does the pattern of civil-military relations have on the effectiveness of strategic decision-making processes?

And finally, *who serves?* Is military service an obligation of citizenship or something else? How are enlisted members recruited and retained? How should the U.S. military address issues of “diversity” in the force? What about reserves, racial and ethnic minorities, women, and homosexuals?

Obviously, questions regarding military service have been answered differently by Americans at various times under different circumstances. Through most of its early history, the United States maintained a small regular peacetime establishment that mostly conducted limited constabulary operations. During wartime, the several states were responsible for raising soldiers for federal service, either as militia or volunteers.

Conscription was the norm in the United States from the eve of World War II until the 1970s. Today the U.S. military is a volunteer professional force. But even now the force continues to evolve, as debates over such issues as the role of the reserve components in the post-9/11 military force, women in combat, service by open homosexuals, and the recruitment of religious minorities-Muslims in particular-make clear.

The various patterns of American civil-military relations have generally worked well, but have occasionally exhibited signs of stress as the civil-military bargain has been renegotiated. Renegotiation has certainly been the case in the United States during the last two decades.

A substantial renegotiation of the civil-military bargain took place with the end of the Cold War. The change in the security environment occasioned by the collapse of the Soviet Union led to a lack of a consensus regarding what the U.S. military was expected to do in the new security environment. The resulting period of drift had a substantial impact on civil-military relations. As the brief summary below suggests, the civil-military bargain is still being negotiated.

## Civil-Military Relations from Clinton to Obama

During the 1990s, a number of events led observers to conclude that all was not well with civil-military relations in America. These events generated an often acrimonious public debate in which several highly-respected observers concluded that American civil-military relations had become unhealthy at best and were "in crisis" at worst. For instance, distinguished military historian, Richard Kohn, viewed the state of civil-military relations during this period as "extraordinarily poor, in many respects as low as in any period of American peacetime history."

Most illustrative of the unhealthy states of civil-military relations during this period was the unprecedented hostility by the uniformed military toward President Bill Clinton, whose anti-military stance as a young man during the Vietnam War years did not endear him to soldiers. Many of the highly publicized disputes between the uniformed military and the Clinton administration reflected cultural tensions between the military as an institution and liberal civilian society. Most of these disputes focused on issues such as women in combat and open homosexuals in the military.

The catalogue included the very public exchange on the issue of military service by open homosexuals between newly-elected President Bill Clinton on the one hand and the uniformed **military and Congress on the other**, "Tailhook," the Kelly Flinn affair, and the sexual harassment scandal at a U.S. Army base in Aberdeen, Maryland. But civil-military tensions were not limited to social issues. Others included the charge that General Colin Powell, then-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was invading civilian turf illegitimately by publicly advancing opinions on foreign policy, and **the military's purported resistance to involvement in constabulary missions**, motivated primarily by the fact that while the Clinton **administration cut force structure by a third from the level of the "Base Force" of President George H.W. Bush**, the pace of non-warfighting deployments increased by 300 percent from 1989 to 1999. Critics contended that such examples illustrated that the uniformed military had expanded its influence illegitimately into inappropriate areas and had succeeded in making military, not political, considerations paramount in the political-military decision-making process. This process, in effect, dictated to civilians not only how its operations would be conducted, but also the circumstances under which the military instrument would be used.

This purported attitude reflected the post-Vietnam view dominant within the military that only professional military officers could be trusted to establish principles guiding the use of military force. Taking its bearings from the so-called Weinberger doctrine, a set of rules for using force that had been drafted in the 1980s, the U.S. military did everything it could to avoid what came to be known-incorrectly-as "**non-traditional missions**": **constabulary operations required for "imperial policing,"** such as peacekeeping and humanitarian missions.

The clearest example of a service's resistance to a mission occurred when the Army, arguing that its proper focus was on preparing to fight conventional wars, insisted that the plans for U.S. interventions in Bosnia, Kosovo, and elsewhere, reflected the military's preference for "overwhelming force." Many interpreted such hostility as further indication that the military had become too partisan (Republican) and politicized.

Those who argued that U.S. civil-military relations had become problematic during this period claimed to have identified serious systemic problems affecting the interaction between the uniformed military and civilians, both government leaders and the society at large. These individuals argued, among other things, that:

- the U.S. military had become more alienated from its civilian leadership than at any time in American history;
- there was a growing gap between the U.S. military as an institution and civilian society at large;
- the U.S. military had become politicized and partisan;
- the U.S. military had become resistant to civilian oversight, as illustrated by the efforts to dictate when-and under what circumstances-it would be used to implement U.S. policy;
- officers had come to believe that they had the right to confront and resist civilian policymakers, to insist that civilian authorities heed their recommendations,
- the U.S. military was becoming too influential in inappropriate areas of American society.

The likely and very dangerous outcome of such trends, went the argument, was a large, semi-autonomous military so different and estranged from society that it might become unaccountable to those whom it serves. Those who advanced this view worried about the **military's expanding influence and were** concerned about the possibility of a military contemptuous of American society and unresponsive to civilian authorities.

Most writers adopting this view acknowledge that the crisis was not acute; it did not, for instance, involve tanks rumbling through the streets or soldiers surrounding the Capitol or the White House. Instead, they said, it was subtle and subversive-like a lymphoma or termite infestation-destroying silently from within and appearing as mutual mistrust and misunderstanding, institutional failure, and strategic incapacitation. If the problem had not yet reached the danger point, they contended, that time was not too far off if something was not done soon.

Not all observers shared this assessment. Some argued that U.S. civil-military relations were **not in crisis but in transition as a result of the Cold War's end and changes in American society**. And others contended that the civil-military tensions of the 1990s were a temporary phenomenon, attributable to the perceived antimilitary character of the Clinton administration.

However, civil-military tensions did not disappear with the election and reelection of George W. Bush. If anything, civil-military relations became more strained following clashes between **the uniformed services and Bush's first secretary of defense, Donald Rumsfeld**. These disputes focused on efforts to **"transform" the military from a Cold War force to one better able to respond to likely future contingencies**, and the planning and conduct of U.S. military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. For one thing, the instances of military officers undercutting Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld and his policies in pursuit of their own goals-what Peter Feaver has called **"shirking," as in anti-Rumsfeld leaks to the press, "foot-dragging" and "slow-rolling"**-that had plagued the Clinton administration, continued apace.

Public criticism of civilian leaders by military officers accelerated as well, peaking with the so-called revolt of the generals in the spring of 2006, when several retired Army and Marine Corps generals publicly and harshly criticized Secretary Rumsfeld. During this episode, much of their language was intemperate, indeed contemptuous. The seemingly orchestrated character of these attacks suggested that civil-military disharmony had reached a new and dangerous level.

Although the critics in this case were retired general officers, observers of this episode believed that these retired flag officers were speaking not only for themselves but for many active duty officers, as well. As Richard Kohn observed, retired general and flag officers are analogous to the Cardinals of the Roman Catholic Church. While there are no legal restrictions preventing retired members of the military-even recently retired members-from criticizing public policy or the individuals responsible for it, there are some important reasons to suggest that the public denunciation of civilian authority by soldiers, retired or not, undermines healthy civil-military relations.

With Rumsfeld's departure and the apparent success of the **"surge" in Iraq**, some expressed hope that harmony might return to U.S. civil-military relations. And to be sure, his successor, Robert Gates, has done a great deal to improve the civil-military climate. But subsequent events-including Secretary Gates' decision to **fire two service secretaries and a service chief and forcing the retirement of a combatant commander**-raised doubts for some. In addition there was the public disagreement on military strategy between President Obama and the ground commander in Afghanistan, **General Stanley McChrystal and the latter's subsequent relief**. All these events make it clear that, while mutual suspicion and misunderstanding have abated

some since Rumsfeld's departure, the state of U.S. civil-military relations remains turbulent and potentially contentious.

### Renegotiating the U.S. Civil-Military Bargain into the Future

Is there a crisis in civil-military relations or are the alleged problems merely the manifestation of yet another search for a new equilibrium based on changing factors? What are the particular problems arising from a “post-modern” military, a relatively small, highly educated and professional force, reared to conduct constabulary operations rather than conventional inter-state wars? What impact will continued technological change have on American civil-military relations? What about social issues? What are the prospects for balanced, harmonious, and effective civil-military relations in the future, especially during times of war?

The Prussian military theorist Carl von Clausewitz crystallized the problem that the study of civil-military relations seeks to address when he wrote: “The first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgment that the statesman and commander have to make is to establish [...] the kind of war on which they are embarking; neither mistaking it for, nor trying to turn it into, something alien to its nature. This is the first of all strategic questions and the most comprehensive” (emphasis added). This oft-quoted passage makes it clear that the decision for war and its subsequent conduct require the successful-if not always harmonious-collaboration of civilian policymakers and their military advisers, who will also be responsible for providing the instrument necessary for the conduct of war and the plans and decisions required to bring it to a successful conclusion.

However, the dysfunctional character of U.S. civil-military relations following 9/11 meant that the judgment that Clausewitz described was not properly made, especially with regard to the war in Iraq. For a variety of reasons, there was, in Colin Gray's formulation, “a black hole where American strategy ought to [have resided].” The absence of strategy meant that all too often, military operations were not connected to policy considerations. Of course, this is not the first time that divided policy councils and dysfunctional relations between soldiers and statesmen have opened the door to strategic failure.

Thus, the most significant lessons of U.S. civil-military relations since 9/11 are not concerned primarily with the question of civilian control. Instead, they raise such issues as how informed civilian leaders are when they choose to commit the military, how well the civil-military pattern enables the integration of divergent and even contradictory views, and how this pattern ensures a practical-military strategy that properly serves the ends of national policy.

The lessons of post-9/11 U.S. civil-military relations also raise the issue of trust: the mutual respect and understanding between civilian and military leaders and the exchange of candid views and perspectives between the two parties as part of the decision-making process. The

emphasis on civilian control in much of the civil-military relations literature obscures the fact that the real lessons of the post-9/11 era are less about the civilian authorities dictating policy to the military than about the tenor of the dialogue and the quality of the policy decisions and strategic plans that emerge from that dialogue.

Part of renegotiating the civil-military bargain in the future is to ensure that the dysfunctional confluence that has created America's strategic deficit is not repeated. Rectifying this situation requires that both parties to the civil-military bargain adjust the way they do business. On the one hand, the military must recover its voice in strategy-making while realizing that politics permeates the conduct of war and that civilians have a say not only concerning the goals of the war but also how it is conducted. On the other hand, civilians must understand that to implement both effective policy and strategy requires the proper military instrument. They must also insist that soldiers present their views frankly and forcefully throughout the strategy-making process.

The future security environment and the reality of American politics suggest the need to shift from the outdated "normal" theory of civil-military relations to one more historically grounded, a model that accounts for the overlapping and reciprocal interrelationships of ends, ways and means necessary for strategic success. This requires establishing new norms that create a decision-making climate that encourages candid advice and the rigorous exchange of views and insights.

It is important to reiterate that U.S. civil-military relations entail more than merely civilian control, as important as that may be. Civilian control is constitutionally grounded in the United States and the principle is accepted without question in the officer corps. The more important questions of American civil-military relations concern how to ensure effective strategies for the employment of the military instrument. To ensure this outcome to the benefit of U.S. security requires discipline, a deliberate process, and a continuous dialogue between the civilian leadership and the military.

## Notes

1. I am indebted to Andrew Bacevich for this formulation of the problem in a comment on an early version of my proposal for a book tentatively titled *Sword of Republican Empire: A History of U.S. Civil-Military Relations*.

# WHAT MILITARY OFFICERS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS

*By Mackubin Thomas Owens*

July 2013

*This E-Note is the text from the Ira Eaker Distinguished Lecture on National Security, delivered by Owens at the US Air Force Academy in May 2013.*

It is a great honor and pleasure to return to the US Air Force Academy today. It is also a great honor to be associated with the name of Ira Eaker, a true American hero and one of the fathers of American air power. I'm sure by this time you have seen *Twelve O'clock High*, and I assure that if you haven't, you WILL see it in the future. You may know that Major General Patrick Pritchard, the character played by the actor Millard Mitchell, is based on Ira Eaker. When we use the movie at the Naval War College, we focus on Pritchard as an example of strategic leadership—linking the tactical and the operational levels of war to national policy. This is what Ira Eaker did: he was responsible for proving the feasibility of daylight precision bombing as an operational concept linked to national policy. Someday many of you will be expected to provide this same strategic bridge between operational art on the one hand and national policy on the other.

## CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS

My topic tonight is civil-military relations. Now many of you are thinking to yourselves: why do I need to worry about civil-military relations? First, the US military as an institution seems to have internalized the commitment to civilian control. There's no likelihood of a military coup. Second, any problem with civil-military relations is something for the generals and admirals to worry about. But I contend that it is the obligation of every officer to understand the dynamics of civil-military relations. Healthy civil-military relations in the future will depend a great deal on you fine, young, soon-to-be officers.

So what do we mean by civil-military relations? I argue that the term refers broadly to the *interaction between the armed forces of a state as an institution, the government, and the other sectors of the society in which the armed force is embedded.*

Civil-military relations have to do with the *allocation of responsibilities and prerogatives between the civil government and the military establishment.*



Civil-military relations can be understood as “Two Hands on the Sword.” The civilian hand determines when the sword is drawn. The military hand keeps it sharp and wields it in combat, always guided by the purposes for which the war is being fought.

I argue that US civil-military relations constitute a *bargain*, regarding the aforementioned allocation of prerogatives and responsibilities.

There are three parties to the bargain: the American people; the government; and the military establishment. The bargain must be periodically re-negotiated to take account of political, social, technological, or geopolitical changes.

There have been several renegotiations of the US civil-military bargain over the past 70 years, including:

- World War II: when the military became a “central” as opposed to a peripheral institution in America
- Cold War: when the rise of nuclear weapons and the central role of deterrence **marginalized the military’s contribution to strategy-making**
- Post-Cold War: a shift to regional conflict and constabulary operations **changed the military’s operational orientation**
- Post 9/11: civil-military relations during a time of protracted conflict, giving rise to the possibility of praetorianism.

A central question today is whether another renegotiation is in the offing.

The civil-military bargain focuses on five questions or sets of questions:

1. How do we ensure civilian control of the military establishment? The dominant model in the United States is Samuel Huntington’s “Objective” Control, which maximize military professionalism in exchange for political neutrality. As Huntington wrote: on the one hand, civilian authorities grant a professional officer corps autonomy *in the realm of military affairs*. On the other, “a highly professional officer corps stands ready to carry out the wishes of any civilian group which secures legitimate authority within the state.” According to Huntington, objective control assures civilian control while **simultaneously maximizing military effectiveness**. Eliot Cohen calls this the “normal” theory of civil-military relations but points out that it has often been violated in practice. The fact that liberal societies such as the United States often take civilian control for granted begs several further questions: does civilian control refer simply to the dominance of civilians within the executive branch – the president or the secretary

of defense? What is the role of the legislative branch in controlling the military instrument? Is the military establishment “unified,” that is, does it speak with anything like a single voice vis-à-vis the civil government? What is the nature of military advice? Should military leaders “insist” that their advice be heeded? What courses of action are available to military leaders who believe the civilian authorities are making bad decisions? In other words is there something that might be called a “calculus of dissent” that military leaders can invoke in cases where they believe civilian decisions are dangerous to the health of the country? These issues, addressed below, are part and parcel of what officers need to know about civil-military relations.

2. What constitutes an acceptable level of military influence on the other spheres of society? The extreme form of military influence in society is militarism, a state of affairs in which military values predominate and the military devours a disproportionate share of society’s resources. What is the proper scope of military affairs? In today’s environment, what constitutes military expertise? Does it go beyond what Samuel Huntington called in *The Soldier and the State*, his classic study of civil-military relations, the “management of violence?” Should it? For instance, to what extent should the military influence foreign policy? Has American foreign policy become “militarized?” Do combatant commanders exercise too much power? Have they become the new “viceroys” or “proconsuls?” What is the proper role regarding the military and domestic politics? Should active duty officers be writing op-eds in support of particular programs or policies? Should retired officers get involved in partisan politics? What is the military’s proper role in influencing the allocation of resources?
3. What is the primary purpose of the military? Is it to fight and win the nation’s wars or to engage in constabulary actions? What kind of wars should the military prepare to fight? Should the focus of the military be foreign or domestic? The United States has answered this question differently at different times and under different circumstances. For example, throughout most of its history, the United States Army was a constabulary force. It permanently oriented itself toward large-scale conflicts against foreign enemies only in the 1930s. The end of the Cold War and the attacks of 9/11 have suggested new answers (e.g., a focus on “irregular warfare”) as well as an openness to the use of the military in domestic affairs (e.g., disaster relief in response to emergencies such as Katrina, domestic law enforcement during the Los Angeles riots, or border security). What impact do such issues have on civil–military relations?

4. What pattern of civil-military relations best ensures military success? All of the other questions mean little if the military instrument is unable to ensure the survival of the state. If there is **no constitution, the question of constitutional balance doesn't matter.** Does effectiveness require a military culture distinct in some ways from the society it serves? What impact does societal structure have on military effectiveness? What impact does political structure exert? What impact does the pattern of civil military relations have on the effectiveness of strategic decision-making processes?
  
5. Who serves? Is military service an obligation of citizenship or something else? How are enlisted members recruited and retained? How should the US military address issues of **“diversity” in the force? What about reserves, racial and ethnic minorities, women, and gays?**

Obviously, questions regarding military service have been answered differently by Americans at different times under different circumstances. Through most of its early history, the United States maintained a small regular peacetime establishment that mostly conducted limited constabulary operations. During wartime, the several states were responsible for raising soldiers for federal service, either as militia or volunteers.

While there was limited federal conscription during the Civil War and a more extensive draft during World War I, conscription only became the norm in the United States from the eve of World War II until the 1970s. Today the US military is a volunteer professional force. But even now the force continues to evolve, as debates over such issues as the role of the reserve components in the post-9/11 military force, women in combat, gays in the services, and the recruitment of religious minorities make clear.

I ask you to keep these questions in mind as I describe the eight things about US civil-military relations that I believe every officer needs to know.

*First, it is important to realize that civil-military tensions in the United States are not new; examples of civil-military tensions in the past include:*

Washington at Newburgh

Federalists vs. Republicans regarding a Military Establishment

Andrew Jackson and Spanish Florida

Mexican War: Whigs and Democrats

Civil War: Lincoln and McClellan

Reconstruction: Johnson Urged to Use the Military to Suppress Congress

Preparedness Movement

Election of 1920: Leonard Wood

*Second, the absence of a coup does not necessarily mean that civil-military relations are healthy.*

All too often, US military officers seem to believe that if the United States does not face the prospect of a Latin-American or African style military *coup d'état*, then all is well in the realm of civil-military relations. But this is a straw man. A number of scholars, including Richard Kohn, Peter Feaver, the late Russell Weigley, Michael Desch, and Eliot Cohen have argued that although there is no threat of a coup on the part of the US military, American civil-military relations have nonetheless deteriorated over the past two decades.

For example, the US military has “pushed back” against civilian leadership on numerous occasions during the last two decades. This pushback has manifested itself in “foot dragging,” “slow rolling” and leaks to the press designed to undercut policy or individual policy-makers. Such actions were rampant during the Clinton presidency and during the tenure of Donald Rumsfeld as secretary of defense. Such pushback is based on the claim that civilians were making decisions without paying sufficient attention to the military point of view.

*Third, civilian control involves not only the Executive Branch but Congress as well.*

As the constitutional scholar Edwin Corwin, once famously observed, the Constitution is an “invitation to struggle for the privilege of directing American foreign policy” between Congress and the president. But there is a similar tension at work with regard to civil-military relations. Those who neglect the congressional role in American civil-military relations are missing an important element. Military officers are obligated to share their views with Congress. Doing so should not be treated as an “end run” undermining civilian control of the military.

*Fourth, US military history illustrates that the military is not always right, even regarding strictly military affairs.*

For instance, during the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln constantly prodded George McClellan to take the offensive in Virginia in 1862. McClellan just as constantly complained about insufficient forces.

Despite the image of civil-military comity during World War II, there were many differences between Franklin Roosevelt and his military advisers. George Marshall, the greatest soldier-statesman since Washington, opposed arms shipments to Great Britain in 1940 and argued for a cross-channel invasion before the United States was ready. History has vindicated Lincoln and Roosevelt.

Similarly, many observers, especially those in the uniformed military, have been inclined to blame the U.S. defeat in Vietnam on the civilians. But the U.S. operational approach in

Vietnam was the creature of the uniformed military. Today, many argue that the operational strategy of General William Westmoreland was counterproductive; it did not make sense to emphasize attrition of Peoples' Army of Vietnam forces in a "war of the big battalions"—that is, one involving sweeps through remote jungle areas in an effort to fix and destroy the enemy with superior fire power. By the time Westmoreland's successor, Gen. Creighton Abrams, could adopt a more fruitful approach, it was too late.

During the planning for Operation Desert Storm in late 1990 and early 1991, General Norman Schwarzkopf, commander of CENTCOM, presented a plan calling for a frontal assault against Iraqi positions in southern Kuwait followed by a drive toward Kuwait City. The problem was that this plan was unlikely to achieve the foremost military objective of the ground war: the destruction of the three divisions of Saddam's Republican Guard. The civilian leadership rejected the early war plan presented by CENTCOM and ordered a return to the drawing board. The revised plan was far more imaginative and effective.

Finally, many senior officers opposed President Bush's surge in Iraq in 2007, further illustrating the fact even in wartime, the military does not always know best.

#### *Fifth, dissent is not disobedience*

The military has an obligation to forcefully present its best advice but does not have the right to *insist* that its advice be followed. However, dissent is not disobedience: there must be a "calculus of dissent" that extends beyond the stark choice of "salute and obey" and "exit." This is a function of professionalism.

Dissent raises the question: is the uniformed military just one more obedient bureaucracy in the Executive Branch or is it a profession granted significant autonomy and a unique role in its relationship with civilian policy makers due to its expert knowledge and expertise? What options does an officer have when he/she disagrees with policies/orders, etc.?

During the so-called Revolt of the Generals, Lt. Gen. Greg Newbold, USMC (ret) wrote: "I offer a challenge to those still in uniform: a leader's responsibility is to give voice to those who can't—or don't have the opportunity—to speak...It is time for some military leaders to discard caution in expressing their views and ensure that the President hears them clearly." Many believed that his dissent would have carried more weight had he offered it while he was still on active duty.

Nonetheless, the issue of dissent has suggested to some that resignation or retirement is the only option for those officers who disagree with policy. But as the eminent military historian Richard Kohn argues, "Personal and professional honor do not require a request for reassignment or retirement if civilians order one's service, command, or unit to act in some

manner an officer finds distasteful, disastrous, or even immoral. The military's job is to advise and then execute lawful orders...If officers at various levels measure policies, decisions, orders, and operations against personal moral and ethical systems, and act thereon, the good order and discipline of the military would collapse."

I have argued elsewhere that this belief on the part of officers is the result of a serious misreading of H.R. McMaster's *Dereliction of Duty*: "Many serving officers believe that [McMaster] effectively makes the case that the Joint Chiefs of Staff should have more openly voiced their opposition to the Johnson administration's strategy of gradualism [during the Vietnam war], and then resigned rather than carry out the policy. . . .But the book says no such thing. While McMaster convincingly argues that the chiefs failed to present their views frankly and forcefully to their civilian superiors, including members of Congress when asked for their views, he neither says nor implies that the chiefs should have obstructed President Lyndon Johnson's orders and policies by leaks, public statements, or by resignation."

*Sixth, civil-military disputes usually do not per se pit civilians against the military, but involve one civil-military faction against another.*

Examples include:

The post-World War II air power debate pitting the newly emerging Air Force against the Navy: on the one hand, President Truman, Secretary of Defense Johnson, and members of Congress favoring the B-36 strategic bomber and the effort by the Air Force to gain control of naval aviation vs. the Navy and its civilian supporters favoring the "super-carrier" *USS United States*.

The firing of MacArthur (Marshall and Eisenhower urging Truman to fire him, Republicans in Congress supporting MacArthur);

The Marines and the Osprey. The Office of the Secretary of Defense rejected the Osprey but the Marines's congressional coalition kept it alive.

*As budgets decline, this is likely to be the main shape of civil-military discord for the foreseeable future.*

*Seventh, patterns of civil-military relations affect military outcomes.*

As Richard Kohn has written, "In effect, in the most important area of professional expertise—the connecting of war to policy, of operations to achieving the objectives of the nation—the American military has been found wanting. The excellence of the American military in operations, logistics, tactics, weaponry, and battle has been manifest for a generation or more.

Not so with strategy.” He is echoed by Colin Gray who observed that: “All too often, there is a black hole where American strategy ought to reside.”

The problem here is that Huntington’s objective control, which reinforces the military’s desire for autonomy leads it to focus on the operational level of war and not on strategy. As Hew Strachan has observed, “The operational level of war appeals to armies: it functions in a politics-free zone and it puts primacy on professional skills.” Herein lies the problem for US strategy making: the military’s preference for focusing on the operational level of war creates a disjunction between operational excellence in combat and *policy*, which determines the reasons for which a particular war is to be fought. In other words, the combination of the Huntington’s objective control and the US military’s focus on the non-political operational level of war means that all too often the conduct of a war is disconnected from the goals of the war.

As two writers recently observed, “rather than meeting its original purpose of contributing to the attainment of campaign objectives laid down by strategy, operational art—practiced as a ‘level of war’—assumed responsibility for campaign planning. This reduced political leadership to the role of ‘strategic sponsors,’ quite specifically widening the gap between politics and warfare. The result has been a well-demonstrated ability to win battles that have not always contributed to strategic success, producing ‘a way of battle’ rather than a way of war.”

They continue: “the political leadership of a country cannot simply set objectives for a war, provide the requisite materiel, then stand back and await victory. Nor should the nation or its military be seduced by this prospect. Politicians should be involved in the minute-to-minute conduct of war; as Clausewitz reminds us, political considerations are ‘influential in the planning of war, of the campaign, and often even of the battle.’”

The reverse is true as well. The military has to be at the policy and strategy table in order to ensure that its advice regarding options and risk are being heard. Which leads us to:

*Eighth, it is important to recognize that there is a difference between being “political” and being “partisan.”*

Military officers must be “political” in the sense of understanding the political environment and being able to navigate its currents. But they must be non-partisan and resist becoming an adjunct of a political party.

WHAT FACTORS WILL INFLUENCE US CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS IN THE FUTURE?

*They include the character of the wars we will fight in the future.*

1. For instance, protracted wars often create the danger of praetorianism as exemplified by the French military after Indochina and Algeria. A milder though still dangerous manifestation of praetorianism was evident in the “Team America” conceit on the part of Gen. McChrystal’s staff in the *Rolling Stone* article that led to the general’s resignation.
2. Declining defense budgets may lead to the end of “jointness” and the emergence of civilian-military factions fighting over resources and missions reminiscent of the B-36 vs. USS United States debate in 1949. *The really great danger is that inter-service battles over resources may lead the American people to conclude that the US military is just another interest group.* If that happens, the high standing of the US military could rapidly evaporate.
3. New circumstances (e.g., cyber and oversight of special operations may create new tensions).
4. The Participation Gap: the “other one percent”
5. Future debate over the Iraq and Afghanistan “narratives.” Copperheads and Vietnam.
6. Domestic Politics, the truly “Forgotten Aspect” of US Civil-Military Relations: How society treats its soldiers and veterans and vice versa. For instance, will PTSD, a “disease model” prevail in society’s view of veterans or may it be supplanted by what Gen. James Mattis has called “positive traumatic growth” as the best way to look at the impact of close combat/intimate killing on soldiers. In other words, do we see our veterans as *victims* or as those who served honorably under difficult circumstances? Here we might look to the legacy of Vietnam.

Karl Marlantes, with whom I served in the same Marine infantry battalion in Vietnam has addressed these questions in a book: *What it is Like to Go to War* (he is also the author of the remarkable Vietnam War novel, *Matterhorn*). He describes the psychological “split” in the soldier at war. This split is captured in a passage from Wolfram von Eschenbach’s *Parzifal*: “Shame and honor clash where the courage of a steadfast man is motley like the magpie. But such a man may yet make merry, for Heaven and Hell have equal part in him.”

## CONCLUSION

Today’s US civil-military relations since 9/11 raise a number of issues. How informed are civilian leaders when they choose to commit the military instrument? How well does the prevailing pattern of civil-military relations enable the integration of divergent and even



contradictory views? Does this pattern ensure a practical military strategy that properly serves the ends of national policy?

The post-9/11 US civil-military relations also point to the issue of *trust*: the mutual respect and understanding between civilian and military leaders and the exchange of candid views and perspectives between the two parties as part of the decision-making process.

Establishing trust requires that both parties to the civil-military bargain reexamine their mutual relationship. On the one hand, the military must recover its voice in strategy-making while realizing that politics permeates the conduct of war and that civilians have the final say, not only concerning the goals of the war but also how it is conducted. On the other, civilians must understand that to implement effective policy and strategy requires the proper military instrument and therefore must insist that soldiers present their views frankly and forcefully throughout the strategy-making and implementation process. This is ultimately the key to healthy civil-military relations.

## PART IV: MILITARY CULTURE

# NEXT-WAR-ITIS, THIS-WAR-ITIS, AND THE AMERICAN MILITARY

By Michael P. Noonan

January 2009

*This essay was published in E-Notes.*

In a recent CBS News story, Marine Corps Commandant General James Conway stated—for at least the second time publicly—that it was time for the Marine Corps to leave Iraq and focus on Afghanistan. In the Commandant's view, the Marine Corps is a "fighting machine," Iraq has turned into "nation building," and "[t]hat's not what we do.... Where there's a fight, that's where the Marine Corps is needed." [1] The subtext of this seems clear enough. General Conway feels that his Marines should focus on "real war," where their martial skills of air and artillery strikes and violent maneuver to close with and destroy the enemy are employed to effect. The extended current counterinsurgency and nation-building campaign in Iraq is seen as a misapplication of the Corps' core competencies and soften the force, or at least emphasize the wrong skills sets and lessons that will cause the United States to pay a steep tax in blood and treasure on some future battlefield.

These comments caused a stir in some circles. Some argue that his comments misread the source of success in Al Anbar, where patient "nation-building" by the Army and the Marine Corps was crucial. It also arguably misreads what will be most useful in Afghanistan, where U.S. strategy emphasizes more than just conventional brawn. But this is not just solely an issue of debate amongst the Marine Corps. All of the services currently are having debates about their dominant service culture and core competencies. A distilled short hand for this debate is between the antagonistically labeled schools of "this-war-itis" and "next-war-itis." This short piece will provide a glimpse of these contemporary debates and offer opinions on how they might play out going into the Obama administration. This is an important debate because strategic success—and no small amount of treasure—is at stake.

## The Other Perennial Military Culture War

Writing in the October 2008 issue of *The Atlantic* magazine, Andrew Bacevich, a retired Army officer and noted historian, described the contours, for land forces at least, of the this-war-itis and next-war-itis schools. [2] In order to simplify things he divided the camps between "crusaders" and "conservatives." Crusaders consist of those who have embraced counterinsurgency and feel that Iraq had gone poorly because "rigidly conventional senior commanders, determined 'never again' to see the Army sucked into a Vietnam-like quagmire, had largely ignored unconventional warfare and were therefore prepared poorly for it." Conservatives, meanwhile, "reject the revisionist interpretation of Vietnam and dispute the

freshly enshrined conventional narrative on Iraq... [and] they question whether Iraq represents a harbinger of things to come.” Many consider the writings of retired Army Lieutenant Colonel John Nagl and current Army Colonel Gian Gentile as the archetype exemplars for the crusader and conservative schools, respectively. [3]

While Bacevich purposefully uses dichotomous ideal types to drive his analysis, a better construct to examine this issue might be one proposed by another retired Army officer and defense scholar: Sam C. Sarkesian. In his examination of the Army officer corps in Vietnam, Sarkesian proposed that there are in fact three groups of officers: traditionalists, transitionalists, and modernists. [4] The “traditionalists,” largely veterans of the Second World War, felt that the proper application of conventional military power would have won the Southeast Asian war. The “transitionalists,” Army officers who had their formative years in the 1950s, believed that conventional power plus some new approaches and techniques would have done the trick. Last, “modernists,” officers with formative experiences during the Vietnam era, believed that conventional techniques could not “win” revolutionary wars in alien cultures. [5] While one may quibble with this analytical slicing, it does provide an interesting structure to apply to each of the services today. What follows is meant to be provocative and will surely raise some hackles; regardless some may find it to have value in examining the current culture clash within the American military. As ideal types these classifications also may hold fluidity between age and year group cohorts. [6]

*The Army.* Of all of the services, the United States Army seems most affected by a profession suffering from cognitive dissonance about whether we the force should be organized, trained, and equipped for irregular (e.g., Iraq, Afghanistan) or traditional (e.g., North Korea, China) threats. The current “traditionalists” were largely enculturated through the experiences of the late Cold War or Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm. For them the Army is the sword and shield of the Republic and needs to focus on large-scale ground combat against similar foes. The “transitionalists” are those officers who came of age during the peacekeeping and peace enforcement operations of the 1990s. These officers seem to see some utility in political-military approaches to the strategic environment, but still seem most comfortable with an approach heavily favoring the application of conventional military power. Last, the “modernists” are the officers who have come of age in the post-9/11 era. Mostly junior officers, they have been shaped by the experiences of Iraq and Afghanistan to buy into the concept of people-oriented counterinsurgency and working with, and sometimes by and through, local forces on the ground. (Each of these age groups and cohorts described above roughly track across the services.)

*The Navy.* The naval service, somewhat like the Army, but perhaps not to the same extremes, has also faced some internal professional dissent. For the traditionalists the dominant view of the profession was for open ocean (i.e., “blue water”) control of sea lines of communications

and precision strikes (both from carrier born aviation and cruise missile) against enemy targets. The transitionalists of the sea service saw the Navy's role expand into the littorals (i.e., "green water") for expanded missions such as humanitarian aid and precision strikes against non-state actors. Modernists, for their part, have embraced riverine operations (i.e., "brown water"), working on the land away from the water (e.g., working convoys, working on Provisional Reconstruction Teams, etc.), and embracing more distributed concepts on the water with smaller platforms such as the Littoral Combat Ship (LCS; also derisively labeled as "Little Crappy Ships" by some service traditionalists).

*The Air Force.* The Air Force of the four services seems least affected by the turbulence over its professional conception. While the scale of activities have shifted from the Cold War days, particularly for its strategic forces, the aerospace service still provides the same essential goods: control of the skies, strikes, and transport. Still, its traditionalists hold most dearly to aerospace supremacy (which is a vital mission) and the efficacy of air strikes to solve complex problems. The transitionalists came of age in a period where humanitarian aid missions were seen as a useful adjunct to traditional roles. Modernists, while still clinging to many precepts of the dominant professional views, seem more sanguine about the use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), unmanned combat vehicles (UCAVs; e.g., armed Predators), working on the ground with the sister services, and are not as invested in the idea that the air arm can solely determine outcomes.

*The Marine Corps.* Of all of the services, the Marine Corps would seem to be the service least at cultural drift. As the service most engrained with a common culture ("every Marine a rifleman") this should not be surprising. Also, as the service most driven by professional paranoia over the encroachment of the other services into its turf (as former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger made clear, even paranoids have real enemies) and reinforced by Congressional statute to be a maritime-based, "shock force," this further leads to a lack of surprise on this front. Still, many traditionalists of the service cling to a view that the Marines should focus on large-scale amphibious operations a la Inchon and Iwo Jima, and everything else should be secondary. A bit of this traditional kinetic view ("shock troops from the sea") is implied in the Commandant's message above. (Afghanistan might be off the littoral, but it provides better opportunities to conduct maneuver warfare and apply violent means than does Iraq.) Transitionalist Marines lived through the period where schools such as the Amphibious Warfare School transformed to the Expeditionary Warfare School and the ethos expanded to "doing windows" on the ground in peace enforcement environs, but with a focus more on the enforcement side of the equation. The modernists, like their kin in the Army, however, seem more at ease with the counterinsurgency role and see the Corps reliving its small wars or "Banana Wars" past.

With the above said, one might ask, so what? The answer to the so-what question is that the dominant cultural paradigms of today drive the procurement budgets of the services, how they are organized, how Soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines are trained and schooled to deal with the operational environment, and, perhaps most importantly, who gets selected to higher positions of rank and authority and thus can help shape the proceeding items down the road. Furthermore, as Sarkesian has pointed out, in regards to the services, “[t]he institution has a built-in socialization process which favors orthodoxy, and the danger is that the institution will capture such officers before they can capture the institution.” [7] The intensity of the fighting among the modernists and traditionalists in the Army is so heated because the stakes are so high. While traditionalists in the Air Force and Navy may not feel as institutionally threatened by their services’ modernists, such a shift in the Army is much more far reaching due to the strategic environment.

### The Rise of Hybrid Wars and Deciding on the Future Direction of the American Military

Which package of views above is correct? That is roughly the \$500-billion-a-year question. Traditionalists spout forth like the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah that the current fetish for **irregular threats and counterinsurgency places the Nation’s security at jeopardy on some still unforeseen conventional battlefield.** They anticipate that the next war will be distinctly conventional and large-scale. Modernists, on the other hand, seem to view much of the **traditionalist outlook as “old think” that has been displaced by the present and emergent realities of networked, non-state or transnational-state threats.** They project a future of myriad small wars, terrorism, counterinsurgencies, and messy protracted conflicts that commingle with criminality. Transitionalists, for their part, seem stuck in the middle. For some, the writings of Frank Hoffman and others on **“hybrid threats” offers a possible middle path.** [8] Such hybrid threats blur conventional and unconventional modes of force employment and sometimes between state and non-state actors. The Lebanon War of 2006 between Israel and Hezbollah is seen as the most recent exemplar of such operational blurring.

But can **“hybrid wars” bring all sides onto the same sheet of music?** It is easy to see how such a conception might be thought to be all things to all people. Ground force traditionalists might see it as a way to focus on the heavy-end of the spectrum of force while their modernist counterparts may look to the low-end. If this is the case the concept may not be as effectual as some see it, and it could make the budgetary process more difficult by having each school of thought trying to justify its procurement wishes as **“hybrid war” systems, but it would at least provide a common operational vocabulary for both sides.** Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates, for one, seems to be a fan of the concept and sees it as part of a balanced strategy. [9] In his words, **“Just as one can expect a blended high-low mix of adversaries and types of conflict, so, too, should the United States seek a better balance in the portfolio of capabilities it has—the types of units fielded, the weapons bought, the training done.”** [10]

The Secretary's endorsement, along with his continued service into the Obama administration, seems for now at least to address a fundamental issue raised by Bacevich in his piece:

*The biggest question of all, [Colonel Gian] Gentile writes, is "Who gets to decide this?" Absent a comparably searching Great Debate among the civilians vying to direct U.S. policy—and the prospects that either Senator McCain or Senator Obama will advocate alternatives to the Long War appear slight—the power of decision may well devolve by default upon soldiers. Gentile insists—rightly—that the choice should not be the Army's to make. [11]*

As historical precedents suggest, this does not mean the issue is resolved for good. To be clear, none of the above suggests that any of the idealized schools have it completely right. Military professionals, like Janus of Roman mythology, need to look both to the past and to the future in order to make the best choices for fulfilling the national security requirements of the United States. But as we still remained mired in fierce wars of the present, and as the public pronouncements of President-elect Barack Obama do not seem to fundamentally alter the conduct of the present wars, and as Secretary Gates has stated his strategic guidance, the argument is moot for now. For the time being, the traditionalists, transitionalists, and modernists should stop sparring and carry out their assigned duties with a modicum of solidarity. Once we win the current wars, we can worry about "next-war-itis."

#### Notes

1. Cami McCormick, "'High Time' to Move Marines to Afghanistan," CBSNews.com, Dec. 31, 2008.
2. Andrew Bacevich, "The Petraeus Doctrine," *The Atlantic*, October 2008.
3. See, e.g., John A. Nagl, "Let's Win the Wars We're In," *Joint Force Quarterly* (issue 52, 1st Quarter 2009): 20-26; and Gian P. Gentile, "Let's Build an Army to Win All Wars," *Joint Force Quarterly* (issue 52, 1st Quarter 2009): 27-33. Both articles may be found online at: [http://www.ndu.edu/inss/Press/jfq\\_pages/i52.htm](http://www.ndu.edu/inss/Press/jfq_pages/i52.htm).
4. Sam C. Sarkesian, *Beyond the Battlefield: The New Military Professionalism* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1981).
5. *Ibid.*, p. 85.
6. For additional insights on the service cultures of the Army, Navy, and Air Force see Carl H. Builder, *The Masks of War: American Military Styles in Strategy and Analysis* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), and for the Marine Corps see Thomas E. Ricks, *Making the Corps* (New York: Scribner, 1998).

7. Sarkesian, *Beyond the Battlefield*, p. 86.
8. See, e.g., Lt. Gen. James N. Mattis and Frank Hoffman, "Future Warfare: The Rise of Hybrid Warfare," *Naval Institute Proceedings*, November 2005, pp. 30-32; Frank G. Hoffman, "How the Marines are Preparing for Hybrid Wars," *Armed Forces Journal*, April 2006; Frank G. Hoffman "Preparing for Hybrid Wars," *Marine Corps Gazette*, March 2007; Frank G. Hoffman, *Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Warfare*, Arlington VA: Potomac Institute for Policy Studies, Dec. 2007; Frank G. Hoffman, "Hybrid Threats and Challengers," *Joint Force Quarterly*, Jan. 2009; William Nemeth, "Chechnya and the Future of Hybrid Warfare," unpublished Master's Thesis, Monterey, California, 2002; James Callard and Peter Faber, "An Emerging Synthesis for a New Way of War: Combinational Warfare and Future Innovation," *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*, Winter/Spring 2002; Michael Evans, "From Kadesh to Kandahar: Military Theory and the Future of War," *Naval War College Review*, Summer 2003; Mackubin Thomas Owens, "America's 'Long War(s)'" *FPRI E-Note*, January 2008; John J. McCuen, "Hybrid Wars," *Military Review*, April-May 2008, pp. 107-113.
9. Robert M. Gates, "A Balanced Strategy," *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2009.
10. *Ibid.*
11. Bacevich, "The Petraeus Doctrine."



# HOW WE FIGHT: CRUSADES, QUAGMIRES, AND THE AMERICAN WAY OF WAR

*By Dominic Tierney*

November 2010

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Unshakeable resolve. The theme was a touchstone on the evening of September 11, 2001, as members of Congress gathered on the steps of the Capitol Building. The Republican Speaker of the House of Representatives, Dennis Hastert, announced that "Democrats and Republicans will stand shoulder to shoulder to fight this evil that's been perpetrated on this nation." The Democratic Senate Majority Leader, Tom Daschle, said that Congress: "will speak with one voice to condemn these attacks, to comfort the victims and their families, to commit our full support to the effort to bring those responsible to justice." A day that began in fear that the Capitol Building itself would be destroyed, ended in a tableau of togetherness, as congressmen warmly embraced.

And then it started. A soft and calming sound at first: "Stand beside her, and guide her." The television cameras pulled back and the surprised anchors grew quiet. On the steps, the voices of men and women, blacks and whites, Democrats and Republicans, rose together in unison: "Through the night with the light from above." With fires still burning at the Pentagon just a few miles away, the song became huge: with pride, with tenacity, with sadness. "From the mountains, to the prairies,/ To the oceans, white with foam./ God bless America,/ My home sweet home." It was a chorus that swept a nation, a truly United States of America, into a war to overthrow the Taliban regime in Afghanistan.

How things change. By 2010, many Americans saw the military campaign in Afghanistan as a futile endeavor. The layers of support for the war effort peeled away, one by one. Matthew Hoh, a State Department employee in Afghanistan, became the first senior official to resign in protest at the war. On September 10, 2009, he wrote that the families of Americans killed in action: "must be reassured their dead have sacrificed for a purpose worthy of futures lost, love vanished, and promised dreams unkept. I have lost confidence such assurances can anymore be

made." Conservative commentator George Will argued that the United States must end its hopeless nation-building mission in Afghanistan: "before more American valor ... is squandered."

In December 2009, President Barack Obama announced a new strategy in Afghanistan in a speech at West Point: "It's easy to forget that when this war began, we were united-bound together by the fresh memory of a horrific attack, and by the determination to defend our homeland and the values we hold dear. I refuse to accept the notion that we cannot summon that unity again." Obama was right. Americans will summon that unity again-just not in regard to Afghanistan.

How had it come to this? Why did we shift from singing "God Bless America," to seeing America's blessed valor being squandered in a futile quagmire? Perhaps the mission in Afghanistan was simply a disastrous failure. But what if our experience of hope and disillusionment in the Afghan War reflected something deeper in the American mind and in American history? What if we are characteristically predisposed to revel in the overthrow of an evil regime, and equally likely to see nation-building in Afghanistan as a grim and forbidding labor?

Sitting on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., and looking toward the Capitol, where members of Congress gathered that night to sing, we can see America's vision of how war is meant to be. Behind us is a marble Abraham Lincoln, enthroned in his temple, and flanked by the national hymns of the Gettysburg Address and his second inaugural address. Straight ahead lie the Reflecting Pool and the World War II Memorial. The shimmering water bridges America's two "good wars": the first to save the Union and free the slaves from 1861 to 1865, and the second to defeat fascism from 1941 to 1945. The fifty-six pillars and the giant arches of the World War II Memorial signify America's common purpose, when the home front and the battle front united to crush evil. Anchoring the military vista, at the far end of the Mall, is a statue of Civil War general Ulysses S. Grant. On a platform of Vermont marble, Grant sits atop his horse, calm amid the fury of battle.

A triumphant tale unfolds before us, with World War II bookended by the Civil War titans, Lincoln and Grant. It's a panorama of glory and victory, a narrative of liberation through force of arms: freedom born; global freedom redeemed. This is what war ought to look like: decisive victory, regime change, and the transformation of the world-a magnificent crusade. But if we broaden the view from the Lincoln Memorial, our peripheral vision reveals a less comfortable military narrative. Hidden away behind trees on the right-hand side is a memorial to the 1950-1953 Korean War. This was no splendid crusade. There was no decisive victory. There was no regime change or transformation of the world. Instead, the United States fought

its opponents to a draw. For Americans, it was a bleak ordeal and a profoundly confusing experience.

The raw immediacy of the Korean War Veterans Memorial is utterly different from the abstract triumphalism of the World War II Memorial. The depiction of the Korean War focuses on the human experience of battle. A group of nineteen men, cast in stainless steel, slog their way uphill, sorrowful and exhausted, burdened with baggage and shivering under ponchos from the elements. The bushes and granite strips signify the rough terrain and horrendous conditions. We asked these men to fight in this environment, and they did.

Meanwhile, concealed under trees to the left is a testament to America's tragedy in Vietnam from 1965 to 1973. This is what war ought not to look like. The United States spent years engaged in a futile nation-building effort in South Vietnam, trying to stabilize a weak government while battling a shadowy insurgency. With each step forward, Washington seemed to get further bogged down in the quagmire.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial is a sunken black wall, inscribed with the names of the fallen. A knife cut into America's body exposes a dark wound. To read the names of the dead, you have to physically descend into the gloom. Facing the wall, stand a group of U.S. soldiers, looking for something—perhaps their buddies, perhaps the meaning of this morass. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial does not commemorate the purpose of the war, but instead honors the sacrifice of the troops. There was no united home front to celebrate. In 1969, hundreds of thousands of demonstrators gathered on the Mall to protest against Vietnam in the largest antiwar rally in American history.

For soldiers and civilians alike, war is often a traumatic experience. It is bound up with our very identity. As a result, war is a subject of overwhelming interest, which has prompted the spilling of almost as much ink as blood. How do we unlock the puzzle of American thinking about this most emotive and critical of subjects?

The key is to distinguish between two types of military conflict: interstate war (where we fight against other countries) versus nation-building (where we fight against insurgents). Inspired by idealism and vengeance, we view interstate wars like World War II as a glorious cause to overthrow tyrants. I call this the crusade tradition. These same cultural forces, however, mean that we see nation-building in places like Vietnam or Afghanistan as a wearying trial, in which American valor is squandered. Whether the stabilization operation is a success or a failure in reality, we usually perceive it as a grim labor. I call this the quagmire tradition.

In other words, Americans are addicted to regime change and allergic to nation-building. In 2000, George W. Bush said: "I don't think our troops ought to be used for what's called nation-

building ... I think our troops ought to be used to help overthrow the dictator when it's in our best interests." This sentiment is as American as apple pie.

The type of war that we are comfortable fighting is very narrow. The enemy must be a state and not an insurgency. And we need to march on the adversary's capital and topple the government. As soon as Washington deviates from this model, the glue binding together public support for the war effort starts to come unstuck. This insight explains why people back some conflicts but not others, how the United States fights, why Washington wins and loses, and how Americans remember and learn from war.

Many of us view each conflict in history as a distinct and unique event, with no overarching sense of how these campaigns relate to our past, and inform our future. But while America's wars don't repeat themselves, they do rhyme, producing a cadence in the nation's encounter with battle. Crusades like the Civil War, the world wars, and the Gulf War, all follow a similar enthusiastic beat. Nation-building operations in Vietnam, Somalia, and Iraq hit the same weary notes.

If America's military experience is an epic song, each verse has a predictable rhythm. When the first shot is fired, the public rallies around the flag. Crusading enthusiasm sweeps the nation until the great dictator is overthrown. But once the United States begins nation-building in a conquered land, hope quickly turns to regret.

We saw this pattern play out in Iraq. In the spring of 2003, the public was confident and supportive as U.S. forces raced to Baghdad to eliminate Saddam Hussein's government. Then suddenly, the statue of Saddam fell, and Americans were in the midst of the greatest nation-building operation since Vietnam. As U.S. forces began fighting insurgents and overseeing elections, the entire tone of America's thinking about the war changed. By 2007, tens of thousands were protesting on the Mall against the intervention in Iraq.

This is a critical moment to reflect on the nation's experience of war. With fighting ongoing in Afghanistan and Iraq, Americans are trying to understand the new era of terrorism and counterinsurgency. The decisions that presidents make in the next few years may steer the course of U.S. foreign policy for generations.

The crusade and quagmire traditions have often served America well. The crusading instinct guided the United States to total victory in the colossal struggles of 1861 and 1941. Fears of a quagmire have sometimes deterred Americans from unwise interference in other countries' civil wars.

But the world is rapidly changing. The end of the Cold War and 9/11 caused sudden seismic shifts, while globalization produces constant dynamism. The primary threats we face arise not

from great powers such as Nazi Germany or the Soviet Union, but from the interconnected issues of terrorism, rogue states, failed states, and weapons of mass destruction.

In this environment, we must pursue military campaigns that do not fall within our blinkered view of idealized war, but rather in our peripheral vision of uncomfortable conflict. Modern technology is so destructive that we may need to avoid crusades and fight limited interstate wars, with restricted objectives that fall short of regime change. After all, we can't always march on the enemy's capital. And it's almost certain that the United States will have to engage in nation-building to stabilize failed or failing states. This is the face of modern war.

But limited interstate war and nation-building seem un-American and are politically very difficult. We prefer smashing dictators, not dealing with the messy consequences. In Iraq, we are paying a terrible price for these attitudes. The failure to plan for post-conflict reconstruction proved catastrophic as the country descended into a vortex of looting and violence. Can we adapt to a changing world? For inspiration, Americans can look back through history. Our tendency to envision wars as either crusades or quagmires emerged at the time of the Civil War. Lost in popular memory is a very different military ethos that existed in the first years of the Republic. The earliest Americans did not demand expansive crusades to crush enemy tyrants. Instead, they favored restricted campaigns against other countries. And the Founders also supported the military's involvement in nation-building, to develop the United States and open up the West to settlement. American soldiers dug canals and erected bridges. They built roads, dredged harbors, and explored and surveyed the land. They aided travelers heading west and offered relief to the destitute. The Founders created a multipurpose army designed for a wide range of challenges, and so should we.

This argument does not fit neatly into traditional categories. It's not liberal or conservative. It's not Democratic or Republican. It's not hawkish, dovish, neoconservative, or isolationist. Rather, at a time when we face new threats and are divided by extreme partisanship, we need to uncover the hidden assumptions that guide our thinking and generate a fresh perspective on the vital questions of war and peace.

In the following chapters, we will travel from Gettysburg to Manila Bay, from the bloody killing fields of France to the improvised explosive devices in Iraq today. We will see the United States roused into a crusading fervor before falling into deep regret, only to be roused again. We will reflect on the ways that we remember war and how these memories take hold of us, how they awaken and limit our sense of the possible. Finally, we will turn to the founding generation and consider a very different vision of conflict.

The book draws on a wide range of literatures, on strategic culture, public opinion, psychology, idealism, and revenge. The sources include opinion polls, letters, poems, novels, memorials, newspapers, posters, photographs, country music, movies, Star Trek, and the

engravings on Zippo lighters. But it's not with a poll, or a letter, or a novel that we start. It's with a speech, the words of which are etched into the Lincoln Memorial where we sit.

# THE MARINE MASK OF WAR

*By Frank G. Hoffman*

November 2011

*This essay was published as an E-Note.*

In an era in which our national security establishment is being asked to consider draconian cuts as part of the Nation's reaction to its strained fiscal health, it behooves us to truly understand the unique character of the institutions that make up our armed services. More specifically, on this date, celebrated around the world as the 236th birthday of the U.S. Marine Corps, we should pause and appreciate the particular contributions that our Corps of Marines provides for us and the great value the Nation garners from its investment in its Force-in-Readiness.

Over two decades ago, the late Carl Builder, an acclaimed defense intellectual who worked for the RAND Corporation, a Pentagon-funded think tank, penned a provocative book. This book, titled *The Masks of War: American Military Styles in Strategy and Analysis*, has been a well-regarded classic in the library of many defense and security professionals. In *The Masks of War*, Builder sought to understand why our Services act the way they do, why they prize certain values and particular platforms, and how they relate to the nation's defense needs. Builder created a useful framework for this study of organizational culture, one that allowed him to explore what he found to be the sometimes puzzling, frequently paradoxical, and unusually distinctive "personality" or institutional DNA of each of America's armed services.

The principal flaw in this book is that it overlooked the Marines. Builder, reflecting his bias as a strategic thinker devoted to defense-wide and nuclear matters, did not think the Marines mattered all that much. He admitted that despite a distinctive, even colorful, institutional personality, they were not an independent actor with a significant voice in strategy or force planning. This will come as a surprise to anyone who has tried to wrestle with the Marines in the Pentagon or on the Hill when it comes to budget matters impacting the Corps.

Writing as he did in the late 1980s, before the end of the Cold War, Builder might be forgiven. In his day, only one Marine General had ever served in a senior position in the Joint Warfighting community. [1] Now looking back over the past 20 years, Marines have served as the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and seven Marine Generals have served as the Commander of five different Joint combatant commands. [2] Today, General James N. Mattis leads the U.S. Central Command, with oversight of two ongoing conflicts and numerous flashpoints. A Marine General, John Allen, commands the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan at present. Moreover, the Marines were the enabling

anvil to General Norman Schwarzkopf's famous "left hook" in Kuwait during Operation Desert Storm in 1991, and General Mattis' 1st Marine Division swept aside several Iraqi divisions as it raced to Bagdad in 2003 on the right flank of the U.S. Army during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Clearly the Corps does not lack for leadership or a strong voice in national security affairs or an active role in Joint operations. While the Marines may be allocated only 7 percent of the Defense Department's budget, they bat well above their weight in the Pentagon and they deliver combat capability well out of proportion to their cost.

The purpose of this brief note is to fill in the vacuum that the late Mr. Builder left and tie the Corps' position as the world's premier crisis response force to today's principal security challenges. Builder's framework contrasted the Services' identities on five elements or what he called "faces." These were explicitly chosen to draw out the differences between the Services. It is these five faces that constitute each Service's Mask of War:

1. What characteristics and icons they valued, their "altars for worship"
2. Their concerns with self-measurement
3. The preoccupation they have with hardware and technology, or "toys versus the arts" of war
4. The degree and extent of intraservice or branch distinction, and finally
5. The degree of insecurity about Service legitimacy and relevancy.

## THE FIVE FACES

Altars for Worship. Builder defined these as the guiding principles of each Service. A devotion to tradition and independence were the two "altars" he found relevant to the U.S. Navy. Command at sea was the "holy grail." The Air Force he said worshiped at the altar of technology. For the Army it is a connection to the Nation and its citizenry; the Army sees itself as loyal servant of the people, America's Army. To the Marines, it is teamwork and the subordination of the individual to the common good of the unit. First person pronouns are shunned. The Marines worship at the altar of combat readiness—physically, mentally and morally. Marines remain identified as Marines for life: "once a Marine, always a Marine" is more than an expression of respect, it's a form of worship of service and a genuine recognition of the arduous process of becoming a Marine. Another altar is an expeditionary ethos, one that prepares units and individuals for rapid deployment and immediate employment in every "clime and place."

Self-Measurement. Builder believed that each of the Services was preoccupied with measuring themselves and their institutional health by some number. To the Army, it's their overall end



strength, for the Navy it's all about the number of ships (600-ship Navy in the 1980s, 313-ship goal today). For the Air Force, it's the aerodynamic and technological quality of their airframes which is a priority. The quality of the Fifth Generation F-22 is what the Air Force touts, and the relative age of their aircraft. The Marines are quantitative as well. They lobbied Congress in the 1950s to have their force structure of 3 Marine Divisions and 3 Marine Aircraft Wings enshrined in public law to preclude their rivals in the Pentagon or OMB cost analysts from whittling them down to insignificance. Over the last few decades, the Marines have been very conscious of their end strength like the U.S. Army. However, they ultimately measure themselves by results in the field, not inputs like funding levels or force size.

Toys versus the Human Dimension. Of all the Services, the Marines emphasize the human dimension and art of war over science. The other Services, Builder noted, were increasingly devoted to their "toys," with the Air Force the most technologically oriented. Builder would undoubtedly find the Marines different. Their understanding of war stresses the fog, friction and uncertainty inherent in human conflict. Their warfighting philosophy of Maneuver Warfare stresses this human dimension in peace and war. This is why the Marines were so resistant to the Revolution in Military Affairs and the Rumsfeld Transformation agenda, which they found to be tied to transient advantages in technology. The Marines will occasionally invest in breakthrough technologies, like their prized tilt-rotor V-22 Osprey. As Clayton Christiansen showed in his best-selling *The Innovator's Dilemma*, successful transformations are rarely the result of technology, but that to remain successful, businesses do need to be prepared to recognize and seize advantage of disruptive innovations. Clearly, despite its higher cost, the Marines believe that the V-22 affords them new advantages in terms of the Osprey's range and speed that will prove disruptive to future foes. Overall, however, the Corps invests a larger portion of its budget in personnel than any of the Services, and invests more on a per capita basis on selection, initial training, and development.

Intraservice Distinctions. The Corps makes far less distinction between its various branches. Like the Army, the Marines have infantry, artillery, tank and engineering units and specialties. Like the Air Force and Navy, the Marine aviation component can be sub-divided by fixed-wing jet jocks, or helicopter pilots or support personnel. The Marines are individually proud of their particular specialty and like to compete with the other Services in their skills but rarely attempt to distinguish themselves with insignia, unique apparel, or devices that the other Services value. Inside the Marine Corps, it is enough to have graduated Boot Camp or Officer Candidate School and be christened simply "a Marine." To that "face" one can also add the mantra that "every Marine is a rifleman" first and then his sub-specialty. Each Marine is trained as a basic infantryman, and then goes to additional training. The only device or insignia that is treasured is the Eagle, Globe and Anchor that all Marines, regardless of rank or position, wear proudly. Elite units, even Marine Reconnaissance units, are usually played down. If you're a Marine, you are part of the team.

**Service Paranoia.** Because the Marines do not “own” or dominate a distinctive domain of the operating battlespace in the way the Navy does with the oceans or the Air Force over the aerospace domain, they are the most concerned with their legitimacy. Every nation needs a navy and an army. But a Marine Corps is a luxury for most countries, although the need to project power far from our shores is considered a prerequisite for a global superpower. The Marines are conscious of the fact that the U.S. Army ultimately proved themselves in amphibious operations in World War II in landings in North Africa, Italy, Europe and throughout the Pacific. The Marines openly acknowledge that the Nation doesn’t absolutely need a stand-alone Service to conduct amphibious operations, but that the Nation wants the Marine Corps that it does have. This sense of insecurity stokes the Corps’ institutional paranoia and makes it less complacent about its place in the national security architecture than the other Services. Former SecDef Robert Gates challenged the Marines in a major speech in San Francisco last year, and the Corps was not happy about being considered complacent about the future. [3] That speech fueled the Corps’ natural paranoia about its position in a post-Afghanistan world.

They need not worry. The Corps’ expeditionary ethos and its devotion to readiness are highly relevant for today’s uncertain age and resource-constrained situation. A balanced force, poised to respond to simple emergencies at one end of the conflict spectrum and ready to leap immediately to complex contingencies at the other end fits America’s needs now and in the foreseeable future. Single purpose or niche capabilities may be needed in specific scenarios, but forces that can cover down on a range of possible crises and adequately perform across a wide range of missions should be valued when the budget gets tight. The Corps’ Mask certainly framed it into a valuable and enormously flexible instrument of U.S. foreign policy. Over two centuries of service, calls to “Send in the Marines” have become synonymous with readiness, discipline, and success.

Builder found that the other Service masks were fixed and resistant to external direction by our national security leaders. To him the faces of our armed forces were entrenched as “engines of glacial stability,” impervious to outside change. The Marines are different, as their Mask of War (and paranoia) promotes change. It promoted adaptation in the development of new tactics and revolutionary technologies when needed. It also promoted improvisation in the face of cunning and cruel opponents in Korea, Vietnam, Al Anbar and Helmand Province. It has framed today’s Marine Corps into a potent middle-weight fighting force prepared to respond promptly to foreign aggression, emerging crises, or humanitarian disasters around the globe. As demonstrated over the last decade, this versatility and cost effectiveness is a good deal for the American taxpayer.

Having examined the Mask of our Marines, we have great reason to celebrate with them today as they pause to reflect on their glorious legacy in peacetime and in war. Semper Fidelis, the

Corps' motto, means "Always Faithful." They have been consistently faithful to their values, to themselves, and to their critical mission. So, give thanks if you know any Marines and Happy Birthday to our Corps!

#### Notes

1. General George Crist, USMC was Commander, USCENTCOM during the late 1980s, during U.S. naval operations against Iran.
2. Including US Strategic Command (General J. Cartwright), US Atlantic Command (General Jack Sheehan), Joint Forces Command (Gen. J. Mattis), Southern Command (General P. Pace) and CENTCOM (Gen. Joe Hoar, Gen. G. Crist, Gen. Tony Zinni, and Gen. Mattis)
3. See the transcript of Robert Gates, Marine Memorial Association Speech at <http://www.defense.gov/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=4672>.

# FROM BLACK BOOTS TO DESERT BOOTS: THE ALL-VOLUNTEER ARMY EXPERIMENT CONTINUES

*By Leonard Wong*

May 2014

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In 1970, the President's Commission on an All-Volunteer Armed Force delivered its report to the President of the United States, Richard Nixon. In the report, better known as the Gates Commission due to the leadership of former Secretary of Defense Thomas Gates, the members of the Commission stated, "We unanimously believe that the nation's interests will be better served by an all-volunteer force, supported by an effective stand-by draft." They added, "We have satisfied ourselves that a volunteer force will not jeopardize national security, and we believe it will have a beneficial effect on the military as well as the rest of our society." [1] In June of 1973, after years of debate, the statutory authority for the draft expired and the all-volunteer force became a reality.

An effective way to survey the evolution of the all-volunteer force is to examine the different eras of the all-volunteer Army. General Maxwell R. Thurman, widely viewed as the principal architect of the all-volunteer force, liked to point out that instead of examining the all-volunteer Army as a monolithic, static entity, it was important to analyze the different eras of the all-volunteer force. [2] The following paragraphs distill the evolution of the U.S. all-volunteer Army into five eras. Examining the all-volunteer Army in five distinct phases highlights the many factors that have impacted the force over time, yet is parsimonious enough to allow larger trends to emerge.

## 1<sup>ST</sup> ALL-VOLUNTEER ARMY: 1973 - 1980

The first all-volunteer Army began with what, on the surface, appeared to be solid footing. Shortly before the draft ended, Congress gave first term soldiers an unprecedented 61.2 percent pay raise. [3] The increase in pay combined with rising unemployment appeared

to give the fledgling all-volunteer Army a favorable start. Unfortunately, the pay increase also had unanticipated second and third order effects. The large pay increase achieved pay parity for young soldiers, but subsequent military pay raises were consistently capped below wage increases in the private sector by a Congress and society who believed they had already done enough for the military. The reduced pay comparability, combined with the pay compression caused by newly recruited privates earning almost as much as their sergeants, eventually led to a gradual despondency in the mid-grade non-commissioned officer (NCO) ranks.

Compounding the problems were inadequate funding to ensure the ability to recruit quality soldiers and the loss of the Vietnam era GI Bill that attracted high quality recruits in search of federal aid for higher education. With morale still low because of the lingering effects of the Vietnam War, disillusionment gradually overcame the force and drove many NCOs and officers out of the Army as they encountered low quality soldiers and deteriorating conditions. In 1973, the Army Chief of Staff Creighton W. Abrams turned to the faculty and staff at the Army War College and asked them to answer the simple question, “Why an Army?” In the aftermath of the Vietnam War, the profession was struggling to define its *raison d'être*.

Declining enlistment rates, low quality recruits, high attrition, and plummeting morale were indicators that the fledgling force manned with volunteers was becoming dangerously fragile. Despite the mounting problems, a 1978 Department of Defense report on the status of the all-volunteer force reported that:

The quality of those serving on active duty, as measured by the education levels of active duty personnel and the average test scores of new recruits, has not declined as popularly believed but has markedly and steadily improved since the end of the draft. [4]

Unfortunately, the new recruit test scores mentioned in the report were derived from the new Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) and subsequently the Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT). Unbeknownst to the Department of Defense and unconfirmed for several years was the fact that the tests were misnormed. Although Army recruiters were told that their total recruiting target could only be five to six percent of mental aptitude Category IV—the lowest mental category acceptable for military service—per the AFQT, the misnorming of the test allowed many more into the force. In 1979, the Army reported that 9 percent of the new recruits were Category IV. In reality, 42 percent of all new soldiers were Category IV due to the misnorming. [5] Although Army readiness levels were acceptable on paper, it was during this era of the all-volunteer force that the Army's Chief of Staff, General Edward C. Meyer, informed Congress that the Army was actually “a hollow Army.” [6]

In the spring of 1976, the U.S. Military Academy at West Point was rocked by scandal as over 150 cadets were expelled for cheating on an out-of-class electrical engineering exam. With West Point graduates supposedly providing the professional foundation for the officer corps,

the profession was shaken. Adding to the introspection caused by the scandal, 119 women arrived in July as part of the first West Point class with women (62 graduated four years later). The debate and controversy that initially resulted with the introduction of women into West Point has largely subsided, but the overall issues involving the role of women in an all-volunteer Army remain.

The first era of the all-volunteer Army began with a time of high expectations and ended with the nadir of the professional Army. It was a time of low quality soldiers, disillusioned officers, and a tarnished societal perception of the Army. The taking of sixty-six hostages after the storming of the U.S. embassy in Tehran, Iran compounded the malaise creeping into the Army. The failure of Operation Eagle Claw to rescue the hostages concluded a very disheartening phase for the all-volunteer force. Because of the state of the all-volunteer force during this time period, President Richard Nixon—who introduced the all-volunteer Army during his campaign for the presidency—suggested that it might be prudent to turn back to the draft because “the volunteer army has failed to provide enough personnel of the caliber we need for our highly sophisticated armaments.” [7]

## 2<sup>ND</sup> ALL-VOLUNTEER ARMY: 1980 – 1991

In contrast to the first era, the second era of the all-volunteer Army was characterized by progress and success. One of the early signs of life being breathed back into the demoralized force was an 11.1 percent pay raise for all ranks in 1981 and a 14.3 percent raise in 1982. The pay increases were invaluable in lifting the morale of enlisted soldiers and officers who had endured the hardships of the 1970s.

The rebound of the all-volunteer Army after the near failure in the 1970s was exemplified by the extraordinary success of the advertising campaign slogan of “Be All You Can Be.” The slogan eventually pushed the Army into one of the most recognizable brands in America, but more importantly, the slogan was attractive to both potential recruits and serving soldiers. “Be All You Can Be” represented the nascent professional Army of the 1980s—a far cry from the “Today’s Army Wants to Join You” slogan of the early 1970s.

The quality of incoming soldiers increased as the Army focused on a “dual market” approach. Studies showed that young people potentially interested in joining the Army were generally work-oriented or college-oriented. Higher pay and training appealed to those in the former group who viewed the Army as a means to learn a skill. The latter group, however, was attracted to deferred incentives, especially money to attend college. The college-oriented group was critical in that soldiers in this group generally were easier to train, had less discipline problems, and retained better. The image of the Army in the eyes of society rose and soon the Army was recruiting levels of quality as indicated by nearly all recruits being high school

diploma graduates (compared with 58 percent in 1973) and only 4 percent in the lowest acceptable mental category.

Pay raises, renewed attention on the families, and the emphasis on raising the overall quality of life for soldiers were part of a gradual departure from a conscription based belief that **soldiers were a “free good.”** The draft had created an **organizational culture that valued the service of soldiers**, yet acted as if soldiers were replaceable at zero cost. From senior leaders to drill sergeants, a gradual realization was emerging that if soldiers did not feel valued or respected—especially the high quality troops—they would leave.

It was during this era that the Army began its **“training revolution”** with a focus on more deliberate planning, measurable outcomes, and continual evaluation. The renewed emphasis on training culminated in the establishment of the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, California. In addition to the transformed emphasis on training, the Army introduced much needed improvements to key acquisition programs. The **“Big Five” weapons system programs** were initiated in the 1970s, but arrived in the 1980s to a force desperate for modernization. The Abrams main battle tank, Bradley infantry fighting vehicle, Patriot missile system, Blackhawk helicopter, and Apache attack helicopter gave the Army a much improved combat capability that helped fuel the increasing professionalism of the force

One of the key concerns of the Gates Commission report was the issue of civilian control of the military. Critics of the all-volunteer force claimed that the uniformed military would be tempted to intervene in political matters. Despite the confidence reflected in the Gates Commission report that the senior military leadership would not have undue influence on policy making, the second era of the all-volunteer force was marked by a growing concern about senior military leaders circumventing civilian authorities. The Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, commonly referred to as Goldwater-Nichols because of its sponsors Senator Barry Goldwater and Representative William Nichols, was passed partly to reestablish a clear chain of command between the civilian overseers and uniformed military.

The second era of the all-volunteer Army was marked by a renaissance across the ranks. The successes of this era culminated in two key events. First, the fall of the Berlin Wall showed that the all-volunteer force had succeeded in deterring Warsaw Pact aggression. Second, the Persian Gulf War displayed in one hundred hours the amazing effectiveness of highly trained, high quality soldiers operating with high tech equipment under highly competent leadership.

### 3<sup>RD</sup> ALL-VOLUNTEER ARMY: 1991 – 2001

The direction of the third era of the all-volunteer Army in the late 1990s was largely set into motion by budgetary restrictions planned in the mid-1980s as well as the end of the Cold

War. With the United States emerging as the world's only superpower, American society was eager to shrink the Army and reap the economic "peace dividend" from the defense budget. Between 1990 and 1997, the active duty Army was downsized from eighteen divisions and 781,000 soldiers to ten divisions and 480,000 soldiers. With many Army senior leaders having experienced the impersonal and painful downsizing after the end of the Vietnam War, deliberate policies were put in place to minimize the detrimental effects of downsizing.

With the Soviet Union gone as the prime antagonist for national security, the Army shifted to the more fundamental role of "serving the American people[8]" by providing disciplined, trained, manpower capable of deploying to a possibly dangerous environment. Soldiers found themselves once again patrolling the borders—this time in counterdrug operations. The Army once again deployed to the American west—this time to fight forest fires. Soldiers once again took postings to faraway lands – this time under the mil-to-mil engagement policy. [9] The Army was deployed to Haiti, Somalia, Rwanda, Bosnia, and Kosovo. Constabulary forces were left behind in Bosnia and Kosovo with no end date in sight.

In October of 2000, General Eric Shinseki, the Army's Chief of Staff, delivered a speech announcing some very significant changes for the Army—a new readiness reporting system, improvements to the beleaguered military medical system, and a proposed increase in the size of the Army to alleviate the peacekeeping deployment strain on soldiers. Somehow, however, these initiatives were overshadowed by a seemingly innocent policy change announced almost as an afterthought—issuing every soldier a black beret.

Howls of protest followed the announcement almost immediately. Members of elite units—the Rangers, Special Forces, and paratroopers—were the first to decry their loss of distinctiveness through the egalitarian issue of the beret. Former Rangers marched from Fort Benning to the White House to deliver a beret in protest. Because some of the berets would be purchased from, of all countries, China, Congress became involved. Finally, after congressional pressure and a nudge from the White House, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld put the plan on hold until further review. Meanwhile the media and public watched in puzzlement over what seemed to be an inordinate amount of discussion and dissent over a hat.

But the hullabaloo over the beret was not about fashion. It was about the arduous process of changing an Army that had for half a century equipped, trained, and prepared itself to fight World War III—and did it very well. And yet that very success posed an obstacle for change in the future. The need for change became obvious in 1990 when the only forces that could be deployed quickly against the armored columns of Saddam Hussein were the outgunned paratroopers of the 82nd Airborne Division. A decade later, the difficulties in deploying Task



Force Hawk to Kosovo reinforced the growing concern that the Army was still working with a Cold War mindset in a post-Cold War world.

The black beret was intended to be a symbol of unity to pull the Army together as it confronted the challenges in the process of change. Instead, an Army survey during that period showed that despite the Chief of Staff's efforts to change the thinking of the leadership of the Army, 50 percent of battalion and brigade commanders reported that they were uncomfortable with the pending changes of transforming the Army. In hindsight, it is almost incredulous that—a year before the terrorist attacks of September of 2001—half of the soon-to-be strategic leaders of the Army were skeptical of shifting from a Cold War force to a more agile Army.

Thus, the third era of the all-volunteer Army was marked by uncertainty—uncertainty about the magnitude and duration of the downsizing as well as uncertainty about the role of the Army in the world. The uncertainty of the third era of the all-volunteer Army, however, came to an abrupt halt on the morning of September 11, 2001.

#### 4<sup>TH</sup> ALL-VOLUNTEER ARMY: 2001 – 2014

With the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, DC, a focused sense of purpose and urgency descended upon the Army. Less than a month after the attacks, combat operations were initiated against the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. The swift successes of special operations forces working with indigenous allies combined with the employment of precision weapons garnered the attention of policy makers. It seemed to many policy makers that the requirement for a large, and often cumbersome, Army had dissipated with this new way of war.

In the weeks that followed the invasion of Iraq in early March of 2003, it appeared that the Army was performing magnificently. By May 1, 2003, the president declared that major combat operations had concluded. Once again, the quality of the American soldier had been a major factor in the battlefield success. The all-volunteer Army concept was once again validated. As the jubilation over the liberation of Iraq began to wane, however, the Army began to confront the reality of simultaneously rebuilding post-war Iraq and fighting a counterinsurgency.

In the chaotic years after the invasion, junior leaders were tasked to conduct missions for which they never trained, executed operations that had outpaced Army doctrine, shifted constantly from adrenaline-pumping counterinsurgency operations to patience-demanding nation building, and received very little detailed guidance or supervision in the process. While this development alarmed some, it also had the unanticipated effect that a large cohort of the Army began developing *adaptability*—a competency that the Army had long recognized as

vital to future warfare, yet had also discovered was very difficult to develop in a non-deployed Army. By being confronted with complexity, unpredictability, and ambiguity, junior leaders were learning to adapt, to innovate, and to operate with minimal guidance. [10]

Despite the initial surge of enthusiasm in society for military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, opposition to the wars steadily increased. According to a Gallup Poll, 23 percent of Americans in March of 2003 believed the U.S. made a mistake in sending troops to Iraq. By 2008, that number had increased to 63 percent. [11] In 2001, less than 10 percent of Americans thought that military action in Afghanistan was a mistake. By 2014, 49 percent believed it was a mistake and 48 percent did not. [12]

The most significant impact of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, however, was the strain on its personnel. A single twelve or fifteen month deployment could be taxing yet feasible for a young soldier with a growing family. Multiple deployments with only a year respite before deploying again, on the other hand, took their toll on the quality of life. Years of the unpopular wars also turned recruiting for the Army into a continuous struggle. Lowered enlistment standards, raised age limitations, and seemingly endless cash enlistment bonuses **barely kept the Army's head above water. When the Gates Commission delivered its report** forty years ago, it assumed that the all-volunteer force would be supported by an effective standby draft and it did not anticipate that long wars would be measured in decades, not years. The end of the fourth era of the **all-volunteer Army resulted in the world's most competent Army, but also an Army stretched beyond its limits.**

#### 5<sup>TH</sup> ALL-VOLUNTEER ARMY: 2014 –

The Army is once again facing an uncertain future environment. The national military strategy emphasizing a pivot towards Asia is a not-so-subtle signal that the nation has no **appetite for land wars or troops occupying foreign countries. Congress's inaction in stopping** sequestration revealed that the days of the military receiving a blank check are over. The downsizing is in progress while tensions in Ukraine, Syria, Africa, and South Korea simmer. Cyberwarfare, the treatment of veterans, PTSD and TBI, and the growing gap between the military and the society it serves will be some of the many issues facing the all-volunteer force in this new era marked by uncertainty and ambiguity.

The all-volunteer military continues to be the institution that holds the most societal confidence. American society is appreciative of an institution that does its job well and subordinates its own interests to those of society. Yet vulnerabilities in that confidence can emerge from the military fighting for its piece of the shrinking fiscal pie, the perceived neglect of veterans, or the growing political activity of retired general officers.

In 1983, the remarkable success of the all-volunteer force led Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger to exclaim, “To all the American people, I would say that the experiment is over. We know that an all-volunteer force can succeed, and we know what it takes to make it succeed.” And yet, perhaps we really cannot know all it takes to make the all-volunteer Army succeed. Considering the circumstances, it appears that this experiment called the all-volunteer Army is not over.

Notes:

1. Gates, Thomas S. Jr., *The Report of the President’s Commission on an All-Volunteer Armed Force*, Washington, D.C., February 1970, p. iii.
2. See Maxwell R. Thurman, “Sustaining the All-Volunteer Force: 1983-1992: The Second Decade,” in *The All-Volunteer Force After a Decade*, eds. William Bowman, Roger Little, and G. Thomas Sicilia (Washington: Pergamon-Brassey’s, 1986), p. 266-285 and Maxwell R. Thurman, “On Being All You Can Be: A Recruiting Perspective,” in *Professional on the Front Line: Two Decades of the All-Volunteer Force*, eds. J. Eric Fredland, Curtis Gilroy, Roger D. Little, and W. S. Sellman (Washington: Brassey’s, 1996) p. 55-65.
3. Thurman (1986, p. 268).
4. Department of Defense, *America’s Volunteers: A Report on the All-Volunteer Armed Forces*, December 31, 1978, Washington, DC, p. 3.
5. Janice H. Laurence, and Peter F. Ramsberger, *Low-aptitude Men in the Military: Who Profits, Who Pays?* (New York: Praeger, 1991), p. 68.
6. See Chapter 5 “Era of the Hollow Army” in *Who Will Lead? Senior Leadership in the United States Army*, Edward C. Meyer, R. Manning Ancell, and Jane Mahaffey, (Westport Connecticut: Praeger 1995) p. 145-187.
7. Richard M. Nixon, *The Real War* (New York: Warner Books, 1980), p. 201.
8. Headquarters, Department of the Army, Field Manual 1, *The Army*, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001, p. 1.
9. See for example the series by Dana Priest, “The Proconsuls: America’s Soldier-Diplomats,” *The Washington Post*, September 28 – 30, 2000 that discusses the role of the military in diplomacy.

10. See Leonard Wong, *Developing Adaptive Leaders: The Crucible Experience of Operation Iraqi Freedom* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College) 2004.
11. Andrew Dugan, *On 10th Anniversary, 53% in U.S. See Iraq War as Mistake*, Gallup Poll, March 18, 2013. <http://www.gallup.com/poll/161399/10th-anniversary-iraq-war-mistake.aspx>
12. Frank Newport, *More Americans Now View Afghanistan War as a Mistake*, Gallup Poll, February 19, 2014. <http://www.gallup.com/poll/167471/americans-view-afghanistan-war-mistake>.

## PART V: MILITARY INSTRUMENTS

# A STRATEGIC RATIONALE FOR LAND FORCE EXPANSION

*By Frank G. Hoffman*

March 2007

*This essay was published in E-Notes.*

Included within the new Pentagon budget is Secretary Gates' decision to increase the size of the nation's Army and Marine Corps. Between these two ground forces, an increase of 92,000 troops was authorized. Of this total, the Army grows by 65,000 soldiers and the Marines by 27,000. This decision reversed years of Office of the Secretary of Defense strategic guidance which had emphasized "leap ahead" technologies over manpower and leaned towards visions of warfare that emphasized U.S. competitive advantages in target acquisition and precision missile systems. The resulting emphasis on "stand-off warfare" by Mr. Rumsfeld precluded significant investments in land forces despite several years of evidence from Iraq. For several years a number of bipartisan appeals to increase the Army and Marines were made without success. Now belatedly, the administration has reversed course. The FY08 Presidential Budget provides for \$5.6 billion to support the first year of this ramp-up in both Services, and estimates that \$112.3 billion will be required to source and equip these troops between now and 2012.

The supporting rationale for troop strength increases has not been well documented, aside from the evident strain that the military is under as it attempts to meet deployment requirements for two simultaneous insurgencies and other efforts in support of the war on terror. The public has been led to believe that this increase is needed now to reduce the ongoing strain placed on our soldiers and Marines due to the protracted struggle in Iraq. Public officials have stated that the increase is required to improve the deployment/home station ratio of two months at home for every month deployed. This argument may seem compelling, but it may not be relevant to Iraq. These new formations, not all of which are the kinds of units most useful in Iraq, cannot be recruited, equipped, trained and deployed for years. Thus, the "dwell time" ratio will not be improved soon enough, unless we assume we maintain significant forces in Iraq out past 2012. So reducing the strain on the forces heading to Iraq is not the most pressing reason.

The war on terror is another potential rationale. Here again, however, exactly what kinds of capabilities are we adding to our protracted struggle against Islamic extremism? If we were adding 9,200 "foot soldiers" to the State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development, it might help. If we were bulking up our badly implemented strategic communications and public diplomacy programs with a new U.S. Information Agency, it might help. If we were using the military manpower to establish standing interagency task

forces, an Army Training and Advisory Brigade, or new legions of active duty civil affairs and psychological operations professionals and intelligence specialists it might help.

Yet there are a number of valid strategic reasons why Congress may conclude that a significant increase in personnel levels is warranted. These include:

- *Reverse the Slow Manpower Erosion.* Offset a decade of incremental reductions caused by rising personnel costs. The Services have been under significant pressure over the last few years to reduce manpower levels to pay for sharply higher recruiting, retention, and health care costs.
- *Bury Our Technological Hubris.* Offset a decade of illusions about future warfare. Over the past decade a number of speculative concepts about the changing nature of warfare have worked against maintaining a sufficient ground force. These include Defense planning guidance predicated upon very short wars, a prejudice for technology over “boots on the ground” and an irrational exuberance about the productivity enhancements posed by the supposed wonders of information technology.
- *Prepare for the 21st Century,* to better posture the Pentagon for the changing character of anticipated wars and contingencies, including the prospects of what the CIA calls the coming “Perfect Storm” of ethnic and religiously motivated conflicts. The historical patterns of such conflicts suggest that these will be protracted and manpower intensive, as we’ve seen in the last few years.
- *Additive Missions,* to provide sufficient capacity to fulfill additive missions being placed on ground forces for preventive interventions in failed or failing states, as well as post-conflict stability operations. Our Special Operations Forces have been increased to meet their increased responsibilities but the Army and Marines have faced persistent pressures to cut end strength despite the changing and increasingly irregular character of conflict. If the U.S. State Department and other agencies have no stomach for “armed civil affairs” or what might be called “contested state building” then the land forces need to have the resources to fulfill these new governance, advisory and training tasks.
- *Take Pressure off National Guard.* We must reduce the need to tap into the National Guard so heavily. The National Guard has been incredibly responsive to a range of contingencies since 9/11, including support to that domestic crisis, Katrina, enhanced border security tasks, supporting operations in Afghanistan, and major deployments to Iraq. This is a well we have tapped into far too often, as a buffer against bad strategic decisions in Washington. The families of our Guard and Reserve component have been asked to pay too high a bill. Likewise, state governors have been left short of units and

assets to meet their emergency and homeland security needs. At a recent Governor's Association meeting with the president, this was at the top of their agenda. The National Guard is close to being flat on its back and its preparedness for a major serious homeland security crisis is questionable. It too requires substantial reinvestment. As Stephen Flynn notes in his new book, *The Edge of Disaster*, we are **inviting another crisis on the scale of Hurricane Katrina by how little we've prepared and how much we have overextended our Guard resources.**

- *Strategic Risk Reduction.* Lastly, and most importantly, increased land forces are needed to decrease precarious levels of risk. Our commitments in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as other ongoing contingencies, have placed a heavy burden on two Services. These commitments and the attendant degradation of our warfighting capability have given rise to the perception by some states that the United States is tapped out and unable to respond to other crises. Furthermore, these perceptions undercut our diplomacy and embolden major states to take license with our interests, and encourages regional actors like North Korea and Iran to act out without fear of reprisal.

The Pentagon has committed itself to a monumental task. Operationally, it is trying to simultaneously win the broader war on terror, defeat two simultaneous insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan, and secure America's other security interests at home and abroad. No small order. Moreover, it must also **train up rotating forces, reset today's depleted force and worn out gear, and modernize all four Services to give them the weapons and equipment they did for the 21st century. The Navy's shipbuilding plans are significantly under funded, even as the costs of new platforms continues to spiral up.** The Navy is not alone. According to Loren Thompson, writing in *Of Men and Materiel, The Crisis in Military Resources*, we have taken our dominance in aerospace for granted for too long, and this indifference has created a rather aged fleet of platforms for our Air Force. The National Guard also faces equipment challenges, especially for its domestic security tasks. As the recent stories out of Walter Reed Army Medical Center show, we have a long way to go in taking care of our wounded soldiers. Now, we seek to enlarge the ground force, which will require new facilities, weapons, recruiting and retention incentives.

This will be an enormously expensive proposition and it is not clear that the White House or Pentagon have established or presented any priorities whatsoever. In fact, according to the Congressional testimony of Gordon Adams, a national security budget expert, **the "Pentagon has put the force expansion horse ahead of the strategic planning cart."** The FY2008 budget, plus the supplemental funding for the war on terror, total \$683 billion. Our military spending is admittedly a small percentage of our total economy, right around 4 percent, but the true measure of reality is that our military budget already exceeds the rest of the world combined.



We need a debate on our national security priorities and the resources we allocate to conventional forces, homeland security, and preventative programs including foreign aid, military security assistance, and threat reduction projects to maximize our security among the many claimants.

Of particular concern is the ability of the Pentagon to sustain a larger force. The new and higher end strengths for the Army and Marines will exacerbate budget pressures on the Services. The feasibility of achieving the higher end strength is a challenge in and of itself. While both Services have attained their first term enlistment goals, the recruiting environment is difficult and asking the ground services to compete with each other for another 92,000 bodies is not going to help. The Army in particular is reversing years of improved human capital trends by accepting older, less educated enlistees, and waiving a far higher number of **moral and legal requirements to maintain today's 80,000 a year enlistment target**. Force quality may appreciably slip when that total rises to 120,000 per year.

In addition to the recruiting challenge, there is the long-term Pentagon financial picture. As Bruce Berkowitz argues in the current issue of Policy Review, the American people have generally supported a robust level of defense spending. However, this level is currently being exceeded due to Iraq and Afghanistan. Historically, we have adjusted our military budget downward some 10 to 15 percent lower after each war. If we do so coming out of Iraq in the next few years, the funding to sustain a larger ground force may not be available, and thus the billions used to attract, train, equip, and build barracks for the new formations will have been completely wasted. **Making this situation more likely is the demographic reality of America's baby boomers**. This cohort is about to begin retiring in large numbers. The projected retirement spike will place extraordinary pressure on federal spending and could drastically crimp **Defense plans to sustain or adequately support today's military**. Today's rather unlimited funding and large Supplemental accounts will not last much longer. The time for hard choices will come back to haunt any decisions made today that do not rigorously account for strategic priorities.

There is no doubt that the American people can afford to spend whatever is necessary to **provide for their security**. Likewise, there is no doubt that today's force and spending patterns do not satisfactorily meet the threats the American taxpayer faces in the 21st century. This gap makes America more vulnerable the longer we continue our current commitments. Additional ground warriors generate numerous strategic advantages and help close this gap, but the rationale must be properly explained if the funding is to be forthcoming.

# A NEW MARITIME STRATEGY: NAVIGATING UNCERTAIN WATERS

*By Frank G. Hoffman*

November 2006

*This article appeared as an E-Note.*

The Chief of U.S. Naval Operations, Admiral Mike Mullen, announced earlier this year his plans to develop and promulgate a new Maritime Strategy. [1] This publication will be the latest in a long line of strategic pronouncements produced by the Department of the Navy. The last formal version was crafted and aggressively marketed by Secretary of the Navy John Lehman during the Reagan administration. [2] That version was the culmination of years of internal studies and critical debates about the Navy's Cold War role. Lehman's offensive sea-control approach was crucial to his arguments for the building of a 600-ship Navy. [3] It served as the cornerstone of the Navy's thinking for how it intended to fight, what type of fleet was needed to counter the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union, and how it would operate. Today's Navy lacks such a cornerstone, and thus Admiral Mullen's initiative is timely and necessary. [4]

However, this effort will be challenged by six factors that will ultimately influence the development of any maritime strategy. These factors will have to be wrestled with in developing a modernized Maritime Strategy that is responsive to America's role in a world characterized by an increasingly globalized economy and a broadening set of missions that naval forces can expect to be tasked with. In a world described by the New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman as "flat," global forces have created a smaller world, one in which change—including radical change—occurs much faster and with more destabilizing impacts than Mr. Friedman appreciates. [5]

## 1. Strategic Foundation

The latest Maritime Strategy was developed to be supportive of a long-held and widely recognized strategy of containment. Although this strategy shifted over time from symmetric confrontations to more indirect or peripheral modes, the overall grand strategy remained intact for almost all of the Cold War, or what is now often thought of as World War III. Today's iteration is being developed in an interregnum in historical terms and in a strategic vacuum. There is a range of options to be considered, and the maritime strategy must be subordinated to a long term Grand Strategy. Instead of a broad bipartisan consensus, stark divisions may exist that undercut an enduring strategic framework.

