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THE US ARMY WAR COLLEGE
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Contemporary Strategy & Landpower

Dilemmas for US Strategy

*David S. Sorenson
Gregory Aftandilian
Richard W. Weitz
Dennis V. Hickey*

US Landpower in Regional Focus

*K. Field, J. Learmont, and J. Charland
W. Andrew Terrill
John R. Deni*

Lessons from Limited Wars

*Todd R. Greentree
David C. Brooks*

Dunlap on "Lure of Strike" Crane Replies



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47 Ashburn Drive | Carlisle PA 17013-5010

717.245.4943

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usarmy.carlisle.awc.mbx.parameters@mail.mil

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From the Editor

Readers will want to note the edifying, if contentious, exchange between two distinguished soldier-scholars, Charles Dunlap and Conrad Crane. Each holds strong views regarding the assumptions and attendant expectations that have underpinned and continue to shape the American way of fighting. We also wish to draw readers' attention to the thoughtful responses we received to our "Women in Battle" forum (Summer 2013), and the authors' replies.

Our first forum looks at four "Dilemmas for US Strategy." One factor that makes formulating strategy difficult, especially for a global power, is that policy choices in one region can reduce alternatives in another. David Sorenson's "US Options in Syria" weighs America's military and nonmilitary options against the goal of containing the Syrian civil war, noting that the failure of the current containment strategy could lead to dire consequences for the region. In "Pitfalls in Egypt," Gregory Aftandilian discusses how antipathy toward the United States grew during the Morsi presidency, and how America can chart a better course by using aid packages to encourage democratic reform. Richard Weitz's "Transition in Afghanistan" suggests that NATO's withdrawal may be too soon to avoid a renewal of the Afghan civil war. Dennis Hickey's "Imbalance in the Taiwan Strait" examines four alternatives for addressing the military imbalance between Taiwan and China, and recommends combining two of them for a better way ahead.

The second forum presents "US Landpower in Regional Focus." In the first article, Brigadier General Kimberly Field, Colonel James Learmont, and Lieutenant Colonel Jason Charland explain the rationale and principal components of the Regional Alignment of Forces concept. Andrew Terrill's "Strategic Landpower and the Arabian Gulf" describes how the US Army has played a stabilizing role for the Arab states along the Persian Gulf, and can continue to do so. John Deni's "Strategic Landpower in the Indo-Asia-Pacific" discusses the US Army's contributions to deterring aggression and to promoting security in the region. In both cases, it is clear the strategic application of landpower offers much more than compellence.

Our third forum, "Lessons from Limited Wars," highlights what we might learn from some of America's limited conflicts. It opens with "A War Examined: Afghanistan" by Todd Greentree, which considers the ambiguous results of America's most recent conflict and what these might mean for the concept of limited war. David Brooks's "Cutting Losses: Ending Limited Interventions," offers three case studies to analyze how US presidents decided when the costs of a limited intervention exceeded its benefits.

This issue also offers a mini-forum on "Examining Warfare in Wi-Fi." Contributions by Paul Kan and Jeffrey Groh review some of the latest literature on cyberwar and cyber warfare, a topic of increasing interest. ~AJE

US Options in Syria

David S. Sorenson

ABSTRACT: This article considers the military choices for the United States as it seeks both to terminate the Syrian civil war on favorable terms and to contain the conflict within Syria's borders. However, few military options promise a reasonable chance to influence the Syrian civil war itself. Thus, America should focus its military and other policy instruments on containing the crisis. That is also a complex problem, but a worse one would be the Syrian civil war spreading to the larger eastern Mediterranean region.

The United States has important interests in the Eastern Mediterranean region and because Syria is a pivotal country in that area, American national decisionmakers must consider whether and how to use military power to defend those interests. The horrifying moral costs of the Asad regime, and the danger of a failed or jihadist Syrian state, make the ongoing Syrian conflict harmful to US and regional partner country interests. The other danger is the possibility the conflict will increasingly spread to Syria's neighbors. The human cost alone is staggering: over 117,000 dead, hundreds of thousands wounded, over six million displaced, ruined cities, half the population in need of food, and two instances of chemical weapons use. However tragic the war is, there is very little assurance the United States could, through direct intervention in the Syrian civil war, stop or slow the destruction. Given the intensity of the civil war, smaller military measures may not only fail to make much difference, but may initiate escalation. The United States should rule out direct intervention to stop the fighting, and instead, concentrate on holding the fighting to Syria proper, as much as possible.

American Interests

US eastern Mediterranean security objectives include sustaining regional stability, avoiding havens for terrorists, preventing weapons of mass destruction (WMD) proliferation, supporting Israeli security, encouraging economic growth, and promoting democratization, though many would quibble with the exact order.¹ The United States must try to prevent the Syrian civil war from extending beyond its source and destabilizing the region. Moreover, as the conflict between Islam's largest sects, Sunna and Shi'a, escalates, it is clearly important to limit religious conflict, which can spread rapidly, and cause poles of religious authority, such as Iran, to gain influence. It is also in America's interest to terminate major internal wars in the region if it has the means and ability to do so, and at an acceptable cost.

David S. Sorenson is Professor of International Studies at the Air War College, and the author of three books on the Middle East, including *Introduction to the Modern Middle East* (forthcoming in 2014), and three other books on US national security issues, along with numerous articles and papers. He has a Ph.D. from the Graduate School of International Studies, University of Denver.

¹ Given the fate of fledgling democracies in the Arab world, democracy advocates may well reconsider its desirability as an early outcome of a political transition.

Ending the Civil War

Given the importance of regional stability, the White House must work to prevent a pivotal country like Syria from collapsing entirely. The human and physical costs are already staggering, and the longer the conflict lasts, the more the human suffering and post-war recovery periods. Thus one possible, indeed likely, outcome of the Syrian civil war is a failed state that becomes a haven for terrorists and criminals, which would obviously harm regional US interests.² No matter which side (or sides) “wins” the war, the damage done thus far may doom Syria to decades of painful recovery, with large areas of lawlessness and suffering. Moreover, the chances of a favorable outcome for the United States are remote; either the Asad regime prevails over a broken country, or Sunni jihadists gain the upper hand, but the most likely outcome is continued fighting until mutual exhaustion. And even if a secular democratic-oriented group or groups prevail in Syria, the cost and difficulty of reconstruction may doom Syria to decades of instability.

While there are clearly moral implications for the United States (and the world), it is highly unlikely a major American military intervention would succeed in dislodging the Asad regime or in ending the fighting. This is because the conflict is widespread throughout Syria’s populated areas, is waged by diverse groups, and is driven by not only the stubbornness of the ruling regime, but also by religious motives beyond simple revolution. Unlike other Arab “spring” countries, the ruling elite, and the approximately 15 percent of its Alawi population, have nowhere else to go; for them the civil war is a fight to the death. Some of the radical Sunni opposition declared the war to be jihad, and appear willing to fight to the death. It is, in short, a deeply embedded war that may well continue even if the Asad regime ends, with the fighting shifting to religiously aligned purposes and fueled by outside actors. Yet the United States does have a vital interest in containing the war, and this is where US decisionmakers must place their emphasis.

Reducing the Shi’a-Sunni Divide

One of the key dangers of the Syrian civil war is its effect on the Shi’a-Sunni schism that has rapidly accelerated since 2003.³ While the sources and nature of the division are too complex to detail here, the Syrian civil war embeds the Shi’a-Sunna conflict. The majority of Syria’s population is Sunni while the Asad regime’s key leaders adhere to the Alawi sect, which is approximately 12 percent of the total population.⁴ While the Alawi ties to the Shi’a are theologically tenuous, Alawi Syrian president Hafez Al-Asad, after taking power in a 1970 coup, received a *fatwa* from Lebanese cleric Musa Al-Sadr stating that the Alawi were a community of Shi’a Islam, and Asad’s decision to side with Shi’a Iran over Sunni-ruled Iraq in the 1981-88 Iran-Iraq war, cemented his position as

2 Andrew J. Tabler, “Syria’s Collapse: And How Washington Can Stop It,” *Foreign Affairs* 92 (July/August 2013): 90.

3 The schism dates to the succession debate following the Prophet Muhammad’s death in 632, and while that schism has flared up over the centuries, it rarely became the basis of a sustained conflict (the 1981-88 Iraq-Iran conflict was much more about two despotic leaders in a struggle for power and possession than it was about religious differences, for example).

4 While a majority of the Alawite support the Asad rule (a few do not), support also comes from some Syrian Christians, who fear that one outcome of the Syrian civil war would be a radical Islamist regime that might persecute Syrian Christians.

a member of the Shi'a world, which passed on to his son Bashar, Syria's current ruler.⁵

For the United States, it is vital the intra-Muslim schism not grow and exacerbate intra-faith fighting in other regional countries, particularly Iraq, Lebanon, Yemen, and the Arabian Gulf countries; currently the Shi'a-Sunni fighting in Iraq has already reached post-US departure levels and threatens to undo the fragile post-Saddam state the United States tried to reconstruct. Fighting in Yemen, Bahrain, and Lebanon could spread to US regional partners.

WMD Issues

A core US regional interest is to prevent proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, though the concern has focused more on nuclear weapons than on chemical or biological weapons. While an Israeli airstrike obliterated Syria's reported embryonic experiment in nuclear research in September 2007, Syria retains deliverable chemical weapons, and the United States has warned them several times about both moving or using them. In June 2013, the United States claimed it had proof of Syrian chemical weapons use against anti-regime forces, and in August, the regime renewed its chemical attacks. While the Obama administration stated that Syrian regime's use of chemical weapons would cross a "red line," the initial response to the June attack was an announcement that the United States would offer some lethal military equipment to rebel forces.⁶ The second use of chemical weapons resulted in a mix of military threats and diplomatic activity, though none of this directly involved the threat of the proliferation of chemical weapons outside Syria. There are multiple avenues for trafficking these weapons: the regime could transfer them to a third party (Hezbollah, in Lebanon, or to an Iraqi Shi'a groups, or the Iraqi regime), or the Syrian opposition could capture Syrian chemical weapons and transfer them itself. In the latter case, the al Qaeda-affiliated Syrian rebel groups could transfer these weapons to be used in the Middle East and beyond.

Containing the Civil War

The Syrian conflict may spread beyond current limited incursions by all sides over the Lebanese, Turkish, Jordanian, Israeli, and Iraqi borders. A significant spillover across any of those borders would seriously threaten regional stability. Syria shares porous borders with these countries, and all have refugee camps with tens of thousands of Syrian refugees who could be swept into an expansion of the Syrian civil war. Such camps may become centers for resistance outside Syria, and Syrian security forces may cross borders to curb any anti-regime activity stemming from such camps. Even a small incursion into neighboring countries could provoke escalation, either by invading forces who push refugees out of the camps and deeper into the country, or by defending forces, who might pursue Syrian security forces back over their border.

5 Fouad Ajami, *The Vanished Imam: Musa Al Sadr and the Shia of Lebanon* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986), 174.

6 Benjamin J. Rhodes, *Text of White House Statement on Chemical Weapons in Syria*, June 13, 2013. "Following on the credible evidence that the regime has used chemical weapons against the Syrian people, the President has augmented the provision of non-lethal assistance to the civilian opposition, and also authorized the expansion of our assistance to the Supreme Military Council (SMC)"

The expansion of the conflict beyond Syria would imperil US regional interests. Should the Syrian civil war escalate over borders, it will likely worsen the growing regional Sunni-Shi'a dispute.

Reviewing US Military Options

Washington faces a challenging environment in the Middle East; there is clearly political and military exhaustion after years of inconclusive engagement, and US defense expenditures will decline sharply over the next decade. Thus, any military options will be constrained. Still, policymakers must generate feasible options, which Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Martin Dempsey offered in his letter to Senate Armed Services Committee Chair Senator Carl Levin (D-MI) on 19 July 2013 (his categories italicized):⁷

- *Train, advise, and assist the opposition*, to include supplying logistics, weapons, and intelligence. The troops required could range from several hundred to several thousand, with a cost estimate of \$500 million annually, according to General Dempsey.⁸ The letter did not specify where the troops would deploy, but presumably in “safe zones” in neighboring countries.
- *Conduct standoff attacks and assist the opposition*, by air weapons against high-value regime targets, including bomb-carrying aircraft and missiles. The purpose would be to decimate targets the regime values or needs to maintain its grip on power. Such targets might be similar to those in Libya or Serbia: regime leadership living quarters, the homes and businesses of regime supporters, military and supportive militia targets, communications capability, supply lines (possibly including flights from outside Syria supplying the regime), for examples.
- *Establish a no-fly zone*. For General Dempsey, a no-fly zone would be limited to combating Syrian air assets in their attacks against anti-regime elements and their supporters. Dempsey noted US rescue personnel would have to enter Syria to retrieve downed aircrews, and the no-fly zone costs could average \$1 billion per month because of high force requirements and operating costs.
- *Establish buffer zones*. This option would create areas along borders (most likely Turkey and Jordan) where anti-regime forces could train, heal, and resupply, and where wounded civilians could receive treatment. It would require protection from air and ground attacks, though the size of such a protective force would depend on the size and location of the buffer zones.
- *Control of chemical weapons*. The United States and possibly allied forces would destroy or seize Syrian chemical weapons and, presumably, their delivery vehicles and supporting equipment. Attacking chemical weapons is difficult and potentially dangerous as only very high heat can destroy poison gas, thus blowing up a warhead can spread its lethal effects for miles. Finding the launchers is also problematic; there is doubt over the location and number of tactical ballistic missiles

⁷ Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Martin E. Dempsey, *Letter to The Honorable Carl Levin*, July 19, 2013.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.

(SCUDs), not to mention the smaller missiles.⁹ Seizing them can also be problematic; they must be moved quickly out of enemy territory without leaks, detonations (some may be equipped with a detonating device), or theft by other forces. Finding chemical weapons is also very difficult; they are small and easily hidden.

United States' strategic planners must consider all these options as possible force application packages, as General Dempsey noted, but all require careful calculation of costs and benefits relative to American national security interests. Planners must also calculate the most likely outcomes of these actions, singularly, or in a package: will they hasten the complete collapse of the Asad regime or further fragment Syria into fiefdoms, each dominated by a sectarian warlord. Paradoxically, they might empower the Asad regime, allowing it to argue that it is now fighting the Americans, pushing some Syrians to commit to the regime. Planners must also recognize there are very few discrete options, once the United States strikes (as punishment for Syrian chemical weapon use). It becomes much more difficult to abstain from further engagement.

While General Dempsey offered force package options, he did not offer his perspective on desirable end states, or how military force might accomplish them. The following section links these force options to possible conflict outcomes.

Ending the Civil War on Favorable Terms

While the White House has not had a hostile relationship with the Asad regime in the past few decades, its behavior in the civil war, including its attacks on civilians, its links with Russia and Iran, and its alliance with Hezbollah, which the State Department lists as a terrorist group, might justify an end state of terminating that regime in favor of a stable government. But experience alone suggests the likelihood of success is low. While the United States has used force (usually with allies) to facilitate regime change, it ended relatively well only in the campaign to end the Serbian Milosevic regime. In Libya, Iraq, and Afghanistan, unstable countries remain after decades of war, at the cost of thousands of Americans killed and wounded, and trillions of dollars spent.

Moreover, no feasible military scenario offers much chance of stemming Syrian violence. The most-often suggested policies are either a no-fly zone, as used in Libya, Serbia, and Iraq before 2003, or a off-shore strike with missiles against select targets like chemical weapons delivery systems, or assets highly valued by the Asad regime. If a no-fly zone is limited to striking air assets, it can degrade enemy capacity to conduct counterinsurgency air operations, and if the United States conducted such an operation with standoff weapons, it could be done at an acceptable cost for both lives and dollars, using precision-guided munitions from naval platforms and naval and Air Force planes with air-launched missiles. Attacks on airfields, munitions, fuel, and aircraft might limit Syrian ability to use air weapons to attack insurgent and

⁹ Mary Beth Nikitin, Paul K. Kerr, and Andrew Feickert, "Syria's Chemical Weapons: Issues for Congress" (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service 7-5700, August 30, 2013), 4-5.

civilian targets.¹⁰ Targeting helicopters is much more difficult, as they do not require runways, and can quickly land and hide after striking targets.

Yet, while Syria has certainly used aircraft to bomb civilians, most of the civilian attacks by regime forces usually involve ground units, either military or militia, and if the US or other-nation air forces vigorously patrol Syrian skies, it will only drive the Asad regime to shift more effort to ground forces, and especially artillery.¹¹ And while a no-fly zone can evolve into a “no-tank” zone, targeting ground force weapons like tanks and other heavy vehicles, such operations are difficult in urban areas. Striking a tank from the air can easily cause civilian casualties; tanks filled with fuel and ammunition can devastate entire neighborhoods when they explode. Even with advanced targeting systems, misses are possible. Even a no-fly or no-vehicle zone destroys most if not all of Syrian air weapons and military ground vehicles, the death and damage from smaller weapons will continue to climb.

The other US option is sending arms and other supplies to the opponent forces, but the numbers and types of equipment are not likely to make a difference against a regime armed by Russia and supported by Hezbollah. Fears that sophisticated arms would make their way either to jihadists or the regime have limited the supply, leading to a growing belief that the United States is only trying to prolong the fighting and ensure no side wins.¹² Whether or not that is a true intention may not matter, because arming rebels will still produce only more inconclusive fighting, whatever the US motive.

The Syrian use of chemical weapons in June and August 2013 drove the Obama administration to declare the actions had crossed a “red line,” though the line itself was unclear.¹³ The president indicated that he planned a limited strike both to punish Syria for using chemical weapons and deter future use in Syria or beyond. The president appeared aware of the limited impact of a strike: “That doesn’t solve all the problems inside Syria, and it doesn’t obviously end the death of innocent civilians inside of Syria.”¹⁴ A limited strike (not conducted at the time of this writing) would not only fail to be decisive, but also provoke a predictable response from the Asad regime. It would continue its campaign in a show of defiance, perhaps using chemical weapons again, thus forcing the United States to consider striking again. America stands to lose either way; should it fail to respond, it appears weak, but should it attack, it steps into a cycle of escalation that it is unwilling to pursue. The Asad regime has much higher stakes than the White House; it is fighting for its life, while the United States is trying to reduce or terminate the war on terms it favors. Even a successful attack in response to a chemical

10 Christopher Harmer, *Required Sorties and Weapons to Degrade Syrian Air Force Excluding Integrated Air Defense System (LADS)* (Institute for the Study of War, July 31, 2013).

11 This is also the conclusion reached by Karl P. Mueller, Jeffrey Martini, and Thomas Hamilton, “Airpower Options for Syria: Assessing Objectives and Missions for Aerial Intervention,” *RAND Center for Middle East Public Policy*, RR-446-CMEPP (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2013), 2-3.

12 Ann Barnard, “Deal Represents Turn for Syria; Rebels Deflated,” *The New York Times*, September 15, 2013.

13 As of this writing, proof of Syrian chemical weapons use is not available, though the evidence appeared to indicate that some side in the war used some kind of chemical agent against civilians. Whether or not the agent was also lethal (though not banned) was unclear.

14 Michael R. Gordon, “Aim of U.S. Attack: Restore a ‘Red Line’ That Became Blurred,” *The New York Times*, August 30, 2013.

weapons attack may propel the Assad regime to decide it is in a game of chicken with Washington, and dare it to continue to respond as it launches more chemical weapons attacks. The United States is likely to lose this game of chicken.

Containing the Civil War

If the Syrian civil war spills into neighboring countries, it directly affects key US regional partners and, in the Turkish case, a NATO ally. Says Cordesman, “America’s real strategic interests are tied to the destabilizing impact of the civil war on Syria’s neighbors, the growing role of Iran and Hezbollah in Syria, and the pressure on Iraq to join with Iran and Syria if Syria remains dependent on Iran.”¹⁵ Small incursions have occurred, and will most likely continue. However, a major breach of borders would clearly threaten US regional interests. It is one thing to have one country in violent conflict; it is quite another to have the fighting spread to four or more countries which have ties to the United States. It could threaten the Lebanese, Jordanian, and Iraqi governments, it could spill into Israel, it could disrupt the flow of commerce in the eastern Mediterranean, and it could expand into countries weakened by the “Arab spring” movements. Should jihadists in Syria expand their operations into the Sinai, or Libya, for example, joining other jihadi already there, and bringing weapons captured from the Syrian military, those countries will become much more unstable than they already are. The new aggressiveness of the Syrian Kurdish rebels could bolster their kinfolk’s efforts to gain more power and to resist the regimes in both Turkey and Iraq.¹⁶

The Syrian civil war could expand in several ways. The Assad regime could expand the conflict if refugee camps outside Syria become staging and training areas for anti-regime forces, or if the regime should try to halt the flow of weapons to insurgents. These weapons come into Syria by land and sea routes (smuggled into Mediterranean ports). Insurgents could attack weapons ships, thus forcing the conflict into the eastern Mediterranean. The United States Navy, and allied and friendly navies, would thus have a role in containing the maritime aspect of the conflict, though containment could also become more active, with those navies seizing vessels carrying arms to the Syrian regime.¹⁷

A major movement of Assad’s forces into Turkey or Jordan would quickly embroil those countries in the civil war, as a Syrian incursion into the Golan would generate an Israeli response. Turkey, Jordan, and Israel have capable militaries, and Syrian leadership might be reluctant to challenge them. But an intrusion over Lebanese borders is more problematic; Syrian forces long occupied Lebanon, and it remains in the Syrian sphere of interest (Syrian maps do not show an independent Lebanon, instead showing Lebanon as a part of Syria). Several Syrian incursions into Lebanon, either by government forces or by rebels, have already occurred and might certainly happen again. The Lebanese army

15 Anthony H. Cordesman, “U.S. Strategy in Syria: Having Lost Sight of the Objective...” (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies), September 12, 2013.

16 Emile Hokayem, *Syria’s Uprising and the Fracturing of the Levant* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies), 129.

17 This would obviously be a high-risk option, and would likely exempt Russian-flagged ships due to the potential for quick and dangerous escalation.

is lightly armed, designed much more for domestic policing than in repelling an outside invader.¹⁸ Iraq faces a similar problem; its military is still rebuilding in the post-Saddam era, but US assistance and training has improved its quality. While there is always the danger that further American help might get into the wrong hands, the United States should still increase its military assistance and other ties to Iraq's military as a part of a ring of Syrian containment.

The United States has experience implementing containment—it was the core strategic doctrine during the Cold War, but the lessons from that experience may be difficult to apply in containing the civil war within Syrian borders. Cold War containment relied heavily on the threat of punishment against the former the Soviet Union or the People's Republic of China for spreading their influence, along with supporting alliances and friends, supplying partners with arms, training, and jointly operated military bases on the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and the People's Republic of China (PRC) rimlands. However, neither the USSR nor the PRC was waging a war against its own people; rather the perceived danger was expansion. Still, though the United States would construct it differently, containment should be seriously considered as the primary military response to the Syrian civil war. While it needs an element of threatened punishment, it will have to rely more on efforts to seal Syria's borders.

America could threaten targets valued by the Syrian regime by air, or by stealthy penetrations should Syrian forces cross borders; through assassinations of key officials; or inflicting widespread damage against regime supporters. Attacks in Serbia focused on assets held by Milosevic's supporters, and the same could hold for Syria. However, the regime has already suffered considerable punishment; and punishment attacks are very likely to include civilian casualties, which the regime can blame on the United States, solidifying its argument that it is resisting American influence in the region. Trying to surround Syria with a containing ring of bases would be expensive, time-consuming, and not popular in any of the potential hosting countries. Most of the border areas are difficult to police and easily crossed through mountain areas or large swaths of desert. These areas have long been smuggler's havens. "Volunteer" fighters, many of them jihadi-oriented, are also sneaking into Syria, with popular transit points being northern Lebanon and the Turkish-Syrian border, partly because of the ease of flying into Beirut and Turkish cities from other countries.¹⁹

Containment against physical incursions over borders is difficult enough, but even if such monitoring works to prevent physical border incursions from either side, it cannot stop the flow of information and ideas that may inspire supporters of any side in the conflict to carry out retaliation outside Syria. Lebanese opponents of Hezbollah, outraged over Hezbollah actions in Syria, could bomb a Hezbollah neighborhood in Beirut, for example, or Shi'a Iraqis, angered over a Sunni action in Syria, could attack a Sunni neighborhood somewhere in Iraq. Still,

18 Oren Barak, *The Lebanese Army: A National Institution in a Divided Society* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009); David S. Sorenson, *Global Security Watch: Lebanon* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2009), Chapter 6.