## 2. Adversary Understanding

The length and nature of the Cold War facilitated the development of a deep understanding of our enemy and the concomitant creation of a cadre of specialists who advised our policymakers about the strategic inclinations, decision-making processes, culture, and historical underpinnings of our opponent. Given the range of potential scenarios facing the United States' global interests today, our grasp and understanding of tomorrow's foe is a daunting challenge. The risks of miscalculation have been ameliorated slightly of late by the development of dedicated cells at the Naval War College and the Center for Naval Analyses. However, American strategists face transnational threats as well as rising powers and naval strategists today lack the formal National Intelligence Estimates and rigorous analytical foundation that their predecessors exploited effectively. [6] Likewise, the opacity of tomorrow's threat reduces our ability to appreciate the specific geography and context for future operations. Where is tomorrow's Northern Flank?

## 3. Political Consensus

Another complexity is the lack of political consensus guiding American foreign policy. Over the past few years, advocates of primacy have sought to extend indefinitely America's preponderance of power. A number of policymakers, often labeled as neoconservatives, have focused primarily on U.S. military power, in the mistaken belief that the United States could compile so much raw power that potential competitors would be dissuaded from even contemplating a competition against the Goliath. A component of this strategy has led to the ongoing war in Iraq, part of a "generational commitment" to bring democracy to the Middle East. The backlash and lessons from this conflict will undoubtedly influence American taxpayers and their elected representatives, but exactly how is an unknown.

## 4. Domestic Support

Closely related to the shifting sands of political support from policy elites and American leaders is the degree of domestic support for a new strategy. The Cold War and the experiences of World War II helped shaped domestic support for many years until that support was weakened by the costly war in Southeast Asia. The Maritime Strategy of the 1980s emanated in part from a rejection of the post-Vietnam syndrome on the part of Americans, led by President Reagan. Absent such leadership and a clear threat, one doubts that a new administration will be able to call the country forward in the aftermath of Iraq. In any event, the American people are older, more diverse, and more sharply divided than they were in the 1980s.

## 5. Economic Context

The previous Maritime Strategy could count on an American economy that was unrivalled in its breadth and technological capacity. America's economic standing remains atop the world's economies today, and its capacity to develop and exploit advanced technology remains substantive. Over the long term, due to reduced investments in education and Research and Development accounts, this lead may be challenged. Moreover, the world economy is different: more interdependent and far more dynamic than a generation ago. Advanced technologies have diffused rapidly, and potential wildcards abound in many fields. America's industrial base is certainly smaller in some fields, including shipbuilding, and other uniquely naval competencies are waning.

## 6. Coalition Network

Another challenge is the United States' decreased ability to attract and maintain coalitions and partners. During the Cold War, America's moral stand, political appeal, and leadership contributed to the creation of NATO and other collective security institutions. From this network of friends, we amassed additive capabilities. From a naval strategy perspective, we also garnered the requisite bases and infrastructure from which to operate forward in critical regions. The end of the Cold War removed the threats and the necessity of these bases, while simultaneously domestic pressures have forced some former allies to reconsider the political costs of permanent U.S. military garrisons. One sees this in Europe and parts of Asia, and in Turkey during the build-up to Operation Iraqi Freedom. Over the last decade or so, America's overseas posture has been considerably eroded, which could limit our ability to project and sustain forces at great distance from our shores.

### Overcoming These Barriers

None of these factors are necessarily insurmountable to the CNO and his team. But they do underscore the complexity of the problem and the need for an inclusive and transparent process of strategy development. The Navy has publicly announced its intention to take this product out to the American people to widen the inputs and to help shape the final product. The CNO has appropriately reached out to his maritime partners in the U.S. Marine Corps and Coast Guard. He has also made a great effort to reach out to his international partners to garner their insights. Yet it has been a long time since the Navy has produced a formal strategy, and hardnosed strategic thinking has not been a forte of the individual Services since the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986 mandated a greater emphasis on Joint operations and ceded strategic thinking to the Joint Staff.

Admiral Mullen recognizes this, and he has energized the considerable intellectual talents at the Naval War College, in Newport, RI, to assist him. Newport has historically assisted the

Navy in developing strategic guidance with a world-class war-gaming center and a dedicated strategic research department that continuously monitors international affairs and maritime matters. While the Navy has not jumped through the strategy development hoops for at least a decade, it has a deep pool of talent and a great deal of legacy capability to draw upon. That base is already making progress with a rich and open series of workshops and war games that are refreshingly candid and remarkably diverse in the range of viewpoints actively sought and listened to. Unlike the past decade or so, when war was reduced to a process of identifying static targets and applying precision weapons, today's Navy is considering a wider range of social, political, and economic factors, not just technology. [7]

Equally important, the strategy process Admiral Mullen has insisted upon avoids what the British strategist Colin Gray calls "presentism." [8] The worst thing the Navy could do is focus on the ongoing War on Terror and radically adapt the Fleet to solve today's problem. Strategy demands a long-term view, guided by the questions that history suggests are relevant, by the enduring nature of distance and geography, and by the ambiguity of strategic decisions in the absence of answers to many unknowns. The long lead time needed to construct a fleet, along with the long life of most ships, reinforces the need for a long-term perspective. Since ships built today will still be in use in 2040 or 2050, they need to be strategically relevant for long periods.

This process also avoids another potential problem by ensuring that institutional biases and preferences do not become preordained answers. There are still some within the Navy who envision the modernization of the Chinese armed forces as a readily convenient threat. This small group sees the PLA Navy as a conventional threat that automatically mandates a large blue-water Navy capable of defeating a mirror-imaged fleet constituted quite like ours. Little thought seems to be given to the strategic culture, legitimate security challenges, or geostrategic options of the PRC. Chinese history suggests a more ambiguous and less conventional approach. This is not to dismiss the Chinese Navy's ongoing modernization or the potential for a rising power to disturb the status quo. But neither "presentism" nor mirror-imaging serve our national security interests.

Having observed it up close for a week, I believe the nation is well served by today's naval strategists and the comprehensive manner in which alternative strategies and options are being scrutinized. The swirling dynamics of globalization are being given due weight, as are historic trends and realities. Critical political issues regarding strategic deterrence, nuclear proliferation, and coalition-management challenges are being wrestled with. A new Maritime Strategy to navigate an uncertain future is a daunting challenge, but is critical if America's security interests are to be as well preserved and advanced in the next century as they were in the last.

Notes:

1. Admiral Mike Mullen, USN, speech at the Naval War College, Newport, RI, June 14, 2006.
2. *The Maritime Strategy*, Supplement, Naval Institute Proceedings, January 1986.
3. George W. Baer, *One Hundred Years of Sea Power: The U.S. Navy, 1890–1990* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994), pp. 418-44.
4. The Department of the Navy did issue two “institutional vision” statements in the aftermath of the Soviet Union’s dissolution which were strategically relevant and represent innovative thinking: “From The Sea” (1991) and “Forward . . . From the Sea” (1993).
5. Thomas L. Friedman, *The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century*, New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2005.
6. For a detailed understanding of the development of the strategy, see John B. Hattendorf, ed., *The Evolution of the U.S. Navy’s Maritime Strategy, 1977–1986* (Newport, RI: Naval War College Press, 2004).
7. See Frederick W. Kagan’s impressive new book, *Finding the Target, The Transformation of American Military Policy* (New York: Encounter, 2006).
8. Colin S. Gray, “Stability Operations in Strategic Perspective: A Skeptical View,” *Parameters*, Summer 2006, p. 4.

# THE MARINES: PREMIER EXPEDITIONARY WARRIORS

*By Frank G. Hoffman*

November 2007

*This article was originally in E-Notes.*

Writing in the *Washington Post* this past September, the usually insightful columnist George Will claimed that America's ongoing messy missions in Iraq and elsewhere had generated tension within its Corps of Marines. "No service was better prepared than the Marines for the challenges of post-invasion Iraq," he concluded, "yet no service has found its mission there more unsettling to its sense of itself."

It is not that the Corps did not want to be in the fight, or that it had better things to do. But its naval character has taken a back seat to fighting the virulent resistance in an extended land campaign, and some core competencies are waning. Today, on the institution's 232nd birthday, we should amplify Mr. Will's observations with a deeper understanding of the Corps' past and most likely future.

The Marines have a unique institutional culture drawn from over two centuries of storied campaigns and selfless service. The most relevant cultural characteristic is what I call their expeditionary ethos. This ethos is the most critical contributor to the Corps' success in combat, especially in the Small Wars and complex contingencies, where the Marines excel. Any astute student of military history can see the roots of this ethos emerging from the Corps' Small Wars period in the 1920s and 1930s, when the Marines were routinely deployed in Haiti, Nicaragua, and the Dominican Republic. These were protracted expeditions, some lasting decades, where the Marines established a range of government institutions and local police forces. It is this Small Wars experience that is the foundation for the success the Marines have had in Iraq.

Many military organizations use the term "expeditionary" to describe themselves or to label distinct units. Marines believe "expeditionary" encompasses far more than a mission involving actions beyond U.S. borders, the official definition. To a Marine Leatherneck the term connotes much more than the ability to deploy overseas quickly. The expeditionary ethos is an institutional belief system that ensures a unit can deploy rapidly, arrive quickly, and begin operating upon arrival. Supplies, equipment, and infrastructure are limited to operational necessities; "nice to haves" are ruthlessly carved out. Such "come as you are" attitudes are embedded in the force design of the Marine Air-Ground Task Force construct, which integrates ground units with aviation and logistics support forces.

From the day recruits join the Corps, they understand that they are going to deploy and that they must be mentally and physically ready. The Corps is famous for its physical readiness, but the intellectual aspect is just as important. Marines are imbued with the notion of doing more with less, of fighting and prevailing in an austere operational environment. They are prepared to use their own initiative and readily solve problems on their own with a minimum of guidance. Marines do not look for explicit guidance, formal doctrine, or tactical templates or checklists. They are eager to apply their creativity to unforeseen problems, without doctrine or clear guidance. This produces a mental outlook that thrives in ambiguity and uncertainty, preparing Marines to adapt to the conditions found once they arrive. Fixed schedules, perfect intelligence, guaranteed support arrangements, and sunny weather are not expected. Murphy's Law is built in the mindset of Marines.

Because of this expeditionary mindset, Marines are constantly prepared to adapt to new situations, and mentally agile enough to create innovative solutions to unanticipated circumstances. They do not expect the enemy to conform to templates or rigid formation, their only expectation is the need to adapt and win. This institutional culture is the basis for the Corps' success in such contingencies in the past and will continue to give the Marines an edge in tomorrow's inevitable contingencies, as well.

Current operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Pacific demonstrate the broad range of possibilities for which our Corps must be prepared. There is nothing new to this and nothing to unsettle anyone who understands the breadth of Marine history or the well-honed crisis response toolkit the Marine Corps provides to the regional Combatant Commanders. Some in Washington would like to see the Marines specialize more and take on tasks for which the Army may be better suited. The Corps' Commandant, General Jim Conway, has stressed that the Marines have been prepared in the past because they recognized that true readiness required a multidimensional force that is well-trained, broadly educated, and properly equipped for employment in all forms of warfare.

This balanced approach is wise given today's emerging operational demands. The emerging security environment is going to emphasize forces that can shift between various forms of warfare, and most likely engage in all forms of warfare at the same time. The diffusion of modern weaponry around the world poses a greater degree of lethality to modern contingencies, meshing irregular tactics with advanced conventional weapons into what strategists around the world are calling multi-modal or "hybrid wars." A force prepared to address hybrid threats would have to be built upon a solid professional military foundation and a modular force structure, but it would also place a premium on the critical cognitive skills to recognize or quickly adapt to the unknown. In particular, American military units would have to be prepared for very adaptive or protean opponents and asymmetric tactics and technologies.



The nature of such hybrid conflicts will also demand uncompromising small unit leadership, tactical cunning, and creative decision makers at the NCO and junior officer level. These leaders must be trained and educated to conduct decentralized missions and rapid decision making under the highly ambiguous and complex conditions of battle. They must be acutely aware of and sensitive to unique cultural factors and their influence on military operations

Dampening the prospects for instability and responding to emerging crises in the heavily urbanized littorals *is* the Corps future. This era will exploit the Marines' experience at operating from the sea, as well as its expeditionary readiness. It is readily apparent that the emerging environment and the Corps' expeditionary ethos and skill set are suited for each other.

The Marines understand their role as an expeditionary force, and that their sense of identity will always remain linked with its Navy partners. The new Maritime Strategy that General James Conway signed in October with his counterpart Admiral Gary Roughead, the new Chief of Naval Operations, reflects this enduring relationship. But the Marines are leaning forward, adapting old training regimens and implementing new educational initiatives to prepare for another era of protracted expeditionary operations and Small Wars. They will continue to march to the sound of the guns, whether in Iraq or Afghanistan, and fight at sea, from the sea, and ashore as needed.

If you see a Marine on November 10, wish him or her Happy Birthday, and hope that more like them will continue to serve our nation in the future. Without such young people, willing to sacrifice their lives in some dark alley halfway around the globe, the chances of preserving stability in the meanest streets would be insurmountable. Today's Marines measure up to the Corps' legacy, a modern breed tempered in the crucible of combat against an elusive enemy. With such battle hardened stock, the Marine Corps will enjoy many more anniversaries and continue to defeat our adversaries, assure our allies, and honorably serve our nation as they always have. You can count on it.

# SEABASING: CONCEPT, ISSUES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

*By Sam Tangredi*

October 2010

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Seabasing is a valid strategic concept that has been simultaneously under-defined, over-defined and vaguely defined. It has become anchored to contradictions: it is officially a joint concept, but one that is widely perceived as a parochial tool to justify budget increases for the Department of the Navy. It is an activity that has been alternately described as traditional and transformational. [1] Many perceive it as defined by a specific set of hardware—future platforms such as the mobile offshore base (MOB), or additional ships for the Maritime Prepositioning Force (MPF), such as the proposed Mobile Landing Platform which would allow for selective offload of prepositioned material while still at sea. [2] Its misapplied *exclusive* association with amphibious warfare, decidedly not a priority in the current Pentagon, has largely driven it out of policy discussions at the Office of the Secretary of Defense level (although programmatic plans linger). Ironically, it came to the fore in the past decade under a Chief of Naval Operations determined to cut capabilities from the amphibious fleet to fund future surface combatants. [3] From 2002 to 2008, it appeared with great frequency and great passion in many professional defense journals and reports. But it is not once mentioned in the QDR 2010 report.

As a grand idea, it appears becalmed yet still visible out on the horizon. However, as a practical reality, it is being done by U.S. forces today—and every day—even when the term is not spoken. And the U.S. Marine Corps—along with a sometime supportive, sometime reluctant U.S. Navy—is projected to continue to make incremental improvements.

What is Seabasing All About?

There is both a broad vision and a narrow view of what seabasing is about. The broad vision stems from conceptual discussions that began within the U.S. Navy in the 1990s. It is also reflected in the introductory sections of the more recent joint U.S. Marine Corps-U.S. Navy-U.S. Army *Concept for Employment for Current Seabasing Capabilities*, released 19 May

2010. However, a narrower view, focused on improvements to amphibious and MPF ship capabilities—as exemplified in the report of the Defense Science Board’s 2003 Task Force on Seabasing—current predominates in operational discussions.

In its broad vision, seabasing is about the capability to use the sea in the same way that U.S. forces utilize overseas regional bases for deterrence, alliance support, cooperative security, power projection, and other forward operations. From that perspective, seabasing is decidedly *not* a new concept. U.S. forces have been seabasing since the U.S. Navy became a global Navy at the turn of the last century—and, arguably, even before. “The World War II “fleet train” [auxiliaries, oilers and supply ships that replenished the combatant ships at sea] that provided the U.S. battle fleet with such unprecedented range and freedom of action” could be considered a seabase since it allowed the fleet to resupply at sea or in isolated anchorages. [4] Likewise, it is easily observed that aircraft carriers are floating airbases that can be positioned and repositioned on a global basis. Amphibious warships also constitute the components of a base for forces (primarily U.S. Marine Corps) that can be rapidly inserted onto land by both surface and air. Combining with the USN grey hulls of the amphibious fleet are the Military Sealift Command’s civilian-crewed MPF ships. [5] The U.S. Army too operates prepositioning ships.

The narrower view of seabasing focuses almost exclusively on naval expeditionary/amphibious capabilities and MPF support of the joint Services. This narrower view is utilized by the U.S. Marine Corps when justifying incremental improvements in naval expeditionary platforms.

One may note, however, the above use of the word *about* rather than *defined*. Seabasing has never had one generally accepted definition and the term itself has appeared in various formats: seabasing, sea basing, Sea Basing, Enhanced Networked Sea Basing, seabased, sea base, and other variants, all of which connote a specific nuance designed to distinguish it from the others. It *does* have an official Department of Defense (DoD) definition, but one that many authorities agree is not complete. The current Joint Publication 1-02 (DoD Dictionary) defines seabasing as: “the deployment, assembly, command projection, reconstitution, and reemployment from joint power from the sea without reliance on land bases within the operational area.” But it also notes: “See also amphibious operations (JP-3-02).”[6]

Although this definition is a great improvement—particularly for proponents of the broad vision—over the previous DoD Dictionary version (which stated that seabasing was a technique of amphibious operations), the note betrays the lingering—and perhaps natural—exclusive association with amphibious warfare. This is one of the reasons that significant discussions of seabasing have not appeared in the defense literature in the past two years. It is become apparent that Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates—kept in his position primarily to

prevail in the “wars we are in”—discounts the likelihood of having to conduct major amphibious operation in the next few years (and certainly not an amphibious assault under fire). As noted, the Quadrennial Defense Review 2010 final report, along with report of the QDR Independent Review panel, never once mention the word seabasing. The QDR 2010 report does include a Mobile Landing Platform (MLP) in its listing of desired naval capabilities. [7] But a MLP, the first of which will be funded in the FY2011 defense budget, is merely another type (albeit unique) of future Maritime Prepositioning Ship (MPS), largely “connecting” or complimenting existing capabilities, and, in itself, does not indicate a strong commitment to seabasing.

Returning to the statement that seabasing is about using the sea in the same way U.S. forces use regional land bases, it becomes apparent that there can be degrees or levels of seabasing in the same way that there are different types of land bases—from austere to well-developed infrastructures. Mid-developed seabases currently exist and have existed; a U.S. naval task force—depending on its configuration—can provide joint C4ISR, rapid strike capabilities using stealth or non-stealth assets, [8] special operations forces (SOF) insertion, theater ballistic missile defense, control of regional air space, SAR and emergency medical facilities, space for a joint task force command element, and the positioning of infantry, light armor, and artillery ashore beyond the beach. This is comparable to the capabilities of a regional land base (relative to the size of personnel assigned). Of course, it cannot provide a golf course—but it can move, thereby making enemy targeting more difficult. Its elements can also be widely dispersed throughout the regional sea, an advantage that can only be duplicated by a network of land bases.

What it (seriously) cannot do is provide landing for heavy lift aircraft or store an *iron mountain* of supplies. Nor can it land significant heavy armor ashore. Nor can it make an Army or Air Force general feel fully in command of things—an unarticulated deterrent to the perception of jointness (even if the U.S. Army officially supports seabasing). Yet, it can be most assuredly joint—and not simply by operating Army helicopters off aircraft carriers near Haiti.

In a practical sense its *jointness* is also not new. Army forces participated in amphibious assaults along with the Marines in the Pacific, and on their own in the European theater. Although the largest landing force in World War Two (D-Day invasion) operated across a narrow channel, and therefore was well supported by land-based aircraft, such was not true in North Africa or Southern Europe.

If the essence of seabasing is a traditional U.S. capability, what has the debate in the past decade been about? Largely it has been:

- (1) a question of how capable seabasing can be made by applying new technologies and greater resources and whether it is valid in countering anti-access defenses;
- (2) an issue of the U.S. Navy appearing to simultaneously oversell the concept and under fund its resources and whether the other Services would support the concept in the joint arena;
- (3) an issue of the U.S. Marine Corps justifying amphibious lift through joint terminology, and struggling with the Navy over new ship programs and OSD over the future of MPF ships; and
- (4) the implication that seabasing could be a replacement, not just a supplement, to regional land bases. An element that adds intensity to the last issue is that seabasing does not require the permission of another nation.

### Sea Control, Sovereignty and Anti-Access

Seabasing is a capability that exploits command of the sea, or less prosaically, sea control. In fact, it cannot exist without sea control. Recently that has not been an issue because of the dominant nature of American naval power, and certainly not since the collapse of the Soviet Navy in 1991. Since that time, American sea control has been a given, unlike the fight to achieve sea control in World War Two. Clearly the People's Liberation Army (PLA), and perhaps others, intends to contest American sea control within its region. [9] However, PLA maritime capabilities have not yet matched their aspirations and it is unclear whether if efforts at sea denial (attempts to deny an opponent use of a contested sea, even when unable to achieve one's own sea control) would be effective. American sea control is not yet broken, presumably allowing the continued viability of seabasing. But the growing ambition for regional denial capabilities—often referred to as anti-access or area denial strategies (A2/AD being the current acronym)—is itself undeniable.

Because it is dependent on sea control, it is natural that the U.S. Navy would provide the vast majority of seabasing platforms out of its own fleet inventory. Originally the Rumsfeld-era Office of Defense Transformation defined *sea-base* as “a noun; the sea and not the things on it.” [10] However, the seabase can more properly be thought of as the ships and platforms on which and by which the forces are positioned. The ocean is the fluid medium that provides both the terrain and the reduction in friction that allows for the movement of heavy objects. Metaphorically, it allows castles to move. These iron castles constitute the seabase. Within the castles are stored and transported the means of military power, including the expeditionary power of the U.S. Marine Corps and resupply for Army land forces. These castles also provide the best logistics platforms for humanitarian assistance in littoral regions.

As mentioned, a most attractive feature of seabasing is that it provides for an overseas base of operation located close or in a crisis area that is completely under the sovereignty of the United

States.[11] Although the United States can project strike power from the continental United States (CONUS), such constitutes but a small portion of the power projection required to affect events on land in combat or crisis. Seabasing provides for a forward presence and deterrence efforts that might not be achieved by latent conventional capabilities in CONUS. Seabasing is also the optimal means of providing *sustained* security cooperation and humanitarian relief. All of this can be conducted without violation of anyone else’s sovereign rights under international law.

Strong proponents of seabasing like to quote British naval strategist Sir Julian S. Corbett’s observation (in 1906) that Britain—then the world’s greatest sea power, traditionally favored sovereign ports and bases that made her “independent of uncertain neutrals and doubtful allies.” [12] But to justify spending resources on seabasing by the need for such independence is a bit of over-selling. America’s current allies are neither weak nor uncertain, and in the current political environment it is doubtful they would place restrictions on basing when facing a mutual threat. However, it is valid to argue that spending on seabasing should be increased because anti-access capabilities of potential opponents (primarily China and Iran) have made fixed regional land bases extremely vulnerable. Seabasing also faces an increasing threat, but by virtue of its mobility presents a much more difficult targeting problem for opponents.

A question becomes whether new seabasing technologies can outpace the growing anti-access threat. The Navy-Marine Corps are planning incremental improvements in expeditionary offload from sea to shore. The development of BMD and improved air defense from Aegis destroyers and cruisers gives additional protection to the seabase. But if future survivability proves increasingly problematic, is a significant investment in improving overall seabasing warranted? And if it is warranted, what technological improvements should be prioritized?

Right now technological/engineering improvements are being applied to expeditionary offload (particularly, the proposed MLP). These are relatively low cost improvements. But more extensive acquisition—such as the MOB proposed in the 1990s—has lost favor in light of other priorities and concerns over anti-access capabilities. Proposed increases to the naval amphibious fleet are also vulnerable to these concerns. This seabasing versus anti-access debate has been smoldering for some time and remains likely to get hotter.

## Seabasing in Sea Power 21

Seabasing (or Sea Basing as it appears in the plan) was touted as one of the pillars of CNO Clark’s Sea Power 21 plan and a means of “projecting joint operational independence.” [13] It was also described “as the foundation from which offensive and defensive fires are projected—making Sea Strike and Sea Shield [two other pillars] realities. [14] But the plan omitted any discussion of amphibious ships (see note 5) and emphasized the

striking capability of the cruiser-destroyer force. To omit the capability of the seabase to land forces ashore (whether for conflict or non-conflict intervention), would seem to ignore the most significant means for the seabase to affect events on land, and relegates seabasing to but a new name for fleet strike—unless the omission indicated a pre-decided budget priority. Clearly CNO Clark intended to emphasize the Navy’s role in supporting joint forces already ashore and expressed support for MPF shipping in resupply of those forces. But this would be a joint supporting capability rather than a joint enabler.

The emphasis on enabling joint forces via a *new* (but old) *concept* would not seem to engender much support from other Services in the joint arena except as a quid pro quo: *I’ll support your program if you support mine*. And it would seem almost a deliberate provocation of the Marine Corps, which naturally enough would consider itself a full partner in any new naval concept. This resulted in a Navy overselling seabasing in the sense that it relied on old missions (the exception being BMD) to justify a supposedly new construct. This was not an auspicious way to advance the seabasing concept. Given the length of time required for shipbuilding, it did allow the 2002 Navy to squeeze some money from amphibious shipbuilding—which directly affects today’s fleet. [15] The overall result is that even today it is not exactly clear (CNO Clark’s successors having largely ignored Sea Power 21) what the Navy’s staff considers seabasing to be.

#### Future of U.S. Marine Corps Expeditionary-Amphibious Capabilities and the Maritime Positioning Force

Since the Navy construct of seabasing did not include the Marine Corps, the Marines did what they do best—declared it an expeditionary objective and took it. Seabasing was turned around from a concept that largely excluded amphibious assault capabilities to one focused on improving them. Such a focus would seem natural, even within the broad vision. But it did not bank on Secretary of Defense Gates’ apparent discounting of the need for strong amphibious capabilities—capabilities that were not particularly needed in Iraq or Afghanistan. Recent OSD efforts to kill the Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle (EFV) program and the Marine Corps’ efforts to keep it alive despite horrendous cost increases may have also tainted SECDEF’s attitude toward amphibious capabilities, MPF and seabasing.

The result is that the Marine Corps views seabasing as a program of incremental improvements in amphibious lift, and primarily as developing capabilities to use MPF ships without having to offload in port. Offloading at sea, particularly a combat offload, requires utilizing modern connector ships, such as the MLP, onto which cargo can be loaded from roll-on, roll-off and break-bulk carriers of the Maritime Sealift Command and re-loaded onto LCACs (land craft air cushion) in the sequence it is needed ashore. This would increase

expeditionary landing capacity without the higher costs of building more amphibious warships.

But while the Marines experiment with incremental improvements, and part of their program has been blessed by the QDR, the Defense Department's program objective memorandum (POM) for fiscal year 2012 has mandated a drastic cut in the Navy's prepositioning budget that may lead to putting two-thirds of the current MPF into reserve status and/or eliminate one of the three Maritime Prepositioning Squadrons (MPSRON)—specifically MPSRON 1 located in the Mediterranean region. [16] There is logic in this decision since OSD perceives a great unlikelihood of the equipment being needed by the U.S. European Command/NATO in the immediate future. But a two-thirds cut, rather than incremental reduction, does not bode well for the overall concept of seabasing.

Even as Undersecretary of the Navy Bob Work—acknowledged expert on seabasing—outlined a future with more individually capable MPF ships in a recent speech on October 5, 2010 at the National Defense Industrial Association's Expeditionary Warfare Conference, it became apparent that his view might not be shared on the OSD level. At the same conference, Brigadier General David Berger, Director of the Operations Division at Headquarters, Marine Corps described the defense leadership as divided between the view that MPSRON ships are merely floating warehouses and those who see it as a forward crisis response capability in support of the regional Combatant Commanders. Outgoing Marine Corps Commandant General James Conway defended Navy-Marine pre-positioning by contrasting it to the Army's view of prepositioning as simply a fast means of resupplying forces already engaged on the ground. As Conway put it, "The Army uses theirs to support a capability. In many ways, our [Navy-Marine Corps] is the [crisis response] capability." [17]

### Supplementing or Replacing Land Bases

The question of whether seabasing can replace land bases, or at least a dependence on land bases, immediately raises bureaucratic issues within DoD that contribute to the opposition to commit to joint seabasing. To some extent, it is a question of foresight. If the future of U.S. war fighting consists of pacifying terror-supporting insurgent groups within land-locked countries, or the continuing utilization of quick striking SOF forces supported by land-based tactical aviation, investment in seabasing would not seem a priority. At times this seems to be Secretary Gates' view, but at other times it seems unclear. [18]

If future wars are going to be dominated by ever more precise *global strike* from CONUS—which would seem to be the U.S. Air Force's preferred future, seabasing would also seem a much lower priority. An additional concern is that a greater commitment to seabasing—along with a qualitative or quantitative reduction in overseas land might cause allies and partners to question U.S. commitment to mutual defense.



However, if the future involves a range of regional crises in which the United States wishes to retain direct influence, there is a lot to commend seabasing as a primary instrument. As anti-access capabilities of potential opponents expand, the survival of regional land bases would seem problematic. The coordinates of these bases are well known and can be struck repeatedly by ballistic missiles relying solely on GPS. But prioritizing seabasing (and ensuring it can survive in an anti-access environment) could also mean a future defense posture in which overall DoD force structure is predominantly maritime. Relying primarily on naval assets as the foundation for most joint force regional basing would be largely seen as a defeat for jointness—which, rhetoric to the contrary notwithstanding, is still largely viewed in DoD to mean a roughly equal or at least a proportional share of the pie to all Services (and major Defense Agencies). This is a formula that the Gates Pentagon has yet to break, and as defense cuts are imposed on major acquisition programs, it is likely that they will affect the Services roughly equally, again, rhetoric to the contrary.

Although the developing Air/Sea Battle planning would seem to bring Air Force-Navy cooperation to a peak, the competition for resources between seabasing and global strike in a flat defense budget is obvious. At the same time, the Air Force is not keen to admit the vulnerability of its long term regional bases, which are required if land-based tactical aviation is to be effectively applied to a regional contingency. The Army has an interest in resupplying its forces—presumably already on the ground—by sea, but it has no interest in becoming a second marine corps.

Under these circumstances, proponents of seabasing might emphasize the role of supplementing regional basing, rather than replacing them. But in a flat or shrinking defense budget, “supplementing” any capability would likely be seen as a luxury rather than a requirement.

#### Reality and Recommendations for the Future of Seabasing

*Thinking About Seabasing: All Ahead Slow* is the title of Bob Work’s magisterial study, an approach he still espouses as Navy Under Secretary. It is an apt recommendation for a defense program environment in which seabasing is not viewed as a priority. In the 1920s and 1930s, the Marine Corps experimented (on a limited budget) on amphibious warfare, thereby developing the concepts and equipment that would enable the great advances in amphibious assault needed in the Second World War. Experimentation with but modest programmatic investment might do the same in advancing seabasing until its need is apparent for future contingencies.

However, if one takes the broader view of seabasing, the responsibility for improving the capacity to seabase falls primarily on the Navy—which must also make particular efforts to gain joint support for the broad vision. Dispersed platforms must be netted together (and securely), with the overall fleet functioning as a multiple-domain, combined arms base, rather

than groups of independent task forces. The current CNO, Admiral Gary Roughead, has called for greater efforts in developing “revolutionary concepts” for naval information and computing, and his actions in combing the N2 (Naval Intelligence) and N6 (C4ISR) on his staff indicates his interest in the tighter *netting* of information. Tighter netting (“forcenet” in the terms of Sea Power 21) of dispersed platforms is indeed a requirement for successful seabasing, but is obviously not sufficient in itself. [19]

The current Gates Pentagon must deal with a quandary as regards seabasing. Experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan will continue to sour future Administration on extensive commitment of ground forces in crisis-torn states. On the surface, this would seem to benefit investments in naval capabilities, but because seabasing remains associated in putting forces larger than SOF forces (e.g. Marine Expeditionary Units) ashore—SOF being the preferred instrument even beyond counter-terror operations—it is unlikely to attract more than incremental investment.

One mission that might increase interest in netting a tight seabase is naval BMD, since reliable information from multiple sources (including land-based) can increase the probability of accurate target solutions. But it is easy to foresee BMD-capable ships as being treated as individual strategic assets, operationally separate from *conventional* forces. This would be a mistake. The *Aegis* destroyer providing ballistic or cruise missile defense is as much of the seabase as a *Patriot* battery defending an overseas land base is part of that base’s combat infrastructure. At the same time, the ballistic missile defense provided to the land territory of allies by the same *Aegis* destroyer is as much a functional mission product of the overall seabase as the capability for landing troops ashore. The logistical network that flows through the seabase—such as fuel delivery by fleet oilers—is the means of keeping the *Aegis* destroyer on station.

To reduce the Pentagon’s quandary, three recommendations can be made:

1. To examine and experiment with the broad vision of seabasing, particularly in conjunction with developing a joint operational concept for anti-access warfare, and in developing the particulars of Air/Sea Battle.
2. If a decision is made to reduce MPSRONs, a significant portion of the savings should be invested in the Marine Corps’ programs for increasing the capabilities of the remaining MPF through new technologies and platforms. This is in keeping with earlier statements by Secretary Gates that the Services could keep most of the savings from cuts made.
3. To maintain naval BMD platforms as an integral part of deployed conventional forces—part of the seabase as exists today—rather than isolate them as an element of strategic deterrence.

Defense policy is all about making choices: who/what is the threat; what strategy should we adopt; how should we emplace or deploy our forces. As noted, it is also about managing resources, even for the United States with its incomparable military but current fiscal crisis. Since there is no certain answer, risk is always involved and alternative strategies must always be considered and evaluated. It is the responsibility of defense planners, and especially the defense leadership, to try to mitigate the risks as much as possible. As a concept, seabasing mitigates risks involving overseas basing, anti-access defenses, and regional presence. The priorities given to mitigating these specific risks is an accurate indicator of the future that the defense leadership envisions.

A prudent strategy in uncertain times for the United States that mitigates risk would be to strengthen capabilities that do not rely on non-sovereign overseas basing, even while working diplomatically to maintain alliances and access to overseas bases. It would appear best to invest in a balance between SOF capabilities, long-range CONUS-based capabilities (such as *global strike*) and highly maneuverable and well defended seabases. These capabilities would seem both compatible and complimentary. CONUS-base forces can provide extensive firepower, but cannot sustain “boots on the ground” in a contested region. Most U.S. interests overseas lie within range of seabased forces, our involvement in Afghanistan notwithstanding.

However, tighter resource constraints usually bring out the worse in organizational rivalries and bureaucratic politics, and a clash between seabasing, global strike, planning for future wars like the *wars we are in*, recapitalizing land forces, and expanding SOF capabilities. In the current Gates Pentagon, such a clash would likely find seabasing on the shorter end.

Notes:

1. Robert Work, *Thinking About Seabasing: All Ahead, Slow* (Washington, DC: CSBA, 2006), p. iv.
2. One of the strongest proponents of the MOB in the 1990s was Admiral William A. Owens, USN. See Owens, *High Seas: The Naval Passage to an Uncharted World* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1995), pp. 163, 165, and Owens and Ed Offley, *Lifting the Fog of War* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2000), pp. 175-176, 205. See an excellent discussion in Lieutenant Commander Henry J. Hendrix II, USN, “Exploit Sea Basing,” *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, August 2003, pp. 61-63.
3. This is my own interpretation of the decisions of CNO Admiral Vern Clark, USN in the early 2000s. Such a motive was never publically stated. See note 5.
4. Work, p. 9.

5. This broad vision interpretation is consistent with seabasing as defined in the U.S. Navy's 2002 policy *Sea Power 21* except for the fact the *Sea Power 21* made *no* mention of amphibious ships as part of seabasing—an incomprehensible, albeit deliberate, omission. Work critically discusses this omission, dismissing Navy staff excuses that *Sea Power 21* was a “Navy” document, but not a “naval” document, therefore not intended to include the Marine Corps, and, thus, not the amphibious ships associated with them (Work, pp. 163-165). But he does not come out with the key factor that CNO Admiral Vern Clark, whose career was almost exclusively in cruiser-destroyer type ships, had little if any interest in expending much shipbuilding resources on amphibious ships. Rather, he saw reductions in amphibious capabilities as a “bill payer” for increasing the capabilities of the cruiser-destroyer force. On *Sea Power 21*, see Admiral Vern Clark, USN, “*Sea Power 21: Projecting Joint Power*,” U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings*, October 2002, pp. 32-41.
6. Department of Defense, Joint Publication 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, 12 April 2001 (As Amended Through 31 July 2010), p. 412. [http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/dod\\_dictionary/](http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/dod_dictionary/).
7. Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, February 2010, p. 46. [http://www.defense.gov/qdr/images/QDR\\_as\\_of\\_12Feb10\\_1000.pdf](http://www.defense.gov/qdr/images/QDR_as_of_12Feb10_1000.pdf).
8. Primary stealth assets being cruise and conventional ballistic missile launching submarines (SSGNs).
9. A fact that is not popularly recognized is that the national government of China does not officially have armed forces. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) and its subordinate People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) swear allegiance to the CCP, not the state. This complicates any strategic calculus of Chinese intentions. This is a point well made in CDR Thomas Henderschedt and LTCOL Chad Sbagia, “China's Naval Ambitions: 10 Myths that America Holds about China,” *Armed Forces Journal*, September 2010. <http://www.armedforcesjournal.com/2010/2010/09/4696227>.
10. Work, p. 8.
11. Sovereignty might be shared with allies or partner nations if they provide ships, platforms and/or personnel for the seabase.
12. Quoted in Work, p. 17.
13. Clark, p. 36.
14. Ibid.

15. See Grace V. Jean, “Marines Question the Utility of Their New Amphibious Warship,” *National Defense*, September 2008. at: <http://www.nationaldefensemagazine.org/archive/2008/September/Pages/MarinesQuestiontheUtilityof.aspx>.
16. Cid Standifer, “Work: Prepositioning set for big changes,” *Inside the Navy*, 11 October 2010.
17. Ibid.
18. In his *Foreign Affairs* article of 2009, Secretary Gates outlined his plan as being one that maintains balance between “between trying to prevail in current conflicts and preparing for other contingencies, between institutionalizing capabilities such as counterinsurgency and foreign military assistance and maintaining the United States’ existing conventional and strategic technological edge against other military forces, and between retaining those cultural traits that have made the U.S. armed forces successful and shedding those that hamper their ability to do what needs to be done.” While “other contingencies” could indicate operations that seabasing could facilitate, it should be noted that he refers to maintaining “the United States’ existing conventional and strategic technological edge” rather than an existing edge in capabilities. Analyses of the article have pointed to “balance capabilities” as meaning a balance across the spectrum of conflict—but that may not be what was meant. In any event, the SECDEF’s natural focus has been on unconventional warfare, counterinsurgency and counter-terror—in which seabasing would play largely a supplemental, if critical role. Robert M. Gates, “A Balanced Strategy: Reprogramming the Pentagon for a New Age,” *Foreign Affairs*, January-February 2009, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/63717/robert-m-gates/a-balanced-strategy>.
19. Andrew Burt, “New Memo from CNO: Roughead Seeks ‘Revolutionary’ Concepts in Information and Computing,” *Inside the Navy*, 11 October 2010.

## PART VI: NON-MILITARY INSTRUMENTS

# ECONOMIC TOOLS IN COUNTERINSURGENCY AND POSTCONFLICT STABILIZATION: LESSONS LEARNED (AND RELEARNED) IN AL ANBAR, IRAQ, 2003–04

*By Keith M. Miles*

September 2006

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On April 7, 1965, President Lyndon Johnson delivered a major address at The Johns Hopkins University. At the time, historian Barbara Tuchman writes, Johnson believed that to lose South Vietnam would be a catastrophe that would make the loss of China inconsequential by comparison. [1]

Johnson believed every man had his price. In his speech, aimed directly at Ho Chi Minh, he proposed a vast Tennessee Valley Authority-style rural rehabilitation and flood-control project for the Mekong Valley to complement Operation Rolling Thunder, the bombing campaign that had just commenced. North Vietnam, Johnson promised, would share in the \$1 billion development project after it accepted a peaceful settlement. Ho wasted no time in rejecting the offer: the next day North Vietnam announced four preconditions for peace, one of which was the adoption of the National Liberation Front program for South Vietnam. Johnson, flabbergasted, returned to the military tool. In June, he authorized the introduction of conventional U.S. ground forces, and the escalation of the conflict began in earnest. It would be decades before the United States would directly fight another insurgency. When it did, it spent a good deal of time relearning the lessons of earlier insurgencies.

On August 22, 2003, CPA Administrator J. Paul Bremer gave his weekly speech to the Iraqi people. These speeches were meant to reassure the Iraqis and build support for the Coalition. That week, the insurgents were just beginning to find their footing, having destroyed the UN compound and delivered hard hits to the country's oil and water pipelines. Bremer announced that the attack on the oil pipeline was costing Iraqis \$7 million a day. "Sometimes it is hard to

grasp what you can do with \$7 million,” he said. “Let me put it this way: The money lost on Friday and Saturday could have renovated 400 primary schools. The money lost on Sunday and Monday could have renovated 130 courthouses. The money lost on Tuesday and Wednesday could have reconstructed two water treatment facilities big enough to bring safe water to over 200,000 people.”

Bremer’s appeal was not so much to the insurgents as to those who allowed them the space to operate. In the end, however, it was no more effective than Johnson’s pitch to Ho. The Iraqi insurgents, we now know, were just warming up.

Both the promise of economic tools and their inability to deliver in the above examples raise the question, what is their proper role in countering insurgency and in postconflict stabilization?

### **Money Can’t Buy Success; It’s All About Politics**

When the CPA took on the task of governing Iraq, it was assuming a clean slate. The old government had been swept away, the security forces had “self-dissolved,” and the traditional statist economy was wide open for change. A few days of looting only added to the sense that the CPA really was starting from the ground up. In July 2003, Bremer wrote that the road ahead lay in progress in three key areas: 1) security and economic development, 2) the naming of a governing council to put an Iraqi face on the political structure, and 3) an economic program that restored basic services, created jobs, privatized state-owned enterprises, and established a social safety net and a system for distributing the benefits from Iraq’s oil money. [2]

In Al Anbar province, in conjunction with the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division, we developed an operating template based on the three Ps: power-generation, police, and political process. We thought that if we could restore electricity, the economy would revive; if we could train and equip police, Coalition forces could withdraw from the cities, reducing the visible face of the occupation. Establishing a political process would show the residents that sovereignty would return soon enough. We later cashiered power for jobs when we saw that the restoration of electricity did not automatically increase employment, and we added reconciliation when we realized the importance of directly engaging former Sunni officials, disenfranchised by the de-Baathification policy, who were able to disrupt the transition. The three Ps thus evolved into JPPR—jobs, police, political process, and reconciliation.

The security, political, and economic areas are generally recognized as the three pillars of a successful counterinsurgency strategy. Analyst Peter Brooks writes that “the three strategic tracks to success in Iraq remain the same as ever: security, political and economic. Progress along all three vectors is essential to victory; each is dependent upon the other.” [3] Colonel H.



R. McMaster has affirmed, “The political, economic, and military have to go together. You have to isolate insurgents from external support. You have to develop security forces. You have to provide security for the population.” [4]

It was becoming increasingly clear by December 2003, however, that the three were not equal in importance, and that their sequencing was key. The primacy of politics was apparent. Military analyst Thomas Ricks later wrote that “military commanders say they have come to understand that they are fighting within a political context, which means the results must first be judged politically.” [5] Anit Mukherjee, a former officer in the Indian Army with long service in Kashmir, recalls, “One of the first lessons taught to all soldiers deploying to Kashmir is that an insurgency can never be militarily defeated. It can only be managed until a political solution is found.” [6]

In 1968, Nguyen Van Thieu, a member of the NLF central committee, published the treatise “Our Strategy for Guerrilla War.” He concludes:

We will never have more weapons, more tanks, more planes than the Americans. The real problem of revolutionary war is not primarily military. It is political. The secret of our success is that we strive to mobilize the people, resolve the peasant question, coordinate the town-countryside struggle, resolve the problem of national minorities and religious sects, and elevate the level of organization and political consciousness. [7]

In another insurgency, the Afghan struggle against the Soviets in the 1980s, the guerrillas did not even bother with an overt political organization, but it was still at its heart a political struggle by religious nationalists resisting occupation. Gerard Chaliand reported in 1980 that:

The resistance fighters have no general strategy, no coordination, no organization other than traditional ties to tribe, region, and family. The resistance has scarcely any political or social program, and no vision of the future. Unlike virtually all of the guerrilla movements of Asia, Africa, or Latin America, the Afghan rebels have nothing new to show the visiting observer: no newly elected village committee, for example, no program for the integration of women into the struggle, no newly created people’s stores or medical centers, no small workshops contributing to economic self-sufficiency of the sort one finds in guerrilla camps throughout the world. [8]

All this occurred at a time when the Soviets were pouring hundreds of millions of dollars into improving the Afghan economy, in many areas producing an infrastructure for the first time in the country’s history.

In Al Anbar, we learned that the Sunnis had their own variation on this theme. While they were not against the money being spent in Iraq, young Iraqis I spoke with made clear that they

found insulting the idea they would support the occupation against the insurgency solely for economic opportunity. Their motivations were more complex but were grounded in the evolving political settlement and where it left their province and their people.

The most basic and essential tool in counterinsurgency, therefore, is a broadly accepted political framework, followed by widespread protective security, or, in the case of a party that rejects a legitimate political process, coercive security. Together, these facilitate economic development, leading to a cycle of overall stability and progress. They may appear almost simultaneously, but a good political settlement without economic aid can still lead to stability, while no level of macroeconomic support can produce stability absent a viable political process.

We in the CPA ignored this basic ordering. Our first two directives not only failed to support the political process, they were politically counterproductive. De-Baathification and the disbanding of the Iraqi Army sent a clear signal to the Sunnis that they did not have a place in the new Iraq. The reality for Iraqis was that the fall of the regime produced winners (Kurds and Shiites) and losers (Sunnis), which fueled Sunni opposition to the Coalition.

The key issue in Iraq remains how to empower the previously disenfranchised Shiites and Kurds in a way that does not disempower the Sunnis. Until this is settled, no amount of security forces or economic programs will bring success. Money can't buy stability.

### Economic Tools Reinforce Stability

If economic tools will not compensate for the lack of a viable political and security framework, they can nonetheless be a major support to counterinsurgency efforts in support of a well-crafted strategy, especially at the local level. To be effective, they should be short-term, focused on people, and flexible.

### Short-Term Focus

Even if it had been bolstering a viable political process, the CPA economic program was probably ill-suited for a country going through Iraq's transition. The elements of what would become the CPA economic strategy were laid out in an early document—"Moving the Iraqi Economy from Recovery to Sustainable Growth": a neo-liberal shock treatment to get the economy on track and ensure Iraq did not become a lopsided petro-state. Its main pillars were to privatize Iraq's industries, modernize the Baghdad Stock Exchange, reform the central bank, establish a new currency, provide Iraqi businesses with fresh credit, create a legal framework compatible with private ownership, production, and distribution, and rewrite the tax and tariff system. [9]

CPA headquarters was fixated on achieving an early transition to a free-market system, encouraged by Washington analysts who were reluctant to give up on any piece of their ideology in the interest of bolstering stability. Even as late as September 2003, with the insurgency in full bloom and U.S. casualties rising, Heritage Foundation analysts James Phillips and Marc Miles wrote that the United States should “bolster freedom, not dependence, in Iraq” by “abrogating the Iraqi constitution and legal edicts that obstruct economic reform, preparing Iraqis for comprehensive structural reforms and privatization, and preparing a comprehensive economic reform package.” [10]

In the same period, during which the emphasis would normally be on macroeconomic continuity and job creation, Ambassador Bremer told field officers and governance coordinators that they needed to be prepared for the effects of a series of economic shocks that were necessary if the country was to assume a proper free-market economic framework.

The case of Hungary was often given to support this shock treatment. This was a horrible misreading of the Eastern European example, ignoring as it did the sequencing of political transitions. In Hungary, economic shock treatment did not begin in earnest until after the first freely elected government had completed the country’s initial four-year postcommunist term, the political class knowing that it need those crucial years to achieve political stability before asking any socioeconomic concessions from the citizenry. And this transition occurred in a peaceful, homogenous and consensus-driven country with a long history of representative government.

In Iraq, the United States was trying to implement a “no pain, no gain” policy while at the same time fighting an insurgency and dodging IEDs. In counterinsurgency, there is no long-term, only short- and shorter-term. If the price for reinforcing stability in the crucial first year of a difficult transition is bad economic policies, so be it. Otherwise, there will never be an opportunity to implement good economic policies.

### Spend on People First

Colin Powell offered this basic guidance for staff officers and commanders: the field is always right. By this, he meant we should not second-guess the judgment of those who are feeling the heat of battle. In Iraq, there was a fundamental disconnect between those in the field and those in headquarters over where to focus spending. The field invariably opted for large-scale jobs programs, while headquarters preferred infrastructure.

We had the same dilemma in Haiti. If one chooses short-term jobs programs over large-scale infrastructure projects, there is no concrete improvement at the end of the spending that will anchor future growth. If, on the other hand, one puts everything into costly, highly technical

infrastructure projects, high levels of unemployment will feed a cycle of instability. Of the two choices, one should opt for the one that produces the most stability.

During counterinsurgency and the early phase of a transition, spending on direct job creation—money-targeting people first—is essential to anchor the political process and shore up security. We came to this realization late, conceding in January 2006 that, as the Brookings Institution’s Michael O’Hanlon puts it, “The initial U.S. effort had been focused too much on large infrastructure.” O’Hanlon advocates, in addition to spending on local infrastructure and health care, a massive job creation program “to reduce the number of Iraqis willing to fire grenades at passing police officers, plant explosives along the routes of troop convoys, or otherwise aid and abet the insurgency.” [11]

AEI analyst Michael Rubin, who served briefly in Iraq in the early CPA days, takes this a step further. He believes we are competing against Shiite militias who, following the Hezbollah pattern, are pouring large amounts of money into the provision of basic services in impoverished Shiite neighborhoods where government services are weak or nonexistent. He notes that while the U.S. has little to show Iraqis for its money spent, Iranian-funded militias have opened branches of Shahid al-Mihrab (Establishment for Promoting Islam) throughout southern Iraq, distributing food and money in return for allegiance. He quotes a U.S. official as having said, “We don’t believe in bags of money in the middle of the night like the Iranians do.” As Rubin notes, “In principle this is fine; in reality it is a recipe for defeat: While Tehran understands the importance of patronage networks, Washington does not. While U.S. funds go to Bechtel and Halliburton, Iran-backed groups address Iraqis’ immediate needs. [12]

Of the many complaints we heard on a daily basis from Iraqis, lack of jobs was the most common. A Baghdad small businessman said it best: “It is easy for the Americans to say, ‘We are doing reconstruction in Iraq,’ and we hear that. But to make us believe it, they should show us where the reconstruction is. Maybe they are doing this reconstruction for them in the Green Zone. But this is not for the Iraqis. Believe me, they are not doing this, unless they consider rebuilding of their military bases reconstruction.” [13] To be effective, money must be spent directly on people.

## Flexibility

One of the unique things about Iraq was the availability of tens of billions of dollars in seized, frozen, or confiscated assets. Some of this money became available for military units in the form of the Commander’s Emergency Response Fund (CERP).

Before I deployed in August 2003, the best policy advice I received was from 504<sup>th</sup> Parachute Regiment XO Michael Fenzel, then working in Mosul, who urged that I preserve this vital and very creative economic tool. Commanders at all levels liked its flexibility. Since it wasn’t

congressionally appropriated, it wasn't subject to the bureaucratic rules and oversight that often made development funds so difficult to spend that they became ineffective.

Local commanders and CPA officials saw the CERP fund as one of the most effective tools they had in winning local support. The basic model was that each battalion commander would have a replenishable fund of \$50,000 to disburse for small projects, with Brigade commanders controlling \$100,000 and the division commander \$250,000. The money was easily accessed and flexible enough to be used as seed money if a project required it. From August to December 2003, I had a similar fund from the CPA so that the Ramadi civil-military team could pool its engineering and project assets to develop a centralized project list throughout the province. At a time when Bechtel, which had won a nationwide project to refurbish schools, had curtailed its work in Al Anbar because of an attack one of its teams suffered en route to a project, we could identify, contract and have a school refurbished in 30 days. Military commanders, who could tailor the program to encourage cooperation, could use these funds to engage local sheikhs and community leaders, who often benefited very directly from the administration of this program.

The program had its downsides, as oversight, especially in places like Fallujah, was often difficult, and managing contracts in a culture where there had never been contracts was problematic to say the least. We now know much of the money was not well spent, with no small amount lost to corruption and theft, something that requires new procedures to improve. But the flexibility and unit-level accountability of this program is vital and should be formalized as a core postconflict tool for U.S. appropriated funds, not just foreign seized assets. Postconflict chaos requires a large-scale infusion of funds by those closest to the action, and the clock is running.

### New Policies and Capabilities

The lack of an operational doctrine for the economic tool in counterinsurgency and postconflict stabilization is a standalone issue that deserves attention. It could, however, be evidence of a more basic issue. If we are to be successful at postconflict stabilization anywhere, core operating assumptions about its place in our national priorities will have to change. Counterinsurgency has always been the doctrinal and operational stepchild to conventional military operations. Its political counterpart, postconflict stabilization, falls similarly behind conventional diplomacy—one of the least funded, most politicized, and least consistently supported enterprises in the foreign affairs realm. For a variety of reasons, none very compelling, the U.S. political-military apparatus has never institutionalized or systematized these approaches. We continue to pay a heavy price for not elevating them to the core place they deserve in our foreign operations.

This phenomenon differs sharply from the world of conventional military operations, where generations of lessons learned are built upon.

Finance Minister Allawi said of the contracting procedure the United States brought with it to Iraq that it may have worked in the United States, but “once you brought it in the context of Iraq, it fell flat on its face.” [14] In a larger sense, we also brought to Iraq a faulty paradigm that undervalues postconflict reconstruction and nation-building. We will spend billions on military operations but cannot find millions to buy stability. We have developed history’s most technically advanced and well-led armed forces to prosecute war but have no equivalent force to secure the peace. For this latter task, we need an entire new doctrine and operational capacity, within which the economic tool in counterinsurgency will have a place.

Notes:

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# UNCONVENTIONAL APPROACHES TO DIPLOMATIC THEORY

*By Garrett Jones*

March 2007

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In my years of government service, I have spent quite a bit of time as a briefcase carrier and “go-fer” for some pretty capable and talented diplomats in the U.S. Foreign Service. While being a diplomat was not my primary job, I did pick up a few pointers from these diplomats on how the game of international diplomacy is played between nations. It appears either that these sorts of basic points did not make the criteria for inclusion in Foreign Service training or that the State Department’s guardian of the “tribal memory” has retired.

Whatever one may think of current U.S. foreign policy in general, even its supporters will admit to the appearance of clumsy execution, poorly briefed officials and a focus on short-term spin vs. long-term policy goals. In short, despite being a superpower, we have not won many lately. North Korea and Iraq are the headliners in what seems to be a widespread uncertainty of where the foreign policy ship of state is headed next.

Most Foreign Service officers operate at a level far above their pay grade, with little or no thanks from anyone. But despite their hard work, there seems to be an ignorance of “street smarts for diplomats.” At the risk of being called “cheeky”, here are a few things they might not have covered when going through basic diplomat training in Northern Virginia. If you already know this stuff, then make sure you pass it on to the next generation. .

ENTHUSIASM vs. COMPETENCE. Do not confuse the two concepts. Just because an individual agrees with you on everything, they still may lack competence. First, you have to get it done. Then you can explain at length how your correct thinking deserves the credit. The corollary to this is do not confuse ideology with competence. It is much easier to live with a competent heretic than it is a witless zealot.

AID AND CHARITY ORGANIZATIONS LIE. You cannot place much confidence in the reporting of any U.S. government aid agency or international charity group about what the conditions on the ground are at any location. They are only human. They often work in terrible conditions with those who are very needy. It is understandable that they often view their own clients or situation as “the worst off.” There are more in need than there is money available to help. Your job as a U.S. diplomat is always to give the policymakers in



Washington accurate information on which to base a rational decision. Another reason to be a little leery of situation reports from the charity and aid folks is not mentioned in polite company, but it is true. Careers are made, promotions are gained and organizations expand when they can identify with a juicy disaster (insert pitiful pictures of starving children here.) This is not most of the folks you will run into, but such people are out there. A rough guide is how many superlatives they use to describe the situation on the ground. If they use more than half a dozen in a 15-minute conversation, either the end is near or you need to take a firm grip on your wallet.

**Dictatorships are personal.** In a dictatorship, there is no space between the **Supreme Leader and the government of the country.** Criticizing the **Big Man's necktie** will go over about the same as calling all the citizens buffoons. In many places, it is far worse to impugn the omniscience of the Great Leader than sending a nasty diplomatic note. He might never know about the note, but someone will tell him the American called him names. This rule also applies to de facto dictatorships, it does not matter what the national constitution of the country says. If the **Padrone** thinks he owns the government, then comments on the national soccer side can be the moral equivalent to breaking diplomatic relations. The inverse sometimes applies. **"Wow" the Grand Jefe and you can then get away with the diplomatic equivalent of larceny with threats.** If the **Big Guy** likes you, no one working for him is going to throw too much of a fit. They understand the game, even if you do not.

**Money is fungible.** Even by giving aid to the victims it is abusing, you are in fact supporting a repressive government. Money not spent on either feeding or repressing its restive citizens is money available to the regime. These funds are then used for corruption or other means of propping up the government. This may not be what you want to do, but understand **your charity is in effect going into the government's pocket.**

**Get over yourself.** You were sent overseas to lie, steal, and cheat for your country. If you are uncomfortable with that, then you do not understand your job. You are not there to do good; you are there to do well while looking good. We hope that your being an advocate for the U.S.'s interests will result in good things, but not always. **Have you considered hiring on with a charitable organization? Many of them do "good work."**

**Hierarchy of needs.** There are four basic levels of interest for a sovereign country that are taught in academia and then one unspoken interest that trumps everything else. In more or less descending order, survival interest (preventing a nuclear attack, for instance); vital interests (ensuring access to oil or water); national interest (protecting a country's citizens and corporations); and general interests - promotion of a country's ideals, etc. The one that triumphs all other interests is the political survival of the government in power. Long-term

vital interests, citizens and everything else will usually be sacrificed to permit a government to continue in power. This is true for the U.S., as much as it is anywhere else.

**SECOND LAW OF THERMODYNAMICS.** All systems tend towards entropy, including political systems. The longer a government or political party has been in power, the greater the level of corruption and incompetence among the people in charge. Individuals improve their skills and competency over time; political administrations do not.

**TALK TO ANYBODY.** I have often thought there should be a Deputy Assistant Undersecretary of State in Charge of Talking to Anybody Who Walks in the Door. Often the prohibition on talking to some faction or government comes from the top, but it is almost always wrong. Someone, at some level, should always talk to whoever will talk to us, even if it is just to get an accurate copy of the abusive press release. Interesting things can happen when dialogue is opened.

**ENVY AND SPITE AS MOTIVES.** Never underestimate national envy and personal spite as motives in international relations. Simply to be seen as opposing the U.S. is good politics in some countries. Some societies view the U.S. as a country of mixed breeds and are annoyed **that it exists and continues to be successful, despite having an “inferior” culture.** More than a few diplomats have been bested by the U.S.’s economic or military power, our supposed allies included. Their egos are every bit as big as ours are. We should also remember that modesty is not one of our cultural strong points.

**JUST BECAUSE THEY ARE CRAZY DOES NOT MEAN THEY AREN’T IN CHARGE.** One of the more difficult things for many U.S. diplomats to accept is that the intelligent, articulate, well-educated person across the table from them can and will act in an irrational manner on some subjects. On many occasions, I have read reports where diplomats assure Washington **that some country’s leadership will act in their country’s best interest, only to watch the same country doing the exact opposite.** Sometimes, on some issues, the cultural divide is not rational. Keep that in mind the next time you think something is a slam dunk.

Having pointed out some concepts that may have been forgotten, let me now presume to suggest some longstanding concepts that desperately need a visit from the diplomatic version of “Extreme Makeover”.

**THE POTTERY BARN RULE OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS.** In the twentieth century, international law operated on the basis of you break it, you own it. If your country overthrows a government, then your country is responsible for creating and establishing a replacement government. Unfortunately, in the twenty-first century this rule is not working out very well (see the Balkans, Iraq, Palestine, Somalia and other cases). This idea needs to be rethought. The old model of conquering a country and then making it a vassal state against the

will of its citizens is well past its expiration date. Some problems need to be eliminated by military force, but subsequent rebuilding may be best left to someone other than the original military organization.

**MANY INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARIES ARE NOT REAL.** Sometimes, neither are the countries they delineate. More governments than anyone would care to admit hold sway over their capital cities and little else. While the international community limits itself to the “recognized” government of the day, the people who can actually affect the conditions on the ground are foisted off on nongovernmental groups. While this may make shaky governments around the world breathe easier, ignoring reality generally causes more problems than it solves. The international community needs to come up with a new designation or category, not quite a sovereign government, but not to be ignored, either. The politically correct term would be “legitimizing all the stakeholders.”

**AT SOME POINT, IT IS HISTORY.** At some point in time, every culture, ethnic group or nationality has been done an injustice by some other group. But squabbling about historical wrongs is almost never useful. The international community needs to put a cap on how far back one can reach to raise a legitimate grievance. A hundred years, two hundred years? At some point, no matter how justified, the grievance is the stuff of history books, not legitimate international discussion. It will not stop the domestic scoundrels from exploiting the argument or issue, but tying this principle to international aid and loans will certainly slow it down.

**CRY HAVOC! GET A GRIP ON THE LAWS OF WAR.** The laws of war clearly need to be reassessed and brought up-to-date by new treaty language in the Geneva Convention. Transnational and armed civilian militias have rendered many of the old notions of “combatant” meaningless. Indeed, some groups make it part of their strategy to use groups or locations protected by the Law of War to further their ends. Unless modern definitions and the responsibility for committing certain acts are brought up-to-date, the current muddle will get worse, not better.

# FINANCIAL WARFARE

*By Paul Bracken*

September 2007

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The U.S. is increasingly using financial warfare to punish international actors, blocking the overseas bank accounts of North Korean, Iranian, and Russian companies involved in illicit activities such as nuclear and conventional weapons proliferation. Attacking the funding of terrorist groups is a core strategy for dealing with this threat.

Financial warfare has greater targeting accuracy than the classic economic warfare of trade sanctions, embargoes, and blockades, which have an overly diffuse impact on whole populations. For this reason, its use is likely to increase, just as precision military strikes replaced carpet bombing two decades ago.

Financial warfare also has a deep connection with information operations and network-centric warfare, which points to a new type of conflict against computing and network infrastructures in the financial sector. When these networks are cut off or compromised, money stops flowing and operations cease. The ability to do this—offensively and defensively—has enormous political consequences.

## What We Think We Know

National power once meant control of natural resources, factories, and ports. Controlling or denying these was a major object of military strategy. Economic warfare—in the form of strategic embargoes, blockades, or the preemptive purchase of scarce resources to deny them to the enemy—was designed to deny access to critical resources, or to disrupt their conversion into war goods.

In the Cold War, the economic autarky of the communist bloc made it difficult to practice classic economic warfare. Outside of technology, there was little the Soviet Union wanted from the West. **But with the tremendous growth of Western trade and finance, the West's** attention soon shifted to whether the Soviet Union could disrupt the international order by triggering a financial panic or another kind of economic dislocation.

By the 1970s, the global economy was restructuring, with Japan's rise as the second-largest economy in the world. Trade and finance increased dramatically, and there was wide

recognition of “the dollar overhang problem,” or more dollars (Eurodollars) outside of the United States than there were in the U.S. economy’s money supply.

Several studies and conferences held in the 1970s on the West’s economic vulnerability concluded that modern capitalist economies were highly resilient; it was difficult to upset them for long. [1] Knocking out key nodes is much more difficult than it first appears because activity automatically shifts to other nodes and sectors. This framework still offers a useful vocabulary for analyzing economic warfare.

The 1980s saw a shift in attention from the economic vulnerabilities of the West to those of the Soviet Union. However, most studies concluded that the Soviets would muddle through the 1980s, with little possibility of an economic collapse. In the 2000s, attention is on the financial, as distinct from the purely economic, aspects of vulnerability. Several reasons account for this: international flows of money dwarf trade, and most of this money—over 90 percent—has nothing to do with paying for toys from China or cars from Japan. It is money seeking a better return by moving electronically from the Buenos Aires to the Russian stock market, and back again to a Connecticut hedge fund.

One measure of the astounding growth of international finance is the flow of dollars through “Chips” computers. Chips is the Clearinghouse Interbank Payments System, privately operated by large banks, to move dollars electronically from one financial institution to another. In 2007, the average daily flow of dollars through Chips is \$1.5 trillion. Since Chips does not process all dollar movements and operates only in dollars, it seems reasonable to say that international money movements amount to \$2.5 trillion per day.

Global finance can have important political consequences. In the “Tequila crisis” of 1994–95, the U.S. loaned \$50 billion to Mexico to avoid a number of destabilizing possibilities. These included increasing the number of illegal migrants coming to the U.S. or derailing the democratic trends underway there.

Politics, likewise, can have important financial implications. In 1998, Long Term Capital Management (LTCM), a Connecticut hedge fund, lost \$3 billion on Russian bonds. This caused the U.S. Federal Reserve Bank to “suggest” to the firm’s limited partners that they invest more capital to avoid destabilizing the world financial system. LTCM, it turns out, was making very thin margins on their trades, and they had to bet huge amounts to generate a decent return. They got their money on loan from limited partners, Wall Street banks, and wealthy individuals. LTCM had leveraged over a trillion dollars on their bets on where the markets were going.

An interesting feature of this crisis is how poorly LTCM assessed political risk. The Russian bond default that triggered LTCM’s collapse did not arise because Moscow was unable to pay

back the bondholders. Rather, the problem was a political split inside the Russian government. One faction simply refused to pay.

More recently, terrorist attacks beginning with 9/11 have had little economic or financial impact. After 9/11, the NYSE was closed for only four days. Within a year, the job market on Wall Street (and the New York City real estate market) was again booming. Even the New York firms hardest hit showed extraordinary resilience. Cantor Fitzgerald, Aon, and Marsh & McLennan lost hundreds of employees in the WTC attacks. Yet they all came back, most in weeks, some in months. The resilience of markets and business is not to be underestimated.

## Financial and Economic Systems

It is important to distinguish between financial and economic systems. This distinction is central to understanding the growing opportunities for financial warfare, as distinct from classic economic warfare. The economic system deals with the hard and soft outputs of the economy—that is, goods and services. The financial system deals with money and credit. In the modern financial system these can be very complicated. Bank credit, money transfers, stocks, bonds, and derivatives are the “stuff” of the financial system. It is a system built on confidence. There is trust that loans will be paid, that money transferred to an account will actually get there, and that money once placed in an account will not suddenly “disappear.”

The difficult question is the relationship between these two systems. After the 500-point drop in the Dow Jones Industrial Average on October 19, 1987, the Dow recovered to its pre-crash levels by the second half of 1989. The huge one-day hit in 1987 had little lasting effect on the real economy. At times the real economy can slow down, measured by GDP decline and increased unemployment, while financial markets boom. At other times, the underlying economics can be good, but finance bad—as in 1987.

Distinguishing between the two systems is important. Financial shocks tend to be more immediate and concentrated in time. They can also be more targeted, affecting particular groups. Economic shocks usually affect broad segments of the population; unemployment goes up or goods are in short supply. Financial shocks are usually more concentrated. For example, when Enron collapsed in 2000, those most affected were not the average citizen, or even the average stockholder. It was the employees and share-owners who disproportionately suffered loss.

## Financial Warfare

Financial warfare is an expanding arena of conflict. Understanding financial vulnerabilities requires thinking across departments that have not historically been well coordinated—e.g., Defense, Treasury, and the intelligence community. Since money in the modern era can be

instantly moved electronically, even the appearance of a threat to accounts can lead to large outflows into safer banks in safer countries. This is how the Eurodollar market began back in the early 1950s. The Soviet Union sold gold for dollars, but was afraid to keep the dollars in an account in New York, where they might be blocked for Cold War reasons. Moscow started a dollar-denominated account in an Italian bank known as “Eurobank,” where it felt safer from seizure.

In the 1956 Suez crisis, when Britain and France landed forces on the Suez Canal to prevent its nationalization by Egypt, President Dwight Eisenhower looked for ways to pressure London to call off the attack. Clearly, Washington could not take direct military action against NATO allies. Eisenhower turned instead to financial warfare. He ordered the Treasury Department to dump British Sterling on the international market. This depressed the value of the British pound, causing a shortage of reserves needed to pay for imports. If this financial situation had continued for much longer, it would have also increased British inflation. The message quickly got through to London, which, along with Paris, soon pulled out of the Canal.

In the aftermath of Iran’s seizure of U.S. hostages in 1979, President Jimmy Carter ordered Iranian government bank accounts frozen in the U.S. and the UK. Recently, the U.S. has acted to block North Korean bank accounts linked to illegal activities and the financing of its nuclear program. The U.S. Treasury Department blocked \$25 million in accounts held in Banco Delta Asia in Macao. This Department also pressured other banks to stop dealing with the banks of Iran and Syria, as well as those of certain Russian companies involved in the arms trade. This pressure has made it more difficult for them to use the global financial system for letters of credit, trade finance, and remittances from their overseas citizens. It also has increased the risk premium and interest rates on any financing they are able to secure from other sources.

A U.S. crackdown on Iran’s Bank Sederat involved getting foreign banks including some of the world’s largest banks—UBS and Credit Suisse of Switzerland and ABN Amro of the Netherlands—to agree not to conduct business with this bank or risk being cut off from the U.S. financial system. U.S. actions have involved both official sanctions undertaken by the Treasury Department’s Office of Foreign Assets Control, and informal actions intended to sap business confidence in dealing with Iran.

Most major banks fear “headline risk.” Having their names in major media for dealing with Iran’s atomic programs, for example, is likely to scare off their regular corporate customers. Informal pressure has proven to be a partial solution to hidden dealings, in that a bank has to consider the costs of dealing with a company or bank linked to Iran or North Korea. In the 1990s, many foreign banks easily bypassed oil sanctions against Iraq which were incorrectly thought to be governed by strict UN supervision of Baghdad’s accounts. The 2005 Volcker

Report concluded that Saddam Hussein, using surcharges and kickbacks, diverted \$1.8 billion involving more than 2,000 companies that engaged in illicit activities.

## U.S. Vulnerability to Financial Attacks

How would the U.S. financial system react to a WMD attack on a major hub, such as New York? Is enough being done to harden and back up financial systems so that a cascading set of failures would not spread to other markets, with dire political implications?

One reason Wall Street responded so quickly after 9/11 was that planning for a possible attack had been undertaken earlier. In 1997, a war game of a Wall Street attack was played. Leaders from the White House, Treasury, the Federal Reserve, the Pentagon, and the intelligence community came together with leaders of Wall Street's largest financial institutions to simulate a terrorist attack designed to disrupt the U.S. economy. The game was played in the WTC's north tower, and some of the actual players were working there on 9/11 and were killed in the attack. The terrorist scenario was nothing like what actually happened on 9/11. The war game attacks focused on key nodes, like computer clearing houses and telephone switching centers, whereas on 9/11 a primitive yet highly effective attack was launched. Nonetheless, the lessons drawn from this game included the need to disperse key facilities away from lower Manhattan, as well as to back up important data at remote locations. All of this proved highly useful to the quick restoration of Wall Street on 9/11.

Since 9/11 the concern to reduce the U.S. financial system's vulnerability to terrorist attacks has greatly increased. Virtually every major U.S. bank and financial institution has thought through its vulnerabilities. In addition, the Treasury Department has taken major steps to ensure that financial systems are more redundant and hardened and that back-up alternates are ready to take over in case of disaster. Sarbanes-Oxley and other legislation require financial institutions to monitor carefully their internal processes. Basle II, from the Bank for International Settlements in Basle Switzerland, reinforces this trend by requiring banks to reserve capital against so-called operational risks, i.e. internal process breakdowns such as those from cyber attacks or inside theft.

In addition, the pattern in the New York financial industry is to disperse back office operations to New Jersey and elsewhere. The hedge fund business is concentrated in nearby Fairfield County, Connecticut. The pattern from San Francisco to Miami is to shed high-cost downtown locations as much as possible. These trends have the combined effect of reducing the U.S. financial system's vulnerability to terrorist attack. However, interdependencies among the financial system and other complementing systems remain. The electrical and telephone grids, in particular, are essential for the smooth operation of the financial system. One of the peculiar features of the New York financial market is that 40 percent of the workforce uses



mass transit to get to work. In the event of a bio-attack in New York, this might be a major vulnerability. But in sum, the U.S. financial system is getting much harder to take down.

### Terrorist Networks

The chief problems of denying funding to terrorist groups are that the amount of money they use is small, and the networks they rely on are mass market in character, and thus difficult to monitor without specific intelligence. Terrorist cells are unlikely to use large international networks for international funds transfer. Reports are that the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka have used on-line eBay and PayPal accounts for money laundering, arms trafficking, and other activities. Such small accounts are very difficult to monitor.

Terrorist funding is hard to disrupt, but even partial successes can have significant payoffs. One of the major lessons learned from cracking down on terrorist funding after 9/11 was the **critical importance of the timing of financial attacks**. **Freezing suspects'** bank accounts requires worldwide coordination, since the seizures must come down nearly simultaneously.

### Financial Warfare as a Strategy

One criticism of U.S. offensive financial warfare is that it is unlikely to be effective. Iran in 2007, for example, earns about \$300 million a day in oil and gas exports. This money flow is not the object of financial actions because it is tied to the legitimate sale of oil and gas to customers around the world. The amount of money blocked in bank accounts held in the name of Iranian Revolutionary Guards, for example, is small compared to these larger flows of money coming from the energy exports.

But this view fails to put financial warfare in a strategic context. Blocking bank accounts of key groups and individuals puts the spotlight on them and thereby increases the risks to any company or government doing business with them. Financial sanctions legitimize additional actions, both financial and non-financial, which can ratchet up more pressure. This is where financial warfare and military strategy converge. Most people think of financial warfare as a substitute for military action, which it is, up to a point. But after a point it becomes a complement rather than a substitute.

The most intense kinds of financial warfare, such as blocking all monetary transactions and flows to and from a country and its citizens, may only make sense under conditions of war. But there is a large spectrum of intermediate cases between small financial sanctions which substitute for kinetic attacks and **“all out” financial warfare complementing military attack**. And it is this spectrum that gives us the key insight that financial warfare as a strategy is best viewed in an escalation framework. It has two separate effects. The first is the direct pain it causes to individuals and companies whose accounts are blocked or confiscated. The second

impact comes from its place as a “next-step” action which is considered reasonable and justifiable. The next step builds on a sequence of actions which raise the bar of what are seen to be sensible and legitimate measures to right some wrong or to force a change in behavior. If the current step does not do this, the next step might. Placing financial warfare in an escalation framework has several important aspects. It is more focused than traditional economic warfare. It is, therefore, more likely to be considered acceptable in a political sense. It was the Iraqi people who suffered most from the embargo placed on Iraq from 1991-2003; Saddam and his cronies bypassed the embargo.

Blocking bank accounts and disrupting money flows is a sharp instrument that goes after those in power who are calling the shots. In many respects, conventional economic warfare is like carpet bombing; financial warfare is like precision strike. Neither one guarantees success, but the latter approach is usually more attractive. Another aspect of placing financial warfare in an escalation framework is that it doesn't just play the game, it reshapes it. The U.S.'s use of informal financial pressures is a case in point. Over 40 major global banks and financial institutions have cut off or sharply reduced their dealings with the Iranian government and businesses at the urging of U.S. Treasury and State Department officials. This is action that goes beyond official UN sanctions intended to deal with Iran's nuclear program. Consider a bank that serves as a financial intermediary for Iran or North Korea. It now has to evaluate the reputation risks to its entire portfolio in dealing with such “hot” clients. Again, credit is confidence. If other banks in the Interbank market (banks making short-term loans to other banks) view it as taking major risks by its dealings with Iran or North Korea, they are likely to be cut off.

Seen this way, financial warfare is a consensus-building device. It sets up a coalition made up of allies and those sitting on the fence who will have to decide whether to honor the sanctions. Financial warfare has an element of risk communication as well, both for the target and others in the network. According to Stuart Levey, Undersecretary of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence, “All the banks we've talked to are reducing significantly their exposure to Iranian business. It's been a universal response. They all recognize the risks—some because of what we've told them and some on their own. You don't have to be Sherlock Holmes to see the dangers.”

Viewed as a “next step” in a dynamic escalation, financial warfare may be much more effective in building pressure than is commonly believed. A good case can be made that North Korea decided to test its atom bomb when it did, in October 2006, because of the asset freeze placed on accounts Banco Delta Asia in Macao by Chinese authorities, at U.S. urging. Financial warfare could produce explosive effects, quite literally. This is another reason for looking at financial warfare as an escalation process: the failure to estimate and analyze its

potential effects can lead to serious mistakes and big surprises. It can only be appreciated with a thorough understanding of it as a dynamic process.

### Information Operations and Elite Targeting

Financial warfare complements military operations as well as information operations. When combined with advances in social network mapping, it can give a highly detailed picture of an **elite's communication and financial structure that can be used for targeting**. Communication and software tools now exist to analyze connections in vast networks of heterogeneous information, such as financial transactions, mobile telephone calls, e-mail, and air travel. This **gigantic information pool can be a source of knowledge about a nation's elite, where they stash their money, who they talk to, and their position in a social hierarchy**. The key to doing this lies in constructing overlays of these datasets to visualize the various connections.

Watching how money flows out of a country in a crisis can be an important tip-off to who is in the know and who is at least partially responsible for national decisions. Carried to the next **step, this can be combined with precise military attacks to go after a nation's elite**. For example, tracking mobile telephone calls can reveal things like where the elite live, their vacation homes, and their travel patterns. Financial tracking of their bank accounts can reveal where they keep their money and who has access to their accounts. This creates the conditions for potentially ruinous attacks with far-reaching social implications on the national leadership. **Were a national elite's overseas bank accounts frozen and their homes targeted with cruise missiles, simultaneously, a hyper-decapitation attack could destroy a nation's leadership**. Clearly, this represents a large escalation. But there are many possibilities which fall short of this, and these constitute an important type of strategy: counter-elite targeting. Counter elite targeting has been considered in the past, both in the Cold War, with nuclear weapons, and more recently in conflicts in Kosovo and Iraq. But the 21st century is likely to see considerably more applications of it.

Spoofing—sending false signals of increased military and financial pressure—could be used to map out the crisis response patterns of a national elite, who they call, and where they send their money. This could be an intelligence treasure-trove of information. It could also be an input to information operations designed to make certain individuals, groups, or companies **“suspect” in the eyes of a leader. This could undermine confidence in the regime**. Seen as an escalation process, this focuses attention on actions which fall short of all-out attacks. These lower-level or intermediate actions are likely to provide U.S. decision-makers with a range of options between doing nothing and all-out attacks.

Developments in technology, intelligence, and finance are converging, creating more favorable conditions for financial warfare. More systematic thought should be given to this important subject.

## Command and Control

Financial warfare blurs the military and civilian spheres of conflict. It should entail cooperation among the armed services, State, Defense, Treasury, DHS, and the intelligence community. Organizational issues over authority and tasking may prove to be one of the greatest barriers to getting a coherent intellectual framework for what is going on. The challenges are difficult, but ignoring them only makes it likely that improvisation and over-compartmentalization could produce serious mistakes.

War games, appropriately designed, could go a long way to revealing some of the tensions and stresses in command and control. The Wall Street Security Exercise cited earlier had this effect. It put attention on the sensitive interface among different government agencies and was an important, if small, step in understanding the vulnerabilities of the U.S. financial system.

## Conclusions

Financial warfare is likely to be an increasing form of conflict because it lies at the intersection of powerful long-term trends in technology, networks, and finance. The precise targeting feature of financial warfare, relative to conventional economic warfare, marks a significant change in the nature of conflict. This topic calls out for more thought about what is likely to be a growing use of a tactic that calls for a strategic framework to understand it.

## Notes:

1. See, e.g., GE Tempo, *Economic Conflict and National Security Research*, Report GE-77, Feb. 22, 1977.

## AMERICA'S BROKEN INTERAGENCY

*By the Hon. Thomas A. Schweich*

March 2009

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The last job I had with the Bush administration was coordinator for police training, judicial reform, and counternarcotics in Afghanistan. When I got the job, the National Security Council said, “It’s got three parts. First, you have to go to Afghanistan and try to coordinate among their agencies for police reform, judicial reform, and counternarcotics. Then you fly to Europe to coordinate with the EU on the same issue. Finally, you come back to Washington and coordinate U.S. interagency.” The last of these jobs was the most difficult one.

Afghanistan’s interagency process could best be described as “uncoordinated lack of action.” For example, in the areas of police training or counternarcotics, the ministry of the interior and the ministry of counternarcotics were supposed to coordinate their activities. The ministry of the interior would train police, the counternarcotics office was then supposed to execute the policies. Well, the ministry of the interior was run by former Mujahideen Tajiks while the ministry of counternarcotics was run by Hazaras who used to work for the Soviets. They didn’t like each other very much, they didn’t coordinate, and they didn’t talk to each other. Then, the two of them were supposed to get together and go down to Helmand and Kandahar and tell the Pashtuns how to get rid of drugs.

There was a complete lack of coordination there—either institutionalized or created on purpose by the drug lords. Even within the agencies, there was very little capacity to get anything done, so the counternarcotics ministry had an \$80 million counternarcotics trust fund. Many countries who didn’t want to send troops to Afghanistan were contributing a lot of money to that fund, but Afghanistan had only spent \$3 million of it after two years.

In Europe, I found a lot of coordination but no action. The Europeans are very good at coordinating—with the Policy Action Group, the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board, etc.—but we had trouble getting them actually to act, to do something and to get their police training mission operational, to get it out to the provinces—to get it to work. So I reported

back, “The Afghans are not very good at either coordination or doing anything, while the Europeans are pretty good at coordination but less so at acting.”

Then I had to work with the U.S. interagency, which was the most difficult process of all. There is action, but without coordination. In looking into, for example, prosecutor training, I found that we had three separate sets of curriculum being done by different U.S. agencies. They were inconsistent. This was the kind of lack of coordination that was going on among the agencies in Afghanistan. In another situation, where we were trying to build courthouses, we had one agency that was providing computerized equipment and another that decided they could delay providing electricity to those buildings during this time. So there was all this equipment but no electricity. One Afghan judge who had gotten to know the U.S. culture—like we were trying to get to know theirs—came up to me and asked, “How many Afghans does it take to screw in a light bulb?” I replied, “Well, I don’t know.” And he said, “Well, neither do we.”

There were more serious issues—for example, on the issue of whether to eradicate the opium crop in Helmand province. Interagency decisions had been taken to actually do this in certain of the wealthier parts of the country where doing so wouldn’t alienate poor farmers. But we got down there with the eradication force and there were fliers coming out of International Security Assistance Force saying “ISAF says not to destroy poppies.” So you have one group coming in to destroy the crop and another saying “we don’t destroy them.” It became a very serious problem.

### Policy vs. Process

As the new administration gets started, we need to focus not only on reviewing policy, but also on reviewing and improving the process, which, as Janine Davidson observes, might be a little easier to reform than the substance.<sup>1</sup> There have been three extensive bottom-up policy reviews on Afghanistan in 2008—the Afghan study group that General Jones led, the Atlantic Council Study Group, and OXFAM’s comprehensive policy study—but almost nobody is looking at the process. [Note: Since this talk, RAND Corporation has also issued an Afghan policy review paper.]

I agree with Davidson that major reorganizations are very difficult. The idea of completely rebuilding government and how it functions is not a realistic objective, especially when one is fighting two wars and doesn’t have time to wait for things to work. Davidson identifies the NSC as one specific area where improvement can be made. The NSC has the coordinating role among the interagency, but the way it was formed and staffed, it wasn’t really designed for coordinating major roles all at once. It has got a very smart group of people, but it’s under-resourced. It doesn’t have expertise in a lot of areas. At principals/deputies meetings, the action items get written up but there’s no way to monitor whether they’re really being

executed unless—it's all by back channels. There's also no way of enforcement if one agency isn't doing what it should—e.g., if DoD isn't executing decisions made at the interagency that they don't agree with.

The State Department Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS), authorized in 2004, was supposed to be the State Department's solution to interagency coordination, but it's been slow getting off the ground. They appointed somebody of ambassadorial rank to coordinate all this, gave him practically no staff or money, and said "Now, everybody else in State and elsewhere, give them your staff and your money." It's very hard to get people to do that. The best way to get that organization operating may be to move it out of the State Department. The other agencies are not going to respect it if there is no respect within its own agency. Davidson mentions that maybe it could be moved to the White House and made part of the NSC, which might solve both problems in terms of getting NSC more expertise, more funding, more capability to monitor, improve its operations, and get more interagency buy-in.

As to funding, Davidson points out that there is a 50:1 ratio of funding for Defense Department to State Department. Therefore, in order to enable the State Department to do the things that it should be doing rather than having non-experts using Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) money and the like, there's going to have to be some parity in the funding and in the staffing. Secretary Clinton has said that she wants to do that, and it's going to be essential to do so as State and other agencies—AID, DOJ—assume their roles in this stabilization effort in these countries. So that's clearly got to happen. But there's also a question of where the money comes from. A lot of the money that goes to the State Department—even when they do get money—comes from supplemental appropriations from DoD, which sends the money over to the State Department, along with its own very onerous conditions—which really continue to give DoD control over the operation. There has to be better recognition of how the funding ought to flow so that the experts can actually do the job.

The State Department has tremendous respect for the Department of Defense, but there was when I was there a perception that there wasn't the same level of respect going to the other agencies. No organization has more competent leaders than the Department of Defense. But when you're in the wars that we're in now in Iraq and Afghanistan, where it's not a traditional battlefield, you also need some followers, not just leaders. You need to recognize the civilian police training expertise of some of the people in the State Department. You need to recognize the rule of law expertise at the Department of Justice. There are other very good leaders in areas that are outside DoD's expertise, and DoD also needs some good followers who are willing to enable the experts in the civilian area to do their jobs, because you can't build a courthouse in Iraq or Afghanistan without some military support—not military direction or leadership, but military support.

There also is the issue of the length of tours. We frequently found that we were coordinating with multiple leaders on the military side within the space of a year. Sometimes the tours were only six months, sometimes two years, but within the tour they changed people around. For example, an idea was proposed two years ago by Defense to arm Afghan auxiliary police. It was not viewed favorably by the Department of Justice or the Department of State. We were fearful that the arms could fall in the wrong hands. There were a lot of problems with it. It was tried, it did not work, as we had predicted, and I have read in the media since I've left there's a new plan to do basically the same thing by a whole new group of people at the Department of Defense. There should be a process where new military people that come in are gotten up to speed on what has and hasn't worked in the past.

Finally, Davidson pointed out the inability to “develop” an effective counternarcotics strategy in Afghanistan. In fact, there was a process, and a strategy was developed: it's on the website, it was approved by the deputies and the principals. It was execution that was the problem. The Department of Defense did not like certain parts of the counternarcotics strategy in Afghanistan. They made their views very clear in the principals and deputies meetings but, ultimately, consensus was reached that went against the views of the Department of Defense. DoD absolutely and completely resisted doing anything that was in that strategy, and in fact senior DoD officials told me that they simply would not execute it, despite it's being approved by the White House.

I've written about the leaking of classified aspects of the strategy to the media in order to rile up our allies and encourage them to resist the strategy. We cannot have such a lack of discipline when there is an agreed-upon interagency strategy—and State and other agencies have done this too. That's very problematic. I advocate the “one-strike-and-you're-out” policy about leaks to the media: one strike and you're fired, and we'll investigate it.

That raises a related point, which is clear leadership of the interagency effort. The Obama administration has appointed a tremendous cast of heavyweights for Afghanistan and Pakistan, but it's unclear who is running the show. George Mitchell was appointed special envoy for the Middle East, but a special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, Richard Holbrooke, was also appointed. I'm a special representative for the UN Office on Drugs and Crime in Mexico right now. Special representative has a very specific set of meanings and, in the context of the United States, from what I understand, they don't think that means that Holbrooke reports to the Secretary of State, yet I doubt he's going to be able to give direction to Secretary Gates. It's unclear what General Jones' role in all of this is, since he's supposed to be the coordinator of this activity. And of course, Vice President Biden was the first person to go there. When it came out two weeks ago that perhaps President Obama would not support President Karzai, it actually was announced to the world through a leak. No one knew where the leak came from—which locus of power made this leak—there was no way to trace it



down, the Karzai government was furious and, from what I understand, there was a lot of disarray in Washington as well.

The State Department's approach reminds me of the old Judy Garland/Mickey Rooney "Andy Hardy" movies, where, whenever there's a problem, the answer is "Let's have a show!" The State Department seems to think whenever there is a serious policy issue, such as the disintegration of Afghanistan, "Let's have an envoy." But doing so undercuts the authority of the ambassadors in the country and makes it unclear what the role of the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, and particularly the National Security Advisor are, and I don't think it solves the problems. There needs to be a very quick and structured effort to streamline the interagency process to make it clear who is running the show, to prevent leaks, have clear lines of authority, and have recourse if somebody is not actually executing.