19 Jeremy M. Sharp and Christopher M. Blanchard, "Armed Conflict in Syria: Background and U.S. Response" (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service 7-5700, September 6, 2013), 14.

the United States must attempt to contain the civil war by supporting friendly countries, sharing information, and maintaining forces (air and naval forces in particular) proximate to Syria, to threaten the Asad regime with unacceptable damage to its military capacity should he attempt to expand the conflict. The “red lines” must be real, and the White House must prepare to carry out threats, because the other core element of containment must be its credibility. Announcing a chemical weapon “red line,” and then hesitating to enforce it, places American policy in a credibility deficit.

Containing the flow of material into Syria is difficult enough. Sudan is reportedly shipping arms, paid by Qatar, to some rebel groups, which complicates Sudanese declared policy to support both Sunna Islamist movements while maintaining good relations with Shi’a Iran.²⁰ Containing such land bridges to the Syrian combatants would be very difficult, and even if Washington and other parties can slow it, weapons to the Asad side will still likely flow from Russia. The United States should, however, put as much pressure as possible on suppliers to both Asad and the jihadist groups opposing his rule to curtail weapons supplies. If Qatar is actually supplying jihadist groups in Syria, either directly or indirectly, the United States needs to exert quiet but firm diplomacy to curtail the supply chain, including the threat to remove the US presence in Qatar that the emirate relies on for defense. Iran is flying in weapons, reportedly through Iraq, though the Al Maliki government denies the charges.²¹ Iraq and Iran are more difficult, but Iraq still needs US military assistance, which the United States can threaten to curtail (though it is in America’s interests for it to continue), while Iran’s new president, Hassan Rouhani, might be at least approachable on the question of mutual restraint on arming Syrian civil war factions.²² While Iran may derive limited benefits from supporting Shi’a and their affiliates in Syria and elsewhere, Iran and the United States have a mutual interest in containing intra-Islamic conflict in general. Should diplomacy not work, there are few additional nonmilitary instruments available as the United States and most other countries are already observing strict diplomatic isolation and economic sanctions on Iran for its nuclear activities. There may be a few military options, though, such as harassing Iranian flights to Syria, or demonstrations of regional military power (large combined exercises, for example); but those have both dangers and limited impact. There are no simple solutions.

To implement containment, the United States must bolster its regional forces, and quickly augment regional friendly forces. American forces are now in Jordan, providing Patriot batteries and F-16 combat aircraft; and Jordan has requested additional US assistance in securing its border with Syria to stem the flow of smuggling and illegal weapons.²³ The United States has stationed forces in Turkey for decades, and recently moved Patriot batteries to the Syrian-Turkish border after Syria

20 “Arms Shipments Seen from Sudan to Syrian Rebels,” *The New York Times*, August 12, 2013. Sudan officially denies shipping arms to Syria.

21 Michael R. Gordon, Eric Schmitt, and Tim Arango, “Flow of Arms to Syria Through Iraq Persists, to U.S. Dismay,” *The New York Times*, December 1, 2012.

22 The Iranian president has limited influence over Iranian foreign and security policy, which is largely the responsibility of the Supreme Leader.

23 Thom Shanker, “Jordan Asks for Assistance in Securing Syrian Border,” *The New York Times*, August 14, 2013.

launched Scud missiles near that border. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) air base at Incirlik is only 100 km from the Syrian border. American forces have largely evacuated Iraq, but Iraqi president Nuri Al-Maliki has requested US assistance to deal with the estimated 30,000 al Qaeda fighters, many from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant.²⁴ Maliki suspects this group of carrying out a spate of bomb attacks against oil infrastructure and civilians, and while such bombings have been too much a part of Iraqi life since 2003, their escalation may be related to the fact that many of the 30,000 al Qaeda members are from Syria.²⁵ Here US surveillance would be useful in containing the flow of such insurgents over the Iraqi-Syrian border, as it would on the other borders Syria shares. Some of the surveillance may be armed as well, and though attacks from drones are controversial, the unknown danger of a lurking drone may deter some insurgents from border crossings.

The Obama Administration faces a strategic quandary relative to Lebanon; it has intervened in Lebanon before, in 1958 and 1982-84, though it has shown relative indifference to Lebanon's tragic quarrels, as in the 1975-90 civil war, and the 2006 war between Hezbollah and Israel. Previous engagement history does not clarify the strategic value of Lebanon and its political status for the United States. However, should the Syrian conflict begin to embroil Lebanon in a significant way (large-scale border crossings, shelling of Lebanese targets, engagement with the Lebanese military, for example), the risk is high the conflict will escalate further. So while neither the United States nor Lebanon would want American forces on Lebanese territory, the United States Navy could maintain a posture of "off-shore balancing," ready to support the Lebanese army in attempting to repel any Syrian attack on Lebanese soil. A complicating factor, however, is the possibility that forces beyond those of the Asad regime might cross into Lebanon; for example, Hezbollah and Lebanese Sunni jihadist forces could fight in northern Lebanon (there have already been skirmishes), and while the fighting might relate to the Syrian civil war, it would be very difficult for the United States to intervene in such a fight. Still, the Obama administration is bolstering its military assistance to Lebanon, increasing training for Lebanese military in particular.

Conclusions

The Syrian civil war has produced a considerable dilemma for American policymakers. How do we respond to a crisis where there are no clear choices? It is in US interests to see the Syrian civil war end, but an American effort to hasten the termination of the tragedy would require a huge force, a long commitment (with few, if any, allies), and no quick exit. Like some other protracted wars (Lebanon's civil war, Somalia, Rwanda, for example), the Syrian civil war may end only when the participants are exhausted, or when their outside patrons stop supplying them with the means to fight on. While the Asad regime has committed moral outrages (as have some opposition groups), the United States does not have the ability to terminate or reduce the Syrian regime's behavior, and probably a greater chance to worsen the fighting. As noted earlier, al Qaeda and its associated radical groups could be the

24 Salah Nasrawi, "Iraq Eyes US to Fight Insurgents," *Al-Ahram*, August 21, 2013.

25 Ibid.

real winner in a post-Asad Syria, though the United States does not have the means to shape the Syrian conflict. The clear danger to American regional interests is in containing the civil war within Syria, and though containment of it will be difficult under the best of circumstances, it is on this mission that the United States must commit its military forces. The White House must aid regional countries to keep the fighting contained within Syrian borders, must study the lessons of Cold War containment, and must quickly implement it, while at the same time living with the consequences of several decades of costly military engagements. The United States must also avoid entanglement in the growing intra-sect conflict within regional Islam because errors here could only fan religious passion and extend the fighting. One core reality is that none of the regional countries benefit from the spread of the Syrian civil war, regardless of their relationship with the United States, other regional countries, or religious orientation. If the fire spreads, everyone gets burned. Containment is in the interests of all countries bordering Syria, and the White House must stress and build on that point in its own policy. While containment never offers easy choices, and does not offer them now, it should still be the central emphasis for the United States as it confronts the Syrian civil war.

Pitfalls in Egypt

Gregory Aftandilian

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ABSTRACT: The US embrace of President Morsi tended to neglect his authoritarian and pro-Muslim Brotherhood policies, angering secular-liberal Egyptians. When the military ousted Morsi with the support of the latter, US officials tried to steer a middle course, but wound up alienating both sides of the divide. This article recommends that the US should continue to use its aid to encourage the new regime to meet its democratic benchmarks and curb its excesses.

The 3 July 2013 ouster of Egyptian President Mohammad Morsi by the Egyptian military put the United States in a quandary. The White House did not wish to endorse a military “coup,” which would make a mockery of US democratization policy and alienate the Muslim Brotherhood, Egypt’s most powerful political organization from which Morsi hailed. US policymakers also did not wish to alienate either the Egyptian military, which it had cultivated and supported for more than three decades, or the country’s liberal establishment, which supported the removal of Morsi. American policy vacillated between tacit support and criticism of the new government, especially after its crack-down on Morsi supporters in mid-August, but did not fundamentally change as Washington tried to preserve its equities in Egypt amidst its low standing in the country. In many respects, this most recent episode was symptomatic of US policy toward Egypt since the 2011 revolution and reflects conflicting US policy goals in the Arab world’s most populous country. Before examining US policy since Morsi’s ouster, it is important to understand why the United States had become so controversial in Egypt before the events of 3 July.

The Morsi Presidency

After Mohamed Morsi was sworn in as president on 30 June 2012, he was visited in July by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Defense Secretary Leon Panetta, in an effort to show support and ensure the bilateral relationship would continue under his leadership. Prior to these visits, the leader of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), Defense Minister Hussein Tantawi, stated: “Egypt will never fall to a certain group . . . the armed forces will not allow it.”¹ However, Secretary Clinton, right after meeting with Morsi and right before meeting with Tantawi, stated the United States supported Egypt’s “full transition to civilian rule” and the return of the military to a “purely national security role.”²

Gregory Aftandilian is an independent consultant and writer who worked 21 years as a Middle East analyst at the Departments of State and Defense, and as a foreign policy advisor in Congress. He is an adjunct lecturer at Boston University, associate of the Middle East Center at UMass-Lowell, and a Senior Fellow for the Middle East at the Center for National Policy.

1 Hamza Hendawi, “Egypt’s Top General Signals Military Won’t Give Free Rein to Brotherhood,” *The Washington Post*, July 16, 2012.

2 Stephanie McCrummon and Steve Hendrix, “In Cairo Clinton Says US Backs Civilian Rule in Egypt,” *The Washington Post*, July 15, 2012.

Morsi then used the occasion of a security incident in the Sinai—the killing of some 16 Egyptian soldiers by extremists on 5 August 2012—to undertake a major restructure of armed forces' leadership. After firing the head of the intelligence service as well as the chiefs of the navy, air force, and air defense command, Morsi forced the two top SCAF officials, Tantawi and army chief of staff Sami Anan, to retire.³ He picked General Abdel Fatah Al-Sissi, a younger member of the SCAF and head of military intelligence, to be the new Defense Minister. Al-Sissi evidently reached an accord with Morsi of some sort, and the military essentially “returned to the barracks,” but probably with the understanding that the new president would not take any further actions against the military. The White House was not alarmed by Morsi's actions because Al-Sissi was well-known to the US military (having studied at the United States Army War College) and official policy was for the Egyptian military to return to the barracks.⁴

Morsi's moves against the SCAF's old guard were welcomed by many of Egypt's young revolutionaries and liberals.⁵ However, his other moves were more controversial. He assumed both presidential and legislative powers and took action against some of his media critics. The Shura Council (the upper body of the parliament) replaced the editors of the government-owned newspapers with pro-Brotherhood figures. Many observers believed Morsi was personally involved in this decision.⁶

In November 2012, a new flare-up occurred between Hamas and Israel, which tested bilateral US-Egyptian relations. Although Morsi sent his prime minister to Gaza in a show of solidarity with Hamas, Egypt used its connections with both Hamas and Israel to defuse the situation. Morsi did not deal with the Israelis directly but instructed Egypt's diplomatic and security services to effect a truce between the two belligerents. For these actions, Morsi received praise from the United States, including a phone call from President Obama.⁷

Only a day after winning this international praise, Morsi undertook the most controversial decision of his presidency. On 22 November 2012, he issued a presidential decree declaring his decisions would no longer be subject to judicial review; in other words, he would be above the law. This action touched off a huge political firestorm in Egypt among his increasing number of liberal and secular detractors who were already suspicious of his motives. Demonstrations took place in many of Egypt's major cities, leading to clashes between Morsi's opponents and the police. The US reaction to Morsi's decree was muted, prompting widespread belief among Egyptian secular-liberals there was indeed a

3 Ernesto Landano, “Egypt Reacts With Respect to President's New Powers,” *The Washington Post*, August 14, 2012.

4 Essam al-Amin, “Egypt's Military Checkmated,” August 24-26, 2012, www.counterpunch.org/2012/08/24/egyptian-military-checkmated/; David Kirkpatrick, “In Paper, Chief of Egypt's Army Criticized US,” *The New York Times*, August 16, 2012.

5 Quote in Landano, “Egypt Reacts with Respect to President's New Powers,” August 14, 2012.

6 “Journalists Continue to Protest Against Chief Editors,” *Egypt Independent*, August 15, 2012.

7 Peter Baker and David D. Kirkpatrick, “Egypt's President and Obama Forge Link in Gaza Deal,” *The New York Times*, November 21, 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/22/world/middleeast/egypt-leader-and-obama-forge-link-in-gaza-deal.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

Brotherhood-US conspiracy, and the United States only cared about the strategic aspect of the relationship and not democracy.⁸

Although Morsi eventually rescinded most of his controversial 22 November decree, he quickly moved ahead to put the new draft constitution, written primarily by his Brotherhood allies, to the public for a referendum. Secular-liberals objected to several articles in the constitution that appeared to place religion above individual rights, and some articles were so vaguely written as to leave them open to the Brotherhood's narrow interpretation. Many Egyptians outside the Brotherhood believed Morsi and the Brotherhood were intent on creating a theocracy as opposed to a civil state. Violent clashes erupted in many Egyptian cities against Morsi and the Brotherhood, and numerous Brotherhood offices were attacked and burned. Adding fuel to the fire, Morsi denigrated the protestors as "thugs" and "holdovers from the Mubarak regime," and he used the police to arrest many of his critics. Reports surfaced of the use of torture.⁹

Meanwhile, several liberal and leftist parties and personalities formed the National Salvation Front in an effort to bring more unity to the opposition and compel Morsi to bring it into the government. Morsi only offered a "dialogue" with this group while he focused his attention on ensuring a Brotherhood victory in the parliamentary elections (then slated for April 2013). Shortly thereafter, the National Salvation Front decided on a strategy of street protests that eventually morphed into the Tamarod (rebel) movement (a petition drive against Morsi). The Brotherhood responded by asking the Shura Council to come up with new laws to allow the security forces to "control protests and confront thuggery."¹⁰

When John Kerry became Secretary of State in early 2013, there was a slight shift in the US approach toward Morsi. Kerry was cognizant that US support for Morsi had alienated nearly the entire Egyptian liberal intelligentsia. For example, in early February 2013, a prominent Egyptian human rights activist, Baheiddin Hassan, wrote an open letter to President Obama in which he accused the American president of giving cover to the Morsi regime and "allowing it to fearlessly implement undemocratic policies and commit numerous acts of repression."¹¹

Although Kerry stated publicly in early March 2013 upon his arrival in Cairo, "I come here on behalf of President Obama, committed not to any party, not to any one person, not to any specific political point of view," his attempt to reach out to the opposition was highly controversial because of the lingering perception that the United States still

8 Brian Katulis, Peter Juul, and Ken Sofer, "Advancing US Interests and Values at a Time of Change in Egypt," *Center for American Progress*, January 31, 2013, <http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/security/news/2013/01/31/51435/advancing-u-s-interests-and-values-at-a-time-of-change-in-egypt/>

9 Ramy Francis, Reza Sayah, and Laura Smith-Spark, "Scores Injured in Cairo Clashes as Crowds Mark Egypt's Protest Anniversary," *CNN.com*, January 25, 2013; Paul Talyor, "US Concerned at 'Climate of Impunity' in Egypt," *Reuters*, February 12, 2013; "Morsi Says 'Counter-revolution' is Obstructing Egypt's Development," *abramonline*, January 24, 2013; "Torture and Impunity Continue in Egypt: Amnesty International," *abramonline*, May 24, 2013.

10 "Egypt's Opposition Says Mursi Responsible for Violence," *Al Arabyya*, February 1, 2013; Gamal Essam El-Din, "Shura Council Discusses Laws to 'Control Protests and Confront Thuggery,'" *abramonline*, February 3, 2013.

11 Baheiddin Hassan, "Open Letter to President Obama," *Al-Abram Weekly*, February 6, 2013 <http://weekly.abram.org/News/1328/21/Open-letter-to-President-Obama.aspx>

avored Morsi and the Brotherhood.¹² Indicative of this tension, some leading oppositionists declined to meet with him and Kerry expressed frustration that Egypt's economy was unlikely to move forward in the absence of a political agreement between the opposing sides.¹³ After meeting with Morsi, he announced the United States would release \$250 million for Egypt in return for Egypt undertaking economic reforms and negotiating a deal with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).¹⁴ Although most of this US aid was for an "entrepreneurial fund" to help young Egyptians, it had the unintended effect of diminishing Kerry's message that the Morsi government should adhere to democratic principles. The Egyptian liberal intelligentsia focused on the \$250 million figure, seeing it as a gift to Morsi.¹⁵

With seemingly mixed messages coming from Washington, and with the opposition looking weak in advance of the parliamentary elections, Morsi decided to take on Egypt's judges, which he saw as not only secular-liberals but Mubarak-era appointees. The courts were a thorn in the Brotherhood's side because they had declared in 2012 that the lower house of parliament as well as the original constituent assembly (both dominated by the Brotherhood) charged to draft Egypt's new constitution, were invalid and ordered them disbanded. Morsi wanted to lower the mandatory retirement age of judges from 70 to 60, which would have resulted in the dismissal of approximately 20 percent of them, allowing him to appoint Brotherhood lawyers to the bench.¹⁶ This attempt was further proof in the eyes of Egyptian liberals that the Brotherhood was attempting to monopolize power.

With parliamentary elections postponed from April until October 2013, the Egyptian opposition put its energies behind the Tamarod petition that spring. The National Salvation Front backed this movement, with the hope it would collect more signatures (calling for early presidential elections) from the citizenry than the number of votes Morsi received in the June 2012 presidential election, thereby delegitimizing his presidency. Economic troubles—gasoline shortages and electricity outages—added to the public's anger at Morsi and the Brotherhood. Polls showed Morsi's popularity had eroded.¹⁷

It was against this backdrop that remarks by the US Ambassador to Egypt, Anne Patterson, became a lightning rod. On 18 June, she gave a speech in Cairo in which she tried to explain why the United States dealt with an Egyptian government dominated by the Brotherhood that so many Egyptians opposed. She stated the "United States would work with whoever won the elections that met international standards." She expressed skepticism that street protests would produce better results than elections, called on Egyptians to roll up their sleeves and work hard to join and build political parties because "there is no other way,"

12 Ann Gearan, "Kerry Pushes Egypt on Economy; Opposition Figures Keep Distance," *The Washington Post*, March 3, 2013.

13 *Ibid.*

14 Michael R. Gordon, "Kerry Announces \$250 million in US Aid for Egypt," *The New York Times*, March 3, 2013.

15 Interviews with confidential sources, March 10, 2013.

16 "Draft judicial law violates constitution: Egypt Appeal Court," *abramonline*, May 15, 2013.

17 Ingy Hasseib, "Daily Power Cuts Spark New Anger at Egypt's Government," *latimes.com*, May 29, 2013; "Support for Egypt Brotherhood and Morsi Dwindling: ZRS," *abramonline*, June 17, 2013

and added that chaos is a breeding ground for instability.¹⁸ Although Patterson was trying to set the record straight on US policy toward Egypt and to address conspiracy theories of a US-Brotherhood alliance, the speech had the opposite effect. Many liberal Egyptians saw the speech as a criticism of the Tamarod campaign and as giving the Morsi administration a free pass on human rights abuses. An opposition group, the National Association for Change, for example, accused Patterson of “blatant interference” in Egypt’s internal affairs.¹⁹

Frustrated by their inability to compel Morsi to change course, the opposition believed street demonstrations were its only recourse. When it was revealed that Patterson also held a two-hour meeting with a Brotherhood leader, Khairat al-Shater, who was not a government official, it fed opposition beliefs of US wrongdoing.²⁰ Actually, Patterson met with al-Shater to persuade him to convince Morsi to broaden his cabinet to include the opposition as a way of heading off strife in Egypt, but she did not make any progress on this issue.²¹ Unfortunately, just the fact that such a meeting with a high-ranking Brotherhood official occurred was “proof” of some nefarious US scheme. Patterson was not only vilified in the opposition press but crudely depicted on placards in anti-Morsi demonstrations. On 29 June, a Tamarod member charged “America and the Brotherhood have united to bring down the Egyptian people.”²²

In late June, the military entered the political fray. On 23 June, Al-Sissi warned “there is a state of division in society Prolonging it poses a danger to the Egyptian state . . . we will not remain silent as the country slips into a conflict that is hard to control.”²³ Al-Sissi also held a private meeting with Morsi, in which he reportedly urged the Egyptian president to compromise with the political opposition. Morsi responded by giving a televised speech on 26 June that, while acknowledging some mistakes, blamed the opposition for much of Egypt’s problems.²⁴ On 1 July, the day after millions of Egyptians started to demonstrate in Cairo’s Tahrir Square and elsewhere against Morsi, while pro-Morsi demonstrators congregated in other parts of the city, the military issued an ultimatum to Morsi and the opposition to seek a grand political compromise to bring stability to the country.²⁵ With Morsi not willing to budge, the military ousted him on 3 July and appointed Adly Mansour,

18 “Ambassador Anne W. Patterson’s Speech at the Ibn Khaldun Center for Development Studies,” June 18, 2013, <http://egypt.usembassy.gov/pr061813a.html>

19 “Egypt Opposition Group Criticizes ‘Blatant Interference’ by US ambassador,” *abramonline*, June 19, 2013.

20 See the interesting piece by Dina Guirguis, “In Response to US Ambassador Anne Patterson,” *Atlantic Council*, June 27, 2013, <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/egyptsource/in-response-to-us-ambassador-anne-patterson>

21 Michele Dunne, “With Morsi’s Ouster, Time for a New US Policy Toward Egypt,” *The Washington Post*, July 4, 2013, http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/with-morsi-ouster-time-for-a-new-us-policy-towards-egypt/2013/07/04/8075f24e-e423-11e2-af3-339619eab080_story.html

22 Quoted in Abigail Hauslohner, “Egyptian Group Accuses US of Keeping Morsi in Power,” *The Washington Post*, June 30, 2013.

23 Nasser Kamel trans. from As-Safir (Lebanon), “Egyptian Army Will Remain Neutral in June 30 Protests,” *al-monitor.com*, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/politics/2013/06/egypt-army-neutral-june-30-demonstrations-morsi.html>

24 Abigail Hauslohner, “Defiant Morsi Defends Tenure as Nationwide Protests Near,” *The Washington Post*, June 27, 2013.

25 “Full Text of Egyptian Military Ultimatum,” *The Times of Israel*, July 1, 2013, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/full-text-of-egyptian-military-ultimatum/>

the head of the supreme constitutional court, as the interim president. In a televised news conference that evening, Al-Sissi said the military had no interest in running the country and had removed Morsi because he had failed to fulfill “the hope for a national consensus.”²⁶

Since Morsi’s Removal

The initial US reaction to Morsi’s ouster was measured, as Washington assessed the situation. President Obama met with his national security team, while Secretary Kerry called some Egyptian officials to urge them to restore democracy. The Obama administration was careful not to call Morsi’s ouster a “coup” because that would have triggered an automatic cutoff of US aid to Egypt under existing legislation. A White House spokesperson underscored the “importance of a quick and responsible return of full authority to a democratically elected civilian government as soon as possible.”²⁷ President Obama said after Morsi’s removal on 3 July that the United States would “not support particular individuals or political parties.” He then acknowledged the “legitimate grievances of the Egyptian people” while also observing that Morsi had won the presidency in a legitimate election. Obama added: “We believe that ultimately the future of Egypt can only be determined by the Egyptian people Nevertheless, we are deeply concerned by the decision of the armed forces to remove President Morsi and suspend the Egyptian constitution.”²⁸

The United States was trying to balance its stated policy goals with its strategic and political interests. Having dealt with Morsi as a legitimate president, based on the fact he was elected in what was deemed a free and fair election, it was difficult for the Obama administration to abandon him and endorse his removal by the military, as that would fly in the face of US democratization policy and subject the United States to criticism that it only supported democracy for non-Islamist groups. Moreover, having courted the Muslim Brotherhood for more than two years because it was the largest and best organized of Egypt’s political parties, the United States ran the risk of alienating this important constituency. On the other hand, with millions of Egyptians opposing Morsi and welcoming the military’s intervention that ousted him, the US administration ran the risk of alienating an even larger group of citizens if it did not appear supportive of what took place. Furthermore, the Egyptian military, with which the United States had developed long-standing and deep relations for more than three decades, was clearly supportive of Al-Sissi’s ouster of Morsi, and alienating this institution might have serious consequences for US-Egyptian strategic ties.

Amidst these conflicting interests was the ongoing impasse on the streets of Cairo. The Muslim Brotherhood staged two large protest encampments—one in Nasr City and another near Cairo University—that included women and children. In the meantime, the interim government arrested several Brotherhood leaders, including Khairat al-Shater. Some Brotherhood members spoke of their desire for martyrdom and said they would not leave these protests until their legitimate

²⁶ David Kirkpatrick and Alan Cowell, “Muslim Brotherhood’s Leaders Seized in Egypt,” *Boston Globe*, July 5, 2013.