The final piece of that, of course, is if you stop leaking, the media becomes irritated and all your sources get mad at you. Another thing that undercut our activity, and both DoD and State were guilty of this, is officials' leaking the good stuff and then sticking to bland, inane, and often inaccurate talking points when talking on the record. It's totally counterproductive. I watched DoD go around on a series of press interviews (congressional committees are subject to this as well) and basically claim the Afghan National Army was doing great. And then there were leaks out, "Oh, we only have two of 97 units ready to go," and then GAO comes out with a report that it's not ready at all, and yet everybody gets stuck to the talking points. We did the same at State. We'd be given uninformative, boring, and sometimes highly-oversimplified talking points that just frustrated the media and Congress, and put pressure on everybody to leak the truth.

In addition to a strong no-leak policy, we need to empower intelligent, competent people who know the issues to go out there and tell the truth. "Here's what's happening. Here's what's going on." You can't leak classified information, but there's so much information that people don't know. For example, in my own area of the drug trade, there is an incredible amount of misinformation about the narcotics situation—about all the poor farmers who are growing poppy when, in fact, there are two UN reports that show that poppy farmers are the wealthiest people in Afghanistan. All the people who claim that eradication will drive people into the hands of the Taliban don't seem to be aware that the only provinces that don't have any poppy are the ones that did have an eradication program and there's no evidence that anyone was driven into the hands of the Taliban. Just simple, objectively verifiable facts.

## Conclusion

The interagency process clearly needs to be improved, but a focus on policy alone is not going to solve the problems. Improvement can be done in a narrow and streamlined way with some

of the suggestions I have made. If we can devote attention to improving the process over the next few weeks, we're going to get a much better result over the next four years.

## PART VII: INTELLIGENCE

# IT'S A CULTURAL THING: THOUGHTS ON A TROUBLED CIA, PART ONE

*By Garrett Jones*

June 2005

*This article was originally published as an E-Note.*

Since retiring from the CIA in 1997 after almost twenty years as a case officer ("spy runner," "asset handler," or "agent recruiter," to those outside the business), I have followed the Agency's failures and successes through the media. The Agency has probably never been as close to termination as an organization as it is now. Numerous presidential commissions and Congressional committees are currently engaged in fault- and fact-finding about recent Agency missions. These groups by their nature are concerned either with the details of individual operations or with sweeping reforms in structure and organization.

The director of the CIA (DCIA), Porter Goss, will need to address these specific issues as the Agency tries to move forward, but one of the repeated themes in these reports is that the Agency must change its "culture"—the day-to-day details of its operation. Much of the Agency's culture is positive and a normal outcome of the nature of its business. Even some of the culture that outsiders find hard to understand may be healthy and useful. But some of the Agency's culture does have to change: a few features that were always counterproductive have now become intolerable. This article identifies some of these specific cultural problems and offers possible remedies.

## DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

The Directorate of Intelligence (DI) is where the intelligence analysts live in the CIA. The job of an intelligence analyst is to take all-source raw intelligence reports (human, satellite, communications intercepts, etc.) and open-source information and then distill this mass of information into a finished intelligence product. The finished product should provide the U.S. policymaker with the best information and interpretations of the foreign policy issues that confront him or her. The DI's failure to properly evaluate and process the intelligence information on Iraq's WMD illustrates several points that recur in DI products. These recurring practices are sources of continuing confusion and unhappiness for the DI's intelligence consumers.

*"Do you have anything to add?"*

I have seen far too many DI products that simply summarize publicly available information and/or attach so many caveats in answering policymakers' questions that the answers are

effectively without value. It may be useful for busy policymakers to have a summary of publicly available information, but such a summary is not an analytical judgment on current intelligence. Neither is answering a specific question with an array of equally possible outcomes. While it may be human nature and bureaucratically wise for the DI to try to give an extensive answer to every question posed, it is also intellectually dishonest and a disservice to the policymaker. "We don't know" can be a valuable answer, even if it is not what the questioner wants to hear. The DI should be required to change its processes to require it to make an accountable judgment that it has sufficient intelligence reporting available to make a meaningful analytical judgment on any question posed to it.

### *Words of Estimative Probability*

When writing analytical judgments, a DI analyst can use any word s/he wishes—"likely," "possibly," etc.—to estimate the probability of an event's occurring. This is imprecise at best. This problem could easily be overcome by acting on a proposal made by Sherman Kent, the man who invented the profession of intelligence analyst, which the DI rejected at the time it was first made. He observed that my "maybe" might be the same as your "probably," and someone else's "certainly" may be my "probably". To prevent confusion, only certain words describing probability should be permitted in intelligence reporting. These allowed words would be defined on a numeric scale of 1-10 or 0-100. As part of the intelligence product, these allowed words and their numerical values would be made known to the consumer, so that the analyst and the consumer can communicate precisely. The simplicity and clarity of the idea should refine both the analyst's intent and the consumer's understanding of analytical judgments.

### *Analysts in Operations*

The CIA formed the Counterterrorist Center (CTC) in the mid 1980s to bring together DI analysts with specialist knowledge of a subject matter and case officers collecting on the terrorist target. It was originally an effort to better target and exploit assets across the Directorate of Operations' traditional geographic boundaries. (For the most part, the DO is broken down along geographical lines, such as the Middle East, Africa, etc.) This was a good idea and worked well as originally conceived. There have since been a number of intelligence centers (IC) set up to cover several different multinational subjects.

From its founding in 1947, one of the CIA's cardinal rules was that intelligence should be collected by a different group of people than those who analyzed what the intelligence meant and its value. The CIA's founders understood that a collector of intelligence invested far too much professional and personal energy into a source or a method to be able to evaluate the resulting intelligence in an unbiased manner. In fact, when the old CIA headquarters was first opened, the hallway doors between the DI and the DO were permanently locked. DI and DO

personnel were not to mix. The DI had no stake in how much time and money the DO had expended in collecting a piece of intelligence. Their only task was to evaluate the accuracy and importance of the collected intelligence.

Unfortunately, it has become common practice in many ICs for analysts to both direct the collection of intelligence, and because of their training, make the first cut on the meaning and value of the intelligence. When it comes time for the DI to produce a formal product, among the first people the DI sound out on what the intelligence means are the analysts responsible for its collection. This is a fundamental error and may be at least partly responsible for the failures surrounding the Iraqi WMD question. This is not to say that collectors' opinions on the intelligence should not be considered: they often have subtle and meaningful insight into the situation. However, their opinions should be one data-point among many, not the first draft of a National Intelligence Estimate.

The current practice is a profound violation of analytical tradecraft. If you are going to collect, collect; if you are going to analyze, analyze. Having analysts involved in the collection process is a good idea, but having invested themselves in collection, they must not be involved in the subsequent analysis.

### *Reports Officers*

Reports Officers (ROs, sometimes called Collection Management Officers), work for the DO, but their primary job is to interface between the DO collectors and the first-line intelligence consumers, who are for the most part DI analysts. ROs are the intermediaries between collectors and consumers. While they are not required to have experience or specialization in the given subject or geographical area, they are tasked to give the DO collectors feedback from the intelligence consumers on the value of the raw intelligence reports, possible gaps in coverage and to identify new areas of interest. Conversely, ROs are to tell the consumers of the reliability and past performance of the DO sources and provide them a general sense of the access the source has to the intelligence targets. ROs are also supposed to ensure that the clerical details of a raw intelligence report are handled correctly: ensuring that the correct addresses are on the report, that an up-to-date source description is used, and that they are the last editorial check to ensure the wording of the report conforms to Agency style.

It appears from media reports on the Iraqi WMD issue that the interface role of the ROs is completely broken. Neither analysts nor case officers are being well served by the current system.

It is time to start over and redesign the RO function. The interface role between the collectors and the consumer has to be done in a different way. The clerical part of the RO's job is non-controversial and clearly needs to be done. Whether moving the interface part of the job to the

DI and retaining the clerical part in the DO, or creating some independent review panel, there has to be a better way. If due regard is given to the collector/analyst problem, the RO interface function may be an excellent task for DI analysts to take on when they are seconded to the DO.

## DIRECTORATE OF OPERATIONS

In the DO, some things have been broken for years, and it is about time they were fixed.

### *The Not-So-Meritorious Promotion System*

In a bureaucracy such as the DO, the promotion system is supposed to do two things well, reward past superior performance and select the people who will advance through the organization and become the future senior officers. In the DO, it works this way: until GS-13, it is pretty much pass/fail. (This is for case officers in the DO; it varies over other Directorates and job titles.) There is no competition to speak of, if you show up and do the job the promotions will come. (The DO had to do this for retention reasons, given how expensive it is for a family to live in the Washington D.C. area.) At GS-14 on up, it becomes competitive, "sort of." The way it works is there are two lists; the first list is that of every one who is eligible for promotion and recommended for promotion by their respective component chief. The second list is everyone else who is eligible for promotion. Both lists are ranked by merit, i.e.; performance to date, from one to whatever. The first list is then matched to the number of available promotions and those folks are promoted. Generally, the recommended list is roughly the same size as the available number of promotions. If there are any positions left after the first list has been promoted, then starting with number one, folks on the second list are promoted until all the promotions are filled. Promotions to the Senior Intelligence Service (SIS, the grades above GS-15) do not even go through the motions of a merit system. The component chiefs take their picks to the DDO (Deputy Director for Operations) and then battle it out over who has the most influence with him this week.

Where there are competitive lists (GS-14 and GS-15); the two lists are not ranked against each other. The first dozen or so folks on the not-recommended list may be as good as or better than anyone on the recommended list, but they will not be considered for promotion until the recommended list has been promoted. This often happens. This is not fair, but you could say that many things in life are not fair. Unfortunately, being unfair is not the worst part of this system. The real problem with this system is, especially at the SIS level, that whatever kind of management and leadership that you have had before, you will have again. I have read many articles written about the CIA and the DO in the last few years, and in all of them, no one has ever called for more of the same. More of the same is what the DO's promotion system fosters. If you liked the past, you are going to love the future.

The quickest way to change things is to have one list for promotions above GS-13, including the SIS levels. Everyone is ranked by merit on the same list and the top performers on the list are promoted. A few folks with new ideas, uncomfortable and threatening ideas to the status quo, may be just what the DO needs. At this point, it cannot hurt to try.

### *"They Did What?" How the Agency Does Not Learn from its Mistakes*

Whether you call them after-action reports or lessons-learned studies, these usually consist of two main parts: identify what your organization has done well or poorly, and then disseminate what you think you have learned to everyone involved. This is an inarguably good idea, but the CIA—and the DO in particular—has yet to buy into it. The DO does not require lessons-learned study, has no guidelines on how to produce one, no personnel responsible for preparing them, and no mechanism for routinely disseminating such a product if one were produced. When an outside body such as the Inspector General does undertake a review or investigation, the results are normally shared with only a few high-ranking individuals. These select readers are often the people responsible for the failure in the first place and have the most at stake in concealing their errors.

If you are neither trying to learn from your mistakes nor circulating information on how to do better to the *entire* organization, you cannot improve performance. True, such a standardized review will require a commitment of resources and may embarrass otherwise good people. Consider however, the resources it will take to repair a disaster. Isn't a little constructive criticism good for everyone? Perhaps one could begin by reviewing generally acknowledged mistakes as a normal course of business. If that proves useful, then the practice could be extended. As far as potential security problems in such a process, since everyone in the DO has high-level security clearances, posting a suitably redacted report available to all in the DO on a classified system is a trivial problem. [1] This is a simple idea that should have been implemented a longtime ago.

### *Worldwide Presence vs. Worldwide Capability*

Within the Agency in the early 1990s, two contrasting schools of thought arose about the number of overseas stations the DO should maintain. One school of thought is that the DO should be on the ground as a permanent presence in as many different locations as possible. Another school believed the DO should conserve its resources, have a permanent presence in only a few key locations, and then be prepared to surge into other geographical locations on a temporary as needed basis. These competing premises are ones upon which reasonable people can disagree. The Agency opted for the worldwide capability model and during the following years, many DO stations were closed overseas. I believe there is a qualitative difference in the effectiveness and reliability of collection operations that are based on a permanent presence. I have participated in "surge" operations to cover breaking intelligence targets, and they are



inherently risky, from both counterintelligence and reliability standpoints. They are also very expensive in personnel and money. In a "surge", operation you are trying to create in days what would normally take years of careful work. This is done by throwing money and personnel at the problem. You can get a way with this from time to time, but eventually this is going to turn around and bite you. I would much prefer to take the long view and carefully vet my collection operations. I believe intelligence collection is about quality, and quality operations take time and preparation. (Attempting to cover this gap by using foreign liaison services creates another set of problems, which will be addressed in part 2 of this article.)

A second reason that I prefer a worldwide presence is the stark fact that many of the Agency's best sources over the years have been volunteers of one sort or the other. It is human to believe that talent and hard work will see you through, but sometimes you can also get lucky. In the past, simply put, the Agency was not very hard to find. Most embassies had a DO officer immediately available and extensive preparations had been set in place to securely handle the genuine volunteer with valuable intelligence. With the closure of many stations, this is simply no longer the case in many places. To win the lottery, you have to buy a ticket. In this case, the price of a ticket is a station on the ground.

### *Toxic People and Due Diligence*

In the past, the Agency has had a reputation of attracting and retaining some very "different" people. I have worked with a few of them, they have run the gamut from individuals who are astonishingly creative and a joy to be around, to those of whom one wonders how they made it to adulthood. In the agency, this second group are known as "toxic people." The Agency has a history of tolerating "toxic people" in positions of authority. The theory expounded at the Agency has always been that despite the damage they do to those around them, these "toxic" individuals are brilliant and the results they produce justify their retention and promotion.

In the past, the Agency may have been strong enough to tolerate "toxic" people and the damage they caused to careers and morale, but I do not believe that this is any longer the case. The current DO workforce will no longer suffer in silence at what they perceive as arbitrary and abusive treatment by senior officers. With Congress looking over the DCIA's shoulder more than ever before, the DCIA and the DDO must demonstrate "due diligence" in their selections of individuals to fill senior positions. The days of senior DO officers with poor people skills and contempt for subordinates are over. If the DCIA does not take note of this change, it will come back to haunt him.

## AGENCY-WIDE REFORMS AND PROBLEMS

### *Counterintelligence and Connectivity*

Since 9/11, both the executive and the Congress have mandated that all elements within the intelligence community must be interconnected and must share information about possible terrorist threats. This is a reasonable reaction to the information fragmentation that was the norm among the intelligence community before 9/11. Unfortunately, there has not been any consideration of the unintended effects of the mandated change in procedures. In the intelligence business, information security equals inefficiency. Raise the efficiency with which you can share information and you automatically increase the possibility that information can be compromised. This has always been a conflict in the intelligence profession: sharing the information risks revealing its existence and endangering the source of the intelligence. The arrival of interconnected networks and computer databases has exponentially raised the damage a hostile mole can do to the intelligence community. In the past, a hostile mole could steal the papers on his desk; now he can steal his own work and everyone else's that is in the various database to which he has access. To paraphrase Paul Redmond, one of the CIA's counterintelligence gurus: "It is an actuarial certainty that there is a hostile mole operating within the intelligence community at any given time." The next mole is going to clean the intelligence community out because of interconnectivity. There are some computer security steps that can be taken, but bluntly, they are hard to do, expensive, and do not work well. This is a cost and an unforeseen consequence of interconnectivity within the intelligence community. It is a matter of when, not if. If the policymakers are not warned early and often, then the intelligence community leadership will deserve the outraged criticism it will receive.

### *Falling Through the Cracks*

Since 9/11, all the components of the intelligence community have significantly redirected their efforts towards counterterrorism. Informed rumor (RUMINT, or rumor intelligence, as it is called) has it that of the FBI's 12,000 or so special agents, only 4,600 are working criminal cases, the rest working against counterterrorism, domestic security, and counterintelligence targets. One can wonder whether keeping the FBI out of the criminal enforcement business to such an extent is a good thing. It was comforting having the bureau focusing on organized crime, international gangs, and white-collar crime.

The classified personnel numbers at the CIA no doubt reflect a similar shift of resources. This means that subjects and areas to which the CIA used to devote resources have been downgraded in coverage. This means we are going to be surprised. No government handles surprise well, and national intelligence agencies are always found to be guilty. Neither the public nor Congress are going to understand it when the inevitable surprise happens. The CIA has taken some bad hits recently in this regard, and a few more maybe fatal. Generally, the

public handles the truth fairly well, even if it is not what they want to hear. The DCIA or the new National Intelligence Director need to craft a program of informing the public of what it can reasonably expect in the short- and medium-term from the CIA. No intelligence service wants to tell the world where it is weak, and it will have to be a careful performance by whoever assumes the task. The alternative to reasonable expectations may well be a complete loss of public trust and a subsequent crippling of the CIA and the intelligence community.

Notes:

1. See Dan Baum, "Battle Lessons," *New Yorker*, Jan. 17, 2005, for the Army's mechanisms to share "lessons learned."

# IT'S A CULTURAL THING: THOUGHTS ON A TROUBLED CIA, PART TWO

*By Garrett Jones*

August 2005

*This article was originally published in E-Notes.*

## DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

Not invented here and not used either: What is intelligence after 9/11 and who gets it?

During the Cold War, the CIA's Directorate of Intelligence (DI) produced a limited number of finished intelligence products. The average DI analyst knew exactly who his consumers were and in what information they were interested. Consumers were usually policymakers at the Department of State, the Pentagon and the White House. Occasionally, the Departments of Commerce and Treasury were involved in certain economic reporting, but the audience for finished reporting was small.

Since 9/11, intelligence consumers run the gamut from policymakers to local police chiefs, combat commanders at the unit level to FBI agents trying to get a search warrant. Some of the consumers want masses of data sifted through, while others insist on receiving a real-time flow of the raw data. A DI analyst may no longer be able even to identify his consumers, much less grasp their individual needs for intelligence. The DI has met this new challenge by largely ignoring its existence. Finished intelligence products are delivered to consumers in more or less the same format and by more or less the same methods as they did during the Cold War, and they address more or less the same questions.

This is not good enough. For a start, the DI needs to identify all of its consumers and find out who needs what information and in what format. A second step might be to find out what other parts of the U.S. government have already amassed large amounts of raw information that could benefit DI consumers. The Drug Enforcement Agency, for instance, has an enormous amount of raw information on the operational details of drug cartels. Do the operations of drug cartels mirror in any way the operations of terrorist cells? Does the multiyear hunt for drug lord Pablo Escobar have any lesson that could aid in the hunt for Osama bin Laden?

Besides identifying its audience and addressing their needs, analysis no longer means just pulling together written documents of various pedigrees and condensing their meaning. There is no public indication that the DI is researching recent developments in computer data-mining of both classified and open-source databases looking for counterintuitive or nonlinear

relationships. (An example of a nonlinear or counterintuitive relationship would be women's dress hemlines and the U.S. stock market, which rise and fall with each other. No one knows why, but the relationship seems real and predictive over time.)

Another new challenge not yet addressed by the DI is that the intelligence analysis function can change over time, even for the same consumer. While policymakers may require the traditional "secret information"—i.e., plans, intentions, and capabilities—to define an emerging situation, their needs can change once an initial policy has been formed. Determining that a chemical weapon plant exists is an example of the traditional "secret stealing"; finding out who is being bribed to sell illicit equipment and by means of what bank accounts is new to the Agency, which has not even explored how to do something covert to effectively end the bribery. Historically, the default is to go to the diplomats and see if a strongly worded demarche can achieve anything; if a diplomatic resolution is not possible, then it's "send in the Marines." There has to be something in between—perhaps compromising the existence of secret international bank accounts, starting civil suits against the various players through deniable fronts, mounting direct-action missions against material in transit, or rerouting shipments by compromising computer systems. The information, or "intelligence analysis," needed to carry out any of these nontraditional efforts in no way resembles traditional intelligence analysis. Shipping schedules are rarely classified, and Swiss bankers may fear public disclosure more than covert action. While those who carry out these nontraditional activities, whether collection or covert action, require intelligence analysis, are the collectors going to do the analysis, analysts working with the collectors, a new branch of the DI? We are not in the Cold War world anymore.

#### Liaison Services 101: None are Friendly and Many are Not Competent

There have been repeated calls in the media and Congress for the CIA to increase its cooperation with "friendly" liaison services to obtain better reporting on terrorism and other vital intelligence targets. This could be valuable, but there are a few features of liaison services to bear in mind. First, there are no "friendly" liaison services, not even among those allies who are historically, philosophically, and economically closest to us. There are several liaison services whose own national interests often coincide with U.S. interests and with whom we often cooperate to some degree. But they are not on our side, they are on their own side. They report to their own governments, and what is good for their governments is not always good for the U.S. The intelligence the CIA receives from a foreign service may be reliable, partly accurate, or completely false, depending on how that service sees its own national interest on a particular subject.

A second factor to consider in understanding liaison reporting is whether the service is any good at reporting on the foreign intelligence subject in question. Besides the CIA, perhaps two

or three other national intelligence services are worldwide in scope. There are then perhaps a baker's dozen of good regional services, which can accurately report on their neighbors or some specific part of the world. The rest, including a number of wealthy and sophisticated countries, would be better served by subscribing to the New York Times for foreign intelligence reporting.

However, the liaison services' internal reporting abilities are often outstanding. Inside their own borders, most liaison services have an excellent grasp on what is going on and who is involved. Their powers normally exceed anything the FBI can do, and if they are willing to share the information, it is usually more accurate and detailed than anything the CIA can hope to obtain unilaterally.

All these factors must be considered in evaluating liaison service reporting. As the Iraqi WMD fiasco demonstrates, this is not being done. As of this writing, the CIA's Counterintelligence Center (CIC) is the primary component that does a regular evaluation of the foreign liaison services. CIC is chiefly focused on evaluating how much of a counterintelligence threat the liaison service might pose to U.S. interests. Evaluating the service's foreign intelligence reporting credibility is outside their scope. Logically, the Reports Officers (RO)—also known as Collection Management Officers (CMO)—could pick up the slack, but they have not done so. As noted in Part 1 of this article, the RO role at the CIA appears to be completely broken.

Whoever is finally drafted to take on this task is going to have to tell the intelligence consumer a few things upfront when disseminating a liaison service's intelligence report. Does the service have credibility as a foreign intelligence reporter? Has the service reported on this intelligence subject in the past? What percentage of its reports were correct? They will also need to inform the consumer about the liaison service's own agenda. Are their own internal politics such that they will tell us everything they know, some of what they know, or will they embellish what information they might have in order to influence U.S. policy? All of these evaluations will have to be updated over time and customized depending on the particular subjects involved. Doing so will be a full-time job, not something that can be done some slow afternoon. Too much is at stake.

## DIRECTORATE OF OPERATIONS

### Management versus Leadership

Never in senior officers' entire careers within the DO will they be evaluated on their leadership ability. There is no leadership training. The Agency's position is that it evaluates and trains its senior officers in management ability, but there is a substantial difference between the two concepts: leadership requires inspiring people, while management involves stewardship of

resources. The U.S. military observes this distinction: their doctrine is that one leads people and manages non-human resources. Managing, instead of leading, people is to treat people as commodities.

Case officers are often called upon to do dangerous and difficult things in dangerous and unpleasant places. The senior officer who wrote a particularly effective memo on reducing the costs associated with the use of rental cars may be a wonderful person, but he may not be the person to call the shots when officers' lives are endangered in some far-off place among hostile people.

Leadership can be taught. The military academies do it every year with 18-year-olds. Leadership can be objectively evaluated, the easiest way being to look back and see if anyone is following you. Intelligence work in the field demands extraordinary things in difficult circumstances. Those performing this work need to be led by senior officers who know the difference between leadership and management. The Agency's senior officers should be evaluated on their leadership abilities before they are promoted.

#### Jointness: On Being Purple

Squabbles over resource allocations began as soon as the U.S. military services were founded. After World War II, Congress attempted to force the various services to adopt the concept of "jointness," where the needs of all the services are placed before the individual needs of each service. (In the military services, jointness is known as "being purple," purple being the color one ostensibly gets when one mixes all the uniform colors of the various services.) Congress was largely unsuccessful. Finally, in 1986, a frustrated Congress mandated that no officer could be promoted to general officer unless he/she had served in a "joint tour of duty," loosely defined as two years working with other services, in which role you are not to represent your own service's parochial interests. The effort worked. Faced with career-ending restrictions, the U.S. professional officer corps embraced the jointness concept and translated the concept into the superb military machine that now dominates the world military scene.

Since 9/11, Congress and the Executive branch have attempted to promote the concept of jointness within the Intelligence Community (IC), but with little success. The bureaucratic inertia and foot-dragging they have encountered mirror the resistance of the military services when they were first confronted with the idea of jointness. If Congress and the president want jointness to be implemented in the IC, they are going to have to force the issue. They could begin by mandating that no one within the IC can advance beyond the level of GS-14 (about equivalent to the Lt. Colonel) without serving in a "joint tour" within the IC. The IC may not embrace the jointness concept, but it will have to give it attention.

## Retirees and Contractors

When I first joined the Agency in the late 1970s, I noticed a few older folks in the halls sporting green badges instead of the normal staff badge. When I asked about them I was told that they were retired staffers who had come back to work on contract to help with liaison visits, temporary workforce shortages, or because they had unusual language or area skills. At the time, I thought this was a good system, Experienced, cleared people could help when there was a workload surge or temporarily plug the gaps until things could be sorted out permanently. Over the years this practice expanded as the Agency's workload and responsibilities increased. By the early 1990s it was largely out of control, with the contracting process in effect being used to fill the gap left by the lower number of employees authorized by Congress. The Agency could not hire new employees at the rate it needed, but it could bring back retirees.

After 9/11, the practice of contracting retirees exploded. Today, the DO would grind to a halt if the retirees were removed. "Rumint" (rumor intelligence) has it that about 30 percent of DO employees are retirees. DO employees can retire, join a firm that is contracting with the Agency, and resume their old job within weeks, with a 25-percent increase in salary. This practice could be justified as a short-term measure and a "necessary evil," but in the war on terror, there are adverse long-term effects.

Apart from the usual abuse that can come from having this kind of money sloshing around, widespread retiree contracting distorts the workforce by siphoning off workers to early retirement. Contract retirees are not in the DO chain of command. As more experienced employees are enticed into retirement, the pool of experience is reduced at the command levels. The practice also tends to separate core functions and skills from staff employees. Several components within the DO are for all intents and purposes completely staffed by retirees, with one staff employee in the front office. The practice creates two workforces, paid significantly different amounts to do the same work. This is becoming a morale problem for staff employees.

This is not to criticize the retired employee contractors, who more than earn their salary and do an excellent job in the process. But Agency management has to assess the long-term impact of the contracting process and how it impacts the hiring and training of tomorrow's leaders.

## AGENCY-WIDE

### You Could Always Ask Them

New CIA Director Porter Goss may want to survey employees on what they perceive to be problems within the Agency. This sort of survey has been done before at the Agency; a particularly large-scale survey was conducted under Director Casey in the late 1980s, but the



results were never released to the employees or the public. Rumint has it that the results of these inquiries are so embarrassing, Agency leadership has refused to release the results. Agency employees have in fact consistently pointed to the same problems over the years. Director Goss may find this to be the right moment to conduct a survey, and one with some degree of transparency for employees.

## Staff Relations

Not unlike government, the military, and the private sector, there has been a long-standing tradition at the CIA of senior officials engaging in sexual relations with newly hired and/or junior officers who work for them. In the early 1980s, the practice became so disruptive at the Agency's main training facility, The Farm, that it was made a firing offense. The perception of favoritism as a result of such relationships, especially in promotions and assignments, is extremely corrosive to employee morale. Director Goss needs to take a position on the problem for his senior staff: if you get caught doing it, you are fired.

## "Palsied by Lawyers"

While I do not always agree with Michael Scheuer,[1] he certainly got it right with that phrase. Having your own lawyer has become as necessary as having top-secret clearances at anything above the lowest level of CIA management. Each level of management has its own lawyer, fundamentally tasked with keeping that level of management out of trouble. Getting something done comes in a distant second priority. This is not an unreasonable response by CIA managers. Since the Boland Amendment in the 1980s, Congress has levied a series of formal and informal requirements on the CIA. Not even their authors agree on exactly what they mean. Couple this with ambiguous guidance from successive administrations, a "gotcha" political climate, and reluctance on the part of CIA directors to back their own people, and the various managers are left looking for cover.

In the CIA as in any other agency, things roll downhill. Starting at the top, at each level a lawyer tries to identify where the "bright line" is that either Congress or the White House does not want the CIA to cross. Having identified where s/he thinks that line is, they then subtract 5 percent to ensure a safety margin for their management level. After a dozen or so levels of management, a lethal-action order turns into a request to speak harshly in Osama bin Laden's general direction. An exaggeration, but not by much.

The lawyers should be pulled out of the unit level and put back with the Office of General Counsel at the director's level, where they belong. Then, a policy can be established of "one issue, one lawyer, and one legal opinion." You have a legal question. OGC has assigned one lawyer to that issue and as the director's lawyer; s/he tells you what the director's guidance is. One interpretation, one safety margin, and one place to go, at the highest level of the Agency,

if Congress or the White House is not happy with how the policy is implemented. Rooting around at the branch level trying to hold some GS-12 accountable for interpreting guidance originating at the highest levels of the government is ridiculous. Short of malfeasance or criminal intent, the buck stops at the director's office, or at least it should.

## Internal Affairs

The CIA has no Internal Affairs Unit or Office of Professional Responsibility to handle violations of Agency regulations or procedures. Depending on what the offense might be, an individual can be investigated for wrongdoing by any or all of the Office of Security, the Counterintelligence Center, the Office of the Inspector General, the individual's work component (for example, the DO for a case officer), and the Office of General Counsel (for determination as whether to refer the matter to the Justice Department for prosecution). Each of these has its own procedures and standards, and each reports its results to different authorities. It is entirely possible for multiple components to investigate the same set of facts at the same time and come to different results. [2] The process is so arbitrary, the "powers that be" can decide who is going to be the designated scapegoat for a particular incident and then convene an investigation to obtain evidence to support their decision.

For reasons of efficiency and fairness, this has to change. Employee investigations, other than criminal acts, need to be conducted by a single investigative office within the CIA, with uniform standards and procedures. The Office of the Inspector General has certain statutorily required duties, but perhaps this task could be added to its purview. The Office of Security might be another place to consolidate this function. Wherever the function is located, the results of these investigations should then be reported to a single place, where a consistent standard of accountability can be applied. At the moment, the employee's component chief decides what penalty, if any, is appropriate based on the various findings—that is, unless the higher-ups have become involved, and then the component chief does what they are told. The entire procedure or lack thereof serves neither the employee nor the Agency.

Shortly after 9/11, an Agency-wide investigation was instituted to hold individuals accountable for failures that may have resulted in the events of 9/11. As of today, this report has not yet been released in either a classified form for use within the CIA or an unclassified form for release to the public. If it requires nearly four years to hold someone accountable, your procedures are broken.

## Conclusion

In this two-part article, I have tried to draw attention to some of the cultural artifacts at the CIA that have failed to change with the times. Whatever utility these practices may have had when they originated, they have become liabilities in the current environment. Though I have

raised many subjects in different parts of the Agency that I believe need to be critically examined, the reader will have noticed a unifying theme. In each instance, there is a marked tendency on the part of senior levels of the CIA not to tolerate criticism, but instead to staunchly defend the status quo. In my experience, working-level Agency employees would welcome substantive change, not just meaningless reorganizations. Additionally, a distorted selection/promotion system has led the Agency to become top heavy with risk-averse "careerists."

Another event such as 9/11 or the Iraqi WMD fiasco could lead to the break-up of the CIA as it is currently known: the ice is that thin. That said, there are some great people working their hearts out at the CIA. With a modicum of enlightened leadership and support, there is nothing that is beyond their reach. The clock is ticking.

Notes:

1. Michael Scheuer, *Imperial Hubris: Why the West is Losing the War on Terror* (Potomac Books, 2004).
2. Richard Holm, *The American Agent: My Life in the CIA* (St. Ermin Press, 2004). Three different components were conducting simultaneous investigations on the same set of facts. None of the investigating components interviewed the person in charge at the time of the alleged incident.

# TORTURE AND THE CIA

*By Garrett Jones*

December 2005

*This essay first appeared in E-Notes.*

Recent months have seen a spate of media reporting about the CIA's involvement with the torture of individuals captured during the war on terror and the resulting secret detention of these individuals in undisclosed locations. This drumbeat cumulated with questions being posed to President Bush about the United States' policy on torture during his recent Latin American tour and Dana Priest's front-page article in the Washington Post on Nov. 2, "CIA Holds Terror Suspects in Secret Prisons."

The media may find it convenient to use the CIA as a catchy handle to identify the subject of their news report, and I suppose it is easier to say "CIA prison" than "a prison built and operated as part of the national security policy of the U.S." It is however, a little misleading. The reader should know that the CIA would not blow its nose concerning torture or secret detention without written instructions from the President through the National Security Council.

Before I go any farther, I should declare my own position on the torture and detention of terrorists. I personally do not care whether we take captured terrorists apart at the molecular level if it helps save U.S. lives. Were I in the terrorist hands, I would receive no mercy from them, and I am inclined to return the favor.

That said; I disagree with the current U.S. policy towards the "interrogation of detainees" and the manner of their subsequent detention. I do not believe the policy has been well thought out, nor have the longer-term effects been well judged.

At this point, we need to define the terms. I would submit that the following standard applies: Any interrogation technique that would be unlawful in a U.S. police station will be considered torture, and any detention of a prisoner outside the United States, i.e., not subject to review by U.S. courts, can be considered secret detention.

This very restrictive standard arises from two different causes. Ever since the Carter administration, we have bludgeoned both our friends and our foes with a "holier-than-thou" position on human rights. The world is going to delight in holding us to that restrictive standard, no matter what we may perceive as changed circumstances. Frankly, they have a point. American politicians have shown little sensitivity or maturity in demanding worldwide

human rights postures that had no connection to circumstances or truth on the ground. (By accidents of history and geography, both the U.S. political elite and the population at large poorly understand that the most basic of all human rights is the right not to be murdered. Until that right is secured, all other human rights are meaningless.) Any change from the treatment we afford our own criminal defendants will be seen for the hypocrisy that it is.

The second reason for this restrictive standard is that while the deployed elements of the U.S. military and intelligence forces are at war, the Congress and the American people are not. After 9/11, U.S. military, intelligence, and law enforcement professionals were told to go to war; the population at large was told to go shopping. Is there any wonder there is a policy disconnect on such a sensitive issue? Among the population at large and the political leadership there is no longer any real sense of danger from terrorism. The troops in Afghanistan and Iraq and the intelligence officers around the world are worried about being shot; the U.S. public is far more concerned with rising gas prices.

The partisan leadership on both sides has failed to explain to the American people that there is a dangerous and lethal struggle going on in the world and that preserving our safety will entail doing some hard, ugly things. Instead, congressional leadership has largely attempted to benefit politically from the very modest steps that have been taken to enhance U.S. security while doing its best to make sure no one is inconvenienced. I fully expect that when there is a change of administration or when power is realigned in Congress, any individual who has engaged in a more aggressive interrogation or detention policy with terrorist detainees should expect to be the object of both Congressional and possibly criminal investigations.

The U.S. Congress has a long history of changing the rules after the fact on controversial subjects. Were I still working at the CIA and became involved in interrogating detainees or with their imprisonment, I would not feel comfortable with less than a written order carefully outlining what I was and was not to do. I would also want a written legal opinion from a competent authority telling me that the person who gave me that order was entitled to do so.

I have not changed my position in the last few paragraphs: a captured terrorist with good information can save many lives if he can be made to talk. I might well be tempted to go beyond the standards I have outlined above if I believed I could save the lives of the men and women working with me in the field. (I was fortunate never to have been forced to make that decision.) I am not, however, going to delude myself that in such a situation, my motives or any vague guidelines from Washington would be enough to save me from a headline-hungry Congressional chairman with political points to score. We are putting our deployed military and intelligence personnel in this impossible situation. They deserve far better from us.

I believe the above description of circumstances is a fair appreciation of the current political situation in the United States. As such, to continue with attempts to implement the current hostile interrogation policy is simply a waste of everyone's time and resources. War is a political decision, and so is the treatment of prisoners captured in that war, no matter what the legal reasoning involved in arguments to the contrary.

Two additional points that will never be satisfactorily addressed for critics of the current policy are ensuring that the wrong person is not subjected to "hostile interrogation" and that no other method would work in the time available. Complete assurance on these two points can never be given in advance, and asking for such a guarantee is childlike in its naiveté.

As a result, at this time, Congress is not going to approve a recorded vote to sanction torture. Unfortunately, because of upcoming midterm elections and reluctance to be perceived as soft on terrorism, it is equally unlikely that Congress will vote to forbid torture. (And you wonder why the people in the field are a little puzzled.)

A reasoned argument can be made that in rare and extraordinary situations, interrogations harsher than would normally be allowed by U.S. law may be justified. The president should have the power to designate by presidential finding one or two senior members of his administration who could authorize such measures against non-U.S. citizens located outside the U.S.: the Secretary of Defense and/or the Director of the CIA, in consultation with, or with notification to, the Attorney General.

This begs the question of how far the interrogators can go, but perhaps legal scholars and ethicists can haggle out the details. (Ethicists have a place in this discussion if only to dismiss the canard that abusing one person to save the lives of hundreds or thousands of other people is never ethically justified.) I believe such a narrowly drawn authority might pass muster in Congress. It certainly has a better chance than the policy the Administration is pursuing now.

If such a narrow application of "hostile interrogation" is adopted, then the need for the CIA to maintain more than one or two "secret prisons" as geographically convenient transit points becomes moot. On a philosophical basis, if you have a war, then you need to set up prisoner of war camps to hold the people you capture. The Defense Department is organized to do this, not the CIA. If you want to call them illegal combatants instead of POWs and continue to interrogate them after imprisonment, I believe settled international law already provides for such leeway, without trying to reinvent the wheel. The CIA has enough to do with its own duties without expanding them into an area the military can probably do better anyway.

As long as we are on the subject of terrorist detainees, a couple of associated issues merit comment. The first is the practice of the rendition of detainees to other countries. If a friendly liaison service is seeking an individual for terrorist crimes committed in their country and the

CIA can assist in bringing that individual to book, then such a rendition would be operationally justified. If subsequent interrogation by the liaison service then provided useful information on terrorist activity in which we are interested, that is all the better. What the U.S. should never do is render a detainee to a liaison service who is going to interrogate a detainee solely at our request, using harsher measures than would be legal for the Agency. This puts the CIA in debt to the liaison service for performing a potentially embarrassing act at the bidding of the U.S. It also calls in to question how seriously both the U.S. government and the CIA are taking the war on terror. It is almost a question of whether CIA is now too squeamish to do its own work. In the end, this sort of thing always comes back to haunt you.

Relatedly, media reports indicate that the CIA is using retired contractors to perform some of the interrogations of detainees. This is a very unwise practice. The command and control of a contract employee is never as effective that with a staff employee. These policies are controversial enough without injecting uncertainty into the command-and-control process. This sort of thing should be done exclusively by staff employees.

Finally, someone needs to address in a very serious manner the cumulative effect on the CIA employees who are tasked to carry out any interrogation policy. If we as a nation decide such actions are necessary, we need to be prepared to support the people we ask to carry out the policy. We may well have physiological or medical casualties among our own people and we must understand this up-front and be ready to take care of them.

# INTELLIGENCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT

*By Paul Bracken*

December 2008

*This essay is based on Paul Bracken, Ian Bremmer, and David Gordon (eds.), Managing Strategic Surprise, Lessons from Risk Management and Risk Assessment (Cambridge University Press, 2008). The author is grateful to Ian Bremmer, President of Eurasia Group, and David Gordon, Director of Policy Plans in the State Department, for their help on the issues in this paper. This article was published in E-Notes.*

Risk management has benefited one field after another. It has improved performance in engineering, environmental protection, finance, space flight, health care, accounting, the control of epidemics—even baseball. There can be little doubt that risk management has enhanced many fields, except one: intelligence has remained largely insulated from it.

Whatever direction the Obama administration’s national security strategy takes, it will be far more *risk-centric* than the policies of recent years. Risk assessment and management will be central to any American policy because the costs of “winging it,” of “going with your gut,” have proven to be very high. This reality—the high price of winging it—is the reason other institutions have embraced risk management to improve their performance.

For intelligence, this leads to a new game. *Risk will take an increasingly central place in national security decision-making.* The intelligence community needs not only to be aware of this, but also to design their work to better assess, clarify, and define the risks that follow from these changes. Intelligence also has to develop a more productive conversation with other operational components of national security, because it is ever more tightly linked to them. Risk management offers a powerful framework to facilitate this conversation.

This paper builds on *Managing Strategic Surprise, Lessons from Risk Management and Risk Assessment* (Cambridge University Press, 2008), which I co-edited with Ian Bremmer and David Gordon. Over two years we worked closely with risk management specialists in finance, health care, engineering, and many other fields. In addition, we worked with intelligence and security experts with great domain knowledge. The project’s aim was to see how risk specialists structured their problems and what the implications were for bringing risk management into intelligence and security affairs. This paper summarizes the key insights and conclusions of the project.



## RISK MANAGEMENT

The reason risk management hasn't been widely used in the intelligence community is not hard to understand. Few people have given much thought to what it is or how it could be used. The same was once true in other fields. It isn't bureaucratic resistance that's the problem. Rather, the problem is the lack of a clear statement of exactly what risk management is and why it is useful.

It is necessary to dispose of some preconceptions here. One is that risk management consists of using models and mathematical methods—for example, Value at Risk in finance, options theory (also finance), or decision and fault trees in nuclear engineering. There are many modeling techniques, and they may have useful application in intelligence.

But risk management conceived as a collection of methodological tools is much too narrow an approach. Creating a collaborative structure—for example, between intelligence and operations—is more than just disseminating narrowly focused tools. It is about managing the complex interplay that occurs in these disparate networks, of which one of the most important is risk. *The real payoff of risk management lies in its ability to foster a common language for assessing and discussing risk by the different parts of an organization.* It raises the level of conversation about risk in such a way that terms and categories have a consistent meaning.

To see this, we turn to how risk management has transformed other fields. Anesthesiologists in the 1980s paid one of the highest malpractice insurance premiums of any medical specialty. For good reason, they had the highest patient deaths from malpractice of any specialty. But in the 1990s anesthesiology got much safer. Patient deaths declined from about 1 in 5000 to 1 in 250,000 cases. For years anesthesiologists had focused on lobbying for laws protecting them from malpractice. But this approach was changed in favor of a risk-based approach that focused on patient safety. New technology was introduced to prevent common mistakes, risk maps were used to define systematic solutions, and a new organization was stood up that focused on patient safety.

The shift from legal protection to patient protection called for a framework that put patient risk at its center. This is an important point. *The big payoff came from developing a framework that focused on risk, along with distinctions and vocabulary that allowed a productive discussion about it.* This allowed a new procedure or technology to be evaluated in a consistent way. It allowed physicians to take a fresh look at their practice through the lens of managing its risks. Moreover, it allowed them to extend this conversation outside of their network, to hospital administrators, equipment vendors, and insurance companies.

This is very different from a “tools” approach to risk management. To import mathematical models into an organization where most managers don't understand them may produce an

improvement here or there, but it won't lead to a productive conversation about risk in the organization as a whole because it won't supply the needed terms, distinctions, and frameworks. Likewise, it won't allow an extended conversation *outside* of the organization, to other institutions, decision makers, and technology suppliers.

## RESULTS OF OUR PROJECT

The project on managing strategic surprise came up with a number of important insights.

### *Surprise Can Be Managed*

Some people think that managing strategic surprise is an oxymoron. This view, while mistaken, points the way to a powerful insight: dealing with surprise is about a lot more than listing bad things that can happen. Consider what is the most fundamental strategy for risk management in business. The reason for a strong balance sheet is because experienced managers know that surprises will happen. With a strong balance sheet, shocks can be more easily absorbed. Borrowing money, protecting key assets, and renegotiating better terms are all easier for a company with a solid balance sheet.

The insight here is that there are several ways to deal with surprise. This leads to a second conclusion.

### *Get Away From Prediction*

Prediction—that is, warning—is one way of managing surprise. But it is only one way. Assuredly, if the future could be predicted, then optimized resources could be put in place to deal with the surprise.

Academic studies of intelligence often conflate intelligence with warning. Intelligence is defined in narrow terms as the study of the success or failure of warning. Thus the myriad studies of surprise attack over the decades and the many case studies of individual warnings.

The conclusion most of these studies reach is that warning is unlikely to be accurate. Managing surprise through warning is very hard. But this insight is well known. It is difficult to understand why after so many decades of research we still find it advanced as a major insight.

There's another problem with this kind of research. It places failure at the center of analysis. Academic studies of intelligence in this vein have tended to become exercises in sophisticated cynicism. Warning is hard, certainly. But placing failure and cynicism as the center of analysis is highly destructive of energy and morale. It directs attention to only one way of managing surprise, warning, overlooking many others.

## *Six Ways to Manage Risk*

If warning has so many problems, then what else is there? Plenty. Here is where risk management can pull together different organizations for a productive conversation about risk.

A global oil company, for example, doesn't invest all of its capital in a single country based on a prediction of political stability. In the same way, DoD doesn't predict future wars and then optimize its forces around these predictions. Indeed, very few organizations place warning at the center of their risk management.

The key is to see that there are only a small number of ways to deal with uncertainty. There are six, and only six possible ways to manage risk. Risk management amounts to balancing these to fit the problem at hand. [1] Many of these involve organizations outside of one's own. For example, in the intelligence world it may involve DoD operational commands. This is how risk management fosters a cross cutting, productive conversation. It gets people from the disparate organizations to talk to each other using a common set of concepts and distinctions. The six general approaches to risk management are:

1. *Isolating Critical Assets from Uncertainty.* This involves the hardening or protecting of key assets. Roberta Wohlstetter's classic account of Pearl Harbor was not used as a case study of how to get better warning as is commonly believed—quite the opposite. This book was less about Japanese aircraft carriers sneaking cross the Pacific than it was about a Russian surprise attack. Wohlstetter's conclusion was that because warning was unreliable, critical assets like the nuclear deterrent should be built to be survivable without it. This insight had tremendous implications for the United States. The nuclear deterrent was structured to have some major part of it survive without warning. This is one of the reasons so many nuclear missiles were built.

There are many other examples of isolating critical assets. Command-and-control aircraft are often kept back from the battlespace to protect them. Backup intelligence facilities lessen the chance that a single attack can knock out the whole system.

Isolating critical resources from uncertainty is usually quite expensive. For example, hardening of shopping centers against terrorist attack is unlikely to ever make sense, given the costs of protecting what is an open facility. So other risk management approaches are necessary.

2. *Smoothing.* This involves turning a big problem into smaller more manageable chunks. Examples include the Europe-first strategy in World War II and the debates about attacking Afghanistan and Iraq simultaneously or in sequence after 9/11. Smoothing is important because many intelligence sensors and collection systems are limited in their processing

capacity. Sizing system capacity is an important investment decision. If crises and events can be smoothed, then it's possible to get away with less processing power. If they cannot, then more processing capacity is required.

Scaling sensor and collection systems means looking at a range of possible threat scenarios to determine whether or not smoothing is possible. Risk has to be factored into any such assessment.

3. *Warning.* Viewed in terms of risk management, warning is an effort to predict conditions so that tailored responses can be used. When warning is unlikely to be good, marginal investments should be placed in other ways to manage risk.

4. *Agility.* Companies in fields as diverse as consumer products and cement have found that predicting demand (i.e. good warning) is exceedingly difficult. Consequently, they have invested in agile logistic systems rather than new warning systems. Adaptive logistics allows them to quickly switch products to meet uncertain demand.

There are many intelligence and military parallels of this as well. The shift to small satellites and UAVs means that systems can be launched much more quickly than giant satellites requiring years of development. The design of modular IT interfaces, while costly, can greatly improve agility. The key point is to recognize agility as an element of risk management. Without it, one may be locked into falling back on less desired approaches, such as warning, or costly hardening of assets.

Looking at agility as one way to manage risks also points to the need to assess enemy risk management strategies. For example, network warfare offers a way to degrade the enemy's agility. The six part framework offered here can be used to map out the enemy's risk management strategy in support of our own operations against them.

5. *Alliances.* Alliances spread risk to several actors, and bring more resources to bear in limiting the consequences of a problem. Outsourcing is an example. Building a strong base of suppliers to the intelligence community lowers the risk that in house approaches might miss an important technological development.

Information-sharing alliances, agreements between component commands and intelligence agencies, and new technologies like cloud computing (which allows rapid expansion of computing architecture) all have important risk management aspects to them.

6. *Environment Shaping.* Managing the environment to make it less dangerous, or less unstable, is the final way to manage risk. Soft power, diplomacy, and all the rest are built on the idea of making the environment less dangerous.

In some instances the goal may be to make the enemy's environment unstable. This will often directly involve intelligence. Cyber attacks and financial warfare are two of many possible examples. The intelligence community, or at least parts of it, have moved from a supporting role to a lead operational one. Risk assessments are especially important here.

This six-part framework for risk management can be used to characterize the overall approach to handling risks by an organization. The six ways can be depicted graphically in diagrams and used as a framework for productive conversations both within and between different organizations. [2]

It also underscores that there are two broad approaches to conceptualizing risk management. One is tactical. It involves things like models and mathematical methods that have a well-grounded academic disciplinary foundation. The other is a strategic management approach. Here, risk management is conceived as developing practical steps intelligence managers can use to transform their organizations to becoming more risk centric. This requires productive conversations about risk both inside the intelligence community, and outside of it. For example, DoD, State, Treasury, DHS, etc., as well as technology suppliers need to be on the same wavelength when it comes to the strategic assessment and management of risk.

It must be admitted that we are in some ways navigating uncharted waters here. Cultural differences, compartmentalization and secrecy, and social factors can be powerful obstacles to holding this conversation across intelligence and security institutions.

But the conversation must be held. Communications, information, and data-mining technologies have raced far beyond the vertical stovepipes of Cold War authority based hierarchies for intelligence and operations. Intelligence has become tightly coupled to operations. It is now embedded in all parts of national security decision making.

The days of Sherman Kent, when the relationship between intelligence and the operational decision maker was one of arms length contact are long gone. The challenge today is to integrate organizational behavior in the face of centrifugal bureaucratic tendencies. Risk management should be one of these integrating frameworks.

### *You Don't Need Data To Think About Risk*

This will sound like heresy to those who conceive of risk management narrowly, as a set of tools and models. But getting better concepts and vocabulary in place has a more important impact. As an example, many of the case studies in our project found that instead of talking about what's likely to happen, attention ought to be given to the variance of what could happen. The concept of variance is important. Alan Greenspan, who has experience in everything from economic policy to crisis management, makes the point in discussing his use

of risk management. He calls for thinking about policy based on a range of possible outcomes—that is, the variance. The distinction between likely outcomes and the variance of outcomes is a perfect example of changing concepts as a way to institute better risk management.

### *Risk Management Always Goes On*

Risk management is always done. It just isn't done in a systematic way.

In a global company, or the intelligence community, there may be tremendous variation in the way risks are monitored, assessed, and managed across different departments. If the work of the organization is loosely coupled, if one part does doesn't affect the other, this may be acceptable.

But the trend in intelligence is for *tighter coupling*. This presents big problems if risk assessment is conducted differently by the relevant divisions.

In our project, Uzi Arad, former Director of Intelligence for the Israeli Mossad, describes his experience in just how enormous the variation can be between military, civilian, and intelligence agencies. Words about risk mean different things to different groups. “Folk wisdom” based on long patterns of established thinking can provide the illusion of risk management.

There is nothing wrong with having independent views, more so in the intelligence world than most others. However, this may lead to estimates with fundamentally different premises about risk—without anyone's being aware of it.

### *Folk Wisdom*

Some truisms about risk are invoked so frequently that they serve as a signpost that deeper thinking about risk is probably needed. We call this ‘folk wisdom.’

A very common response when it comes to risk is the statement that “we took a calculated risk.” Whenever this phrase came up in our project we had a prepared question. “Can you show us the calculations, please?” In not one single case did anyone do so. In fact, this question irritated several officials.

Another piece of folk wisdom about risk is that “the greatest risk is in not taking any risks.” In a certain sense this is true. But this saying legitimizes virtually any action, which is not very helpful in assessing what its associated risks are.

Folk wisdom about risk should be used in a positive way. It's an indication that deeper deliberation is needed.

### *Recent Intelligence Reforms Move in the Right Direction*

The intelligence community has been restructured in recent years, notably with the creation of the office of the Director of National Intelligence (DNI). There have been many criticisms of this, but our project suggests a different conclusion.

DNI's job is **horizontal integration of the intelligence community in the broadest sense**. Given the huge variance in the way risk management is done across the hundreds of departments that make up the intelligence community, this is an absolute necessity. Richard Posner and others have argued that DNI only adds another decision-making layer—i.e., that it will gum up an already bureaucratic process. [3] They call for less bureaucracy in intelligence and more streamlining of decisions.

This view shows a lack of understanding of modern organizational behavior. It also overlooks what is happening in global corporations and other large organizations. As globalization, new technology, and new competitors made international business more complex, the response was to develop integration strategies and departments (like DNI). The role of integrating departments was twofold: to make sure subdivisions weren't acting in ways blind to significant risks; and to understand and respond in a coherent way to threats in the outside environment.

Absent an integrated risk management framework, individual departments would head off on their own merry way, with little regard for the enterprise as a whole. If a shock hits, performance is piecemeal. The risk environment is distorted, as bureaucratic politics determines which risks get attention.

Calling DNI another layer of bureaucracy is like saying that insurance giant AIG was right to disband their risk management group that oversaw financial derivatives (which they did) and **that this move "streamlined" decision-making**. AIG's disbanding of this group led to the destruction of one of the world's most valuable companies. [4] One subdivision went off on its merry way using internally developed risk models without broader review by senior management. Disbanding the review group did cut down on bureaucracy. It also created conditions where a single subdivision destroyed an entire company, most of which was financially sound.

There is no guarantee, of course, that DNI will effectively integrate the intelligence community. There never are guarantees of this kind. But its establishment sets up the conditions for positive improvement.

## *Strategic Risk*

Putting risk at the center of intelligence can help to clarify *strategic* risk. This is the risk associated with a particular strategy. The intelligence community doesn't formulate strategy, of course. But it does have a responsibility to assess the risks associated with a given strategy.

Strategic risk assessment means going beyond where terrorists will strike next, how many bombs North Korea has, and whether Russia will cooperate with the U.S. It assesses the risk of a strategy—e.g., of preemption, coercion, soft power, or any other strategy. This is a huge gap in U.S. security planning. Strategy tends to be formulated by a team at the top, but they rarely assess its risks.

One lesson of the ongoing credit crisis is that financial institutions didn't adequately assess the risks of their strategy. Their risk management focused on market, credit, and operational (execution) risk. It didn't focus on strategic risk, like borrowing short on global markets and lending long. There are many lessons to be learned from this melt down, and strategic risk is one of them.

It should be emphasized that the failings of risk management by financial institutions in the credit crisis, while real, have not led those institutions to abandon risk management. Not one financial company has done so. There is a thoroughgoing review of risk management practice, as there should be, to come up with improvements.

## CONCLUSIONS

Risk management is playing a central role in more and more fields. This alone is good reason to think about it in intelligence. If it advances the state of the art in everything from health care to baseball, in engineering to accounting, it ought to have useful application in intelligence as well. At one time its applicability in every one of these fields was doubted. Yet risk management has had a transformative effect on all of them.

Risk management's most important effect hasn't been to "solve" problems. Rather it has been to reconstitute the basic conversations about them. In our discussions with the experts from the different applications of risk management, nearly all of the leaders emphasized that it was these conversations—the ways problems were discussed and framed—that were more important than the predictions that came out of formal models.

There is a one more point worth emphasizing. This is the need to better understand how risk, and its management, is conceived in other countries and in other societies. In our project we saw this theme in fields as diverse as energy security and the spread of the bomb. A great deal of research shows that risk assessment is hardly an objective science. It is powerfully shaped by cultural, social, and institutional forces. This is an area needing more research attention,



because it is often the interaction of national (or group) risk assessments that drives outcomes, rather than one of them alone.

Risk management is a cross-cutting framework that extends beyond the specializations imposed by academia and bureaucracy. This brazen mixing of specialties is one of its most important contributions.

Notes:

1. My insistence on precisely six ways to handle risk probably sounds pedantic. I would allow that depending on how terms are defined it could be five, or seven, or some other number. But that number is small. The thrust of the argument made here remains the same regardless of this. See Bracken, “How to Build a Warning System,” Chapter 2 in *Managing Strategic Surprise*.
2. See *Managing Surprise*, pp. 32-38.
3. Richard A. Posner, *Preventing Surprise Attacks: Intelligence Reform in the Wake of 9/11* (Roman and Littlefield, 2005).
4. See the testimony of Maurice (Hank) R. Greenberg before the U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, October 7, 2008. Greenberg was the Chairman and CEO of AIG until 2005. His successor’s team disbanded the risk review group established by Greenberg.

# TOWARDS AN INTELLIGENCE-BASED NUCLEAR COOPERATION REGIME

*By Rens Lee*

July 2009

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At their recent Moscow summit, Presidents Obama and Medvedev articulated a common concern over what Medvedev called “negative trends in the world” resulting from the emergence of aspiring nuclear players in the Middle East and elsewhere. But other than Obama’s expressed goal of locking down all “vulnerable” nuclear materials on an accelerated timetable, there was little suggestion of a proactive common strategy to stem the global proliferation dynamic. [1] Developing such a strategy is an urgent nonproliferation priority and should be placed high on the agenda of a nuclear security summit meeting that the sides have scheduled for March 2010.

Russian-American collaboration against the spread of nuclear weapons needs to extend beyond conventional threat reduction programs underway in Russia and elsewhere for the past 15 years, to include the difficult and relatively uncharted area of sharing proliferation-relevant information, some of which may be sensitive. Our intelligence services, which now devote vast resources to spying on each other, could join forces by sharing information on states and terrorist groups intent on developing nuclear weapons, including their clandestine procurement attempts. This process could include sharing and comparing open-source information, information on the probable source of nuclear materials seized in transit, or clandestinely acquired information on groups and individuals involved in nuclear trafficking. While agreements exist committing the countries to exchange information on these matters, actual sharing remains woefully inadequate, both bilaterally and with international organizations such as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). [2]

Intelligence cooperation is vitally important, because the current nonproliferation regime is essentially reactive and containment-oriented. It is not well equipped to deal with the smuggling activities and nuclear procurement conspiracies of nation-states and terrorists. The nonproliferation treaty (NPT) and associated conventions and agreements obligate states in various ways, but of course do not bind sub-state actors or non-state entities: Besides, signatory states have been known to cheat, either maintaining covert weapons programs or helping those who do. Also, the ability of states to keep their nuclear houses in order has proved problematic in the past, especially in the aftermath of the Soviet collapse.

On a practical level, cooperative U.S.-Russian security measures such as material protection, control, and accounting (MPC&A) upgrades for direct-use materials and radiation monitors at border crossings offer limited protection against a range of unconventional proliferation threats: for example, collaborative thefts by well-placed insiders able to turn off alarms and defeat electronic surveillance systems; exports of highly enriched uranium and plutonium concealed in legal radioactive cargo; a decision by a senior state official to provide strategic nuclear wares to an unauthorized end user (as Pakistani scientist A.Q. Khan did with centrifuge enrichment technology for many years); and smuggling strategies that probe the sensitivity of radiation sensors with decoys or opt to circumvent official customs posts altogether.

Also, the modern safeguards technology the U.S. introduced in newly-independent states after the USSR's demise were not yet widely deployed in the early-mid 1990s. This was a time of extreme malaise and prime proliferation risk in Russia's nuclear complex, reflected in hundreds of thefts of nuclear and radiological materials. In fact, only last year was the gargantuan task of securing Russia's vast stocks of fissile materials and warheads mostly completed. One wonders how much weapons-usable material has been stolen, secreted, or pushed onto the black market since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Similar concerns relate to the fate of the 21,000-plus tactical nuclear weapons deployed to the territory of the USSR just prior to its collapse. There have been persistent, if unconfirmed, reports in the Russian and international media that some Soviet-era tactical nuclear weapons (TNWs) are held outside Russia or have simply disappeared. Russia and the international community need to address these troubling questions more forthrightly than they have in the past and collaborate in finding answers.

An immediate priority for the U.S. and Russia, along with other concerned countries, should be to detect and, where possible, disrupt smuggling chains for "loose" nuclear-related goods—that is to tamp down the shadowy networks that connect the sellers and ultimate end-users of these dangerous items. Not enough is known about such activities—how they are organized and financed; what front companies, criminal groups and other intermediaries are used; who the inside collaborators are; etc. Countries could jointly organize underground sting operations to flesh out buyer and end-user networks and possibly to recover nuclear material that has been removed from government inventories but has not yet fallen into the hands of our adversaries. Techniques such as offers of amnesty or even rewards for information on stolen caches also could be employed. Of course, it is inconceivable that a comprehensive interdiction and damage control strategy could be implemented successfully without cooperation of the security services, particularly those of the United States and Russia. [3]

Finally, cooperative intelligence strategies could help clarify the link between clandestine nuclear transfers and the spread of nuclear weapons capabilities. In cases where a consequential leakage has occurred, information sharing can identify the origin of the theft, where the material is headed, and who the likely customers are. In the most serious cases, such as the transfer of a nuclear weapon or sufficient material to make one, intelligence could help guide joint operations against suspected recipients, which might range from diplomatic pressures to emergency response exercises to actually disabling an adversary's nuclear arsenal. [4]

Building an intelligence partnership with Russia will be no easy task. Russia and the United States have distinct, if overlapping, strategic interests as well as somewhat different assessments of the proliferation threat, particularly where Iran is concerned, so maintaining and expanding a unilateral U.S. collection capability is of central importance. Also, on the sensitive issue of nuclear leakage, Russia has in the past been reluctant to come forward with information on smuggling incidents, either out of embarrassment or out of fear of retaliation from the West. Surely some formula should be found to indemnify Russia, or any other country, against the possibility of nuclear security lapses such as those that may have occurred during the Yeltsin administration or in the chaos surrounding the break-up of the Soviet Union.

In any event, overcoming such obstacles is essential for Russia and the United States to prepare successfully for a post-proliferation world, maintaining vigilance against shadowy threats that may be waiting to strike in a time and place that we least expect.

Notes:

1. White House Office of the Press Secretary, "Press Conference by President Obama and President Medvedev of Russia. The Kremlin, Moscow, Russia, July 6, 2009, pp. 2, 4.
2. Cristina Hansell, "Nuclear Terrorism Threats and Responses," in National Academy of Sciences and Russian Academy of Sciences, *Future of the Nuclear Security Environment in 2015*, Washington D.C. National Academy of Sciences, 2009, p. 157.
3. The idea of an intelligence-based nuclear security policy is not entirely new. For example, Graham Allison more than 10 years ago recommended that the U.S., Russia, and other leading industrial powers set up a "Nuclear Interpol" to track and disrupt illicit nuclear activities. Yet the concept has carried relatively little weight in a nonproliferation approach that has overwhelmingly stressed building technological "lines of defense" against nuclear theft and smuggling. See Graham Allison, et al., eds., *Avoiding Nuclear Anarchy: Containing the Threat of Loose Russian Nuclear Weapons and Fissile Materials*, Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1996, p. 175.

4. On weapons, such cooperation would benefit from a comparative baseline inventory **checking Russia's current stockpiles of different TNW categories against what the former Union Republics held on the eve of the Soviet demise** Whether Russia would agree to such an exercise or to share the results with the West is problematic at this point.

## PART VIII: THE POST-9/11 WARS

## ASSESSING THE LONG WAR

*By Frank G. Hoffman*

January 2007

*This article originally appeared as an E-Note.*

America is suffering from a national STD crisis. No, it's not the one you think—it's a Strategic Thinking Deficiency. This deficiency lies at the root of the current challenges in Iraq, an enormous miscalculation and a gross misapplication of national power. This deficiency is also responsible for our continued inability to diagnose today's global struggle in a holistic manner. Too often we look at Iraq as an isolated event, instead of one front or campaign in a larger conflict. Thus, we fail to see how the actions in one theater impact the conduct of the war in a larger or more systemic sense.

The STD limits our ability to measure what is important from what is merely expedient. What should be an American grand strategy ends up a series of policy stovepipes instead of a comprehensive understanding of the problem, and an equally holistic and integrated solution. Such a fragmented perspective fails to recognize our long-term interests and warps American policy. Key strategic interests are being ignored, and isolated actions take us incrementally away from vital requirements.

Washington is responding in classic fashion; after three years of deadly conflict with little concrete progress, a plethora of policy reviews, Congressional blue-ribbon panels, and study groups are underway. The bipartisan Iraq Study Project (ISG) led by former Secretary of State James Baker and Congressman Lee Hamilton tried to provide a remedy. But it did not offer a plan to achieve “victory” in Iraq, and thus the White House apparently has rejected the panel's recommendations. The Chairman of the Joint Staff has assembled an outside team composed of U.S. officers with extensive experience in Iraq. A spate of pundits have chimed in with their own set of options [1], with most seeking a military solution where there is none.

The ISG was a large dose of common sense. Their report provides a polite but devastating critique of American policy in Iraq. Its 79 recommendations include a few clunkers that are not realistic. But, overall, it serves as an indictment of our current strategy and its implementation. There was nothing terribly original or bold in the report, the product of intense negotiations among ten prominent Americans of great intellect with long careers in public service. That's the nature of these bipartisan groups; the most extreme ideas are left on the editor's floor, victim to the search for unanimity.

The problem with many critiques of the ISG is that they appear to focus solely on Iraq, and thus reinforce Cold War habits. Such reviews focus on individual trees and not the forest. Any serious review needs to begin with the recognition that we do not understand the nature of our enemy or the nature of the war. We began this conflict by calling it the GWOT. This is typical Pentagonesque. In essence, we declared war against a tactic, deliberately making our enemies evil and illegal at the same time—but also confusing ourselves about our objective or who really was our enemy.

Some commentators like Professor Eliot Cohen and former CIA Director James Woolsey suggest that World War IV is appropriate. This does suggest a protracted contest with numerous fronts, and the multidimensional mobilization that is needed to achieve success. But this gives Bin Laden and Al Qaeda far too much credit in terms of their total capability.

So we've settled now for the Long War. This says a lot about the protracted nature of the contest, but almost nothing about what we are trying to defeat or what we are fighting for. But it does suggest that it should be fought by the Pentagon, which misleads our strategy. We have over-militarized our counter-terrorism strategy and repeated the mistake in Iraq. In many respects, our reactions have been entirely predictable, very costly, and of great advantage to Al Qaeda. As FPRI Senior Fellow Michael Radu has observed, "When you have confusion defining the enemy, you inevitably have confusion in finding ways to fight it."

Just what have we accomplished to date in the Long War? Well, any ledger is going to identify some clear gains. Viewed objectively, U.S. policy has garnered some positive achievement. For example:

- The U.S. has recovered from a deadly attack on our own shores with two swift military campaigns. Saddam Hussein is no longer terrorizing his people and threatening the region.
- Despite what you might read, there has been progress in governance and economic development in both Afghanistan and Iraq.
- Our economy is doing well; it may sputter from time to time thanks to high energy costs, but the overall economy has grown some 15 percent since 9/11. Recall what the Dow Jones Index was on that day—it's grown from 9,650 to today's rosy 12,500.
- We are working effectively in partnership with key allies—not just Britain and Australia—but thirty odd nations.
- The nation has begun to shore up our home defenses, although clearly the stand up of DHS is still a work in progress—reorganizing in the midst of war is never easy.



- Likewise, we've reorganized our intelligence system, although we're still not sure if competition between OSD and the new Director of National Intelligence create more opportunities for our enemies than it retards.

That's our progress to date. Much of this progress has taken form as organizational initiatives, which reflect a needed strategic readjustment from an outdated Cold War architecture. But the ledger has both black and red ink. On the debit side, the strategic evaluation is long and pessimistic.

We have to start with the observation that Bin Laden is alive and apparently well, although Al Qaeda is a more diffuse organization. Its exceptional resiliency and adaptiveness are in force, but its command and control are strained. Georgetown University Professor Bruce Hoffman has testified that the enemy has been dispersed but is now more lethal, better trained, and is now more unpredictable than ever. Al Qaeda has achieved an autocatalytic capability to generate cells sympathetic to the movement. The CIA officially confirms this analysis and warns that Iraq has abetted a global rise in radicalism.

The resource implications are staggering. We can start with the human costs. In terms of human life, some 3,000 lives were lost at home, and another 3,000 have died overseas since in our effort to preclude future ones, while another 20,000 have been wounded. The violence in Iraq appears to continue unabated, as evidenced by last December's 113 Americans killed, the highest level in two years. At an average of 65 deaths a month, one has to ask if another 1,600 lives-24 months of dying-is a price we are willing to pay to help Iraq reestablish itself.

In economic terms, the United States has spent \$500 billion on the war, *every dime borrowed*, with a total bill that will undoubtedly exceed \$1 trillion when increased personnel costs, veteran health bills, worn-out equipment, and national debt payments are factored in. Advocates of perseverance in Iraq have no response to the question, "what does another \$200 billion achieve that the first \$500 billion failed to secure?" The significantly enlarged national debt also presents a looming liability and a further limit on our strategic freedom of action. In the long term this further limits our ability to invest in our security, infrastructure, people or global competitiveness.

Internally, we still lack an accepted constitutional framework for fighting this new form of war-and the Executive Branch's assertions of wartime powers do not constitute a long term solution. In terms of diplomacy and the informational component of U.S. power, we've been isolated, outgunned by Islamic media. Polls suggest that in many countries, the United States is perceived as the greatest source of instability. Then Secretary Rumsfeld acknowledged in 2005 that our ability to counter the narrative of the Islamist extremists has been amateurish. [2] We are still not effectively contradicting the narrative of our enemy—in fact we've not tried at all.

The geostrategic scorecard is not rosy either. We have less flexibility to deal with Iran or North Korea today, the latter now believed to have sufficient material for 10 nuclear bombs, *unless it sold some for hard currency*. Iran has been the biggest benefactor of U.S. policy to date; its influence and nuclear ambitions have not been retarded while our attention and armed might has been focused on Iraq. North Korea and Iran would not be as bold if the “velvet glove” of U.S. diplomacy was backed with a mailed fist. Russia and China have quietly made inroads with diplomatic and economic initiatives that significantly enhance their long term goals in the Middle East, Africa and elsewhere. Meanwhile, our forces are bogged down in Iraq and our capabilities are being eroded. The rising strategic risks being taken by American policy makers by this erosion are overlooked in favor of a myopic focus on Iraq.

Afghanistan, another key campaign in this war, remains a troubled land. The Taliban, once vanquished, is resurging. More than 300 American and NATO troops have died there the past two years. Violence is up, and President Karzai’s credibility is significantly diminished. Suicide terrorism, once an anomaly, is now a weekly event. Recent reports document a bumper crop of new opium. The Taliban, which curtailed the cultivation of poppies when they were in power, is now actively promoting and protecting the drug business. A \$3 billion annual cash flow has overcome the Taliban’s moral scruples. The transition from Holy Warriors to Drug Warriors is not heartening. A recent CIA report offered little solace. It found that Karzai’s government has little control over what happens outside of Kabul, and that popular support is declining due to perceptions of ineffectiveness and corruption. [3]

With regard to Iraq, there has been measurable progress, but as the President admitted, not enough and not fast enough. As a recent intelligence assessment from Baghdad starkly put it, the insurgency remains “potent,” sectarian murders are up 200 to 300 percent, and the potential for civil war has passed a tipping point. Civilian casualties are up significantly. Nary a weekend goes by without the morgue in Baghdad receiving 100 bodies, most with their hands bound and evidencing signs of torture. The majority of Iraqis think that attacking Americans is acceptable. [4] Our reconstruction programs were significant, but not well managed. Our training and security assistance efforts never received the priority and resources that they should have been accorded. The Iraqi military and police are weak, and thoroughly penetrated by corrosive factions and religious groups. What we think of as a trained Iraqi unit by day, the locals call “death squads” at night.

Militarily, the U.S. military is stretched thin. Its material readiness is slowly being eroded and its personnel costs are rising. It will take at least two years after any significant troop redeployments to reestablish manpower, equipment and training systems for future contingencies. The Chief of Staff of the Army just testified that the Army has reached the breaking point. The ISG report was clear on this, pointing out that it will take a serious program with dedicated resources to restore the American military.

So the ledger is mixed. There has been some success in both Afghanistan and Iraq. But our strategy has failed in achieving stated or desired ends. The costs for what has been accomplished has been completely disproportionate to the gains. Furthermore, the effort in Iraq has detracted from other strategic interests.

By any objective viewpoint, a strategic net assessment is equally harsh. The investment to date has significantly exceeded projected costs. Far too often, the means employed have been applied contrary to our ultimate aim. It is hard to swallow, but America today is weaker, poorer, and more isolated than it was three years ago. There is ample evidence that should we continue along today's lines, it would materially impair our world standing and overall security posture.

The American public has gauged our progress to date and weighed the resources spent on their behalf. They recognize that we must change course to a different heading and adjust our means. This is why calls to "surge" more military forces are falling on deaf ears at home and from our commanders in Iraq. Einstein's adage that "insanity consists of doing the same thing but expecting different results" has been forgotten. We have already surged 20,000 troops (Iraqi and U.S. units) to Baghdad and have nothing to show for it. Advocates of surging unready brigades to Baghdad have to answer why doing more of the same thing and expecting better results makes any strategic sense.

Instead of persisting with the same strategy, James Fallows suggests in *The Atlantic* that we "Declare Victory" and come home. This perspective overestimates our success to date and repeats the errors of the last few decades, which only emboldened the enemy, whose ideology has spread and is now self-generating. It also underestimates our opponents and their commitment. "Come home America" is not a strategy, it's an evasion of responsibility.

But Mr. Fallows correctly diagnoses the essence of the strategic deficiency. He recognized that the conflict in Iraq is merely a single campaign in a long war. We can lose a battle, and we may even lose a campaign. But we cannot afford to lose the larger struggle against extremism. So upon closer examination, Fallows' assessment is close to the mark. We have achieved what we could in Iraq, and now need to shift to the longer and larger threats. As the ISG report makes explicit, it is time to stand back and look at the problem in a larger sense. Others want to see a clear cut plan for victory in Iraq. Such calls fail to recognize the simple fact that "victory" has already been elusive even as the butcher's bill has increased. We should be more honest with the American people about what constitutes victory.

As the supporting external agent, victory for the United States in Iraq must be understood to mean a functioning, stable and representative government in Baghdad. Getting to this point will depend on a number of decisions, including the form of government, degree of reconciliation or justice between parties, and political power sharing arrangements. These

decisions will all be in the hands of the Iraqis. Whether or not they agree to put aside sectarian differences, agree to build effective tools of governance, and establish social justice is up to them. Victory is not a product of American manufacture in this war, and it cannot be attained by force of arms. We can help midwife a better Iraq, but to this point all we have done is nurture a civil war.

Resolution of this campaign is not about U.S. troop levels. As Charles Krauthammer noted in Philadelphia in November 2006 at FPRI's annual dinner, "You can tinker with American tactics and troop levels all you want, but unless the Iraqis can establish a government of unitary purpose and resolute actions, the simple objective of the war—leaving behind a self-sustaining democratic government—will not be achieved." [5]

The solution does not lie in staying the course or adding more combat brigades. That approach only benefits Bin Laden and our enemies. Their strategy is to provoke a costly engagement at a time and place of their choosing. Our strategy should be based on our interests, not the jihadists. Our strategy should also focus on the real problem, which is economic and political in nature. We are using the wrong metrics when we focus on infantry brigades. Those who want to "surge" fresh formations should insist on surging reconstruction aid and fresh battalions of diplomats and State Department personnel. Surging combat forces (more accurately extending current troops) is a cosmetic salve that may buy some time, but time for what? In addition to pressuring the Iraqis to come to an agreement, someone needs to pressure the NSC staff to do their jobs and effectively coordinate U.S. strategy and oversee its execution. We can and should expect the Iraqis to do more, but we have not even succeeded in compelling our own institutions to adapt to the nature of this conflict with any degree of urgency.

The resolution for the Iraq crisis from an American perspective can be found in the following four questions: (1) What has to be done to preclude Iraq from becoming a source of regional instability and can America devise and implement a plan to achieve this? (2) Will the Iraq people work with us in attaining this goal? (3) Can we accomplish this within the time period and resources the American people will tolerate? (4) Can we attain this without compromising other strategic security interests?

If the answer to any of these questions is no, we should prepare to pull back most of our combat forces this year. But if the answer to all the questions is yes, we could and should still ramp down the U.S. contribution to roughly 100,000 troops by the start of 2008, with further cuts dependent on the effective stand up of Iraqi security formations. We have too many staffs and support personnel in Iraq and too few troops to bother with taming the Sunnis in Al Anbar. We should aim for retaining a force of more than 50,000 through 2009, which should be sustainable. This is not about a retreat, it's about the recognition of what is possible and

what is strategically necessary. The chaos, regional instability, an emboldened enemy and lost prestige that proponents of surging fear have already occurred, we just have not faced up to the facts yet. It's also about recognizing that we need to properly conceptualize the Long War as 80 percent political and ideological, and stop treating it like a nail because all we have is our Pentagon hammer. Once cured of our current thinking deficiency, the opportunity to reengage intelligently in the Long War with a refined, comprehensive approach will be open to us.

Notes:

1. See, e.g., Frederick W. Kagan, "Choosing Victory: A Plan for Success in Iraq," AEI, Dec. 14, 2006, at [www.aie.org](http://www.aie.org).
2. Speech at CFR, December 2005.
3. See Thomas Johnson and Chris Mason, "Understanding the Taliban and Insurgency in Afghanistan," *Orbis*, Winter 2007.
4. Nicholas D. Kristof, "Listen to the Iraqis," *New York Times*, Oct. 8, 2006.
5. Charles Krauthammer, "Past the Apogee: America under Pressure," at <http://www.fpri.org/enotes/20061213.krauthammer.pastapogee.html>.

# IRAQ AND THE “METRICS” SYSTEM

*By Michael P. Noonan*

September 2007

*This essay was published in E-Notes.*

The past few weeks have introduced a whirlwind of reporting on the current situation in Iraq. In particular, the reports of the Independent Commission on the Security Forces in Iraq, the U.S. General Accountability Office’s report, and the September 10-11, 2007 testimonies of Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker and Army General David Petraeus before the House and Senate Armed Services and Foreign Affairs committees, respectively, have caused much debate and political mudslinging. [1] The pro- and anti-Bush camps tend to see such reports entirely through their own analytical prism. Worse still, each side has some ground to stand on in making their particular arguments, because the metrics for judging success or retrogression on the ground are often inexact and therefore can yield contradictory findings for or against the war. That being said, the surge and refined counterinsurgency strategy that began earlier this year does appear to be working. Whether the metrics continue on an upward path remains to be seen; still, given the consequences of defeat, they suggest that the current strategy should be allowed to continue until the spring, at which time a fuller picture of the situation on the ground should determine whether the strategy should be totally reexamined and other options undertaken. What follows is a discussion of the surge strategy, the abovementioned reports, and the options moving forward to provide more context and evidence for the position stated above.

## The Surge

The surge strategy that the president announced on January 10, 2007 called for a multi-tooled and multi-phased approach toward the political-military situation on the ground. [2] More troops would be committed to the fight and a new emphasis on counterinsurgency operations would guide the use of those troops. While some have argued that Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus’ recent testimonies amounted to a nine-month report card on the surge, in reality the full surge force package was not in place until earlier this past summer. Presently there are 160,000 U.S. troops in Iraq; according to figures collected by the Brookings Institution’s Michael O’Hanlon, we had 140,000 troops in Iraq in November 2006, 135,000 troops in February 2007, and 150,000 troops in May 2007. [3]

Regardless, the number of boots on the ground is not necessarily the best metric for success. How those forces and other interagency actors would be used on the ground (i.e., “force employment”) would be just as, if not more so, critical to the strategy’s chances of success.

Key determinants for the successful force employment and implementation of such a strategy are the leaders in place on the ground. In Iraq this fundamentally changed with General Petraeus' assumption of command of Multinational Force-Iraq in February 2007 and Crocker's confirmation as ambassador to Iraq the next month. No matter what one's view of the current situation on the ground, the arrival of these two individuals has seemingly created a new sense of unity of effort and increased labors to build Iraqi and U.S. counterinsurgency capabilities on scene. U.S. forces have moved away from a thick concentration on massive forward operating bases (FOBs) and have deployed out to smaller combat outposts (COPs) where they have more interaction with Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and the Iraqi populace.

## The Reports

The Petraeus-Crocker testimonies were preceded by several other reports of note. The Independent Commission on the Security Forces of Iraq Report, or the Jones Commission, was mandated under May 2007 Congressional legislation. Its twenty commissioners have a combined history of over 500 years military and more than 150 years of law enforcement service. The Commission examined the security environment of Iraq and assessed the forces serving under both the Iraqi Defense and Interior ministries.

Overall, the Commission found that Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) have made uneven progress, but signs point to an increasing capability to provide internal security. Externally, however, the ISF will not be capable of independently securing their borders against foreign conventional military threats (p. 8). In the case of the defense ministry, there are still logistical and administrative problems that hamper capability and effectiveness. The Iraqi Army will be unable to independently operate within the next 12-18 months, but that is mainly due to the lack of adequate logistics and leadership deficiencies.

The commissioners were less sanguine about prospects for the Interior Ministry, which they found to be a ministry in name only that serves dysfunctionally and along sectarian lines (p. 10). The Iraqi Police Service, National Police Force, and Border Security forces are all assessed as being ineffective absent a functional ministry.

The General Accountability Office also issued a report on its independent assessment of 18 benchmarks in the legislative (7), economic (1), and security (10) realms. It found that the Iraqi government has met 3 benchmarks, partially met 4 others, and failed to meet the other 11. For its part, the administration, through the State Department, claims that conditions are present to meet only 16 of the 18 benchmarks, and that in those 16 areas, progress is satisfactory in 8, mixed in 2, and unsatisfactory in 6. Again, different measures produce different evaluations.

The administration and the GAO agreed that the Iraqi government has failed in enacting legislation on de-Baathification and for the equitable distribution of hydrocarbon resources to

the people of Iraq, providing Iraqi commanders with authority to execute the Baghdad Security Plan without political intervention to go after sectarian parties, ensuring that ISF are enforcing the law even-handedly, increasing the number of ISF units capable of operating independently, and preventing Iraqi political authorities from undermining or making false statements against ISF members. In addition, the GAO claims that the Iraqi government has failed to form a Constitutional Review Committee and then conduct a review and enact legislation establishing electoral commissions with special emphasis on provincial elections, reducing sectarian violence, eliminating militia control of local security, enacting and implementing legislation on amnesty and a strong militia disarmament program.

Agreement on Iraqi progress was shared, in part or in whole, between the GAO and the administration on legislation to form semi-autonomous regions, the establishment of holistic committees to support the Baghdad Security Plan (BSP), the provision of 3 Iraqi Army brigades to support Baghdad operations, ensuring that Prime Minister Maliki keeps his word on the BSP not allowing sectarian or political safe havens for insurgents, establishing planned joint security stations across Baghdad, ensuring that minority political rights in the legislature are protected, and ensuring that \$10 billion in Iraqi revenues are allocated and spent for reconstruction projects.

#### The Crocker and Petraeus Testimonies

The advent of a new strategy and a more unified diplomatic-military leadership comes amid a bitterly partisan debate, aggravated by the early onset of presidential campaigning. Although General Petraeus, like Ambassador Crocker, is a “career professional,” attitudes toward his report were sharply political: in a Gallup poll taken on the day of the general’s testimony, 68 percent of Republicans surveyed stated that his report would be independent and objective compared to 68 percent of Democrats, who held that the testimony would be biased to reflect the administration’s position. [4] The ambassador and the general gave frank, direct testimonies, designed in part to cool the boiling stew of partisanship. There were no glowing progress reports, but each man stated that progress, however frustrating and slow, is taking place.

Ambassador Crocker stated that “the cumulative trajectory of political, economic, and diplomatic developments in Iraq is upwards, although the slope of that line is not steep.” He acknowledged that the progress will be uneven and that “[t]here will be no single moment at which we can claim victory; any turning point will likely only be recognized in retrospect.” The legacy of Saddam Hussein and the sectarian violence of 2006 and 2007 have produced a context where modern Iraq is best characterized as a “traumatized society.” And while there are frustrations with politics at the national level there has been a flowering of federalism at the local and regional levels, particularly in the west and north, and such regional



consolidation has helped with the security environment in those parts of the country. Still, the security environment has led the Iraqi economy to perform sub optimally—especially in terms of manufacturing and agriculture. And while many neighbors have been helped in Iraq (in particular Kuwait, Jordan, and Turkey), Syria has been “problematic” and Iran plays a “harmful role.” That having been said, the U.S. is expanding the number of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (advisors on a full-range of political and economic issues) to 25 this year (up from 10 previously) and he called for the establishment of an Iraqi-American Enterprise Fund to provide for investment, training, and infrastructure improvements.

General Petraeus, for his part, declared that the military objectives of the “Surge” are largely being met. In particular, going after Al Qaeda-Iraq has reduced the number of security incidents and helped with the rejection of Al Qaeda in Anbar over the past eight months. Iraqi security forces continue to grow in number and capability, if slowly. However, all is not bright: “Lack of adequate government capacity, lingering sectarian mistrust, and various forms of corruption add to Iraq’s challenges.” Agreeing with the Jones Commission, he acknowledged that sectarian issues, logistics and support deficiencies, and insufficient numbers of qualified commissioned and non-commissioned officers hindered the effectiveness of the ISF. Still, of 140 stood-up Iraqi Army, National Police, and Special Operations Forces battalions, 95 are capable of taking the lead in operations with some coalition support. Moving forward the U.S. should be able to reduce forces starting in December and return to a pre-surge level of 15 brigade combat teams by summer 2008. If progress continues, that number could then be decreased even further. Petraeus cautioned that there will continue to be a sizeable role for U.S. forces for the foreseeable future, but concluded that over time the U.S.’s leading and partnering portions of combat operations should give way to providing overwatch and serving as a backstop to the ISF.

### Analysis and Future Outlook

The Ambassador and the General underscored that one cannot divorce the military and police roles from the political, cultural, and economic contexts. Much progress needs to be gained on the ground, particularly on the political and economic fronts. The events of the past six months suggest that the best way ahead on those fronts is a bubble-up approach that focuses on providing security at lower levels, which then percolates to produce political progress at the local and regional levels to further press reform at the national level. As the late-French officer and counterinsurgency expert David Galula gladly quotes from a Chinese source, an insurgency is a 20 percent military and 80 percent political proposition. [4] While one may quibble with the percentage distribution, in counterinsurgency operations the political ends overshadows the military means. [6] Three elements—time, the Iraqi Security Forces, and politics—might just allow such a bubble-up strategy to work in Iraq.

(1) Time. The Surge strategy should be allowed to run its course while U.S. troops are available on the ground. By the spring a clearer picture should emerge as to whether recent gains are real or just a chimera. This is, no doubt, tough on the troops, many of whom have been extended to 15-month rotations, but current conditions seem to warrant the continuance of a full-court press. The developments in Anbar province allow a shift to Baghdad, Diyala, Salahaddin, and to provinces further south. Time is also needed because the full repercussions of the repositioning of British troops in Basra are not yet evident—and Basra is important because it both abuts the major supply route for the land delivery of supplies for U.S. forces in Iraq and is a major epicenter for Iranian influenced Shia militias.

(2) ISF. While there are certainly many problems with the Iraqi Security Forces, the dueling feuds over effectiveness might not be using the proper metrics. [7] To be sure, logistical difficulties and shortages for the ISF must continue to be pressed, particularly from U.S. advisors at the Coalition Military Assistance Training Team and military, police, and border transition team levels, but one element seems to be paramount: can these units fight? Various evaluation methods of the readiness of Iraqi forces are nice to have and can show progress or slippage in performance, but ultimately the best metric seems to be whether such forces are actively engaging insurgents and criminal elements within their areas of operations without contributing to sectarian violence. If units are conducting themselves in this way then increased coalition attention should be given to helping in areas such as straightening out logistics. Less or no assistance should be forthcoming if units with enough soldiers/policemen and rudimentary logistics are still not pulling their weight in their area of operations or are conducting missions to further sectarian goals.

(3) Politics. We should continue to work with localities and the emerging provincial governments, many of which (such as Ninawa and Anbar) are moving forward on election decisions without deference to Baghdad. Such progress is a welcome development and should drive positive change, or at least break deadlocks, in Baghdad.

In sum, Petraeus and Crocker were able to demonstrate just enough progress from the surge in Iraq to break the “surge” in Washington that threatened to end the American combat effort by a date certain. Still, as the other reports also emphasize, even if we have the right strategy in place and the right command and control structure on the ground, the enemy also gets a vote. The remainder of the Ramadan period, the heaviest period of insurgent attacks over the past several years, will be an early test for American resolve. Six months from now General Petraeus’ metrics will have to be clearer and Ambassador Crocker’s trajectory steeper if longer term U.S. support for the Iraqi operation is to be sustainable.

Notes:

1. See General James L. Jones, USMC (ret.), Chairman, The Report of the Independent Commission on the Security Forces of Iraq, September 6, 2007; and, U.S. Government Accountability Office, Report to Congressional Committees, Securing, Stabilizing, and Rebuilding Iraq: Iraqi Government Has Not Met Most Legislative, Security, and Economic Benchmarks, GAO-07-1195, Sept. 2007. The testimonies of Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus are available at: [http://armedservices.house.gov/hearing\\_information.shtml](http://armedservices.house.gov/hearing_information.shtml).
2. See “Fact Sheet: The New Way Forward in Iraq,” at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2007/01/20070110-3.html>.
3. Jason Campbell and Michael O’Hanlon, “The State of Iraq: an Update” *New York Times*, Jan. 10, 2007, available at <http://www.brookings.edu/views/op-ed/ohanlon/20070610.htm>. See in particular the tables.
4. Jeffrey M. Jones, “Public Confident in Petraeus, but Wants Iraq Withdrawal Timetable,” The Gallup Poll, Sept. 10, 2007, available at: <http://www.galluppoll.com/content/?ci=28675&pg=1>.
5. Chinese General Chang Ting-Chen cited in David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (New York: Praeger 2005 [reprint]; 1964), p. 89.
6. For a similar point see Field Manual 3-24/Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 3-33.5, *Counterinsurgency* (Washington: Department of the Army, December 2006), pp. 1-22.
7. For a tactical level perspective on working with the Iraqi Army, see this author’s “The Business We’ve Chosen,” *The American Interest*, (November/December 2007): forthcoming.

# WINNING THE WARS WE'RE IN

*By John A. Nagl*

November 2009

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*Your mission remains fixed, determined, inviolable. It is to win our wars*

—General Douglas MacArthur [1]

The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have spurred long-overdue changes in the way the U.S. military prepares for and prioritizes irregular warfare. These changes are hard won: they have been achieved only after years of wartime trials and tribulations that have cost the United States dearly in lives of its courageous service men and women, money and materiel. However, these changes are not universally applauded. Yet I believe they should continue, particularly regarding the ongoing war in Afghanistan.

Today, the United States is not winning a counterinsurgency campaign in Afghanistan. And in Iraq, it just managed to turn around another that was on the verge of catastrophic collapse only two years ago. A continued U.S. commitment to both campaigns is likely necessary for some years to come. **America's enemies in the Long War**—the al Qaeda terrorist organization and its associated movements infesting other states around the world—remain determined to strike. A host of trends from globalization, to population growth, to weapons proliferation suggests that the “era of persistent conflict” against lethal nonstate irregular foes will not end any time soon. [2] For these reasons, the security of the United States and its interests demand that the nation continue to learn and adapt to counterinsurgency and irregular warfare and that it institutionalize these adaptations so that they are not forgotten again.

## **Forgetting Yesterday's Lessons—On Purpose**

Our military capability to succeed in today's wars can only be explained in light of our experience in Vietnam. In the wake of that war, the Army chose to focus on large-scale conventional combat and “forget” counterinsurgency. Studies criticizing the Army's approach

to the Vietnam War were largely ignored. The solution was to rebuild an Army focused exclusively on achieving decisive operational victories on the battlefield.

The dark side of this rebirth was rejecting irregular warfare as a significant component of future conflict. Rather than rethinking and improving its counterinsurgency doctrine after Vietnam, the Army sought to bury it, largely banishing it from its key field manuals and the curriculum of its schoolhouses. **Doctrine for “low-intensity” operations did make a comeback** in the 1980s, but the Army regarded such missions as the exclusive province of special operations forces. Worse, these revamped doctrinal publications prescribed the same enemy-centric conventional operations and tactics that had been developed in the early 1960s, again giving short shrift to the importance of securing the population and countering political subversion. [3] It was as if the Vietnam War had never happened.

The **military’s** superlative performance in Operation Desert Storm in 1991 further entrenched the mindset that conventional state-on-state warfare was the future, while counterinsurgency and irregular warfare were but lesser included contingencies. The United States did not adjust to the fact that its peer competitor had collapsed, spending the decade after the Cold War’s end continuing to prepare for war against a Soviet Union that no longer existed.

Deployments to Somalia, Haiti, and the Balkans in the 1990s brought us face to face with diverse missions that did not adhere to the Desert Storm model. Despite the relatively high demand for its forces in unconventional environments, the U.S. military continued to **emphasize “rapid, decisive battlefield operations by large combat forces” in its doctrine and professional education.** The overriding emphasis on conventional operations left the military unable to deal effectively with the wars it ultimately had to fight.

### A Failure of Adaptation

After the wake-up call of September 11, 2001, our lack of preparedness was exacerbated by our failure to adapt fully and rapidly to the demands of counterinsurgency in Iraq and Afghanistan. By early 2002, the Taliban appeared defeated and Afghanistan firmly under the **control of America’s Afghan** allies. The fall of Baghdad in April 2003 after a three-week campaign initially appeared as further confirmation of the superiority of U.S. military capabilities. In both instances, the enemy had other plans. Inadequate contingency planning by both civilian leaders and military commanders to secure the peace contributed to the chaotic conditions that enabled insurgent groups to establish themselves. With some notable lower-level exceptions, the military did not adapt to these conditions until it was perilously close to losing these wars. U.S. forces faced with insurgencies had no doctrinal or training background in irregular warfare and reacted in an uncoordinated and often counterproductive fashion to the challenges they faced. Many of these early ad-hoc approaches to counterinsurgency failed to protect the population from insurgent attacks and alienated the people through the

excessive use of force. [4] Although some units did develop and employ effective population-centric counterinsurgency techniques independently, such improvements were not emulated in a coordinated fashion throughout the force. [5] It was not until 2007 that we finally adopted a unified approach that effectively secured the population and co-opted reconcilable insurgent fighters in Iraq—and we are currently attempting to make that leap in Afghanistan, a campaign that we neglected to focus on the war in Iraq. The price for those decisions is now coming due.

### **Toward a “Better War” in Afghanistan**

Preventing Afghanistan from again serving as a sanctuary for terrorists with global reach or serving as the catalyst for a broader regional security meltdown are the key objectives of the campaign there. Securing these objectives requires helping the Afghans to build a sustainable system of governance that can adequately ensure security for the Afghan people—the keystone upon which a successful exit strategy depends. We should instead aim for a sustainable system of governance that can effectively combat the insurgency, and in doing so prevent a re-emergence of transnational terrorist safe havens.

Achieving these goals will require more military forces, but also a much greater commitment to good governance and to providing for the needs of the Afghan people where they live. The coalition will need to use its considerable leverage to counter Afghan government corruption at every level.

While an expanded international commitment of security and development forces can assist in achieving these goals in the short term, ultimately Afghans must ensure stability and security in their own country. Building a state that is able to provide a modicum of security and governance to its people is the American exit strategy from Afghanistan. The successful implementation of a better-resourced effort to build Iraqi security forces, after years of floundering, is now enabling the drawdown of U.S. forces from that country as Iraqi forces increasingly take responsibility for their own security; a similar situation will define success in Afghanistan. **The classic “clear, hold, and build” counterinsurgency model was relearned over several painful years in Iraq, but at present there are insufficient Afghan soldiers and police to implement that approach by holding areas that have been cleared of insurgents. As a result, U.S. troops have had to clear the same areas repeatedly—paying a price for each operation in both American lives and in Afghan public support, which suffers from Taliban reprisals whenever we “clear and leave.”**

U.S. and allied forces must ensure that their uses of force are not counterproductive to the operational necessity of population security and gaining local support against the insurgency. As in the early years of the Iraq war, U.S. troops previously tended toward both heavy-handed tactics and reliance on air strikes that have served to alienate the Afghan population. While the

new U.S. command in Afghanistan has taken steps to rein in counterproductive uses of force, these incidents have left a legacy of Afghan mistrust that will be difficult to overcome.

Secondly, while considerable focus is now on the direct counterinsurgency role of U.S. forces, more attention and resources must be devoted to developing Afghan security forces. More U.S. **soldiers are required now to implement a “Clear, Hold, and Build” counterinsurgency strategy**, but over time responsibility must transition to the Afghans to secure their own country. If the first requirement for success in a counterinsurgency campaign is the ability to secure the population, the counterinsurgent requires boots on the ground and plenty of them. The long-term answer is an expanded Afghan National Army and effective police forces. Currently the Afghan Army, is at 70,000 and projected to grow to 135,000, and is perhaps the most effective institution in the country. It must be substantially expanded, and mirrored by sizable local police forces, to provide the security that will prevent Taliban insurgent infiltration of the population. Building Afghan security forces will be a long-term effort that will require U.S. and international assistance and advisers for many years, but there is no viable alternative. There is also, unfortunately, no viable alternative to the international community underwriting most of the Afghan security forces, although it is worth remembering that more than fifty Afghan soldiers can be fielded for the cost of one deployed American soldier.

The United States and International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) also need to get smarter about the way they engage Afghan communities at the local level. Insurgencies can be won or lost at the local level because securing the support of the population requires understanding the specific issues that cause it to sympathize with one side or another. Insurgencies are rarely monolithic: they comprise numerous local factions and individuals fighting for personal gain, revenge against real or perceived slights, tribal loyalties, or other reasons that may have little **to do with the insurgency’s professed cause. The Taliban is an amalgam of local fighters and mercenary and criminal elements around a hard core of committed jihadists. U.S. commanders are interested in trying to “flip” less ideological factions and promoting the development of local self-defense militias to encourage the Afghan tribes to defend against Taliban infiltration.** [6] Exploiting divisions within an insurgency paid dividends in Iraq, where the emergence of Anbar Awakening and Sons of Iraq played a major role in crippling al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) and dramatically reducing violence.

However, local communities are unlikely to turn in favor of ISAF and the Afghan government until these institutions demonstrate that they are fully willing and able to drive out the Taliban and provide some level of lasting security and competent governance. Local communities **won’t resist the Taliban or help the security forces as long as the insurgency appears to hold the upper hand while the government remains weak at best and abusive at worst. Seizing the initiative from the Taliban and reestablishing the political order’s legitimacy requires securing**

the population and developing a sophisticated, nuanced understanding of local communities, particularly the conflicts within them that insurgents can exploit to their own ends.

Building host nation security forces and “flipping” elements of the Taliban are not sufficient to succeed on their own, but they are important components of a counterinsurgency strategy that can succeed in Afghanistan if properly resourced.

### Learning from our Mistakes

Saint Augustine taught that “the purpose of war is to build a better peace,” but we have not built the capacity to create that better peace in the American national security establishment. A close look at the historical record reveals that the United States engages in ambiguous counterinsurgency and nation-building missions far more often than it faces full-scale war. Similar demands will only increase in a globalized world where local problems increasingly do not stay local and where “the most likely catastrophic threats to our homeland—for example, an American city poisoned or reduced to rubble by a terrorist attack—are more likely to emanate from failing states than from aggressor states.” [7]

Trends such as the youth bulge and urbanization in underdeveloped states, as well as the proliferation of more lethal weaponry, point to a future dominated by chaotic local insecurity and conflict rather than confrontations between the armies and navies of nation-states. [8] This future of persistent low-intensity conflict around the globe suggests that American interests are at risk not from rising peer competitors but from what has been called a “global security capacity deficit.” [9] As such, the U.S. military is more likely to be called upon to counter insurgencies, intervene in civil strife and humanitarian crises, rebuild nations, and wage unconventional types of warfare than it is to fight mirror-image armed forces. We will not have the luxury of opting out of these missions because they do not conform to preferred notions of the American way of war. [10]

Both state and nonstate enemies will seek more asymmetric ways to challenge the United States and its allies. America’s conventional military superiority, which remains substantial, will drive many of them to the same conclusion: When they fight America conventionally, they lose decisively in days or weeks. When they fight unconventionally by employing guerrilla tactics, terrorism, and information operations, they have a better chance of success. It is unclear why even a powerful enemy would want to risk a costly head-to-head battlefield decision with the United States. As Secretary of Defense Robert Gates has said, “Put simply, our enemies and potential adversaries—including nation states—have gone to school on us. They saw what America’s technology and firepower did to Saddam’s army in 1991 and again in 2003, and they’ve seen what [improvised explosive devices] are doing to the American military today.” [11]



The developing strategic environment will find state and nonstate adversaries devising innovative strategies to counter U.S. military power by exploiting widely available technology and weapons and integrating tactics from across the spectrum of conflict. The resulting conflicts will be protracted and hinge on the affected populations' perceptions of truth and legitimacy rather than the outcome of tactical engagements on the battlefield. This is the kind of war we are struggling to understand in Afghanistan; it is the kind of war we are most likely to face in the future.

Notes:

This essay draws upon John A. Nagl, "Let's Win the Wars We're In," *Joint Force Quarterly* 52 (1st Quarter 2009), available at [www.ndu.edu/inss/Press/jfq\\_pages/editions/i52/7.pdf](http://www.ndu.edu/inss/Press/jfq_pages/editions/i52/7.pdf).

1. Douglas A. MacArthur, farewell speech before the West Point Corps of Cadets, West Point, NY, May 12, 1962, available at [www.nationalcenter.org/MacArthurFarewell.html](http://www.nationalcenter.org/MacArthurFarewell.html).
2. Geren and Casey, "Strategic Context," available at [www.army.mil/aps/08/strategic\\_context/strategic\\_context.html](http://www.army.mil/aps/08/strategic_context/strategic_context.html).
3. Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr., *The Army and Vietnam* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), pp. 271–273.
4. See Nigel Alwyn-Foster, "Changing the Army for Counterinsurgency Operations," *Military Review*, November/December 2005, pp. 2–15; Daniel Marston, "Lessons in 21st-Century Counterinsurgency: Afghanistan 2001–2007," in *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare*, ed. Daniel Marston and Carter Malkasian (Oxford, UK: Osprey Publishing, 2008), pp. 226–232; Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (New York: Penguin, 2006), pp. 214–297.
5. George Packer, "The Lesson of Tal Afar," *The New Yorker*, April 10, 2006, available at [www.newyorker.com/archive/2006/04/10/060410fa\\_fact2](http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2006/04/10/060410fa_fact2).
6. See Fontini Christia and Michael Semple, "Flipping the Taliban," *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2009.
7. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, September 29, 2008.
8. For more on this point, see John A. Nagl and Paul L. Yingling, "New Rules for New Enemies," *Armed Forces Journal*, October 2006, available at [www.armedforcesjournal.com/2006/10/2088425](http://www.armedforcesjournal.com/2006/10/2088425).

9. Jim Thomas, *Sustainable Security: Developing a Security Strategy for the Long Haul* (Washington, DC: Center for a New American Security, April 2008), 9, available at [www.cnas.org/attachments/contentmanagers/1924/Thomas\\_SustainableSecurity\\_April08.pdf](http://www.cnas.org/attachments/contentmanagers/1924/Thomas_SustainableSecurity_April08.pdf).
10. Gates, September 29, 2008.
11. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, October 10, 2007.

# HOW WE FAILED IN AFGHANISTAN AND HOW WE CAN DO BETTER

*By the Hon. Dov S. Zakheim*

October 2011

*The following article is a version of the talk that Zakheim gave at FPRI on July 27, 2011 on his book, A Vulcan's Tale: How the Bush Administration Mismanaged the Reconstruction of Afghanistan.*

The “policy wonks” who assume high government office after an election rarely think about implementation. They act as if executing policies is a job for somebody else. At the very end of my book, I quote the famous line by Leona Helmsley: “taxes are for the little people.” For policy wonks, implementation is for the little people. They don’t worry about such matters; their concern is to make policy.

The people who gravitate to presidential candidates are policy types; and they are so for a very simple reason. The candidates do not yet have to worry about implementation. They just have to worry about getting elected. They formulate policies that they think people will support. As a consequence, those who take sub-cabinet level jobs, much like those at the cabinet level, invariably are policy people.

Cabinet officers clearly are the equivalent of Chief Executives of major corporations. They should be making policy. But the second level, that of the Chief Operating Officer, calls for management and implementation skills. In the Department of Defense, however, all too often the people who have filled sub-cabinet level positions have also been policy people who simply do not focus sufficiently on the challenges of policy implementation.

Implementation means a lot of things depending on who is doing the implementing. Those who wear the uniform are implementers; they fight wars to realize policy objectives. Those who acquire weapons are implementers; their job is to provide the military with the **wherewithal to prevail in combat**. Those who wear “green eye shades,” the comptroller staffs, are implementers; they must calculate how to pay for programs, or for fighting a war. Other less glamorous functions in the Department of Defense and other national security agencies also involve implementation.

I resided in the policy world during the Reagan administration. Even then, my job involved both planning and resources. I was an interface between the two. But in the job that I held from 2001 to 2004, I was solely an implementer. Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld asked me to be the Comptroller, the person in charge of the budget. His argument was that the budget is policy, which in a sense it is.

An interesting aspect of Donald Rumsfeld's plan to manage DoD, which was not grasped by many people, was that he was going to be his own Chief Operating Officer. He understood very well what the Pentagon needed to do to change itself. In fact, on September 10, 2001 he said that the biggest enemy to the Pentagon was its own bureaucracy. Rumsfeld wanted to change all sorts of things, notably the way the Pentagon managed acquisition as well as its finances. He focused, literally, on getting the trains to run on time. **And he didn't focus** as much on policy issues, leaving many of them to his deputy, Paul Wolfowitz, whose background, expertise and academic interest were in the policy realm.

Wolfowitz was the dean of the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), but he never wrote an article, much less a book, about human resources, financial management, logistics and supply chains, or any of the other things that involve the kind of job he took, which was a COO's job. **Instead, he wanted to be Rumsfeld's alter ego, which** was fine with the Secretary, who combined the CEO and COO jobs in his own person.

Then came 9/11. Suddenly, Donald Rumsfeld was transformed into the Secretary of War. He had to pass on to his deputy the task of implementing policy but his deputy had little passion for such matters. What I found, therefore, as the person in charge of the financial side of implementing policy, was that I was often brought in too late to the discussions leading up to policy decisions. At the same time, however, I was often being asked to figure out how to fund those decisions. Sometimes I succeeded; sometimes I failed. I believe that I succeeded more than I failed; otherwise, my tenure at DoD would have lasted six months, not three years.

In any event, this was no way to run the Department; there should have been a much greater focus on implementation. I am convinced that, after 9/11, the DoD leadership's lack of focus on implementation led directly to a lack of focus on Afghanistan after mid-2002. And that, in turn, contributed heavily to what went wrong in Afghanistan.

### Afghanistan: What Went Wrong

The situation in Afghanistan in 2002, 2003, and 2004, was much different from what it is today. In those years, most of that country was reasonably safe. I recall walking in Kabul and elsewhere without body armor. I returned to Kabul last year and again this year because I serve on a commission that is looking into wartime contracting, and in these last two years I did have to wear body armor.

The security situation had not yet deteriorated even during my final visit to Afghanistan as Under Secretary in 2004. At the time, people were still returning to Afghanistan. No less than two million refugees returned from Pakistan to Afghanistan in the first few years after the launching of Operation Enduring Freedom. Drugs were not as big a problem as they are now.

Shops and small businesses were reopening. The environment was just different from that which prevails today.

Richard Haass, the President of the Council of Foreign Relations, recently wrote a book with a title that is widely quoted: *War of Necessity, War of Choice*. Haass's title has become a catch phrase underscoring the distinction between Operation Enduring Freedom, a war of necessity, and Operation Iraqi Freedom, a war of choice. I would call "Afghanistan One" the war of necessity; Iraq, the war of choice; and "Afghanistan Two," which began in late 2004/early 2005, and which we continue to fight, the unnecessary war, totally unnecessary. We are fighting this war because we did not focus on implementation; we did not provide enough money for the Afghans to fully rebuild their country. We need not have fought this second war at all.

Let me give you some examples of how we under-funded Afghanistan in those early years. In the fiscal 2003 budget, the Office of Management and Budget—which my book identifies as the major culprit in the underfunding of Afghan reconstruction—was prepared to provide only minimal funding for Afghanistan's military in the account called Foreign Military Financing. This account would, for example, have funded the training and equipping of the Afghan National Army. OMB's initial proposal for financing the Afghan military was a paltry one million dollars. Not surprisingly, the OMB proposal prompted absolute outrage elsewhere in the government. The State Department was furious, the Defense Department was furious, and at last OMB backed off.

The same miserly mentality governed OMB's proposals for the fiscal year 2004 supplemental appropriation. This time it was not a matter of a draft proposal that others might alter. The OMB requested \$983 million from Congress to fund the back-office operations of Ambassador Jerry Bremer's Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq. By comparison, in that same supplemental, OMB requested \$800 million for everything to do with Afghanistan. Everything. Happily, Congress added funds to those that OMB requested for Afghanistan. The final approved amount was 50 percent higher, a total of \$1.2 billion.

For reasons I have never been able to fathom, the Deputy Secretary of Defense worked very closely with an official at OMB who was behind both the minimal Foreign Military Financing proposal of Fiscal Year 2003 and the following year's supplemental request for Afghanistan. I was essentially "end-run."

It was ironic that on occasion Donald Rumsfeld would call me into his office and say, "Dov, you don't have it in you to take on OMB," while in fact I was constantly jousting with OMB. Paul Wolfowitz would then call me in right after I saw the Secretary and ask me why I was getting Rumsfeld all excited about OMB.

In effect, we had a situation where the Secretary and the Deputy essentially were working at somewhat cross-purposes. The Office of Management and Budget and the Defense Department were also working at cross-purposes. And of course the State Department and the Defense Department were working massively at cross-purposes, because—and I am only partly exaggerating for effect—the people at State thought the Defense people were trigger-happy, while the DoD people saw their counterparts at State as lacking backbone.

I happened to have worked closely with my counterparts at State and Treasury. I was the only senior person at Defense who actually received a commendation from State, as opposed to muttered insults. This was no way to manage a war. But because the focus was on policy, it was easy to slip into ideology. The more the focus is on getting things done, the more the focus is on business, the less one can afford to focus on ideology. As everyone knows, government **has no real “bottom line” as business does, except during wartime. Then there is a very real bottom line, though it is of a very different nature. Implementation is the key to a successful bottom line in wartime, a principle that policy wonks unfortunately seem to overlook.**

### Implementing Policy and Finding Partners

One of the proposals I outline in my book to ensure better implementation in DoD is to appoint two Deputy Secretaries of Defense—one for policy and one for management.

Permit me to explain. When I served the Defense Department during the Reagan Administration, we focused on twenty countries, at most, twenty-five. The Soviet Union was the **“big bad wolf.”** Then there were perhaps a half dozen countries in NATO that mattered—the British, the French, the Germans, the Italians, the Norwegians, the Turks. We would generally focus on some of the other NATO states if they were not being sufficiently cooperative, while we essentially took the rest for granted. We took Portugal for granted, for example. All too often we even took Italy for granted. But we really had to pay serious attention to only a few of our NATO allies. In addition, we paid a lot of attention to only a few other states, whether or not they were formally allied to us, for example, the Saudis, the Israelis, the Egyptians, the Japanese, the Koreans, the Chinese and the Australians. All told, perhaps two dozen states were permanently on our radar screen.

With the emergence of the War on Terror, we have had to pay serious and ongoing attention to about 190 countries because terrorists can set up shop anywhere. There was a need to **ensure that governments, no matter how big or small, were on America’s side. Suddenly, senior Defense officials have to worry about states ranging from the “stans” of Central Asia to tiny Sao Tome and Principe, countries that many Americans did not even know existed.**

What does it mean to worry about 190 countries? It means that the Secretary of Defense has to meet with an endless round of Defense Ministers because the countries are all important. And

then there are the foreign ministers of those countries, who often also want to meet with the Defense Secretary. There are the emirs and the sultans and the kings and the prime ministers. If the Secretary is a superstar like Don Rumsfeld, or for that matter Bob Gates, everybody wants to see him (or her).

It is important to remember that meetings with a senior foreign official consume considerable time and effort. Before a Secretary of Defense meets with a foreign counterpart, s/he has to spend time being briefed on the upcoming meeting. S/he is given background on the visiting official, on the policies of the official's country, on major issues with the US, on what the official might be seeking. In addition, countless hours go into preparing what is called "The Book," a thick volume, full of information that supports the briefing to the Secretary, some of which is eminently forgettable. Someone will be taking notes in the course of the meeting; there will often be a post-mortem afterwards. Every one of these official visits with the Secretary is not trivial in terms of the time and the people involved. And the Secretary's time is as limited as it is valuable.

I once participated in a meeting with a European foreign minister that underscores the point I just made. I was at the meeting because I was involved in a number of international financial negotiations for the department and because in the summer of 2002 Secretary Rumsfeld appointed me to be the civilian coordinator for Afghanistan, an unlikely job for a comptroller. The foreign minister sat down at the meeting's outset and asked Rumsfeld, "Do you know why I'm here?" "Why are you here?" the Secretary shot back. "Because I wanted to meet you" was the frank, but disconcerting, reply. Whether one of the 190 foreign, defense, and prime ministers, not to mention monarchs of various stripes, has a crucial reason for seeking a meeting with the Secretary, or simply wants to meet the Secretary, all have to be accommodated. And that can consume the Secretary's time.

White House policy meetings also consume the Secretary's time, and not all of them are scheduled in advance. The White House calls a meeting, and the Secretary adjusts his schedule accordingly, setting off a chain reaction of schedule changes: the Deputy's, those of the Under Secretaries, the Assistant Secretaries, and further on down the line. And these changes can take place several times a day.

Clearly, whether it is to cope with the crush of visiting dignitaries or the exigencies of the White House, or, for that matter, the endless round of appearances on Capitol Hill, the Secretary must have a Deputy who deals with policy matters. But the trains do have to run on time as well, and for that the Secretary must have a second deputy. To its credit, the State Department has recently created a second deputy secretary position, focused exclusively on management.

Defense must do the same, especially at a time when defense budgets are being severely cut back as part of the aftershock of the debt ceiling crisis. How defense cuts are managed over the next few years will determine the Nation's security posture for decades to come. The Department must have a deputy who can oversee the implementation of these cutbacks without being distracted by very real policy debates and the interactions, whether with the leaders of other nations or other agencies, which are part and parcel of those debates.

### The Shift from Afghanistan to Iraq

In late August 2002 I was appointed to be the Civilian Coordinator for Afghanistan. Why was the DoD Comptroller named as the Civilian Coordinator for Afghanistan? Forget the fact that I had a policy background. That was not the nature of my then-current job. The simple answer is that Afghanistan was no longer top drawer. In August and September of 2002, our focus was shifting rapidly to Iraq. Since a relatively senior person had to look after Afghanistan's non-military concerns on behalf of the Department, since I had a policy background, and since Doug Feith trusted me because I never meddled in his affairs, I suddenly became the coordinator for Afghanistan. What does that say about misplaced priorities? Shouldn't the job have gone to the Under Secretary in charge of policy?

I was one of the people who in 1997 signed the famous open letter that called for regime change in Iraq. But getting rid of Saddam didn't mean getting rid of Saddam in March of 2003. As I relate in my book, the subject came up in a discussion with Paul Wolfowitz early in 2001 when we both were consultants to the DoD, since prospective appointees serve as consultants prior to Senate confirmation. (In my case, the government being the government, I was already a consultant but had to resign my consultancy so they could make me a consultant!) We were walking down the E-Ring, which is the main ring of the Pentagon where the Secretary and Deputy Secretary's offices are located, and we got to talking about Iraq. I told Paul Wolfowitz that I had signed the same letter that he did but that we needed to be careful about breaking the place up. Wolfowitz turned to me and said, "You're too close to the Arabs." I realized then and there that we were just not on the same page on this issue. Iraq was already on Paul's mind well before 9/11. Nobody had dreamed of 9/11 in January of 2001.

In any event, when we really started gearing up for Iraq someone had to work with the Afghans to convince them that we had not totally forgotten them, but it wasn't going to be the people who were consumed by the Iraq buildup. There was too little focus on implementation in Afghanistan by a senior leadership that was engrossed in policy formulation for Iraq. So I became the coordinator for Afghanistan.

Even before my Afghan mandate was official I had been asked to find materiel support as well as funds to support Operation Enduring Freedom; once the Iraq War had begun I was asked to do the same for our efforts in Iraq. One of the lessons I learned while seeking assistance for



Operation Iraqi Freedom was that we have to be very careful about how we treat our allies. Because the attack on Iraq took place in the way it did, we had trouble with the Germans, we had trouble with the French, and we had trouble with the Canadians. As a consequence, Paul Wolfowitz decided to deny reconstruction contracts to any country that had not initially supported us.

His approach contrasted with that of Ronald Reagan toward Britain after American forces went into Grenada in 1983. Margaret Thatcher had bitterly criticized Reagan for doing the American intervention. Many American officials were indignant, since we had unstintingly supported the British during the Falklands War of the previous year. Nevertheless, Reagan did not respond by denying American contracts to the U.K. He was clever enough to recognize that the British were our close allies and to let the matter pass. He treated Thatcher's critique as a short-term spat and nothing more. It is unfortunate that we did not follow Reagan's example two decades later.

My team and I, working alongside counterparts from State, and often from Treasury as well, scoured the world for troops to join the Coalition forces in Iraq. It was like getting blood from a stone. Most of the states that we approached insisted on a U.N. mandate before they would commit forces to Iraq. In contrast, smaller countries in Eastern Europe and Central Europe were content to contribute what they could without a U.N. mandate, but their biggest problem was how to get to Iraq. We had to provide them with airlift, which we did.

One country did the reverse of calling for a U.N. mandate. They asked that we pay them at U.N. rates. I said, "Thanks, but no thanks."

As part of the search for forces, we developed a unique relationship with Spain, which contributed a brigade of its own. I and three other officials had met with Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar on a trip that he made to Washington. He told us that when he would visit towns in the American West and Southwest and would speak to Hispanic audiences about working closely with the United States, the crowds would go wild. Listening to him it occurred to me that we should recruit troops in Latin America jointly with the Spanish. This had never been done before. So I called my opposite number, the Deputy Defense Minister of Spain, and put the idea to him.

Initially, the response was totally negative. Upon further consideration, the Spanish Government agreed that Deputy Defense Minister Fernando Diez Moreno would join me in leading a Spanish-American delegation to four Central American\Caribbean states. We began in El Salvador, where we met with Amherst and Harvard-educated President Francisco Flores, who spoke perfect English. We briefed him on why we needed troops from his country. He was supportive, but told us that he needed approval from his Congress, which might be tough to obtain, since not all of them liked "Gringos."

Then it hit me. Why not have our Spanish compatriots brief the Congressmen in Spanish? Fernando Diez Moreno agreed to my suggestion; Congress voted to send the troops. We did the same thing in Honduras, and got a commitment to send troops. We tried the same thing in Dominican Republic, with the same result, and again in Nicaragua. Though the head of the Nicaraguan military was a Sandinista, Nicaragua sent troops as well. Sometime later, I visited the Central American and Dominican troops in Iraq. They constituted part of the Spanish brigade. The troops really had it good; they were served wine with their meals.

In any event, I saw the joint Spanish-American effort as—in the immortal final lines of Casablanca—the beginning of a long friendship. And then came the Madrid bombings in March of 2004 that ended our short-lived joint effort. Newly elected Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero had a totally different attitude to the war in Iraq and announced that Spain would withdraw its troops from that country. Our joint search for additional Coalition forces for Iraq came to an abrupt end. Nevertheless, I am convinced that eventually the short-lived “special relationship” between Spain and the United States will be revived, to the mutual benefit of both countries.

My basic point about all of the foregoing international relationships is that we cannot work alone in a highly demanding contingency. And if we are not going to work alone, we had better not expect our closest allies to toe our line every time, because we certainly won't toe their line every time. We need to work in unison. Taking an “I'll do it myself” approach tends not to succeed any more.

#### Jerry Bremer and the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq

Permit me a word about the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) in Iraq. I dealt directly with Ambassador Bremer, who was somebody I had known and liked for many years. I still like him, but he simply was not the right person for Iraq at that time. As the late Harvey Sicherman wrote in a wonderful piece in *The American Interest* magazine, “Jerry” Bremer had no background in the region, and did not really understand its culture.

Bremer also apparently tried to approve most things by himself, creating bottlenecks that stalled some of CPA's efforts. One major bottleneck involved a program in Iraq that seemed to be going well. It was called CERP—the Commanders' Emergency Response Program. Colonels would be given \$50,000, 60,000, \$100,000 in walking-around money that they would use to pay local contractors to fill holes in the roads, build schools, build houses and so on. The program was a classic example of how policy could be implemented successfully.

It could have been even better. I had been tracking CPA funds on a daily basis, and I had noticed there was about \$2 billion that was just not being spent, nor even being allocated. It was just sitting there every single day. I thought, “Great! Let's use that money for CERP.” I

put the idea to Paul Wolfowitz, and received an enthusiastic response. I approached OMB , and won its support. I went to my colleagues at State, who also liked the idea. Bremer did not agree, and the proposal stalled.

When I was next in Iraq, I went to see Bremer about CERP. I told him that everyone supported **the idea of using some or all of CPA's two billion for CERP. He replied that he was the** custodian of the Iraqi people and would not be dictated to by Washington. Bremer denies that he ever said any such thing, and in fairness to him I have footnoted his denial in my book. But I have also quoted from another book by one of his immediate subordinates that asserts that **Bremer pronounced, "I am the law," which of course was of a piece with what I heard him say.**

Afghanistan: What Is to Be Done?

I would like to conclude with some thoughts about what we might now do in Afghanistan. To begin with, we really cannot leave. That is not to say that we should stay with 100,000 troops. We should instead have our forces continue to train the Afghan military. I also think we need to have Special Operations Forces there. We have to convince the other side that we are in Afghanistan to stay as long as we are wanted. That is not exactly our policy today.

**General David Petraeus's success in Iraq with the "surge," and the fact that he did not achieve the same degree of success in Afghanistan, was due in no small part to the fact that no one announced during the Iraq surge that we would be leaving that country in a couple of years. Yet the President announced that we were to leave Afghanistan at the very time that he announced the surge of forces to that country. Well, if you were Hamid Karzai, whom I have met a couple of times, and you know the Americans have abandoned Afghanistan once before, and you hear the President then announce that we are getting out again, wouldn't you hedge your long-term bets?**

You would certainly do all you could to avoid a major quarrel with the Pakistanis because they will be your neighbors for a long, long time. And you certainly will be very careful about the Pashtuns because they will be living in your country for a long, long time. In fact, you happen to be a Pashtun. So you start trimming your sails. I think most of us would do the same in that situation.

Priority number one for the United States is therefore to convince everybody, our Afghan allies, the Taliban and their henchmen, Pakistan, India and all other regional actors that we may be pulling out 50,000-60,000 troops, but that we will still have enough people in Afghanistan to keep Al Qaeda out, keep the Taliban down, and keep training the Afghan security forces.

Priority number two is to make clear to Karzai that we are not going to push him under a bus. We may **not like him all the time, but we cannot allow the region to speculate about Karzai's** fate the way Middle Easterners and others have said about Mubarak: that we pushed Mubarak under the bus. We also pushed the Shah under the bus. And we pushed Musharraf under the bus. If you are Karzai, you are just waiting for the bus to show up. We have not only to convince everyone that we are staying in Afghanistan, we also have to convince everyone that we will not push Karzai under that bus.

While I was comptroller I created an office that dealt with international finances. It was disbanded when I left, something I consider to be a huge mistake. We need such an office to help negotiate basing agreements, all of which involve money, cost-sharing agreements, all of which involve money, and other international arrangements that often involve money. We need to support the Defense Department with financial expertise at the negotiating table.

We had that expertise when we helped put together a plan to reimburse the Pakistani military for its operations in support of our efforts in Afghanistan. Our plan eventually became known as the Coalition Support Fund, which Congress recently froze due in large part to a lack of oversight regarding the ultimate destination of the funds we sent to Islamabad. While I was comptroller, we would carefully check where the money was going to before we transferred funds to Islamabad. Pakistani invoices were vetted by Central Command. They were vetted by Doug Feith's policy office. **They were vetted by the office that was then called "Program Analysis" and they were vetted by my comptroller staff. The Pakistanis were not always happy** because they would get only 80 or 85 cents for each dollar, and often had to wait months for payments to be made. The vetting process and that portion of my staff that dealt with international financial matters and participated in that process, both appear to have been left by the wayside after I departed the Pentagon.

Freezing funding for the Pakistani military is no way to get the only institution in Pakistan that can keep the country together to be on our side. But we have done that before! As a very senior officer recently put it, **"There is not a single junior officer in the Pakistani Military who does not know who Larry Pressler was, and there is not a single junior officer in the American military who knows who he is."** Larry Pressler was a Senator who authored his eponymous amendment that cut off assistance to Pakistan. Pakistan turned elsewhere for assistance. If we persist with our freeze, the Pakistanis will have other states, not all of them friendly to the United States, to whom they can and will turn.

I do not have a problem cutting back on economic assistance to Pakistan; Europeans can bear that economic burden. They actually are better at nation-building than we are. The only time we successfully build a nation is if we flatten it first, as we did Japan and Germany, or if we let dictators flourish, as we did in South Korea and Taiwan. Otherwise, we're terrible at it. We

have never had a colonial office. We had a Bureau of Insular Affairs for managing the Philippines and other territories captured in the Spanish-American War, but that was a long time ago. We can certainly help the Europeans, but we should let them take the lead when it comes to revitalizing Pakistan's economy. Military support is another matter, and in that sphere we should remain engaged with Pakistan and not cut off our financial support.

# THE OBAMA DOCTRINE AND THE LESSONS OF IRAQ

*By Dominic Tierney*

May 2012

*This essay, published in E-Notes, is based on Tierney's remarks at FPRI's Manhattan Salon.*

The Obama Doctrine is like the Holy Grail. People have searched for it all over the world. The Internet is full of theories about what it looks like. Skeptics have doubted whether it even exists. The quest for the Obama Doctrine reveals a president with the wisdom to resist doctrinaire thinking. But at the same time, Obama's focus on avoiding the mistakes of Iraq could itself prove dangerously rigid.

One of the reasons that the Obama Doctrine has seemed elusive is that the concept of a “presidential doctrine” is used to mean different things. In one sense, it refers to a tradition where each president gets to issue a single binding pronouncement—amounting to one of the Ten Commandments of American foreign policy. Back in the nineteenth century, the Monroe Doctrine proclaimed: *thou shalt not colonize the Western Hemisphere*. More recently, the Truman Doctrine held: *thou shalt resist communist insurgency*. And the Bush Doctrine declared: *thou shalt be with us, not with the terrorists*.

In this sense, there is no Obama Doctrine. The president has declined to issue such a commandment and isn't in any hurry to do so. Back in 2008, Obama said he was “not going to be as doctrinaire as the Bush Doctrine, because the world is complicated.” [1]

Obama should be applauded for questioning the value of rigid doctrines. Simplistic proclamations can become a straightjacket that constrains a president's options. This is especially true when we live in a complex world with diffuse threats, as we do today. The Arab Spring, for example, with its distinct local dynamics, requires flexibility, and even inconsistency. We don't need the same strategy in Libya and in Syria.

Presidential doctrines have a poor record. The Truman Doctrine, for example, encouraged a universal definition of U.S. national interests during the Cold War that helped draw the United States into Vietnam. Other nations have copied many American innovations, but they haven't copied the presidential doctrine. Bismarck didn't have a doctrine. Neither did Churchill. As creative diplomats, these leaders wanted flexibility in their foreign policy.

The idea of a presidential doctrine can also be used in a looser way: to refer to a president's core foreign policy beliefs. After 9/11, for example, the Bush Doctrine outlined a positive transformational agenda with four major elements. First, the world was gravely threatening

because an alliance of terrorists and rogue states could inflict incalculable harm on the United States. Second, the spread of democracy—even at the point of a bayonet—would undermine terrorism and serve American interests. Third, the United States would act unilaterally when necessary. Fourth, the United States would protect its position of unchallenged primacy.

In this looser sense, the Obama Doctrine does exist. For sure, Obama has continued and even enhanced the use of several Bush-era tools such as drone strikes. But overall, the Obama Doctrine is designed less to revolutionize the international system than to correct past errors.

Obama is not, after all, a foreign policy president. His main goal upon election was to solve the financial crisis and pursue his domestic agenda. In their bestselling account of the 2008 election, *Game Change*, John Heilemann and Mark Halperin captured Obama's thinking as he courted Hillary Clinton to be secretary of state: "the economy is a much bigger mess than we'd ever imagined it would be, and I'm gonna be focused on that for the next two years. So I need someone as big as you to do this job." [2] It's striking to compare the relative caution of Obama's foreign policy agenda with the expansiveness of his domestic goals.

Obama has dialed down all aspects of the Bush Doctrine. Obama's rhetoric is less militant and crusading on the importance of democratization, less apocalyptic on the potential threats that exist, less enamored by the allure of unilateralism, and less aggressive in asserting primacy through military spending.

Look closer, and a central dynamic animating the Obama Doctrine is negative: rejecting the Iraq War. Here it's useful to take a step back and think about how leaders learn from history. It's commonplace for presidents to draw analogies with the past, for example, referring to appeasement in the 1930s, the Vietnam War, or U.S. intervention in Somalia in the 1990s. Sometimes these historical allusions are just rhetoric, designed to decorate a speech. But they can also powerfully shape how presidents think.

Interestingly, leaders don't learn from all of history. Instead, they make analogies with past failures more than successes and they usually focus on recent events. This means that the key source of learning is the last big failure. For the post-World War II generation, the major lesson of history was "don't appease." Then, after the 1960s, a new and powerful historical lesson emerged, "no more Vietnams." In the wake of 18 American combat deaths in the Battle of Mogadishu in 1993—immortalized by the movie *Black Hawk Down*—the lesson was "no more Somalias."

For Obama, the most powerful lesson of history seems to be "no more Iraqs." It's hard to find any aspect of the Obama Doctrine that is not directly influenced by the Iraq War. First, Obama has highlighted what Michael Doran calls an "extrication narrative" based on a responsible withdrawal of U.S. forces from the Middle East—especially Iraq. Second,

compared to Bush, Obama is more restrained about using force, and more concerned by the potential for unintended consequences. Third, when force is employed, Obama favors precise and surgical operations, including Special Forces raids and drone strikes. Fourth, Obama supports multilateral military operations, especially if there is a large-scale commitment. Fifth, Obama is averse to Iraq-style nation-building. The Pentagon's 2012 strategic guidance document, "Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership" stated bluntly that: "U.S. forces will no longer be sized to conduct large-scale, prolonged stability operations." [3]

The 2011 U.S. intervention in Libya exemplified these five aspects of the Obama Doctrine and represented in many ways the "anti-Iraq War." Unlike with Iraq, the Arab League and the UN Security Council supported the Libyan mission. The United States played a relatively secondary role. Nation-building by American forces was rejected out of hand.

In addition, as a sixth point, the president has sought to shift America's diplomatic and military attention away from the Middle East toward a rising China. The Pentagon's strategic guidance declared: "We will of necessity rebalance towards the Asia-Pacific region." This represents not just a change in regional focus but also in adversary: from asymmetric insurgents toward traditional great power rivals. In November 2011, Obama announced that 2,500 U.S. Marines would be deployed to Australia. Symbolically, they'll be about as far away from Iraq as possible.

There are exceptions where Obama acted in ways that echoed the Iraq War. Most importantly, the president escalated U.S. forces in Afghanistan and adopted a counter-insurgency strategy that is similar in some respects to the "surge" of American troops in Iraq. But the president is now looking to wind down the Afghanistan War and add a new chapter to the extrication narrative.

In part, the centrality of "no more Iraqs" to the Obama Doctrine reflects broader strategic and cultural forces. The cost of the Iraq War in blood and treasure (5,000 dead and \$700 billion expended), as well as pressures from the financial crisis and the rise of China, would have forced any president to absorb the lessons of Iraq. Indeed, Obama's thinking is part of a wider backlash against the Iraq War in American society, which political scientist John Mueller called the "Iraq Syndrome." [4] In November 2011, for example, approval for the war in Iraq hit an all-time low of 29 percent. [5]

At the same time, however, Obama may be particularly attuned to the lessons of Iraq. After all, the Iraq War was central to his political rise. Obama's opposition to the conflict was a major reason why he defeated Hillary Clinton in the 2008 Democratic primary. (Hillary voted to authorize the use of force in Iraq, and she refused to apologize for this vote even when she became a critic of the war.) Obama once said that he was not against all wars—just a "dumb war" like Iraq.



Is it helpful to focus so heavily on the lessons of Iraq? There is, of course, much we can learn from the Iraq War. For one thing, regime change can unleash unpredictable forces. This is a critical lesson because Americans often see war in its purest form as a moralistic crusade to topple tyrants. Another related lesson is the risk of overconfidence. The champions of the invasion promised that stabilizing Iraq would be straightforward but these hopes proved to be wide of the mark. Indeed, the failure to plan effectively for the post-war occupation was one of the avoidable catastrophes of recent U.S. foreign policy.

Iraq also reveals that when an administration is set on war, and controls the intelligence data, there can be a lack of scrutiny from the media and Congress about the strategic consequences of using force. The true debate only came later—when the American boots were already on the ground.

But the danger of the “no more Iraqs” syndrome is that it promotes exactly the kind of doctrinaire thinking that the president has promised to resist.

Someone attacked by a dog when he is young may develop a healthy wariness of dogs: once bitten, twice shy. Or he may exhibit an incapacitating life-long phobia. And the same is true with Iraq. We can either become suitably wary of the perils of regime change, or we can develop a harmful phobia against anything resembling the Iraq War.

As the saying goes, those who forget the past are doomed to repeat it. But political scientist Robert Jervis once noted that those who remember the past and learn from it sometimes make the opposite mistakes. [6] No one should forget the lessons of appeasement from the 1930s. But after World War II, American presidents overlearned these lessons and saw every threat as the second incarnation of Hitler—which must never be appeased. In 1965, President Lyndon Johnson announced that he was sending U.S. ground troops to Vietnam because “we learned from Hitler at Munich that success only feeds the appetite of aggression.” [7]

Today, we’re in danger of overlearning the lessons of Iraq. First, the grave costs in trying to stabilize Iraq and Afghanistan have produced a powerful backlash in the United States against the whole idea of nation-building. A tempting lesson from Iraq is: let’s never nation-build again. Some go even further and believe that the U.S. military shouldn’t prepare for stabilization missions. If the military can’t do it, the military won’t be asked to do it.

One problem is that Iraq is an exceptional case. If we put the Vietnam War to the side because the United States was simultaneously fighting both an insurgency (the Vietcong) and a state (North Vietnam), Iraq is the single most costly counter-insurgency or nation-building mission in American history. Most nation-building missions incur far fewer casualties. When the United States helped to stabilize Bosnia and Kosovo in the 1990s, for example, there were zero

U.S. deaths. We therefore need to consider the experience of nation-building in Iraq as part of a broader sample of cases.

The truth is that the United States is almost certain to carry out stabilization missions in the future. For all roads, it seems, lead to nation-building, from wars for regime change like World War II, Afghanistan, or Iraq, to humanitarian interventions like Somalia, to peacekeeping missions like Bosnia and Kosovo. The answer is to make sure that the U.S. military is highly trained at nation-building—and then employ this tool with great discretion.

Second, memories of the flawed intelligence on weapons of mass destruction in Iraq may be powerfully shaping how the United States assesses the state of Iran’s nuclear program today. Afraid of repeating the error of threat inflation, the U.S. intelligence community has become far more skeptical about reaching conclusions about Iran’s capabilities. The upside is that improved safeguards and a heavy dose of caution may produce a more accurate viewpoint. Paul Pillar, a former C.I.A. analyst, believes that current intelligence reports are based on the facts. But he added: “Because intelligence officials are human beings, one cannot rule out the possibility of the tendency to overcompensate for past errors.” [8] Correcting for previous threat inflation, without overcorrecting and downplaying menacing data, is a very delicate task.

A third prominent lesson of Iraq is to use force multilaterally, in order to share the burdens of war and gain legitimacy. But the NATO intervention in Libya in 2011 revealed the challenges of multilateral warfare, with too many cooks threatening to spoil the broth.

Napoleon once said, “If I must make war, I prefer it to be against a coalition.” The reason is that multilateral military campaigns can be cumbersome and ineffective, and may suffer from a lack of leadership. In Libya, many NATO allies had tight restrictions over what their militaries would do. The UK, France, the United States and Canada, carried out most of the airstrikes. Meanwhile, Spain, the Netherlands, and Turkey wouldn’t allow their aircraft to engage in ground attacks.

According to the *New York Times*, a NATO report “concluded that the allies struggled to share crucial target information, lacked specialized planners and analysts, and overly relied on the United States for reconnaissance and refueling aircraft.” [9] Former Defense Secretary Robert Gates described NATO’s incapacity in Libya (and Afghanistan) as a wake-up call, fearing “the real possibility for a dim, if not dismal future for the trans-Atlantic alliance.” [10]

Of course, Qaddafi was eventually overthrown. But these alliance problems could be dangerous in a more difficult or prolonged operation.

In summary, Obama should be credited for rejecting doctrinaire diplomacy. But the Iraq War was such a negative experience for the United States that the idea of “no more Iraqs” could become an *idée fixe* or a dangerously dogmatic position. We must learn from Iraq but we can’t let a single case blot out the sun.

Notes:

1. <http://www.npr.org/blogs/itsallpolitics/2011/03/23/134781423/complex-libya-offers-no-simple-answers-so-obama-has-none>.
2. John Heilemann and Mark Halperin, *Game Change: Obama and the Clinton, McCain and Palin, and the Race of a Lifetime* (New York: Harper Collins, 2010), p. 435.
3. [http://www.defense.gov/news/Defense\\_Strategic\\_Guidance.pdf](http://www.defense.gov/news/Defense_Strategic_Guidance.pdf)
4. <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/61196/john-mueller/the-iraq-syndrome>.
5. See [www.pollingreport.com/iraq.htm](http://www.pollingreport.com/iraq.htm) and [www.pollingreport.com/afghan.htm](http://www.pollingreport.com/afghan.htm).
6. Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976).
7. Yuen Foong Khong, *Analogies at War: Korea, Munich, Dien Bien Phu, and the Vietnam Decisions of 1965* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 179.
8. [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/01/world/middleeast/assessing-iran-but-thinking-about-iraq.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/01/world/middleeast/assessing-iran-but-thinking-about-iraq.html?_r=1).
9. <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/15/world/africa/nato-sees-flaws-in-air-campaign-against-qaddafi.html>.
10. [http://www.cbsnews.com/2100-202\\_162-20070467.html](http://www.cbsnews.com/2100-202_162-20070467.html).

## PART IX: IRREGULAR WARFARE

# COMPLEX IRREGULAR WARFARE

*By Frank G. Hoffman*

January 2006

*This E-Note is a shortened version of a paper delivered at the FPRI's conference The Future of American Military Strategy held at the Union League of Philadelphia, December 5, 2005.*

The current U.S. National Defense Strategy identifies irregular challengers as an increasingly salient problem. The ongoing Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) was expected to shape America's capacity to deal with nonlinear and irregular warfare, as well as balance the Pentagon's overdrawn checkbook. But like the last two evolutions, this QDR will probably be a dud. It is mired by major programs the Services cling to, despite their high costs and irrelevance in an era of intra-state warfare and global insurgency. OSD's leadership cannot convince the Services, Congress, or swarming army of lobbyists that we need to shift the Pentagon's budget towards more irregular threats and away from a rigid focus on conventional warfighting.

This essay outlines the emergence and implications of Complex Irregular Warfare. This mode of warfare builds upon and exploits nontraditional modes of warfare. The rise of Complex Irregular Warfare is the natural reaction to America's overwhelming military superiority. The United States has pushed future opponents to alternative means that are purposely designed and deployed to thwart Western societies. This mode of warfare exploits modern technologies and the tightly interdependencies of globalized societies and economies. A more appropriate alternative to America's current overall security architecture and its national security investment portfolio is offered to shape America's military against this threat.

The nature of tomorrow's irregular wars is not completely clear. Most likely it will evolve into "War Beyond Limits" as described by a pair of Chinese Colonels in a volume entitled "Unrestricted Warfare." It certainly will not break out as described in the Pentagon's strategy, with enemies choosing discrete options between conventional, irregular, catastrophic or disruptive strategies. We will face hybrid forms purpose built to exploit U.S. vulnerabilities. This would include states blending high-tech capabilities like anti-satellite weapons, with terrorism and cyber-warfare directed against financial targets or critical infrastructure. They will surely involve protracted and extremely lethal conflicts like the insurgency in Iraq. Such wars will be neither conventional nor low intensity. Above all, the enemy will be protean.

The posture of U.S. military forces under such a strategy requires greater nuance and more of an indirect approach than yesterday's Garrison Era. Forward presence will be costly but invaluable, shifting rather than fixed, depending on the current context. Forces will have to be

designed to maintain American interests across a broader array of missions and against more adaptive enemies. The following constitutes an outline sketch of the changes needed.

## Army

The evolution of the Division-based Army to one centered on modular Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs) is spot on. These are more self-contained, cohesive, and faster to deploy. But the Army's plan to transition the Army's 10 Divisions, (33 BCT equivalents) into 43 smaller BCTs needs reexamination. Creating the overhead costs for the new BCT cuts out real combat power, and the proposed mix of Heavy (armor), Medium, and Infantry brigades (19/6/18) is too conventionally oriented.

The "modularity" concept offers less than meets the eye. The claim that the proposal increases combat power by 30 percent measures only a 30 percent increase in the number of brigades, and not true combat power. The Army plan decreases the number of Total Force maneuver battalions from 201 to 161. More than 20,000 "trigger pullers" have been sacrificed to produce a larger number of arguably weaker units until the Future Combat System is fielded. In theory the FCS will use better computers, sensors, and networks to compensate for traditional firepower, but the program will not deliver anything until at least 2015.

To rebalance the Army for an era of Complex Irregular War, 7 heavy brigades should be traded for more medium and infantry BCTs. Adding 3 Stryker Brigades and a third infantry battalion to the 18 IBCTs provides more balance for irregular warfare. In effect, by reversing the shift to create additional brigades and their overhead, a net total of 13 maneuver battalions can be created, within the Army's current manpower totals. This would represent a significant increase in true combat power, adding "boots on the ground," and enable "full spectrum operations" and the ability to win the peace as well as the fighting phases.

## Air Force

America's airpower dominance will have to be reshaped to provide relevant strategic and operational effects. This will require the Air Force to expand its missions in space and cyberspace, as well as provide a modernized strategic strike capability. The \$200 million F-22 "Raptor" may be a technological marvel, but it's an investment that reflects a misappropriation of funds for an irregular world. Thus, it should be cancelled with its funding shifted to new long-range bombers. A bomber with a range in excess of 2,000 miles is needed. The Air Force buy for the Joint Strike Fighter can be cut in half, and those funds shifted towards investments in the Unmanned Combat Air Vehicles.

## Marines

To adapt for the 21st century, the Marines should shift its orientation from major combat operations and amphibious assaults to focus on protracted Small Wars. They should achieve more modularity by shifting away from the separate Marine Division and Aircraft Wings to standing Expeditionary Maneuver Brigades, with roughly 15,000 Marines each. Each of these would be supported by new units for Information Warfare, Special Operations, and Security Cooperation/Foreign Military Training tasks.

Considering the nature of a second Small Wars era, the Corps should terminate or sharply reduce plans for the V-22 Osprey and the Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle (EFV). The tilt-rotor Osprey is too expensive and too fragile for expeditionary employment. The Marines are making too many operational compromises in their ground systems to get around the limitations of the \$80 million V-22. The \$8 million EFV affords seamless high-speed transition from sea to deep inland objectives for forcible entry operations. It is too optimized for very rare ship-to-shore maneuver, and is not adequate for tactical maneuver of Marines during Small Wars. The resources allocated to the V-22 and EFV programs should be applied to simpler, less vulnerable, and more rugged modes of air and ground mobility.

## U.S. Navy

The recently retired Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), Admiral Vernon Clark, admitted the Navy is neither balanced nor optimal for the ongoing GWOT or against future irregular adversaries. **The capabilities found in today's 300 ship fleet makes it extremely potent for conventional fights in deep "blue water."** America's carriers can threaten four times as many deep strike aim points than a decade ago, and the strike potential of the total fleet has increased three times over. Yet, the Navy continues to add to its combat punch. The fleet has too much strike capacity, paid for at the expense of expeditionary and littoral combat assets that are more relevant against irregular maritime threats. The outgoing CNO was right, we do not have a balanced fleet.

**The Navy's Mahanian lusting for a future Trafalgar or Midway is reflected in its devotion to large, expensive ships.** This creates an unaffordable shipbuilding plan with a new \$14B aircraft carrier, the CVN-21, and Virginia-class submarines estimated at \$2.5B each, and a DD-X destroyer that costs around \$3B. **The Navy's new Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) fits the bill with innovative hull designs, modular mission packages, and superior speed (up to 50 knots).** Just as important, the LCS or Street Fighter provides the requisite capability packages to deal with irregular threats, at one-tenth the cost of a DD-X. Accordingly, in a world without a blue water opponent, this analysis leans towards the LCS as the new platform of choice. The DD-X however, is retained as the sole frame for surface combatants.

The Navy should reduce its focus on aviation-based power projection and emphasize littoral and expeditionary forces. Reducing carrier battle groups from 11 to 9, while preserving a robust amphibious force as a maneuverable form of presence and cooperation is a good way to posture U.S. forces for irregular contests. It should also increase the number of LCS and other innovative hull forms for "green water" operations against irregular forces increases the utility of the Navy.

The Navy's new shipbuilding plan for 333 ships is like the Army's plan, too conventional and completely unaffordable. The alternative outlined here is fleet is achieved, and better shaped for littoral warfare, countering anti-access threats, interdicting criminal activity and suppressing piracy and interference to sea lines of communication. It provides both the green and blue water platforms the United States needs to counteract irregular warfare at sea. Just as important, this fleet provides both persistent and periodic forms of presence, maneuvering at sea, without absorbing the political and military vulnerabilities of fixed ports and airfields.

### Special Operations

One of the most cost effective and relevant capabilities in America's arsenal is the elite "quiet professionals" of U.S. special operations forces (SOF). While the U.S. SOF community has been augmented, much more can be done. Its current optempo is too high. We currently have 80% of our assets in two countries, Iraq and Afghanistan, which former SOF veteran Mike Vickers calls "a two-country solution to a 60 country problem." To address the lack of a robust capability, we should:

- Increase the SOF by three battalions
- Increase SOF's organic intelligence and UAV assets
- Increase SOF's HUMINT resources by 33%
- Increase SOF's organic stealthy aviation assets

In a world of persistent conflict, we should consider further institutionalizing SOF as a distinct Service-the Special Operations Force (SOF). Creating a Service, to include JCS representation, would further strengthen its representation in key planning circles in Washington. Most importantly, it would give SOF ownership of the personnel policies, career patterns, promotion paths, and other incentives within its own unique culture. SOCOM's headquarters could be better used as a regional command for Africa (AFCOM).



## Domestic Security

It is patently obvious since Hurricane Katrina that many homeland security deficiencies remain. The Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) requires significant and dedicated resources. Its budget of roughly \$30B has to be increased twenty percent. It also needs to be reinforced by transferring the National Guard to DHS (less 15 Guard combat brigades). This would provide DHS with the leadership, command and control, transportation, medical and manpower assets to prepare and respond to both man-made and natural disasters.

The Coast Guard also needs to be retooled. Its aging ships and helicopters are not up to the task posed by new modes of warfare. The Integrated Deepwater System, the Coast Guard's modernization program, should be accelerated. This program will provide modern cutters, aircraft, and a refurbished helicopter fleet. The program should be funded at \$1.25B per year to accelerate its achievement in 10 vice 20 years. The Coast Guard's end strength should be increased from 38,000 to 55,000.

## Conclusion

Complex Irregular Warfare presents a mode of warfare that contests America's overwhelming conventional military capability. It attacks the hubris behind the notion we could "redefine war on our own terms." The impact of the 9/11, 3/11 and 7/7 attacks have not gone unnoticed by tomorrow's enemies. Nor has our bloody experiences in Iraq which offered a rich laboratory for their education. Because of their success, protracted irregular conflicts will not be a passing fad nor will they remain low-tech wars. Our opponents eagerly learn and adapt rapidly to more efficient modes of killing. We cannot continue to overlook our own vulnerabilities or underestimate the imaginations of our enemies. In a world of Complex Irregular Wars, the price for complacency only grows steeper.

## LESSONS FROM LEBANON: HEZBOLLAH AND HYBRID WARS

*By Frank G. Hoffman*

August 2006

*This E-Note is adapted from Colonel Hoffman's op-ed in Defense News, Aug. 14, 2006, with the gracious permission of the Editor.*

The war in southern Lebanon revealed significant weaknesses in the posture of the Israeli defense force—and it has important implications for U.S. defense policy. The amorphous Hezbollah, led by Hassan Nasrallah represents a rising threat. Mixing an organized political movement with decentralized armed cells employing adaptive tactics in ungoverned zones, Hezbollah affirms an emerging trend. Highly disciplined, well trained, distributed cells can contest modern conventional forces with an admixture of guerrilla tactics and technology in **densely packed urban centers**. Hezbollah's use of C802 anti-ship cruise missiles and volleys of rockets represents another advance into what some are calling “hybrid warfare.”

Hezbollah lost a tremendous amount of its offensive firepower and a substantial amount of its infrastructure and trained fighting force. However, Israel failed to rout the Iranian-backed force, and may have lost the strategic battle of perceptions. Certainly, the Israeli Defense Force won the tactical battles, and Hezbollah's arsenal of rockets is badly diminished. Claims about a victory for Nasrallah are a bit dubious in strictly military terms. But one thing is certain, the Israeli Defense Force's **credibility has been weakened** and Hezbollah will come out of the conflict stronger in ideological appeal.

The war also underscores shortfalls in the approach to future conflict advocated by the U.S. secretary of defense and his advisors. This is not apparent on the surface, but can be discerned in the (very few) programs actually under way to deal with the Hezbollah threat. More important, the approach advocated in the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review seriously underestimates the lethality of such irregular warfare. In theory, the Pentagon's **strategy is based upon the potential for an expanding range of future threats; including conventional, nontraditional, terrorists, and disruptive challengers**. This expands the U.S. military's mission set outside of its comfort zone and beyond its preference for fighting conventional forces, in similar uniforms and equipment, arrayed neatly in linear formations, preferably in open **terrain**. The Office of the Secretary of Defense's **policy experts realize that the U.S. military has myopically focused on battles against preferred enemies, vice campaigns versus thinking opponents, at the expense of U.S. security needs**. Hezbollah clearly demonstrates the ability of nonstate actors to study and deconstruct the vulnerabilities of Western style militaries, and devise appropriate countermeasures.

The National Defense Strategy and the 2006 QDR quite properly recognized that future challengers will avoid our overwhelming military strengths and seek alternative paths. OSD's senior civilian policy makers sought to shift the Department's capability investments to meet these challengers. So far, the effort has produced more rhetoric than substance, with the exception of increased funding for Special Operations Forces (SOF). America's "Shadow Warriors" have a valued place in today's ongoing Long War, but there are limits to the rate at which we can grow SOF and limitations as to its operational utility in conflicts as seen in Afghanistan, Lebanon, and Iraq.

Just as significant, the report underestimates the looming scale and lethality of irregular warfare as a different form of warfare intended to erode America's will and protract the costs of U.S. operations. The QDR equates irregular warfare with simply counterterrorism and the defeat of terrorist networks. This over simplifies the problem as seen in Iraq and by Hezbollah's defiant opposition. The problem is far bigger than just networks of terrorists; we face the emergence of Complex Irregular Warfare, which requires a more sophisticated response.

The Pentagon's leadership appears to still believe in "cheap hawk" techniques including those that failed in Afghanistan and the Tora Bora. Ground forces were not augmented in the QDR; in fact, their strength was cut. Instead, the QDR placed emphasis on indirect approaches and pursuing "lines of least resistance." Of course, out-thinking the enemy and exploiting vulnerabilities is the essence of great generalship. But strategy must rigorously match ends with means, and the Pentagon has continually shorted the Armed Services here. Rhetoric is grand but the funding has been thin as is the hope that such an indirect approach precludes the need to employ U.S. ground forces in a world in which anti-Americanism, ethnic divides, and Islamic clashes have produced a roiling stew of hatred and sectarian strife.

The Pentagon has yet to catch up to the front pages of the newspaper. Its multi-challenger threat perspective shifts the Department's portfolio from an over-emphasis on conventional foes, but may not present the most likely or most challenging threat. Our greatest challenge will not come from a state that selects a single approach, but from states or groups that select from the whole menu of regular and unconventional tactics and technologies. Many analysts have captured these trends, with Russian, Australian, and American authors talking about "multi-modal" and "multi-variants" forms of war. A pair of Chinese Colonels are notorious for their conception of Unrestricted Warfare—or war without limits. Other American and British analysts have noted the fusion of regular and irregular modes of combat.

John Robb, a security analyst who operates a fascinating blog called *Global Guerrillas*, espouses the rise of Open Source warfare, which aptly captures the entrepreneurial and

exploitive element of today's enemies and their ability to acquire a purpose-built competitive force from available commercial sources.

Rather than the separate and distinct threats as found in the new National Defense Strategy, future scenarios will more likely present unique combinational or hybrid threats that are specifically designed to target U.S. vulnerabilities. Conventional, irregular, and catastrophic terrorist challenges will not be distinct styles, they will all be present in some form. This could include states blending high-tech capabilities like anti-satellite weapons, with terrorism and cyber-warfare directed against financial targets. Conflicts will include hybrid organizations like Hezbollah and Hamas, employing hybrid capabilities. States will shift their conventional to irregular formations and adopt new tactics, as Iran appears to be doing. Violence will not be a monopoly of states. We will face major states capable of supporting covert and indirect means of attack, as well as Thomas Friedman's "super-empowered" fanatics capable of highly lethal attacks undercutting the sinews of global order.

Future opponents will be engage in what Marine Lieutenant General James Mattis has called "hybrid wars." The term "hybrid" captures both their organization and their means. In such conflicts, future adversaries (states, state-sponsored groups, or self-funded actors) will exploit access to encrypted command systems, man-portable air to surface missiles, and other modern lethal systems, as well as promote protracted insurgencies that employ ambushes, IEDs, and coercive assassinations. Cunning savagery, continuous improvisation and rampant organizational adaptation will mark this form of warfare.

A force prepared for this environment would have to possess a unique set of expeditionary characteristics. In particular, this force would have to be prepared for protean opponents or known adversaries employing unpredicted tactics or asymmetric technologies. Such a force would be equally prepared to thwart very adaptive enemies by posing irregular, catastrophic or disruptive operations of its own. A force prepared to address hybrid threats would have to be built upon a solid professional military foundation, but it would also place a premium on the critical cognitive skills to recognize or quickly adapt to the unknown. As such, success in future conflicts places a greater priority on rapid—if not continuous—organizational learning and adaptation.

The U.S. military is struggling to identify effective counter-measures against irregular and hybrid threats. Too much emphasis has been placed on laminating old case studies from Colonial era wars and rural Maoist insurgencies against today's more lethal threats. There is much to learn from history but it rarely repeats itself. In the Army's call for full spectrum "pentathletes," and in its cutting edge counter-insurgency doctrine and education efforts led by Lt. Gen. David Petraeus at Fort Leavenworth, one sees great progress. So too with the Marine Corps efforts to incorporate cultural intelligence and language training, as well as its

experimentation with Distributed Operations. Persistent contact with local populations to establish security and actionable intelligence, and persistent pressure against an elusive cellular adversary can only be achieved with highly trained forces prepared to “find and fix and finish” nimble guerrillas. John Boyd, an Air Force theorist and brilliant strategist, stressed that in irregular wars the predator must be more creative than the prey—and relentlessly penetrate his sanctuary to disrupt his cohesion. The IDF attempted this in Lebanon but was far from successful, which should provide a warning to the Pentagon.

Irregular wars in general, and hybrid wars in particular, reflect a style of war in which “finding and fixing” the opponent in a congested urban complex or in complex terrain is usually much more difficult than actually “finishing” him. Part of this is the nature of the terrain and the proximity of the guerrillas to non-combatants. The irregular’s focused efforts to purposely adapt to his environment like a chameleon is another complication. We can see this trend playing out in Afghanistan and in Lebanon as well. Success in hybrid wars requires small unit leaders with decision-making skills and tactical cunning to respond to the unknown—and the equipment sets to react or adapt faster than tomorrow’s foe.

Success also requires soldiers and Marines who understand the non-kinetic aspects of irregular warfare too. In Hybrid Wars, any act—violent or non-kinetic—and the ideological exploitation of its results are must be as tightly coordinated as a close air strike. The discriminate use of force is critical to ensure that its application does not impair the political and psychological dimensions of the conflict. Here the Department of Defense and the Services can and should do more.

DoD has supposedly unshackled itself from its infatuation with space based missile defenses, networks of sensors and information systems, and stand-off warfare. However, one glance at the DoD procurement budget suggests otherwise. We are still over investing in major platforms for shock and awe, and under-investing in U.S. ground forces. Building up the indigenous forces in situations like Iraq is correct. Enhancing the capabilities of under-governed states is smart and proactive. However, we cannot always count on proxies, surrogates and partners to achieve American interests. Success in today’s urban contested zones and ungoverned spaces mandates that DoD refocus its efforts and resources on the hard-edged and most relevant of American tools—its land forces—for hybrid wars.

# WHAT TO DO ABOUT PIRACY?

*By Mackubin Thomas Owens*

April 2009

*This article was originally published as an E-Note.*

Piracy, a scourge that had been stamped out in the 19th century, still flourishes in those Hobbesian areas of the world where order and the “rule of law” do not exist. The seizure of a U.S.-flagged vessel, the Maersk *Alabama*, earlier this month and the subsequent rescue of the ship’s captain by the U.S. Navy has alerted Americans to the fact that Somalia and its coast is such an area. Ever since the collapse of the Somali government in 1991, it has been a particularly stark example of what is now called a “failed state.”

According to statistics provided by the International Maritime Bureau, there were 293 incidents of piracy or armed robbery in 2008, of which 130 occurred off the coast of Somalia and in the nearby Gulf of Aden. Of these, about 50 were successful. With the exception of the United States (in the Maersk *Alabama* incident) and the French, most governments, shipping companies, and insurers have opted to pay ransoms amounting to millions of dollars to free crews and vessels.

What is to be done? One school of thought argues that we should do little or nothing because the cost of stamping out piracy again is too high. They point out that some 21,000 ships transit the Gulf of Aden every year and maintain that 50 successful pirate attacks doesn’t really constitute much of a threat, certainly not one worth expending the resources necessary to eliminate it. Ideas on how we might do so include arming crews or providing specialized armed detachments. As Derek Reveron, my Naval War College colleague, observes, the costs of providing security teams aboard merchant vessels or arming crews and training them to defend the ship probably exceed the costs of paying ransom for the rare ship taken.

In addition, Reveron argues, piracy in this part of the world isn't an American problem. He contends that piracy is an annoyance, but other than offending our sense of freedom of the seas, it doesn't for the most part affect American shipping. Thus focusing on piracy is an example of the tail wagging the strategic dog. He argues that the Europeans and Asians, who are quick to demand U.S. leadership on the one hand and criticize the United States for its actions on the other, ought to be responsible for dealing with pirates here.

But others point out that piracy is a threat to a peaceful, commercial “liberal world order.” For instance, the threat of piracy has a dampening effect on commerce, raising insurance rates

and other costs of transporting goods by sea. Such increases in the cost of commerce are not good any time, but especially during a recession.

Experience seems to indicate that a “liberal world order” does not arise spontaneously as the result of some global “invisible hand” but requires the actions of a powerful state willing and able to provide the world with the “collective goods” of economic stability and international security. Today, the United States is the only state able to provide either of these beyond its own territory, especially on the great “commons” of the sea. Thus, according to this view, the United States today must lead the other maritime commercial states in an effort to end piracy, just as Great Britain did during the 19th century.

But there are major practical problems with doing so. The first is the vast sea area, about four times the size of Texas, in which the Somali pirates operate. Patrolling an area with about 1300 nautical miles of coastline requires a huge commitment of naval resources. In fact, at any one time, the U.S. 5th Fleet has 5-10 ships in the area. That commitment is complemented by both an EU naval force and a NATO fleet. Several other countries, including China, Russia, India, Saudi Arabia, and Malaysia, have provided naval assets for anti-piracy operations in the area or will soon do so. But the area is simply too large for a continuous naval presence sufficient to deter or defeat the pirates.

Then there is the political economy of Somali piracy, which has created a network that provides intelligence, sanctuary, funding, and the “mother ships” that provide the pirates with the “reach” they need for their depredations. Additionally, the pirates have demonstrated a remarkable ability to adapt to changing circumstances, avoiding the Somali coast in order to thwart anti-piracy patrols, docking at ports in other countries to refuel and lay on supplies.

But the elimination of piracy is more a question of will than of resources *per se*. Piracy (along with the slave trade) was crushed in the 19th century when the states of Europe, rather than tolerating the practice as they had done in the 17th and 18th centuries, decided to take action. The effort was led by Great Britain, with the Royal Navy as the primary instrument. What made the actions successful was the determination of Great Britain and others to attack the *source* of piracy. The Royal Navy in particular not only captured and sank pirate ships, but also attacked pirate sanctuaries, destroying their bases.

In the 19th century, the United States also played a role in ending the piratical forays of the Barbary States of North Africa. This is one of the reasons why it has been nearly two centuries since pirates last attempted to seize a vessel flying the American flag.

After losing the protection of Great Britain as a result of America’s Declaration of Independence, American ships were preyed upon by the Barbary States—Algiers, Tunis, Morocco, and Tripoli (today’s Libya). Like the Europeans during the same period (and most

maritime states today), the Americans deemed the cost of military action too high and opted to pay “tribute” to the Barbary States. But the demands for these bribes kept growing while the seizure of U.S. ships only increased.

Congress authorized the construction of several frigates and President Thomas Jefferson dispatched them in 1801 for “policing actions” in the Mediterranean after the pasha of Tripoli declared war on the United States. During the next several years, the fledgling American Navy bombarded the harbors of Algiers, Morocco, and Tunis or threatened them with bombardment. As a result of these actions, these states agreed to cease cooperating with Tripoli. But the pasha remained defiant.

In 1804, a naval force under Captain Stephen Decatur boldly sailed into Tripoli harbor, where he set fire to the captured *USS Philadelphia*, later rescuing its crew, bombarding the fortified town, and boarding the pasha's own fleet where it lay at anchor. In April 1805, Captain William Eaton led an expedition consisting of U.S. Marines, mercenaries, and Arab rebels across many miles of desert to take Tripoli's second city, Derna, by surprise, largely ending the depredations of the Barbary pirates against U.S. ships in the Mediterranean.

To adopt such an approach to piracy today, however, would require a return to a distinction in the traditional understanding of international law, one that did not extend legal protections to individuals who do not deserve them. This distinction was first made by the Romans and subsequently incorporated into international law by way of medieval and early modern European jurisprudence, e.g. writings on the law of nations by such authors as Hugo Grotius and Emer de Vattel.

The Romans distinguished between *bellum*, war against *legitimus hostis*, a legitimate enemy, and *guerra*, war against *latrunculi*—pirates, robbers, brigands, and outlaws—“the common enemies of mankind.” The former, *bellum*, became the standard for interstate conflict, and it is here that the Geneva Conventions and other legal protections were meant to apply. They do not apply to the latter, *Guerra*—indeed, punishment for *latrunculi* traditionally has been summary execution, although the extreme punishment was not always exacted. The point is that until recently, no international code has extended legal protection to pirates.

As Grotius wrote in *Mare Librum (The Free Sea)*, “all peoples or their princes in common can punish pirates and others, who commit derelicts on the sea against the law of nations.” And more forcefully, Vattel wrote in his 1738 treatise, *The Law of Nations*, that “legitimate and formal warfare must be carefully distinguished from those illegitimate or informal wars, or rather predatory expeditions, undertaken, either without lawful authority, or without apparent cause, as likewise without the usual formalities, and solely with a view to plunder.”



Once this distinction is revived, it opens the way for the only real way to stamp out piracy, as was done in the 19th century: the use of force to wipe out the pirate lairs. Under the old understanding of international law, a sovereign state has the right to strike the territory of another if that state is not able to curtail the activities of *latrunculi*.

As John Locke understood, pirates are in a “state of nature” relative to political society. And political society has the right to defend itself against such individuals:

*“That, he who has suffered the damage has a right to demand in his own name, and he alone can remit: the damnified person has this power of appropriating to himself the goods or service of the offender, by right of self-preservation, as every man has a power to punish the crime, to prevent its being committed again, by the right he has of preserving all mankind, and doing all reasonable things he can in order to that end: and thus it is, that every man, in the state of nature, has a power to kill a murderer, both to deter others from doing the like injury, which no reparation can compensate, by the example of the punishment that attends it from everybody, and also to secure men from the attempts of a criminal, who having renounced reason, the common rule and measure God hath given to mankind, hath, by the unjust violence and slaughter he hath committed upon one, declared war against all mankind, and therefore may be destroyed as a lyon or a tyger, one of those wild savage beasts, with whom men can have no society nor security: and upon this is grounded that great law of nature, Who so sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed.”*

The United States acted in accord with this understanding in the early 19th century. In response to raids from Spanish Florida by Creeks, Seminoles, and escaped slaves, General Andrew Jackson, acting on the basis of questionable authority, invaded Florida, not only attacking and burning Seminole villages but also capturing a Spanish fort at St. Marks. He also executed two British citizens whom he accused of aiding the marauders.

Most of President James Monroe’s cabinet, especially Secretary of War John Calhoun, wanted Jackson’s head, but Secretary of State John Quincy Adams came to Jackson’s defense. He contended that the United States should not apologize for Jackson’s preemptive expedition but should insist that Spain either garrison Florida with enough forces to prevent marauders from entering the United States or “cede to the United States a province, which is in fact a derelict, open to the occupancy of every enemy, civilized or savage, of the United States, and serving no other earthly purpose than as a post of annoyance to them.” As Adams had written earlier, it was his opinion “that the marauding parties ought to be broken up immediately.” As John Gaddis has observed, Adams believed that the United States “could no more entrust [its] security to the cooperation of enfeebled neighboring states than to the restraint of agents controlled, as a result, by no state.”

Unfortunately, we have permitted legalism and moralism to twist our understanding of the “rule of law” into something that Grotius, Vattel, Locke, or the Founders would no longer recognize. For instance, European navies have been advised to avoid capturing Somali pirates since under the European Human Rights Act, any pirate taken into custody would be entitled to claim refugee status in a European state, with attendant legal rights and protections.

Americans must understand that if we really wish to root out piracy today, we must be willing to take strong steps. But these steps will require us to change the current mindset, which does not distinguish between war against legitimate enemies and war against “the common enemies of mankind,” which include not only pirates but also terrorists.

# THE NEW THREAT: TRANSNATIONAL CRIME

*By Robert Killebrew*

April 2011

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Two major shifts affecting the security of the United States in the past three decades—the collapse of the Soviet Union and the rise of transnational terrorism—went virtually unrecognized and unanticipated by U.S. policymakers, although in retrospect the signs were plain for everyone to see. Today, a third threat to American security is in plain sight, but is still unrecognized except for specialists at lower and intermediate decision-making levels. Transnational crime has grown to such proportions in today’s world that it has become a significant factor in geopolitics and a threat to the future of civil government worldwide. The danger is particularly acute in this hemisphere, in a region generally from the Canadian treeline through the U.S., Mexico and Central America, to Colombia and Venezuela, an area loosely defined as “Mesoamerica.” [1] This is a glimpse into the future fight of the 21st century—disintegrative forces of blended crime, terrorism and insurgency against governments and civic order.

Understanding the threat posed by crime requires, first, that we recognize the insidious effect that corruption has on the functions of government worldwide, particularly in our own hemisphere. This not just a resurgent Mafia, though the Mafia is part of the larger challenge. **Four factors have combined in a “perfect storm” to greatly enlarge the effect of crime in the world today.** First, the collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1990s released huge stocks of arms and useful infrastructure—airlift, shipping and industrious, entrepreneurial people—as well as relaxing border controls that had immobilized millions in the former Soviet empire. This led to mass migrations of peoples—probably greater, as a percentage of population, than the Hun migrations at the end of the Roman Empire. The result, along with high birth rates in the **emerging world, has been not only an increase in people available for criminal “armies,”** but also a huge upsurge in human trafficking, either legal or illegal, willing or unwilling. Next, the communications revolution of the past decade has put into the hands of criminals communications and data processing systems ideally suited for evading police, controlling illicit activities, navigating with pinpoint accuracy, and for moving wealth within global

financial systems. Finally, international markets in illegal drugs have brought fabulous wealth to a crooked few, and illicit funds flow freely with little regard for national borders or governments. Easily available illegal money gives criminals more fiscal “mobility” to buy gear – weapons, computers, etc.—than their sometimes-outgunned, tax-financed opponents. The size of the global black economy has been estimated to be as huge as a fifth of the global gross national product. [2] Criminal cartels, gangs and other illegal armed groups are today spending billions of dollars annually to undermine governments worldwide, either by corruption or, when that fails, by intimidation and violence. This is not exclusively a blue-collar problem; the criminal networks include not only rich thugs and brutal “soldiers,” but also white-collar businessmen, some of the world’s leading banks and financial houses and governmental ministers.

From the U.S. perspective, the impact of these developments is generally recognized in the growing violence along the U.S.’ southern border, where the Mexican drug cartels fight their own government and one another for access to the lucrative drug markets inside the Estados Unidos. Membership in the criminal networks in the “Mesoamerican” region include members of the Iranian, Bolivian, Ecuadorian and Venezuelan governments, cocaine producers in the Fuerzas Armadas de Revolucionaries de Colombia (FARC), the seven or so Mexican drug cartel networks that are increasingly transnational in scope—including 270 or so “branch offices” inside the U.S.—and the Latino gangs and others that comprise the “retail” outlets for drugs and other crimes in American cities and towns. [3] Included in the networks are the financial organizations complicit in receiving and “washing” illicit funds into legitimate channels.

These networks deal in other traffic besides drugs—kidnappings, assassinations, intimidation, extortion, theft, human trafficking of both willing and unwilling subjects and other forms of crime. Indeed, one misapprehension is that legalizing drugs can end the struggle against criminal networks. In fact, these are permanently organized criminal organizations whose incomes depend on many forms of crime, of which drugs is the major, but not the only, form. These transnational criminal organizations must be recognized as what they are—crime-based, terrorist insurgencies—and confronted directly. While their activities inside the United States have not yet risen to the level of direct threats to government – although there are some localities along the U.S.-Mexican border that have reasons to believe they do—their activities in Mexico, Guatemala and other countries in Central America and the FARC’s attempts to take over the Colombian government indicate that they are clear threats to civil governance in those areas. The involvement of the Iranian, Venezuelan, Bolivian and Ecuadorian governments in supporting the FARC and associating with the Mexican cartels adds a different geopolitical dimension. [4]

Defeating the rise of transnational crime—turning back the growth of the cartels and other criminal networks—will call for the U.S. to integrate its efforts with allied countries to a much higher degree than previously, and to develop much smoother working relationships among law enforcement and governmental agencies within the United States itself. Two key understandings are necessary at the outset of any discussion of anti-gang strategy.

First is the pernicious idea that transnational crime cannot be “defeated.” This idea, however wrong, strikes at the heart of whether civil government is even possible in the coming century, or whether the continuing rise in crime’s growth and power is simply inevitable. In fact, when civil governments marshal their forces and apply them discriminately, criminals can be defeated—they are, after all, only thugs and crooks, with no religious or political ideology to appeal to the masses, only force and fear. In the U.S., American law enforcement officers routinely break up gangs. In Colombia, the single state in the region that is turning back the criminal wave, government officials through trial and error have discovered that the key to beating criminal networks is the same as defeating guerrillas—a national government that functions under law, that can protect the rights and property of its people, with sufficiently efficient security forces and courts to defeat, apprehend, try and imprison offenders. **“Defeating” criminals is not only possible, but has been done.**

Second is the concept, mentioned above, that effective civil governance is the key to defeating criminal insurgencies. Closely associated with the actual defeat of the insurgencies—of any insurgency, in fact, regardless of its origin or motivating factor—is the rehabilitation of criminal insurgents and their reintegration into a civil society that respects human dignity, rewards enterprise and protects property.

The issue is scale. When individual criminals break the law, whether for profit or to further an ideological agenda, they are dealt with by police and criminal courts. When thousands of **criminals band together as insurgents to challenge the authority of the government, the state’s** interest is not only to contain and defeat the insurgency, but to return these thousands to useful civil life, not to spend millions in wasteful detention for long periods. [5] Thus in Colombia today, members of the FARC are detained under the Colombian justice system, and an elaborate system of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR), common in its intent to all insurgencies, is applied to most FARC members, or members of other criminal **bands, who voluntarily “come in” from the field.** [6] Clearly, defeat of large-scale transnational criminal networks requires not only some form of legal detention, but also a **system that permits criminal “soldiers” to return to civil society.**

An overall U.S. effort to defeat the criminal networks operating both outside our borders and inside our cities and towns must not only be horizontally integrated across federal government agencies, but also reflect the vertical organization of the American federal system.

Domestically, the most effective antigang agencies are local police forces with their intimate knowledge of the streets and neighborhoods in which criminal gangs and networks operate. Federal support to local law enforcement, whether indirectly through law enforcement agencies like the Drug Enforcement Agency or the Federal Bureau of Investigation, or directly in the form of grants and other fiscal aid, is key to success. Local police, who must compete for funding with fire departments, garbage pickup and schools, need help with the most updated technology, with intelligence analysis and with rapid access to data bases that cover criminal activity. On the national level, immigration reform would strip away gang members' hiding places among fellow Latinos who are now afraid to go to the police, and would remove the chance of a long-term, embittered and alienated minority class in the United States. Prison reforms that embrace rehabilitation and reintegration are vitally necessary to cut down the revolving-door "crime academies" extant in prisons in the United States. Finally, federal, state and local programs to fight gang recruitment in elementary and secondary schools are vitally needed: one Los Angeles police officer recently observed that "We can convince people to stop smoking and wear seat belts—why can't we convince kids than joining gangs is a bad thing to do?" [7]

U.S. strategy outside our borders must be focused on assisting our allies in the region to rebuild their own security and investigative agencies and to reinforce justice systems that look after the security concerns of all citizens. Challenged states must reestablish legitimate, capable national governance systems under the rule of law, and they must reintegrate lower-level criminals into societies that support economic and social justice. More specifically, U.S. policy should work with and through governments in the region, beginning primarily with two specific states—Mexico and Colombia—that have the resources to mobilize against the cartels. [8] In Mexico's case, no nation in the Western hemisphere is more important to the defense of the United States. Mexico's determination and courage in fighting its own domestic insurgency, and its wiliness to stay the course, are vital to the wellbeing of the United States. In the case of Colombia, decades of U.S. aid and the Colombians' own determination to take their country back has seen not only success inside Colombia, but a willingness by the Colombian government to provide aid in its turn to fellow regional states; at this writing, Colombia is providing training and other kinds of assistance to Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Costa Rica and Panama. The United States' proper course of action should be to increase assistance to those two vital countries as building-blocks to a regional strategy, engage directly and bilaterally when appropriate throughout the region, but focus on behind-the-scenes support to initiatives of the beleaguered states themselves, working to strengthen local justice systems through training and indirect support, rather than trying to override local governments for short-term gain. U.S. assistance to Colombia from about 2000 to the present should be the model for successful intervention in crime wars.

Transnational criminal networks attacks on the foundations of legitimate government are ongoing, not only in Mexico, but throughout the region, including the United States. The growth of such criminal activity, aided by technology and operating globally, may well be the most potent danger to civil society since the retreat of Soviet-style communism in the 1990s. Criminal terrorists and insurgents can be beaten; their great vulnerability is that they offer no vision to ordinary citizens, and thus have little appeal other than violence. Governments that serve their people, secure their rights and apply justice are the long and short-term answers to criminal attack. The United States, which led the fight against global communism in the last half of the 20th century, must now lead the fight against global and regional crime.

Notes:

1. “Mesoamerica” is actually an archeological term that denotes the extent of Mayan civilization, but will be used here in an expanded sense to include, to the North, the United States and Canada, and to the South, Colombia and Venezuela.
2. Although more attention is being paid to the expansion of crime, the seminal work remains *Illicit: How Smugglers, Traffickers and Copycats are Hijacking the Global Economy*, by Moises Naim (New York: Random House, 2005.)
3. Latino street gangs are a new, growing and deadly element in American crime. There are many sources of information on these groups, but a good place to start is CRS Report to Congress; the MS-13 and 18th Street Gangs; Emerging Transnational Gang Threats. Congressional Research Service, Washington, D.C., January 2008.
4. These associations are detailed further in *Crime Wars: Gangs, Cartels and U.S. National Security*, Jennifer Bernal and Robert Killebrew, Center for a New American Security, Washington, D.C., pp 22–34.
5. The Colombian experience, at least, argues strongly that insurgents should not be granted a status as combatants under the Geneva Conventions, but should instead be regarded as criminals by the host country, to the extent that whatever military or police forces are required, captured insurgents should be given legal rights common to all citizens under the justice system in force at that place.
6. A roughly similar process is underway in Afghanistan and has been applied in Iraq, where reintegration efforts in U.S.-run prisons reduced recidivism to single-digit numbers. This is a difficult, frustrating and sometimes unsuccessful process that is nevertheless essential to defeating widespread criminal activities, regardless of motivation.
7. **Author’s notes.**

8. See, for example, the Center for a New American Security policy brief, “Security Through Partnership; Fighting Transnational Cartels in the Western Hemisphere,” Center for a New American Security, Washington, D.C. March 2011.



## SOFT WAR = SMART WAR? THINK AGAIN

*By Anna Simons*

April 2012

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We Americans do not yet live in a post-American world. We have not yet become the Greeks to someone else's Rome. We retain unprecedented hard power. We have more lethal conventional force at our disposal than any country in history. One of the things that should thus increasingly puzzle taxpayers is why Washington would want to retool our military to minimize these capabilities, and instead build capabilities that won't advantage us at all.

What this article describes are several asymmetries and a handful of truisms that defense intellectuals ignore at our peril. [1] By advocating more soft power and smarter counterinsurgency—by, essentially, pushing to outfit us for soft war—those who would reorient our military are making two sets of errors. First, they misread 21st century realities. Second, they misread human nature.

Numerous terms have been used to describe the likely contours of future war. According to most who write about the subject, adversaries know they will never be able to best us using conventional force, so the presumption is they will continue to resort to terrorism, and other unconventional, asymmetric means. In addition to more urban warfare, the future will be characterized by war among the people, or fourth generation war, hybrid war, irregular war, and insurgency. Adversaries will try to trip us up in ways that favor them, baiting us directly when they can, ensnaring us indirectly when they can't. Washington had thus better worry both about non-state actors—the scourge of our times—as well as near-peer competitors who, if they are smart, will seek to do us harm by using non-state proxies (much as Iran has done to Israel via Hezbollah), by taking us on in realms we can't yet and may never be able to effectively control—like cyberspace—and/or by outflanking us economically, maybe even ideologically, and certainly politically in the court of global public opinion.

This last has become ever more important, no doubt thanks to the state of 21st century technology, which makes image management *seem* easier and more controllable than ever before. How else explain why President Obama works so hard to retain his iconic stature abroad, or why George W. Bush remains so excoriated? Granted, many would (and did) consider President Bush's policies too unilateral—an assessment which, while he was President, did Bush irreparable domestic damage. But the fact that his international image

could then so profoundly affect his domestic political standing only further reinforces the broader point: perceptions aren't just iterative, but the iterations have all sorts of effects, too.