²⁷ John Lederman, “US Officials Decline to Take Sides in Conflict,” *Boston Globe*, July 5, 2013.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

president (Morsi) was restored to office. On 8 July, the situation on the ground grew tenser as more than 50 Brotherhood protestors were killed in front of a military building in Cairo where they had gathered in response to rumors that Morsi was being held there. The military said the protestors fired first and one soldier was killed and 42 injured, while the Brotherhood claimed their supporters were killed indiscriminately by the military.²⁹ In the aftermath of this incident, some in the Tamarod campaign urged the authorities to ban the Brotherhood altogether.³⁰ In this highly-charged atmosphere, US officials urged restraint on both sides. Secretary of State Kerry spoke frequently with interim vice president Mohammed El-Baradei and interim foreign minister Nabil Fahmy while Secretary of Defense Hagel spoke regularly with Al-Sissi.³¹ The US message was to urge the authorities in Cairo not to use force and to create an inclusive government. El-Baradei and the new interim prime minister Hamza El-Beblawi, a prominent liberal economist, both urged the Brotherhood to enter into negotiations for a coalition government but the Brotherhood's bottom line was that Morsi should be reinstated first as president, a non-starter for the new government.³²

While still not calling Morsi's ouster a coup, the United States joined the European Union (EU) in calling for Morsi to be released from custody.³³ In early August a number of US and European officials, including Deputy Secretary of State William Burns and EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton, came to Egypt to seek a political compromise between the authorities and the Brotherhood. Two prominent Republican Senators, John McCain and Lindsay Graham, also traveled to Cairo at the behest of the White House, to urge restraint and to argue for an inclusive government. Though McCain and Graham had called Morsi's ouster a "coup," they had voted with a majority of Senators to oppose an amendment that would have cut off all aid to Egypt.³⁴ These mediation attempts by US and European officials, however, did not make any progress.

Throughout the initial period after Morsi's ouster, the Obama administration decided not to change the US assistance programs to Egypt, and in late July decided not to make a determination of whether a "coup" had occurred in Egypt.³⁵ The most it did was delay the delivery of F-16 jets to the Egyptian military, probably as a lever to ensure the interim government would abide by its timetable on elections. But even this small slap on the wrist was criticized by the Egyptian military. In

29 William Booth, Michael Birnbaum, and Abigail Hauslohner, "Egypt's Military Shoots Protestors," *The Washington Post*, July 9, 2013.

30 David Kirkpatrick, "Egypt's Liberals Embrace the Military, Brooking No Dissent," *The New York Times*, July 18, 2013.

31 In his *Washington Post* interview in early August, Al-Sissi said he spoke to US Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel "almost every day" since the events of July 3. See Lally Weymouth, "Harsh Words for US from Egypt," *The Washington Post*, August 4, 2013.

32 Lally Weymouth, "An Interview with Mohamed ElBaradei, Who Hopes for Reconciliation in Egypt," *The Washington Post*, August 2, 2013, http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2013-08-02/opinions/40983074_1_muslim-brotherhood-army-president-mohamed-morsi

33 "State Department Calls for Morsi Release," *CNN.com*, July 13, 2013, <http://edition.cnn.com/2013/07/12/world/meast/egypt-coup>

34 John McCain and Lindsey Graham, "How Democracy Can Win in Egypt," *The Washington Post*, August 11, 2013.

35 White House Press Secretary Jay Carney stated on July 8, 2013: "I think it would not be in the best interest of the United States to immediately change our assistance programs to Egypt," as quoted in *The Washington Post*, July 9, 2013.

an interview in *The Washington Post*, published on 5 August 2013, Al-Sissi said the F-16 delay “is not the way to treat a patriotic military.” He also said the United States had “turned its back on the Egyptians, and they won’t forget that.”³⁶ Al-Sissi’s tough words were undoubtedly genuine, but he was also buoyed by the fact that several Gulf Arab countries had given Egypt some \$12 billion in emergency funds.

At the same time, by not calling the 3 July ouster a coup, the United States was criticized by the Muslim Brotherhood for supposedly giving the Egyptian military a “green light” to remove Morsi.³⁷ When Secretary Kerry, during a press conference in Pakistan on 1 August, said the Egyptian military had acted to “restore democracy” when it ousted Morsi, he was denounced by the Brotherhood and other Islamist parties in the region. Kerry soon backpedaled from this statement, saying that all parties, the military and the pro-Morsi demonstrators, needed to work toward a peaceful and inclusive political resolution of the crisis.³⁸

On 14 August, the Egyptian military, spurred on by many Egyptian liberals, ordered the security forces to violently breakup the pro-Morsi protest encampments, believing these demonstrators had been given ample time to leave and their continued presence hindered implementation of Egypt’s political roadmap as well as efforts to restart Egypt’s economy. At least 500 protestors and 42 policemen were killed in the initial confrontation and hundreds more protestors were killed in subsequent days, accompanied by the arrests of many Brotherhood leaders.³⁹ Both Secretary Kerry and President Obama called this crackdown deplorable, and President Obama ordered the cancellation of the joint Bright Star military exercises scheduled to occur in late September. The US President also suggested that further steps could be taken against the Egyptian military, but he did not order the suspension or cutoff of aid, and he implicitly acknowledged that the situation was complicated. He stated that although Morsi had been elected democratically, a majority of Egyptians had become opposed to Morsi’s rule because his government “was not inclusive and did not respect the views of all Egyptians.”⁴⁰ Subsequently, the Obama administration ordered a review of US aid to Egypt including the delivery of helicopters for the Egyptian military.⁴¹ The Obama administration believed it had to do something in the face of such high numbers of civilian deaths to send a signal of its dissatisfaction with the Egyptian military’s actions but not so much as to burn its bridges to the authorities in Cairo.

36 Weymouth’s Interview with Al-Sissi, August 4, 2013.

37 Jason M. Breslow, “Who’s Who in Egypt’s Widening Political Divide?” PBS.org July 17, 2013, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/foreign-affairs-defense/revolution-in-cairo-foreign-affairs-defense/whos-who-in-egypts-widening-political-divide-2/>

38 “Muslim Brotherhood Criticizes Kerry’s Endorsement of Mursi’s Overthrow,” Reuters, August 1, 2013; Deb Riechmann, “Kerry Backpedals on Controversial Comment on Egypt,” Associated Press, August 2, 2013.

39 Liz Sly and Sharaf al-Hourani, “Egypt Authorizes Use of Live Ammunition Against pro-Morsi Protestors,” *The Washington Post*, August 15, 2013, http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2013-08-15/world/41412007_1_mohamed-morsi-muslim-brotherhood-rabaa

40 The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, “Remarks by the President on the Situation in Egypt,” August 15, 2013, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/08/15/remarks-president-situation-egypt>

41 Julian Barnes and Dion Nissenbaum, “US Weighs Military Aid to Egypt Item by Item,” *The Wall St. Journal*, August 20, 2013

A Way Ahead for US Policy

The United States' standing in Egypt is at a low point. Indicative of this dearth of influence, Al-Sissi clearly ignored repeated American calls about the need to exercise restraint and ordered the crackdown on the pro-Morsi demonstrators and the imposition of emergency laws. Most of Egypt's liberals are backing the Egyptian military and believe the United States does not understand the "threat" posed by the Muslim Brotherhood. The prevailing sentiment among this faction is that if the United States is upset with Egypt's new direction, then so be it—Egyptians (by which they mean the non-Brotherhood citizens)—must decide for themselves how best to protect their society. The other faction—primarily supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood—see US policy toward Egypt as a replication of policy during the Mubarak era—backing the security forces regardless of human rights abuses and against the interests of "genuine" democracy. The key questions are: How does the United States recover from this situation? Which policies should it pursue? Can it realistically maneuver in this highly polarized political environment to preserve its interests?

First, US officials must understand their failures. Although the United States is often a convenient and unfair target for the ills of Egyptian politics, US officials miscalculated by not taking Morsi to task when he clearly acted in an undemocratic way, particularly when he issued his 22 November decree placing himself above the law. Morsi's harsh policies against his detractors were also insufficiently criticized by US officials who were so grateful to Morsi for brokering a truce between Hamas and Israel that they essentially gave him a free pass when he acted as an authoritarian leader. When the United States did increase criticism of the Morsi government in 2013, it had already lost support of the liberals. And when the liberals and secularists settled on the Tamarod campaign as their best vehicle to oppose Morsi, their campaign of "street action" was criticized by the US ambassador. The United States appeared more interested in "stability" for stability's sake than for meeting the democratic aspirations of a majority of Egyptians who wanted Morsi to resign or at least hold new presidential elections. Enduring three more years of a Morsi presidency, including his policies of imposing the Brotherhood's version of Islam on the state and society, was untenable for them but that was what US officials were calling for, at least indirectly. As one Egyptian liberal activist told the international media shortly after Morsi was ousted, because Egypt at this stage did not have an impeachment process, the Tamarod campaign and the military's action against Morsi were the only avenues open to them.⁴² The underlying lesson learned is that the United States must be consistent when dealing with undemocratic or authoritarian policies of a particular regime, even if that regime has cooperated with the United States on some regional issues. It was proper, therefore, for US officials to "deplore" the violence by the security services against the pro-Morsi demonstrators in August 2013, but US officials should also have deplored the incitement to violence by some Brotherhood leaders as well as the violent actions, caught on camera, by some elements in the pro-Morsi protest encampments who shot at security forces.

⁴² Comments by an Egyptian liberal activist in Tahrir Square, as reported by CNN's special program on Egypt, July 3, 2013.

Second, US policymakers must understand that in such a highly polarized environment, it is impossible to please both factions. The most it can do is remain consistent on human rights and work with the winning side and, in that way, try ease the repression of the other side. The new Egyptian government is currently composed of liberals and some Mubarak era figures, with the strong backing of the military. This is the reality now, and the majority of Egyptians support it because they see the Brotherhood as the greater threat.⁴³ Hence, it would not be prudent for the United States to suspend or cutoff aid because that would remove whatever limited influence the United States still has in Egypt, and would not advance the democracy agenda. By continuing this aid, the United States can rebuild its image in Egypt (at least with the majority faction) and urge Egyptian authorities to stick to the timeline to restore the semblance of a democratic government. This timeline involves the rewriting of some controversial clauses in the constitution, a public referendum on the new constitution, and holding parliamentary elections followed by presidential elections. If Egypt meets these benchmarks with minimal violence, it has a chance to establish a semi-democratic government, and this is the most that can be realistically expected at this stage. A true democratic government is unlikely in the near term because the military is likely to maintain a strong, behind-the-scenes role in it.

The question about the future of the Muslim Brotherhood looms large over this scenario. As of this writing, it is unclear whether the Egyptian authorities will outlaw the Brotherhood and its political party. At a minimum, the government is likely to bring some Brotherhood leaders to trial for inciting violence. Outlawing the Brotherhood altogether would certainly please more hardline elements in the new Egyptian government, who have called them “terrorists,” but it could prove to be counter-productive. Some Brotherhood elements could go underground and resort to violence, posing additional problems for the government. The 5 September 2013 assassination attempt against Interior Minister Mohammad Ibrahim may or may not have been orchestrated by such elements, but similar actions against the government are likely if the Brotherhood is outlawed and its political party is prevented from contesting elections.

Given the prevailing sentiment among most Egyptians who support the new government that the US aided and abetted Morsi, American officials would have little influence in persuading Egyptian authorities not to support a wholesale outlawing of the Muslim Brotherhood. However, over time, especially if the United States praises Egyptian officials for sticking to its democratic benchmarks, US officials might have a better chance of convincing them that a policy of inclusion, rather than exclusion, would be best for Egypt’s long-term stability and democratic governance. The fact the Egyptian government is itself divided on this issue gives the United States an opening. Such discussions should best be done behind closed doors lest the United States be accused of “interfering in Egypt’s internal affairs,” but when word of such discussions leaks out, as is likely, the United States can also use it to show the Brotherhood

43 Sahar Aziz, “Egypt’s Identity Crisis,” *CNN.com*, August 7, 2013, <http://globalpublicsquare.blogs.cnn.com/2013/08/07/egypts-identity-crisis>

that US policy is not directed against Islamists, and that it supports the inclusion of all nonviolent political entities in the political process.