Something else the castigation of George W. Bush reveals is the extent to which our attitudes have shifted. Arguably, we Americans have always wanted others to think well of us—it has become standard for American politicians to invoke the U.S. as the shining city on the hill. But in the past this amounted to little more than rhetorical posturing. In contrast, today we don't just *need* others' good opinion of us to feel better about ourselves, but link this directly to our security. Ergo our renewed concern about public diplomacy, though one irony with the attention we now pay to what we call 'strategic communication' and information operations is that those who believe in the Evil Eye (and practice witchcraft and sorcery in other parts of the world) do so for very similar reasons; they, too, believe misfortune comes from people thinking ill of them. One difference between them and us, however, is that they believe the less they do to incite others' resentment the less likely it is others will wish them harm.

The idea that perceptions shape reality is hardly new. According to some linguists, whatever language we grow up learning literally prefigures the world we see. Or, as anthropologists might put it, our patterns of thought are never wholly our own—not when each of us is subject to socialization from the moment we are conceived. One logical conclusion that could be drawn from this is that we're all so deeply imprinted that not even years' worth of psychoanalysis can purge us of who we are. However, this turns out to be an insufficiently enlightened point of view as far as most Americans are concerned. Our American assumption tends to be that whatever has been learned can, over time and with the right techniques, be unlearned. This, after all, is what education aims to do. If parents won't, don't, or can't teach their children the sky is blue, it becomes society's responsibility to do so.

Not uncoincidentally, the idea that people can be remade also motivates missionaries. But not just missionaries. Advertisers, too. No one has outperformed American marketers. Thus, the elision is easy: if marketers without PhDs can successfully manipulate today's sophisticated global consumers, then surely smart diplomats and defense intellectuals (along with members of the military) can do the same when it comes to influencing foreign populations and countering our adversaries' narratives.

However, such thinking ignores at least three realities. First, in a true cross-cultural contest, no one is interested in buying what the other side is selling. Not only do both sides operate by different rules and use different methods, but when people see themselves as irreconcilably different the fuel tends to be renewable—and continues to be so, so long as neither side manages to inflict a permanently game-changing defeat on the other.

One implication is that no matter how important it then may be to compare across technical capabilities—e.g., *they've* got suicide terrorists and IEDs, *we've* got air superiority and

Predators—**focusing on what’s *not* comparable** can be even more critical. Take, for instance, finesse vs. force. Although we in the West appear to have reached the point where we finally favor influence, soft power, and finesse over the threat of game-changing force as *the* means by which to shape the international environment to our advantage, we have arrived at this ultra-civilized point just as finesse is decreasingly likely to achieve the results we seek.

This is due to Reality #2: namely, it is not just we who have grown increasingly sophisticated about others’ sensibilities, but **other people have grown increasingly sophisticated and sensible** about us. More to the point, they have also grown more suspicious, particularly when they think we might be manipulating them. At the same time, people elsewhere *have* become increasingly good at manipulating us, especially when we’re on their turf.

This is hugely significant. It means that, without any fanfare—or acknowledgment, actually—we have reached an inflection point, which may also turn out to be a break point in history. **Not only are we Westerners no longer likely to fight people who aren’t already aware of what shoes and automatic weapons are**—which undermines one asymmetry that almost always did advantage us in the not-so-distant past—but among those running circles around Washington and the West today are not other Westerners. Instead, they are leaders like Kim Jong-un and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, or Omar al-Bashir and Hamid Karzai. Or, consider who has been said to be one of the greatest maneuver warfare strategists of the 20th century (a century that included Patton and Rommel): Paul Kagame, the current and potentially lifelong President of Rwanda, a likelihood which itself speaks volumes about his political and not just military acumen. [2]

The breadth and depth of political skill, and the longevity of rule across what many in defense policy circles mistakenly refer to as the ‘arc of instability,’ underscores yet another irony: not only will *they* always be better at *their* politics than we are, but lots of non-Westerners, both heads of state and local warlords, will continue to be able to out-finesse us by being extremely good at hoisting us on our own buzz terms like ‘governance,’ ‘stakeholders,’ and ‘sovereignty’ to shrewd effect. But also, they—unlike us—remain willing to apply force.

If, meanwhile, we were to ask why so many leaders are still so willing to use force against their own populations, the cheap answer would be they must do so because they think violence works. The more discomfiting response is that it often does.

This brings us to Reality #3. For those who believe it can secure them an edge, decisive armed force will always trump finesse, and will always tempt those who don’t expect to be deterred by greater counter-force.

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Although some might claim there are hundreds of human universals, there are really only a handful of things all individuals need to consciously do to survive (so long as **they don't have** to worry about their immediate physical safety): eat, drink, sleep, and excrete. The variety with which we humans perform all four of these functions is astounding. One other universal is that we share the same life cycle. All humans, if we live long enough, begin as infants, pass through childhood, enter adolescence, and become adults. What different societies do with or at each of these stages varies considerably and helps account for our cultural differences. But, to cut to the chase: there is an immutable biological foundation on which societies construct all sorts of institutions, around which they devise all sorts of rules, and from which they then extract meaning and purpose. We tend to fixate on these differences and the patterns they yield. Unfortunately, in trying to figure out why those people 'over there' do 'those' things, we too often ignore the constants we should likewise be able to count on. Among those constants is the potential efficacy of overwhelming force.

Here is a thought question: Is there anything humans express similarly the world over, and recognize and agree is the same, even if they speak mutually unintelligible languages and live **totally different kinds of lives**? I've posed this question for 13 years in classes. Significantly, thus far (still) the only answer that seems to hold across the board is the ability to withstand physical pain. Physical bravery or physical courage seems universally recognizable and universally valued. There is nothing else we humans express—not happiness, sadness, grief, anger, you name it—that can't be misread for something else, which suggests two things. First, there must be something about the infliction of pain that transcends culture. And second, virtually all of the emotions and values we think we share, we might *or* we might not share, the implication being that when we presume we know what others mean, we might be right—or, we might be wrong to our considerable detriment.

In light of this, tying our long-term security to the notion that we can out-manipulate and out-spin others in the realm of cross-cultural persuasion, and thus wage some sort of soft, smart war seems especially imprudent.

For instance, it should be telling that militaries the world over do many of the same things with their young men, many of the same things they have done for centuries, and things that still work—from basic training to drill. When I ask my students, who are all mid-career military officers, who they would have more in common with during working hours: a major in China's People's Liberation Army or a hippie in Santa Cruz, California, their response is almost always another major in any army.

Sociologically this stands to reason since militaries are not only designed to tangle with other militaries, **but are built to do so out of the same raw materials; it shouldn't be surprising that they mold members to similar standards and instill similar values.** Nor can it be considered

coincidental that among the values militaries instill (or stoke) is a keen interest in what members of other militaries are up to. In fact, a good argument can be made that armed forces aren't worth anything if they do not continually canvas each other for best practices and then adopt those that seem most effective, regardless of the source.

Yet, as easy as it is for one military to adopt another's tactics, techniques, and procedures, look at how few deep-seated *structural* changes militaries make to themselves (or allow civilian authorities to make to them). Napoleon could be brought back to life, and while certain weapons platforms might initially stump him, the organizational principles that undergird any of today's militaries would feel eerily familiar. Some defense analysts might point to this and say "exactly—that is *exactly* what is wrong with our current force structure and our antiquated military design."

But surely one reason so little changes rests with why we have armed force in the first place: there is a security dilemma in the international arena; what country could afford to reconfigure its military radically differently from its likeliest foes?[3] Another explanation points to bureaucracy. Every military is larded with bureaucracy (often competing bureaucracies) as well as entrenched self-interests. Or, alternatively, there is the nature of hierarchy. By definition, hierarchies tend to be conservative since, when the old are in charge, the young are bound to chafe, and the old then resist.

I don't want to suggest that any of the usual explanations for deep-seated resistance to change are wrong. But, when it comes to the unchanging nature of war, there is something else that rarely surfaces in discussions, and especially not in discussions about future war, and that is the fact that there is a default hierarchy wired into males, one that is particularly pronounced among armed males. You see it in every Service in the U.S military. There are the combat arms and then combat support; fighter pilots and everyone else. You see it even in those who claim to have always been oriented toward counterinsurgency—namely, elements of our Special Operations Forces (SOF).

Counterinsurgency is worth singling out because it is at the vanguard of how soft war proponents want to see us fight: nimbly, with finesse, a small footprint, and population-oriented sensitivity. One chronic problem with counterinsurgency, however, is that its press has always outstripped anyone's ability to make it work as advertised. Or, as historian Douglas Porch so notably points out for the French in North Africa (and the French in North Africa serve as *the* model for those who extol counterinsurgency's virtues today), 'hearts and minds' was a phrase adopted to purposely gull domestic French audiences. It was intended to mask what really needed to be done in Morocco and Algeria, which is far more accurately captured by the phrase 'stomachs and minds.' [4]

‘Stomachs and minds’ summarizes Sherman’s march through Georgia. It also explains why Sherman’s generals decimated the buffalo in their efforts to bring Plains Indian tribes to heel. It is a phrase OSS founder William Donovan used in passing to describe what the U.S. needed to do if it ever hoped to win in Vietnam. [5] Indeed, in most descriptive accounts about counterinsurgency campaigns, soldiers who start off wanting to help rather than hurt civilians, wind up willing to destroy crops and burn villages; Vietnam is hardly the first setting in which those tasked with COIN found themselves tempted to use more rather than less violence in order to force peasants, villagers, and other innocents to choose sides. [6]

Not only does COIN’s own history reflect the need for a stunning amount of brutality, but the fact that in campaign after campaign commanders have found themselves desperate to be able to apply decisive force reveals what every generation ends up (re)discovering the hard way: soft approaches don’t impel enough people to change their ways fast enough.

This then raises a second uncomfortable truism that is missing from today’s future war debates. Put most bluntly, men who join combat units—to include Special Operations Forces—do not do so because they dislike the idea of wielding force. Just the opposite. If they didn’t want to at least try their hand at violence, they’d choose another profession or another line of military duty. This is clearly not a politically correct thing to admit. So, no one typically does. Worse, because this doesn’t square with what soft war proponents would prefer these forces should want to do, it never comes up in any of the discussions about who should be at the pointy end of the spear when it comes to waging population-centric warfare. Nor does anyone point to another uncomfortable set of facts that SOF’s own makeup reveals.

Within SOF there are three tiers or types of force. At the bottom of what turns out to be a clear status pyramid sit Military Information Support Operations (nee Psychological Operations) and Civil Affairs units. [7] These are units directly responsible for shaping the messages and humanitarian activities that everyone hopes will win hearts and minds. In a soft war world, these are the units that *should* represent soft war’s cutting edge. Yet, as purveyors of what we might call unarmed finesse, PsyOp and Civil Affairs units routinely receive the least amount of attention and the fewest resources, and have always received less attention and fewer resources than those in the tier directly above them.

Those in this next tier are Green Berets, or Army Special Forces soldiers. They deal in what we might call armed finesse. Their mission has long been to work by, with, and through indigenous forces. By living and fighting side by side with local forces, they both literally and figuratively help (re)build security. Yet, elite as they are, not even Green Berets belong in the very top tier of SOF units. That tier belongs instead to door-kicking direct action units. These are units that deal in decisive, often covert unilateral force. Think: Delta Force or Seal Team

Six. Not only do today's versions of those units rate whatever resources they need, which often means they get the best stuff, but they also like to think they attract the best men.

In other words, despite what COIN doctrine itself suggests the status pyramid should look like, which in a population-centric warfare world would mean Psychological Operations and Civil Affairs units have the most prestige and shooter-killer teams the least, the status pyramid remains the same as it has always been. Nor is anyone seriously talking about inverting it. Though even if they did, and even if such a change *could* be successfully legislated, it is not clear it could ever be made to stick. That is because, as the long sweep of human history suggests, being able to inflict visibly decisive pain still beats any and everything else. [8]

One sees this otherwise unspeakable truth wherever one looks. Even in today's kinder, gentler society we Americans are hopelessly attracted to lethality. Witness the entertainment industry. Ask women. The appeal of being able to be deadly is both noble and base. War literature—from the *Illiad* to Sebastian Junger's *War*—both reflects and helps perpetuate this. Boil all the evidence down, and here is what emerges: the value some people will always be able to find in decisive armed force is that it can be decisive. Thus the hierarchy among males. Thus the need for militaries. Meanwhile, modern militaries haven't just evolved to use force decisively, but are effective (or not) as a consequence.

While this is a truth that some Americans might prefer to wish away, it is also a truth that *has* proved easy to brush aside thanks, in part, to the fact that our military has always been under tight civilian control. Ironically, the only time U.S. military units operate somewhat freely is *in extremis* abroad. In many regards, this makes the U.S. exceptionally fortunate; wars occur 'over there,' while here at home we have all sorts of protections in place to not only mitigate conflict, but help keep our military apolitical, our system coup-resistant, and the vast majority of our most physically aggressive members of society either behind bars or otherwise pre-occupied. [9] If the armed forces rarely publicly voice politically inconvenient truths. [9]

Arguably, this is among the reasons soft war, information operations, strategic communication, and influence campaigns have gained such traction over the past decade. [10] Never mind that, somehow, numerous smart people in Washington and academe appear to believe that those whom we most need to influence abroad will hear that we plan to co-opt them via soft power and will then happily let us do so. Being charitable, those who think this might work have either not spent enough time among non-Westerners and/or have spent too much time among people skilled at telling them the kinds of things they most want to hear.

Of course, too, smart people (to include policy makers) are almost always drawn to clever thinking, even though, when push comes to shove, cleverness rarely suffices. We see this with terrorism. Whenever terrorists apply decisive (shockingly decisive) force, we almost always

end up having to respond with yet *more* decisive force. If we were honest, we'd admit we do so for at least two reasons: first, we haven't yet figured out what works better. And second, at a visceral level we must suspect nothing *will* work better. Nor will it—not given the realities of human nature, and the fact we are (to borrow from Lionel Tiger and Robin Fox) imperial animals, wired to want to dominate, some more aggressively and decisively than others. [11]

So, where does this leave us? Say we were to at least grudgingly acknowledge these realities. What *should* we want policy makers to do? Should we want them to continue to attempt to remake the military, which is what today's soft power approach to warfare essentially requires? Something that, in turn, demands we somehow remake males. Or, should we instead ask policy makers to rethink how to make the most prudent possible use of the givens we've got? [12]

It is certainly clear what any adversaries would prefer we do—they would no more want us to use decisive force than we seem prepared to want to use it. In the grandest irony of all, this should simply underscore who already has an edge in out-finessing whom.

Notes:

1. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the October 2011 Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces, and draws on arguments also made in “Asymmetries, Anthropology, and War,” *Pointer* (Journal of the Singapore Armed Forces) 37 (2), 2011.
2. Romeo Dallaire, *Shake Hands with the Devil* (Random House Canada, 2003), p. 188.
3. Which doesn't mean militaries don't add new capabilities or components. But, thus far, few of these have led to military-wide restructuring or radically new, never-before-seen organizational designs.
4. Douglas Porch, *The Conquest of Morocco* (Knopf, 1983); *The Conquest of the Sahara* (Fromm International, 1986).
5. Richard Dunlop, *Donovan, America's Master Spy* (Rand McNally, 1982), p. 505.
6. For proof, read Brian Linn's *The Philippine War 1899-1902* (University Press of Kansas, 2000) about “the most successful counterinsurgency campaign in U.S. history” (p. 328). For a counterargument one might consider advisory missions undertaken by individuals like Edward Lansdale, who was adept at finesse in the Philippines, but in Vietnam couldn't persuade enough (or the right) others of his vision. What Lansdale couldn't accomplish there speaks volumes about how hard it is for Americans to be able to act with real advisory finesse abroad (or in Washington for that matter). An



entirely different article could be written about what real advisory finesse of the Lansdalian type *could* potentially accomplish under the right conditions. One final note: even in current Village Stability Operations in Afghanistan, Special Forces teams have found themselves having to engage in forceful, coercive blackmail to ‘get’ otherwise recalcitrant locals to side with them (author’s observations, January 2011).

7. This status pyramid was first described in Anna Simons and David Tucker, “U.S. Special Operations Forces and the War on Terrorism,” *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 14 (1), 2003.
8. Yes, smart *and* strong may well seem to be the ideal combination—which is one reason all recent ‘ism’s (fascism, communism, Nazism) were fomented by intellectuals *with* thugs. Nonetheless to triumph, every ‘ism’ required a leader at the helm capable of considerable ruthlessness (e.g. Hitler, Stalin, Mao, etc.).
9. Via professional or extreme sports, for instance.
10. Another potential reason: an overly large officer corps for which lots of staff jobs have to be found. It is easy for staffs to come up with all sorts of smart, but not necessarily practicable ideas.
11. *The Imperial Animal* is the name of their now-classic book, first published in 1971.
12. To be clear, the argument here is not pro-war. It is, instead, anti the chimera of finesse as a salvation *from* war. For a foreign policy that would deploy the U.S. military far less frequently, see *The Sovereignty Solution*.

## PART X: TERRORISM

# THE HISTORY AND FUTURE OF SUICIDE TERRORISM

*By Michael Horowitz*

August 2008

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There are two important questions to consider in studying suicide terrorism. First, why has suicide terrorism emerged in the last few decades as such a potent weapon? Second, why is it that some terrorist groups use suicide terrorism, while others have not? Suicide terrorism has emerged as a very powerful weapon over the last several years, with 9/11, car bombings in Iraq, in the West Bank, in Sri Lanka and elsewhere. It has captivated the public. As a tactic, it has infiltrated our national consciousness. However, we need to stop viewing suicide terrorism as something exotic and incomprehensible, which only leads to confusion. It makes more sense to think of it as an example of a military innovation for non-state actors and to apply some of the analytical tools we use to analyze the spread, or diffusion, of nuclear weapons, carrier warfare, or blitzkrieg warfare.

Many argue that suicide terrorism is more effective than other kinds of terrorist attacks. In *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism* (2005), Robert Pape of the University of Chicago found that, excluding 9/11, from 1980-2003, suicide attacks represented 3 percent of all terrorist incidents, but 48 percent of the casualties. This means that the bang for the buck in the average suicide attack is extraordinarily high. However, we tend to view suicide terrorism as something simple for those who do it—you strap a bomb on and blow yourself up, or you get in a car that has a bomb and run it into something. In fact, there is a complicated organizational challenge associated with adopting suicide terrorism. It is not a costless move for terrorist organizations. Some of the difficulties involved in adopting suicide terrorism explain why, while some groups have chosen to use it, others have not. In particular, suicide terrorism proved exceptionally difficult to adopt for the most successful terrorist groups of the pre-suicide bombing era. Like successful businesses that fail to adapt in a changing strategic environment because they were too stuck in their old routines and ways of operating, the PLO, the Provisional IRA, and the Basque ETA all failed to adopt in the short to medium term. Only the PLO's Fatah, of the three, ever adopted it, and that was almost two decades after the introduction of the innovation.

In addition to looking at the organizational decision to use suicide bombing, we should also focus on suicide terrorism as an example of the diffusion of innovations. One brief story with repercussions for U.S. national security illustrates the interconnections among groups and the importance of understanding how they operate. In the early 1990s, when Osama bin Laden was shifting Al Qaeda into more of a direct operational role, he needed to figure out the best way to attack an American embassy. He looked at different plans and ideas other groups had had. He recalled Hezbollah's bombing of the U.S. Marines barracks in 1983 and Hezbollah's other successes with suicide bombings. So, despite profound theological differences between the Salafist/jihadist views of Al Qaeda and the Shiite Hezbollah, Bin Laden sent his operatives to go talk to the Hezbollah leadership. They came back with what were effectively operational blueprints for how to plan and execute suicide attacks, especially against hard targets like embassies. The East African embassy attacks resulted in part from this example of diffusion. In the 1980s, Hezbollah was really thought of as an innovator, the first mover. This story shows the spread of the idea to the primary adopter of suicide terrorism in the 1990s and beyond—Al Qaeda. The subsequent history of suicide terrorism is best thought about as a diffusion process.

### Defining Suicide Terrorism

It is very difficult to define terrorism in general. Even parts of the U.S. government cannot agree on a definition. Suicide terrorism is easier to understand conceptually. It is a violent attack designed to kill others where the death of the attacker is a necessary part of the action. This is different from a suicide mission. In WWII movies, you have the suicide mission where the men get together and are sent on a mission that they know they will not survive. The means of destruction in this case, the way they perpetrate the attack, is the machinegun they fire, the grenade they throw, or the bomb they drop. They know they are probably going to die, but it is not their deaths that cause the mission to succeed. They are simply going to die accomplishing their mission. That is very different than a suicide attack where it is through your death that your mission, the killing of others or destruction of a target, is accomplished. The mission is accomplished through your death.

We all know about imperial Japan's use of kamikaze tactics at the end of WWII. In mid-1944, in response to growing Japanese losses and especially the large decline in the quality of Japanese pilots, the Japanese turned to using the planes as weapons themselves, flying them directly into U.S. ships. Historians disagree about when exactly this debuted, but most would cite Leyte Gulf in October 1944 as the first place we saw it en masse. By the end of the war, the Japanese had sunk between about 34 and 70 ships and killed thousands of Allied soldiers through this tactic. Most military historians do not consider Japan's efforts a success, one reason being that to accomplish this, the Japanese sacrificed almost 5,000 pilots. But this is a clear example of the use of suicide attacks.

## The Modern Era

Suicide bombings disappeared until the early 1980s, the beginning of the suicide terrorism era in Lebanon. In 1982, radical elements of the Shiite resistance in southern Lebanon joined together in the Bekka Valley to form Hezbollah. The group was aided by Iranian Revolutionary Guards, who may have brought with them Iranian human wave tactics from the Iran-Iraq war. While not the first suicide attack in the period—that occurred in 1981—the first known attack by Hezbollah was on November 11, 1982, against an Israeli military installation. The success of that attack prompted Hezbollah to continue, which led to the worst terrorist attack overseas against U.S. assets, the Marine barracks bombing that killed over 200 Americans.

The way Hezbollah thought about the attacks highlights basic questions about motivations that analysts continue to discuss today. According to Martin Kramer, when Hezbollah considered whether to continue suicide bombings, the decision was in part a theological decision driven by practical concerns. Clerics justified suicide bombings for two reasons: the genuine devotion of the martyr and the practical utility of the attack. As the spiritual leader of Hezbollah, Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah, said, “the Muslims believe that you struggle by transforming yourself into a living bomb like you struggle with a gun in your hand. There is no difference between dying with a gun in your hand or exploding yourself.” (Kramer 1991) However, note the practical element of the justification as well. Later in the 1980s, when Hezbollah’s leaders decided the attacks were not achieving the same successes as before, either tactically or strategically, it made sense to stop. This shows, at an early point, the interconnectedness between religious and practical arguments for suicide bombing.

The perceived success of the tactic and the notoriety Hezbollah had gained led to the spread of suicide bombing. The Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka became a non-Muslim and non-Middle Eastern early adopter in 1987. The Tamil Tigers came out of a resistance movement in Sri Lanka that sought independence and autonomy. In 1987 they began a suicide campaign that spanned multiple decades. Before 9/11 and the ensuing spate of suicide bombings in places like Afghanistan and Iraq, the Tamil Tigers were actually the most prolific adopter of suicide terrorism in the world, credited with over 150 attacks; 191 is one estimate.

The LTTE is very interesting from a targeting perspective. We tend to conceptualize suicide terrorism as being about attacking civilians. While Hezbollah did not necessarily focus on attacking civilians, groups like Hamas or Al Qaeda (and affiliates) have caused the association of suicide bombings with civilian targeting. Alternatively, the LTTE, especially at the outset, conceptualized suicide attacks very differently. They used suicide bombing more as a substitute for military operations they could not complete with conventional means, making

them asymmetric but closer to the traditional military sense of the term. The Tamils thought about suicide bombing more for hard targets and assassinations, not necessarily targeting civilians, though civilians often died in their attacks.

### Theories for Rise of Suicide Terrorism

Suicide campaigns increased steadily from the early 1980s to 2001 and beyond. The number of suicide attacks worldwide between 2001 and 2005 shows a more than secular increase in the number of attacks. Why? One explanation revolves around individual-level factors—individuals who had grievances against a government or group who sought to demonstrate their anger or fury through a suicide attack. Other explanations postulated psychological weaknesses or proclivity to suicide. Few scholars still accept those sorts of arguments. Research by Alan Krueger and others seems to suggest there is not a strong link between economic weakness and suicide terrorism, either at the national or individual level. Two recent theories, however, have met with some acceptance.

One, by Robert Pape, has to do with occupation. He finds that when groups are or feel occupied, they are much more likely to resort to a tactic like suicide terrorism. Pape's argument has intuitive appeal given the actions of a group like Hamas, which feels occupied so arguably turned to suicide terrorism to make a splash, get media attention, and try to demonstrate to their occupier, Israel, the true cost of their actions. However, one problem with Pape's argument is that many occupied groups have not used suicide terrorism. Consider the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA) in Northern Ireland, a violent terrorist group whose members had no problem dying for the cause but which never adopted suicide terrorism (on a few occasions they kidnapped families and forced the husband to drive a bomb loaded with explosives towards a checkpoint, but those are coercive rather than voluntary). So, while occupation can explain some cases of suicide bombing, it cannot explain non-adoption by prominent groups.

Another explanation, by Mia Bloom of the University of Georgia, has to do with what she calls "outbidding." Bloom held in *Dying to Kill: The Allure of Suicide Terror* (2005) that if you want to understand suicide terrorism, you have to understand the competition for control that often happens in insurgency situations. Multiple groups committed to a cause try to demonstrate their commitment to the broader public, and there is no better way to do that than to show the absolute willingness of group members to give up their lives for the cause. If the public is supportive, the competition proves which groups "legitimately" represents the interests of its people. This drives the escalation to suicide terrorism. While parts of the outbidding explanation are persuasive, one problem is that while it actually does a reasonable job of explaining some of the behavior in the Palestinian territories, it does not explain suicide campaigns where there are not elite competitions for control. For example, in the Tamil case,

the struggle for influence among Tamil resistance groups was over before the Tamil Tigers' suicide terror campaign began.

A third theory has to do with the combination of religion and globalization. In *The Globalization of Martyrdom: Al Qaeda, Salafi Jihad, and the Diffusion of Suicide Attacks* (Johns Hopkins University Press, forthcoming November 2008), Assaf Moghadam of the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point argues that the increase in suicide terrorism over time is really driven by the Salafists/jihadists. So most important is understanding Al Qaeda and the globalization of terrorism. Moghadam's work is part of an interesting new wave of suicide terrorism research.

Explaining suicide terrorism requires viewing it as a military innovation and better understanding the organizational requirements needed for its adoption. The Provisional IRA was a non-adopter of suicide terrorism despite being one of the most successful terrorist groups of the 1970s and 1980s. It had complicated training manuals and almost a mini-state-like bureaucracy. It focused first and foremost on the survival of their volunteers, the term they used for group members. How do you square that with something like suicide terrorism? Organizational theorists like James Q. Wilson have identified something called "critical task focus," which refers to the way an organization defines its goals and objectives. The Provisional IRA's focus on the survival of its volunteers as part of its goal led to the conflation of its critical task focus with the way it conducted its operations, confusing means and ends. Since the group built into its reason for existing the survival of its members, how do you tell them to go kill themselves?

Another way to think about organizational requirements has to do with experimentation and organizational age. Economist Mancur Olson argues that as countries and bureaucracies age, they develop more and more sub-layers and veto points. People gain prestige, privilege, and get promoted in an organization on the basis of their talent, somewhat like in a business. As specialization captures an organization and it develops more extensive bureaucratic layering, it becomes much harder for the organization to change what it is doing if it turns out that it should do something different. So, what do you do with a terror group that has built up expertise in something like remote bombing or attacking military bases? For those groups, adoption of suicide terrorism is very difficult because they are embedded in the ways they have always done business.

Cost generally does not govern whether or not a group is going to adopt suicide terrorism. A suicide terrorism attack costs only about \$150, so money is not the obstacle. The organizational element is the real obstacle. Therefore, which groups should be more likely to adopt and which should be more likely to pass on suicide bombing even if that tactic, on the surface, could help them achieve their goals? It should be easier for the younger groups that do

not have embedded ways of doing business to adopt suicide terrorism and harder for those more established groups.

How do we test this idea? I studied over 800 terrorist groups from 1968 onwards, the universe of terrorist groups during that period according to the Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism, looking at whether or not they used suicide terrorism. Using statistical analysis to control for numerous factors, such as whether a group was affiliated with Al Qaeda, whether it was involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict, or whether the group felt it was occupied, I assessed whether the probability that a group will adopt suicide terrorism relates to how long the group has existed, or its organizational age. The results strongly support the idea that there is something about organizational dynamics that helps drive the suicide bombing process. For groups that are religiously affiliated, who claim the reason they exist has something to do with their religious beliefs, the probability of adoption is very high at the beginning. Groups that have more established ways of doing business are significantly less likely to adopt.

A good example of these dynamics comes from Fatah, Yasser Arafat's organization in the Palestinian Territories. They eventually adopted suicide terrorism in 2000 in the Second Intifada, years after Hamas and Islamic Jihad. One explanation for their delay is the way prestige was locked up with particular people and within the organization. You received credit and priority in the organization based on hijackings, kidnappings, and remote attacks. It made suicide terrorism something very complicated for them to deal with organizationally. It took them a long time to figure out how to adopt it.

For non-religiously motivated groups, how long they exist does not have as strong an affect on the probability of adopting suicide terrorism. Looking at all known suicide terrorism groups from 1983 to 2006, we see many direct connections (for instance, we know that Hamas and Hezbollah talked about suicide terrorism after the expulsion of Hamas members from Israel to southern Lebanon in 1992) and also indirect connections (the Tamil Tigers/LTTE invented the suicide vest, which Middle Eastern groups like Hamas and others then modeled). Adding together the direct and indirect links among groups, almost every suicide terrorism adopter is linked together in one way or another. In the 1980s, Hezbollah was the hub from which suicide tactics spread to the Palestinians and other groups. In the 1990s and beyond, Al Qaeda became the hub. When analysts used to study suicide terrorism, they tended to ask, "Why did Hamas do it? Why did the Taliban do it?" Rather than focusing just on individual groups, the phenomenon is best understood as part of a diffusion process.

Over the last few years, Afghanistan and Iraq have become the centers of suicide bombing activity. From March 2003 to February 2006, between former Baathist ideologues and Zarqawi and Al Qaeda in Iraq, there were more than 400 suicide attacks against U.S.-led forces, Iraqi civilians, and other groups. In the past year, the Anbar awakening and the surge



have been fairly successful at decreasing the number of all types of attacks against U.S. troops, but the number of suicide attacks has stayed the same or even increased. The month-by-month numbers show spikes in relation to important events such as Fallujah, so it is possible that this divergence, where total attacks decline but suicide attacks stay the same, shows that the decision to engage in suicide attacks is different than the decision to engage in attacks in general or that suicide attacks are simply much harder to stop.

Suicide terrorism in general has become more normalized over the last decade. Bloom recently presented a paper at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association on this point. She has noticed a normalization and regularization in the past couple of years. While it began as something unique, suicide terrorism is now a regular tool of sectarian violence. It is therefore unlikely that we will see suicide bombing go away. We see this both in Afghanistan and with the increasing use of female suicide bombers.

## Conclusion

Despite the historical roots of suicide terrorism with the kamikazes in WWII, the tactic never really caught on with states. Nation-states generally have more efficient ways to produce the same amount of force than suicide attacks. The era of suicide terrorism really began in Lebanon in the early 1980s. We can best make sense of it if we think of it as a military innovation, not as something exotic, and if we study it from a diffusion perspective. Instead of wondering why a group is doing this grotesque thing, we need to wonder why they are but others are not. The evidence suggests the importance of organizational factors in driving the adoption or non-adoption of suicide terrorism, as well as the existence of a diffusion process where the innovation spreads among groups. Therefore, we should study suicide terrorism in a serious fashion, looking at the big picture and the key variables that explain behavior, rather than in an emotional manner.

# HOW WE MISUNDERSTAND TERRORISM

*By Adam Garfinkle*

September 2008

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Auguste Comte once wrote that “intellectual confusion is at the bottom of every historical crisis.” Insofar as the United States finds itself in a foreign policy crisis, intellectual confusion is indeed the cause, and in this case it is three-part.

First, two post-Cold War U.S. administrations have misconstrued the implications of a unipolar world. Both the Clinton and Bush administrations thought American influence would grow as a result of the U.S. victory in the Cold War, but the opposite has been the case.

Second, there is a widespread American misunderstanding of both the origin and scope of Islamist apocalyptic terrorism. That threat is enabled to some degree by poverty and social injustice, by grievances over Western policies, and by the authoritarian political cultures of the Muslim world. But it is not caused by any of these. Its underlying cause is the inability of most Muslim—and especially Arab—societies to effectively adapt to the growing pressures of modernization.

Third, there is the dominant cadence of our own political culture: Enlightenment universalism. Our belief in the universal applicability of what is actually a parochial point of view obscures awareness of the true source of Islamic terrorism.

The error of assuming greater U.S. influence when there is actually less has compounded the misunderstanding of terrorism, producing counterproductive policies that have reduced U.S. influence still further. Only by escaping our confusion can we end the crisis.

## Neither Poverty Nor Tyranny

When confronted with a novel challenge, the human mind reasons by analogy. We then become prone to reading the world in ways that reaffirm the choice we have made. Since 9/11 most Americans (and many others) have tended to reason by analogy about Islamist terrorism in two basic tropes, both idealist in nature—one quintessentially liberal and one quintessentially conservative.

The liberal idealist approach is to alleviate the poverty and social injustice thought to be the “root cause” of terrorist violence and address the supposedly legitimate grievances of those who hate us in the Middle East. Those who took the poverty approach to deal with terrorism were simply recapitulating the Cold War catechism: Communism festers when impoverished people lack hope in the future.

But the idea that stimulating rapid economic growth in Middle Eastern countries would reduce the generation of terrorism is ahistorical. Rapid economic growth invariably brings disruptive social change in its wake. It does not “settle down” societies; at base, change—even progress—that comes too rapidly to be assimilated *is* the problem.

As to grievances, there is a general tendency to exaggerate the role of Israeli-Palestinian and Israeli-Arab conflicts in the broader Middle Eastern context. The idea that an Israeli-Palestinian peace arrangement, could one be produced, would reduce the terrorist threat to the United States and the West is delusional. Indeed, Western brokerage of a settlement that leaves a Jewish State of Israel in any borders whatsoever would increase, not reduce, terrorism. In fact, the depredations of Arab autocracies are better accelerators of the frustrations that can congeal into terrorist violence than anything that goes on in Israel/Palestine. Moreover, just as rapid economic growth would produce more angst and, hence, more terror recruits, making Israel the scapegoat to appease radical Muslim demands would only help radicals in their internal social battle against more moderate and traditional forces. Those who think that alleviating poverty in the Middle East and “addressing the grievances” of our enemies are the best policies to deal with Islamist terror would only substitute different counterproductive policies for current ones.

That said, the counterproductive potential of current policies is undeniable. The “democracy deficit” trope of conservative idealism analogizes the oppression of Soviet and East European societies to that of societies abused by authoritarian governments in the Muslim and especially the Arab worlds. President Bush’s frequent assertion that freedom is a gift of God universally applicable to all people is the clearest example of this highly moralized view of international politics. Combined with a simplified version of democratic peace theory, this view encompasses a secular messianist vision of permanent world peace. Its core theory is that terrorists arise because other avenues of political participation are closed off. These violent malcontents blame the West, the United States in particular, for the stultified environments in which they suffer.

Liberal templates for understanding Islamist terrorism have fallen behind the “democracy deficit” analogue in recent years. Not only did the poverty approach fly in the face of obvious facts about 9/11 and other terrorists, but conservative idealists have controlled the bully pulpit

and employed talented White House speechwriters to make use of it. However, the democracy deficit template remains a misleading analogue for understanding Islamist terrorism.

Social injustice and acute income stratification have been features of authoritarian Arab and Muslim societies for the entire modern independence era, and even before that. Yet the sort of terrorism we experienced on 9/11 is new; Al Qaeda was founded only in 1988. How can conditions that have existed for decades and even centuries explain this recent phenomenon?

The Bush administration's policies have produced predictably counterproductive outcomes in Gaza, for example, and in Iraq, where a premature election strengthened a proclivity for sectarian voting. This has reinforced the downward spiral where decision-makers continue to see the world through the prism of their chosen analogue.

### The Real Problem

The root causes of apocalyptic terrorism have to do with a condition of blocked or distorted modernization. A monumental, culture-cracking collision between the Muslim world and “Westernization” has been ongoing for a century and more, gaining momentum in the last two post-Cold War decades with the accelerating Western cultural penetration of the Muslim world. Mostly traditional societies are being increasingly stressed by external pressures even as changes well up within from greater urbanization, literacy and social mobility. To various degrees, these societies are being pluralized, and this is placing enormous strains on established ways of thinking and behaving.

Pluralization—a process in which people become aware that there are multiple ways to interpret and act in society—tends to divide traditional societies into three basic groups: a **minority that wants “in”** to the modern world; nativists who fear for the identity of their society and use religious symbols to mobilize people against the alien intrusion; and those seeking a living tradition to negotiate entry into modernity on culturally acceptable non-Western terms. Western historians of the many precedential movements sometimes refer to them as chiliastic, or end-of-the-world, millenarian religious risings. Such movements are generally quietist and inward-turned. Sometimes, however, they turn their energies outward into mad and often suicidal violence against real or perceived enemies. At such times, believers usually think that violence is part of a divine plan to hasten the end of the world, bring the messiah, re-establish the Caliphate, or whatever the theology requires. Such movements generally arise at times of disruptive change, anything that renders normal frameworks of social understanding obsolete.

One reason many Middle Eastern societies have problems dealing with the stresses induced by rapid change: the endogamous family structure. Endogamy generally means marrying close to one's family, but in the Middle East, it defines a tribe. It refers to the strong preference for

marriage within extended family defined by strongly patriarchal lineages, and it even provides a **survival rationale for men having multiple wives**. These “segmentary lineages” shift about with cousin marriage to give rise to a kind of internal balance of power among subunits.

In most Arab societies, everyone knows where they fit into the overall structure. Loyalty is to extended family, individual agency is weak, and the entire structure tends to resist outside influence. Religion is organic to birth and reinforces the authority of the patriarchal system. However, it is the social structure, which predated Islam, that comes first. Assaults to tribe and family, real or imagined, are therefore assaults against religion, and vice versa.

Endogamous social organization helps explain why these societies tend to split into factions when they come under pressure. The Taliban, which most Westerners consider motivated by religion, are as much driven by concern over their tribal structures’ viability. Westerners divide politics from religion and religion from social structure by second nature, but these divisions have no parallel in the Middle East.

Why do they hate us?’ They don’t. Sometimes we disgust them because of what they consider our materialist, impatient and promiscuous ways. But mainly they fear us. They are afraid that our cultural-economic intrusion into their social space will destroy their corporate identity and undo the authority structures that for thousands of years have protected them against the vicissitudes of history. They interpret the threat through the prism of religion and use religious pride to mobilize resistance. But at base this has nothing to do with theology as Westerners understand the term.

In times of stress, joining chiliastic movements is not the only mode of coping. Many react instead by becoming more conventionally religious. This is why rapid upward mobility is frequently associated in the Muslim world with greater piety, not less. This is the opposite of what postwar Western modernization theory expected, an error caused by a spasm of unreflective universalism that led its practitioners to superimpose Western templates on non-Western societies.

Alas, we Americans don’t often bother distinguishing between pious traditionalists and politicized nativists, and we generally don’t realize how scary we are to traditional peoples. Now, when large enough chunks of any society generate outward-turned chiliastic movements, all hell is liable to break loose. But the real targets are always close to home, with the exception of those, e.g. Mohammad Atta, living in Europe, uncomfortably suspended between the old and the new. We in the West are primarily props in their arguments.

The motivation for 9/11 came from nativists attacking the “far enemy” to undermine those of their countrymen who opposed both their views and approaches to cleansing their societies. The presence of U.S. forces on Saudi soil provided a handy pretext, the end of the Cold War

made the United States the only obvious target of such an attack, and modern transportation and communication technologies provided the means. The hope, clearly expressed by Al Qaeda principals, was that U.S. forces would be lured subsequently into Afghanistan and smashed as were Soviet forces before them.

If there is any good news in this account of our terrorism problem, it is that episodes of chiliastic violence invariably burn themselves out. They require lots of un- or under-employed young men to constitute the armies of protest, but young men grow up fast. Above all, suicidal violence tends to create self-limiting organizations. So even if salafi groups were better organized than most are, the threat they pose is limited by the time horizon. To call this conflict a “long war” is therefore exactly wrong. It will only become a “long war” if we act in such a way as to make it one.

The bad news is that a policy of exporting democracy will not curb chiliastic violence. Indeed, by threatening and weakening the very Arab and Muslim state elites which we need to contain these movements, we make the prospects of that violence worse. By implying that we are politically and morally superior to them, again, we help nativists in their internal struggles with those who are our natural allies. It is, therefore, good that the Bush administration’s “forward strategy for freedom” in the Middle East has been quieted, because further efforts to promote it would have been disastrous.

### What We Must Do

If we substitute a blocked-modernization understanding of the problem for a democracy-deficit understanding, what would change in U.S. foreign policy?

First, we would rethink efforts to promote economic growth and political liberalization in the Muslim world. It is fine to want to alleviate poverty and spread liberal institutions and democratic government to others. But it is hard for outsiders to do liberal good works in places where the institutional and attitudinal precursors—a pervasive sense of individual agency and the idea of equality before the law; belief in an intrinsic source of moral-political authority; and the existence of a concept of a loyal opposition—are largely absent.

More than that, introducing democratic forms prematurely can be counterproductive to the eventual success of liberal institutions. For example, elections, interjected into heterogeneous societies not used to individual political agency, can drive societies back toward their tribal roots. The January 2008 election in Kenya seems a case in point.

Therefore, we should cease the rhetorical policy of promoting democracy in the Muslim world. Traditional Muslims do not accept distinctions between theology and ideology. In this they are consonant with the flow of history, in which political theology has always been a fact

of life. More than that, “democracy” carries baggage in the Muslim world, much of it negative. To some, democracy vaguely means government that is not arbitrary and corrupt. To many pious Muslims, however, it is vaguely associated with apostasy. In his anti-election campaign in Iraq in 2005, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi suggested that voting was tantamount to participation in a Christian religious ritual.

Moreover, when U.S. officials claim that our way of doing politics is sanctioned by God, they are saying in effect that traditional Muslim concepts of government are not sanctioned by God. This turns the conflict into a more explicitly religious dispute that helps radical nativists for whom the religious pride of ordinary people is a natural ally.

U.S. policy, therefore, requires a low-profile, long-term emphasis on assisting gradual, sustainable economic reform, and on promoting locally acceptable forms of the rule of law. This is in our interest not just because alleviating poverty and promoting justice are good in and of themselves, or because such programs will stamp out terrorism in the short run (they won’t), but because we need stronger states in the region to contain religious energies and movements.

For the time being, then, first, we should prefer “soft” authoritarian rule to weak and warlike young democracies. We should save our high-profile rhetoric and any muscular action for states actively supporting or abetting terrorist violence.

Second, we should stigmatize terrorism, using indigenous sources of authority to do so, but without linking that effort to democratization. We should patiently pursue a state-strengthening liberalization agenda even as we separately pursue a terrorism-stigmatization campaign.

Third is public diplomacy. We have botched this in the Middle East over the past six years. We have been worried about our image, but the problem is the failure of most Muslim societies to audibly condemn terrorism—a practice that is abhorrent to any reasonable reading of Islam. We should have been quietly networking traditional Muslim intellectuals and clerics to help them articulate that terrorism is morally wrong. We have done some of this, mainly at the Defense Department, but the State Department has wasted years perseverating on the wrong question. In an absentminded fit of post-Cold War economizing, Congress destroyed the institution arguably best suited for the purpose—the United States Information Agency—and tried unsuccessfully to stuff its remains into the Department of State. One solution would be to re-establish USIA, but a new public-private partnership of some kind is probably the better way to go.

Fourth, we should try not to lose, or appear to lose, the war in Iraq. Being seen to lose in Iraq is the single most effective way to help Al Qaeda recruit an ample next generation of terrorists.

Not losing is the best way to deflate its conviction that God is on its side. Nor should we lose the struggle in Afghanistan, which may turn out to be harder than Iraq. And we should not underestimate the huge symbolic value of finding and killing bin-Laden and al-Zawahiri. But this does not mean we should stay in Iraq in full military strength until we have helped midwife a liberal democracy. Rather, we should seek an Iraq that holds together in a federal state, and that is neither so strong as to threaten its neighbors nor so weak as to entice violence from them.

It is safe and wise to set minimalist goals for U.S. Iraq policy for two reasons. First, Iraqi society will probably not collapse into acute sectarian violence if the U.S. reduces its military profile there; and the regional consequences of negative events in Iraq would not in any event be as significant as many fear. National leaderships in that part of the world are generally **cautious and conservative, aware of their own weakness and the neighborhood's dangers.** More important, if we keep assuming that small shifts in what we do will have outsized regional consequences, we will become in perpetuity a nation of caring and hence incompetent imperialists. An “indispensable nation” attitude of this sort for the Middle East is a formula for protracted disaster.

Fifth, if we understand that rapid social change occasionally produces violent chiliastic movements, we should expect to see more such movements over the next several decades. We should also expect that if the U.S. remains the number-one power, we will remain the prime target for such groups. This leads to an important observation: When we think of a nexus between WMD and terrorism we typically think of nuclear weapons. But nuclear weapons are hard to make, hide, transfer and use compared to bioweapons. By all means we should continue efforts to contain the nuclear weapons proliferation threat. But if the future WMD of choice will likely be bio-weapons, we need to devise ways to better control the uses of bioscience. We need an international regime to both monitor and set standards for bioscience research, and we probably should criminalize certain behaviors.

Lastly, we must take the full measure of what the crisis of modernity in the Arab/Muslim world means for the Western approach to the region. As a rule, we should make ourselves scarce, and when we cannot, try to join with our European, Asian and Middle Eastern allies.

Of course, whether the U.S. government keeps its profile high or low, it cannot tell NGOs what to do or tell U.S.-based corporations where to buy, sell and invest. The products of American entertainment culture, especially action films, do a lot of damage. They convey images of American society wildly at variance with reality. We need to reconsider what, if anything, we can do about this as a matter of public policy.



We need also to adjust homeland security policy. Terrorism sets a trap that requires the object of its attention to conspire in its own undoing. We have fallen into that trap. What should we do now to reverse the errors we have made?

First, the U.S. government must stop injecting fear into the American population. It should eliminate Orwellian security announcements in our subway systems and avoid messages telling us vaguely to “report suspicious activities.” Such policies tell all potential terrorists that it doesn’t take much to rattle us. They constitute not deterrents but incentives to strike us.

Second, we need to stop treating so many visitors to our country as potential terrorists. We are alienating our best potential friends abroad with bureaucratized paranoia. We must also stop violating international legal norms regarding prisoners and detainees. It is true that the Geneva Conventions no longer speak adequately to the times, but we should err on the side of compliance wherever a question of interpretation arises.

Third, we should examine whether the FBI can ever mount a serious effort at domestic counterterrorism. We may need a new organization, comparable to Britain’s MI5, for this purpose.

Fourth, we must get a handle on immigration. The U.S. Customs and Immigration Service cannot possibly be expected to find the “signal” of terrorism crossing our borders when the “noise” of 12-14 million illegal immigrants eats up its resources. Congress needs to fix the problem, but it won’t unless the next White House forces the issue.

Fifth, we need to re-conceive the structures of both the Directorate for National Intelligence and the Homeland Security Department. Both of these “reforms” are over-centralized, over-layered bureaucratic monstrosities that probably make us less safe. We need, instead, to become a more resilient nation, both to deal with contemporary salafi terrorism and with the more daunting prospects of post-salafi bioterror in the future.

Sixth, as we need to say less from our bully pulpits about the danger of terrorism, we need quietly to do more about it. We need to reduce the number of lawyers in the Defense Department who keep telling U.S. Special Forces units what they cannot do, for example, with Predator missiles.

Seventh and finally, if the problem of apocalyptic terrorism is a “war of ideas,” then as with any war someone needs to be in charge of it. The U.S. government needs unity of command, but today no one is in charge. No one has even undertaken the elementary exercise of working up a functional budget to show what resources we are spending across half a dozen Executive departments and agencies. The preparation of such a functional budget would make a worthy exercise for a transition team between an election and an inauguration.

# DISRUPTING THE FOREIGN FIGHTER FLOW

By Michael P. Noonan

October 2009

*This essay draws upon the “Disrupting the Foreign Fighter Flow” panel discussion from the FPRI’s “The Foreign Fighter Problem” conference held at the National Press Club in Washington, DC, on July 14-15, 2009.*

On the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan U.S. Soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines have confronted third-party national combatants. Widely known as “foreign fighters” these individuals have gained deadly skills, combat experience, and global connections that can be exported and exploited to devastating effect in other locations. Whether one believes that the extremism of Al Qaeda and affiliated movements is an existential threat to the United States or that such threats pose more of a nuisance to international security, the fact is that foreign fighters motivated by such causes do pose risks not only to U.S. service members deployed to combat zones, but also to geostrategically important governments in North Africa, the Middle East, and South and Southeast Asia, not to mention potential targets in the United States, Europe, and other locations. Therefore, disrupting the flow of foreign fighters is an important undertaking. But how does one do so?

## The Foreign Fighter Phenomenon at a Glance

The foreign fighter phenomenon has grown since the call to jihad against the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. Following that conflict foreign fighters migrated to such places as the Balkans and Chechnya, Dagestan, and Tajikistan in the former Soviet Union. But this is not a new problem. Foreign fighter belligerents on both “sides of the hill” were a marked feature of the 1930’s Spanish Civil War. Furthermore, the incidence of such fighters has been fairly widespread throughout history. As David Malet, a recognized expert on the phenomenon, has noted, “Among the 331 civil conflicts [occurring between] 1815 [and] 2005, at least 67 of them featured the presence of foreign fighters.” [1]

Still, the emergence of Al Qaeda directly from the experience of 1980s Afghanistan, portends ominous possibilities from this latest cohort of global foreign fighters. According to Clint Watts, a former Army officer and FBI special agent with expertise on foreign fighters, “[l]eft unchecked, the Second Foreign Fighter Glut will produce the next generation of terrorist organizations and attacks much as the First Foreign Fighter Glut fueled [Al Qaeda].” [2] While they might not be as numerous as those that participated in the 1980s jihad, which was in many cases sanctioned by regional governments, “they have learned skills that far outweigh those of the original Jihadis. Their understanding and employment of urban tactics, weaponry

and advanced technology make them far more lethal than their predecessors.” [3] In Iraq, for instance, while such fighters have accounted for less than 5 percent of insurgents they were estimated at producing over 90 percent of high lethality attacks. [4]

But what—if anything—is new about this latest wave of foreign fighter activity? Malet suggests that, “[i]n modern history, transnational insurgencies have been based on various ties of ethno-nationalism and ideology, but contemporary foreign fighters in conflicts around the globe now all share the same religious identity.” [5] This does not mean that Islam itself is the cause of this phenomenon, rather “the cause appears to be partly the result of a period effect, the coincidence of increasingly globalized communications and transportation technology with a particular identity community whose members have transnational identities that are currently particularly salient.” [6] Perceived threats to such identity communities, thus, foster and propel defensive mobilization by motivated individuals. To Malet, such defensive mobilization is the key to recruitment across cases, ideologies, and religious networks. [7]

### Disrupting the Foreign Fighter Flow

Clint Watts asserts that the foreign fighter pipeline has three phases: (1) source country/flashpoint, (2) safe havens and the transit network, and (3) target locations. [8] Others suggest that a fourth phase, outflow destinations, is important as well. [9] Each of these phases is examined below. It is important to remember that at least since the original anti-Soviet jihad in Afghanistan there has been a large chicken-and-egg effect and overlap between and amongst these phases. The complexity of the issue, however, suggests that one cannot deal singly with any particular phase. A combined approach working within and across phases appears to be the only realistic way to minimize the problem in the short- to mid-term. Full eradication of the phenomenon seems unrealistic.

*Source Country/Flashpoint.* Foreign fighters like most other combatants must be recruited. While self-selection and varying degrees of intrinsic motivation are important, extrinsic factors also appear to be crucial. Watts argues that “social-familial-religious” networks fuel such recruitment with the assistance and influence of former foreign fighters. [10] Defensive mobilization recruitment themes similar to former President George W. Bush’s statement to “fight them over there so we don’t have to fight them here” are employed. [11] Autocatalytic recruitment from, say, the internet appears to be rare. Cities and neighborhood kinship and cultural nodes are important. For instance, according to the “Sinjar files”—the most complete personnel files on the foreign fighter inflow into Iraq captured near that northwestern Iraqi city—the top five foreign fighter producing cities for that cohort of individuals per capita were: Darnah, Libya; Mecca, Saudi Arabia; Jawf, Saudi Arabia; Dayr al zur, Syria; and Sanaa, Yemen, respectively. [12]

In the long run this phase is probably the most important one but suppressing the flashpoints is also fraught with difficulties. As the terrorism scholar Jarrett Brachman has noted,

*...over the last eight years al Qaeda has undergone a metamorphosis. It has transformed from a global terrorist group into a global terrorist movement, one with its own founding fathers, well-codified doctrine, substantial and accessible corpus of literature, and deep bench of young, bright, and ambitious commanders. Attacks still matter to them, but in an era of increased counter-terrorism pressure, al Qaeda is beginning to realize that it is a lot more effective at being a movement, an ideology, even a worldview. It is starting to see that terrorism is only one of many tools in its arsenal and that changing minds matters more than changing policies. [13]*

Pivoting popular narratives away from Al Qaeda and other extremists, as the past decade-plus has shown, however, is difficult. As the late French counterinsurgency practitioner and theorist David Galula said, “[t]he insurgent, having no responsibility, is free to use every trick; if necessary, he can lie, cheat, exaggerate. He is not obliged to prove; he is judged by what he promises, not by what he does. Consequently, propaganda is a powerful weapon for him.” [14] Within the U.S. government bureaucratic layers and seams inhibit the effective coordination to counter such narratives even before getting to work by, with, and through the numerous governments whose populations are subject to the messages of the global movement. And even when working with these governments, the embassy teams tend to focus more on bilateral relations rather than on stemming the outflow of extremist foreign fighters who operate sometimes thousands of miles away from their day-to-day realities. [15] It is important to increase the flow of counter-narratives to messages of Muslim oppression or victimization, but this is often difficult given the reasons stated above. Additionally, while host nation governments today do a much better job of tracking individuals who have left to become foreign fighters, those fighters who do not achieve martyrdom pose risks to their home countries and to others abroad.

*Safe Havens and the Transit Network.* Unless such fighters go to fight in a neighboring country, much depends on getting foreign fighters to training sites and to target destinations intact and undetected. (Unfortunately, thanks to the internet, training sanctuaries for some skills may not be as critical as they once were.) In addition, it is necessary to establish logistical hubs not only for the transit and training of fighters, but also locations to conduct a wide array of financial activities—ranging from the illicit (such as product piracy, smuggling, money laundering, etc.) to the more commonplace (access to banking, legitimate businesses, etc.)—which are necessary to fund current and future operations.

Prior to September 11, 2001 national governments (e.g., the Sudan and Afghanistan) were more willing to offer sanctuary to groups such as Al Qaeda, but the U.S. reaction to the attacks on New York and Washington, DC, in Afghanistan and other locations has diminished

such flagrant support. Today, such groups seek out the freedom of action offered by geopolitical “dead spaces,” [16] like areas of the Sahel, Somalia, and Yemen. [17] Punitive strikes may be taken against targets using such dead space—see for example the alleged U.S. raid near Deir Ezzor, Syria in 2008, [18] the Israeli Air Force attack on a supply convoy in Sudan in spring 2009,[19] and the recent U.S. strike to kill Saleh ali Saleh Nabhan in Somalia[20]—but political sensitivities and the resources required to undertake these special missions can impose costs. In addition, some experts claim that international cooperation in the fight on terrorists is enhanced when the United States respects sovereignty. [21]

Such cooperation may be necessary in order to restrict the free movement of foreign fighters. For instance, law enforcement and intelligence organizations need to collaborate more in sharing information. They should also keep tabs on those with whom such individuals are interacting. In addition, such cooperation might assist in making it more expensive or more difficult for obvious foreign fighter candidates to travel to known transshipment points. But such cooperation will not always be possible. A local government, if one exists, may be unable or unwilling to cooperate. Under such circumstances, punitive or information gathering raids, as described earlier, may be undertaken or more creative approaches such as “false flag” operations to complicate the smuggling of fighters into and out of target areas. These operations might also demoralize and dissuade such fighters from following through with going to, or recruiting others to, fight. [22]

*Target Locations.* By the time foreign fighters arrive at target locations they are mainly the problem of the host nation security forces or are, like in Afghanistan and Iraq, also the problem of external armed forces. As stated earlier, such fighters, particularly in Iraq and Afghanistan, have deployed tactics, techniques, and procedures of great skill and oftentimes of greater lethality than those previously used on scene—e.g., the diffusion of innovative uses of person-borne, vehicle-borne, or static emplaced improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Furthermore, as the “McChrystal Assessment” on Afghanistan states, “[f]oreign fighters provide materiel, expertise, and ideological commitment.” [23] Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, among others, showed what such materiel assistance, expertise, and ideological commitment could accomplish by bringing Iraq to the precipice of civil war in 2006 by employing a strategy pitting Sunni Arabs vs. Shi`i Arabs vs. Kurds.

Vast amounts of information and specialized capabilities are necessary to counteract such networks. You need human networks to go after foreign fighter and insurgent networks, but all insurgencies are *sui generis*. Population-centric counterinsurgency or foreign internal defense approaches may work in certain environments, but not in other locations where the physical or human terrain may favor other methods of force and resource employment. Foreign fighters themselves must also operate in these varied terrains. Not all environs will be hospitable. As the Anbar Awakening showed, such foreign fighters may

operate more effectively when divorced from the local populace who, in any event, may tire of such visitors and their behavior. [24]

Aside from those who stay on the battlefield or move to other destinations, some foreign fighters in the target locations will be killed—and many request to be suicide bombers [25]—while others are captured. Of those captured, some are returned to their source countries for imprisonment or for attempts at reintegration into society. Such reintegration seems to work in certain cases, but not in others. As of the spring of 2009, for instance, a Pentagon report found that there was roughly a 14 percent recidivism rate among those prisoners transferred from Guantanamo Bay, Cuba to other locations. [26] If—and it may be a big *if*—this other 86 percent of individuals holds across other samples and such individuals become solid citizens and do not incite others to go off and fight then that would be a great success. But as was stated earlier, former foreign fighters, even if not actively engaged in fighting themselves, appear to be important cogs in recruiting others to fight—either by word or by past example. Of course, those who had unpleasant experiences while off fighting might be useful in dissuading others from following their paths, too.

*Outflow Destinations.* Those foreign fighter veterans who are not killed or captured at target locations generally may either: (1) return to their source country, (2) go to a safe haven, or (3) go to a current or future conflict zone. Since the first foreign fighter glut of the 1980s and 1990s, this situation has spawned something akin to a deadly version of the “show that never ends.” [27] Examining the so-called “Arab Afghans,” who fought the Soviets in the 1980s, the terrorism scholar Mohammed Hafez suggests that that conflict produced six types of veterans: reintegrationists (those who went home again and reintegrated into their original societies), government assets (e.g., Arab Afghan Yemenis who fought against southern Yemenis during the civil war following Yemen’s reunification), facilitators, social revolutionaries (e.g., Egyptians and Algerians who fought against their governments upon return from Afghanistan in the 1990s), global jihadists, and unaffiliated terrorists (e.g., Ramzi Yusef). [28] Some will continue due to their religious or ideological beliefs while others are attracted to the lifestyle—a powerful argument. As the military historian, and retired U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel, Robert Mackey has stated about a different historical context, “the guerrilla fighters of Arkansas and Missouri during the [American] Civil War formed the cadres of the Old West criminal gangs—Cole Younger, Jesse James. They were people who did not fit back into their societies; they couldn’t go home again.” [29]

Whether individuals are motivated by religion, ideology, or lifestyle, the Islamist strategic studies scholar Barak Mendelsohn has offered a simple, yet important distinction between different groups of foreign fighters: those that are experienced and those that are not. According to Mendelsohn, the experienced cadres deserve more attention because of their leadership abilities, their technical, tactical, and strategic knowledge that they can transmit

through training and advising, and their connections. [30] While the less experienced might be capable of causing large-scale carnage, particularly in spectacular suicide attacks, the experienced cadres are the planners and instigators.

To counter such individuals it is, therefore, important to plan for and deal with foreign fighter outflows, especially the cadres leaving from Iraq and Afghanistan. To Mackey the key to such planning is to consider what happens 5, 10, or 15 years from now and develop a series of “indications and warnings.” In particular, the United States should: (1) stringently look at where money goes and where it moves (“funding, financing, travel and movement”), (2) focus on the law enforcement angle and on coalition partner capacity-building, (3) acknowledge that once fighters start leaving a country such as Iraq it is critical to know where they are going, and (4) focus on conflict abatement. [31] Wars allow foreign fighters the opportunity to fight, provide them with expertise and the repetition of practice, and serve as the training ground for the next fight. Lastly, as Mendelsohn has suggested, we need to identify the connections to local groups from source or future target countries where outflow may become a lot more relevant. [32]

Beyond these steps, Mackey suggests that we need to establish an international fusion center overseas that would aggregate intelligence and share it cross-nationally. This would allow us to track outflow and leverage comparative advantages in human intelligence capabilities. And while he noted that the Foreign Fighter Task Force is doing a great job, it is focused on U.S. Central Command area of responsibility. That task force model needs to be copied and applied elsewhere and given an international role. In other words, “[w]e need to modify our organization bureaucratically to meet the threat and not necessarily try to force the threat into our bureaucratic model,” argued Mackey. [33]

From a different—but largely complementary—angle, Dan Green, a former Provincial Reconstruction Team member in Afghanistan and Naval Reservist tribal engagement officer in Iraq, has suggested the need to build U.S. personnel capacity. Michael Doran, a Middle East scholar and former National Security Council, Department of Defense, and Department of State official, has argued that the United States must build a political warfare capability. To Green, building personnel capacity is essential in developing bases of knowledge, expertise, familiarity, and the relationships needed to operate in the locales where foreign fighters originate, transit, and fight. Unfortunately, bureaucratic structures impede such deep specialization and inhibit precisely the development of the skills required for the political warfare capabilities suggested by Doran. According to Doran, we have some great programs in place, but that they are all ad hoc. What is needed is: (1) greater flexibility in moving between war zones and non-war zones, (2) better local intelligence and the ability to put the right answer (often non-military) on target, (3) better understanding of cultural contexts, (4) legislative relief to create constructive linkages between things like intelligence collection and

development assistance under a new organization, and (5) increasing relationship linkages by developing educational institutions such as the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies—but from a “whole of government” perspective—for Africa and Central Commands. [34] Such capabilities—when combined with those offered by Mackey and Mendelsohn—would offer robust, yet scalable measures for dealing with issues across and within the four foreign fighter phases.

## Conclusion

Today the United States focuses largely on what to do in Afghanistan and in neighboring Pakistan. Still, some reports suggest that the drone strikes against Al Qaeda in Pakistan have produced an outflow of foreign fighters to Yemen and Somalia. [35] Meanwhile the situation in Iraq remains improved from the dark days of 2004-2007, yet still tenuous. But there are other reports claiming that Al Qaeda has reinforced their leadership to refocus and direct the fight in Iraq by sending Sheikh Issa al-Masri to Syria. [36] Strategically, these developments lumped together suggest three things: (1) the foreign fighter problem and the “Al Qaeda movement,” however defined, are not going away, (2) such fighters are intent on keeping the United States widely engaged across theaters of operations, and (3) the movement to Yemen and Somalia, aside from their geopolitical dead space benefits, are in close striking distance of the heart of the Arabian peninsula and Egypt.

Financial reality and limited diplomatic, development, and defense capabilities already stretched thin by eight years of war suggest further difficulties in dealing with foreign fighters. Realistically this means that the United States must leverage its friendships and acquaintances to work by, with, and through others and employ indirect strategy. As the late French Army General Andre Beaufre stated in his magisterial *An Introduction to Strategy*

*Though its outward manifestations are of a specialized and frequently disconcerting nature, indirect strategy is no specialized form of strategy divorced from direct strategy. The key to it, as with all strategy, is freedom of action; it is only the method by which this freedom is obtained which is different. It must be obtained by initiative combined with security and it is different because the area of freedom of action (and therefore the limits of security) depends upon what is done outside, not inside, the area at issue. This is its special feature and it is this which gives it its indirect character. [37]*

In other words, while foreign fighters are by no means chiefly responsible for all of the problems in places such as Iraq, Afghanistan, or Pakistan, working against them successfully will help to reduce violence in the war zones. Combined with effective actions on the ground, an indirect strategy that husbands and appropriately distributes resources across borders to limit recruitment, transit, and logistics for these international killers is essential to success.



Notes:

1. [http://davidmalet.com/The\\_Foreign\\_Fighter\\_Project.php](http://davidmalet.com/The_Foreign_Fighter_Project.php). See also his “Foreign Fighters: Transnational Identity in Civil Conflicts,” Ph.D. dissertation, The George Washington University, 2009.
2. Clint Watts, “Countering Terrorism from the Second Foreign Fighter Glut,” *Small Wars Journal*, 2009. Accessible at: <http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/journal/docs-temp/247-watts.pdf>.
3. Ibid.
4. Figures cited by David Malet during panel one of the FPRI “The Foreign Fighter Problem” conference. Available at: <http://www.fpri.org/multimedia/20090714.foreignfighterphenomenon.html>.
5. David Malet, “Why Foreign Fighters? Historical Perspectives and Solutions,” *Orbis* (Winter 2010): forthcoming.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Clint Watts, “Countering Terrorism from the Second Foreign Fighter Glut,” *Small Wars Journal*, 2009. Accessible at: <http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/journal/docs-temp/247-watts.pdf>.
9. See discussions from the “Disrupting the Foreign Fighter Flow” panel at: <http://www.fpri.org/multimedia/20090715.disruptingforeignfighters.html>.
10. Watts, *Countering Terrorism from the Second Foreign Fighter Glut*.
11. See, for instance, Clint Watts statements on “The Foreign Fighter Phenomenon – Overview” panel.
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# MAJOR NIDAL HASAN AND THE FORT HOOD TRAGEDY: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE U.S. ARMED FORCES

*By Clint Watts*

June 2011

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## Introduction

Major Nidal Hasan's killing of his fellow soldiers at Ft. Hood, Texas undermines the common trust binding America's all-volunteer, multi-ethnic military force. Hasan's violence forces all service personnel to take an introspective look at their organization and persistently assess the possibility of extremists in their ranks. After Hasan's attack, many questioned the U.S. military's ability to recruit, train and retain Muslim military members without exposing service members to violent extremism. Unfortunately, Hasan's violence against fellow soldiers and fellow Americans is not unique. Recent history offers repeated examples of current or former military members conducting violent attacks in support of many different extremist causes. To ensure the integrity and safety of the all-volunteer force, the U.S. military needs a structured approach to assessing and mitigating the threat of lone-wolf extremists in the ranks.

## The Radicalization of Nidal Hasan

Major Nidal Hasan's radicalization progressed through several stages. Immediately following his high school graduation in 1988, Hasan enlisted in the U.S. Army serving for eight years and simultaneously completed his undergraduate degree from Virginia Tech. In 1995, Hasan transitioned to Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences to pursue a medical degree. Through 2001, Hasan appeared to be on track for a successful military career.

Three major forces likely triggered Hasan's turn to extremism. First, Hasan's mother died in May 2001. Her death greatly affected Hasan pushing him toward a more devout period in his life. Allegedly, Hasan began desperately pursuing marriage to a beautiful and ideologically devout woman. However, no woman measured up to Hasan's standards and likewise no potential spouse displayed interest in his highly conservative worldview. [1]

Second, Hasan, grieving from his mother's death, gravitated to the conservative brand of Islam preached at the Dar al-Hijrah in Falls Church, Virginia; a mosque known for its attendance by

two of the 9/11 hijackers. During 2001-2002, Anwar al-Awlaki also preached at Dar al-Hijrah issuing a now infamous sermon in November, 2001 equating the U.S. Global War on Terrorism with a larger global war by the U.S. against all Muslims. Hasan's ideological following of Awlaki later manifested itself in repeated emails to the cleric requesting attack guidance and religious rulings on what would become his 2009 Ft. Hood shooting. [2]

Third, Hasan's work in the psychiatry field challenged him psychologically. Hasan specialized in behavioral health and his duties required the counselling of soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. Nader Hasan said his cousin Major Nidal Hasan "was mortified of the idea of having to deploy... he had people telling him on a daily basis the horrors they saw over there [in Iraq and Afghanistan]." [3] Hasan's fear of deployment, lackluster performance, death of his parents, and introduction to extremist ideology during a particularly vulnerable period pushed him down a familiar radicalization path.

### Indicators of Hasan's Radicalization During Military Service

In 2003, Hasan began a psychiatric residency at Walter Reed hospital where classmates and supervisors quickly spotted Hasan's extremist views. During his first year, officers identified Hasan "openly questioning whether he could engage in combat against other Muslims," [4] prompting one of his supervisors to recommend Hasan's departure from military service. However, military process impediments combined with a general aversion to losing a medical education investment likely resulted in Hasan being retained and pushed onward in the military.

Hasan's radicalization had accelerated by his third year at Walter Reed. His residency required a presentation commonly referred to as "Ground Rounds." Rather than produce an academically rigorous and medically focused presentation consistent with his psychiatric residency, Hasan initiated a discussion entitled "The Koranic World View as it relates to Muslims in the U.S. Military." [5] This presentation overtly questioned U.S. justifications for combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan and advocated that the Department of Defense "allow Muslim soldiers the option of being released as conscientious objectors to increase troop morale and decrease adverse events." [6] Hasan's extremist views during this presentation appalled classmates, sending off clear warning signs. [7] However, supervisors moved Hasan through the residency certification process despite his extremist briefs and inferior performance.

Hasan's frustrations in the medical program and continued radicalization led to him seek ideological approval from Anwar al-Awlaki; a known al Qaeda terrorist. Beginning in December 2008, Hasan sent eighteen emails seeking religious justification for "when jihad is appropriate, and whether it is permissible if there are innocents killed in a suicide attack." [8] In one email communication with Awlaki, Hasan identified significantly with the

Hasan Akbar 101st Airborne operations center attack of 2003, suggesting that Akbar's actions were a model for Hasan's upcoming plot. [9] Additionally, Hassan donated "\$20,000 to \$30,000 a year to Islamic charities." [10] While his email trail slipped through the FBI-DoD investigative divide, Hasan planned and executed his Ft. Hood attack less than 30 days prior to his deployment to Afghanistan.

#### Comparative Perspective: Other Lone-Wolf Extremists with U.S. Military Experience

Major Hasan represents only one of many U.S. military service members conducting extremist attacks on Americans. Comparative analysis of Nidal Hasan with Timothy McVeigh, Eric Rudolph and Hasan Karim Akbar suggests a common pattern of circumstances, emotional triggers and warning signs indicative of extremism in the ranks.

##### *Timothy McVeigh- Oklahoma City Bombing-1995*

Social isolation, professional frustration and anti-government ideology spurred Timothy McVeigh's radicalization. Friends and neighbors from McVeigh's childhood describe him as a loner stemming from his parent's divorce and his father's long work hours. Routinely bullied by other kids he "began to show psychological signs of paranoia and delusion at the age of fourteen when he delved deeper into his fantasy work, imagining himself in constant peril." [11] McVeigh found a real connection with his grandfather who introduced him to shooting and firearms. Despite being intelligent, McVeigh struggled to maintain employment and spent his money and time buying weapons, reading survivalist magazines and investigating government conspiracies. [12] McVeigh's father hoped the military's structured environment combined with McVeigh's personal interests would provide a long-run career for his son.

McVeigh joined the military in 1988 and met two other recruits, Terry Nichols and Michael Fortier, who shared his anti-government ideology. These three men reinforced each other's extremist beliefs which focused largely on the removal of second amendment rights. McVeigh excelled in the Army but spent his free time alone reading survivalist magazines and anti-government publications like the Turner Diaries. [13] McVeigh deployed to the First Gulf War and performed well. However, McVeigh later regretted his service and felt he was "bullying" Iraq. He returned to Ft. Riley and received the opportunity to attend the Special Forces Assessment and Selection (SFAS) course. Unprepared physically, McVeigh failed to finish SFAS. Frustrated with his military time, McVeigh left the service only to find few job opportunities. [14]

### *Eric Rudolph- Olympic Park/Abortion Clinic Bomber- 1996-1997*

Eric Rudolph led federal investigators on one of the largest manhunts in American history after detonating four bombs killing four people and wounding more than a hundred. [15] As a child, Rudolph's mother immersed him in a fringe ideological movement known as the Christian Identity which professed anti-government and racial extremism. [16] Family friends and high school classmates described Rudolph as a loner, openly disparaging other races and writing a high school essay denying the Jewish holocaust. An emotional trigger igniting Rudolph's radicalization was his father's death from cancer in 1981 which Rudolph attributed to the FDA's failure to approve a new medicine. After his father's death, Rudolph moved with his mother to Joplin, Missouri where he attended the Church of Israel led by Dan Gayman. Gayman indoctrinated Rudolph in extremist Christian Identity ideology whose core tenet was, "the anthropological supremacy of the white race." [17]

Eric Rudolph joined the military in 1987 wanting to be "part of an elite military unit, like the Rangers or the Special Forces." [18] Rudolph spoke openly to fellow soldiers about his racist views, praising Adolf Hitler, disparaging Jewish people, and complaining about African American drill sergeants. [19] Rudolph did not associate much with other soldiers and "instead he would hang back in his room and get high, reading military manuals and (a) book called 'The Little Black Book of Explosives'." [20] Rudolph's persistent drug use and poor performance led to his discharge after only 18 months of service, establishing a second emotional trigger that likely contributed to his radicalization. [21]

### *Hasan Karim Akbar - 101st Airborne Operations Center Attack- 2003*

Hasan Karim Akbar (a.k.a Mark Fidel Kools) attacked his fellow 101st Airborne Division soldiers in Kuwait as the unit prepared for the 2003 invasion of Iraq killing two and wounding many others. The son of two converts to the Nation of Islam, Akbar grew up in the Watts and South Central districts of Los Angeles living much of his life adjacent to the Bilal Islamic Center. [22] Akbar struggled as a child allegedly suffering trauma during his teens as a result of witnessing his sister being sexually assaulted by his step-father (a step-father later convicted for the illegal possession of weapons). Akbar attended University of California- Davis, spending nine years pursuing a degree. While attending college, Akbar enrolled in the Reserve Officers' Training Corps but failed to receive a commission, leaving college deeply in debt and enlisting in the Army.

Akbar struggled in the Army and was removed from his squad leader position and relegated to lower level tasks. Fellow soldiers noted Akbar "was rarely in the company of others and was seen talking to himself." [23] Akbar's personal diary advocated violence against Caucasians, the military and the government stating "my life will not be complete unless America is destroyed." [24] Just one month prior to his attack, Akbar expressed his violent intent writing,

“I will have to decide to kill my Muslim brothers fighting for Saddam Hussein or my battle buddies... I may not have killed any Muslims, but being in the Army is the same thing. I may have to make a choice very soon on who to kill.” [25] Akbar’s extremist motivations likely arose from psychological trauma, perceived and/or actual racial discrimination, frustration over professional performance, financial troubles and exposure to Islamic extremist ideology.

### Radicalization as a Broader Process

Hasan’s radicalization path mirrors the route taken by other lone-wolf extremists with military experience such as McVeigh, Rudolph and Akbar. Chris Heffelfinger, author of *Radical Islam in America*, describes a general construct outlining four stages useful for tracing the radicalization of Hasan, McVeigh, Rudolph and Akbar. In the first phase (Introduction), individuals encounter the extremist ideology and its literature. Stage two (Immersion) sees the individual immersed in extremist thinking resulting in the solidification of an extremist mind set. In stage three (Frustration), individuals begin expressing dissatisfaction with the perceived inaction of other members of the faith. Finally, some individuals move to stage four (Resolve) where they commit to undertake violent action on behalf of the extremist ideology. [26]

Each of these phases portends a set of general indicators signifying an extremist’s march towards violence. Additionally, progression through the radicalization stages often correlates with significant emotional triggers in the person’s life. Common radicalization triggers fit broadly into the categories of family, financial, psychological and professional. As seen with Hasan, McVeigh, Rudolph and Akbar, extremists often travel their radicalization path following one or more of these emotional triggers.

### Assessing and Mitigating the Risks of Extremism in the U.S. Armed Forces

Preventing extremist violence by current and former military members requires a comprehensive approach addressing all phases of a serviceman’s recruitment, training, service, and reintegration back into society. The U.S. military could pursue several programs and policies to prevent future Hasan-type extremism.

Recommendation: Conduct comprehensive research on extremism in the ranks

Immediately following Major Hasan’s Ft. Hood attack, many pundits narrowly focused on Hasan’s religion as the causal link to violence. However, recent history on extremist attacks by current and former military members suggests Hasan’s actions characterize a broader pattern of extremist behavior. Before instituting any program to detect and mitigate violent extremism in the ranks, the military must initiate comprehensive research to accurately map the process and indicators of extremist radicalization across all ideologies. The research should encompass cases of extremist violence to include Hasan, McVeigh, Rudolph, Akbar and many other



servicemen advocating violence against Americans. Only through comparative research gleaned from comprehensive data, rather than anecdotal case studies, can the U.S. military develop actionable and accurate warning signs for its leaders to assess extremism in the ranks.

Recommendation: Establish an extremist radicalization model for assessing service members

Holistic research of extremists in the military will create a radicalization model leaders can utilize to identify vulnerable servicemen. An overall radicalization framework helps leaders correlate disparate pieces of information into a broader context indicative of extremism. Building from previous research by Heffelfinger and others, the model provides military leaders a structured method to track information, warning signs and triggers of service member extremism. Empowered via a web portal, military leaders should be able to reference the radicalization model for indicators of extremist activity as well as regulations and procedures for mitigating extremism. For example, should the model contain a phase ‘Resolve to Commit Violence,’ leaders would be able to view indicators and case studies relevant to this phase in the radicalization process.

Recommendation: Construct reference materials for assessing extremism

A well-researched radicalization model will generate indicators and warning lists providing leaders a tool for identifying extremists in their organizations. Focusing on extremist behaviors rather than demographic stereotypes will provide military leaders tangible measures to assess and mitigate extremism. Any indicator or warning list should include adequate caveats reminding leaders that no single indicator necessarily confirms extremist behavior. Rather it’s the combination and correlation of multiple indicators that routinely coincides with lone-wolf extremism. Below is a short example (not comprehensive) demonstrating how Heffelfinger’s “Introduction-Immersion-Frustration-Resolve” model could be used to categorize indicators. [27]

Introduction- (Initial contact with the extremist ideology)

- Joining extremist ideology.
- Establishing new friendships with other servicemen connected to extremist groups.
- Accessing extremist literature, videos, audio broadcasts, websites and social media.

Immersion- (Immersion in the thinking and mindset of the extremist ideology)

- Altering physical appearance to conform to extremist practices. Could be seen in changes in dress, tattooing, hair styles, and other ideological markings.

- Participation in charitable or other fundraising activities supporting the extremist ideology.
- Aggressively recruiting servicemen to the ideological cause.
- Citation of extremist views in conversations with other service members to **demonstrate mastery of one's new ideology.**
- Display of inspirational extremist figures or symbols.

Frustration- (Frustration over inaction of other members of the ideology)

- Denunciation of other members of the ideology for not being sufficiently adherent or **"true" to the ideology.**
- Seeking the approval of ideological leaders or peers for the use of violence.
- Increased self-isolation from other servicemen both on and off duty.
- Concerns from friends and family members **over service member's rhetoric and isolation.**
- Declining military performance impacted by commitments to other extremist activities.
- **Attending extremist gatherings far from the service member's duty station.**

Resolve- (Resolve to commit violence on behalf of the extremist ideology)

- Weapons purchases and training outside the normal course of military duty.
- Theft of ammunition, explosives and other materials needed for a violent attack.
- Openly advocating violence against other military members or American citizens.
- Acquisition and reading of operational military manuals unrelated to the service member's duties
- Reading of bomb-making or other attack planning literature and websites.
- Giving away of all possessions to friends, neighbors and other service members.
- Planning for death by creating wills and final statements.
- Seeking attack approval and guidance from extremist leaders.

- Attendance at an ideological, militant training camp or foreign travel inconsistent with service member's family, friends and pattern of life.
- Attack planning and rehearsal.
- Outright defiance of the chain of command and violent threats to other service members.

The above list identifies some common indicators of extremist behavior. However, this list remains incomplete and the military must aggressively research past extremists in the ranks to generate a more comprehensive indicator list.

Recommendation: Identify common emotional triggers leading to radicalization

Radicalization is a path often pursued by those suffering significant emotional events. Military leaders responsible for assessing and mitigating extremism might benefit from a representative list of emotional triggers known to accelerate service member radicalization. These triggers might be explored and categorized to account for different disruptions to an extremist psyche:

- Family- Death of a family member or divorce may leave the service member searching for a coping ideology.
- Professional- Failure to achieve professional goals or adapt to military lifestyle may result in the individual being particularly vulnerable to extremist recruitment.
- Financial- Extremist ideologies often provide comfort to those suffering financial struggles.
- Psychological- Witnessing or participating in a traumatic event may trigger distress leading to the pursuit of extremist ideologies.

The above triggers when combined with other extremist indicators can help military leaders identify the causes and steps in service member radicalization. Additionally, populating the service member's radicalization pathway with triggers, indicators and warnings helps the leader identify legal, administrative and medical options for disrupting potential violence.

Recommendation: Maintain a database of extremist propaganda

Military commanders need a database cataloging violent extremist propaganda and training manuals. Throughout each of the cases discussed in this paper, fellow service members and leaders witnessed extremists in the ranks accessing extremist propaganda. Hasan accessed al Qaeda websites. McVeigh and Rudolph were seen reading The Turner Diaries. Each extremist ideology hosts its own extremist propaganda justifying violence. Military leaders do not have

sufficient time to learn and recognize each extremist ideology and its publications. Developing and maintaining a database of known extremist propaganda, literature and websites that advocate violence against U.S. citizens and the U.S. government would provide military leaders a resource for quickly identifying and understanding extremist activity in their organizations.

Recommendation: Develop resources for mitigating all extremist ideologies

Recent historical analysis shows lone wolf military member extremist violence manifests itself in many different extremist ideologies. Solely focusing on Islamic extremism within military ranks is short-sighted. Timothy McVeigh, a non-Muslim, executed the Oklahoma City Bombing; the largest terrorist attack committed by a former or current U.S. military member. Military member violence manifests from racial, religious, and anti-government ideologies. Holistically identifying, assessing and mitigating all forms of extremism in the military will better protect service members and citizens while maintaining the diversity of the U.S. Armed Forces.

Recommendation: Extremism prevention training across the military

Personnel at all levels will benefit from training to identify extremist behavior. This training would familiarize military personnel with the radicalization framework, indicators and emotional triggers synonymous with extremism as well as explain reporting procedures for those service members witnessing extremist behavior. This training might mirror suicide prevention training and could even be taught concurrently with this annual training requirement.

Conclusion: Lessons Learned for Military Leaders from Major Hasan's Radicalization

In hindsight, Hasan's superiors had the legal latitude and command authority to remove Hasan from the service. However, their insufficient documentation of Hasan's poor performance and extremist tendencies combined with their unfamiliarity with Army policy on command authority allowed Hasan to continue serving in the military.

Status quo operations of the Army Officer Evaluation system hurt the Army's collective performance in general and in the case of Major Hasan compromised the safety of Army personnel. Army medical corps officers repeatedly identified Hasan's poor performance and extremist tendencies, yet his performance records provide little indication of these concerns. Inaccurate documentation by Hasan's superiors led investigators to dismiss warning signs correlating Hasan's online activities and extremist tendencies. Military evaluation reports look remarkably similar across all officers regardless of performance. Military leaders need improved training on the valuable purpose of evaluation reports for accurately assessing performance and providing tangible indicators of officer negligence and extremism.

Officers at all levels, in all services and in all specialties must understand their options for removing poor performers with extremist tendencies. A supervisor identified early in Hasan's residency the dangers of retaining his officer. However, a limited understanding of the authorities and procedures for removing Hasan frustrated attempts to remove Hasan from service. Commanders must gain a deeper understanding of their options for removing individuals whose behavior clearly threatens fellow service members.

Notes:

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27. Note, the indicators illustrated in this section are the opinions of the author and the author alone. These opinions do not represent the U.S. government or any other public

or private entity. The indicators discussed in this section come from the author's 1) research for this paper, 2) research in counterterrorism conducted over the past several years as a consultant to federal, state and local law enforcement and the intelligence community, 3) programs conducted through the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, 4) service as a Special Agent on an FBI JTTF, and 5) service as an Infantry Officer in the U.S. Army.

## PART XI: TECHNOLOGY & NATIONAL SECURITY



# THE REVOLUTION WILL BE BROUGHT TO YOU BY TEXT MESSAGING

*By Garrett Jones*

March 2008

*This article appeared in E-Notes.*

During the 2007 protests in Myanmar, the media reported that the opposition was coordinating their protests by text messaging and getting video out of the country through wireless internet connections. These tactics were so successful that the government limited international internet access; it later shut down all wireless connections for a period. Eventually the government was forced to restore service, as the shutdown incapacitated government forces as much as the opposition. We have now seen similar such phenomena in Tibet, China, and Kenya.

In most of the third world before the coming of wireless connection—the internet and the cell phone—there were very few telephone lines, mostly to government officials and a few wealthy individuals. Service was poor, with frequent outages and poor line quality. Costs were exorbitant. Waits for installation of new telephone lines were typically measured in years, not days, even for the wealthy and well connected. The telephone company was usually a government ministry or parastatal noted for its corruption and inefficiency. This made even the overseas telephone call beyond the reach of the average citizen and a long-distance call within the country something of an event.

There was normally one television channel, state owned, which broadcast to the capital city and a few other urban areas. Every newscast, every day began as follows: “Today the president of the republic, His Excellency (insert local dictator’s name here) (show picture of dictator) reviewed/met with (cut to film of local dance group, tractor factory, etc.) to the sounds of the cheering citizens.” The radio stations were of a similar ilk, but at least you could normally dance to the music. Anyone with any wealth or interest in the truth listened to the shortwave broadcasts of the BBC, Voice of America or Radio Netherlands (or, for French speakers, Radio France and the French versions of the BBC etc.). Newspapers were normally a little more informative about overseas news, but they were easily shut down if they began to annoy the local politicians.

This technological bottleneck led to a situation where the government could control to a substantial degree what the local population knew of events in the world at large and from relatively inaccessible parts of their own country. This control was never absolute, but with a largely poor and illiterate population, control of information was a powerful tool in a government’s hands. The opposition viewpoint was largely confined to rumors and foreign

shortwave news broadcasts, which might or might not be heard by the average citizen. Landline telephones were easy to disrupt or monitor, and newspapers, with their bulky infrastructure, were always operating on government sufferance. The “facts” were what the government said they were, more or less.

Today, cell phone providers in Kenya estimate that 10 million Kenyans either own their own cell phone or have easy access to one. This is in a country of about 31 to 34 million people. Kenyans like to talk, a lot. These are modern cell phones with state-of-the-art text messaging, Bluetooth, internet and video capability. There are services available to the average Kenyan that have not yet made their way into some regions of the United States. Access to the phones and airtime can be anonymous, and as with most things in Africa, where paperwork intrudes, money will make anything work. The new wireless networks have spread across the country and outside urban areas. A farmer can now have good quality internet access if he lives near a major highway or in one of the many cell footprints across the country. The cell towers and systems are state of the art and well maintained. Airtime is expensive, but not exceedingly so. **The poor are somewhat shut out by the cost, but sharing someone’s phone if you are buying the airtime is a common practice.** Thus, one cell phone in a slum may have hundreds of different users in a month.

Wireless connectivity has become a necessary service for the Kenyan middle class. Unlike other places, many Kenyans rely on their cell phone as their primary internet access device and link to the World Wide Web. With regard to government control of services, as in the United States, **Kenyan telecommunication regulation is organized to “encourage political giving”** for politicians and revenue for the government, rather than promote technological advancement. The technical competence of most incumbent politicians is low, their primary concern being revenue and political funding. The result is a free-for-all for providers on the services they offer, and the long-term impact of these services in the political arena is little understood, much less constrained by the government.

What this means to the average middle class Kenyan is that the truth is now what CNN in New York, or the BBC in London, says, or what comes from a chat with Uncle Achmed in Mombassa. This news comes with pictures, video and blogs that run the gamut from political to rap music. The government no longer controls the flow of information. Anyone with an airtime card and a camera phone can document anything, anywhere. Kenyans are receiving and reacting to events before the government is even aware something has happened. Embarrassing footage of a policeman killing an unarmed protester? Before it has made it to broadcast on the local television station, it has been shared on cell phone videos all across the country. Isolate an area of the country from foreign journalists so a potential problem can be **minimized or denied? Not likely!** “I-Reporters” are sending reports by text message to the capital and beyond as the event unfolds. Blogs of all types are reporting real-time

developments and rumors, with the bloggers' own analysis. Government and opposition statements are mocked and dissected with a vigor that demonstrates that at least the computer-literate portion of the population trusts neither side. An equivalent development in the West may have been translating the Bible from Latin to the local language. Now the local population will decide what it believes, not a ruling priesthood of vested interests.

I will leave it to others to describe the socioeconomic impacts of the communication revolution and the many technical aspects thereof. It does, however, strike me that there are several unforeseen consequences on the political situations common to any society that is rapidly acquiring a freedom of communication its citizens have not until recently been allowed.

The first common aspect is that the political opposition is almost uniformly better at exploiting the advantages of the technological developments than the governments in power. This may be generational or the natural conservatism of those in power, but it does seem to be a common theme. In Kenya, the opposition has slick and attractive blogs and websites, and their use of text messages and phone trees is freely acknowledged. The Kenyan government's original media reaction after the riots was clumsy and relied on full-page ads in the traditional press. The opposition responded with timely blogs and text messages. The electronic version of events was soon seen to overwhelm government media efforts. Crude pro-government blog sites finally sprung up about a month into the current election crisis, as the incumbent government tacitly acknowledged that it was losing the media war.

The government, early on in the crisis, banned live radio and TV news broadcasts as a way to control when and what the population was told. This was an ineffective action, as the connected parts of the population simply switched to international news sources and live blogging to follow breaking developments in their own country. The political and tactical effect of this use of technology puts the general population, and the political opposition specifically, inside the government's decision loop. The wired population is reacting to an event before the government had learned of it or formulated a response. No government can win that battle. The best they can hope for is a talented spokesperson to spin the situation. The Kenyan government had no such luxury.

The second common theme to telecommunication advances is that the government is also fully entwined in the wireless and internet infrastructure as the political opposition. As far as I am aware, no authoritarian government has tried to duplicate the wireless infrastructure with a government-only-system, nor have they placed any serious restraints on intra-country interoperability. This being the case, simply shutting down the general wireless or internet capacity cripples the government as thoroughly as it does any opposition group.

The third common thread is the exponential expansion of the problem of monitoring communications when wireless and internet systems are introduced. Rather than thousands of

individuals who were well documented by their landline telephone accounts, an authoritarian government is now looking at millions of individuals with no fixed location or identifiable characteristics. One could argue that software and hardware advances make monitoring easier, but such a program is still very expensive and technically intensive. Monitoring modern wireless and internet networks is exponentially harder and more expensive than monitoring landline systems. Governments that face this expensive and technically challenging task are almost by definition new to modern telecommunications, cash strapped, and technically backward. Even if a government has the capability to mount wireless intercepts on a large scale, a very serious second part of these technological challenges is how to analyze the buckets of information intercepted into something meaningful and useful. The best first-world intelligence services are still wrestling with that particular dilemma. In a third-world situation, this means opposition communications are, with a little care, unfettered and largely unstoppable.

At first blush, the Chinese with their “Great Fire Wall” limiting international access to certain international internet sites seems an exception. The Chinese government seems on the surface to have devoted enormous resources and funds to establishing an effective censorship of external Worldwide Web sites. While the technical effectiveness of the “Great Fire Wall” can be argued, the Chinese may have missed the point. The threat of wireless and internet communication to an authoritarian government is not by their contaminating the local citizens to seditious foreign ideas; *it is that they establish an efficient means by which the local population can organize in opposition to the government.*

All the evidence available indicates that Chinese official communications intra-country are largely maintained through the civilian network. Thus turning off wireless, text messaging and internet access would paralyze both the civilian economy and the official government communications system. In China’s example, by establishing an effective internal communication system that cannot easily be disabled, the Chinese Communist Party has doomed itself in the long term. The “Great Fire Wall” may well be viewed in the future as the 21st century’s electronic “Maginot Line.” It appears to be a common thread that the political implications of modern wireless internet telecommunications are wrongly perceived, if noticed at all by authoritarian governments.

While Kenya struggles through one crisis, and may have been changed forever by wireless and internet communications, China is facing a telecommunications crisis of its own making within the next six to eight months. The 2008 Beijing Summer Olympics should provide an opportunity to see the first signs of how an internal political organization uses communication technology and the effectiveness of the “Great Fire Wall” in moderating internal dissent. Tibetan opposition organizations have already begun activities to put forth their views, and are likely just the first of many to do so. All of these groups will enhance the effectiveness of

their protest by using telecommunications methods beyond the effective control of authoritarian governments.

# TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION AND NATIONAL SECURITY

*By Paul Bracken*

June 2008

*This essay, published in E-Notes, is based on lecture Bracken delivered for FPRI on May 12, 2008, in Philadelphia.*

Of the United States' \$600 billion defense budget, at least 40-50 percent goes to technology. Technology issues are extremely important in national security, and I would like to give an overview of some of the major issues and a range of frameworks in which to view them. However, it has to be noted that there is no one best framework in which to look at these issues. Rather, there are several; I will discuss a few of them, each of which provides its own unique insights.

To ground the subject, there are many conventional views about technology and national security. One common view, particularly in political science and social science departments, is that technology doesn't make much difference at all—we should think more about strategy and be smart, rather than buy technology to gain capabilities we would not otherwise have. I heard a variation of this recently in a talk by a State Department official who pointed out that if you take the State Department budget, add foreign aid, and divide it by the Pentagon budget, it reaches 5 percent. That is, 5 percent of the total national security budget is given to diplomacy. The clear implication—which may be correct or not—is that money should be shifted from the military budget to diplomacy, foreign aid, etc.

A second view is that the U.S. is getting soft—the Chinese are producing far more engineers, while we produce MBAs and lawyers. Upon closer examination, this common view turns out to be not entirely accurate. The numbers of Chinese engineers are grossly overstated, because they include what we would call technicians from community colleges. The IT support person in the U.S. would be classified as an engineer in China. On the other hand, there are indeed numerous issues in U.S. universities, and in the broader American economy, that make it difficult for a student to want to major in engineering. Simply because critics have overstated Chinese education capacity to make their point does not mean that they do not have a point to make. From my dealing with very bright college students I see many obstacles for them to major in engineering.

Probably the most popular common way of looking at technological innovation and national security in the U.S. is, “Are we still ahead?” This year for the first time, China will spend more on R&D than Japan. China is really going into technology in a big way. So the question “Can we keep the lead?” is natural to ask.

These common views aren't necessarily wrong, but there are different frameworks that pose different questions. What we should do is collect all of the good insights from various frameworks to see where we are on the subject of technological innovation and national security. Let me give some examples.

In the 2006 Lebanon-Israel war, Hezbollah used short-range rockets to rain down death on the northern part of Israel. Israel evacuated 150,000 people out of northern Israel into tents in Israeli national parks to get them out of harm's way. In the process, Hezbollah also fired a cruise missile and almost scored a catastrophic kill on an Israeli warship. Fortunately, the bomb exploded outside the ship. The Winograd Commission formed to investigate this war concluded that Hezbollah, a semi-military organization, with a few thousand people, was able to resist the Israeli Defense Forces, the strongest army in the Middle East. Hezbollah used technology to match its tactics, knowing that if it took on Israel in a direct, head-to-head war with conventional forces, it would not stand a chance.

This is all very suggestive of what other countries are going to do when they look at the U.S. Fighting the U.S. with advanced conventional forces is suicide. Fighting in others ways is not.

## ENDS AND MEANS

Another model of innovation and technology is a success story. Technology, innovation, and national security from 1977-81, were highly integrated and aligned. U.S. Secretary of Defense Harold Brown and Undersecretary William Perry decided to "offset" Soviet military advantages not with more manpower and bigger armies, which is how the U.S. is responding to the current terrorism threat—expanding the size of the Army and Marine Corps—but, because the cost of labor had gone up with the end of the draft, by investing in technology. There was enormous skepticism whether the U.S. could do this and get away with it. It was seen as too dangerous and risky by many groups.

The biggest skeptics were the Joint Chiefs of Staff. They wanted forces in being. The second biggest skeptics were defense critics, who were sure the new technologies would not work. There was actually an odd collusion between the anti-military crowd and the Joint Chiefs of that era, both arguing that the U.S. should not go down that road. We did go down that road. The size of the army was shrunk dramatically after the end of the draft, technology was substituted for it, and although we'll never know it would have worked in a European conflict, we certainly know that when we fought the 1991 Gulf War, all the technology did in fact work.

A simple framework to think about security, national security, and innovation is means: resources and things we can do. Using an expansive definition, we can get more people, we can throw more money at it; or soft power, if you believe in that. Then there's ends. Do you want

to beat Russia, Germany, Japan, shape world order? Anything you could conceive of is an end. Technology can be seen as part of the calculated relationship between means and ends—i.e., strategy.

This simple model is useful because many people advance strategies—but can't say whether they will cost 4 or 24 percent of the GDP. Treating the means-ends distinction as some kind of technical detail, or ignoring it altogether, seems to me to be characteristic of the strategy discussion in the U.S. today.

In the offset strategy example, Secretaries Brown and Perry decided that the ends they wanted to achieve was to offset Soviet military power; the means were principally technology and the money to buy it. They got away with it because President Carter didn't want to buy anything. He was very interested in innovation as long as it didn't require purchasing military equipment. So the R&D was done under his administration, and when President Reagan took office, he was uninterested in studies and analysis but he wanted to buy force structure. It was the coincidence of the Reagan administration following the Carter administration that shows the complexity of technology policies.

## LEAD USERS

The simple means-ends model described above is what in engineering or physics we would call a “canonical model or form.” But there are other ways to look at the issues. What if the calculations between ends and means are too hard to actually do? Or, what if they are politicized? There's a different model for this. It's called Lead Users. This holds that the calculation is just too hard to figure out. You can't know what Congress is going to do, or what the future threat is going to be. So, just buy a technology, give it to people and see what they do with it. This is how the real world usually operates. Most U.S. military equipment has nothing to do with what it was originally bought for.

An example is nuclear weapons in the early part of the Cold War. Many studies were done about whether we would or could use them; if we used them against the USSR, would they fire back at us? Elaborate strategies of deterrence were developed. However, the way nuclear weapons were really used by Presidents Truman and Eisenhower had nothing whatsoever to do with the strategic literature. They were used to rattle the cage and increase risk when you were in a crisis, such as the Berlin crisis of 1948 and the Cuban missile crisis of 1962. Nuclear weapons were used; they just weren't detonated. The use of nuclear weapons which allowed the U.S. to win the Cold War with GDP defense budgets of 8-9 percent compared to the Soviet Union's 20-30 percent, ultimately bankrupting them, came not from any study. Things we would take for granted about deterrence, first- and second-strike capabilities, no one thought of them at all until we actually had nuclear weapons in our possession. Then, leaders figured out ways to “use” them.



Another example would be the Navy's use of cruise missiles, which were originally nuclear weapons. The Navy thought, these are great, we could use them instead of jets and fly bombs to targets much more cheaply.

So one alternative that happens all the time is Lead Users. How did the Linux computer software develop? People developed it on their own in the field. Studies have found that half of Linux has been developed by on-the-job programmers who should be programming what they're supposed to be programming; instead, they're developing Linux.

## DISRUPTIVE TECHNOLOGIES

Another model is Disruptive Technologies. The term is widely used in the Pentagon, CIA, and industry today to mean a big game-changer. It's partly right to see the Apple iPod, for example, as a disruptive technology in consumer electronics because it blew apart the existing market structure of dominant players. But I want to go into this in a little more sophisticated way.

First, the Disruptive Technology argument has two parts. There are sustaining technologies and disruptive technologies. Who is being sustained? The industry leaders. Certain technologies reinforce the power of the industry leader. Others disrupt that position. They favor new upstart companies or countries that are trying to break into the big leagues. It's a scoring system about whether they are sustaining or disruptive technologies. Sustaining technologies that enhance the power of the U.S. military to fight and win wars like we won against Iraq in 1991 and in March 2003, at least until the counterinsurgency started in April 2003, include cheap integrated circuits, dense-wave division multiplexing (amplifying light beams and switching them in fiber optic lines), stealth, nanotechnology, quantum computing—these are areas where the Pentagon is putting its money today, both in terms of R&D and in terms of conceptualizing the future and what it means for the U.S. I would argue that cheap rockets and simple cruise missiles are disruptive technologies because if other countries such as China and Iran and non-state actors like Hezbollah get them, they're very simple to operate, do not cost a lot of money, and they make life horrible for the sustaining technology player, the U.S.

The Disruptive Technology argument is interesting because it doesn't just recognize game changers, it says there's a dimension to this which advantages some countries over others. We're putting technology into a larger management framework.

A second part of Disruptive Technologies argument is frequently overlooked when we discuss whether we're still ahead of China (which we are, on almost any technology). If you picture a gap between the position of the U.S. in military stock and a rising country coming up with Disruptive Technologies, it isn't the gap that the disruptive technology must fill, but only the

gap up to a midpoint of what the customer needs. What will sell in the marketplace? As one national security example of this, China today is developing a very substantial military capability. Is the gap closing? No. When it comes to quantum computing, nanotechnology, dense-wave division multiplexing, we are way ahead of the Chinese. But the Chinese only need to reach some midway level, far short of this. If you take some old technologies like over-the-horizon radar and marry them to cruise missiles, you will in future years, many believe, be able to kill anything on the surface of the ocean. If you can find it, you can kill it. China today shoots up missiles which ask our GPS satellites, “Where am I?” They can then do a mid-course correction to come down into what they call a basket of space, say, with a U.S. aircraft carrier in it. In ten years, the Chinese may be able to kill any target in the western Pacific out to 2,000 miles.

This has enormous national security implications. Japan will be asking, what about us? Can the U.S. be a superpower but not operate in the western Pacific? You might say, would the Chinese really blow up an aircraft carrier? Well, I’ve played in war games where, when staff go in and ask the president for permission to move the aircraft carrier to Taiwan because there’s a chance its personnel might be killed, with a loss of 4,000-5,000 lives, with a single shot that is non-nuclear, the president says “If I lose 5,000 people, I’m going to be really forced to escalate war, and I don’t want to do that.” So the decision is to hold back U.S. forces to Guam and Hawaii. This is very “interesting” from a Southeast Asian, Taiwanese or Japanese point of view.

So it’s not the gap. If the Chinese have the ability to do this, they can be way behind in other advanced technologies. But there will be large geostrategic changes. That’s the insight of this Disruptive Technology framework.

## SIDEWISE TECHNOLOGIES

Sidewise Technologies is an idea I got from Bob Panero when I worked with him at the Hudson Institute many years ago. He suggested looking at technologies that come out of the developing world compared to those of the U.S. He observed that it was thought that all the good spots in the world for hydroelectric dams had been taken—big canyons behind which you could put a lake. But if you look at it, there’s a tremendous potential for hydroelectric power with low-earth dams. It’s just that Western engineers tend to think that a dam has to be 200 feet high with giant turbines.

The same logic is found with military innovation. It’s still the atomic bomb causing the U.S. nightmarish problems, an old, mature technology of 1945. The atomic bombs the Pakistanis, Iranians and North Koreans are trying to develop are not very sophisticated. They’re very primitive. But they go off. As to missiles, the U.S. would never invest in a SCUD missile, which has no guidance system. It shoots off and maybe it comes down somewhere, your own people

are the ones who are mostly endangered. Saddam Hussein did invest in SCUD missiles, and fired 37 of them at Israel in 1991, destroying the myth of Israeli invincibility. You couldn't strike at Israel, or so it was believed. Iran is developing missiles that can reach well into Europe, and so Middle Eastern wars that used to involve Israel, the Golan Heights, the Gaza, have expanded to include Iraq, Iran, even Europe now, because the missile defense system the U.S. wants to build will be based in Poland and the Czech Republic. So technology dramatically changes military geography. Years ago, the Europeans could say, "We don't care about the Middle East. Ultimately, we'll feel sorry for Israel, but it doesn't affect us." The Shahab-3 of Iran will change that view.

Over-the-horizon radar, which China is using today, is like high-frequency radio waves that bend over the earth's horizon. It can be used to find big pieces of steel in the western Pacific, such as aircraft carriers. The U.S. deployed its first system in the 1960s, [1] but Sidewise Technologies like SCUDs and OTH radar get virtually no attention in the U.S. They don't advance the state of the art like quantum computing or other more sophisticated innovations. So they are ignored, to our peril.

There is no doubt that the U.S. has its hands full in Iraq now with IEDs and other primitive systems. How do we handle those? Do we do it in retail fashion, by expanding the Army and Marine Corps to go around to the world's slums to fight bad guys house to house? Or do we try to find other ways?

To summarize, the U.S., to pursue a strategy—the calculated relationship of large ends to means—intrinsically has used technology more than any other country in world history. The Offset strategy of the 1970s allowed us to literally reduce the size of our standing forces by a third with a capital investment, an astounding achievement. But it doesn't always work. If you can calculate what you're going to do, some will look to Lead User models. Then there's Disruptive Technology, which allows you to look at international politics and what other major countries are up to. The final model is the technologies that cause the U.S. nightmares, in recent years, Sidewise Technologies.

## CONCLUSION

Teaching at a business school, I see the unbelievable transformative effect of technology. Within China recently, a U.S. company, a world leader in heart valves, very sophisticated technologies, took in a Chinese joint venture partner, as one must do in China. They've been there three years and have just discovered that the Chinese company has made the first Chinese heart pacemaker. It is half the price of the U.S. system and looks to be more reliable. The U.S. company is asking itself, what are we going to do?

There are so many examples of this in global business. Does the same thing apply to nation-states? Can the blitz speed of strategic advantage, which we know exists in the world of multinational corporate competition, not apply at the nation-state level? My view is that it does apply. There's a very complex technology game going on among the U.S. and China. As well, the U.S. is trying to play India and Japan against China, using their national innovation systems.

Other countries don't need to close the gap, they just need to meet their own security needs. If the U.S. Navy and Air Force cannot operate in the western Pacific, this changes world order dramatically. Japan will need to decide what it's going to do—will it develop its own nuclear deterrent, independent of the U.S.? What will India do? What will the West Europeans do? Will they continue their non-action in the face of these changes? Technology can dramatically and quickly change world order, and it's happening as we speak.

Is the U.S. being outmaneuvered technologically? There are three areas where we're competing now: conventional, unconventional, and nuclear. In conventional warfare, if you put armored divisions against us, we will win very quickly with our air and ground power. Then there's the unconventional warfare the Israeli Winograd report discussed, which is semi-militarized organizations like Hezbollah getting better technology. Finally, there are now nine (and counting) countries getting the atom bomb. The U.S. investment, its overwhelming capital expenditures in its forces, centers mainly around conventional warfare. Over the past two decades this has caused a non-symmetric, unconventional reaction. If you are Hezbollah, you move in that direction, terrorism but trained with modern radio networks and weapons. If you're North Korea, Pakistan, Iran, and likely others you go nuclear. If Iran goes nuclear, Saudi Arabia and Turkey will not be far behind. So the investment of the rest of the world is opposite of the United States. We're so focused on the conventional high-tech systems, we're ignoring the other two areas and getting pinched and pressed by both sides.

One could draw a very complicated scenario space of how that happens and how different countries take different actions. There's no definitive answer to the final question, but it does show the central feature of technology embedded in a larger national security policy.

Notes:

1. William Thaler at the Naval Research Laboratory developed the first experimental system, MUSIC, in the 1950s; a greatly improved system, MADRE, was built in 1961. Cobra Mist, the first truly operational system, was built starting in the late 1960s by the U.S. and UK.

# CYBERPOWER AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

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June 2012

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Like the shock paddles of a defibrillator on the chest of a heart attack victim the prefix 'cyber' has an electrifying effect on policymakers and strategists wrestling with the complexities of information age security—or more commonly today, “cybersecurity.” Successfully attaching the term to this or that policy appears to markedly increase its chances of survival. Thus in recent years while public spending has been shrinking (or is expected imminently to shrink) we have seen a bonanza of resources dedicated to countering or mitigating threats to our economic vitality from “cyber espionage” and “cyber crime,” societal cohesion from “cyber subversion” and “cyber terror,” and ultimately our material being from “cyber war.” “I dare say,” said Deputy Secretary of Defence Ashton B. Carter in March 2012, “we'd spend a lot more if we could figure out where to spend it.” [1]

Some venture to call this a panic, while others suggest a degree of alarm is justified. Both are partly right and partly wrong. The defense and foreign policy community is worried too much about the effect of cyber on the existing distribution of power among states in the international system. It is not worried enough about the ways in which digital connectivity is imbuing a wide range of novel globally networked social movements with a potential strategic significance not seen by non-state actors since 1648. The high profile attacks of *Al Qaeda*, its affiliates and imitators in New York, Washington, Bali, Madrid, London, Mumbai and elsewhere are a part of the story. They are instances of what has been called cyberspace “touching the ground.” [2] But they are not the whole of the story: many other social movements employ the same strategy of using cyberspace for the mobilization of contention in support of diverse causes; most are not violent but a few are, and more are poised to escalate as the problems which animate them (in particular economic) grow increasingly acute; and several are experimenting with forms of digital coercion which have not been seen before.

*What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun.*

*Ecclesiastes 1:9*

The literature on cyber security is typified by two major preoccupations. The first is how “game changing” the technology is—even sidelining the Clausewitzian paradigm of war. [3] The second is a heavy analytical focus on computer science rather than social science. Both, while understandable to a degree, are unhelpful. The effect of connectivity on how war is conducted is potentially, although not yet shown in practice, considerably large. Its effect upon war’s essence as a reciprocal act of force to compel one’s enemy to do one’s will is small, contrary to the claims of “cyber war” alarmists. All told, its effect upon strategic affairs is complex. On the one hand, it represents a significant advance in the “complexification” of strategy, understood in the sense of the production of intended effects as the philosopher Bertrand Russell described the function of power. On the other hand, strategists today—still predominantly concerned with the conflicts and confrontations of states and organised military power—are generally missing the power which non-traditional strategic actors better adapted to the network flows of the information age are beginning to deploy.

*“The Web is shifting power in ways that we could never have imagined. Cyberspace is reinventing warfare.”*

—BBC, “*The Virtual Revolution*” (6 February 2010)

Ours is not the first time in which it was claimed that technology was reinventing warfare. Beginning ninety years ago, the prophets of airpower writing in the shadow of the Great War’s ghastly yet indecisive slaughters were equally convinced that aerial bombing of modern industrial societies, so vulnerable to disruption and terror they thought, would drastically increase the decisiveness of war. The Italian Giulio Douhet is the most famous of such theorists but others such as J.F.C Fuller and Basil Liddell Hart in Britain and William “Billy” Mitchell in the United States shared his views all or large part. One cannot help but hear echoed in today’s “cyber doom” scenarios Stanley Baldwin’s infamous 1932 House of Commons speech in which he warned “the bomber will always get through...” [4] That none of this proved true of airpower then does not mean that it might not be true of cyber power now. Some caution, however, about claims of discontinuous change in war might be in order.

*“First you will come to the Sirens who enchant all who come near them. If any one unwarily draws in too close and hears the singing of the Sirens, his wife and children will never welcome him home again, for they sit in a green field and warble him to death with the sweetness of their song.”*

—*Circe’s warning to Odysseus in Homer’s The Odyssey, Book XII*

Cyber power falls squarely in the tradition of what Eliot Cohen once described as airpower’s “mystique,” offering “gratification without commitment.” [5] Moreover, it appears to offer other alluring properties which airpower does not: *anonymity* and *low “buy-in costs.”* There is something to such claims. For instance, compared to ships and planes (the “hardware” of modern warfare) weaponized code seems relatively cheap. On closer inspection, though, it

transpires that while relatively low-grade/low-potential-damage “cyber weapons” are indeed cheap and readily available, high-grade/high-potential-damage “cyber weapons” are not nearly so. [6] In historical perspective the Stuxnet virus that targeted the Iranian nuclear programme in 2010 will likely be regarded as the Zeppelin bomber of its day—whatever the cyber weapons that may follow it they are unlikely to be both cheap *and* effective. (At the time of writing a new piece of malware ‘Flame’ is in the news—designed for espionage rather than sabotage, it is much larger than Stuxnet though it shares an apparently common lineage.) In short, cyber power is likely to make strong states stronger and weak states weaker.

The problem of anonymity has a similarly counterintuitive complexity. A devastating attack on national infrastructure by an unknowable attacker is an oft-heard nightmarish hypothetical. [7] However, the seeming ability of cyber power to deliver an almighty blow without triggering war’s inherently escalatory nature is also seductive: it seems to offer the possibility of gratification without commitment whatsoever. But it is an exaggeration. The problem is not with the theoretical power of cyber espionage (possibly sponsored by foreign powers) to enervate economies that depend on secured intellectual property rights and electronic commerce [8]; it is, rather, that as a frame of analysis war as an act of force to compel our enemy *to do our will* is a distracting way to conceptualize the problem. Technology can alter the way in which force is applied but it does not obviate the necessity to *declare one’s will* (even if after the event). Anonymity is as much a problem for the strategic aggressor as it is the defender. There is no way around this problem through gadgetry or subterfuge.

*“Freedom is the freedom to say two plus two make four. If that is granted, all else follows.”*

—Winston Smith writing in his secret diary in George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty Four*

Cyberspace, however, changes relations amongst non-state entities and between states and non-state actors in other significant ways. For one thing, as has been observed of non-state use of weapons of mass destruction, for enemies who possess no comparable infrastructure against which to retaliate or who act non-rationally cyber attack might yet prove a potent means of attack. More immediately, though, interconnectivity has proven to be an invaluable tool of social mobilization as may be seen in the “Arab Spring.” There is controversy over these so-called “Twitter Revolutions”: social media enthusiasts see the role of connectivity in them as inherently liberalizing while skeptics observe its eminent authoritarian utility. It is often said that cyberspace increases transparency, or what psychologists call “mutual knowledge” which, in turn, makes it harder to govern through repression. This is essentially the truth that Orwell’s Winston Smith hit upon with his maxim of freedom consisting of the ability to speak one’s mind. Big Brother’s strength was the ability to prevent this, to deny people any environment, even in their own homes, in which they could speak openly. Thus having

transformed every citizen into a solitary outpost of secret fear, physical control of the population was relatively easy.

The Spanish sociologist Manuel Castells describes what is happening as a paradigm shift from mass communications to mass self-communications. In our deeply networked public sphere social movements and “insurgent politics” have a greater ability to set agendas and shape discourse than ever before. [9] This is not academic fancy. Britain’s chief of defence staff Sir David Richards has described the future of war in similar terms, arguing that the conflicts of our time are fought “through the medium of the Communications Revolution.” [10]

*“Find your tribe. Decide what you believe. Rally them around you.”  
—Matthew Reinbold, Salt Lake City Ignite Conference, March 2010[11]*

The consequences of information transparency, however, are hardly confined to authoritarian states. Albeit in less dramatic fashion, the publication of sensitive documents by Wikileaks illustrates the way in which cyberspace makes it harder to govern full stop. Some argue that the way in which information now flows more freely into the public sphere has changed the “landscape of international relations” irrevocably. [12] Be this as it may, we can already observe that connectivity enhances the ability of movements to operate and organize in both the physical and virtual dimensions in ways that are hard to counter with the kinetic blows of a conventional campaign. Occupy Wall Street, which describes itself as a “leaderless resistance movement” utilizing the “Arab Spring tactic,” is a case in point. [13] The use by the diverse “alter-globalization” of “smart mob” tactics using digital connectivity to deploy “swarming tactics” goes back to the 1999 “Battle for Seattle” protests against the World Trade Organisation is another. [14] In a wider sense we see signs of revolution adapting to the new public sphere as far back as the early 1990s Chiapas revolt in Mexico which skillfully exploited the then emerging cyberspace using email to internationalize its cause and find allies abroad. One sees the same trend exhibited in the umbrella group “We are Everywhere,” which describes itself as an “unprecedented global rebellion of the oppressed and impoverished, a rebellion which is in constant flux, which swaps ideas and tactics across oceans, shares strategies between cultures and continents, gathers in swarms and dissolves, only to swarm again elsewhere.” [15]

It is easy to dismiss such groups. Their putative strengths of leaderlessness, diversity of membership, and constant internal debates over the desirability or otherwise of the use of force (the vast majority today are non-violent though some subgroups have embraced “black bloc” tactics, including property damage and sabotage as well as street-fighting) may just belie inept leadership, absence of real unity, and a general lack of seriousness of purpose. Today’s “revolutionary” *zeitgeist* (in the West, at any rate) may serve no further purpose than the emotional sustainment of a small counterculture that possesses no potential of mass



mobilization. And yet the potential for escalation in size and type of operation is real. As Starhawk (one of the major strategic thinkers in the movement) put it, one possibility is its involvement into “an unpaid militant mercenary army.” [16] The reason she concludes this would be wrong is important because it is not her personal conviction of non-violence that is germane so much as a shrewd strategic calculation that at the moment the political and economic system is already reeling toward collapse, violent tactics are “most likely to backfire and confirm the system’s legitimacy.” [17]

Whether or not Western society is really reeling towards collapse remains to be seen, although it is widely feared that the ongoing collapse of the Eurozone is leading to major social disorder. [18] Moreover, as opposed to Islamism, which in the West appeals to a minority within a minority, the “global justice” movement is powered by a widespread and deepening perception that the current order is significantly unjust. Cyberspace enables diverse movements to highlight some vital elements of a compelling strategic narrative, for instance in the case of “Occupy” economic victimization of the 99 percent by the 1 percent, and to organize in forms that are highly fluid and able to sustain protest over the long-term at low-cost. At the same time, it does not deliver on a platter another key ingredient: the plausible route to a better future which mass movements have always required in the past in order to truly mobilize. Were such to appear these groups would very rapidly scale the strategic agenda.

In the meantime and even without such a plausible end-state, the potential for new forms of simple disruption and attack of the *status quo* is worthy of concern. Social change is not *a priori* a bad thing—on the contrary, it is the hallmark of a healthy, dynamic and open society; it is, rather, that the range of known unknowns surrounding the emerging new hacker elite (in large part among the most disaffected youth segment of the population) which derives its power from a greater than normal ability to delve between the layers of cyberspace. The Internet collective known as “Anonymous” is an example. In recent years it has “declared war” on everything from the Church of Scientology to the Zetas drug cartel. Yet despite having demonstrated the power to inflict pain and destroying wealth—the essential “bargaining power” of strategy—strategic studies has shown little interest in it. No doubt this is in part because the group, as its idiosyncratic target set and rationalization of their operations as being essentially “for the lulz” (i.e., laughs), is practically self-parodying. There are, however, similarities of outlook (if not organization and operational concepts) between Anonymous now and 19th and early 20th century anarchists with whom many members seem to consciously identify. Whether there are more disciplined revolutionaries within the movement employing the dumb mass of other cheap “clicktivists” or “hacktivists” as ad hoc “shock troops” or not is unknown. Its championing of *Wikileaks* may be significant if it represents the development of a coherent ideological identity that can outweigh the well-

established capriciousness of the group. Anonymous without an agenda is a nuisance; Anonymous with an agenda has the potential for quite serious mischief.

Connectivity has important implications for the practice of war but it does not alter its nature nearly as much as has been supposed. That said, we should not blind ourselves to the ways in which it is changing strategic affairs in the broader sense. In capsule form, these might be said to include:

1. A vast increase in the number and type of potential strategic actors as more and more people and organizations find ways of using cyberspace to mobilize contention globally for causes which would likely have failed to find a constituency in a less densely networked age;
2. The emergence of networked social movements that are building upon growing dissatisfaction with the *status quo* and embrace a “diversity of tactics” including purely electronic attacks conducted by a new hacker elite; and,
3. A change in the manner of identity-group formation and scale of data-availability that makes it more and more difficult for all states and organizations to keep secrets and to govern as more and more people share more and more information with more and more enthusiasm in more and more sophisticated ways.

Perhaps most fundamentally for strategists the ever-greater number and interconnectedness of actors is highly problematic because it increases the inherent complexity of the strategic environment.

Cyberspace can be a powerful force for good. But it has a significant dark side also. For one thing the rapidity and ease of communications means that actions initiated in one place can have practically instantaneous effects in another, regardless of their geographical separation. And the limits beyond which there are no potential attacks are disappearing as national frontiers become more permeable. It seems to accelerate existing revolutionary tendencies and offer new coercive tools to which such groups may escalate; and yet, paradoxically, it seems also to enervate these movements—to impair their ability to escalate and to build disciplined cadres over the long term, which heretofore has been a hallmark of revolutionary success. Contemporary events in the Middle East where old regimes toppled by spontaneous outpourings of public rage are being succeeded by more disciplined revolutionaries playing the vanguard game illustrate this duality.

In the West we appear to be seeing the “retribalization” of society, which the media guru Marshall McLuhan predicted in the 1960s in ways that are potentially very positive while also in ways that are decidedly negative. The extremist Anders Breivik who on the 22nd of July

2011 raided a youth camp of the Norwegian Labour Party shooting and killing sixty-nine people, most of them teenagers is an example of the latter which blends both cyberspace and “real space” elements inextricably: he chose his “tribe”—one which he defined on the basis of ideas almost entirely formed by his solitary on-line activities; he decided what he believed and what made him angry, which he explained in laborious detail in a 1,000-page-plus manifesto that he distributed to carefully selected individuals throughout Europe on the day of the attack; and he went out to make the world what he wanted it to be through an act of spectacular violence designed primarily as an “information operation” to galvanize his target constituency and win new adherents. Breivik’s propaganda by deed was hardly the first of its kind; it is unusual as a variant that is highly adapted to the current communications paradigm and because of the degree of individual superempowerment it involved. It will not be the last.

Notes:

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14. Howard Rheingold, *Smart Mobs: The Next Social Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Basic Books, 2002), pp. 160-162.
15. Notes from Nowhere (eds.), *We are Everywhere: The Irresistible Rise of Global Anti-Capitalism* (London: Verso, 2003), p. 16.
16. Starhawk, *Webs of Power: Notes from the Global Uprising* (Gabriola Island, British Columbia: New Catalyst Books, 2008), p. 60; for a different vision of this prospect which imagines such a mercenary force going from strength to strength see the near-future science fiction novel by Adam Roberts, *New Model Army* (London: Orion, 2010).
17. Starhawk, p. 150.
18. See UBS Investment Research, *Global Economic Perspectives*, “Euro break-up: The Consequences” (6 September 2011), <http://www.scribd.com/doc/64020390/xrm45126>.

# THE RACE FOR DRONES

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January 2015

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Over the last two decades, the United States has been the world's pre-eminent user and supplier of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs). In 2013, the United States was estimated to have approximately 7,500 drones in operation, ranging from relatively small surveillance drones to the more famous Predator and Reaper models used for targeted killings in Pakistan, Yemen and elsewhere. [1] By contrast, China's fleet, ranked as the second largest in the world, is smaller than the United States by at least several thousand drones. One estimate in 2011 suggested that China's Air Force possessed only 280 drones, although other branches of the Chinese government have thousands more. [2] Moreover, the United States has enjoyed vast technological advantages in range and strike capacity of its drones, making its fleet a cut above those held by their global competitors. [3] Other states, such as Britain, Israel, Russia, and the United Arab Emirates have their own growing drones programs, and have invested in research and development, but remain far behind the United States in the number and sophistication of their drones. The concentration of technological know-how in U.S. companies, and the vast infrastructure in research and development for drones present in the United States, has led many observers to conclude that America will retain an unchallengeable pre-eminence in drones for the foreseeable future. [4] The global diffusion of drones, according to the conventional wisdom, is not a problem because of the lead in drone technology that the United States holds over potential adversaries.

Such complacency about the consequences of a global race for drones is not warranted. Today, America's comparative advantage in drones is being eroded as drone technology is spreading across the international system. While their current technology lags, and in some cases merely imitates, U.S. drone models, global competitors such as China and Russia are now spending billions to catch up to the United States in research and development for drone technology. The U.S. lead will remain for the next decade or more, but the substantial Chinese, Russian and European investments in drone research and production will gradually match the technological advantage currently held by U.S. companies. Moreover, the United States is not the dominant player in the current export market for drones. Israel has

become the world's supplier of first resort, selling drone technology to a large number of other states for domestic and military uses. Due to U.S. and Israeli exports, and the efforts of other states to develop drone export markets, drones have now spread to most established militaries in the developed world. Between 2004 and 2011, the number of states with active UAV programs doubled, from 40 to over 80. [5] More than one third of the states in the world have developed their own drones programs, ranging from relatively small boutique programs to growing multi-purpose drone programs used for combat, surveillance and civilian uses. According to a RAND study, 23 countries are developing their own technology for different types of armed drones. [6]

Even in an era of austerity and steep cuts in defense spending, the demand for drones is increasing, leading a growing number of states to consider joining the export market. The American and Israeli companies that traditionally have dominated the drones market are now facing increasingly stiff competition from Chinese companies who are developing dozens of drone models for the export market. The competition will only become more intense as new arms manufacturers from Europe, Russia, and the Middle East begin to catch up. Moreover, many of these states, such as Russia and China, face fewer export restrictions and will be able to sell sophisticated drones to governments not authorized by the U.S. Congress to receive comparable American models. The result is that drones of increasing quality will soon be in the hands of states such as Iran, Syria, and North Korea. [7] Similarly, non-state actors will get into the race for drones, as the United States recently discovered when Jabhat al-Nusra and ISIS deployed drones to coordinate attacks against targets in Syria. [8]

The long-term strategic consequences of this new arms race in drones around the world will not be known for decades. At this point, drones are not an immediate strategic game changer in the way that nuclear weapons once were. A better analogy is the diffusion of military aircraft: after the pioneering use of heavier-than-air aircraft by the U.S. in 1910, all of the major powers at the time—Britain, France, Austria, Germany and Italy—rapidly followed suit with their own military aviation programs, while many other states became purchasers of aviation from dominant American, British and other European suppliers. The diffusion of military aircraft (of varying quality) continued throughout the 1930-1940s to the point where almost every major military in the world boasted at least a token military aviation capability. Over time, it became a mark of prestige for a state to have an air force even if it conveyed little more than symbolic value. By the late 1940s, it was clear that the diffusion of military aviation was creating dramatic strategic consequences, either by resetting the terms of competition for existing rivalries or by introducing a degree of uncertainty into regional balances of power.

The world is now approaching a similar point with drones as the race for this technology is resetting the terms of global competition and quietly altering the rules of the game for many

long-simmering conflicts and rivalries. This is happening in part because few, if any, states will use drones in the way that the United States currently does, as a way to ruthlessly target militant networks in ungoverned territories. Rather, the proliferation of drones will also be accompanied by rapid adaptation of drones to new, and perhaps unforeseen, civilian and military uses, which will have three consequences for the international system. First, the proliferation of drones will reset the rules and norms governing surveillance and reconnaissance and invite new counter-measures that may paradoxically increase uncertainty between regional rivals over the long run. Second, as a low-cost, apparently low-risk form of technology, drones will become increasingly useful to governments in testing the strategic commitments and the nerves of their rivals. Even today, a number of governments and rebel groups facing regional rivalries have started to use drones in ways that chip away at the foundations of previously stable deterrent relationships. Third, the worldwide proliferation of drones in contested airspace, and the increasing risk that a drone will have an accident with a civilian aircraft, multiplies the chances of a conflict spiral stemming from an accident or drone misuse. Given these risks, it is in Washington's interest to take a leading role in slowing the race for drones and developing new legal, institutional and normative mechanisms to govern drone usage and sale in the future.

Notes:

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# THINKING ABOUT MILITARY HISTORY IN AN AGE OF DRONES, HACKERS, AND IEDS

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April 2015

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We live in a transitional period in the history of human conflicts. Military robotics and cyber capabilities constitute a Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) that will permanently alter the nature of warfare. The United States, which leads in the creation and adoption of these forms of technology, has the unique opportunity to shape the RMA and prevent some of its negative consequences, but only if it acts quickly and decisively to lead an international movement that can address the worst potential consequences of these developments. Absent such a determined effort, military robots and cyber capabilities are likely to make human conflict even more painful and costly, not only for uniformed military organizations but also for the noncombatant civilian populations of the world.

A Brief Introduction to RMAs

RMAs permanently alter the nature of warfare. Nations and non-state actors that accept and adapt to the changes presented by RMAs tend to gain a decisive advantage over non-adopters,

such that RMAs offer the possibility of upsetting the pre-existing power structures of the global state system. These RMAs do not occur instantaneously, nor do they occur in a vacuum. Rather, they are the sum of changes in technology, doctrine, and strategy that collectively change the nature of conflicts. Over time, though, RMAs render previous conceptions of warfare obsolete. When the conditions for an RMA are created, there is a period of asymmetry, followed by a widespread adoption of the change as late-adopters realize their errors and rush to retain as much of their power as possible by changing their approach to warfare. While being first in an RMA is not always a lasting advantage, as the costs of first-adopter status can be prohibitively high, being last to adapt is almost always a recipe for disaster.

One of the most well-known RMAs in history serves to illustrate many of the key points of the RMA phenomenon. Gunpowder, in at least a rudimentary form, had been discovered in China by at least the Song Dynasty of the eleventh century, and might have been in existence even earlier. The benefits of gunpowder weaponry were not immediately obvious, although the innovation gradually spread through trade and conquest, reaching Europe in the thirteenth century. At that time, warfare was characterized by limited objectives for massively fortified positions. The pinnacle of field combatants, the heavily-armored, mounted knight, dominated the battlefields of the era, bolstered by armies of less-protected archers and men-at-arms. Fortifications of the era had high walls, protective moats, and the ability to withstand long sieges. To conquer such a position required months, and possibly years, gradually wearing down the defenses and exhausting the supplies of the threatened castle. Once gunpowder artillery, even of a rudimentary sort, became common, the era of castles quickly ended, as the **high walls could not withstand even the inaccurate cannon fire of the era. Likewise, knights' armor could not stop the power of a firearm's projectile, and thus became an expensive and mostly useless relic of the earlier era.** Gunpowder permanently transformed the notion of warfare in Europe, and in turn triggered a fortification revolution, with new strongpoints constructed specifically to counteract the power of gunpowder weapons. Field armies also abandoned the old means of combat, adopting hand-held firearms that could inflict devastating wounds upon the enemy. Of course, early firearms had disadvantages. They were heavy, they usually failed in poor weather, their rate of fire was ridiculously slow, and their accuracy was dismal. To counter these problems, military theorists invented the notion of linear tactics, combined arms formations, and volley fire. By the sixteenth century, European armies utilizing gunpowder weapons had swept through enormous portions of the globe, conquering the New World empires of the Aztecs and the Incas, colonizing the coasts of the Americas and Africa, and completely overturning the previous world order. States that failed to adapt to the new system, or who did not have the capability to produce gunpowder weapons, simply ceased to exist, the victims of an RMA that swept aside the entire old concept of conflict. [1]

## Setting Limits Upon Conflicts

Of course, not every observer of the gunpowder RMA considered it a positive development. Without gunpowder, after all, the widespread adoption of chattel slavery, the eradication of native populations outside of Europe, and the horrors of increasingly widespread warfare would not have been possible. One needs only examine the Thirty Years War to appreciate the terrible potential of gunpowder-wielding armies, particularly when bolstered by religious leadership calling for the annihilation of competing worldviews. After Europe nearly destroyed itself through that terrible conflict, a new desire for order emerged, codified by the Treaty of Westphalia and the establishment of formal state boundaries. Scholars such as Hugo de Grotius presented arguments about the types of behavior that should be forbidden in warfare, attempting to mitigate the very worst aspects of human conflict. The awful potential of gunpowder made the establishment of limits upon wartime behavior a desirable goal, and such limits could only be created during an era of peace. If every belligerent agreed upon a certain standard of behavior in war, or at the very least, agreed not to engage in the worst forms of action, the horrors of warfare might at least be somewhat limited. Later philosophers, most notably Charles-Louis Montesquieu and Emmerich de Vattel, built upon Grotius' arguments and established further norms of behavior in wartime. In general, the key considerations of wartime behavior can be summed up in two concepts: proportionality and discrimination. [2]

The notion of proportionality simply argues that any given action in a war should be proportionate to the type of conflict being fought. Essentially, it serves as a means to avoid a massive escalation of a conflict that might be contained at a much lower level. Proportionality does not require that every belligerent precisely copy the behavior of the enemy (although to do so would almost guarantee that a war would remain extremely limited), but it does require that a state actor give significant thought to the consequences before engaging in a disproportionate response. Of course, proportionality is, at least to a certain extent, in the eye of the actor, and what one belligerent considers an escalation in hostilities the other might consider a perfectly natural response. In theory, though, the proportionality idea should prevent one state from responding to a border incursion with a nuclear strike, and prohibits extremely powerful states from responding to minor provocations with full-scale attacks against weaker neighbors. [3]

Discrimination is the idea that warfare should be confined to military forces whenever possible. While it is an impossible standard to suggest that civilians should never be affected by interstate conflict, it is necessary that a belligerent's actions be able to specifically target the legitimate combatants and whenever possible spare the citizenry. Thus, if a weapon cannot be aimed in such a manner as to deliberately target a specific individual, vehicle, or unit, it could be considered indiscriminate. For this reason, general artillery bombardments of civilian

populations are considered illegal, indiscriminate attacks, although that has not prevented their use from time to time. Likewise, area bombing of cities during World War II could easily be classified as an indiscriminate attack; to get around the prohibition, aerial attackers constantly claimed to be attacking a certain point target of military value, and then wrote off the resulting collateral damage as the unfortunate result of an imprecise weapon. By the end of the war in the Pacific, even this degree of legal cover had largely been dropped, and the incendiary raids on Japanese cities demonstrated the dangerous potential of indiscriminate (and some would argue disproportionate) attacks. [4]

## Warfare in the Twenty-First Century

Modern warfare in the twenty-first century has not been characterized by the large formations and attritional warfare of the World Wars, nor has it particularly resembled the large-scale insurgencies of the American war in Vietnam or the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Although American military forces would undoubtedly prefer most modern conflicts to resemble the Persian Gulf War, when an American-led coalition of nearly one million troops managed to drive the Iraqi occupiers out of Kuwait at a minimum of losses to the coalition forces, the coalition victory in 1991 demonstrated the futility of conducting such a war against the United States, NATO, or any of the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council. Rather, any belligerent that hoped to face off against the United States would need to negate many of the American advantages in technology, training, and logistics, and would need to seek to exploit perceived American weaknesses, if any could be found. In the run-up to the 2003 invasion of Iraq, it was evident to most military observers that the Iraqi Army had no chance of holding off an American-led attack. Its fortunes had only declined since 1991, while the coalition position in the region had been considerably strengthened. Aerial overflights gave a massive intelligence advantage to the coalition forces, which had a reasonably certain idea of the size, composition, and location of Iraqi combat units. Further, the coalition would commence any war with uncontested aerial dominance, an almost insurmountable advantage in twenty-first century conventional warfare.

The invasion commenced as planned, with a very quick drive from the Kuwaiti border directly toward Baghdad. The spearhead of the ground column gave little thought to flank security, which was effectively provided by the air cover overhead, and instead focused on quickly pushing into the Iraqi capital. Many American political leaders assumed that the Iraqi population would welcome the overthrow of Saddam Hussein, and would embrace the necessary short-term occupation of their homeland. Cultural misunderstandings aside, this mindset demonstrated both a shocking level of hubris and a total lack of awareness of the risks associated with moving into an urban occupation zone. Apparently, the lessons of the Battle of Mogadishu (1993), in which thousands of poorly-armed, completely untrained Somalis engaged much smaller American special operations forces in a two-day firefight that ended in

an American fighting withdrawal after a successful raid, had failed to permeate the U.S. military. At the end of the fighting in Mogadishu, even though the Americans had inflicted more than 20-1 casualties upon their irregular attackers, it was the United States that abandoned the humanitarian mission and the militias that retained control of the city.

## Countering the Coalition

In Iraq, an enormous number of well-trained troops who owed their position in Iraqi society to the Hussein regime proved far less amenable to life under coalition occupation than the planners had expected, especially after Paul Bremer's Coalition Provisional Authority government ordered the Iraqi military disbanded. Hussein's followers, particularly the special Saddam Fedayeen units, waited for the occupiers to move into the urban areas before launching a very widespread and well-coordinated insurgency. The urban locations largely negated American airpower and firepower advantages, as the resulting collateral damage from any heavy weapons use could be turned into a propaganda victory even if it initially ended in a tactical defeat. Further, the lack of raw numbers of coalition troops meant that many of the enormous weapons caches discovered in the march toward Baghdad remained unsecured, and open to plunder by any miscreants determined to resist the occupation. The insurgents quickly discovered that engaging in any form of direct tactical engagement with the American-led coalition forces was a recipe for disaster. On the other hand, the use of mines and roadside bombs soon became a favorite tactic of the insurgents. Soon, the number one casualty-creating activity for the Iraqi fighters was the use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

IEDs have a long history in warfare, stretching back to the first uses of gunpowder as an explosive. There has been almost an infinite variety of IED designs, but their basic premise is relatively simple. A bomb of some type is planted in the vicinity of where enemy troops are expected to pass, and detonated at a time when it can be expected to create the greatest number of casualties. Unlike land mines, an IED does not necessarily require the enemy to make direct contact with the device. Most, rather, are command-detonated at the most advantageous moment. This detonation might be through a mechanical device, an electronic pulse, or some form of wireless signal. The explosives themselves range from repurposed artillery shells buried in the road to extremely complex shaped charges designed to create a penetrating effect capable of piercing even heavily armored vehicles. Although American forces were well-prepared for conventional combat operations, they had little initial ability to detect and counteract IEDs, and soon began to fall victim in staggering numbers. As the casualties mounted, public support for the war in Iraq steadily dropped, making the enemy able to offset many American advantages with a relatively simple device. Warfare is often characterized as a learning contest, and in the battle over IEDs, the concept certainly proved true. Each side sought to out-innovate the other, with the Americans developing better-armored vehicles designed to deflect bomb blasts; deploying jammers to block detonation

signals; and clearing the roadways of any debris that might be used to conceal an explosive device. The insurgents, in turn, developed new ways to design and deploy their bombs, eventually hiding them in corpses, in heavily civilian areas, and in cars driven by unknowing accomplices. Unfortunately, the IED is a very easily-constructed weapon, the Internet is rife with instructions for how to construct simple yet effective devices. As the IED casualties mounted, the United States began to cast about for a new means of waging war that would not place so many U.S. troops directly in harm's way. The obvious solution was to find ways to wage war from afar, substituting machines for human combatants.

### Military Robots and the Quest for Bloodless War

The search for a bloodless war led to the most terrifying development of warfare in the current century, specifically the emergence of robotic warfare. Although systems with a limited degree of robotic characteristics have been utilized in war for nearly a century, the newly-emerging machines are starting to be created with a level of environmental awareness and decision-making capabilities that are unprecedented. The mass media is currently enamored with the term “drone,” although it is a thorough misnomer in that it evokes visions of a mindless machine carrying out its task without regard for the consequences or the surroundings. A remotely-piloted vehicle (RPV) has a human controller at some position, determining the actions of the machine, even if the pilot is not actually within the machine in question. The most common such systems are remotely-piloted aircraft (RPAs) which have become ubiquitous in the current American conflicts against terror organizations around the globe. However, the truly frightening machines, which have been designed and tested but not yet fielded, are those given autonomous control over lethal decision-making. Barring an international agreement to ban such devices, it is almost certain that one or more nations will choose to deploy such “killer robots” against an enemy, a move that will undoubtedly demonstrate their tactical utility, but which also might plunge the world into yet another arms race, one which could have devastating consequences for the human population of belligerent nations.

The earliest robotic military systems were simply unmanned flying bombs. The Kettering Bug was designed during World War I, but not put into production soon enough to be used against the enemy. The device, also called the flying torpedo, was an unmanned aircraft with a payload of explosives and enough fuel for a one-way trip toward an enemy position. It was preprogrammed to fly for a set number of minutes on a straight heading, at the end of which the engine cut out and sent the Bug plunging toward the enemy position. It had a range of fifty miles, but rarely managed to strike within a mile of the target. [5] By the end of World War II, the Germans had greatly improved the idea, firing off V-1 flying bombs toward Britain for the last several months of the war. These devices were essentially a bomb attached to a jet engine, their straight and level flight made them easy pickings for interceptors, which found the best

countermeasure to be matching speed, altitude, and direction and then literally tipping the bomb over, causing it to crash into the English Channel. [6]

By the Vietnam War, the United States was fielding modified target drones outfitted with cameras to conduct aerial reconnaissance over contested territory. These aircraft really were drones, and could be sent into areas where a manned aircraft might face too much danger (or might cause an international incident if shot down). Dozens were sent across the Chinese border, with a number shot down by Chinese air defenses. On each occasion, the Chinese trumpeted their success in shooting down an American aircraft, but could not show off a captured pilot to complete the propaganda victory. [7] Shortly after the war ended, the United States began working on a series of remotely-piloted aircraft that might be able to gather much better intelligence because they could react to changing conditions on the ground. The most well-known such airframe, the General Atomics RQ-1 Predator, entered service in 1995. After some initial hiccups in its first deployments in the Balkans, the aircraft emerged as a key surveillance platform. Its long loiter time, relative low observability, and its ability to beam a data stream back to its operators made it a key tactical asset in the invasion and occupation of Afghanistan. In 2001, the military tested the idea of firing AGM 114 Hellfire missiles from the Predator, thus allowing an operator the possibility of making an immediate attack upon a key target identified by the aircraft's sensors. From 2001 until 2009, Predators, and starting in 2007, MQ-9 Reapers, began to play an increasingly important role in the global fight against Al Qaeda, launching attacks in several countries and killing a number of key leaders of the terror organization and its affiliates. [8]

In the meantime, ground robotics also continued to advance, albeit with considerably less fanfare. One of the first goals for a fully-automated military system was the creation of a more effective air-defense system. The U.S. Navy debuted its Phalanx Close-in Weapons System (CIWS) in 1980. This radar-guided Gatling gun fires 20 millimeter shells at a rate of up to 4,500 per minute. It is designed to shoot down anti-ship missiles or attacking aircraft, each of which moves at a speed far too great for a human operator to have a realistic chance of scoring a hit. Thus, the Phalanx must, by definition, be fully automated, even if it has a human operator standing by to hopefully intervene if something goes wrong. [9] By 2003, a ground-based version of the system, the Centurion, was deployed for the mission of protecting American positions from rocket, mortar, and artillery projectiles. Other ground robots capable of combat missions include the iRobot PackBot, which has been most noted for its use in disarming explosives, but which can also be outfitted with weaponry, and the Talon SWORDS, a tracked robot that can carry rocket launchers, machine guns, or sniper rifles. While the SWORDS can be operated remotely by a human, it can at least theoretically be enabled to undertake autonomous operations. [10]

Currently, military robotics are moving in several developmental directions, including the creation of smaller, smarter, and more lethal variants. For many theorists, the true point of no return will be the deployment of a robotic weapon that is authorized to take human life **without the permission of a human operator, often called the “man-in-the-loop.”** While some of the air defense platforms could theoretically kill in the performance of their duties, it is not necessarily their primary function, in that they exist to counter an aerial threat, not to kill enemy pilots. Many of the latest models in development, on the other hand, are envisioned to be extremely efficient killers, capable of eliminating targets without putting any friendly operators in harm’s way, and with minimal collateral damage. It would not be difficult to marry a sophisticated facial-recognition software program to a camera-carrying platform with an attack capability, resulting in a robot that would be essentially a flying assassin, capable of loitering over an area and searching for an individual target, and then killing that target at the first opportunity. [11]

In the ongoing war against Al Qaeda and its allies, the United States, in particular, has become extremely reliant upon high-technology, remotely-operated systems. These platforms have allowed American decision-makers to largely wage war with impunity, secure in the knowledge that they can attack an enemy that cannot strike back against U.S. military personnel. However, no enemy in history has simply remained content to absorb the blows of an attacker and offer no retaliatory response. The attacks against Al Qaeda militants might **keep American military personnel out of harm’s way, but they also infuriate the citizenry in** the areas where the attacks are launched, and almost certainly inspire attacks against whatever targets are within reach. Regrettably, those targets are far more likely to be civilians, including journalists, tourists, embassy personnel, or anyone else unfortunate enough to come within range.

### The Advent of Cyberwar

The Internet can be not only an information source for designing weapons, but also the mechanism by which weaponry might be deployed. When the interconnection of computers was first envisioned, little thought was given for the security of such a network. Although the network itself massively expanded, the lack of an initial security protocol has led to endemic weaknesses within the infrastructure of the Internet. [12] As well, the computers and software **upon which the Internet’s functionality is based are filled with vulnerabilities that might be** exploited by a knowledgeable computer user. By the 1990s, it was clear that an attacker could obtain control over a target computer, or at the very least, could significantly hinder its function and ability to transmit useful information. Decades of experimentation with this new type of attack, usually dubbed cyber warfare, have only expanded the abilities of computer attackers, commonly referred to as hackers. The resources of states have been applied to developing cyber attack capabilities, and those nations that are most reliant upon cyber



functions for both military and civilian infrastructure are by definition the most vulnerable to cyber attack. [13]

Thus far, cyber warfare has not directly caused a death, although many experts argue that it is only a matter of time before such an attack leads to a fatality. Cyber attacks have definitely contributed to military operations, though, with one of the most obvious examples being Operation Orchard. This incident involved an Israeli airstrike upon a suspected Syrian nuclear reactor that might have been used to produce nuclear weapons. In 2007, Israeli warplanes utterly destroyed the facility, which was still under construction by Syrian engineers assisted by North Korean advisors. Prior to the attack, a cyber attack rendered the Syrian air defense network inoperative by “spoofing” the radar operators’ screens, essentially making the Israeli aircraft invisible on the screens. The first indication that anything was amiss came with the explosion of Israeli ordinance upon the Deir ez-Zor site, which was subsequently filled in and bulldozed by Syrian authorities, who also denied the existence of any nuclear program. [14]

The other most well-known, and somewhat mysterious cyber attack came in 2010, when an extremely sophisticated worm program was introduced to the Iranian nuclear reactor computer system at Natanz. The self-replicating program quickly spread throughout the Iranian network and searched for a very specific form of programmable logic controller used to run uranium-separation centrifuges. Upon locating its target, the worm then slightly modified the logic controllers’ instructions, causing the centrifuges to undergo violent changes in their spinning frequencies. Over time, this destroyed a substantial portion of the centrifuges and greatly set back the Iranian nuclear program. [15] Even after the damage became evident, it was still more than a year before a little-known Belorussian cybersecurity firm announced that it had discovered a malignant program that it dubbed “Stuxnet.” The program could only have been created with the resources possessed by an extremely advanced cyber state, although no nation has formally claimed responsibility for the attack. The most likely candidates, based upon both technological capability and political desire for such an outcome are the United States and Israel, but neither nation has responded to allegations of planting the program. [16]

### The Need for New Limits Upon War

While these advanced platforms might offer the illusion of warfare with minimal human casualties, it is far more likely that they will only delay the inevitable human deaths that are created by war. The most fervent proponents of the devices tend to have two lines of argument. The first is that the robots might be able to create a permanent advantage for the first adopters of these devices, essentially locking in the current world power dynamic. However, given the low cost of entry into this field of innovation, this is an extremely unlikely, and quite frankly dangerous, idea of why to adopt such weaponry. The second is that warfare might be relegated to a conflict of machines, with the losing side in the robot war laid open to

attack, but naturally conceding the argument that led to the conflict before facing attack. Unfortunately, previous RMAs have led to a similar argument, most recently when airpower advocates argued that warfare would become almost sterile after the adoption of military airplanes. Early airpower theorists like Hugh Trenchard, Billy Mitchell, and Giulio Douhet all argued that the aerial armadas of modern states would meet and fight for supremacy of the air. Once one side's airpower had triumphed, the loser would inevitably surrender rather than face the devastation of an uncontested aerial bombardment. Nearly a century of aerial warfare has demonstrated the farcical nature of this argument, and yet it continues to be spouted in numerous airpower arenas. Not even the massive devastation of German cities, the firebombing of Japan, and the atomic destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki caused the advocates to drop their assumption that enemies would refuse to withstand aerial attacks. It is highly unlikely that a robotic war would simply stop once one side exhausted its supply of machines—instead, the war would devolve from a contest to a slaughter, making the nature of human conflict infinitely worse, but with little or any mediation of the horrors of modern war. Only a deliberate effort to enact and enforce an outright ban of autonomous lethal military robots stands a chance of preventing such a conflict.

The United States, as the foremost developer and user of military robotics, is the only world power that can take the lead on an effort to set limits upon the utilization of military robotics. Instead, though, the United States is doubling down on its investments in high technology killing machines, and essentially refusing to consider setting limits on what it currently considers to be a major asymmetrical advantage in the ongoing conflicts with Al Qaeda, the Islamic State, al-Shabaab, and other terror organizations. Every generation that engages in conflict is forced to examine the limits of acceptable behavior, and to consider whether or not the current rules are still an accurate reflection of the realities of warfare in their era. In the twenty-first century, the laws of armed conflict, developed before the advent of cyber warfare and military robotics, are simply not up to the task of providing an effective governance system for modern conflicts, and thus must be revised to reflect the new paradigm. If the United States does not take the lead in such an effort, the effort cannot succeed, and the likely future of military engagements will truly become more terrible for all involved.

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## PART XII: NUCLEAR WEAPONS & DETERRENCE

## CULTURE AND DETERRENCE

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August 2006

*This article was published as an E-Note.*

The debates among American strategists before both the first (1991) and the second (2003) Gulf Wars naturally differed, because strategic circumstances differed. But at least one common element—aside from the obvious fact that Iraq was the target of both campaigns—stood forth: disagreement over whether the United States could deter a nuclear-armed Iraq. As a rule, those who believed we could opposed war in both cases, while those who were skeptical that deterrence would work inclined to favor military action to prevent a nuclear-armed Iraq from coming into being (though not necessarily to favor the second war we actually got, when and how we got it).

Clearly enough, this disagreement reflects deeper views about what deterrence is and how it works—and it is an ongoing debate, now transposed to disagreements about policy toward Iran. Those who believe in the robustness of deterrence weigh the costs and risks of U.S. military action against Iran and decide firmly against it; those who are skeptical that deterrence will work see before them a different calculus. What distinguishes these two views? In essence, different views on how the human mind navigates social realities.

Those who believe in the robustness of deterrence see a universal logic inherent in WMD that flows ineluctably from the nature of the weapons themselves. It is not as though cultural differences do not exist, or that different societies do not have different styles of reasoning—granted, they do, such advocates will admit. But all these differences are trumped by the manifest consequences of what an exchange of nuclear weapons would mean. Different reasoning styles is not the same as different rationalities or irrationality, and any rationale person will avoid personal and national suicide. That is why Richard Rhodes, Pulitzer-prize winning author of *The Making of the Atomic Bomb*, could write in the middle of the Kuwait crisis in 1990 that it would not matter if Iraq gained nuclear weapons capabilities because “45 years of postwar history has demonstrated that acquiring such weapons in a nuclear-armed world is inescapably self-deterring.” It is how Stanley Hoffmann, invoking the authority of Zbigniew Brzezinski, could write that “deterrence, which has worked against far greater powers, remains an effective substitute for preventative war. Israel could deter Iraq, and the US as well as other nuclear states could provide a nuclear guarantee to countries threatened by Iraq’s nuclear capacity.”

These views are supposedly buttressed by inarguable historical facts. From the time in 1947 that more than one country possessed nuclear weapons, no such weapon has ever been fired in anger, notwithstanding a series of extremely tense political crises and very deep-seated ideological conflict. Not only did the United States and the Soviet Union never use them, neither has China, France, Britain or other lesser and newer nuclear powers such as Israel, India, and Pakistan. Everyone has been either deterred or self-deterred, to use Rhodes' language, and so, the argument goes, would Iraq, Iran, North Korea, and other states foolish enough to waste their resources on nuclear weapons programs. Facts are facts; case is closed; who could argue with that?

Me. I argued against this view more than 15 years ago, and nothing that has happened since has changed my mind: nuclear weapons are not by their very nature universally self-detering. Deterrence is a collective psychological act, and the human mind is shaped not only by its capacity for rationality but also by emotion, moral logic and, yes, culture. Indeed, the impact of culture on the strategic realm after 9/11 is, or should be, more obvious than ever, and that impact is highly variable. I will reprise my narrower argument in a moment, but it is worth reflecting first on the logical fallacies of the robust-deterrence school of thought at their core. I say fallacies—plural—because the mistake being made here is a compound one. It is a mistake, first of all, to simply superimpose the U.S.-Soviet experience onto other geopolitical domains, but robust-deterrence advocates have also misinterpreted the U.S.-Soviet deterrence experience itself. Both mistakes involve the underestimation of the significance of culture on strategic assessment.

#### Mistake Number 1

A funny thing happened on the way to the Cold War. We American children of the Enlightenment are persuaded of the universal validity of certain political propositions (luckily enough, those propositions we ourselves happen to hold dear). This persuasion of ours collided in the late 1940s and 1950s with a rising social science establishment hell-bent on “hardening” its image, if not its actual work habits, as being scientific. The result is that Americans came to believe—perhaps more accurately, to assume as if by second nature—in a theory of politico-military behavior that was both universal in application and scientific in nature. Like a child who thinks that the names for objects inhere in the objects themselves, we believed we were discovering objective truths about life in the early years of the nuclear age rather than imagining (and thus inventing) such truths in culturally idiosyncratic ways.

Because these truths were supposedly objective and universal, we assumed that the Soviet leadership must have thought about these weapons and their uses just as we did. Therefore, we could plan the impact of our policies because we knew how the Soviet Union and others would react to them: namely, just as we ourselves would react.

The trouble was, they didn't. Robert McNamara, the U.S. Secretary of Defense who first tried seriously to fuse the formal theory of the day with national policy in the nuclear age, postulated that once a strategic plateau was reached between U.S. and Soviet strategic forces, it would be possible to cap that plateau and then to negotiate sizable and stabilizing reductions. McNamara assumed that the Soviet leadership shared the view that nuclear weapons had no rational battlefield use and that any notion of practicable strategic superiority was meaningless, not just because the weapons were unusable but because neither side would allow the other to attain lopsided advantages. When Soviet behavior did not reflect McNamara's anticipations, some people began asking why.

As it happened, Nathan Leites of the RAND Corporation had been thinking about such matters for some years. He postulated that every national leadership cadre would have what he called an "operational code" for dealing with strategic issues, a general orientation to strategy shaped by culture: language, religious beliefs, historical memory and imagination, and the whole gamut of metaphors that enable societies to make sense of the world and act purposely in it. Leites understood, along with every skeptic of positivism from Immanuel Kant to I. W. Thomas, that, in the latter's words, people do not first see and then define, they define and then they see. The Soviets would not in all or perhaps even most cases see the world as we did, and they would not react as we would react. They would not necessarily share our assumptions or properly assess our motives, nor we theirs (unless we deciphered their operational code).

Most American strategic analysts either ignored Leites or did not understand what he was saying. B. F. Skinner was a lot more popular in those days than Kant, after all. Not until the late 1970s did the dominant view of the U.S. strategic analytical community accept the existence of distinctive strategic cultures. This happened for a variety of reasons: It had by then become impossible to explain Soviet behavior in ways that harmonized with our presumed universal understanding of strategic logic; Chinese strategic behavior and language looked odd compared to ours; and the case for taking cultural factors seriously was finally being made in language that arms and arms-control experts could understand.

## Mistake Number 2

Those who still argued the positivist case for robust deterrence in 1990 were, perhaps, holdouts from the early years of the Cold War, their brains stuck in some kind of intellectual amber, still believing in objective and universal truths about deterrence. But they compounded their error with the assumption that what worked for the U.S.-Soviet relationship (for reasons they at least partly misunderstood) would also work both for lesser-included cases (e.g., a superpower deterring smaller nuclear powers) and for different cases (e.g., a smaller nuclear



power deterring one or more other small nuclear powers). As I argued in 1991, there are at least six fairly obvious reasons why this assumption is mistaken.

First, U.S.-Soviet deterrence was a straightforward bilateral proposition; no other nuclear powers really played in the same weight-class. Deterrence in a nuclear-armed Middle East, which may come to include a nuclear-armed Israel, Iran, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and so forth—not a far-fetched proposition, regrettably—would have to be as omni-directional as Middle Eastern antagonisms and fears, and this is not to speak of how nuclear powers outside the region would figure in all this. Calculations of sufficiency would be far less certain; states might well seek arsenals equivalent with not only one potential antagonist but several. Such a situation would conduce to arms races, crisis-instability, miscalculations, and accidents. Then there is the heightened risk of fissile materials theft and diversion along with constant fears of further proliferation convoluting still further the strategic environment. To whom does this sound like a formula for stable deterrence?

Second, first-generation nuclear weapons and delivery systems are relatively unreliable and vulnerable to preemption. Stable deterrence depends on mutually survivable forces, not mutually vulnerable ones.

Third, deterrence failure in the U.S.-Soviet case was presumed to signify massive if not total societal destruction because of the mega-tonnage involved and the unreliability of any built-in escalation brakes. Not so, necessarily, in the Middle East, with much smaller arsenals and a **reluctance to shoot off all of one's assets lest a third party take advantage after the fact**. And less than ultimate stakes produce less than perfect caution.

Fourth, U.S. and Soviet caution in strategic relations stemmed from a fact we still tend to take for granted: Both leaderships actually cared about the well-being of those they ruled, even if in **the Soviet case the population's production capability rather than human value was uppermost**. But we saw repeated demonstrations of mass murder inside Iraq by the Sunni ruling elite against Kurds and the majority Shiite population during Baath rule, without regard for the injury done the state, and it is not unreasonable to wonder whether the fragility of the civil bond between rulers and ruled in multiethnic and highly stratified Middle Eastern societies weakens significantly the fundamental social basis of deterrence.

Fifth, another possible discontinuity can affect the stability of deterrence: crazy states or crazy leaders in charge of highly authoritarian political cultures. Saddam Hussein was a malignant narcissist who could not have cared less about the slaughter of millions. Mao and Stalin were mass murderers with exotic personalities, too. It is not that democracies never produce scary leaders: a close study of Woodrow Wilson, for example, evokes gratitude that WMD did not yet exist during his lifetime. But on the whole, top-heavy political systems are far more prone to recruit madmen or fanatics to the pinnacle of power, and neither madmen nor fanatics are

reliable stewards of nuclear deterrence because neither can be presumed to care two figs about ordinary people.

A special case in point concerns religious fanatics. During the Cold War, when nuclear deterrence theory was invented and debated, this problem simply never arose. Yes, it's true, lots of people described Marxism-Leninism as a secular religion, and not without both reason and utility. But religion and ideology are not the same: they are not similarly organic to society and they don't motivate and mobilize masses of people in the same ways. When President Ahmedinejad of Iran speaks in apocalyptic, millenarian terms, many Western secular sophisticates force themselves to believe he can't be serious. Most likely, he is quite serious. When radical Muslim clerics describe why it is alright for Muslims to incidentally kill other Muslims in mass terrorist attacks—because “Allah will know his own” so that the innocent will become instant martyrs in paradise—they give every appearance of actually meaning what they say. An eleventh-grade Iranian textbook teaches that in the coming era-ending war against the infidels, Muslims cannot lose: “Either we all become free, or we will go to the greater freedom which is martyrdom. Either we shall shake one another's hand at the victory of Islam in the world, or all of us will turn to eternal life and martyrdom. In both cases, success and victory are ours.”

How does one deter people who believe that, who are willing and even eager—from the sound of it—to turn their entire country and their entire religious sect into a suicide bomb?

Sixth, the idea that nuclear powers could extend their influence to protect non-nuclear allies was a standard-issue plank of Cold War strategic platforms. And it worked, despite the fact that protected allies were never entirely confident about it. But the idea that U.S. power protected Italy and the Netherlands and the Federal Republic of Germany from being attacked—and presumably, according to the theory, that U.S. nuclear power protected them from nuclear attack—was never based on firepower alone. It was based on willpower, and ultimately, therefore, the credibility of extended deterrence depended on persuading the target of the deterrence posture that the protecting power cared just as much about the well-being of an ally's population as it cared about its own—or close enough, anyway, for practical purposes. Extended deterrence worked because Western democracies shared not only interests but also core principles in common.

Now, U.S. nuclear protection of Israel is credible enough, though Israel, as a nuclear power itself, doesn't need a U.S. umbrella. But a pledge of U.S. protection for Kuwait? Egypt? Jordan? Saudi Arabia? Would those governments even want such public pledges, and would others really believe them? Could Israel, as Stanley Hoffmann seemed to suggest in 1991, really provide a credible deterrent for Kuwait to protect it from a nuclear Iraq? Who on earth would give credence to that?

Finally on this point, it is worth thinking about the possibility that a nuclear-armed Iraq, or Iran, not only would not be deterred by the United States, but could in fact deter the United States. This is the matter of inverted deterrence, a tricky but entirely realistic possibility.

The United States might have been able to deter a nuclear Iraq, and it may be able in the future to deter a nuclear Iran, from undertaking a direct attack against the United States or Israel. But could U.S. or Israeli nuclear weapons deter an aggressive nuclear-armed autocracy from stoking proxy warfare against neighbors, in Lebanon for example? From surreptitiously peddling nuclear know-how or materiel? From launching conventional aggression against a neighbor?

If Iraq had had nuclear weapons in 1991, would the United States have sent an expeditionary force to expel Iraqi forces from Kuwait? If, in the hypothetical absence of the second Gulf War, Iraq had acquired nuclear weapons in 2007 and reinvaded Kuwait conventionally in 2008, would the United States be sending an expeditionary force into the teeth of a nuclear shield to repeat its earlier successes? Under such circumstances, who, exactly, would be deterring whom? These are not easy questions to answer; but who doubts that U.S. calculations of risk and benefit would be dramatically different under such circumstances?

This is why the argument that U.S. policy should have focused more on North Korea (and less on Iraq) in 2002-03 because it was the greater nuclear threat was so foolish. Once past the nuclear threshold, as all assumed North Korea was, U.S. options narrow as its risks are magnified; all the more reason to prevent rogue regimes from getting past that threshold in the first place. But best to do it, of course, in a broader diplomatic context that does not encourage other countries to sneak under the nuclear wire before the Americans bestir themselves to act—in other words, in such a way that an act of counterproliferation policy does not elicit the need for further acts of counterproliferation policy.

#### A Lebanese Coda

It follows from this little thought experiment that culture **isn't the only element one needs to consider** when thinking about deterrence. There are many aspects of strategic logic that, while not universal, are common enough to be appreciated across many cultures. But it is a dangerous mistake to dismiss the relevance of culture on strategic decision-making. Take the recent flare-up in Lebanon as an example.

Why did Palestinian nationalists a generation ago and Shiite fanatics today insist on believing that Israel is weak, fragile, a mere “spider’s web”? In part because in traditional Islamic lore, Jews are caricatured as weak, inferior, craven, and cowardly. Why, apparently, did Sheikh Nasrallah not expect the Israeli reaction he got from Hezbollah’s July 14 attack across Israel’s northern border? In part because he **didn’t appreciate the impact of Israelis’ hearing, still in the**

psychological shadow of the Holocaust, a fresh barrage of anti-Semitic and eliminationist rhetoric coming from Hezbollah's sponsors in Tehran (as well as from Nasrallah himself). Why did Israeli leaders underestimate the tenacity of Hezbollah fighters? In part because they believed mistakenly that religious fanatics cannot be trained in modern military technique, and because they could not take seriously the possibility that an entire society in southern Lebanon could really assume the mentality of a death cult.

Examples don't end here, of course. The war on terror is suffused with cultural predicates, many of which American leaders misread. The President's Freedom Agenda, for example, no less than the early American approach to strategic deterrence, is based on Enlightenment notions of ideal human social and political organization that are assumed to be universal but that, ironically enough, are idiosyncratically Western. The projection of these assumptions onto Muslim countries with their own idiosyncratic characteristics is worse than futile; it is counterproductive. But that is a subject for a different essay, one called, perhaps, "Culture and Inadvertent Provocation."

Notes:

1. Rhodes, "Bush's Atomic Red Herring," *New York Times*, Nov. 27, 1990.
2. Hoffmann, "The Price of War," *New York Review of Books*, Jan. 17, 1991.
3. For an application of culture not to strategy but to law, see Lawrence Rosen, *Law as Culture: An Invitation* (Princeton University Press, 2006). For a good summary of cultural approaches to politics, see chapter 2 of Samuel Huntington's *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (Simon & Schuster, 1996), especially pp. 41-5.
4. Case in point: Robert Legvold's brilliant essay, "Strategic Doctrine and SALT: Soviet and American Views," *Survival*, Jan.-Feb. 1979.
5. Argued in "Will Saddam Get the Bomb?" *National Review*, May 13, 1991.
6. See Anna Simons, "Making Enemies, Part Two," *The American Interest*, Autumn 2006, pp. 40-1.
7. Quoted in Bernard Lewis, "August 22," *Wall Street Journal*, Aug. 8, 2006.

# THE BOMB RETURNS FOR A SECOND ACT

*By Paul Bracken*

November 2012

*This essay, published as an E-Note, is adapted from Bracken's book The Second Nuclear Age: Strategy, Danger, and the New Power Politics.*

Atomic weapons have returned for a second act. **This time the bomb's spread has nothing to do with the cold war, the first nuclear age that remains the context for so much of our thinking about nuclear weapons.** Over the past two decades new nuclear powers have emerged from "natural causes," the normal dynamics of fear and insecurity that have long characterized international relations.

**This isn't a welcome message, yet it's one we ignore at our peril.** Perhaps the United States could have done more to stop the spread of nuclear weapons, cracking down harder on India or Israel, on North Korea or Pakistan. Perhaps it could have cut its own nuclear forces to the bone to entice Russia and China not to modernize theirs. But such efforts would have looked too much like a historical grand design to freeze temporary power advantages into permanent history, preserving U.S. military superiority using the mask of arms control. In an era of shifting great powers, rising new ones, and deep uncertainty about the future shape of world order, such efforts were bound to fail.

The United States did nearly everything it could to foster global antinuclear policies after the cold war. I cannot think of any policy in American history, not the Monroe Doctrine, not liberal internationalism, not containment, that had more widespread, bipartisan support in domestic politics, or more energetic backing. **The problem is this: it just didn't work.** Other countries simply didn't buy it. They were sovereign nations in charge of their own destiny so they could choose to keep the bomb or get it. The spread of the bomb, and other advanced military technologies, wasn't some aberration or false start, a path that was briefly followed until people woke up to the dangers. As a result, the bomb has become deeply entrenched in international relations, at the global and regional levels.

**I don't think any U.S. policy to prevent the bomb from returning for a second act would have worked, short of some colossal effort on the scale in dollars and blood of World War II.** This is because it wasn't just a handful of rogue actors like North Korea that went nuclear. Major powers did too. India, the world's largest democracy, joined the nuclear club. China has upgraded its nuclear forces along with the rest of its military. Add Russia to this group and three of the four BRICs (Brazil, Russia, India, and China), the dynamic comers in the twenty-first century, are modernizing their nuclear arsenals. **Even Britain and France didn't give up**

their nuclear weapons, in great measure to preserve their declining influence as other countries rose in power. Looking back, these are natural developments in the international system as responses to geopolitical change.

One more factor is behind the return of the bomb. Distrust of the United States has also fueled its spread, as a counter to American military interventions. China, Russia, India, Pakistan, North Korea, and Iran hardly desire a world that is “safe” for U.S. strong-arm tactics with conventional forces. In their eyes, the bomb counters America precisely because it is so risky. Because if there's one thing nuclear weapons do it is to increase the risks in any military showdown, with the prospect of a large spike in the level of violence. This suits many countries just fine. It's exactly what they want, given that most of them can't possibly compete against the United States in conventional technologies.

Nine countries currently have the bomb. Eight have modernized their nuclear arsenals, with weapons of longer range and with a diverse menu of delivery means and warhead types. The one exception is the United States. In the second nuclear age, it is misguided for America to continue the charade that nuclear weapons are useless. Other countries sure don't think so, and they are the ones that count.

## STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

What is now developing goes beyond merely getting the bomb. Strategic innovation—new strategies built for a nuclear environment—is increasing among those in the nuclear club and among those about to join it. As countries acquire these weapons they are developing new ways to use them to advance their strategic purposes.

For example, India's strategy of rapid conventional attacks explicitly accepts the atomic threshold as defining the new strategic environment of battle. Pakistan is fielding a whole new class of battlefield nuclear weapons. The threat of a breakdown of command and control serves as a deterrent to India starting something that Pakistan cannot control. China's nuclear modernization is creating a far more agile force, one that can be placed on nuclear alert using its road-mobile missiles and submarines. Political signaling with this more agile force is vastly greater than China's old missile force. North Korea also has innovated, and tested a quick launch salvo scheme keyed to radar warning of attack against it.

Each of these innovations is worth studying in itself. But there is a larger connection. They demonstrate strategy innovation in the second nuclear age, as occurred in the first nuclear age. The kinds of innovation are different between the two eras. But it is taking place. Some of the new innovations are shrewd. Some are crazy. Others are dangerous. But this doesn't belie the point that they are taking place. This is sometimes difficult to recognize in the United States

because of the certainty that nuclear weapons have no conceivable uses, that is, that they have no value. Would that this were true.

There is also a continued reliance on theories and vocabulary invented for a different, earlier age: the cold war. Deterrence, containment, first and second strike, counterforce and countervalue. These terms from the 1950s are used today as if their meanings were self-evident or in no need of clarification when applied to very different conditions. Our frameworks and vocabulary may block us from seeing the reality that other countries view the bomb very differently than we do. Our theories of deterrence and containment have a powerful grip—so much so that we don't even see them as theories but as reality.

## RIVALRY IN A NUCLEAR CONTEXT

The grip of the atomic bomb is especially strong in the regions. In this respect, the second nuclear age is almost the mirror image of the first. In the cold war the path to atomic war ultimately had to go through Washington and Moscow because the nuclear triggers were controlled there. The U.S. and Soviet governments served as safety valves to make sure that whatever happened in the region clashes of the cold war didn't escalate to a nuclear exchange. The locals might have wanted this to happen, or not, but the superpowers surely did not.

For example, newly released transcripts of the Cuban missile crisis meetings in 1962 between Fidel Castro and Soviet officials showed that there was no way Moscow was going to let the Cuban leader have the bomb. There is no doubt that the Soviets did not want Castro to have the bomb. Indeed, for Moscow, withdrawal of nuclear weapons from Cuba was a desired outcome because it meant the Cubans would never get their hands on one of these weapons.

Think how different things are in the second nuclear age. The “locals,” North Korea, Pakistan, Israel, and quite probably others will have the bomb—and they will control the trigger. Conflict in the Middle East, South Asia, and East Asia is hardly new. What is new is the nuclear context it will take place in.

The influence of major powers adds a measure of reserve and caution to regional conflict, but to me, it has nothing like the strength of the bloc discipline of the cold war. This shift of nuclear risk to the regions hardly makes the old conflicts disappear. To frame these conflicts in an altogether different framework, namely nuclear deterrence, overlooks the principal sources of risk, which are the local political differences. It substitutes a familiar calculus that worked in the cold war, deterrence, for fundamentally different strategic realities. Convoluting discussions of nuclear strategy, like the targets Pakistan and India might fire at, or Israel's greater throw-weight compared to a nuclear Iran, miss the main risks of escalation

## THE BREAKDOWN IN MAJOR POWER MONOPOLY OVER THE BOMB

The second nuclear age lacks an overarching ideological struggle as the cold war had. But it does have an overarching theme: the breakdown of major-power monopoly over the bomb. The victorious powers of World War II, the United States, Russia, China, France, and Britain once had monopoly rights to it. Their monopoly position was even enshrined in treaty, in the NPT, and in their permanent seats in the United Nations Security Council.

This monopoly has broken down, just as it has in other areas of technology and politics. This has profound implications that go beyond the regional security issues discussed above. A multipolar nuclear order has come about because the original five nuclear powers have been unable to block entry into the club.

India's nuclear program makes this especially clear. The Indian nuclear program has become virtually an accepted, legitimate weapons program, whatever the fiction of the NPT says. Moreover, India in 2012 tested an ICBM, one that almost surely has independently targeted warheads (MIRVs). India has "used" the bomb quite successfully to claw its way into the major power club, and to leverage its way to greater international status with it. The recent U.S.-Indian commercial nuclear deal ratifies this strategy. Think for a moment if the United States had sold some old tanks or destroyers to India, instead of nuclear reactors. It wouldn't have caused any kind of a political stir. It would be considered a laughing stock of strategic American influence. But sell nuclear reactors and it changes the balance of global power.

Some people in the United States still argue that the bomb is an outdated relic of the cold war, and that it is a weapon without any uses. The Indian case is one of many example that belie this argument.

## CONCLUSION

There are many implications of having to live through a second nuclear age. Arms control will have to change dramatically. The military balance will shift. New, innovative strategies are likely to develop. Further modernization of nuclear forces and the spread of the bomb is likely.

A great deal of artful, creative thinking is needed to handle these challenges. The world made it through the first nuclear age with thinking, and with luck. It is time to start thinking in a much more sober way about the challenges ahead for living through a second nuclear age.



# WHY WE SHOULD BE DEVELOPING NUCLEAR EARTH PENETRATORS— AND WHY THEY ARE ACTUALLY STABILIZING

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May 2011

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With the ratification of the New START Treaty and the associated political commitments made by the Administration and Congress to modernize U.S. nuclear deterrent capabilities, attention is beginning to shift towards the shape of the future arsenal. Many questions remain: about the threats which we need to deter, about what we need to hold at risk in order to deter effectively, and about the size and nature of the arsenal needed to meet those requirements.

One of the most pressing questions is what the United States can and should do about the growing ability of its most plausible state adversaries, including North Korea and Iran, [1] to locate their most valued assets underground in facilities effectively immune from missile, air, or naval attack. Estimates of the number of such “hard and deeply buried targets” (HDBTs) have ranged from as low as 50 in North Korea and Iran to as high as 10,000 worldwide according to an influential study by the National Academy of Sciences, citing the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency (both estimates in 2005). [2] While reliable numbers are unavailable in the unclassified realm (and most likely also in the classified, due to the extremely formidable challenges of correctly identifying such facilities and accurately ascertaining their characteristics), it seems reasonable to assume that the number of significantly hardened and buried facilities in countries of concern stands at least in the hundreds and very possibly in the thousands. In any case, what is essentially undisputed is that potential adversaries such as North Korea and Iran are increasingly able to locate or move their most valued assets to underground depths beyond the effective reach of U.S. action (assuming that the most deeply buried facilities would be reserved primarily for the most important assets).

This is because current U.S. earth penetration capabilities are insufficient to hold such facilities at risk. While the U.S. fields conventional earth penetrators, “many of the more important strategic hard and deeply buried targets are beyond the reach of conventional explosive penetrating weapons and can be held at risk of destruction only with nuclear weapons,” [3] as the 2005 National Academy panel reported. U.S. nuclear earth penetrator capabilities, on the

other hand, are also limited, and U.S. Government officials have made clear that current U.S. nuclear weapons cannot penetrate to the depths required to hold at risk the most important HDBTs. [4]

### Earth Penetrating Weapons Are Needed

This is a serious problem. The core of deterrence lies in being willing and able to destroy what your adversary most values. Bluntly, we need to be able to say credibly that “wherever you go, we can get at you.” If enemies can make themselves immune to retaliation, deterrence is seriously compromised. Yet the trend among our potential adversaries towards hiding underground, beyond the reach of our weaponry, poses precisely this challenge.

This burrowing underground might not be so severe a problem as to warrant developing nuclear earth penetrating weapons (EPW) if we could rely on our ground forces eventually to occupy and/or destroy bunkers. Thus the United States has for the last two decades relied on the threat of regime change and leadership accountability to deter WMD use by rogue states. Because these states have generally had comparatively limited WMD capabilities—and no nuclear weapons—and could not strike the U.S. homeland, this threat has been highly credible and quite effective. For example, in 1990-1991 the United States could rely not only on a response of massive retaliation, but also on threatening Saddam Hussein and the Ba’ath leadership with regime change and personal accountability if Iraqi forces used WMD against Coalition forces, a combined threat that sufficed to deter the Iraqis.

But this option is unlikely to be as feasible in the future. This is because key potential U.S. adversaries, such as North Korea and Iran, are today developing nuclear weapons and fielding survivable delivery systems, such as mobile ballistic missile systems, even as they are building more hardened and deeply buried facilities. [5] This combination of sanctuary and survivable striking power would allow these countries to hide or shield their most valued assets beyond the range of U.S. strikes while threatening the United States and its allies with survivable nuclear delivery systems. States so armed could shield their most valued assets from U.S. strikes while holding the threat of nuclear attack over Washington and allied capitals to deter any attempt to disarm them or occupy their countries. Facing the prospect of a nuclear strike in reaction to an attempt at occupation, a future President would not be in as strong a position to make a threat of the kind that Secretary of State Baker made to Tariq Aziz and the Iraqi leadership: if you use WMD against us, we will occupy your country and hold you personally accountable. Instead, if current trends continue, a country like North Korea will be able to place its most valued assets in sanctuary underground beyond the reach of our weaponry while ensuring, through survivable nuclear and WMD forces, that we cannot sensibly attempt occupation and regime change. This would mean that the leadership of such a country might enjoy a degree of effective immunity from U.S. reprisal.

Conversely, nuclear EPWs would be unnecessary if we could safely and with good conscience rely on only the threat to destroy unprotected cities and other soft targets to deter the North Koreans of the world. But the threat to confine ourselves to holding North Korean cities at risk in such a situation might well be ineffective in swaying a leader such as Kim Jong-Il, whose sensitivity to losses among his own population when weighed against the preservation of his own rule should not be overestimated. Moreover, we might contemplate what Kim's response would be were we to attack his cities when he might be hiding in a hardened bunker and his mobile nuclear forces were dispersed. In light of North Korea's retaliatory capabilities, does the United States want to be forced to contemplate "trading" cities with a Kim Jong-Il? Finally, it need hardly be stated that confining ourselves to the option of attacking an adversary's cities would be, to say the least, morally troubling.

The capability to destroy HDBTs, on the other hand, would give the United States a more sensible option that would enable us to get at what our adversaries most value while avoiding the most serious pitfalls posed by occupation or attacks upon cities as such. Unlike either of these approaches, a formidable EPW capability would give us the assured ability to target an opponent wherever he chose to go, thus ensuring that he would never feel immune to our retaliation and so giving him the strongest incentive to moderate his own behavior. Even better, such a posture would strengthen our basic pre-war deterrent, since a potential adversary would know that he would always be vulnerable in a conflict with the United States. This would, of course, greatly increase the risks and potential costs of going to war with the United States and so lower the chances of war in the first place. This was why the United States, during the Cold War and especially starting with the Carter Administration, sought to develop the nuclear capabilities needed to hold at risk the hardened and deeply buried sites the Soviets were building in order to ensure that we could target the Soviet leadership wherever they might go—even after a Soviet first strike. It was the same logic applied to more contemporary threats that drove the Clinton Administration to generate the initial requirement for the controversial robust nuclear earth penetrator in the 1990s.

Of course, an effective strike on an HDBT would require accurate and timely intelligence, not only about the location and nature of the facility, but also about its contents. But the substantial difficulties of obtaining such intelligence would not undermine our fundamental capability to hold at risk an opponent in an HDBT, ensuring that an adversary would know that he would always be vulnerable to the exposure of his position—a well-grounded fear when the signatures associated with the operations and movements of a nation's leadership are considered. Moreover, assuming substantial resolve on the part of the United States in the face of a grave attack, there would be no necessary time limitation on the acquisition of such intelligence.