Working with the new Egyptian government and continuing US aid would also have the benefit of preserving (or reactivating) the close security relationship that has benefitted the militaries of both countries for more than three decades. Although the Bright Star exercises have been cancelled, they should be resurrected in 2014 if domestic violence subsides and the Egyptian government fulfills its political roadmap. Each military establishment still values the cooperation it receives from the other, and in the case of the United States, this includes over-flight rights and expedited transit through the Suez Canal—both critically important in case of contingencies in the Persian Gulf. Although Egypt has said it would not cooperate with the United States on possible strikes against Syria, there may be future regional crises in which the two countries can cooperate closely. Moreover, with the hope of renewed Israeli-Palestinian talks on the agenda, the more the security relationship between the United States and Egypt is maintained and supported, the more Egypt will offer support in these negotiations. Although Morsi brokered a truce between Hamas and Israel, he was personally loath to meet with the Israelis. A new Egyptian president will unlikely have such close ties to Hamas, but he may be more cooperative on peace process issues and not have qualms about meeting with Israeli officials in the interest of securing a Palestinian-Israeli peace deal.

Cutting US aid to Egypt would have none of these benefits and runs the strong risk of ending what limited influence the United States currently has in Egypt. Egypt remains a cornerstone country of the Middle East, and right now its nationalist guard is up. American policymakers should best proceed prudently and not take any dramatic action that would harm the relationship. The Middle East remains a dangerous place but cooperation between the United States and Egypt can mitigate these dangers and steer Egypt toward its desired democratic path, even if that path results in a semi-democratic political system.

Transition in Afghanistan

Richard W. Weitz

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ABSTRACT: NATO has made progress constructing the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), which have assumed the lead for most combat operations, resulting in declining NATO casualties. The ANSF's ability to suppress the Taliban insurgency, however, depends on NATO's training and equipping it sufficiently to replace the military intelligence, aviation support, logistics, and other enablers NATO now provides. The Afghan government also needs to improve its performance. Further progress is likely, but a renewal of the civil war that devastated Afghanistan in the 1990s remains a fearful possibility.

In June 2013, the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) assumed the lead combat role throughout Afghanistan against the tenacious Taliban insurgency. US combat forces in Afghanistan are scheduled to decrease to 32,000 by the end of the year.¹ After next year, the United States intends to have a smaller Enduring Presence force operating under NATO command and a separate focused counterterrorism mission. If the ANSF performs well in the next year with a declining US military presence, we could see a successful NATO-ANSF transfer. The risk remains uncomfortably high, however, that the Afghan government will eventually succumb to an onslaught of the intensely ideologically motivated Taliban fighters linked to al Qaeda Islamist extremists. Both groups enjoy sanctuary and support in neighboring countries. Still, the most likely scenario is renewed civil war among multiple armed factions such as Afghanistan experienced during the 1990s.

Even a flawless ANSF-NATO handoff would not guarantee a benign end to the conflict. Many political, economic, diplomatic, and myriad other variables could affect the war's outcome. In his 2012 speech at Bagram Air Base, US President Barack Obama identified five lines of American effort regarding Afghanistan in coming years. In addition to strengthening the ANSF, these efforts included building a strong Afghan-American partnership; supporting an Afghan-led peace process; enhancing cooperation between Afghanistan and its region; and successfully implementing the 2014 security, economic, and political transition. The latter goal includes transitioning to an ANSF-led war, a private sector-led economy, and successfully holding free and fair elections next year. The Pentagon will have only a modest influence over many of these factors, as is often the case with recent civil conflicts involving the United States.

The prospects for a peace agreement between the Afghan government and the Taliban have experienced several ups and downs. However, few expect a meaningful peace deal before most NATO combat troops leave

Richard Weitz is Senior Fellow and Director of the Center for Political-Military Analysis at Hudson Institute. His current research includes regional security developments relating to Europe, Eurasia, and East Asia as well as US foreign, defense, and homeland security policies. He is a nonresident senior fellow at CNAS. He has published numerous books and monographs.

¹ Bailey Cahall, "President Obama said to be considering "zero option" in Afghanistan," *Foreign Policy AfPak Channel*, July 9, 2013, http://afpak.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2013/07/09/president_obama_said_to_be_considering_zero_option_in_afghanistan.

Afghanistan. In their 31 May White House news conference, President Obama and visiting NATO Secretary General Anders Rasmussen did not even mention the possibility of a negotiated settlement to the war. Instead, they announced plans to hold a NATO summit in 2014 that would finalize details for Operation Resolute Support, the alliance's new post-2014 train, advise, and assist mission in Afghanistan.² Even so, perhaps the most serious problem preventing a peace agreement is the belief among Taliban leaders that, following the withdrawal of NATO, the ANSF will succumb to their more highly motivated fighters.

The Challenging Transition to Afghan Lead

Despite a decade of intense work and sacrifice, the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan has yet to secure its main objectives of empowering a legitimate post-Taliban government sufficiently to ensure security throughout the country and prevent Afghanistan from again becoming a terrorist safe haven.³ The double military surge in Afghanistan—which saw two waves of tens of thousands of additional US and NATO troops enter the country following Obama's inauguration in 2009—helped blunt the Taliban resurgence and restore Afghan government control of the country's population centers, especially in the south. The Taliban generally ceased its large-unit operations and returned to its earlier focus on targeted assassinations, terrorist bombings, and demonstrations at high-visibility public events. For example, the Taliban swiftly followed the 18 June NATO-ANSF transition ceremony in Kabul with a 25 June attack on the presidential palace and other downtown Kabul targets.⁴ Although these attacks are routinely suppressed within hours, they do succeed in challenging Afghan government morale by engendering negative commentary in the Western media about the ANSF's inability to counter the Taliban without a NATO combat presence.

In addition to these tactical gains, the surges provided ISAF time to strengthen and prepare the ANSF to assume the lead role in combating the Taliban insurgents. In 2011, NATO formally launched a plan to transition full responsibility for security to the Afghan government, with reduced NATO training and equipping of the ANSF. The ensuing period has seen NATO forces in Afghanistan decreasing in number and shifting to a support role of training, advising, and assisting. Hundreds of ISAF bases have been closed or transferred to ANSF control, while the ANSF has assumed responsibility for ensuring security in increasing numbers of provinces, cities, and districts.⁵ Afghan forces began leading the majority of frontline operations in July 2012 and now take charge of almost all combat missions (though NATO special forces and intelligence are still heavily involved in the concentrated attack on the

2 "Remarks by President Obama and NATO Secretary General Anders Rasmussen After Bilateral Meeting Oval Office," *White House Office of the Press Secretary*, May 31, 2013, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/05/31/remarks-president-obama-and-nato-secretary-general-anders-rasmussen-aft>

3 North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "NATO Operations and Missions," February 21, 2013, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_52060.htm

4 Abdol Wahed Faramarz, "Tough Job Ahead for Under-Resourced Afghan Forces," *Institute for War and Peace Reporting*, July 1, 2013, <http://iwpr.net/report-news/tough-job-ahead-under-resourced-afghan-forces>.

5 "Unused U.S. Military Base to Be Demolished in Afghanistan," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, July 18, 2013, <http://www.rferl.org/content/afghanistan-us-destroys-unused-base/25042351.html>.

Taliban insurgents network).⁶ Most recently, the ANSF has taken charge of planning and coordinating the joint Afghan-US patrols in eastern Afghanistan, the last sector to transition to ANSF lead and the main focus of this year's counterinsurgency campaign.⁷ As a result, NATO casualties in 2012 declined to a level below that of any year since 2008, while Afghan army and police battle deaths and injuries have risen to several hundred per month.⁸

Despite several high-profile showcase attacks in Kabul and elsewhere, the ANSF units have thus far been able to maintain overall security in these transferred areas, albeit with substantial ISAF support. Measurable progress has also occurred in terms of various metrics such as territory under Afghan government control, captured or killed Taliban or al-Qaeda leaders, and growth in ANSF size and missions (more brigade- and corps-level operations).⁹ Most recently, the Afghan government has begun constructing a national military education infrastructure, from elite academies to military occupational specialty schools, as well as its own helicopter-based Air Force. When Afghan President Hamid Karzai met with US officials in January 2013 in Washington, they agreed to accelerate the military transition timetable (Milestone 2013). In June 2013, the ANSF assumed the lead combat role throughout the country.¹⁰ Whereas the Pentagon concluded that only one Afghan National Army (ANA) brigade could conduct independent operations in 2012, the US Defense Department believes that the ANA now has one corps, five brigades, and 27 battalions capable of independent operations.¹¹

Strategic Partnership

On 2 May 2012, officials from Kabul and Washington signed a Strategic Partnership Agreement. Under its terms, the United States pledged economic, security, and diplomatic assistance to Afghanistan for ten years after 2014. In return, the Afghan government agreed to improve accountability, transparency, and the rule of law; protect the rights of all Afghans, regardless of gender; and pursue further domestic reforms and capacity-building programs aimed at addressing the underlying socioeconomic, political, and other drivers of insurgency.¹² Afghanistan's cooperation with the United States and its allies will

6 Ben Barry, "The endgame in Afghanistan," *Discussion at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS)*, Arundel House, London, July 11, 2013, <http://www.iiss.org/en/events/events-s-calendar/the-endgame-in-afghanistan-9bb2>.

7 Carlo Muñoz, "US troops adjust to Afghan National Security Forces lead in combat ops," *The Hill*, July 13, 2013, <http://thehill.com/blogs/defcon-hill/operations/310687-us-forces-adjust-to-afghan-lead-in-combat-ops>.

8 Cheryl Pellerin "Afghan Forces Achieving Security Success, Official Says," *American Forces Press Service*, July 11, 2013, <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=120443>

9 U.S. Department of Defense, "Report on Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan," December 2012, http://www.defense.gov/pubs/pdfs/1230_Report_final.pdf and Joseph F. Dunford, "Statement Of General Joseph F. Dunford, Commander US Forces-Afghanistan, Before The House Armed Services Committee On The Situation In Afghanistan," April 17, 2013," <http://docs.house.gov/meetings/AS/AS00/20130417/100660/HHRG-113-AS00-Bio-DunfordUSMCG-20130417.pdf>.

10 Matt Spetalnick, "Obama, Karzai accelerate end of U.S. combat role in Afghanistan," *Reuters*, Jan. 12, 2013, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/01/12/us-obama-afghanistan-idUSBRE90A0ZT20130112>.

11 "Statement Of General Joseph F. Dunford."

12 "Enduring Strategic Partnership Agreement between the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the United States of America," May 1, 2012, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/2012.06.01u.s.-afghanistansignedtext.pdf>.

also continue under their Enduring Partnership Agreement, signed at NATO's 2010 Lisbon Summit. In addition to encouraging further domestic reforms, these framework agreements reassure the Afghan government, as well as other United States and NATO regional partners, that they will not be abandoned despite the withdrawal of NATO's combat forces. The agreements also provided leverage with the Afghan Taliban, Iran, and Pakistan by weakening their conviction that NATO countries will simply wash their hands of responsibility for Afghanistan after 2014. For this reason, Iran lobbied the Afghan parliament to reject the Strategic Partnership Agreement and Iranian security forces harassed Afghan diplomats following its approval.¹³

Nonetheless, the durability of the post-surge military gains remains under question as the United States and other coalition members withdraw their forces and reduce their other military support. As of July 2013, there are approximately 65,000 US troops, 30,000 NATO forces, and perhaps an equal number of foreign security and military support contractors fighting on behalf of the Afghan government. More than 3,250 ISAF members (including more than 2,000 US soldiers) have been killed in action during the Afghanistan campaign. ISAF had 130,000 soldiers at its peak strength in 2011, when 50 countries contributed combat personnel to the mission. Western governments have been gradually reducing forces since then. By September 2012, US force levels had fallen from peak levels by 33,000 troops, reaching pre-surge levels.¹⁴ In his January 2013 State of the Union address, President Obama announced that 34,000 US troops would depart Afghanistan within a year.¹⁵ That will lower US forces approximately 32,000 by early 2014, with further decreases likely delayed until after the April 2014 elections. Other foreign military contingents are following a comparably steep drawdown.