## Earth Penetrators Actually Foster Stability

This deterrence requirement is relatively straightforward. Many criticisms of the development of nuclear EPWs, however, have focused on their allegedly destabilizing aspects, as in the opposition to the Bush Administration's controversial Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator (RNEP) program. [6] Yet the truth is that such weapons would actually foster stability because they would reduce the incentives to strike early, before a window of opportunity passes, and because they would enable a retaliatory strike posture.

If strategic stability is given its traditional definition of weapons and postures that mitigate incentives to strike first and/or fast in a crisis and that reduce the probability of war, then earth penetrating weapons are not destabilizing. Quite the contrary. Because effective EPWs would enable the United States to hit an opponent whenever and wherever it chose to do so, they would minimize any pressures on the U.S. to strike in a perceived window of opportunity while an enemy or his valued asset was still aboveground or in a vulnerable underground facility. A principal reason to strike first is to take advantage of opportunities while they exist, opportunities such as the ability to take out an adversary's valued assets while they remain vulnerable to U.S. strikes. Think, for instance, of the pressures that a U.S. leader might face in a variant of the 2003 attempted decapitating strike against Saddam Hussein if the President thought there were a serious chance the opponent might use WMD—and then think of the response of the opponent in the wake of such a decapitation attempt. With EPW weapons, it would be less likely that a President would be boxed in by the hellish choice of “strike now, or lose the opportunity entirely” because there would be nowhere that an opponent could safely escape American action. An EPW capability would thus mitigate the window of opportunity quandary and so allow the President to wait, a vital component of stability. More broadly, an EPW capability would strengthen stability by giving U.S. decision-makers greater confidence in the general effectiveness of the American retaliatory capability, since there would be no sanctuary from it. This would give greater strength to the overall American deterrent, thereby lowering the probability of aggression against U.S. interests and war.

Another important consideration in the stability equation is the confidence that Russia and China have in the survivability and effectiveness of their retaliatory force in light of U.S. assets. U.S. capabilities that could help give the United States a disarming first strike capability could well encourage Moscow or Beijing to adopt far less deliberate launch postures, in turn increasing the possibilities of catastrophe. Yet EPWs would not add significant counterforce capability against Russia or China's retaliatory forces to the U.S. arsenal. Deployed mobile land or sea-based ballistic missiles as well as mobile or otherwise survivable command and control assets would not be more easily targeted because of an earth penetration capability. Thus the United States would not gain any added benefit from striking first in an attempt to disarm an opponent. Moreover, the United States could take additional steps to minimize

disruptions in strategic relations with Moscow and Beijing; for instance, the United States might unilaterally commit to limiting the number of such weapons produced to limit their impact on strategic stability with Russia and China.

Finally, EPWs would not lower the “threshold” for nuclear use—a nuclear strike would remain the extraordinarily grave step that it is today. Indeed, the very fact that effective nuclear EPWs would necessarily be very “dirty” in terms of radioactive fallout would ensure that no President would authorize their use except in the gravest circumstances. [7]

#### Earth Penetrators Do Not Need to Be Nuclear, but Nuclear Variants Should Not Be Ruled Out

The requirement of deterrence with respect to HDBTs is that the United States needs to be able to hold at risk from afar whatever an opponent values, even if he goes deep underground. This does not perforce require that such capabilities be nuclear; indeed, the use of conventional weapons to disable or effectively destroy HDBTs by closing off airshafts, entrances, and other vulnerable points would of course be a preferable approach. U.S. opponents, however, are fully aware of these conventional capabilities and must be expected to anticipate U.S. attempts to close off tunnel entrances and ventilation systems and to adapt to such a threat by such measures as multiplying entrances/exits, airshafts, and communication links and by the use of decoys, among other tactics. Moreover, as the National Academy of Sciences report found, there are stark physical limitations on the destructive power of conventional munitions as earth penetrators. This means that, in order to defeat some HDBTs, especially the most hardened and valuable ones, the explosive power that only a nuclear weapon can provide might be required in order to destroy the facility. Indeed, even a nuclear earth penetrator strike might well need to be accompanied by conventional strikes to close off exits and/or to prepare the target area in advance of a laydown employment of more vulnerable types of nuclear EPWs, including those designed to burrow more deeply before detonating.

While the technical characteristics of an effective EPW capability should not be too sharply defined in advance, the key is that nuclear options for EPWs should not be excluded from serious consideration. Prudence dictates, therefore, that the U.S. Government should carefully study the feasibility and utility of nuclear EPWs, specifically by ordering the National Laboratories to study the issue. One concrete step that Congress could take would be to allow the National Laboratories to conduct simulated “sled tests” to determine how a nuclear payload would operate against HDBTs. Congress in the FY2006 Defense Authorization Act prohibited the Laboratories from conducting such tests, in effect blocking off research into the nuclear option. [8]

In order to minimize any negative political repercussions associated with the development of a nuclear EPW, it could be based on existing weapons, especially the B-61 Mod-11 or the more powerful B-83 nuclear gravity bombs; indeed, some work has already been done in this direction. [9] Focusing initial nuclear EPW work on gravity bombs would also lessen concerns in Moscow and Beijing, as bombers are far less suitable as first strike weapons than are fast-flying ballistic missiles. [10] To further assuage concerns, modifications could be trammled to ensure that additional nuclear testing would not be required to certify the weapon while pursuing necessary hardening and other improvements.

### Getting Past the Politics to Maintain Deterrence

The last time a study to look into a nuclear EPW was proposed, the idea fell victim to the political tempest surrounding the 2001 Nuclear Posture Review, the emphasis on preemption in the 2002 National Security Strategy, and the 2003 war against Iraq. A nuclear EPW ended up looking like a symbol and tool of aggression, preemption, and a policy of first strike. This was unfortunate, as it distorted the realities of the issue. An effective EPW capability—whether conventional, nuclear, or both—is crucial for deterrence and stability. Indeed, the requirement for such a capability is a logical deduction from the traditional American approach to nuclear policy, one that stretches back into the Cold War, when the United States initiated development of nuclear EPWs to ensure that the Soviet leadership could never feel immune from U.S. retaliation, and forward to the Clinton Administration’s decision to initiate work on a robust nuclear earth penetrator. Correctly couching consideration of a nuclear EPW in this context cannot but help to win it a fairer hearing.

Beyond debates about stability, however, critics of a nuclear EPW have also argued that the development by the United States of any new nuclear weapons capabilities would undermine nonproliferation efforts by exposing Washington to charges of hypocrisy. How, runs this line of argument, would the United States be able to ask non-nuclear weapons states to forswear pursuing their own nuclear arsenals—and support firm efforts to prevent others from acquiring them—if the United States is itself modernizing its arsenal? This debate touches on a much larger set of issues concerning why nations acquire nuclear weapons and the nature of the international system, but the essence of the problem with this critique is that it vastly overstates the influence that incremental U.S. nuclear policy decisions such as the one advocated here have on other nations’ calculus as to whether to obtain nuclear weapons of their own. Moreover, to the extent that there are concerns regarding the consequences of development of a nuclear EPW, the United States could mount a vigorous public diplomacy initiative to explain that the development was driven not by pursuit of a domineering, disarming capability but rather by the need to maintain an effective deterrent to preserve stability in light of changing conditions.

The question of how technically to develop a nuclear EPW while maintaining U.S. commitments to restraint presents another set of challenges. It is true that developing and deploying a nuclear EPW might require a change in the U.S. policy, as laid out in the 2010 Nuclear Posture Review, that the United States would not develop new nuclear warheads or pursue new military missions or new capabilities for nuclear weapons. Of course, if an effective nuclear EPW could be entirely based on existing systems, then no change in U.S. policy on nuclear weapons development would be entailed. (A nuclear EPW would not be a new capability because the existing B61-11 weapon is a penetrator.) But it is possible that, in order to field a credibly effective nuclear EPW, new capabilities might need to be pursued. For instance, if potential adversaries continue digging further underground, the United States will likely need to develop effective burrowing devices to “open the door” for follow-on weapons to couple their blasts more effectively to the target. This development would entail a change in national policy. Yet the change involved would be relatively modest, constituting an adaptation of the existing framework of deterrence to new technical and geostrategic realities rather than a basic change in our fundamental approach. More to the point, a rigid “no change” policy cannot be tenable if, as we must realize, nuclear deterrence will remain a cornerstone of our security for the foreseeable future. The instinct to keep nuclear competition in check is laudable, but this does not necessitate a straitjacket on adaptation, which is what a nuclear EPW would be.

Ultimately, deterrence remains the best way to avoid war while protecting our core interests. Deterrence rests on the ability and the willingness to strike what one’s opponent most values wherever they are—no matter how long it takes. Weapons, postures, and strategies that contribute to this ability are to be commended and pursued, even if they at first glance seem frightening, for it may be the very qualities that make them frightening that also make them effective, and therefore stabilizing.

## Glossary of Terms

*Earth Penetrating Weapons:* A weapon designed to penetrate into soil, rock, concrete, or other material to deliver a weapon to a target buried in the earth.

*Hard and deeply buried targets:* Intentionally hardened and buried facilities used to conceal and protect a state’s leaders, military and industrial personnel, weapons, equipment, and other assets and activities. Ranging from hardened, surface bunker complexes to tunnel facilities deep underground, HDBTs are typically large, complex, and well concealed, incorporating strong physical security, modern air defenses, protective siting, multifaceted communications, and other important features that make many of them able to survive attack by conventional weapons.

*Sled test*: A test platform that slides along rails designed to test equipment such as missiles and bombs for collection on a variety of characteristics, including results of impact.

Notes:

1. See Christopher Ford, “Conventional ‘Replacement’ of Nuclear Weapons,” at <http://www.newparadigmsforum.com/NPFtestsite/?p=546>.
2. For the low figure, see Jeffrey Lewis, “How Many Rogue State Hard and Deeply Buried Targets?” ArmsControlWonk.com, May 20, 2005, at <http://lewis.armscontrolwonk.com/archive/511/how-many-rogue-state-hard-and-deeply-buried-targets>. For the high figure, see National Research Council of the National Academies, Committee on the Effects of Nuclear Earth-Penetrator and Other Weapons, *Effects of Nuclear Earth-Penetrator and Other Weapons*, Washington, DC: National Academies Press, 2005, 14, available at [http://www.nap.edu/openbook.php?record\\_id=11282&page=14](http://www.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_id=11282&page=14).
3. *Ibid.*, 1.
4. Statement of Linton F. Brooks, Acting Under Secretary of Energy and Administrator for National Security, National Nuclear Security Administration, U.S. Department of Energy, before the Subcommittee on Strategic Forces, Senate Committee on Armed Services, April 8, 2003, at <http://armed-services.senate.gov/statemnt/2003/April/Brooks.pdf>.
5. See, e.g., Daniel A. Pinkston, *The North Korean Ballistic Missile Program*. Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=842>, and, for Iran, <http://www.fas.org/programs/ssp/man/militarysumfolder/shahab-3.html>.
6. See, for instance, Daryl G. Kimball, “Replacement Nuclear Warheads? Buyer Beware,” *Arms Control Today*, May 2005, available at [http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2005\\_05/focus](http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2005_05/focus).
7. See Chapter 6, “Human and Environmental Effects,” of the National Academies study for an analysis of the severe consequences of even a low-yield nuclear earth penetrator.
8. See the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006, Report of the Committee on Armed Services of the House of Representatives, 463, available at [http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=109\\_cong\\_reports&docid=f:hr089.109.pdf](http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=109_cong_reports&docid=f:hr089.109.pdf). For an account of the history of the termination of RNEP, see Jeffrey Lewis, “NNSA Denies Axeing



RNEP,” November 15, 2005, <http://lewis.armscontrolwonk.com/archive/855/nnsa-denies-dropping-rnep>.

9. See “Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator” at GlobalSecurity.com at <http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/systems/rnep.htm>.
10. This would not be to exclude consideration of a nuclear EPW on a ballistic missile, but simply to investigate whether a gravity bomb option might be sufficient for deterrence and on technical grounds.

## PART XIII: GREAT POWER COMPETITION

# THE RUSSIANS ARE SEEPING IN, THE AMERICANS ARE PIVOTING OUT, AND THE GERMANS ARE MOVING UP: THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

*By Jakub Grygiel*

July 2013

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The objective of much of US foreign policy toward Europe of the past century was, to use Lord Ismay's phrase, to keep the Russians out, the Americans in, and the Germans down. [1] The pithy saying sounds blunt and undiplomatic, but it is still true. It is in the interest of the US to maintain an equilibrium in Europe where no power can reign supreme, to contain Russian imperialist nostalgia, and to maintain a deep level of engagement in the region—all in order to avoid another D-Day, a forceful and costly reengagement in European politics. Liberal and post-modern rhetoric about “global architecture of partners” or about the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century balance of power notwithstanding, the nutshell of US grand strategy toward Europe continues to be this.

While NATO was and is the military component of the strategy to achieve these goals, European integration was its political and economic element. The latter is still doing fine, and continued interest by all parties in the maintenance of military interoperability and of security assurances makes NATO an indispensable tool. It certainly has its own problems, especially those stemming from the inability and unwillingness of most of its European members to maintain an adequate level of defense expenditures. But it has a clear mission accepted by all members, responding to a continued need for security. It also makes the US a European power, maintaining a firm American foothold across the Atlantic.

But the other component of US strategy—one of open encouragement for the EU—no longer matches the goal. Washington continues to push in favor of greater EU centralization even though this no longer supports our goal of a harmonious and powerful Europe. By supporting EU's drive to an “ever closer union” at all costs, Washington mistakes the tactical process for the strategic objective. The goal is a balanced, stable and prosperous Europe; the means has been, in part, European integration. But it is becoming clear that the former is not being achieved by the latter.

A readjustment of the policy is particularly important given that the reality on the ground seems to indicate that the Russians are seeping in, the Americans are pivoting out, and the Germans are moving up.

The Russians have been buying their way back into Europe over the past years. It is to a degree a mirror image of the end of the Cold War, when the US approach was, in Robert Gates's words, to "bribe the Soviets out" using the wealth of the West. Now, the Russians are bribing themselves in, using the deep pockets of their natural resources. It is a combination of buying political access by hiring influential political names as lobbyists, of exercising a heavy hand in the energy markets, and of lining up strategic allies as EU candidates (Serbia and Montenegro).

The Americans are pivoting out, moving military resources and political attention to the Asian theater. The Atlantic is losing strategic relevance to the Pacific and the US Navy is sailing to Asia while the remnants of American armored forces have been removed this year from Europe. Moreover, Washington has little, if any, influence over internal EU dynamics, becoming a mere spectator at a time of an economic crisis and collapse of political legitimacy.

Finally, the Germans are increasingly the dominant, if reluctant, strategic actor in Europe. Whether it is austerity plans for the profligate Southern Europeans or future political arrangements of the EU, Germany is the power *sine qua non*. Political leaders of European states embark on pilgrimages to Berlin, not Bruxelles. The foundational Franco-German axis is flailing, in large measure because of the abysmal political leadership in Paris, and new realignments are forming (notably, a Polish-German rapprochement). The longevity and effectiveness of these new partnerships remains to be seen as they are not based on an equipoise of power or interests, but rather on a plea proffered by weaker countries to Germany. Countries such as Poland fear that Germany will choose to go alone, deeming the maintenance of the euro zone and of the EU as too costly. Hence, they ask for a more proactive Berlin, one that would assume fully and consciously Europe's burden. In brief, this is not a relationship of equals, but of petitioners in front of German uncertain power.

The EU is not to blame for all three. The American "pivot," in particular, is simply recognition of the growing importance of Asia, combined with the perception that Europe is a success story no longer requiring constant American supervision and protection. The Russian imperialist nostalgia is a product of indigenous forces that, despite high hopes of the 1990s, are difficult to eradicate and will continue to motivate Moscow's political leadership for years to come. The weakness of the EU is that there is a lack of a coherent posture toward Russia, in part driven by geography (Germany, France, and Italy will naturally have a different perspective toward Moscow than Riga or Warsaw) and in part by short-term desires to cash in on Russian spending (especially in the military realm).

What the EU is to blame for is the inability to deal with the changing internal balance of power. The post-war equilibrium based on a Franco-German partnership with the UK as a watchful and engaged actor is falling apart. France is running on fumes, while the UK is choosing to be less engaged suffering from a justified “Bruxelles fatigue.” And the Mediterranean countries (Spain and Italy) are in deep economic and political crisis preventing them from exercising authority and influence over European politics; they are not Greece yet, at the mercy of European bailout policies, but they are not meaningful participants in intra-European politics.

This change may be benign or simply not relevant to the future of the continent, as perhaps the most ardent fans of the EU project could argue. If the EU is truly a post-modern creation where decisions are taken by specialized experts and implemented by independent managers, then a new balance of power ought not to matter much. And indeed, if that is the case, the most appropriate policy should be to support the actor—Germany, in this case—that may be the most likely to sustain the EU.

The challenge is threefold. First, such a belief in the post-power essence of the EU is increasingly less appealing and less popular. Observers of European politics describe with some alarm a reassertion of “nationalism,” the ghost that haunts Europe and that should have disappeared under the blue EU flag. The EU is becoming associated with unemployment and lack of legitimacy, rather than with the avoidance of another world war.

Second, Germany may not want to lead EU forward. It simply costs a lot of money that the German electorate is not willing to front any more. It is therefore not inconceivable to see Germany wanting to shed the more burdensome countries in Southern Europe, and rearrange the euro-zone as well as the EU into something quite different from its current institutional setting and from its original idea. A smaller “Northern” core, sharing the same currency, may become a reality out of fiscal necessity. Moreover, a German leadership is unlikely to result in a more coherent European strategic actor because of the reluctance of Berlin to exercise a large role on the world scene. As a keen observer of European politics notes, “This avoidance has become the key feature of the German foreign and security policy debate. German dodging has always been a nuisance in Europe. Now, with Germany as Europe’s indispensable nation—and with Europe’s erstwhile strategy champions lost in self-absorption—Germany’s evasion has become a geopolitical problem. More than that, it is a scandal. And it won’t end anytime soon. Germany, Europe’s swing state, prefers to continue its strategic slumber.” [2]

Third, other European countries may not want Germany to lead Europe. The calls for a more active German leadership are not uniform and unopposed. Indeed, the fear of a German domination of European politics and economics is quite pervasive, if less vocal. By and large, worries about a German hegemony over the continent are quickly dismissed as ahistorical,

overly alarmist, and inappropriate in a EU context. But it is too easy to discount such worries. Nobody really expects a German military resurgence, and the exercise of power occurs in a consultative fashion through economic and financial influence. Nonetheless, the worry is that in the end Berlin is imposing policies, which, albeit necessary, carry little support and legitimacy in the target countries (to wit, Greece) – and the result may be a swelling of anti-German feelings.

An American push to support German leadership in Europe is, thus, a desperate move that is highly unlikely to reap many strategic benefits. In fact, it is upsetting traditional partnerships, in particular with the UK, and has been received quite coldly in Germany itself.

More broadly and most importantly, the US should cease its public support for the continued efforts to keep the EU afloat, efforts that are predicated on greater centralization of the powers in Bruxelles. We have limited influence over the internal dynamics and, above all, we are taking sides in an intra-European debate that is far from settled. Threatening a good ally, Great Britain, that were it to leave the EU it would not be included in new trade negotiations is shortsighted and counterproductive. Such a posture allies the US not with Europe, but with one side of a vocal internal debate in Europe. It puts Washington together with Bruxelles, and alienates half of Europeans. And it deprives us of strong allies within Europe.

A partnership with Europe does not necessarily mean a partnership with the EU. On the contrary, to seek a greater relationship with the EU, to the detriment of strong ties with individual countries, weakens the US because its counterpart, the EU, is a political entity that cannot protect its own citizens, is creating deep tensions among its states, and is contributing to an upheaval of the continent's equilibrium of power.

The success of the EU is not inevitable. We should be agnostic about the future of the EU and ought to be open to alternative ways of pursuing the continued goals we have in Europe. Whether some of these ways may involve a British exit, or a geographic consolidation of the Eurozone, or even in the most extreme and unlikely scenario the splintering of the EU project, Washington ought to be prepared. As Paul Johnson observed recently, “U.S. policy ought to take note of the general air of hostility toward Brussels. Mr. Obama faces the prospect of Britain leaving the EU and of France, Germany, Italy and Spain all weakening their links. This will have little effect on American prosperity, but it is a return to realism that Washington should welcome, if quietly.” [3]

A Europe that is free, strong, and whole is not necessarily based on the EU. Bilateral relations are not *passé* nor ineffective, and should take precedence over the mirage of a unified, multilateral Europe. Our goals are still there, and rightly so, but the policies need to be adjusted.

Notes:

1. Interestingly, this is a tripartite objective that is recurrent in modern European history. For instance, as Brendan Simms writes, the goal of the 1815 diplomatic settlement was “to keep the British in, the Russians out and the French down.” A century later, the British were being replaced by the Americans, while the French had been relentlessly weakened and replaced by the Germans. The Russians, remarkably, are always there. Brendan Simms, *Europe* (New York: Basic Books, 2013), 179.
2. Jan Techau, “Why Germany Won’t Be America’s New Geopolitical Partner,” <http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/?fa=52126&lang=en>.
3. Paul Johnson, “United Europe – Bad Idea?,” *Forbes*, 24 June 2013.

# MORE IS NOT ENOUGH: ARMS BUILDUPS, INNOVATION, AND STABILITY IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC

*By Felix K. Chang*

November 2013

*This article originally appeared on E-Notes.*

The arms buildup across the Asia-Pacific is remarkable. Understandably, some fear that the accumulation of military hardware reflects possible arms races and that these arms races will increase the likelihood of political miscalculation and lead to armed conflict. But while all arms races include arms buildups, not all arms buildups are arms races. What is now occurring in the Asia-Pacific fails to meet the classic criteria for an arms race. It does not represent “a progressive, competitive peacetime increase in armaments between two states or coalition of states resulting from conflicting purposes or mutual fears.” [1] It is not a case where states have become trapped in a competitive spiral of ever greater arms procurement.

Nonetheless, the region is rearming. That is because of changes in the geopolitical environment that have been brought on by China’s rapid military modernization, its more assertive behavior, and the region’s festering doubts about long-term American commitment. But rather than being a “competitive” increase in armaments, the arms buildup across the Asia-Pacific bears more resemblance to an arms catch-up, in which regional countries have come to realize that their military forces are inadequate to ensure their safety in the new environment. But since no one country or set of countries, at the moment, is attempting to match the pace of China’s military modernization or cause China to fear for its safety, there has been no real competition.

Moreover, not all arms buildups are the same. Geography (or the lack thereof) can help differentiate. In some parts of the world where countries struggle over land, calculations of military power must take into account not only combat systems, but also the conditions under which they would operate—terrain, fortifications, and even operational concepts (like envelopment), none of which have a direct corollary in the air or at sea. [2] In today’s Asia-Pacific, countries largely vie for control over maritime spaces. Since the specks of land that exist within these spaces have little intrinsic military value, they are strategically less important than the skies above and the seas around them. That means that, in the Asia-Pacific, combat systems are more likely to dominate military power calculations. Since the effectiveness and survivability of such arms on the modern battlefield increasingly relies on a high level of technical sophistication, there is little doubt that technology will play an outsized role in determining the ultimate balance of power in the Asia-Pacific.



## ARMS RACES AND INNOVATION

Even so, the study of arms races can inform how the Asia-Pacific's arms buildup could contribute to greater stability, rather than less of it, in the regional balance of power. That is because there are different kinds of arms races. One sort focuses on increasing the quantity of arms. In that case, a country would seek to increase the numerical strength of its existing combat systems to improve its military power. For instance, Japan could simply acquire more of its current-generation fighter aircraft. The other sort concentrates on increasing the quality of arms. In that case, a country would seek to replace its existing combat systems with more capable ones to improve its military power. **Returning to Japan, one can see this in Tokyo's decision to replace its existing fleet of F-4 fighters with next-generation F-35 Joint Strike Fighters.**

Of course, both quantitative and qualitative features are present in most arms buildups. But one is often still favored over the other. That can have meaningful consequences for the outcome of an arms race. In a quantitative race, the country that can develop a numerical superiority in its military forces is likely to maintain it in the long run, since its rival would have to redouble its efforts just to catch up. Indeed, the country that wins a quantitative race is frequently the one with greater determination and resources. Hence, it is believed that quantitative races naturally lead to an inequality in the balance of power. Given that, such an arms race is more likely to produce a situation in which the country holding a military advantage chooses to use it against its rival to achieve its goals.

On the other hand, a qualitative arms race tends toward equality in the balance of power. Rather than a single long race, it looks like a series of shorter ones. If a country that is at a numerical disadvantage in a particular combat system introduces a new and vastly more effective one, it could quickly neutralize the numerical advantage of its rival. Thus, each new and innovative combat system can narrow the military power gap between two rival countries. **That was certainly a motivation behind America's ceaseless investment in technology for its military throughout the Cold War—so that it could confront the Soviet Union's numerically superior conventional forces on more equal terms.** As the theory goes, the larger the innovative leap, the faster a lagging country can approach parity with its rival. Inasmuch as an inequality in the balance of power may increase the likelihood of aggression and conflict, a greater equality in that balance may well decrease their prospects.

Of course, some may argue that the attainment of technological superiority could have the same effect as the achievement of numerical superiority. In that view, a country with a technological superiority might be tempted to use it before its rival can match its achievement. But that has rarely occurred. Certainly new combat systems developed during wartime have been immediately put to use. For example, during World War II Germany made

its Me 262 jet fighter and *Vergeltungswaffen* (retribution weapons)—the V-1 buzz bomb and the V-2 ballistic missile—fully operational soon after they were developed. [3] The United States did the same for the atomic bomb. But in the years immediately after World War II, the United States held a clear qualitative superiority over the Soviet Union in atomic arms, but did not use them. In the decades that followed, the two countries sought qualitative superiority in many technologies, but again neither side employed them against the other. Rather, it was when a country possessed an unchallenged qualitative superiority relative to its rival did it resort to military force. The Soviet Union used it against Afghanistan (1979-1989) and the United States in several cases, from North Korea (1950-1953) to Iraq (1991 and 2003).

Thus, military innovation, at least, offers the possibility of a less destabilizing arms race than one purely based on numerical superiority. One could say the same of arms buildups. Countries that embark on arms buildups that focus on innovation may be able to reach military parity with their rivals faster and thus achieve greater equality in the balance of military power (and ultimately regional stability). Of course, using the current generation of military technology in innovative ways may also produce similar benefits. But to maximize those benefits, countries must eventually adopt new military technologies.

## LESSONS OF HISTORY

The classic example of qualitative arms races occurred in the competition for naval supremacy between the 1840s and 1910s. During that time a series of innovations occurred that revolutionized naval warfare. Among the most significant were: steam propulsion and screw propellers (replacing the sail); iron and steel-hulled ships (replacing wooden ones); and progressively more powerful breach-loading guns (replacing muzzle-loading cannons). While the British Royal Navy maintained its dominant position throughout this time, it did so in spite of serious challengers.

The first was the French Navy. In response to Anglo-French tensions over Spain and Syria, French Emperor Napoleon III sought a stronger navy and, specifically, one equipped with steam-powered warships. Steam offered naval commanders far better control over an engagement than wind ever could. When France launched the steam-powered *Napoléon* in 1850, it immediately outclassed every warship in the Royal Navy. But Britain quickly responded with its steam-powered Agamemnon-class ship of the line two years later. By 1858, France still lagged Britain in sail-powered ships of the line 10 to 35, but already reached parity in steam-powered ships of the line 29 to 29. A few years on, greater British determination and resources enabled the Royal Navy to regain its supremacy. But by then France introduced the ironclad. With cannons still dominating maritime arsenals, iron offered far better protection from cannon fire than timber. By the start of the American Civil War (and the famous *Monitor* vs. *Merrimack* engagement), the French Navy had 15 ironclads built or under

construction. The Royal Navy had only seven. But after a crash shipbuilding program in the early 1860s, Britain restored the Royal Navy's preeminence.



Nevertheless, by the late 1880s, new countries with as much determination and resources as Britain had emerged, most notably Germany. [4] At the same time, powerful breach-loading guns firing high-velocity shells, which could penetrate iron and steel, had begun to replace muzzle-loading cannons and their traditional shot. Until then, British naval policy had been to never introduce any technology that would outdate its existing warships, but to undertake a rapid shipbuilding program if another country were to do so. But with Germany's fast rise, Britain decided to introduce the first "all big gun ship," the Dreadnought-class battleship, in 1906. However, doing so reduced the value of the Royal Navy's existing fleet and gave Germany a chance to catch up. Thus, two years later, despite the Royal Navy's great advantage over its German rival in pre-Dreadnought battleships, 63 to 26, its lead in Dreadnought battleships under construction was slim, only 12 to 9. Still, Britain's early start and continuous investment allowed it to build on its advantage through the start of World War I. At each turn, one can see how innovation helped a country with inferior military

power quickly catch up to its rival. Only Britain's embrace of innovation allowed it to stay ahead.

More recently, a similar story has played out in the Pacific. After two U.S. aircraft carrier battlegroups were sent to challenge China's attempt to intimidate Taiwan with ballistic missile tests off its coast in 1995 and 1996, China has sought ways to even the balance of power between it and the United States. Before the end of the decade, it beefed up its anti-air campaign strategy to counter the threat from American aircraft carriers. But rather than reflexively build its own aircraft carriers, it sought to capitalize on a gap in American fleet defenses. While the U.S. Navy had focused on improving its defenses against sea-skimming cruise missiles since the 1970s, it had not fully developed its defenses against ballistic missiles from above. Fortunately for China, its ballistic missile program was one of its few weapons programs that escaped the turbulence of the Cultural Revolution. [5] By the early 2000s, China's ballistic missile technology had advanced to the point at which Chinese military leaders could seriously contemplate using ballistic missiles armed with maneuverable conventional warheads to hit (or at least damage) a large ship, like an aircraft carrier, at sea. In 2004 China's military revised its doctrine to include the possible use of anti-ship ballistic missile salvos against aircraft carriers off its coast. At the time, American observers dwelled on the "asymmetric" nature of the threat. But more fundamentally, it was a threat born from innovation. China began to deploy DF-21D anti-ship ballistic missiles sometime in 2012. Though China still lacks the oceanic surveillance system that it needs to properly detect, track, and target an aircraft carrier, the presence of such missiles has narrowed the gap in military power between China and the United States. [6]

However, the United States has not stood still. It also innovated. Advances in its ballistic missile defense program allowed the United States to set up a X-band radar in northern Japan in 2006 to track ballistic missile launches in the Pacific. A second is now under discussion for southern Japan. These radars could also support the targeting of SM-3 surface-to-air missile interceptors aboard U.S. warships at sea. And that is not the end. In 2014 the U.S. Navy will deploy its first-generation laser weapon system to counter small craft in the Persian Gulf. It is not hard to imagine that in the coming decades, higher-powered laser weapon systems could be used to deflect or defeat anti-ship cruise missiles or even ballistic missile warheads. [7]

That is not to say that all military innovations are revolutionary or even transformative. However, in conjunction with proper military organization and doctrinal employment, military innovations can help quickly correct inequalities in the balance of power without triggering a more destabilizing quantitative arms buildup.

## THE ASIA-PACIFIC ARMS BUILDUP

Fortunately in the Asia-Pacific, technology is already a recognized necessity, given the region's geography. Hence, considerations regarding military innovation already take center stage in weapons procurement. They have contributed to the rapid adoption of air-independent propulsion in the region's most recently acquired diesel-electric submarines. Air-independent propulsion technology enables submarines to stay underwater for far longer than they do now, reducing the likelihood that they will be detected. Four of the six most advanced navies in the region, including those of China, Japan, South Korea, and Singapore, have all acquired air-independent propulsion submarines. [8]

Even so, many of the less advanced armed forces in the region have chosen to upgrade their armed forces to only the current generation of combat systems. A good example is Vietnam, which dramatically increased its military expenditures over the last half decade. It turned to its former Russian patrons to supply SA-20 air defense systems, Su-30MK2 fighters, and Kilo-class submarines—all of which many other countries, including China, already possess. [9] But Vietnam also reportedly ordered two batteries of P-800 missiles, part of the Russian K-300P Bastion-P coastal defense system. [10] Each road-mobile battery can rapidly deploy to a site and salvo its missiles against an adversary from an unexpected direction. Given that much of the maritime spaces that Vietnam disputes with China are within the range of these missiles, Vietnam has essentially taken advantage of a contemporary technology and employed them in an innovative way to create a potential local military superiority. Doing so reduces the military power gap between the two countries in those disputed spaces.

Of course, there are constraints on a qualitative arms buildup in the Asia-Pacific. First and foremost is money. *Few can match the pace (or volume) of China's military spending on new technology.* [11] More generally, modern air and naval armaments are simply expensive and getting more so. [12] Even unmanned aerial vehicles, once heralded as cost-effective airborne platforms, has followed the capability and cost trajectories of their manned predecessors. Plus, since many Asia-Pacific countries rely on foreign defense companies for their armaments, any devaluation of their national currencies can make already-costly purchases even costlier. The same could be said about the impact of shortcomings in their arms procurement processes. A second constraint is access to military technology, due to either arms export restrictions or political circumstances. Countries typically impose restrictions on arms exports, because of their concern over technology proliferation, mistrust of those that seek the military hardware, or pursuit of policy goals that require such controls. In one recent case, the United States cited the potential for technology leaks as the reason it barred the export of F-22 fighters to Australia, Israel, and Japan. [13] In another case, political circumstances have played the central role. Taiwan has long sought to acquire

advanced combat systems (like submarines) but has been unable to do so, because of sustained Chinese pressure on arms exporting countries to isolate it from international arms sales.

These constraints on a qualitative arms buildup in the Asia-Pacific give rise to two destabilizing concerns. Either the inequality in the balance of power grows so great that China believes that it is free to behave aggressively in disputes with its neighbors; or a country that is unable to qualitatively improve its military power relative to China might seek to expand its existing military forces and use them (in conjunction with whatever political levers it has) to try to compel China into a settlement before its transitory advantage is lost. Both scenarios would increase the potential for armed conflict in the region.

## CONCLUSION

Today, perceptions in the Asia-Pacific about its geopolitical environment are changing. Countries that once viewed China as a benign power and enjoyed a free ride from America's military presence in the region, either directly or indirectly, are now rebuilding their military strength. Those countries with Cold War-era security arrangements with the United States have sought reassurances of American commitments to them. But however firm those commitments may be, it seems that they have become somewhat more dependent on the administration in Washington. Hence, many countries have come to believe that they must adequately rearm to provide an additional hedge against China's rise, should it turn out to be less benign than originally hoped. Together with China's rapid military modernization, the region-wide military buildup has raised fears that armed conflict has become more likely.

But in studying the nature of arms races, we can see that arms buildups need not end in conflict. [14] Rather if the countries of the Asia-Pacific focus on military innovation as the foundation for their arms buildups, they could improve their military power more quickly and in doing so create greater equality in the balance of power. That, in turn, would lower the probability of miscalculation and conflict. Indeed, the geography of the Asia-Pacific naturally leads countries to concentrate on technology in their arms procurement decisions. Regrettably, budgetary constraints, currency devaluations, and internal bureaucratic and political challenges have bedeviled many of these efforts. While acquiring more of the same sorts of military hardware that one's rival already has in abundance may imbue a country with slightly more confidence, it is unlikely to do much to close the gap in military power in the long run. There is no getting away from the need for military innovation.

Notes:

1. Samuel P. Huntington, "Arms Races: Prerequisites and Results," *Public Policy* 8:1 (1958), pp. 41-42.

2. Wayne P. Hughes, *Fleet Tactics and Coastal Combat*, 2nd ed. (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2000), pp. 172-173.
3. Germany's innovations marked attempts to escape the limitations of speed in the former case and air defense penetration and weather in the latter case. Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millet, *A War to Be Won: Fighting the Second World War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), pp. 599-600.
4. The other new major naval power was the United States, which also saw itself in an arms race against Germany by 1903. George W. Baer, *One Hundred Years of Sea Power: The U.S. Navy, 1890-1990* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), p. 37.
5. John Wilson Lewis and Xue Litai, *China's Strategic Seapower: The Politics of Force Modernization in the Nuclear Age* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), pp. 129-205.
6. Jonathan F. Solomon, "Maritime Deception and Concealment: Concepts for Defeating Wide-Area Oceanic Surveillance-Reconnaissance-Strike Networks," *Naval War College Review* 66:4 (Autumn 2013), pp. 87-116; Julian E. Barnes, Nathan Hodge, and Jeremy Page, "China Targets U.S. Might By Bulking Up Its Military," *Wall Street Journal*, Jan. 5, 2012; Duncan Lennox, "Analysis: China's ASBM project: keep calm and carry on," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, Feb. 16, 2011.
7. Spencer Ackerman, "Watch the Navy's New Ship-Mounted Laser Cannon Kill a Drone," *Wired*, Apr. 8, 2013; Adam Entous and Julian E. Barnes, "U.S. Plans New Asia Missile Defenses," *Wall Street Journal*, Aug. 23, 2012, p. A1; Missile Defense Agency, *Ballistic Missile Defense Review Report* (Washington: U.S. Department of Defense, Feb. 2010).
8. These include China's Type 041 (Yuan-class), Japan's Sōryū-class, South Korea's KSS-2 class, and Singapore's Archer-class submarines. Since Australia ruled out nuclear propulsion for its next class of 12 submarines, they are likely to be equipped with air-independent propulsion technology. India is assessing whether it can install air-independent propulsion into its new Scorpene-class submarines, starting with the third boat of its six-boat building program. Department of Defence, *Defence White Paper 2013* (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2013), p. 82.
9. Felix K. Chang, "A Salutation to Arms: Asia's Military Buildup, Its Reasons, and Its Implications," FPRI *E-Note*, Sep. 2013, p. 3.
10. Jon Grevatt, "Vietnam negotiates for Russian coastal defence systems," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, Aug. 15, 2011.

11. Felix K. Chang, p. 2.
12. That can be quantified in American naval shipbuilding costs. Over the last thirty years, naval shipbuilding costs have risen about 1.4 percentage points above the normal rate of inflation. Congressional Budget Office, *An Analysis of the Navy's Fiscal Year 2013 Shipbuilding Plan* (Washington: Congressional Budget Office, Jul. 2012), p. 14.
13. Jim Wolf, "Senate panel seeks end to F-22 export ban," Reuters, Sep. 10, 2009; Jason Miks, "F-22 Export Ban, Collective Security Test U.S.-Japan Defense Ties," *World Politics Review*, Jan. 30, 2009, <http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/3227/f-22-export-ban-collect>. Sharon Weinberger, "F-22 Not For Sale, Says Export Chief," *Wired*, Apr. 30, 2007.
14. The quality of information and control also plays a role in conflict avoidance. Strategic misrepresentation, imperfect intelligence, problems of interpretation, and problems in control can all lead to a lack of cooperation and possibly conflict, rather than better balance. George W. Downs, David M. Rocke, and Randolph M. Siverson, "Arms Races and Cooperation" in *Cooperation Under Anarchy*, ed. Kenneth A. Oye (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 133-143.



## PUTIN’S “NEW WARFARE”

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May 2014

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*“War proves a rough master. Words change their ordinary meaning. Reckless audacity becomes courage; prudent hesitation, cowardice. Frantic violence becomes bravery. The advocate of extreme measures is always trustworthy; his opponent, a man to be suspected. Promises of reconciliation hold only so long as no other weapon is at hand. Meanwhile, moderate citizens perish between the two sides, either for not joining in the quarrel or from malice.”*

*“Revolution runs its course from city to city, and the places which it arrived at last, from having heard what had been done before, carried to a still greater excess the atrocity of their reprisals.”*

*—from Thucydides, “The Civil War at Corcyra,” III:10.*

The real end of the history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, argues Vladimir Pastukhov, was marked by Russia’s annexation of Crimea c.2014. As the new century dawns, Russia and the West are “at war with each other,” a condition each “all but openly declares.” [1]

Compared to this self-assessment, Ukraine’s lot is less auspicious. Its misfortune, Pastukhov writes, was to be born in the wrong place at the wrong time. It has become a bargaining chip between Russia and the West. Like 18<sup>th</sup> century Poland, “we must come to terms with the fact that Ukraine, in the form in which we are accustomed to see her for the past twenty years, has ceased to exist.” [2] Thus, another’s characterization of the 17 April Geneva accord as “this senseless piece of paper.” [3]

Ukraine “is at risk of dismemberment,” writes Andrey Illarionov, because those upon whom she relied to defend her position at Geneva betrayed her. Illarionov’s “those” are in equal measure Ukraine’s leaders—he calls acting Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk and acting

President Oleksandr Turchynov “traitors”—and the West, whose actions legitimized Russia’s seizure of Ukrainian territory “without the use of tanks.” [4]

From the perspective of Russia, events in Ukraine are less important for any ephemeral effect on its standing in the world than for their transformative effect on Russian society, according to Vasily Kashin:

«События приняли уже неотвратимый характер, и их ход не может быть изменен ни в Москве, ни в Вашингтоне, ни в Киеве. Конфронтация с Западом сформирует новое российское общество, и вопрос состоит только в том, каким образом использовать новые условия, чтобы предстоящие годы не были потерянным временем для России.»[5]

“Events [in eastern Ukraine] have taken on a character of the inevitable and their course cannot be changed, not in Moscow nor Washington nor Kiev. Russia’s confrontation with the West will form a new society.”

*PUTIN’S “NEW WARFARE”*. War has indeed proved a rough master in Ukraine. Russian journalist Yuliya Latynina writes on the independent media website *Yezhednevny Zhurnal*[6] (Daily Journal) that Putin has conceived a fundamentally “new kind of warfare” (Russian: **новой войне**. Russian transl.: *novoy voyne*) for the new international order. [7] It is conceptually rooted in the following observation:

«Современный Запад осуждает любое применение силы со стороны государства, но не замечает насилия в том случае, если оно исходит от «активистов», «общественных организаций» или «народа». Это дает бесконечную свободу злой воле.»

“The modern West condemns the use of force by a state, but excuses violence if it comes from ‘activists,’ ‘community organizations,’ or ‘the people.’ This gives infinite freedom to malicious intent.”

New Warfare employs four tactics. The first is to use noncombatants, especially women and children, as “human shields,” [8] something reputedly borrowed from “Palestinian terrorists.” [9] The second is a media component, [10] which she elaborates as follows: “If the main purpose of conventional warfare is victory, then the main purpose of the New Warfare is public relations.” [11] The third is to “accuse others of what you are doing yourself.” [12] This involves *provocateurs* masquerading as local irregular forces to assume the role of victim-cum-avenger, something Russia employed to great effect during its c.2008 intervention in South Ossetia. [13] The fourth is a somewhat twisted variation of “hearts and minds”—**зомбируется** (Russian transl.: *zombiruyetsya*)—figuratively, to capture the mind of

“liberated” populations and turn them into “zombies” that attack Russia’s enemies via “pogroms and ethnic cleansing,” [14] and by so doing form “a human shield” between Russia and “enemy” [here, read: Ukrainian] troops. [15]

While the tactics of the New Warfare are clear, does it have a comparably clear strategic objective? Among the many answers to this question, Aleksandr Vdovin offers one of the more interesting. [16] Citing Lenin’s unfulfilled “call for the transformation of the Russian Empire into the Russian Republic,” he writes:

«Для этого требуется многое: сдвиги в национальной политике в сторону акцентов на государствообразующем русском народе, православии, соединении советской и российской истории, державности. Требуется очищение исторического наследия от русофобства, выработка мер по преодолению негативных последствий разделенности русского народа, узаконение пропорционального представительства всех народов в органах власти, избавление от асимметричного федерализма.»[17]

“We want a united and indivisible republic with solid power, which can only be derived from the voluntary consent of the people. With due deference to good intentions, we must recognize that it is long since time for Russia to establish a Republic form of government. Building the Russian Republic requires many things, in particular, transformative national policies to emphasize supporting ethnic Russians who seek to form their own states; the Orthodox Church; the continuity between Soviet and Russian history; and Russia’s great power status. It requires cleansing the historical heritage of *Russophobia*; developing measures to reverse the adverse consequences to ethnic Russians of partition; [18] legalizing proportional representation by ethnic group; and ending asymmetrical federalism.” [19]

THE DIALECTIC OF UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES. The 19<sup>th</sup> century political economist Frédéric Bastiat wrote famously of *unintended effects*:

“There is only one difference between a bad economist and a good one: the bad economist confines himself to the visible effect; the good economist takes into account both the effect that can be seen and those effects that must be foreseen.” [20]

The same may well be said of politicians.

Of Putin’s New Warfare, what effects must we foresee? For one, it has created a “fulminate mixture” [21] inside Ukraine that “is not only accelerating the collapse of Ukrainian statehood but sharpening regional conflicts within Ukraine”:[22]

«Эксперты уже давно предупреждали, что к политическому кризису на Украине скоро прибавится социальный. Подобная гремучая протестная смесь может привести к непредсказуемым последствиям.» [23]

“Experts have long warned that the political crisis in Ukraine would soon acquire a social dimension. The consequences of such an explosive mixture within the protest movement could be unpredictable.”

Put another way, the protest movement fomented by Russia has unintentionally given rise to a social movement, a *dialectic of unintended consequences* of a sort. Or to return to Bastiat, “it almost always happens that when the immediate consequence is favorable, the later consequences are disastrous.” [24]

As a result of the rise of this social movement, Boris Shmelev [25] warns, “the war in southeast Ukraine is against not only Kyev but also the Ukrainian oligarchs”:

«Кстати, именно недовольство олигархами увеличивает число тех, кто ориентирован на Россию на Украине. Если предположить, что Россия реинтегрирует Донецкую, Луганскую, Одесскую и ещё какие-то области Юго-Востока Украины, то там уже российское руководство будет «разруливать» ситуацию с украинскими олигархами. Между тем, у населения юго-восточной Украины сложился имидж Путина, как борца с олигархами. Это, конечно, сильно преувеличенное представление, но в народной мифологии этот образ прижился. Путин представляется, как человек, который подавил олигархат в России. Россия воспринимается здесь как страна, которая может помочь «разобраться» с украинскими олигархами. Последние, кстати, при нынешней киевской власти только укрепили свои позиции.» [26]

“Discontent with the Ukrainian oligarchs increases the orientation toward Russia within Ukraine. There is a belief within the protest movement, should Russia annex Donetsk, Luhansk, Odessa, and other parts of southeast Ukraine, that Putin will ‘resolve’ the situation with the Ukrainian oligarchs. This reflects a popular mythology within the movement of Putin as the man who crushed the oligarchs in Russia. Russia is perceived [in southeast Ukraine] as the only country that can ‘deal’ with the Ukrainian oligarchs, who incidentally have only strengthened their position in the current Kyev government.”

A second, and this time perhaps not wholly unintended consequence of the New Warfare is the inability of Ukraine’s armed forces to mount effective resistance. This reflects two factors, one specific to Ukraine; and the other, a general rule that applies to standing armies. To the former, writing under the headline “It’s not the Ukrainian army that’s keeping Putin out,”

Anshel Pfeiffer notes, “There was no reason to expect the Ukrainian military to function any better than the failing country it serves, especially when taking into account that it grew out of the Red Army and many of its officers continue to see the comrades from across the border as brothers in arms.” [27] To the latter, Andrew Bowen writes:

“ [N]o military, much less Ukraine’s, is designed or trained to deal with situations like the one they are facing now. Militaries are designed to fight other militaries, not to quash internal dissent and adapt to an internal policing role...” [28]

The post-*Maidan* emergence of Ukrainian nationalist paramilitaries revives, for both Russians and Ukrainians, the unresolved legacy of “the OUN-UPA problem.” [29] The following quote from an analysis written by a serving officer in the Ukraine Armed Forces is interesting for its parallel to contemporary events:

“The 1940s-1950s Ukrainian insurgency eventually was unsuccessful because the international community did not support the movement and because the Soviet government was simply too large, too well organized, too ruthless, and too powerful for the insurgency to overcome.” [30]

Extremist groups such as *Svoboda* (“Freedom”)—which control one-quarter of Ukraine’s government ministries, including defense—and *Pravyi Sektor* (“Right Sector”)—a member of which is deputy chair of Ukraine’s National Security Council—operate political and paramilitary branches. Within twenty-four hours of “forming a special battalion in the Donetsk region of eastern Ukraine,” [31] *Pravyi Sektor* assured an Organization for Cooperation and Security in Europe (OSCE) monitoring mission that it “had dissolved its militant wing. It was transforming into a political party and *did not consider itself to be a part of the ‘armed groups’ mentioned in the Geneva Statement.*” [Emphasis added]. Ominously, OSCE monitors reported:

“The Lviv team met with the Head of the Right Sector in the city. He declared that all activities of the Right Sector were aimed at supporting the efforts to enhance the defense of the country (including registering volunteers, providing them with basic physical training without weapons) and that they were coordinated with the National Security Council of Ukraine and the Ukrainian Armed Forces.” [32]

Some argue a shared memory is necessary for the unity of any nation, which in turn is necessary for the stability and viability of a state. [33] As Anthony Smith wrote, “no memory, no identity; no identity, no nation.” [34] Short of that, Ukraine might find its own *pacto de olvido*, a “pact of forgetting” such as Spain instituted during its democratic transition. By agreeing *not* to reckon with a painful historical past, Spaniards hoped to avoid a repetition of

bloody civil conflict. It is not, however, the pathway evident in Ukraine of “historical simplification, omission, and outright lies.” [35]

The historical narrative dominant in southern and eastern Ukraine (and of course, in Russia) holds that Russians and Ukrainians “shared common historical origins and in effect belonged to one pan-Russian nationality.” [36] For many Ukrainians, accepting that narrative is tantamount to denying the legitimacy and normalcy of Ukrainian state independence. [37] One encapsulation of “the OUN-UPA problem” perhaps best characterizes the danger posed by the emergence of nationalist militias in the vacuum formed by an ineffectual national defense force:

“For Lviv and Western Ukraine, UPA fighters are heroes, perhaps the biggest heroes in the history of Ukrainians struggle for independence. But for Eastern Ukraine, the UPA is a band of bandits, traitors, and collaborationists. The UPA is the single most controversial phenomena in the history of Ukraine. Nothing divides our society more.” [38]

Aleksandr Dugin [39] offers a more theoretical (and distinctly Russian) perspective:

«Украинская драма наглядно иллюстрирует этот закон геополитики: в этой стране геополитическая граница проходит ровно посередине – на Юго-Востоке и в Крыму народ наделен ярко выраженной евразийской, сухопутной, пророссийской идентичностью; на Западе и отчасти в Центре – проамериканской, атлантистской. Именно эта геополитическая полярность и стала причиной гибели незрелой украинской государственности в 2014 году. Пришедшие в ходе государственного переворота радикальные атлантисты немедленно столкнулись с жесткой оппозицией в Крыму и на Юго-Востоке, что закончилось уходом Крыма в Россию и гражданской войной.» [40]

“The Ukraine drama illustrates the law of geopolitics in a country in which the geopolitical border is exactly in the middle—in the southeast and in the Crimea, people have a Eurasian, pro-Russian identity; in western Ukraine and in part of central Ukraine, they are pro-American Atlanticists. It is this geopolitical polarity that led to the death of the nascent Ukrainian state in 2014. The radical Atlanticists who came to power during the coup immediately encountered stiff opposition in the Crimea and in southeast Ukraine, ending in the Crimean secession and a civil war.”

NOVYE RUSSKIYE 3; REST OF WORLD, NIL. [41] How then will this situation develop? From the perspective of one Russian:

«В современном мире могут существовать только крупные государства или государственные объединения...На мой взгляд, у Юго-Востока Украины, который я люблю называть историческим именем Новороссия, есть только один путь преодоления кризиса—влиться в состав России. Мы все прекрасно знаем, что и тут далеко не рай, проблем хватает, но вместе их решать будет легче.»[42]

“In the modern world, only large states or federated states are viable...In Southeast Ukraine, which I like to call by the historic name *Novorussia*, there is only one way to overcome the crisis—to join Russia. We all know this is far from a perfect solution to the problem, but at the same time, it will be easier to solve.”

What is clear is that the situation in Ukraine has mutated from a political crisis to an existential one, or at a minimum, is poised at the event horizon to do so at any moment.

The economic sanctions imposed so far on Russia are not warfare of any class, economic or otherwise: while sanctions seek “to coerce target governments into particular avenues of response,” [43] economic pressure applied to achieved a defined set of political goals is different from economic denial to limit an adversary’s military capabilities and expose it to military defeat. Economic sanctions can be credited with success if they meet three criteria: (1) the target state concedes to a significant part of the coercer’s demands; (2) economic sanctions were applied before the target state altered its behavior; and (3) no more-credible explanations exist for the target state’s change of behavior. It seems unlikely today that these criteria will be satisfied in any meaningful sense. Moreover, showing that economic sanctions have *some* effect does not imply economic sanctions alone can achieve comparable ends to military force alone, or to the employment of the two together. [44] One question that ought to be assessed honestly in the current circumstance is whether imposing sanctions simply yields greater domestic political benefits than refusing calls for sanctions or resorting to military force. [45] Economic sanctions may make threats of force more credible, but they do not substitute for them.

What of the economic sanctions imposed on Russia? Consider the view of one Russian analyst:

«За революцию—не важно, левая она или правая—надо платить высокую цену. «Консервативная революция» дорого стоит. Эту цену придется платить вовсе не потому, что Путин поссорился с конкретным президентом США или канцлером Германии. А просто потому, что сумасшествие само по себе дорого стоит. У него очень высокая цена. Ее платят все сословия, все семьи—и те, кто радовался наступлению «консервативной революции», и те, кто был против.»[46]

“For a revolution—no matter left or right—you have to pay a high price. Revanchism [literal translation: ‘conservative revolution’] is expensive. The price is high not because Putin quarreled with a specific American president or German chancellor. It is expensive simply because it is madness. And it will be high for everybody—those who rejoiced in Putin’s revolution, and those who were opposed, too.”

Coming full circle around, Henry Luce wrote, “The 20th Century is the American Century.” [47] Of course, such prognostications have more often than not missed their mark: in 1904, Canadian Prime Minister Wilfred Laurier declared, “The 20th Century Will Be the Century of Canada.” But if, as Vladimir Pastukhov believes, Russia’s annexation of Crimea marked the real end of the history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, does it mark the end of “The American Century,” too?

It is claimed the emergence of peer competitors—something that has resulted historically in regional instability—and not terrorism presents the greatest long-term threat to United States national security. [48] Consider, then, Morozov’s admonition, “At the head of the Russian Federation stands a ‘conservative revolutionary,’ a revanchist player who is prepared to sacrifice the Russian Federation’s standing in the world in its entirety in order to threaten the world order that emerged as a result of events in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.” [49] That much, at least, is clear. What is less clear is what the West will do about it, and how far it will go to preserve that order.

Notes:

1. Pastukhov, a lawyer and visiting fellow in Russian law & politics at St. Antony’s College, Oxford, writes, “Крымом исторически закончился XX век” [“Crimea marks the historical end of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century”]. See: Pastukhov (2014). “Украина – это Польша XXI века.” [“Ukraine is the Poland of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.”] 14 April 2014. <http://polit.ru/article/2014/04/14/ukraine/>. Last accessed 23 April 2014.
2. Ibid.
3. The phrase is from a recent commentary by Russian journalist Yuliya Latynina on the Geneva accord on Ukraine. Quoted in <http://www.interpretermag.com/west-has-given-putin-a-mandate-to-take-as-much-of-ukraine-as-he-wants-latynina-says/>. Last accessed 23 April 2014.
4. Andrey Illarionov (2014). “Украинцы, вас предали.” [“Ukrainians have been betrayed.”] <http://aillarionov.livejournal.com/675700.html>. Last accessed 23 April 2014. Quoted in Paul Goble (2014). “West has Given Putin a ‘Mandate’ to Take as Much of Ukraine as He Wants, Latynina Says.” *The Interpreter*. Online edition 22 April



2014. <http://www.interpretermag.com/west-has-given-putin-a-mandate-to-take-as-much-of-ukraine-as-he-wants-latynina-says/>. Last accessed 23 April 2014.

5. Vasily Kashin (2014). “Шанс для новой России.” [“Chance for a new Russia.”]. *Vedomosti*. Online Russian language edition. <http://www.vedomosti.ru/opinion/news/25463021/novaya-rossiya>. Last accessed 23 April 2014.
6. On 13 March 2014, Russia’s ROSKOMNADZOR (Federal Service for Supervision in the Sphere of Telecom, Information Technologies & Mass Communications) banned *Yezhednevny Zhurnal* for “incitements to unlawful behavior and participation in unauthorized mass gatherings.” <http://moskovskienovosti.com/russia-bans-several-websites-critical-of-govt-grani-ru-kasparov-ru-and-yezhednevny-zhurnal/>. Last accessed 28 April 2014.
7. Original Russian text: “Путиним придуман принципиально новый вид войны, рассчитанный на новые международные условия.”
8. Russian: Живой щит. Russian transl.: *zhivoy shchit*.
9. Russian: Палестинские террористы. Russian transl.: *Palestinskiye terroristy*.
10. Russian: Медиасоставляющая. Russian transliteration: *Mediasostavlyayuschaya*
11. Original Russian text: “Если в обычной войне боевые действия совершаются ради победы, то в новой войне главной целью тех или иных операций является пиар.”
12. Russian: Обвиняй других в том, что делаешь сам. Russian transl.: *Obvinyay drugikh v tom, chto delayesh' sam*.
13. This lesson is not lost on Ukrainians:

«Естественно, внешняя угроза сегодня играет на руку старому национализму; милитаризм и национализм всегда работают в паре...Самое популярное слово сейчас во Львове—не «революция», не «война», а «провокация». Провокаций все боятся, и все их ждут; в первую очередь, сами националисты. Провокатором называют человека с мегафоном.»

“The external threat today naturally plays into the hands of the old nationalism; militarism and nationalism always work in pairs...The most

popular word in Lviv now is not ‘revolution,’ it is not ‘war’: it is ‘provocation.’ Everyone is afraid of provocations, and everyone is waiting for one, especially the nationalists. The provocateur is the person with a megaphone.”

See: Andrew Archangel (2014). «**Львов: все сложно Андрей Архангельский побывал во Львове и увидел, что Западноукраинский Национализм— совсем не то, что нам кажется.**» (“Lions: It's Complicated. Andrew Archangel visited Lviv and saw that Western Ukrainian nationalism is not what we think.”). *Colta*. Online Russian language version, 30 April 2014. <http://www.colta.ru/articles/society/3075>. Last accessed 30 April 2014.

14. Russian: **Погромы и этнические чистки**. Russian transl.: *pogromy i etnicheskiye chistki*.
15. Russian: **Встает живым щитом перед войсками противника**. Russian transl.: *vstayet zhivym shchitom pered voyskami protivnika*.
16. Vdovin is a revisionist historian and member of the Russian Academy of Humanitarian Sciences. In 2010 he co-authored the highly controversial Russian language textbook, *A History of Russia 1917-2009*.
17. Aleksandr Vdovin (2014). “**Пропаганда космополитизма и мирового правительства в СССР и РФ.**” 26 апреля 2014 [“Cosmopolitan propaganda and world government in the Soviet Union and the Russian Federation.”] <http://rossiyanavsegda.ru/read/1926/>. Last accessed 28 April 2014.
18. As used here, “partition” refers to the Soviet era policy of **национально-территориальное размежевание** [Russian transl.: *Natsionalno-territorialnoye razmezhevaniye*) under which territorial boundaries were set without specific reference to ethnic considerations. The term is sometimes translated as *delimitation* to convey the sense that territorial boundaries were delimited from the geographic distribution of ethnic groups.
19. As used here, the term “asymmetrical federalism” refers to the post-Soviet devolution of power within the Russian Federation, and the emergence of non-Russian ethnic separatism. See: Gail W. Lapidus (1999). “Asymmetrical Federalism and State Breakdown in Russia.” *Post-Soviet Affairs*. 15:1, pp. 74-82. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/1060586X.1999.10641463>. Last accessed 28 April 2014.

20. Frédéric Bastiat (1850). “What Is Seen and What Is Not Seen.” <http://www.econlib.org/library/Bastiat/basEss1.html>. Last accessed 29 April 2014.
21. Aleksey Verkhoyantsev (2014). “Гремучая протестная смесь: На Востоке Украины недовольны не только политикой Киева, но и собственными олигархами.” [“The protest’s fulminate mixture: In eastern Ukraine, protesters are dissatisfied not only with Kiev’s policies but also with their own oligarchs.”]. *Свободная пресса* (*Svobodnaya Pressa*). Online Russian language edition, 23 April 2014. <http://svpressa.ru/politic/article/86185/>. Last accessed 29 April 2014.
22. Original Russian language text: “Мы сейчас являемся свидетелями не только нарастающего краха украинской государственности и обострения региональных противоречий на Украине.” Ibid.
23. Verkhoyantsev (2014). Op. cit.
24. Bastiat (1850), op. cit.
25. Shmelev is head of the Department of International Relations of the Diplomatic Academy of the Russian Federation.
26. Verkhoyantsev, op. cit.
27. Anshel Pfeiffer (2014). “It’s not the Ukrainian army that’s keeping Putin out.” *Haaretz*. Online English language version, 16 April 2014. <http://www.haaretz.com/news/world/.premium-1.585899>. Last accessed 29 April 2014.
28. Andrew Bowen (2014). “Can Kiev regain control of Eastern Ukraine, and its own military?” *The Interpreter* [online edition, 21 April 2014]. <http://www.interpretermag.com/can-kiev-regain-control-of-eastern-ukraine-and-its-own-military/>. Last accessed 23 April 2014.
29. The “OUN-UPA problem” refers to two WW2-era paramilitary groups, the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (*Orhanizatsyia Ukrainskykh Natsionalistiv* or OUN) and the Ukrainian Insurgency Army (*Ukrainskykh Povstanska Armia* or UPA). The OUN was established in 1929 and coordinated wartime underground activities in Soviet-occupied western Ukraine. It operated openly in Nazi-occupied Poland, and formed two Ukrainian battalions within the Wehrmacht. The OPA grew out of a 1940 split within the OUN to operate in western Ukraine in the 1940s and the 1950s, fighting at different times both Nazi and Soviet forces. At the war’s end, the OUN and the UPA effectively became a single organization once again. As the Soviet

Union reestablished control over the territory of Ukraine, however, armed resistance by the OUN-UPA in western Ukraine diminished and eventually ended by the mid-1950s marking the end of the nationalist liberation movement in Ukraine.

30. Major Pavlo Savchenko, *Armed Forces of Ukraine* (2012). "The Insurgent Movement in Ukraine during 1940s-1950s. Lessons Learned from the Case Study of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (OUN-UPA)." A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, p. 77.
31. "Ukraine: Right Sector To Form Special Battalion In East." <http://www.stratfor.com/situation-report/ukraine-right-sector-form-special-battalion-east>. Last accessed 23 April 2014.
32. "Right Sector tells OSCE mission it is being transformed into party, its military wing dissolved." *Interfax-Ukraine*. Online English version, 23 April 2014. <http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/201818.html>. Last accessed 23 April 2014.
33. Oxana Shevel (2009). "The politics of memory in a divided society: A comparison of post-Franco Spain and post-Soviet Ukraine." Paper prepared for presentation at the 5th Annual Danyliw Research Seminar on Contemporary Ukrainian Studies, University of Ottawa, 29-31 October 2009, p. 21. <http://ase.tufts.edu/polsci/faculty/shevel/PoliticsofMemory.pdf>. Last accessed 29 April 2014.
34. Anthony Smith (1996). "Memory and modernity: reflections on Ernest Gellner's theory of nationalism." *Nations and Nationalism*. 2:3, p. 383.
35. Shevel (2009), p. 31.
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# UNDERSTANDING THE NEW GLOBAL ORDER: THREE TECTONICS

*By Michael Hayden*

December 2014

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I have been out of government about five-and-a-half years and I get to talk to a lot of groups. One of the standard requests is: What keeps you awake at night? The problem is there is so much going on now. It's not just that we're more interconnected and seeing more on our 24/7 news stations or on our cellphones; there is just more stuff – ugly stuff – going on. But what's going on underneath? What are the tectonics? Why is the surface of the earth shaking in so many places?

I'm going to suggest three tectonics that explain why this world is so turbulent.

Tectonic Number 1: The New Malovence: The Threat from Non-State Actors

It was mentioned that I worked on the NSC staff for Brent Scowcroft in the Bush 41 administration. Two-and-a-half years ago, Brent wrote an article<sup>[1]</sup> arguing that when he was National Security Advisor, all the pieces on the board we cared about were nation-states, and frankly we moved those pieces around through what you and I today would call hard power – masses of men and metal at the right place at the right time. If we liked you, it was the promise of masses of men and metal; and if we didn't like you, it was the threat of masses of men and metal. **That's how hard power operates among nation-states.**

Scowcroft suggested most things in the industrial age trended to strengthen the nation-state. If you're going to industrialize a society, you need a powerful center. Look at our own history. We remember the Republican Party as being the anti-slavery party but that wasn't the only plank in the platform. The other plank was the construction of a national infrastructure to support the industrialization of the United States. Elsewhere, Communism was a horrible theory of history, worse theory of government, but it worked if your goal was to rapidly

industrialize a backward and agrarian society. In other words, the industrial age trended towards strengthening the nation-state.

Whereas the industrial age strengthened the nation-state, the post-industrial information age erodes the power of the nation-state. In other words, things that we used to think could be done only by government are now being done by sub-state actors, groups, gangs, even individuals. All of us have been empowered magnificently. We have been wondrously empowered to do things on our own but that empowerment has an incredible dark side. It pushes power down to sub-state actors, groups, and individuals, some of whom are very, very malevolent. Years ago we never lost any sleep over a religious fanatic living in a cave in the Hindu Kush . . . and yet now we do.

The first tectonic is the second great age of globalization, the first age being the age of sail. The second great age of globalization has made us so interconnected, jamming together the good and the bad, the strong and the weak, in ways we have not been jammed together before. This has made us vulnerable – not to malevolent state power but to the byproducts of the absence of state power.

**Remember that “what keeps you awake at night” request I keep getting? I always had the same five things on my list and I wasn't lazy. I think those are the five core things. Two of them are countries, one was China, one was Iran. The other three weren't. The other three were terrorism, transnational crime and cyber threats. None of them has to be the product of state power, and while they can be used by states, they can all come at us without being sponsored by a state.**

Now, one quick corollary on tectonic 1. Our national security structure was hard-wired in 1947 to defend us against malevolent state power. The National Security Act of that year created the National Security Council, the Central Intelligence Agency, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Secretary of Defense and America's Air Force. Thus we're hard-wired to work against malevolent state power but, for the reasons I have explained, one of the key challenges today emerges from the absence of state power. And I would suggest that a lot of the prickly debates we have been having with ourselves over the past thirteen years has been about taking a national security structure designed for one set of challenges and making it work to deal with challenges not anticipated at the time.

Two presidents have said we're at war with Al Qaeda. What do you do in a war? Close with and destroy the enemy; in other words, you kill him. We have done that in every war. What does it look like today? It looks like targeted killings from unmanned aerial vehicles outside of **internationally agreed theaters of conflict. We're a little uncomfortable with that. We don't have a national consensus there yet.**

I'll tell you what, don't kill them. What else can you do with the enemy? Close with and capture him. We had tens if not hundreds of thousands of German and Italian prisoners of war here in the United States during World War 2 and we kept them for the duration of the conflict. What does it look like today? It looks like that little Navy Base on the southeastern tip of Cuba. We're a little uncomfortable with the capturing thing, too.

How about you just do your intelligence thing? How about you just figure out what these guys are doing? Why don't you intercept their communications? Recall Bletchley Park, Enigma, Battle of Midway. What does it look like today? Everything that Edward Snowden has told you about for the last 16 months. Get the point?

The first tectonic is that the greatest dangers to your welfare and mine are not coming from state power but from the absence of state power, from ungoverned areas. And we are not yet settled into a national consensus about how we're going to work against that.

## Tectonic 2: The Impermanence of Things We Thought Permanent

Tectonic 2 is the erosion of things we thought permanent in the international system – in particular those that derive from two treaties, Versailles and Westphalia. What I'm going to suggest is that Versailles and Westphalia are going away.

Versailles is more easily explained. About 100 years ago, the end of World War 1, either through or at the same time as the treaty of Versailles, several countries were created. One of them was Czechoslovakia. Remember those maps that you used to stare at when you couldn't follow the polynomial equations on the blackboard. And so let me just check the map. If you got used to that map, I'm sorry because a lot of stuff is going away like Czechoslovakia. That country had its “velvet divorce” - not a big deal. Yugoslavia, also created by Versailles, also no longer exists. That was not so velvet; it was pretty violent.

Now, you've got another country not created by, but at the same time as, Versailles: it used to be called the Soviet Union. It's gone. And an awful lot of what's going down now whether it's in Abkhazia or Ossetia or Moldova or Transnistria or Crimea or Eastern Ukraine, it's all about who was standing on what side of a line when the music stopped and the Soviet Union dissolved. And if you think that this melting of Versailles thing is only European, you're wrong. Spread your gaze a bit eastward and now go to the eastern Mediterranean. There are countries created at the time of Versailles – Iraq, Syria and Lebanon.

Iraq is gone. It is not coming back. Syria is gone. It is not coming back. These are artificial states created for the convenience of European diplomacy indifferent to the cultural, historic, commercial, religious, ethnic and linguistic realities on the ground; they were kept in place by raw power. The first application of raw power was the Europeans, the guys who drew the



lines. And when the European empires melted, the lines were kept in place largely as a byproduct of the Cold War. These countries lined up on one side of the ball or the other and neither we nor the Soviets wanted those guys to start dragging us into war; so we said leave the lines alone.

And after the Cold War, those lines were kept in place by raw Arab autocracy. But it has not been a good decade so far for raw Arab autocrats. They're going down fast. And so these artificial states, whose boundaries were kept in place by an external imposition of power, simply imploded when the external imposition of power was lifted.

Here in the United States, we have problems but we have got elastic structures in our society. We get pushy and prickly at times, and some of these times turn violent but, fundamentally, since the civil war we work it out. We have enough flexibility in our system that these tensions are by and large resolved and we move to the next level.

The tensions in the Middle East were flash frozen 100 years ago. Put another way and badly **mixing my metaphors**, these tensions were in a Coke bottle and we've decided we're going to take the top off while forgetting that somebody has been shaking the bottle for the last 100 years. Put another way, even if we replaced Bashir al-Assad and Abu-Bakr al-Baghdadi with Saint Francis of Assisi, this is still going to be a mess.

Richard Haass, head of the Council on Foreign Relations, has described this as the next Thirty Years War,<sup>[2]</sup> and he's not suggesting our Air Force is going to be bombing and strafing there **for thirty years but he is trying to compare it to the Thirty Years' War in Europe (1618-1648)**, when Europe went from one equilibrium to another equilibrium post-1648. In the intervening thirty years, one third of the continent died. That's what Richard is suggesting. This is a generational thing.

I mentioned the Treaty of Westphalia, which ended the Thirty Years' War. That war was fundamentally a war of religion. In the arc of Western history, Westphalia is the handshake **amongst us. It said we have a long list of reasons to kill one another but let's take religion off the list.** In other words, we in the West decided that we were going to separate the secular from the sacred.

What's the relevance of that today? We in the West are making the presumption that one of the other great monotheisms of the world, Islam, is going to arrive at the same deal at some point in its history; that Islam will agree to separate the secular from the sacred. But one point is not a trend line, and we've got one point. **That's how Christendom did it. That's how Christendom made its compromise with modernity.** We are all operating under the assumption that Islam will do the same thing. We'll see.

That's only one element of Westphalia; there are other elements. The premise of Westphalia is that the nation-state is the fundamental unit of international discourse and the nation-state has a degree of sacredness, for lack of a better term, with regard to its boundaries or its reality or its sovereignty. That reality is being gnawed at from the left and the right.

From the left, there is the concept known as R2P – the “responsibility to protect.” It is the justification that the UN used for entering into Libya in 2011: the right of the international community to determine that what's going on internally in another country is so displeasing that the community can override the sovereignty of that country. That contradicts Westphalia, which saw sovereignty as a big deal, where internal is internal.

The Westphalia concept is getting gnawed from the right by Vladimir Putin. Westphalia says you are a citizen of the country in which you reside. What Putin is doing is not just causing an awful lot of trouble in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine and trying to overthrow the post-Cold War security structure in Europe – all big things; he is going after the fundamental premise of Westphalia that you're a citizen of the country in which you reside and he is replacing it with a different definition: that your citizenship is determined by the language your mom and dad spoke in the kitchen while you were growing up. That is a fundamentally different concept. And that's the tectonic: things you and I thought were permanent – like borders and the concept of sovereignty – are being eroded.

### Tectonic Number 3: The Perilous Trajectory of US-China Relations

The third tectonic has to do with the two great powers left on the planet – the United States and China. We're the only superpower but we are getting used to the reality of a near peer with respect to the Chinese. I firmly believe China is not an enemy of the United States. There aren't any good reasons for China to be an enemy. There are logical non-heroic policy choices available to us and the Chinese. Those choices will keep the relationship competitive. Occasionally that competition will rise to the level of confrontation but it never has to get to the level of conflict.

That said, according to Professor Graham Allison at Harvard University, what you have here is the fundamental issue of a status quo power dealing with an emerging power. <sup>[3]</sup> As he put it, we have seen this movie before – when the dominant power Sparta faced the rising power of Athens in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC and about two dozen times since the start of the modern era in 1500. He said that very often the mechanism by which the status quo power and the emerging power resolve their differences and get to a new balance is a process generally known as . . . global war. So this is a really important tectonic. This is something that really requires an awful lot of attention.

But let's focus on the status of each of these two countries. Most people like me are willing to tell you that we spend as much time fretting about Chinese failure as Chinese success, about China's weakness as we do Chinese strength. There are incredible structural problems inside the People's Republic right now. If you think our social security system is a Ponzi scheme, just think what it must be for a society that's had a one-child policy for generations.

There is maldistribution of wealth between the coast, which looks like us, and inland, which looks like China 300 years ago. There is environmental catastrophe on a scale hard for us to imagine. We're talking about shutting down cars, home heating and factories so that the sky could be seen during the APEC meeting in Beijing. I saw one estimate that Chinese pollution cost the Chinese economy about 11 percent of GDP a year.

So if you're Xi Jinping in the Politburo, you're riding the tiger here. By the way, who died and made you emperor? Why are you in charge? Marx, Engels, Lenin? Nah, long gone. You're in charge because of Chinese GDP growth for the last fifteen years, not because of ideology. But most people actually think that the growth has actually been considerably less than what the Chinese claim. And even if the party delivered in the past, we're telling you they're not going to be able to continue to deliver. What got their game to this level is incapable of getting their game to the next level. And so if it's not economic growth and if it's not Marxism, what else will keep the regime in power?

Some say Confucian merit. They are accustomed to being governed by people who deserve to be the governors. They are well educated. They're morally superior. If you're going to buy that morally superior line for the Chinese communist party, then you do not have access to the Chinese blogosphere. This is an incredibly corrupt party. The Chinese people are not going to grant it control on some platform of moral superiority.

So I'm running out of ideas here. It's not Marxism, it's not moral superiority, and it's not economic delivery. What's left? And the ugly thing that's left is nationalism. And that's why you see the Chinese beating their chest about a bunch of rocks called the Senkaku Islands or the Diaoyu. Actually they're creating a bunch of rocks in the South China Sea so that they can claim the territorial waters about them.

The last thing I'll touch on is the tectonic internal to us. Where are we going as a people? What is the role you think is appropriate for us in the world today?

Professor Walter Russell Mead (an earlier Benjamin Franklin Award winner) says you can divide American presidents into four baskets when it comes to their foreign policy. <sup>[4]</sup> He said you can have a Hamiltonian policy, named for the first Secretary of the Treasury. This is the idea that America can't be free unless it's prosperous; America can't be prosperous unless it's strong. I think Governor Romney would have been Hamiltonian.

Or you can have a Wilsonian foreign policy, known for its idealism – making the world safe for democracy, trumpeting the war to end all wars.

The third model is the Jeffersonian foreign policy, which is inward looking, focusing on what has to be done at home rather than abroad. During his presidency, there was an undeclared naval war between France and Great Britain off the mouth of the Chesapeake, and both the French and the British were grabbing American ships and American sailors. The new Republic was very offended by this and people were saying you have to stand up for us. Jefferson therefore went to Congress for an authorization – not an authorization for the use of military force but an authorization called the non-intercourse acts, which allowed the president to direct American merchant men to stay in port. His response to our being raided on the high seas by the French and British was: don't go there.

Finally, there is the Jacksonian tradition. Andrew Jackson was the first American president from the frontier. He was an Indian fighter, a war hero, and the first Democratic president (whether you spell it with a big D or a small d). Mead characterizes as Jacksonian adherents the people who watch Fox news.

George W. Bush, the president that I served, was Wilsonian, the most Wilsonian man in this office since Wilson. I will admit that President Bush had a touch of Jackson going on there too. There was a time he was walking past a press rope line – when things were heading south in Iraq – someone barked out a question: What about that insurgency? And the president just wheeled around and said, “bring it on.” That's Andrew Jackson.

President Obama is equally Wilsonian. Take the speech in Cairo, or the speech in Ankara, or Prague. The president is trying to sponsor a world in which there are no nuclear weapons. That's really Wilsonian. I also think President Obama is Jeffersonian, manifest in sentiments such as “the tide of war is receding” or that Al Qaeda is on the run and it's time to do nation-building at home. A lot of the tension we see in our government trying to make decisions is the president and the staff reflecting this inner struggle between his inner Wilson and his inner Jefferson. Do you want evidence of that tension? Go back and check the West Point speech in December 2009, when he says we're surging in Afghanistan – sort of, for about 18 months.

The tectonic here is: What are we going to decide is our model? Where are we going with this? Remember that speech about six weeks ago, when the president gave a speech he never wanted to give about ISIS? You all probably watched that with great interest but your interest was minuscule compared to that of people around the world. For the rest of the world, this is the tectonic.

If we're in Paris and I'm the former head of DGSE and you're a bunch of French foreign policy thinkers, I'd have started with this one. This is the one everyone is watching. What are the Americans going to do?

I have always had my struggle with American exceptionalism. I think we're exceptional but it sounds a little too bombastic, and it entails a little too much chest-beating. But I learned an important lesson in 1994 in Sarajevo. I was with the US European command. Sarajevo was under siege during the war in Bosnia. I was in the Sarajevo market about two days after a Serbian 120-millimeter mortar shell came down in the market, detonating at about eight feet above ground. It blew the shrapnel everywhere, and dozens were killed. When I went to the marketplace, I could see the shrapnel holes in the asphalt. It was winter and bitterly cold. I was in my battle gear. I had a weapon and an American flag patch, and I was just walking around. At some point, one person, then another, saw the flag, and other people gathered and they started chanting USA, USA. USA. At that point, I came to the realization that it really didn't matter whether or not I thought we were exceptional, everyone else does.

There are certain expectations. We didn't earn it. We probably don't want it. But the accidents of history and the will of the Creator have put us in a place where what we do matters for the welfare of the planet – more than any other country. And if we do this half well, if we do this to the best of our ability, the best mark we'll ever get from history is, “as global hegemon, these guys weren't bad.” But that's as good as it gets. That's where we are. And that's why what FPRI does – taking a long view about where this fits into history, geography and culture – is so very important. If we get it wrong, we suffer – and the rest of the world does, too. So I am happy to be associated with your work, and I'm honored that you thought enough of me to include me in your group. Thank you very much.

Notes:

2. “A World in Transformation,” by Brent Scowcroft, *The National Interest*, May-June 2012.
3. “The New Thirty Years’ War,” by Richard Haass, Project Syndicate, July 21, 2014.
4. “Avoiding Thucydides’s Trap,” by Graham Allison, *Financial Times*, August 22, 2012.
5. *Special Providence: American Foreign Policy and How It Changed the World*, by Walter Russell Mead (New York: Random House, 2011).

# HOW CHINA EXPLOITS A LOOPHOLE IN INTERNATIONAL LAW IN PURSUIT OF HEGEMONY IN EAST ASIA

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January 2015

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Who “minds the gap” in the South China Sea? The gap, that is, created in international law concerning the use of coercion or aggressive force and the right of self-defense of victim states. China exploits this gap in the international law on the use of force to compel its neighbors to accept Chinese hegemony in East Asia. By using asymmetric maritime forces – principally fishing vessels and coast guard ships – China is slowly but surely absorbing the South China Sea and East China Sea into its domain. And it does so by exploiting a loophole in international law created by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) that makes it impossible for regional states to respond effectively. This legal dimension of the international politics of the maritime disputes in East Asia is not widely understood, but it is at the core of Chinese strategy in the region.

## **China's Strategy**

In pursuing its grand design, China must overcome resistance from three groups of antagonists. First, China has to overwhelm Japan and South Korea in the East China Sea and Yellow Sea. The plan: divide and conquer. Make sure Japan and Korea dislike each other more than they dislike China. So long as Japan and South Korea nurse historical grievances, China reaps the gain.

Second, Beijing must “Finlandize” the states surrounding the South China Sea by bringing the semi-enclosed body of water into its orbit. The plan: use a suite of carrots and sticks to bring its much weaker “frenemies”—Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Brunei—into line. Likewise, the split in ASEAN plays to China's advantage. This strategy is by itself a powerful approach, and the first 150 years of U.S. domination and division sowed in South America provides an excellent roadmap for a gangly imperialist.

Finally, Beijing has to position itself to prevent interference by the two major maritime powers from outside the region that could stop it. Only the United States and India are positioned to check China's ambition. The plan: bring pressure to bear within the region without risking great power naval war. In particular, avoid a clear-cut incident that might trigger the U.S. security agreements with Japan, Korea, or the Philippines. [1] In pursuit of these three plans, China applies pressure across the spectrum of low-level coercion, but is careful not to cross the threshold of what is considered an "armed attack" in international law, and therefore trigger the right of individual and collective self-defense.

For example, beginning in 1999, China declared a seasonal "fishing ban" throughout the South China Sea, even though it has no legal competence to regulate fishing outside of its own 200 nautical mile exclusive economic zone (EEZ). The farthest reaches of the Chinese ban stretch more than 1000 miles from the southern tip of Hainan Island. The fishing ban purports to manage fish stocks in the EEZs of Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Brunei. Imagine if the United States began to control fishing vessels and oil platforms in Mexico's EEZ.

China also has been relentless in promoting an historic right to the islands and features, and virtually all of the ocean area, of the entire South China Sea. The world is uniformly dismayed at China's unflappable and indignant claim to "historic waters" in the South China Sea. Maritime claims are based on the rules set forth in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (LOSC), which China joined in 1996. Beijing's expansive claims, however, are based on the 9- (now 10-) dashed line that was published by the Republic of China in 1947. Although a fundamental precept of the sources of international law is that the "later in time prevails," China unabashedly touts the dash-line claim as trumping its legal obligations in the Law of the Sea Convention. [2] China has also renewed historic claims in the East China Sea over the Senkaku Islands, and in the Yellow Sea. Maritime claims constitute China's greatest "unforced error" in its *nom de guerre* as a "peacefully rising" great power.

### **China's Tactics**

Beijing deploys a staggering variety and number of civil law enforcement and civilian commercial vessels and aircraft to press its claims and intimidate other nations. Fishing trawlers and fishery enforcement vessels are the vanguard of this policy, resulting in routine clashes with maritime security patrols in neighboring EEZs. [3] Defense News referred to China's swarms of fishing vessels as "proxy enforcers" that work in concert with the Chinese Coast Guard and People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) to "circle a disputed area of contention or create a barrier to prevent access" by the naval forces of its competitors. China Marine Surveillance ships, for example, have completely closed the entrance to the vast lagoon of Scarborough Shoal, located 125 nm West of the Philippines and inside the Philippine EEZ.

Sometimes, these incidents turn deadly. In December 2011, for example, a Chinese fisherman killed a South Korean Coast Guardsman that attempted to impound the Chinese boat for illegal fishing.

Fishing vessel swarms are “rent-a-mobs” at sea, yet they pose a sensitive dilemma for other countries in the region. If the fishing vessels are challenged by neighboring states’ maritime law enforcement, it appears that the fishermen are subjected to heavy-handed action. This political element also stokes righteous nationalism in China. On the other hand, if coastal states acquiesce in the actions of the fishing vessels, they cede jurisdiction and sovereign rights in their EEZs.

China first began using fishing vessels as irregular forces in the 1990s against the islands of Matsu and Jinmen to put pressure on Taiwan during periods of political tension. [4] Today China uses these tactics against Japan in the East China Sea and in the South China Sea against the Philippines, Vietnam, and Malaysia. China also has used fishing vessel swarms against Korea in the Yellow Sea. In 2009, when China confronted the USNS Impeccable special mission ship as it conducted military surveys 75 nm from Hainan Island, it used a flotilla composed of a naval intelligence vessel, a fisheries patrol boat, an oceanographic ship and two small cargo ships or fishing trawlers. Some of the vessels appeared to be manned by Chinese Special Forces. [5]

In order to forge stronger unity of effort within the government, Beijing combined five separate agencies into a single Coast Guard in March 2013. The “Five Dragons” were the China Coast Guard of the Public Security Border Troops, the China Maritime Safety Administration of the Ministry of Transport, the China Marine Surveillance Agency of the State Oceanic Administration, the China Fisheries Law Enforcement Command of the Ministry of Agriculture, and the maritime force of the General Administration of Customs.

Last year, China added oil rigs to its stable of paramilitary maritime forces when the China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) rig HD 981 was positioned near the Paracel Islands in Vietnam’s EEZ. The rig was guarded by a bevy of some 30 Chinese fishing vessels, paramilitary craft, and PLAN warships, until it withdrew months later. The oil rig incident was the lowest point in Sino-Vietnamese relations since 1979. Vietnamese forces were ejected from the Paracels by Chinese marines in a bloody 1974 invasion.

As the region awaits a ruling on the Philippine’s arbitration challenge to preserve its sovereign rights in its EEZ, China’s maritime misadventures in the region leverage a gaping hole in international humanitarian law created by the some of the world’s top jurists in the 1986 ICJ Case Concerning the Military and Paramilitary Activities in and Against Nicaragua (Nicaragua v. United States of America).



## China “Minds the Gap” in International Law

In order for China’s strategy to work, it has to slowly coerce its neighbors into accepting Beijing’s hegemony, but avoid a military confrontation. China uses force through its coast guard, fishing vessels, and now oil rigs, to change the political and legal seascape in East Asia, but it studiously keeps PLAN ships over the horizon to sidestep the chance of war.

The Charter of the United Nations governs the law on the use of force in international affairs. The goal of the United Nations is to suppress “acts of aggression and other breaches of the peace.” [6] While the 1928 Kellogg-Briand Pact famously outlawed the conduct of “war,” and the agreement is now regarded as the height of interwar naiveté, the proscription in the U.N. Charter is even broader. Under article 2(4) of the Charter, “armed attack” (or more accurately, armed aggression or aggression *armee* in the equally authentic French translation) is unlawful. Article 2(4) also states that the threat of the use of force is as much a violation as the use of force itself.

What may states do if they suffer armed attack or armed aggression? Article 51 of the Charter recognizes the inherent right of individual and collective self-defense of all states to respond to an attack. So far so good – any illegal use of force qualifies as an armed attack, and an armed attack triggers the right of self-defense of the injured state, right? Wrong, at least according to the International Court of Justice. The decision in the 1985 ICJ Nicaragua Case opened a “gap” between an armed attack by one state and the right of self-defense by the victim state.

The case arose from the wars in Central America in the 1980s. The Sandinista regime seized power in Nicaragua in 1979, and embarked on a Marxist campaign to “liberate” Honduras, El Salvador and Costa Rica. Nicaragua supported a splinter resistance movement in El Salvador with weapons, ammunition, money, training, intelligence, command and control, and provision of border sanctuaries. With this aid, guerrilla forces wrecked El Salvador’s economy and turned minority disaffection into a full-blown insurgency. The civilian population in the region suffered, and atrocities were committed on both sides.

To stabilize El Salvador, President Ronald Reagan signed National Security Decision Directive 17 on November 23, 1981. NSSD 17 authorized the CIA to build a force of Contra rebels to conduct covert action to overthrow the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua. Military assistance flowed to Honduras and El Salvador to help inoculate them against communist insurgents. The decision reflected one of the earliest programs of the Reagan Doctrine to oppose the spread of Soviet influence.

In 1984 the Government of Nicaragua brought suit against the United States before the ICJ, arguing that U.S. clandestine activities against it, including arming the Contra rebels and mining the ports of Nicaragua, were a violation of Nicaragua’s sovereignty. The United States

countered that U.S. operations were a lawful exercise of the inherent right of individual and collective self-defense under article 51 of the U.N. Charter. President Duarte of El Salvador said to the media on July 27, 1984:

*What I have said, from the Salvadoran standpoint, is that we have a problem of aggression by a nation called Nicaragua inside El Salvador, that these gentlemen are sending in weapons, training, people, transporting bullets and what not, and bringing all of that to El Salvador. I said that at this very minute they are using fishing boats as a disguise and are introducing weapons into El Salvador in boats at night.*

*In view of this situation, El Salvador must stop this somehow. The contras ... are creating a sort of barrier that prevents the Nicaraguans from continuing to send them to El Salvador by land. What they have done instead is to send them by sea, and they are not getting them in through Monte Cristo, El Coco, and El Bepino. [7]*

The Court rejected the U.S. and El Salvadoran claims of self-defense against an armed attack by Nicaragua. In an interim decision on the Case, the ICJ ruled by a vote of 15 to 0 that the United States should “immediately cease and refrain from any action restricting, blockading, or endangering access to Nicaraguan ports....” In its final ruling on the Merits, the ICJ held by a vote of 14 to 1 that Nicaragua’s right to sovereignty may not be jeopardized by U.S. paramilitary activities. Training, arming, equipping, and supplying the Contras was a violation of international law, and not a lawful measure of collective self-defense taken by the United States and its regional allies in response to Nicaraguan aggression.

The ICJ ruled lower-level coercion or intervention, such as “the sending by or on behalf of a state of armed bands, groups, irregulars, or mercenaries” into another country constitutes an “armed attack,” but the right of self-defense is triggered only if such intervention reaches the “scale and effects” or is of sufficient “gravity” tantamount to a regular invasion. There was no right to use self-defense against coercion or lower-level armed attack by irregulars or insurgents that does not rise to the threshold of gravity or scale and effects.