In an open congressional hearing in early 2012, a National Intelligence Estimate issued in December 2011 was described as warning of "dire" outcomes and a protracted "stalemate" unless ISAF and ANSF made considerably greater progress toward their transition objectives.¹⁶ ISAF then experienced a series of challenges in 2012 that included the burning of Qurans inside Bagram Air Base by US soldiers, the massacre of 17 Afghan civilians by one American soldier, and the circulation of photographs of US military personnel defiling the bodies of dead Taliban fighters. These developments contributed to an escalation of insider attacks, when Afghan soldiers turned their weapons against United States or other NATO forces in ugly cases of fratricide. Although these incidents have declined in recent months, the Taliban has some supporters throughout the country. The movement sustains a strong presence in eastern Afghanistan near its Pakistani support bases, but Taliban attacks in north and west Afghanistan have become more frequent now that NATO force levels in these regions have declined. In general, Taliban fighters are using more aggressive direct attacks to supplement their

13 Sardar Ahmad, "Afghan-US Pact Strains Ties With Tehran," *Agence France-Presse*, May 8, 2012.

14 U.S. Department of Defense, "Report on Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan," December 2012, http://www.defense.gov/pubs/pdfs/1230_Report_final.pdf.

15 Rajiv Chandrasekaran, "Obama wants to cut troop level in Afghanistan in half over next year," *Washington Post*, February 12, 2013, http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2013-02-12/world/37051681_1_afghanistan-afghan-army-troop-level

16 "Senate Select Intelligence Committee Holds Hearing on Worldwide Threats," *Defense Intelligence Agency*, January 31, 2012, www.dia.mil/public-affairs/testimonies/2012-01-31.html

standard employment of improvised explosive devices (IEDs remain a potent tool of carnage). IEDs still inflict the most casualties of ANSF personnel. The Taliban's growing presence and changing tactics have contributed to higher overall ANSF casualties, more desertions, and the periodic overrunning of poorly commanded ANA units in remote locations—though the ANSF eventually recovers many of these outposts.¹⁷

Furthermore, according to the United States Department of Defense, “The insurgency continues to receive critical support—including sanctuary, training infrastructure, and operational and financial support—from within neighboring Pakistan.”¹⁸ Afghan-Pakistan conflicts reoccur with disturbing regularity over border checkpoints, cross-boundary shelling, and Afghan claims of Pakistani collusion with the Afghan Taliban. For more than a decade, the Taliban have enjoyed an invaluable sanctuary on Pakistani territory from which its fighters can recruit, train, and operate across the porous Afghan-Pakistan frontier—notwithstanding recurring American warnings that the Taliban's activities redound negatively on Pakistan's own stability. Meanwhile, Karzai stokes anti-Pakistan sentiment to mobilize Afghan nationalist support, which can provide an excuse for Afghan leaders to blame setbacks on Islamabad rather than try to overcome them through needed domestic reforms.¹⁹

Afghan Capability Challenges

The ANSF has grown faster than expected, reaching its full complement months ahead of schedule. Between December 2009 and October 2012, the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan (NTM-A) helped the ANSF expand by more than 140,000 personnel, to approximately 352,000 soldiers. Notwithstanding its larger size, growing responsibilities, and ISAF's extensive train and equip program, the ANSF still has major weaknesses and gaps, such as insufficient airborne and signals intelligence capabilities, spotty senior officer leadership, inadequately robust logistics given the country's weak national infrastructure and challenging geography, and weak management and administrative skills. In particular, the ANA lacks adequate enablers such as aviation, casualty evacuation (CASEVAC), combat medical support, and Counter-Improvised Explosive Device (CIED) capabilities. The Army has only 28 Mi-17 helicopters, the primary CASEVAC aircraft.²⁰ The ANA officer corps is thin in key qualities such as literacy, leadership, aggressiveness, and management skills. It also does not have an ideal ethnic balance. Further work is needed to teach the Afghans better gunnery, engineering, and weapons maintenance skills. In terms of morale, ANA units suffer from high desertion and defection rates, aggravated by a persistent shortage of noncommissioned officers (NCOs).²¹ The Afghan National Police (ANP), especially the newer Afghan Local Police (ALP) deployed in remote locations as a human-and-physical-terrain-denial

17 Nick Hopkins, “Taliban kill 1,100 Members of Afghan Security Forces in Six Months,” *The Guardian*, January 23, 2013. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/jan/23/taliban-afghan-security-forces-nato>

18 U.S. Department of Defense, “Report on Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan,” December 2012, http://www.defense.gov/pubs/pdfs/1230_Report_final.pdf.

19 Ben Barry, “The endgame in Afghanistan.”

20 Jim Michaels, “Afghan forces blunt Taliban offensive, commanders say,” *USA TODAY*, July 2, 2013.

21 “Statement Of General Joseph F. Dunford.”

and intelligence-gathering force, also needs better equipment and training before it can fulfill its important mission of preventing the Taliban from returning to areas conquered by the ANA.

The ANSF needs a better human capital strategy. Although the ANSF still suffers from high levels of attrition, especially among the locally recruited police, widespread poverty ensures a large number of recruits eager for gainful employment. The main challenge now is to raise the quality of much of the ANSF, ideally to the high level found in the Afghan Special Operations Forces (ASOF). ISAF has focused on imparting skills through training and mentoring, while the Afghan Ministry of Defense concentrates on removing incompetent field commanders and improving its vetting and retention processes.²² NATO's Security Force Assistance has changed from that of partnering and combat to using its Security Force Assistance Teams (SFATs) to train, advise, and assist sponsored ANSF units to conduct independent combat operations. Afghan political and military leaders are generally satisfied with this progress, though some complain about NATO's resistance to their efforts to obtain tanks, combat aircraft, and major conventional weapons systems.²³ The alliance is building the ANSF into a primarily counterinsurgency force rather than a conventional military given the absence of threats to Afghanistan by other countries' conventional armed forces.

With ISAF support, the ANSF has adopted a "layered security concept" that compensates for weaknesses in each element of the ANSF. The concept seeks to address persistent coordination problems between them (especially between the ANA and ANP) by integrating all ANSF elements into a joint defense in depth. This interlocking protection web encompasses the ANA, ANP, ALP, ASOF, Afghan Border Police, the National Directorate of Security (NDS), and other ANSF elements, which will soon include Mobile Strike Force battalions, which move by ground vehicles. An Operational Coordination Center (OCC) will control the network as well as disseminate relevant tactical intelligence among its components. ISAF still provides enablers for this layered defense system, especially aviation assets, but the forces in the field are almost all ANSF personnel.²⁴

Air Power Problems

Combat aviation presents a special problem. Analysts believe that it will not be until 2017 that the Afghan Air Force, whose presence could at least strengthen local pride and morale, will be able to operate without substantial foreign assistance.²⁵ Aviation has proved to be a key asymmetrical advantage for ISAF and Afghan partners since the Taliban lacks any air support. ISAF air surveillance and strikes provide one of the most effective instruments for countering Taliban infiltration across the Afghan-Pakistan border—a persistent problem that looks unlikely to be

22 "A Discussion on Afghanistan with General John Allen," *Brookings Institution*, March 25, 2013, http://www.brookings.edu/events/2013/03/25-allen-afghanistan#ref-id=20130325_allen

23 "Can Afghans take the lead?," *Inside Story, Aljazeera*, June 18, 2013, <http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/insidestory/2013/06/201361872036451240.html>.

24 "Statement of General Dunford" and "Discussion with General Allen."

25 Josh Smith, "Afghan Aircrews Training To Proceed Without Foreign Aid," *Stars and Stripes*, February 22, 2013.

resolved anytime soon. But ISAF has found it difficult to build a new Afghan Air Force from scratch given the country's austere conditions, bad weather, and remote forward locations of ANSF units that need aerial supply, aerial surveillance, and air casualty evacuations air surveillance. The greatest challenge is the time required to train enough skilled Afghans sufficiently to maintain and operate an air force.

At present, the United States Air Force (USAF) is pursuing a graduated approach toward transferring missions to their Afghan counterparts, with a slower pace of drawdown than seen with the US Army and Marines. NATO is providing the ANSF with indirect fire weapons such as artillery to compensate for the reduced ISAF combat air support.²⁶ The expectation is that ANSF ground forces will need to adapt and fight differently, with less combat air support, after 2015. NATO could also rely on US air assets located over-the-horizon in other countries even after 2014.²⁷ However, whether NATO governments would order something such as a spoiling air strike in 2015 or beyond against Taliban forces that began to pose a significant threat is uncertain.

Since the NATO combat withdrawal decision makes it harder for the Taliban to claim it is fighting to rid the country of foreign troops, Taliban leaders rely on exploiting their narrative of Western abandonment of Afghanistan. A common message is that, whereas NATO is removing its combat forces from Afghanistan, the Taliban fighters will remain. To counter this narrative, NATO planners are reconsidering their earlier decision to reduce the ANSF to 230,000 troops after 2015 for affordability reasons. The February 2013 NATO defense ministry formally considered supporting the larger force until 2018 as a means to better ensure Afghanistan's security, but perhaps even more importantly as a means to counter the abandonment narrative that NATO planners see as a greater threat to the alliance's campaign goals than the Taliban.²⁸ But actually sustaining the larger force will require greater financial contributions from NATO and non-NATO countries than currently planned, despite the continued global economic slowdown and other priorities. General Joseph Dunford, Commander US Forces-Afghanistan, recently warned that, "The gains that we have made to date are not going to be sustainable without continued international commitment," quickly adding that, "We are not where we need to be yet."²⁹ Whether these supplementary finances will soon materialize is doubtful, but ISAF and NATO can make meaningful progress toward overall economic development by continuing to combat illiteracy and innumeracy, promoting the recruitment of national minorities within the ANSF, and imparting more dual-use technical skills that have civilian application, including project and logistics management.

26 Michaels, "Afghan forces blunt Taliban offensive."

27 US Department of Defense, "Department of Defense Press Briefing with Maj. Gen. Polumbo from the Pentagon Briefing Room," April 23, 2013, defense.gov/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=5225.

28 Adam Entous and Naftali Bendavi, "U.S., NATO Consider Keeping Large Force Of Afghans," *Wall Street Journal*, February 22, 2013.

29 "Afghan gains not yet sustainable: NATO," *The Australian*, June 15, 2013, <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/breaking-news/afghan-gains-not-yet-sustainable-nato/story-fn3dxix6-1226664184461>.

Overcoming Insider Threats

The surge in “green-on-blue” attacks, in which supposedly friendly Afghan soldiers turn their weapons on their ISAF advisers, has impeded efforts to address the ANSF weaknesses. These “insider attacks” represent a major problem since they exploit a crucial vulnerability by seeking to disrupt the vital ISAF partnership and training programs with their ANSF colleagues. The highest annual total of insider attacks occurred in 2012, when there were at least 60 confirmed cases of ISAF troops being killed, which accounted for more than one-fifth of all ISAF combat deaths that year (almost one hundred more ISAF soldiers were wounded).

Year	No. of Attacks	No. of ISAF Casualties
2007	2	2
2008	2	2
2009	6	10
2010	6	20
2011	21	35
2012	46	60

Table 1. Afghan “green-on-blue” attacks. Source: International Security Assistance Force; as of March 2013; some attacks in 2012 are still under investigation and not included above.³⁰

NATO analysts assess that only 10-25% of the attacks are directly caused by Taliban action (infiltration, impersonation, co-option, etc.), attributing most attacks to personal grievances (inter-personal disputes), or spontaneous action (retaliation for some obnoxious act committed by the Western countries, such as burning of Korans or showing anti-Islamic films, or simply post-traumatic stress).³¹ Yet, the Taliban tactic of claiming responsibility for all these attacks unnerved ISAF advisers, who at times interacted less, or under more restrictive conditions, with their Afghan counterparts. On several occasions, NATO removed its advisers from Afghan work posts and suspended partnered operations in the field. The French government explicitly cited the insider attacks, which killed several French soldiers, to justify the withdrawal of French combat forces earlier than originally planned.

The rapid increase in the ANSF’s ranks contributed to this insider problem since it led to a relaxation of recruitment and supervisory standards.³² The surge in the number of ISAF advisers collocated with ANSF personnel also increased the number of targets. At one point, almost 5,000 NTM-A trainers served in Afghan institutions, while 400 ISAF military and police advisory teams deployed with ANSF units in the field. They trained more than 3,200 ANSF instructors in a “train-

30 “What lies behind Afghanistan’s insider attacks?” *BBC*, March 11, 2013, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-19633418>.

31 Luke Mogelson, “Which Way Did The Taliban Go?” *New York Times Magazine*, January 20, 2013.

32 “Statement Of General Dunford.”

the-trainers” program aimed to allow NTM-A to reduce its presence like the rest of NATO.³³ Even if only one of every 500 Afghan soldiers turns his weapons on an ISAF colleague, that figure yields dozens of attacks given the ANSF’s large size.