While both Nicaragua and the United States had funded guerrillas and engaged in acts that destabilized the region, the ICJ distinction turned on the concept of “effective control.” Nicaragua was found not to have “effective control” over the insurgents trying to overthrow governments in El Salvador and Honduras, whereas the United States was deemed to exercise “effective control” over the mining of Nicaraguan harbors and the Contras.

The Court denied El Salvador the opportunity to intervene in the Case, assuring a David vs. Goliath narrative. The ICJ also accepted the Sandinista’s version of the facts and ignored the armed aggression committed by Nicaragua against its neighbors. [8] Judge Schwebel, an American on the Court, issued the only dissent: “In short the Court appears to offer – quite

gratuitously – a prescription for overthrow of weaker governments by predatory governments while denying potential victims ... their only hope for survival.” The Case represents one of the greatest pieces of international judicial malpractice in history and it should not be surprising that the decision now supports Chinese maritime encroachment (as well as Russian shenanigans in its neighbors from Georgia to Ukraine to the Baltics – but that is a story for another day).

Whether the Nicaragua Case was driven by outcome-based decision making that required a U.S. loss, or a high-minded, but misguided effort at international social justice (as I have suggested here), the result is that a gap opened between armed aggression and the right of self-defense. By using lower-levels of coercion spread over numerous small acts, none of which are sufficient to trigger the right of self-defense, aggressors are rewarded. Being politically and legally cognizant of the Nicaragua Case, China is making strategic maritime gains at the expense of its neighbors without the risk of starting a war.

Furthermore, China’s strategic use of its fishing fleet as a component of “legal warfare” goes beyond exploiting the gap between the use of force and self-defense in *jus ad bellum*; it affects *jus in bello* as well. Fishing vessels likely would be used as belligerent platforms during any regional war. Some suspect China is outfitting thousands of its fishing vessels with sonar in order to integrate them into the PLAN’s anti-submarine warfare operations that would have to find and sink U.S. and allied submarines.

Ever since the landmark 1900 case *Paquette Habana*, which arose from U.S. seizure of Cuban fishing boats in the Spanish-American war, coastal fishing vessels and fishermen are exempt from target or capture during armed conflict. By placing sonar on its fishing vessels as a force multiplier for anti-submarine operations, Beijing instantly risks these ships being regarded as lawful targets in the event of conflict. But the optics of the U.S. Navy sinking Chinese fishing vessels is made-to-order propaganda. In any event, Sam Tangredi, a prominent defense strategist wonders how many of the limited number of torpedoes is the U.S. Navy willing to expend, given the enormous number of fishing vessels.

The reaction to all this might be – so what? Countries have long used asymmetric attacks that fly under the radar. What is different now is that irregular warfare is being used as a tool of the strong to change the regional security system, rather than the weak. Furthermore, the international legal aspects of the present situation inures to China’s advantage. Consequently, the systemic risks are that much greater and can only be compared with the campaign by the USSR to destabilize countries during the Cold War. Who says international law doesn’t matter?

Notes:

1. The United States has defense agreements with five Asian states: Thailand, the Philippines, Japan, South Korea, and Australia. Some of these defense agreements and the Taiwan Relations Act were the subject of an FPRI podcast last year, which can be accessed here: <http://www.fpri.org/multimedia/2014/06/us-security-commitments-asias-cha>.
2. States that have historic fishing claims may seek access from the coastal state that manages those areas under article 62 of the Law of the Sea Convention.
3. Lyle J. Goldstein, “Chinese fisheries enforcement: Environmental and strategic implications,” 40 *Marine Policy* 187 (2013).
4. Wendell Minnick, Fishing Vessels in China Serve as Proxy Enforcers, *Defense News*, August 18, 2014, p. 15.
5. Some of the “fishermen” appear to be entirely unconvincing subsistence fishermen – young, crew cut, athletic, continually at sea in Southeast Asia without tanned skin, and (!) unable to operate fishing equipment. This observation has been made to me by a former 2-star admiral in East Asia and a retired Chief of Navy from one of the states bordering the South China Sea.
6. Article 1(1), Charter of the United Nations.
7. Press Conference of President Duarte, Sam Salvador Radio Cadena YSKL (in Spanish) 1735 GMT 27 July 1984 in San Salvador (July 27, 1984) reprinted in *FBIS Daily Reports Latin America*, 1, 4 (July 30, 1984).
8. See, e.g. John Norton Moore, *The Secret War in Central America – Sandinista Assault on World Order* (1987). John Norton Moore served as a Deputy Agent of the United States at the jurisdictional phase of the case. The United States did not participate in the Merits phase of the case. Full disclosure: I earned my research doctorate under John Norton Moore at University of Virginia School of Law, where I also serve as Senior Fellow. Professor Moore has written more extensively about the legal shortcomings in the case in John Norton Moore, *Jus ad Bellum before the International Court of Justice*, 52 *Virginia Journal of International Law* 903, 919-935 (Summer 2012).

## PART XIV: THE FUTURE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM?

# SOVEREIGNTY—THE ULTIMATE STATES’ RIGHTS ARGUMENT

*By Anna Simons*

July 2011

*This article was originally published in The Telegram.*

Much as it would be comforting to think that jihadism will wither with Osama bin Laden’s demise, the opposite could well occur. Or, what about NATO’s discombobulated effort to topple Moammar Gadhafi? This, too, could augur plenty more anti-American terrorism. If Gadhafi survives, watch out. If he doesn’t, but his family members do, watch out. All of which should lead Americans to wonder: do we have any more coherent a policy today for dealing with anti-American violence than we did ten years ago?

The answer, sadly, is “no.”

For ten years and counting, U.S. policy has rested on the misguided notion that it is somehow possible to separate “moderates” from “radicals,” or reconcilables from irreconcilables. Washington’s policy has been that if those espousing and participating in unjustifiable violence can be isolated, moderates should be wooable, and once they’ve been won over the irreconcilables can be eliminated. To accomplish this, we just need to persuade moderates to stop lending extremists support.

One problem with such a presumption, however, is it treats radicals and moderates as if they represent two neatly distinguishable groups of people. But, they clearly don’t, not when parents and siblings can express genuine surprise when they learn it was their son, daughter, brother, sister, or husband who just martyred him or herself in a suicide attack. If family members in close quarters and tightly knit households can’t tell or don’t know exactly where each other is on the scale of radicalization, how can we make such a determination? More to the point, why would we ever want to base our security on the presumption that we can?

Sometimes individuals make it obvious that they hold extremist views; some wear their politics on their sleeves. Others do not. Most famously, the 9/11 hijackers didn’t. But also, just because someone is a moderate today does not mean that he or she can’t be radicalized tomorrow. It is impossible to predict which sorts of events will trigger what types of reactions or in whom. It could be the 16th rather than the 15th time that a young man is made to stand for hours at a checkpoint that flips the switch. This is why even the best intentioned de-radicalization efforts through education are likely to prove insufficient.

Inadvertence compounds the radicalization problem. For instance, consider the release of the prisoner abuse photos from Abu Ghraib. They depict abuses that should not have occurred. **But the fact that incidents that shouldn't have occurred were recorded—which also shouldn't have occurred—means those images will be available to incite people for years to come.**

Once incidents are logged into social memory, that's where they stay. But also, as the Abu Ghraib debacle illustrates, there is no foolproof way to ensure abuses won't occur. Worse, if unforeseen events can push buttons in people who themselves aren't aware they have them till after they are pushed, keeping "moderates" separate from potential "radicals" becomes either an impossible or a never-ending task.

Logic suggests two ways to deal with radical adversaries who are uninterested in a secular peace: inflict so much loss and pain that none dares cross you again. Or, force those with the ambition to rule to have to rule. Let al Qaeda, for instance, wrest Saudi Arabia from the Saud royal family if it can.

Several summers ago a group of military officers and I put together an argument that is not quite as untempered as the two approaches just described might suggest, but it does borrow from both. [1] In the Sovereignty Rules world we envision, the United States would not engage in the same sorts of behavior that radicalize so many people today. We Americans would not imprison people in other countries. Nor would we imprison them in their own countries. We **wouldn't occupy. We wouldn't invade to nation-build.** Instead, the United States would do everything in its power to reinvigorate sovereignty. We would make countries self-police.

**Think about it. There is no more effective mechanism for eliminating "bad guys" than to impel countries to self-police.** This is true even given the caveat that not every country in existence should be a country. Some should be two or three. Others should not exist at all. But until humans stumble or agree upon a new way to arrange political space around the globe, states are the socio-geographic containers we've got. **Nothing else at the moment has states' potential to box in terrorists and other non-state anti-state actors.** Nothing else grants diverse peoples a freer rein to govern themselves as they see fit.

One of the most under-remarked realities of modern existence is that there is no place that **isn't claimed by at least one government, sometimes multiple governments.** All of the habitable planet is spoken for. Nor is there a government that does not want to be taken seriously and treated as though it is just as sovereign as every other. The UN itself is predicated on the notion of separate but equally sovereign states. Regardless of size, system of governance, or behavior, all countries get a seat and a vote in the General Assembly, while membership in other international and regional organizations further cements countries' **privileged position** and points to states as the global unit of account. In fact, it is hard to imagine how the world might work without them.

Yet, at the same time that every state is made to count, no state is really held accountable. That turns sovereignty into a global emperor with no clothes. With no enforcement capability, the international community is an entity that, at best, communes. It wields neither clubs nor trumps. This means the bottom line remains much as it has always been: ultimately, only might makes right. More often, might makes wrong, and when that happens it invariably requires yet more force to overcome those bent on misusing it.

Unpleasant as such truisms are, the fact remains that no universal consensus has been—or likely ever will be—reached on what we all agree is fair, unfair, moral, immoral, or intolerable. If only there were such a thing as universal values, countries would already be abiding by the same code.

Not only is there no “there there” when it comes to international governance, but we Americans are our own First Responders. That means prevention is also up to us—unless we can shift the burden to other governments. Yet, given the current system, even if enough other governments agreed with us that we should somehow collectively share governance, there is no guarantee—and nothing to guarantee—that American preferences, never mind principles would prevail.

In contrast, reinvigorating sovereignty seems simpler, more straightforward, and more rewarding for everyone. As commonly understood, sovereignty promises two things: a **country’s territory is supposed to remain inviolate, and populations within a country’s borders** are expected to pledge their allegiance to it. By rights, any violator of U.S. sovereignty—whether an attack is as large as 9/11 or a single American on official government business is killed abroad—and those who helped or harbored the perpetrators should already be on notice that we hold them accountable. Indeed, if only Washington made clear that this was the principle on which our foreign policy rested, everything else would fall into place, and others would have already seen what holding violators to account means. Take Osama bin Laden. Yes, finally, U.S. forces killed him. But he should never have been able to find a safe haven in the first place.

The flip side of the sovereignty coin is that all countries would be free to make as much of sovereignty as we do without worrying about our interfering with them. Americans would no longer hector others about how they live. We would no longer badger people elsewhere to become more like us. Instead, populations should be able to live under whatever system of governance they choose, to use their natural resources in whatever manner they see fit, and to run their economies according to the principles that most suit them, so long as nothing they do **violates others’ sovereignty—not in terms of pollution, refugee flows, support to insurgents elsewhere, or a government’s inability to police its own borders.**



In theory, this is what sovereignty already promises. In practice, no one has ever tried systematically to make it work. Worse, by not holding irresponsible governments to account, the international “community” has helped encourage a whole array of non-state actors, whose very existence defies the “to each his own—don’t tread on me” quid pro quo sovereignty promises.

Today, if a government can’t or doesn’t deliver services to its citizens, non-state actors eagerly fill that void: some do so for the age-old reason of saving souls, others seek supporters in their struggle against an unjust regime, and yet others are recruiting foot soldiers for battles elsewhere. Not only does the legitimacy we all grant non-state actors totally confound the separation of powers sovereignty demands, but it confounds us. Where, for instance, does Hezbollah fit along that spectrum of saving souls, struggling against what it regards as an unjust regime, and targeting us? What about Jemaah Islamiyah? What about the next generation of “self-help” organizations we are midwifing in Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Yemen, and beyond?

Of course, another problem non-state actors pose is that they undermine the very essence of the social contract that is supposed to exist between rulers and ruled. When non-government entities deliver critical services, governments don’t have to. This vicious cycle not only feeds corruption and further entrenches dysfunction, but alienates even as it subverts. It is what enables states to fail. It is what throws other countries’ ends, ways, and means totally out of whack.

Somehow, we have permitted—nay, enabled—non-state actors to evolve to such a point that we now treat them as though they are beyond governmental control altogether. As Jakob Grygiel puts it, small stateless actors have become “the long tail of international relations.” Their prominence—which, again, is only thanks to us—convinces us that “the Westphalian state system is in a long recession.” [2]

But in a Sovereignty Rules world—in which heads of state are impelled to fulfill duties and not just receive deference, and in which there would be no more under-governed areas—non-state actors, literally, would not exist.

Here is one path for getting there: First, a totally transparent and very simple foreign policy that puts foreign governments and populations everywhere on notice. Let one of your citizens launch an attack, and you as the state, the source, the host that “owns the problem,” will be delivered a list of U.S. demands, such as “eliminate al Qaeda from your territory” or “disarm and disable Hizballah.” “Here’s what we expect and when we expect it. How you go about it is totally up to you.”

How those on the receiving end of Washington's demands choose to respond would then determine how we view them: are we dealing with a partner state, a struggling state, an adversary, or a failed state? Basically, "we've been attacked, and you own the problem. What kind of relationship have you had with the United States? What kind of relationship do you want now?" It's the future, not the past that matters.

Partner states are those both willing and able to meet U.S. demands, and in many cases would act exactly as we would want them to without our needing to express a thing.

Struggling states are willing but unable to fully assist—like Tanzania after the 1998 bombing of the U.S. embassy. Struggling states will likely need military or other assistance, but only to help take care of the specific problem at hand; we would not help prop up anyone's regime.

Adversary states are those whose governments are either complicit in an attack or refuse Washington's demands. What distinguishes adversary states is that they have the capacity to do as we ask, but willfully choose not to.

Failed states, meanwhile, lack central control; the government can't (or doesn't want to) reach all quarters. Nonetheless, even in failed states someone represents authority, if only at the local level, and therefore bears responsibility and needs to be held accountable. If the resident authority—whether a warlord, traditional chief, or a council of elders—does not root out those who attacked us, Washington's reaction would be just as swift and overwhelming as if we were confronting an adversary state.

Let a regime explicitly support attackers or do nothing to eliminate them, and that government invites the largest and loudest U.S. response: we target it. We don't bomb a little or fire warning shots and then wait to see if leaders, who have consciously put themselves in an adversarial relationship with us, suddenly want to negotiate. Instead, we make an example of that government. It's gone, as are those who attacked us.

Put like this, reinvigorating sovereignty can sound unremittingly harsh. But, in reality, it is totally liberating. For instance, one of its radical turns back to common sense is to remind everyone that governments have choices and responsibilities. A second twist is that all countries receive equal treatment—England, Russia, Iran, the Comoros. Granting everyone equal opportunity may be eminently American, but it is not something we have applied to foreign policy thus far.

Yet consider: in a world of purposeful miscommunication, calculated misinformation, sophisticated disinformation, and increasingly cynical audiences, being unequivocally principled conveys a message no one can misinterpret. At the heart of future diplomacy would

be the uncontested reminder: you already know what to expect. We have promised, now we deliver.

Not only would a strategy predicated on being totally forthright—and decisive from the outset—put an end to charges of hypocrisy, but it would make it next to impossible for politicians (ours or theirs) to play shell games with force.

And yes, such a strategy would require enhanced intelligence. The United States would need to be sure some “innocent” state or government is not being framed for someone else’s deeds. But—if Terrorist A has traveled to Country X on a passport issued by Country Y, then Country Y and Country X have a lot to answer for. Those who would be treated as adversaries are those who either refuse to answer such questions or openly defy us by refusing to hold anyone accountable for gaps in their security.

In other words, when thinking about how the United States would respond to anti-American violence, two things would have to occur before the U.S. uses force, and both are triggered by others, not by us. First, U.S. sovereignty was violated. A sovereign government intentionally or unintentionally lent attackers support. Second, that sovereign government refused to meet our demands to permanently neutralize our attackers. Only then would we target it and them.

Worth emphasizing is that this is not a policy of mindless punishment or destruction. Its intent is not to wipe out—or even threaten—every unlucky, inept, or corrupt regime. The United States would not aim to exact an eye for an eye. Instead, this approach is completely iterative. U.S. sovereignty is violated; Washington demands; the government we hold responsible responds; how it responds determines how we re-act.

Question: could anti-Western jihadis, or any anti-American actors for that matter, flourish in such a world?

Meanwhile, to make this work—to get the American people on board—would require several things. To make the idea itself acceptable would probably be among the most difficult. Acceptance might only come in the wake of a defeat in Afghanistan, or another 9/11. Or, it could take a truly gutsy politician to urge Americans to revisit our Constitution and better understand what grand strategy is supposed to do: align ends, ways, and means.

Why is this last point so important? Because, say jihadis were to strike Chicago tomorrow, what would the United States do? When Chicago is burning, whom would we target? How would we respond? There is nothing in place and no strategy on the horizon to either reassure the American public or warn the world: Attack us, and this is what you can expect.

We would flail.

As for the “means” the United States has available to achieve our ends, the capabilities and limitations of our flesh-and-blood armed forces in the field always matter. They are an essential, if not the most essential, piece of enforcing any policy. Thus, unlike most students of counterinsurgency and counterterrorism, my co-authors and I do not look at violent extremists and argue that the U.S. military had better retool in order to meet twenty-first century adversaries on the irregular warfare “battlefield”—which is non-Americans’ battlefield of choice. Instead, we ask why the United States doesn’t tilt all fields of battle (to include urban, maritime, and cyber) back toward methods of applying decisive overwhelming force that already advantage us.

A related premise is that because it is a forecaster’s nightmare to try to predict who, hailing from where, (Somalia, Pakistan, Ft. Hood?) might target the United States, how, and with what effect(s), we need a significantly different logic and an “if... then” approach that goes something like this: if the United States more effectively monitored trends, movements, and rumblings abroad, then that should mitigate the likelihood of another surprise attack. If America were to be attacked despite this, but citizens were prepared to absorb the blow, then the surprise shouldn’t paralyze us. If the United States had a series of counter-responses prepared in advance, then no enemy could benefit from our misfortune. If, meanwhile, the U.S. government advertised its preparations ahead of time, then who would want to bother attacking us at all?

Of course, in the ideal Sovereignty Rules world no one would have cause to target us since the U.S. government wouldn’t be doing anything to provoke them. But, in the wake of recent events, we do still have adversaries—and, thanks to our current actions, revenge will motivate at least some of them for quite some time to come.

As for what clever adversaries might use against us, no one who writes about national security today analyzes our domestic divisibility as a real security concern. [3] Instead, those who focus on homeland security typically concentrate on our physical, and even cyber, infrastructure. Yet, 35 years ago the North Vietnamese proved more than capable of manipulating soft American hearts and sympathetic American minds to undermine our will to win the war in Vietnam. Much more recently the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have driven new wedges into the body politic—much as Libya could yet do if *The Wall Street Journal’s* assessment of President Obama’s recent remarks in London are correct: “Obama Warns of a Long Slog in Libya.” [4]

The United States has rarely remained united during prolonged wars. It seems only prudent to assume that a smart adversary would therefore want to embroil us in a long war, and then purposely aggravate and even manipulate our differences over foreign policy. To prevent this

is just one further reason we should adopt an unambiguous foreign policy, to include a return to Declarations of War.

With Declarations of War the United States would always be poised to deploy force, but only after clear sovereignty redlines have been crossed, and full debate has occurred. [5] This would ensure the country is squarely committed to achieving victory, since once war has been declared either the enemy surrenders, or we do.

As for whom that enemy might be, here we come to the heart of a matter that too few want to squarely face: Just War theory has been totally outstripped by twenty-first century (even late twentieth century) realities. Adversaries have made it virtually impossible for forces in the field to affect any sort of reasonable separation between non-uniformed militants and militant “civilians.” Worse, opponents strive to make as much of “collateral” damage as they can by forcing us to inflict it. Americans need to understand the price the United States pays when it allows others to force us to play by their rules. We’re the ones neutralized when we let non-state actors form shadow states in which they then get us to concur with them that their supporters are non-combatants. We play into their hands when we attack. We also play into their hands when we don’t attack and they remain free. This means they win either way. And, again, only because we let them.

As a country, the United States is in a position of unparalleled strength. Physically, we are practically impregnable. No other state is going to try to take us over. But that does not mean others won’t seek to weaken or undermine us. This is why we must take our domestic divisibility over the use of force far more seriously than we do, especially since this is the vulnerability foreigners have greatest access to. To these ends, we also need to mature the American vision of war—and make clear who is really responsible for the deaths of any “innocents.” Not us. Otherwise, we’ll never be able to cut through the Gordian knot of non-state actors as non-combatants, shadow forces that other states can either willfully or inadvertently (but still irresponsibly) support to our detriment.

Greater domestic indivisibility matters for a host of reasons. To cite just one: if we Americans were much clearer about why we can’t be all things to all people and why we must remain distinctly American, we could then focus more of our efforts on getting our own house in order. Even more importantly, an America that confines its proselytizing to our shores—and that lives by the mantra “we’ll be us, you be you”—would liberate others to remain distinctively different, as well. Sharia will never be for us—we need to be crystal clear about that. But it is also not for us to say it’s not for others.

There is more. Because foreign aid undermines sovereignty, careful distinctions need to be made between assistance and relief, and between man-made and natural disasters. The United States should always assist in the triage phase of natural disasters, and should always offer

unstealable education and training. But the U.S. government should get out of the business of foreign aid welfare. Let do-gooders continue to minister aid abroad if foreign governments permit them to do so. But the proviso needs to be that taxpayers would no longer be responsible for rescuing fellow citizens should they break other countries' rules, regardless of whether they are American missionaries disguised as aid workers or errant journalists.

While liberal-minded humanists might be appalled at these recommendations, they shouldn't be—not if they truly believe in what a real respect for other cultures entails. At the same time, the flip side of no-more-U.S.-government-funded-aid would have an equally profound effect on corporate behavior. This is because, according to the relationship framework—are you a partner, struggling state, adversary, or failed state?—U.S. national security would be predicated on security and security alone. U.S. taxpayers would no longer subsidize the protection of American business interests abroad. Corporations would be just as free as anyone else to operate wherever other governments permit them to. But the same kicker would apply: where there's choice, there's responsibility. Consequently, multinationals would probably find themselves needing to behave quite a bit differently than they do today whenever and wherever they extract resources.

What anti-Western radical could possibly object to this?

A whole suite of recalibrations would ensue. Alliances, for instance, would be detangled; there would be fewer of them, and all would be subject to rigorous public debate. The U.N. and other international organizations would have the supra-sovereign domains of the global commons to attend to, which would give them truly meaningful work. As for what a Sovereignty Rules world would mean for future Osama bin Ladens, say the U.S. had adopted a sovereignty rubric on September 12, 2001, and had declared war on al Qaeda. Such a declaration would have put anyone harboring al Qaeda on immediate notice: if you don't render al Qaeda inert within your territory, or if you don't make it easy for us to do so if you can't, you stand to lose everything. This would have been a promise, not a threat—with no nation-building by us afterwards.

No matter how stark “destruction with no reconstruction” may sound, consider what it would accomplish and how much faster it would have done so than what we have endured over the past decade, with who knows how many entanglements to come. First, there would be less collateral damage done to civil liberties, the cornerstone of our freedoms. Second, but no less important, is the havoc that a decade of war has wreaked on our military and military families, with PTSD a time bomb for society and not just veterans. As for what a decade has done for our adversaries, well, they've been able to keep decentralizing, to continue improvising explosive and other devices, and to keep experimenting with suicide.

A second benefit to “breaking without fixing” would be to deter those who think they might want to safely support violent extremists in the future, while for anyone stubborn enough to defy us, the example of what we do to them would offer a clear choice to their successors: comply or you can join your predecessors. Most humans who have the ambition to lead are sufficiently self-interested and ambitious that it is hard to imagine them not wanting to rid themselves of anti-American terrorists; these are leaders who will also be far more capable of rebuilding their country than we could ever be.

Essentially, the message conveyed to heads of state would be: don’t be unresponsive to your citizens. If you can’t address their needs, and they lash out at us, it’s us you’ll have to answer to next. Or, if you choose to hide behind non-state actors and attack us indirectly: beware.

In the twenty-first century, the United States should no more tolerate those who surreptitiously support perpetrators of anti-American violence than citizens should tolerate leaders who govern so ineffectively they permit safe havens to exist. To connect the dots and thereby correct how hollow we’ve allowed states to become, self-policing has to be made to matter. It is also high time to recognize that governments being responsive to, and not just responsible for, their citizens is also the only viable antidote to countries being turned into police states, or kleptocracies, or both.

While there are more pieces and parts to the overall argument than space allows here, it would be naive not to address whether such a sovereignty-based approach to foreign policy goes too far. Perhaps it does. Certainly no other national security strategy goes as far as this one does to marry the freedoms inherent with choice, or the choices inherent in freedom, to twenty-first century realities. Though we would also submit that to anyone reading this for whom reinvigorating sovereignty seems too drastic, ask yourself the following: What more reasonable way is there to enable people to live religiously, politically, economically, and/or ideologically incompatible lives except by accepting a states’ rights world in which responsibility and accountability are placed back where they belong, at the feet—or on the heads—of those who claim the perquisites of office, whose nation-building and self-policing functions are supposed to mean they answer to their citizens so that no one has to answer to us?

## Notes

1. For the first published version of the argument, see Anna Simons, Don Redd, Joe McGraw, and Duane Lauchengco, “The Sovereignty Solution,” *The American Interest*, Spring 2007.
2. Jakub Grygiel, “The Power of Statelessness,” *Policy Review*, April & May 2009, p. 42.

3. One exception is Stephen Flynn.
4. Alistair MacDonald and Carol Lee, “Obama Warns of a Long Slog in Libya,” (May 26, 2011).
5. In our forthcoming book, we also describe Standing Declarations of Preemption—which don’t yet exist, but should.



# GULLIVER’S TROUBLES: GREAT POWERS AND FAILED STATES

*By Dominic Tierney*

June 2012

*This article was first published in E-Notes.*

In the famous story by Jonathan Swift, Gulliver was troubled both by the tiny Lilliputians, men “not six inches high,” and by the giant Brobdingnagians, who were 72 feet tall and took “about ten yards at every stride.”

The United States is also fearful of Lilliputians and Brobdingnagians—but we’re talking about countries rather than people. The Lilliputian countries are too weak. They’re failed states, plagued by civil wars and ineffective governments, which breed terrorism, cause humanitarian crises, and export crime and drugs. Meanwhile, the Brobdingnagian countries are too strong. They’re great powers capable of militarily challenging the United States, and dominating Europe or Asia.

Lilliputians and Brobdingnagians have been the major threats to American security since the Republic was founded. But rarely has the United States worried about both in equal measure. Instead, over the last century, the United States has switched back and forth, fearing one and then the other.

In July 1915, the President of Haiti, Vilbrun Guillaume Sam, was covering in the bathroom at the French legation in Port-au-Prince when the mob arrived. Led by men dressed in black funeral frocks, who had just buried their children, murdered by the regime, the crowd hauled Sam from the bathroom, dragged him through the streets, and cut him to pieces with machetes. The grisly spectacle followed seven years of near-anarchy in Haiti, and prompted the United States to intervene and try to stabilize the country.

As the Haitian case illustrates, during the early twentieth century, the U.S. military spent most of its time dealing with Lilliputians—or Caribbean and Latin American states that were seen as too weak. In his 1904 corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, Theodore Roosevelt declared Washington’s right to intervene in chaos-ridden countries in the hemisphere. In the following decades, there were over two-dozen American nation-building missions known as the “banana wars.”

These operations followed a similar pattern. Fraudulent elections and the specter of civil war prompted the United States to send in the Marines. As Washington saw it, a stable, secure, and democratic region would promote U.S. interests and values, protect the Panama Canal, and

expunge foreign—especially European—influence. The aim, as Woodrow Wilson paternalistically put it, was to "teach the South American Republics to elect good men." [1]

By the end of the 1930s, however, the United States shifted its attention dramatically from Lilliputians to Brobdingnagians. The chief threat now emanated, not from countries that were too weak, but from countries that were too strong. For half a century, Washington's spotlight focused on great power rivals, including Nazi Germany, Imperial Japan, and the Soviet Union. These states threatened to become regional hegemony that could imperil American interests and directly endanger the homeland. The Franklin Roosevelt administration responded by aiding Britain and other allies through Lend Lease, and after Pearl Harbor, by waging war against the fascist states. From the late-1940s, Washington pursued a strategy of global containment against the Soviet Union.

After the Cold War ended, the pendulum swung again, and the United States moved into another Lilliputian era. On December 8, 1992, U.S. naval commandos slipped ashore as an advance guard for the humanitarian intervention in Somalia. But a small army was waiting for them on the beach, employing bright lights that blinded the commandos. Fortunately, it was an army of journalists and cameramen. In a bid to win the public relations battle in Somalia, officials had tipped off the press. The result was a cross between Omaha Beach and Oscar night.

The U.S. intervention in Somalia symbolized the renewed attention paid to failed states in the 1990s. With the end of the Cold War, there was a decrease in civil wars in Latin America and Southeast Asia, but a spike in violence in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Balkans. The character of civil conflict evolved from organized insurgencies to "primitive wars" with poorly armed militias. Countries that were too weak could provoke humanitarian emergencies, spark refugee flows, and destabilize entire regions.

During Bill Clinton's presidency, every major U.S. intervention targeted failed or failing states. In 1994, U.S. forces entered Haiti to restore an elected government. The following year, American troops joined a peacekeeping mission in Bosnia. And in 1999, the United States intervened to end the humanitarian crisis in Kosovo.

The view of failed states as the primary security threat reached its apogee during the George W. Bush administration. The architects of 9/11 were based in one of the world's most anarchical countries, Afghanistan. The 2002 National Security Strategy stated that, "America is now threatened less by conquering states than we are by failing ones." In 2004, Francis Fukuyama wrote: "radical Islamist terrorism combined with the availability of weapons of mass destruction added a major security dimension to the burden of problems created by weak governance." [3]

Why does the pendulum swing back and forth between Lilliputian and Brobdingnagian eras? There are always unique factors at work in each period shaping threat perceptions, such as the terrorist attacks of 9/11, which starkly reinforced the view that failed states were the primary danger to the United States.

But there are also some underlying dynamics. Most importantly, the emergence of great power rivals tends to blot out the sun, and draw U.S. attention away from failed states. The danger from Lilliputians is overshadowed when Brobdingnagians appear on the horizon. After the great power threat diminishes, the light shines through, revealing the hazard posed by weak countries.

In addition, during Lilliputian eras, the primary focus of the U.S. army is nation-building and the stabilization of failed states. But Americans usually get disillusioned by these missions and see the outcome as a failed quagmire. Disenchantment with nation-building reinforces the desire to focus on great power rivals.

The Brobdingnagian pivot in the 1930s, for example, reflected the threat posed by an expansionist Germany and Japan. But it was reinforced by a backlash against the banana wars. After Franklin Roosevelt won election as president in 1932, he announced that the United States would act as a "good neighbor," by bringing the curtain down on nation-building missions: "the definite policy of the United States from now on is one opposed to armed intervention." If the Latin Americans wanted to elect good men, it was up to them.

Why do these pendulum shifts matter? Crucially, Washington views failed states very differently depending on whether the United States is in a Lilliputian era or a Brobdingnagian era.

In a Lilliputian era, like the early twentieth century or the post-Cold War period, the absence of great power threats means that the United States is often free to intervene in weak countries as it sees fit. Without a peer competitor to get in the way, it's up to Americans whether the Marines wade ashore or not. At this time, the United States sees the insecurity of failed states as an inherent problem, and tries to stabilize foreign lands as an end in itself. Whether it's Haiti in 1915, or Haiti in 1994, the aim is to set up a government that can hold the target country together—and any ripple effects on the global balance of power are a relatively distant concern.

By contrast, in a Brobdingnagian era, the calculus is reversed. The United States is not at liberty to intervene as it chooses. Instead, a rival great power may actively resist U.S. endeavors. Furthermore, from Washington's perspective, the insecurity of a failed state is less of a problem in itself. What matters is how the weakened country fits on the global chessboard. The United States will stabilize—or even destabilize—foreign countries as its

broader interests dictate. If a failed state is in the enemy camp, the United States has few qualms about encouraging further discord.

During the Cold War, for example, the developing world became the frontline of the global struggle, as both the United States and the Soviet Union aided proxy forces. Washington poured blood and treasure into South Vietnam in a bid to prop up this failed state. Meanwhile, the United States actively destabilized Afghanistan by aiding the Mujahadeen rebels fighting the Soviet Union, and deepened the Nicaraguan Civil War by supporting the Contra rebels battling the leftist government.

What will happen next? The pendulum is about to swing again. With the rise of China, the United States will move from the current Lilliputian era toward a Brobdingnagian era—with a shift in focus away from failed states toward great power diplomacy. The Secretary of Defense recently declared that: **“We will of necessity rebalance towards the Asia-Pacific region.”** Obama announced that 2,500 American Marines would be deployed to Australia as a sign of the new East Asian strategy.

The emerging Brobdingnagian phase reflects the fact that China is viewed as the major long-term threat to U.S. security. And this transition is reinforced by public and elite frustration with the costs of stabilizing Afghanistan and Iraq. Americans would rather engage in great power diplomacy than repeat the nation-building Labors of Sisyphus.

The pendulum is unlikely to swing back entirely to the Brobdingnagian extreme. After all, a second Cold War is hardly imminent. Unlike the Soviet Union, China has not built an empire at the point of a bayonet or proclaimed an aggressive ideology inimical to American democracy and capitalism. Furthermore, given the continuing concerns over terrorism, nuclear proliferation, and human rights, the dangers emanating from failed and failing states will continue to hold attention in Washington.

Instead, the pendulum may move toward a middle position, with the United States keeping one eye on the inherent challenges of weak states, and one eye on the consequences for great power diplomacy.

What will be the effects? First, the United States will view failed states less as an inherent problem, and more as an arena for great power rivalry over strategic bases and energy resources. **Washington may show increasing sensitivity to the issue of “relative gains,”** or whether the United States or China benefits more from continuing instability in Afghanistan, Haiti, or Sudan.

If a failed state is a U.S. ally, concerns over China could redouble Washington's efforts to restore order in the troubled land. But if a failed state is hostile or pro-Chinese, the United

States may cast a blind eye to the country's travails, or even deliberately pull the thread that leads to its unraveling.

China, after all, has recently expanded its diplomatic and economic activities in failed or failing states. Since 2004, China has sent over 1,000 police to help stabilize Haiti, in part because Haiti is one of 23 countries that still recognize Taiwan. The long-term goal may be to draw Haiti into China's diplomatic orbit. In 2007, China contributed engineering troops to a joint African Union-United Nations operation in the Darfur region of Sudan. China has also made significant investments in oil, natural gas, and copper production in Afghanistan.

After 9/11, Washington welcomed Brobdingnagian help in dealing with the Lilliputian threat, by encouraging Chinese investment in Afghanistan. But if we move into a new era of enhanced great power rivalry, Americans may look at Afghanistan in a different light, favoring the country's stability only if it aids U.S. interests, and competing with China over the control of Afghan resources.

Fortunately, we live in a time of great power peace, and war with China is unlikely. But competition over failed states is one of the more plausible scenarios for military conflict. **Jakub Grygiel described the potential for “vacuum wars” where the absence of effective government in failed states lures in great powers.** If Indonesia were to collapse, for instance, China might intervene to protect the Chinese minority, provoking military action by other regional powers.

If the rise of China occupies U.S. attention, there may be less bandwidth available for purely humanitarian operations like in Somalia. These types of missions tend to occur only in Lilliputian eras. At times of great power competition, Washington lacks the will for a purely idealistic venture. And a rival great power may also resist Washington's capacity to intervene.

Interestingly, Americans dramatically altered their view of failed states over the last century even when the countries themselves did not change. Haiti has been beset by problems since it gained independence in 1804. An ordinary Haitian might not understand why, during the twentieth century, the United States became suddenly concerned about the stability of Haiti, then lost interest, and then became worried again. Similarly, an ordinary Afghan might not comprehend why Washington, in turn, destabilized Afghanistan in the 1980s, ignored the country, began a major nation-building mission costing billions of dollars—and may soon rethink the value of Afghan stability based on whether the United States or China benefits more.

The waxing and waning of great power rivals has always shaped the American view of failed states. As China rises, Gulliver will view the Lilliputian threat through the Brobdingnagian lens.

Notes:

1. Walter A. McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State: The American Encounter with the World Since 1776* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1997), p. 131.
2. <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/nsc/nss/2002/nss1.html>.
3. Francis Fukuyama, *State-Building: Governance and World Order in the 21st Century* (Cornell University Press, 2004), p. xi
4. Tony Smith, *America's Mission: The United States and the Worldwide Struggle for Democracy in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 120-121.
5. Speech by Leon Panetta in Singapore, June 2, 2012, <http://www.defense.gov/Speeches/Speech.aspx?SpeechID=1681>.

# ANARCHY IS THE NEW NORMAL: UNCONVENTIONAL GOVERNANCE AND 21ST CENTURY STATECRAFT

*By David Danelo*

October 2013

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When I was commissioned a Marine Corps officer in 1998, I was told to believe non-state entities were dangerous to U.S. national security. Whether forecasting the end of history or the clash of civilizations, the foreign policy scholars my seniors encouraged me to study pointed towards “ungoverned spaces” as the global hotspots where American warriors were most likely to fight. The concern grew when Afghanistan’s stateless areas served as staging grounds for the 9/11 attacks, and again in Iraq when the Coalition Provisional Authority blamed postwar instability on a lack of good governance.

Having removed my uniform and traveled through many ungoverned—or, more accurately, unconventionally governed—spaces, I question the value of building national security policy around the need to develop states. Assumptions that good governance can only exist through state structures often result in flawed, ineffective policy responses that satisfy bureaucrats without altering ground conditions. Consider West Africa, where American officials are more concerned with financing capacity building programs to support dysfunctional states (Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, and so on) than identifying and influencing religious and tribal power brokers, even if they don’t hold formal elective office. And in Mexico, law enforcement in the six northern states collapsed without disrupting U.S.-Mexico trade volume, which grew from \$332 billion in 2006 to a record \$493.5 billion in 2012.

In Syria—or, more accurately, the coasts, mountains, rivers, and deserts that used to be Syria—Iranian, Saudi, and Russian sophistication is running circles around Western impotence. Washington policymakers have trapped themselves with binary options for responses to the civil war’s regional tensions. On the one hand, supporting even the most moderate opposition forces elevates Sunni extremists. On the other, allowing the Assad regime to retain power in Damascus further increases Iran’s regional influence. Given this dilemma, does the United States have an interest in developing flexible techniques that would produce alternative policy options matching the street savvy of our competitors? Assuming we do, how do we build those more nuanced approaches into our foreign policy toolbox?

From South Ossetia in the Caucasus to Somaliland in East Africa, much of the world operates under political structures that are difficult for American pundits and policymakers to understand, let alone influence. As [this map of geopolitical “anomalies”](#) illustrates well, anarchy is the new normal in the 21<sup>st</sup> century world. [1] Consequently, an initial step towards more perceptive policy approaches might be to manage, accept, or even encourage unconventional governance as a productive avenue through which American power could be regularly exercised. This approach would view unelected leaders in general, and ungoverned space in particular, as conditions to be effectively handled rather than problems to be permanently solved.

## THE NEW NEW MEDIEVALISM

I am hardly original in predicting the 21<sup>st</sup> century will challenge the Westphalian state order. In 1994, Robert Kaplan warned of the “coming anarchy,” prognosticating a systemic nation-state collapse that would strain the planet’s social fabric. [2] In 2006, John Rapley wrote in *Foreign Affairs* of “the new Middle Ages,” identifying the patronage systems of Jamaican smuggling gangs as more effective at public security than government officials. [3] Dr. Jakub Grygiel argued in 2009 that scholars should acknowledge “the power of statelessness” as a reason why many insurgents had little interest in controlling a modern state. [4] The same year, novelist Steven Pressfield published “It’s the Tribes, Stupid,” a five-part video blog offered as an introduction to unconventional governance in Afghanistan based on historical research and hundreds of testimonies from U.S. military forces. [5]

Theoretical warnings of impending geopolitical chaos first emerged a generation earlier. In 1977, Australian international relations professor Hedley Bull published *The Anarchical Society*, arguing that state sovereignty had weakened to the point that the international system resembled what he called “new medievalism,” a system where authority and power functioned more through conglomerates, corporations, and city-states than actual government leaders.

U.S. national security leaders are traditionally taught to operate within the Westphalian model; ambassadors and combatant commanders seek and cultivate “strategic partnerships” with military and political authorities in other states. Even so, the U.S. government functions in many ways as Dr. Bull had predicted. Consider the role Erik Prince (Blackwater, Xe) played in deploying security contractors to Iraq, or the influence of George Friedman (Stratfor) on the U.S. intelligence community. [6] The Edward Snowden espionage affair and Aaron Alexis shooting point to the U.S. military’s ongoing dependence on contractors.

But medievalism is not all negative, and city-state capabilities—which Bull predicted would grow as the Westphalian system devolved—can often be effective. The New York City Police Department has reduced violent crime over three decades with 34,500 uniformed armed



officers, giving it a stronger military capability than two-thirds of the world's countries. Does that mean the NYPD should have its own flag? Don't be surprised: it does. [7]

Given the risk that disorder brings, Washington policymakers invariably fear power structures that aren't aligned within the nation-state system. Government forces appear best suited for preventing terrorists from having land and resources to train for attacks. Al-Shabaab, the party responsible for the recent Nairobi attacks, developed their skills in Somalia's ungoverned areas. Like in Iraq and Afghanistan, the nation-state system seems to be the best tool available for preventing terrorists and criminals from gestating, training, and plotting.

## WEST AFRICA AND NONSTATE PARADIGMS

There's nothing theoretically wrong with strengthening democratic institutions. But in West Africa, giving foreign aid for capacity building seems to have created as many problems as it solved. In early 2013, after receiving aid and training for years, American officials condemned Mali's National Army (and their own training standards) for failing to halt radical Salafist forces from exploiting the Tuareg north. But Mali's army is predominately Bambara, a tribe with little incentive to fight against Tuareg northern independence. Mali's soldiers didn't need more training on how to fight northern Salafist threats: they needed a reason to fight. Preserving Mali as a nation simply was not a strong enough incentive.

If American policymakers reconsider Mali's security situation through a paradigm other than Westphalian structures and Bismarckian statecraft, they might reach different policy conclusions. By acknowledging the obvious—Tuareg leaders, not the Mali government, control northern Mali—Washington might also seek to persuade the Tuaregs to become allies instead of enemies. Instead of teaching Malian soldiers tactics they already know and logistics they can never afford, officials could make clear that the United States fought the Tuaregs because their leaders chose to embrace radical Salafist Islam as an end to achieve independence, and not because the U.S. opposes a *de facto*, or even a *de jure*, independent Tuareg area.

While wantonly partitioning off the ethnic region might upset the president of Mali, doing so eliminates the uncomfortable and unnecessary façade that the national government is the country's most significant political force. That it is not is obvious to anyone in West Africa. As [FPRI's Ahmed Charai recently wrote](#), Morocco's King Mohammed VI carries regional influence based on his inherited Islamic title "commander of the faithful." The king's recent initiatives to promote religious moderation among radicalized Tuareg imams may preserve Washington's regional interests more effectively than any state-building endeavor ever could. [8]

## MEXICO: GROWTH DESPITE WEAK GOVERNANCE?

In U.S. strategic terms, both the most and least significant state-building attempt since 9/11 took place in Mexico, where U.S. policy advisors collaborated directly with Mexican authorities to develop federal, state, and local governance during the country's drug war. Formally through the Merida Initiative, and informally with thousands of relationships in the U.S. Departments of State, Defense, Justice, and Homeland Security, the two countries bolstered funding for institutional development to new levels. Over six years, bi-national cooperation to build institutional capacity contributed to increasing security and reducing violence.

But the drug violence itself had little impact on the U.S.-Mexico trade relationship. This economic partnership was the primary geopolitical reason both countries had invested in the drug war in the first place, and was also what many analysts feared the carnage would damage. As it turned out, binational manufacturing consortiums privatized security to meet local demand, and violence decreased labor costs south of the border. At the same time, U.S. border authorities focused enforcement on brokers and freight forwarders with known narcotics associations, which lowered transaction costs for traders who kept a clean slate.

Although the trade boom in both countries appears likely to continue even as violence wanes, capacity building in local security had no impact on stimulating economic growth or preventing fiscal collapse. The manufacturing sector on both sides of the border had incentives to prosper despite the violence, and businesses took measures they deemed necessary absent conventional governance. If 2013 projections hold, U.S.-Mexico trade will exceed over \$500 billion this year. Economically speaking, anarchy may have even proven oddly advantageous.

## MANAGING SYRIA'S ANARCHY

Unlike in Mexico, political dysfunction in the northern Levant has only brought opportunities for extremists. Syria's civil war has destroyed the country, chased one of every three civilians from their homes, pulled in fighters from throughout the Muslim world, and made strange bedfellows of all involved. Shi'ite Hezbollah soldiers who fought Israel in 2006 now skirmish against Iraqi Sunni warriors who resisted, then allied with (and were trained by), U.S. military forces. Those same Sunnis have aligned with al-Qaeda supporters they previously opposed. In Syria, Americans see the Muslim Brotherhood as relative moderates compared to the remaining rebel pantheon. These "moderate" Brotherhood fighters have funneled arms and weapons in Syria to al-Qaeda sympathizers, and are now threatening the Kurds, who had previously stayed neutral in Syria's conflict.

In a region filled with guerrillas, militias, and paramilitaries, the Kurdish *peshmerga* stand out. Their estimated strength is around 300,000, although analysts hesitate to pinpoint a solid

number. If estimates of the *peshmerga*'s size are accurate, they tie with France as the world's fifteenth largest army, which gives the Kurds greater manpower capability than both the Syrian state and the rebel opposition. And over the past two decades, the *peshmerga* have succeeded in their military objectives of securing autonomous Kurdish enclaves with overt and covert U.S. assistance.

Before the civil war, Syria's Kurdish regions were restive enough for the Assad regime to occupy them with Syrian soldiers. After the war started, Assad withdrew his troops from Kurdish areas and extended overtures to the Kurds for loyalty, including a diplomatic envoy to the Kurdish Regional Government in Erbil. In the meantime, Erbil has quietly filled the security void in Syria's Kurdish areas with *peshmerga* soldiers who are based in Iraqi Kurdistan. Despite Iraqi Kurdistan's security guarantees, Syrian Muslim Brotherhood members kidnapped 30 Kurds in early September, forcing them to pledge their support for Sharia law and "the real Islam." The Muslim Brotherhood's actions suggest the Syrian opposition has as much, or more, to fear from the Kurds as the Assad regime.

Despite their religious moderation, political loyalty, and military capability, U.S. policymakers rarely discuss the Kurdish role in Syria. It is considered too volatile, a diplomatic taboo of sorts among proper statesmen. Unfortunately, statelessness makes the Kurds a geopolitical mistress. American policymakers dally when need requires, but leave them alone when serious regional options are discussed.

Although the *peshmerga* have remained neutral in Syria's civil war, there's little doubt they would enter forcefully if either side threatened to occupy Syria's Kurdish enclaves. If Syria is moving towards an indefinite state of anarchy, as all assessments indicate, the United States would be wise to acquire and sustain regional asymmetric influence. Next to the Israelis, the Kurds are the most consistent U.S. ally in the region. They have no love for Hezbollah or al-Qaeda, and are geographically well suited to work as American partners in the Levant. Since radical Shi'a and Sunni influence appear likely to be present in Syria for some time, it seems prudent to invest in a strong, proactive relationship with a potent regional force.

Overtly arming Kurdish fighters in Syria would not necessarily provide the United States with immediate geopolitical advantage in either toppling the Assad regime or rebuilding the Syrian state. On the contrary, arming the Kurds, even defensively, would threaten the Turks, inflame the Iranians, and stoke Syrian sectarianism to even worse levels than it already is.

But geopolitics is chess, which means Washington needs to plan for not just today's crisis, but the series of crises likely to result from the troubles of the moment. Lebanon and Iraq, two of Syria's five geographic neighbors, are hollow states at best, and nobody wants to add Syria, lest the entire Levant start to look like Somalia. Unfortunately, as the Rolling Stones put it, you can't always get what you want.

## THE NORMALCY OF STATELESSNESS

In the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, before Westphalia's accord brought the nation-state system, feuds between Rodrigo Borgia (Pope Alexander VI), Giuliano della Rovere (Pope Julius II), and the Orsini, Colonna, and Medici families (among others) provided both motivation and resources for armies throughout what is now Italy to coalesce, defend, and fight over territory and treasure.

Since anarchic times have clearly arrived, this paradigm may offer a more accurate sense of what 21<sup>st</sup> century statecraft and security policy in much of the world may look like.

It is difficult for American policymakers to accept that many of the world's regions may be stateless for years to come. But seeing political disorder as the geopolitical equivalent of a mosquito bite rather than a malaria outbreak acknowledges a truth we instinctively know: the world does not appear destined to carve itself into two hundred liberal democracies anytime soon. The new medievalism's tenets will apply not just in troubled areas (the Levant), or paradoxical ones (the U.S.-Mexico border) but also in well-governed regions (Manhattan) as they depend on their own city-state structures for security.

Current events suggest Washington must learn how to maintain U.S. interests within a political framework where anarchy is the norm. Doing so requires more than "working with" tribes; it requires making policy about tribes. In East Africa, American and European officials have discreetly grown comfortable depending on Somaliland and Puntland clan authorities to secure northern Somalia. Despite their own internal border dispute, officials from these two unrecognized regions have proven useful in regional struggles against piracy and al-Shabaab. In the coming decades, alliances with Somaliland and Puntland clan leaders may prove more useful in crafting regional policy than any emergent Somali state in the "capital" of Mogadishu.

As the 21<sup>st</sup> century unfolds, anarchy should certainly not be an aspiration. The nation-state system is clearly the most productive, peaceful and profitable way for people across the world to coexist. But it is not how many of the world's most troubled regions actually relate to each other, or to their local and international neighbors. Consequently, Washington should become comfortable leveraging city-states, conglomerates, and clans alongside great powers, grand strategy, and good governance. The practice of statecraft must evolve to consider using, rather than preventing, the power of statelessness. As Dr. Bull concluded, "It is better to recognize that we are in darkness than to pretend that we see the light." [9]

Notes:

1. See <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/worldviews/files/2013/08/Revised-Map-Of-Geopolitical-Anomalies-1.jpg>.
2. Robert D. Kaplan, "The Coming Anarchy," *The Atlantic*, February 1994.
3. John Rapley. "The New Middle Ages," *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2006.
4. Jakub Grygiel. "The Power of Statelessness," *Policy Review*, Hoover Institution, April 1, 2009.
5. <http://www.stevenpressfield.com/vblog/>.
6. Suzanne Kelly, "Exposing Stratfor," *CNN.com*, Security Clearance blog, February 28, 2012.
7. <http://www.nypdreruit.com/inside-nypd/nypd-history>.
8. Ahmed Charai, "Soft Power, Hard Results in North Africa," *FPRI E-Notes*, September 2013.
9. Hedley Bull. *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics*. Columbia University Press, 1977, p. 312.

# THE "BEWARE: POISON" APPROACH TO SECURITY

*By Anna Simons*

April 2014

*This article was published as an E-Note.*

The current debate about Ukraine is troubling for at least three reasons. First, Russia is being belittled and President Putin caricatured in unnecessarily unhelpful ways. Second, the comparisons between President Obama and Neville Chamberlain or Putin and Hitler are deeply flawed. All analogies are problematic. But if an analogy is to be drawn, then why not make a comparison to the prelude to the Korean War, when it was thought that Washington had better counter aggression in East Asia if it hoped to retain allies in Western Europe.

*Did allied resolve over Korea really keep Western Europe out of communist clutches? Is that what kept the free world free?*

Questions such as these point to the third problem swirling around the Ukraine debate: some very important assumptions remain unquestioned. Like: what commitments *does* the United States have, and to whom? Presidents and their representatives have made all sorts of promises and pronouncements over the years. Yet, when is the last time the U.S. Senate openly debated the terms of a bilateral defense treaty?

Constitutionally speaking, there are very constrained circumstances under which “we the people” owe other countries anything. So, what obligations are pundits, politicians, and policy makers actually referring to when they claim the U.S. needs to act?

Unfortunately, ‘we the people’ have paid insufficient attention to how diffuse U.S. foreign policy-making has become. Worse, those we rely on to advise us about national security—namely, defense intellectuals—have been equally derelict. Case in point, one question we should not have to ask is how, 12+ years after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, any part of Ukraine can be absorbable by Russia.

Just think about it. In a 21<sup>st</sup> century replete with suicide terrorism, IEDs, “green on blue” violence, and any number of other hard-to-counter insurgent tactics, what would lead a country to even think it can successfully ingest a population that doesn’t want to be absorbed? It is one thing to already contain such a population. But—why would you willingly go out and swallow poison?

Two answers suggest themselves. 1) Irredentism—in which case you are not swallowing poison; you are simply reuniting kin. For instance, instead of absorbing rabid Russophobes,

Putin and his advisers are absorbing Russophiles—Crimeans aren't Chechens. Or, 2) it is not the population per se you are interested in. Instead, you are after stuff, and are willing to use whatever means necessary to assert your authority, consequences be damned. If this is your approach, history offers three broad methods:

- a) carrots and sticks—you reward collaborators and sub-contract coercion to them.
- b) eliminationism—you either wipe or drive out any group that opposes you.
- c) population transfers—you do more than just move people out, you move other people in.

Of course, numerous variations on these themes can be, and have been, practiced in sequence or in combination. However, each of these methods and any of its variations generally requires heavy-handed social controls and works best when there is already a faction-ridden local history to draw on. Although, even then, it is not clear that any recent aggressor has applied these techniques successfully over the mid-run.

By way of example, consider the trouble Israel has had with the Occupied Territories or China with Tibet. Or, for the biggest lesson of all, consider Afghanistan. Rightly or wrongly, numerous Cold Warriors believe the Soviet Union's demise began with its invited invasion of Afghanistan (and many Afghans concur).

Recent and ongoing cases of insurgency and rebellion should be highly suggestive. Say that, rather than Washington having encouraged members of the former Warsaw Pact to join NATO, it had encouraged them to make themselves more individually indigestible instead. Then, not only could NATO have been dismantled, but its dissolution would have signaled a genuine (instead of just a faux) reset with Russia. [1] Even better, instead of an unwieldy number of countries now thinking they might be able to count on unwieldy multilateralism for their collective defense, populations intent on securing themselves could have urged their governments to turn the specter of intimidation inside out. [2] How so? Again, the world is awash in hard-to-counter methods of self-defense: insurgency, terrorism, cyber-attacks. The world is also awash in small arms.

In other words, what the Swiss and Finns did prior to World War II—and what some have dubbed “punitive resistance”—could easily be updated.

In fact, there are a limitless number of things countries could do to preemptively deter 21<sup>st</sup> century expansionist states. For one, virtually all resistance movements and rebellions have been reactive, as the prefix re- suggests—not premeditated. They have emerged in the wake of invasion. Few ministries of defense have either worked toward, or advertised, their ability to stage a Red Dawn-like reception for invaders. Nor is the potential in such an approach confined just to countries in the former Soviet orbit. Any country could adopt a

“don’t tread on me” or “beware: poison” defense, which is a type of defense well-suited to a world predicated on sovereignty.

To illustrate, consider the insurgent spectrum found in Sudan. [3] Nubans, the people famous for having been photographed by Leni Riefenstahl, live in a mountain zone well away from **any of Sudan’s borders**. Unfortunately, that means that they are stuck. They can wage an insurgency, as they have on and off for decades, but though the Sudanese government will probably never succeed in fully penetrating their mountain fastnesses, the Nubans cannot sufficiently hold their own down on flatter ground. At best rebel elements can make life difficult and costly for the regime in Khartoum. But eventually both sides will have to come to some sort of live-and-let-live accommodation.

Insurgents in Darfur, to the west of the Nuban Mountains, are marginally better off. They at least abut a porous border which affords them a relatively easy way to ferry fighters in and out. But this also makes them dependent on their alignments with different Chadian factions who have their own complicated politics, which means Darfuris are enmeshed in regional and supra-regional dynamics well beyond their control—which has been a problem.

In contrast, rebels in what was once southern Sudan now have their own country, the Republic of South Sudan, **the world’s newest independent state**. Southern Sudanese rebels proved able to earn their independence in part thanks to timing—they were fighting longest, hardest, first. But they also had distance from the capital, favorable terrain, a visionary leader, staunch allies, and strength in numbers going for them. The **flip side to southerners’ tenacity, however**, is that too many young men now know little else but fighting. Some observers cite this as a major contributing factor in the civil war that is brewing in South Sudan. Nonetheless, one (grim) silver lining to the presence of so many ex-combatants is that even should Khartoum stoke the violence, **Omar al-Bashir’s regime would have to be nuts to try to re-seize the South**.

## TOXICITY

Already 70+ years ago, anthropologists were identifying groups of people around the world who (willfully or not) made themselves unconquerable. Every empire has encountered people it did not even try to control. Usually these have been peoples living in less-than-accessible areas. Invariably, something in their past sent them fleeing to higher, swampier, or more inhospitable ground. Worth noting is that any group that did so, no matter how weak at the time, did so because it *wanted* to remain apart. Otherwise, it could have assimilated. [4] The **implication: it isn’t just terrain, but also values and priorities that make some peoples more resistant to ‘capture’ than others**.

Of course, anyone familiar with defensive principles knows that impregnability and the appearance of impregnability have a deterrent value all of their own. Thus the beauty of



difficult terrain. But no matter how invaluable erecting walls, digging moats, donning armor, or investing in missiles might be, an even simpler way to put off attackers would be to advertise extreme toxicity.

Being poisonous is different from being impenetrable. There are an endless number of ways to turn citizens into the nationalist equivalent of a staph infection.

Toxicity should be attractive for a host of reasons. For one, the very process of building up a sense of national dignity and using nationalism for anti-access purposes would itself contribute to and then ensure that citizens would not *want* to be absorbed. [5] Toxicity would also cost less than more conventional forms of deterrence.

Not only are advanced weapons systems exorbitantly expensive, but they are exactly the things that more powerful (and aggressive) countries excel at countering. In contrast, there is no 20<sup>th</sup> century case I can think of in which those waging a guerrilla war on behalf of nationalism lost to foreigners; in fact, either foreigners and the nationalists eventually prevail. [6] Or, wherever nationalism is weak but other allegiances—to tribe, clan, or religious group—remain strong, foreigners have had an even harder time. Recent experiences in Afghanistan and Iraq should only underscore this.

In fact, over the past several decades, a panoply of new tactics, techniques, and procedures for resistance and opposition have emerged. Add these to new sources of external support made possible by far-flung and increasingly well-connected diasporas, and it doesn't matter how totalitarian a 21<sup>st</sup> century aggressor might want to be, no conqueror will be able to immediately seize or control everything.

At the same time, if done right, advertising at least some of the bad things an invader would suffer should preclude anyone from even wanting to try. Here is where information operations and strategic communications *could* come into their own. As it is, the usual signaling via diplomacy, military exercises, the deployment of forces, and display of capabilities is fraught with the potential to be misread, as is all cross-cultural communication. **Instead, why not apply 'shock and awe' to 'hearts and minds'?** Let family members of those who serve in adversaries' militaries know what awaits their loved ones in graphic detail, or make clear to the population at large how much terror they can expect at home, where they think they are safe. In other words, stoke fears.

Admittedly, what exactly “*if you invade, then here's what we might do*” could consist of would need to be tailored to who the aggressor is. But this is a challenge that anyone who enjoys thinking unconventionally should relish. **'Red teaming' on behalf of the homeland shouldn't just appeal to deep-thinking defense analysts and special operators, but to all those who have a defiant streak and a penchant for wile.**

I can think of one major objection to the argument that countries should be encouraged to make all parts of themselves toxic to conquerors. Say Strong State X isn't interested in absorbing anyone. Perhaps it just seeks territory, or water, minerals, or "stuff." After all, going after *lebensraum* or loot and booty wasn't just conceivable prior to the Allied victory in World War II, but was a major impetus for war. It would be naïve to assume that the prospect of pillage and property won't always motivate some men. Just look at how war-torn Congo has been treated by its neighbors.

Look, too, at how Congolese (the people) have been treated.

One unintended consequence of the fact that we live in an era that (rightfully) condemns the wholesale enslavement or subjugation of other people is that once it is no longer possible to put people *to* use, it is easy to consider them of no use. [7] We get ethnic cleansing as a result, which inverts irredentism. Instead of simply absorbing and assimilating co-ethnics and subjugating or enslaving the rest—which is what conquest used to permit—strong states ingest and then attempt to purge whatever extraneous population they don't want.

However, here is where globalization in 2014 should offer an improvement over globalization circa Bosnia. *Outright* eliminationism in the modern era has never really been possible. Except in the case of small, self-contained tribes or religious communities, wiping out everyone can't be achieved. Hutu *genocidaires*, for instance, came nowhere close to killing all Tutsi in 1994. In fact, their spree ensured a Tutsi revival. The existence of diasporas—and of students, laborers, refugees, and exiles who live abroad—makes it next to impossible to wipe out an ethnic or religious group today. Target the communities they come from and that should raise the specter of revenge. Surely more could be made of this specter than has been thus far. Somewhere between the Israeli government's reaction to the 1972 Munich Olympics, for which perpetrators were killed in their beds years later, and the ways in which Iran's al Quds force operates lie myriad possibilities for promising aggressors sleepless nights and an endless reign of terror.

Ironically, fears about the Evil Eye, witchcraft, and sorcery have long served a similar purpose in small-scale face-to-face communities. And while most Americans might consider it far-fetched to think that anyone could be deterred by threats of supernatural or karmic payback, the hours of air-time spent recently on the whereabouts of missing Malaysian Air flight 370 point to the public's deep-seated, even existential concerns about air travel. As the film, television, and marketing industries have made abundantly clear over the years, the power of suggestion is persuasive indeed.

## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

As for what putting missiles in Poland now does for Ukrainians, it may make Poland harder to swallow, just like moving armaments to the Baltic states may bulk them up a bit. But as military officers from Eastern Europe sadly joke, their countries are nothing more than speed bumps should the Russians decide to reconstitute their former Union. Which is why, again, the better deterrent should be to have Russians ask Russians (and the Kremlin) why they would even *want* to try to reassemble an empire? [8] Don't they remember what invading Afghanistan did to the Soviet Union? Don't they already have plenty of terrorism concerns thanks to unrest in the Caucasus? Does the Kremlin really intend to do nothing about the Chinese seeping into its Far East? Can Russia really afford so much over-reach?

Meanwhile, to get enough Russians to not only reject, but *fear* what reassembling a Greater Russia would embroil them in requires Americans and others to stop insulting Russia's capabilities or Putin's intelligence which, to any Russian who cares about Russia's (never mind Putin's) honor and status, is a taunt.

To be clear, too, “don't tread on me”/”beware: poison” suits any country that has an aggressive or more militarily capable neighbor or adversary. The only reason I have singled out Russia is because if we are not more careful with our rhetoric and contradictory signaling, we may end up embroiled as well—which would be disastrous for all involved.

Finally, while self-defense, ‘stand your ground’ and ‘no duty to retreat’ resonate with Americans, it is important to remember the U.S. has never been forced to submit to a foreign power; invasion is inconceivable to us. Doubtless, that is one reason many Americans find movies like *Red Dawn* so appealing—resistance strikes us as fun. Demographically, economically, politically, historically, and geographically we remain fortunate. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment also arms us in a profoundly important way. Elsewhere, countries *have* been invaded and resistance *to* invasion would need to be crafted quite differently. The crafting also needs to be craftily done. The population has to be fully engaged. Most importantly, the citizenry has to *want* to make itself indigestible. [9]

In the end, I can think of four approaches to indigestibility that less advantaged countries might avail themselves of:

- 1) Be too big to be able to be swallowed—which helps explain alliances.
- 2) Make all parts of you too difficult to grab—this is the armadillo/porcupine approach to defense.

3) Be too toxic and *advertise your toxicity*—which is what every poisonous plant and animal does; something that seems particularly well-suited to our ‘information age.’

4) Mix and match.

While ‘mix and match’ will probably strike most as the ideal response, let me offer one final image: rattlesnakes, copperheads, cobras, mambas, and adders. We don’t ingest them, but when we invade their territory the response is toxic, no ‘ifs, ands, or buts.’ [10] Better still, their “don’t tread on me” nature not only suits sovereignty’s defense, but capitalizes on exactly the kind of cross-cultural deterrent all humans have been hard-wired to fear.

Notes:

1. It seems quite ironic that a socialist form of defense is considered to be the best possible defense against former communists. And that this collectivist approach is meant to defend a free market system which profits some nation-states much more than others.
2. Or responsible civil servants could have alerted citizens to prod their governments to a) care, and b) do something.
3. Caveat: there are quite a few more insurgencies and proto-insurgencies than the three singled out here.
4. Or they could have accepted second class status, or kept migrating till they found a more welcoming area and/or empty land, etc.
5. Unfortunately, as several international officers attending the Naval Postgraduate School have pointed out, civil defense and resistance are no longer prominent in any European military’s war plans.
6. Of course, where foreigners assist one side in a civil war, and that side acts sufficiently nationalist, then nationalists also prevail (e.g. the Huk Rebellion in the Philippines).
7. For a more in-depth explanation of the connection between the ‘death of conquest’ and ethnic cleansing, see Anna Simons, “The Death of Conquest,” *The National Interest* (Spring 2003) or “Making Sense of Ethnic Cleansing,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 22 (1999).
8. Of course, the eventual ideal should be that distaste for conquest is so internalized as a norm that the prospect never even crosses a Russian – or any – leader’s mind.

9. Here, again, diasporas can prove incredibly useful. Governments should be prepared to use them, but must also be wary so that diaspora communities do not become the tail that agitates the neighboring dog.
10. Or, for an alternative, think anti-freeze—which, as any dog owner knows, may be oh-so-irresistible but ever so deadly.

# IS THE WHOLE WORLD ON FIRE?

*By Dominic Tierney*

December 2014

*This article originally appeared in E-Notes.*

“I am a very old man, and I have lived through almost the entire century,” wrote Isaiah Berlin in his 1994 essay, “A Message to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.” [1] The 85-year old British political philosopher looked back at the carnage of the previous decades, and forward to the promise of a new millennium. The crimes of Genghis Khan “pale into insignificance next to the Russian Revolution and its aftermath: the oppression, torture, murder that can be laid at the doors of Lenin, Stalin, Hitler, Mao, Pol Pot.” And yet, with democracy spreading, “Great tyrannies are in ruins, or will be—even in China the day is not too distant.” The twenty-first century “can be only a better time for mankind than my terrible century has been.” However, he said, “I shall not see this brighter future, which I am convinced is coming.” Berlin died three years later in 1997.

Today, the philosopher’s dream of a better time for mankind may seem like a cruel illusion. The whole world appears to be on fire. After 2011, non-violent protests against Bashar al-Assad’s regime in Syria metastasized into a brutal civil war. In the catalytic heat of sectarian violence, Islamic State emerged as a hardened jihadist movement that swept from Syria into northern Iraq and declared a new caliphate. The overthrow of Muammar Gaddafi’s government in Libya in 2011 triggered a security vacuum and a fierce battle between rival militias to decide the succession. During the summer of 2014, Israel launched a bloody intervention to suppress rocket fire from Gaza. Meanwhile, Russia clipped off the Crimean Peninsula from Ukraine, and fueled the secessionist violence in Eastern Ukraine. In 2012, Martin Dempsey, the Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff said the world is, “more dangerous than it has ever been.” [2]

And yet, from a different perspective, we could be witnessing the brighter future that Berlin foresaw. In his book *The Better Angels of Our Nature*, Steven Pinker collected a mountain of evidence showing that violence of all kinds has steadily declined over the centuries. Today, he wrote, “we may be living in the most peaceable era in our species’ existence.” [3] Indeed, scholars broadly agree that global warfare has fallen significantly, [4] especially since 1945. [5]

How can we reconcile these two viewpoints? Perhaps Pinker and his fellow professors are naifs, fiddling with datasets while Aleppo burns. After all, U.S. President Abraham Lincoln appealed to the “better angels of our nature” in his First Inaugural Address in 1861—right before a horrific civil war killed 750,000 Americans. [6]

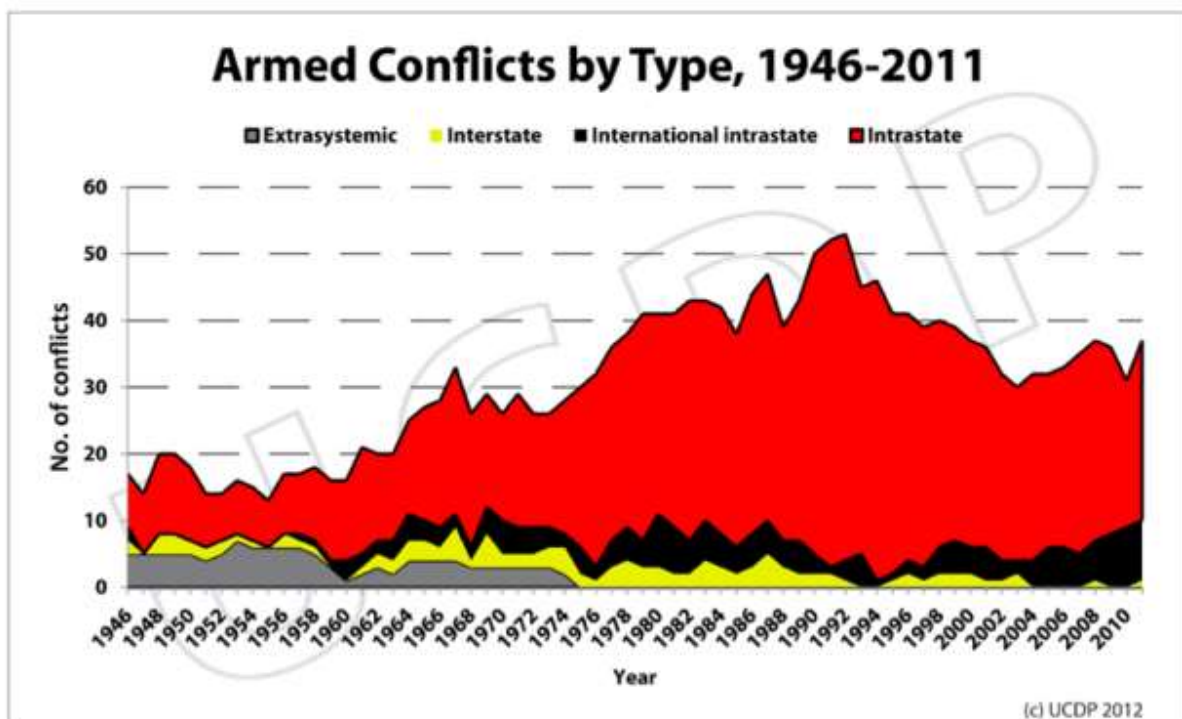
Or, alternatively, perhaps the world really is getting more peaceful, but a shrieking kettle of hawks in the media and government blind us to the dove's ascent.

The truth is that global violence has indeed declined, especially interstate wars fought between countries. But as the tide of conflict recedes, we are left with intractable civil wars that present a host of difficult challenges. There is a tale of two worlds. For interstate relations, it's the best of times. For fragile countries, threatened by internal fracture, it may be the worst of times. And here the zones of peace and war collide. Countries may not fight each other directly, but they show few qualms about intervening in foreign internal conflicts. Indeed, civil wars have become the main arena for military competition between states. The world is not on fire. But even smoldering embers can suddenly alight.

### The Best of Times

Let's begin with the good news. Since World War II, there has been a striking decline in the level of interstate war, or fighting between the uniformed militaries of recognized countries. Of course, states have not suddenly become paragons of virtue. International politics remains a contact sport. Interstate wars do still happen, like the brutal Iran-Iraq War of the 1980s.

But these conflicts are now very rare. The chart below, from the National Academy of Sciences (via theAtlantic.com) reveals the decline of interstate war. [7] Other data (here [8] and here [9]) show similar results.



World War II was a great crescendo of interstate violence that heralded what historian John Lewis Gaddis called “the long peace.” [10] Great powers have not fought each other since the Korean War, over sixty years ago. In Western Europe, war used to be the sport of kings and despots. Now tourists can picnic safely on the Franco-German border.

Territorial expansion by force is no longer acceptable. Departments of war have been renamed as departments of defense. Empire building has gone out of fashion. For much of the world, war has shed its luster of glory. Theodore Roosevelt once declared: “no triumph of peace is quite so great as the supreme triumph of war.” But which leader of a developed democracy would repeat these words today? [11]

There are many reasons for this happy tale of interstate peace, including memories of the world wars, nuclear deterrence, the spread of democracy, economic interdependence, and the creation of international institutions like the United Nations. The precise importance of each factor is much debated. But few can dispute that relations between countries have entered an era of almost unprecedented stability.

### The Worst of Times

Now for the bad news: conflict still exists in the form of civil wars, or organized violence within the boundaries of a state. Of course, guerrilla warfare is nothing new. The term dates back to the Spanish rebels who battled against Napoleon over two centuries ago. But as interstate wars disappeared, insurgency has come to dominate the stage of global conflict. Today, almost nine-in-ten wars are civil wars.

The factors that produced interstate peace proved far less effective at stopping civil wars. Democracies may not fight each other but they do sometimes collapse into internal discord. Nuclear weapons may deter a foreign country from invading but they won't deter an insurgency. Global interdependence may pacify relations between states but it can't hold fragile countries together.

Meanwhile, the dynamics that increase vulnerability to civil war—poverty, foreign sanctuaries, mountainous and jungle terrain, and government incapacity—haven't gone anywhere. And since 1945, three seismic events rippled through the international system, tearing apart fragile countries. First, the disintegration of the great European empires, and the emergence of dozens of brand new countries with weak institutions, provoked a wave of civil wars. Second, the end of the Cold War and the collapse of another empire, the Soviet Empire, produced a further spike in internal conflict. After the mid-1990s, the incidence of civil war fell back. But a third shock to the system—the Arab Spring in 2011—led to a new phase of violence in Libya, Syria, and elsewhere.



International terrorists also didn't get the memo about the end of war. On 9/11, the United States was struck, not by a foreign army, but by a tiny band of nineteen men. This group bypassed America's defenses like a virus and used the nation's strength against itself, by turning aircraft into guided missiles. In recent years, the lines between terrorism and insurgency have blurred. Al Qaeda has evolved from a dedicated terrorist group into a loose network of militias that seek to govern territory in countries like Iraq, Syria, and Mali.

For the United States, foreign civil wars have become a major security issue, causing humanitarian crises, refugee flows, and terrorism. According to the 2002 National Security Strategy, "America is now threatened less by conquering states than we are by failing ones." [12]

### The Eloi and the Morlock

In H.G. Wells's classic novel *The Time Machine*, the hero travels far into the distant future and discovers that mankind has divided into two distinct classes: the Eloi, who live in luxury and peace above ground, and the primordial Morlocks, who toil underground and come out at night to feed on the Eloi.

In a sense, today's world is one of Eloi and Morlocks, of countries living in interstate peace and societies riven by brutal civil wars. Occasionally, the Morlocks cross over from the zone of turmoil to the zone of harmony, like Al Qaeda emerging from Afghanistan to strike the United States on 9/11.

But more often the roles are reversed, and it's the Eloi that feed on the Morlocks. Countries avoid interstate war but they display few inhibitions about wading into foreign internal conflicts. In other words, states rarely fight each other directly through conventional invasions. Instead, they compete indirectly through proxy wars, by backing rival insurgent or government factions with military aid, air strikes, or boots on the ground. Civil wars are now the primary battleground for military competition between countries. Like a recovering alcoholic stumbling upon a speakeasy, foreign civil wars are where countries rediscover their bad habits.

Proxy wars are nothing new. The Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) was a dress rehearsal for World War II, as Nazi Germany and fascist Italy backed the right-wing Spanish rebels, while the Soviet Union provided aid to the leftist regime in Madrid. During the Cold War, Washington regularly supported embattled regimes fighting insurgencies, for example, in South Vietnam, and also backed rebels groups in Afghanistan, Angola, Nicaragua, and elsewhere.

But foreign intervention in internal conflicts is on the rise. The number of internationalized civil wars recently reached its highest level since 1946. [13] During the civil war in Iraq after 2003, Iran didn't fight the United States directly. Instead, Tehran trained and equipped Shiite militias that killed hundreds of American and allied troops.

Proxy war is also Russia's main playbook of military intervention. In both Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014, Moscow backed rebel factions in civil conflicts on the Russian periphery.

Syria is the archetypal proxy war. Iran, Saudi Arabia, Russia, the United States, Britain, France, Turkey, and other countries, have provided aid to a diverse cast of factions on the ground.

The temptation to intervene and manipulate the course of a civil war is often hard to resist. Some states seek to end humanitarian suffering. More usually, they pursue their strategic interests. The supply of weapons, advisors, and troops can be covert and potentially deniable. And intervention may be dialed up or down as required to alter the outcome.

As we saw, democracy, nuclear weapons, changing global norms, and economic interdependence proved more effective at stopping wars *between* countries than *within* countries. And these dynamics also failed to prevent states from wading into foreign internal conflicts. Nuclear weapons can't usually deter clandestine interference in a civil war. And to get around global norms against aggression, intervening troops become "volunteers," soldiers "on leave," or "little green men," as Russian troops were described in Crimea.

Why does the rise of internationalized civil war matter? For one thing, these conflicts tend to be much bloodier than wars that remain a domestic affair. [14] Furthermore, by meddling in civil wars, countries are playing with fire. Proxy wars could transmit conflict back to the interstate level—so the Eloi begin fighting each other directly again. In proxy conflicts, the patron usually remains aloof and the local ally has considerable autonomy. The ally may therefore act in unexpected ways, like shooting down the Malaysia Airlines jet in Eastern Ukraine. Today, internationalized civil wars could be the single greatest threat to global interstate peace.

## A Better World

As the twentieth century wound down, Isaiah Berlin dreamed of a better future for mankind. In many respects, these hopes have transpired. We are fortunate enough to live in a time of unparalleled interstate peace. No one in 1945 could imagine that countries would almost give up waging aggressive conventional war. The whole world is not on fire. Indeed, the embers of conflict today pale next to the great infernos of the past.

But the near elimination of interstate war has left intractable civil wars as the major source of global conflict. And the same countries that abandoned interstate war are quite willing to meddle in internal disputes.

This is our world: Eloi and Morlock; peaceful and warlike; stable and unraveling. A world of messy internal conflicts is preferable to a world of ferocious interstate campaigns. But for the United States and its allies, managing internationalized civil wars presents a host of new challenges. Washington must entrench the sources of interstate peace and find new tools to dampen the flames of civil war. We live in a better time, if we can keep it.

Notes:

1. <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2014/oct/23/message-21st-century/>.
2. <http://www.cato.org/policy-report/septemberoctober-2014/most-dangerous-world-ever>.
3. <http://stevenpinker.com/pages/steven-pinker-honestly-best-time-be-alive>.
4. [http://stevenpinker.com/files/pinker/files/intl\\_studies\\_review.pdf](http://stevenpinker.com/files/pinker/files/intl_studies_review.pdf).
5. <http://www.hsrgroup.org/human-security-reports/2013/overview.aspx>.
6. <http://www.bartleby.com/124/pres31.html>.
7. <http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2012/11/5-charts-about-climate-change-that-should-have-you-very-very-worried/265554/>.
8. <http://www.systemicpeace.org/CTfigures/CTfig03.htm>.
9. <http://www.vox.com/2014/9/23/6829399/23-maps-and-charts-that-will-surprise-you>.
10. <http://books.google.com/books?id=7ETeJIO1YUYC&q=gaddis+long+peace&dq=gaddis+long+peace&hl=en&sa=X&ei=f6J4VLOGLfaBsQs-YK4Cw&ved=0CB0Q6AEwAA>.
11. [http://books.google.com/books?id=WpgSAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA387&dq="no+triumph+of+peace+is+quite+so+great+as+the+supreme+triumph+of+war."&hl=en&sa=X&ei=nqJ4VOGGDviQsQTp7oBA&ved=0CCQ6wEwAQ#v=onepage&q="no%20triumph%20of%20peace%20is%20quite%20so%20great%20as%20the%20supreme%20triumph%20of%20war."&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?id=WpgSAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA387&dq=).
12. <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/63562.pdf>.

13. <http://www.hsrgroup.org/human-security-reports/2013/overview.aspx>.
14. <http://www.hsrgroup.org/human-security-reports/2013/overview.aspx>.

# IS THE WORLD GETTING SAFER—OR NOT?

*By Frank G. Hoffman and Ryan Neuhard*

June 2015

*This article originally appeared in E-Notes.*

A glance at any major newspaper gives the reader an impression of global chaos, with raging conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Nigeria and Yemen. The crisis in Ukraine suggests that the potential for a serious conflagration over borders in Europe still exists. Others argue that we really live in a world of prosperity and unprecedented peace. [1] Our own FPRI Senior Fellow Dominic Tierney suggests we recognize a more nuanced distinction between interstate and intrastate conflicts. [2] He pointed out the dichotomy between recent history's decline in interstate wars and a spate of messy intrastate conflicts. Professor Tierney ends his piece with cautious optimism, suggesting "we live in a better time, if we can keep it."

We agree that the last few decades were a better time, but suggest that keeping the peace is becoming problematic. In particular we would urge greater caution with statements like "few can dispute that relations between countries have entered an era of almost unprecedented stability." Deterring interstate war and preserving the peace may prove more difficult than in the last few decades. The forces that are credited with dampening interstate war—America's surplus military power, robust set of global alliances, and the lack of competitors—are still present, but fading. New shifts in the security environment may be stacking the deck against the United States and the existing international order.

The notion of a strategically benign world of unparalleled security is unfortunately still distant and growing dimmer. The context that produced positive trends in the past is evolving, and against US national interests. Contrary to rosier depictions, we sense that our alliances are weakening, that the authoritarian leaders in Beijing or Moscow care little for any consensus about international norms, and competitors are certainly vying for influence in Asia, the Persian Gulf, and along Europe's frontiers.

Our perspective of current and future trends is reinforced by a projection by the U.S. intelligence community. The National Intelligence Council issues a long-range forecast every four or five years, and its last report assessed the likelihood of stability in stark terms:

...the risks of interstate conflict are increasing owing to changes in the international system. The underpinnings of the post-Cold War equilibrium are beginning to shift. During the next 15-20 years, the US will be grappling with the degree to which it can continue to play the role of systemic guardian and guarantor. [3]

That assessment is based upon the character of the international system, and America's will and capacity in preserving that system. However, these conclusions were not supported by a recent strategic forecast produced by a team in the United Kingdom. Their periodic reports are highly respected, due to their careful research and measured judgments. The UK report agrees with optimists like Tierney, concluding that:

Although many people see the 20th and early 21st centuries as being the most violent and bloody in human history, evidence suggests that the frequency and intensity of wars, as well as the number of violent deaths, has been declining sharply and is likely to continue to fall. [4]

The UK report went out further in time, out to 2045, and there is definitely the possibility that near term trends of higher violence could regress. But we believe that any forecast on future human violence needs to more carefully examine history and account for possible changes in the emerging security environment.

In light of this, it is important we develop a prudent sense of awareness of the geopolitical context that could evolve from a plausible projection of drivers in the near future, and the potentially grave consequences that may emerge. Contrary to assertions about linearity in past patterns, trends are not immutable and they do not proceed in only one direction. Neither global peace nor persistent conflict is preordained. Trends are the consequence of multiple drivers.

But what dark forces might appreciably bend what some see as an ineluctable and linear pattern? In this section we offer several possible other drivers:

America in Retreat. What happens to regional stability if the United States decides to come home to rebuild? Who fills in the vacuum in the Middle East or guarantees freedom of navigation in the Pacific? If we decide that we no longer have the wallet or the will to continuing to guarantee or buttress the existing international order, are we comfortable allowing other to decide what rules and norms remain? We are inclined to think that if we collectively decide to opt out of a leadership role in the world, that we should expect a greater degree of violence.

The Return of Geopolitics. Although not universally accepted, the last decade has seen the return of geopolitics. Yesterday's brief unipolar moment was just that, a passing moment. Now the balance of power in the international order matters a great deal. Rising powers like China will be expected to seek greater power and influence, especially in their own region, and may seek to resolve longstanding disputes by force of arms. China clearly knows the Melian Dialogue by heart, might makes right and the weak do what they must. Russia's behavior along the periphery of its borders suggests that Dr. Tierney's notion that "Territorial expansion by force is no longer acceptable" is not widely accepted in Moscow.

The key question for futurists and strategists seeking to maximize the security of their respective countries is how will China evolve? Will it seek a responsible leadership position within the existing set of international rules and norms, or will it seek to alter that system? The prevailing power structure and order of the last 30 years contributed much to subdued levels of interstate conflicts. Alterations to the **current power system by China's significant military modernization** could conceivably generate a greater likelihood of flashpoints, confrontations, and crises. Will great power competition erupt into a war?[5] History suggests that periods of great power transition will increase the level of instability and the chances of conflict. [6] It is not automatic, but the emergence of rising powers tends to produce conflict with existing predominant powers. [7] The ongoing high level of defense spending in Asia is not indicative of high levels of trust and transparency. [8]

**Reduced Coalition Capability.** A major contributor to peace in both Europe and Asia has been a **strong alliance system.** America's allies used to be major contributors to preserving the peace in many dimensions. They do not get enough credit for their contributions in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere. Yet, looking forward, we see America's traditional allies struggling with political, fiscal, and demographic challenges that hamstring their ability to export security beyond their immediate environs. Domestic security and social welfare systems will tie up our European partners for the foreseeable future. Will their reduced capacity induce Russia to take further steps against Ukraine, Baltic States and other former FSU countries? Could weaker conventional deterrence around Eurasia heighten risks of conflict? [9]

**Disruptive Technologies.** The evolving character of technology will have a commensurate impact on our security, sometimes in ways we have not yet imagined. [10] Technology is not the sole driver of change in military revolutions, but our age is replete with potentially disruptive sources of innovation that will change how societies fight. Cyber security will be a continual challenge even if it does not technically qualify as a form of warfare, as it can be used to enable or disable crucial elements of our national security and economic system. [11] Cyber deterrence remains very uncertain. Crisis instability appears to be growing, given the uncertain balance of capability between nations gaining more nuclear capabilities, fielding anti-satellite capabilities, and the uncertain character of cross-domain technologies. What happens when another country becomes the first to field a weapon based on directed energy or if Russia succeeds with hypervelocity missiles before the West? One must ask if the reliance of states on space or cyber connectivity is increasing the need for preemptive actions. If true, this could increase crisis instability and the higher level of incidences of conflict breaking out and doing so quicker than we have imagined it.

**Competition for Scarce Resources.** Will future wars center on energy security? Resources like oil, valuable rare minerals and water have been contested resources and a possible driver of wars. U.S. energy requirements may benefit from the recent tight oil and shale gas revolution.

But China continues to assert ownership of the South China Sea, perhaps with the notion that oil and rare earth deposits can be exploited there. [12] Far more likely is greater tensions over access to fresh water. The nexus of environmental changes, including drought, water shortages and food price spikes can be expected to lead to decreased political stability. Food price spikes **have been tied to flashpoints in northern Africa and Syria's civil war. Could future flashpoints erupt from rising population needs for water and food?**[13]

Violent Extremist Organizations. Political violence directed against noncombatants to provoke shock and terror is on the rise, and has been for some time. Groups like Al Qaeda, ISIS and Boko Haram are filling security vacuums and exploiting political dissatisfaction throughout the Middle East and North Africa. The frequency and lethality of their use of terrorism appears to be escalating, as these groups compete with regional factions and each other for media attention, funding, and recruits. [14] As extremist groups embrace emerging technologies, the potential for disruption and violence may increase further. [15] Though perhaps not enough to incite wars on its own, terrorism and extremist violence is shifting regional power balances, spreading insecurity, and aggravating ethnic and religious animosities, all of which can spiral into new wars. Do these VEOs pose enough risk to order and stability in key regions that warrant substantial investment? What happens, as U.S. intelligence suggests, when VEOs gain access to more lethal capabilities?[16]

Peace Support Operations (PSOs). The last 20 years have seen a great explosion in the number of PSOs. These operations, often authorized and paid for by the United Nations, have helped reduce trends in violence. Will the UN continue to agree to provide the legitimacy and resources for these operations in the future? Will the major powers that sit on the UN Security Council continue to permit PSOs, or will they become another battleground in geopolitical competition? Will the increased levels of violence from violent extremists make conditions in these operations too costly for the states that provide the troops? Depending on the answers to these questions, decreased levels of authorized operations and lower troop contributions could **decrease the UN's capacity to previous levels, which will lead to higher recidivism** in current conflicts, as well as unchecked levels of misery and violence in conflicts where PSOs could have been deployed. Already, there are signs that support for conflict mitigation is exhausted. [17]

#### History Returns: Combining Mars and Minerva

All told, the combined impact of these trends could generate a return to more significant levels of conflict, increased levels of casualties and other costs. Not all of these drivers will peak at the same time, but several are likely to produce instability and conflict. An unraveling of norms can erode international order and create the conditions for contagious misbehavior.



Reports from both international and U.S. academic centers show that the frequency and violence of contemporary conflict is already reflecting a rise. [18] Fatalities are up sharply, thanks to Syria, Iraq, and Libya. [19] The number of Displaced Persons or refugees is at an international peak. [20]

Certainly, the whole world is not on fire, and there are no barbarians at our gates (or beaches). Just as certainly, we do not live in a risk-free world, or one in which we can confidently state that the scourge of war is disappearing. An era of declining violence that began with the end of the Cold War has ended. A new era has arrived, with new power struggles, ancient hatreds, and new technologies. Instead of looking backwards and resting on our laurels, we need to accurately capture current data on ongoing wars (Mars) and project forward with more imagination and a greater sense of history. The owl of Minerva provides insights only to those willing to explore history in breadth, depth and context. We should seek answers to the basic context questions posed here before events spin entirely out of control.

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