ISAF Commanding General John Allen recognized that foreign forces had to rely on fellow Afghans to use their superior cultural knowledge and human intelligence to curtail such incidents. ISAF partnered with the Afghan government to adopt a comprehensive response strategy, which aimed to reduce the number of “green-on-green” attacks in which ANSF personnel attacked their Afghan comrades. Afghan and ISAF personnel took measures to improve vetting and screening of new ANSF recruits; enhance counterintelligence efforts; make ISAF and Afghan personnel more aware of each other’s cultural sensitivities as well as behavioral traits of potential attackers; designate Guardian Angels to protect ISAF soldiers from insider attacks; and deploy mobile training teams to enhance force protection against insider threats. Furthermore, the ongoing reduction in the size of the ISAF mission and its use of smaller ISAF advisory units (security force assistance teams) embedded for long periods in only high-level ANSF units reduced the number of opportunities and targets for insider attacks. Most of the green-on-blue attacks do not involve soldiers who serve together on a constant basis. Rather, attackers find it easier to kill people whom they encounter in episodic or random contacts.

The Post-2014 NATO Mission

A critical question remains unresolved: how many United States and other foreign troops should remain after 2014 and what missions should they undertake? The Pentagon and other NATO militaries are assessing numerous variables as they decide how many forces they should recommend remain (hence the range in numbers): the ANSF’s performance this year; the strength of the Taliban and al-Qaeda; progress in the Afghan peace and reconciliation process; the April 2014 elections process; and the regional security environment (especially the policies and performance of the new Pakistani government).³⁴ Determining how many ISAF troops stay after 2014 and how fast other soldiers can leave Afghanistan also requires establishing in advance what specific missions NATO will perform after 2014. In principle, these tasks could include defending the Afghan population; protecting foreign civilian workers; killing and capturing key Taliban leaders; and building the ANSF through further training and advising in accordance with the transition plan NATO developed in 2010 and reaffirmed at its May 2012 Chicago summit.

The February 2013 NATO defense ministerial discussed how many forces to keep in Afghanistan beyond 2014, what they will do, and how rapidly other forces would depart. The numbers under consideration at that meeting ranged from 8,000 to 12,000 military personnel, with most of these troops coming from the United States and other NATO countries, as well as from a few NATO partners in ISAF such as Australia.

33 ISAF Headquarters Public Affairs Office, “ISAF Press Briefing September 5, 2011,” <http://www.isaf.nato.int/article/isaf-releases/isaf-press-briefing-september-5-2011.html>

34 Peter R. Lavoy, “Embargoed Until Delivered,” *Testimony of Dr. Peter R. Lavoy before the United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, July 11, 2013, http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Lavoy_Testimony.pdf

The United States might contribute between one half and two thirds to this total. The NATO ministers are now using this figure as a “planning” guidepost for pacing their own 2013-2014 reductions.³⁵ This number represents the middle-range of the three figures the Pentagon presented to NATO last November, but seems less than the US military commanders in the field would prefer.³⁶ The larger NATO force would amount to roughly 18,000 to 23,000 troops, while the smallest option discussed in November 2012 was from 3,000 to 6,000 troops.³⁷

Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) Stress

Until recently, there had been no serious discussion of a “zero option” for US troop presence, but keeping NATO military forces in Afghanistan beyond 2014 depends on the successful negotiations of a SOFA between the Afghan government and various international partners, which would define the legal rights and responsibilities of the foreign forces. When he met Karzai this January in Washington, Obama insisted that the new US-Afghan Bilateral Security Agreement under negotiation to replace the existing US-Afghan SOFA would have to provide comprehensive legal immunity for US troops in Afghanistan. Karzai has accepted this condition in principle, but the issue proved sufficiently controversial in the case of Iraq as to prevent any American forces (besides the standard Marine Guards, etc.) from remaining in that country after 2011. Relations between Karzai and Obama grew so testy in the summer of 2013 over proposed peace talks with the Taliban, with Karzai accusing Obama in a video link of seeking a separate peace with the Taliban, that the administration let it be known that the zero option was under serious discussion.³⁸ But Karzai’s entourage might be correct that such talk was simply a negotiating ploy that neither side could ever accept given their mutual need for some US military presence for both Afghan and regional security considerations.³⁹ The White House might announce its intent to keep a major troop presence in Afghanistan after 2014 while simultaneously declaring that the United States was prepared to negotiate the SOFA with the next Afghan government as well as the Karzai administration.⁴⁰ In addition to defusing the immediate crisis, this approach would reflect the reality that Karzai’s successor could repudiate any deal negotiated by his predecessor.

35 Adam Entous, “U.S. Sets Out Post-2014 NATO Force For Afghanistan,” *Wall Street Journal*, February 23, 2013.

36 “The Afghan Horizon: ‘Afghanistan will not stand alone’ — NATO declaration,” *Chicago Tribune*, January 19, 2013; Carlo Muñoz, “US Military Advisers: Impasse Won’t Stop Handoff to Afghan Troops,” *The Hill*, July 9, 2013, <http://thehill.com/blogs/defcon-hill/army/309791-us-military-advisers-impasse-wont-stop-handoff-to-afghan-troops>.

37 Adam Entous, “U.S. Sets Out Post-2014 NATO Force For Afghanistan,” *Wall Street Journal*, February 23, 2013.

38 Mark Mazzetti and Matthew Rosenberg, “U.S. Considers Faster Pullout in Afghanistan,” *The New York Times*, July 8, 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/09/world/asia/frustrated-obama-considers-full-troop-withdrawal-from-afghanistan.html?pagewanted=all&_r=1&ref=asia&pagewanted=all&.

39 “United States could leave Afghanistan early as tension between Obama, Karzai mounts,” *Reuters*, July 9, 2013, <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/world/u-s-pull-troops-afghanistan-year-report-article-1.1393607#ixzz2YfnwGXZ9>.

40 Stephen Hadley, “Assessing the Transition in Afghanistan,” *Testimony before the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee*, July 11, 2013, http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Hadley_Testimony.pdf.

The February 2013 NATO defense ministerial discussed the alliance's post-2014 train, advise, and assist mission. NATO is considering establishing training bases in the four main sectors of Afghanistan as well as a central headquarters in Kabul. The training mission might keep the current leading roles of Germany in the north, Italy in the west, and the United States in the east and the south. NATO trainers would work with ANSF units only at the corps level and conduct all their training on bases rather than in the field.⁴¹ Most likely, American soldiers in Afghanistan after 2014 will be assigned to units having at least one of three broad missions: advising and training select ANSF units as part of the post-2014 NATO force; protecting State Department and other civilian personnel on interagency missions; and capturing or killing high-value terrorists in Afghanistan as part of a separate counterterrorism force under US command. Unlike NATO trainers, this counterterrorism force of several thousand US military personnel would have US Special Operations Forces (SOF) embedded with lower-level Afghan units such as the Afghan SOF brigades. Some of these SOF personnel could be dual-hatted to perform US counterterrorism and NATO training missions. It is possible that these SOF forces might also support high-priority missions in neighboring countries, ranging from killing terrorists to neutralizing weapons of mass destruction (like a Pakistani nuclear weapon) that might fall under the control of a terrorist group.

Concluding Observations

The prospects for a peace agreement with the Taliban have risen and then fallen in recent months, with much attention paid to allowing the Taliban to establish a negotiating office in Doha. The initiative backfired after the Taliban representatives tried to fly their old flag and name it after their deposed government, leading Karzai to accuse them of seeking to establish a government-in-exile with American connivance.⁴² Yet, the Karzai government has contributed to the peace problem by pursuing several, often conflicting negotiating tracks, dealing with self-proclaimed Taliban representatives who lack much influence with the movement, and leaving much of Afghan society fearful that the government will reach a deal with Taliban leaders and other local elites at their expense.

In any case, it seems unlikely that a settlement is achievable before most US combat forces leave. Even if the talks start soon, the experience of other negotiations seeking to end a civil war suggest they will likely take considerable time to realize a deal. The parties need to feel comfortable working with one another, compromise their initial demands, and then sell any deal to their respective leaderships. On the government side, there will need to be a means to incorporate the interests and demands of many Afghan stakeholders who now feel excluded from the peace process. Regarding the Taliban, its leaders still reject US demands that they negotiate directly with Karzai's government, adopt

41 Thom Shanker, "NATO in Talks on Scale of Afghan Role After 2014 Deadline," *The New York Times*, February 23, 2013.

42 Kathy Gannon, "Taliban Close Qatar Office to Protest Flag Fracas," *Associated Press*, July 9, 2013, http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/taliban-close-qatar-office-protest-flag-fracas-19613331#.Udv_Wz5hlSY.

a formal cease-fire, sever ties with international terrorist organizations like al-Qaeda, and acknowledge the legitimacy of the post-2001 Afghan Constitution.⁴³ Another complication is that the Taliban consists of many fighters who are motivated by local grievances that will not be resolved by curtailing the NATO military presence or in peace talks with the central government. Whether the Taliban has a genuinely moderate wing able to induce the rest to support a peace deal remains unclear.

Prospects for Success

The ANSF has been making steady progress in improving its fighting capabilities, but its long-term capacity will be challenged by an expected loss of interest and support in NATO capitals after their troops leave the field. Much attention has been paid to whether we will have a zero option (or zero outcome, with no US troops after 2014), but this debate often overlooks that, whatever the military rationale for any troop presence, symbolism becomes important. A larger foreign troop presence can better counter the abandonment narrative, though it would be wise to concentrate those troops that remain in few basing facilities to minimize their force protection requirements. A more urgent question is the pace of any drawdown. A straight-line or accelerated withdrawal to 2014 could prematurely undermine the still vital US training mission of the ANSF. A better strategy would be to keep as many troops as possible in Afghanistan for as long as possible. Not only will this provide the ANSF with better training and the US forces with more combat opportunities, but it would better support the enormous task of moving large volumes of US and NATO defense items out of the country as well as the troops.

Beyond 2014, the United States could best achieve its core counterterrorism objective of preventing the return of al Qaeda or other transnational terrorists to Afghanistan by being able to continue drone strikes in Afghanistan, perhaps using bases in a neighboring country if a new US–Afghan SOFA proves elusive. Sustaining some Pakistani support for the US-backed Afghan war effort, as well as for the larger war on terror, will also prove critical. The Pakistan–United States relationship is held together by common interests rather than a genuine sense of partnership or shared values. The war in Afghanistan has been a source of tension between them but also helped hold them together. With the US military withdrawal, and the resulting decline in US aid to Islamabad, this source of cooperation will weaken.

In addition to the combat issues, a key test for this new arrangement could be Afghanistan's April 2014 national elections. In its partnership agreements with NATO and the United States, in the July 2012 Tokyo Conference Mutual Accountability Framework, and in other ways, the Afghan government has pledged to make governance and other reforms in return for continued foreign security and economic support. In particular, Afghan authorities have committed to conduct free and fair elections, under international supervision and with independent election commissioners, in which none of the candidates or parties would receive special administrative resources or other inappropriate advantages to tilt what should be a level playing field. If the Afghan political institutions

43 James F. Dobbins, "Assessing the Transition in Afghanistan," *Testimony Before the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee*, July 11, 2013, http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Dobbins_Testimony.pdf.

perform as badly as in the 2009 national ballot, if the ANSF fails to provide a safe and secure electoral environment, or if President Karzai decides to renege on his vow not to run for reelection (or cynically orchestrates a close relative or associate as his successor), then international enthusiasm for the entire Afghan project would substantially diminish. But the decreasing Western military presence and interest in Afghanistan is reducing US leverage in this and other areas.

Imbalance in the Taiwan Strait

Dennis V. Hickey

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ABSTRACT: This study outlines present US policy on arms sales to Taiwan. It also examines options an American administration may wish to consider to address the growing military imbalance in the Taiwan Strait. The author argues that some new thinking may be required if Washington, Beijing, and Taipei hope to realize a peaceful resolution of the “Taiwan question.”

Although the United States has long recognized the People’s Republic of China (PRC) as the legitimate government of all China, it maintains a robust military relationship with the Republic of China on Taiwan (ROC or Taiwan). Indeed, in 2011, Taiwan was the largest purchaser of US defense items and services in the world.¹ Despite America’s support, however, the military balance across the Taiwan Strait—in terms of personnel, force structure, arms, and developments in military doctrine—continues to shift in China’s favor. This study outlines the present US policy on arms sales to Taiwan; it also examines several options a US administration may wish to consider to address the growing military imbalance between Taiwan and the PRC. Some new thinking may be required if Washington, Beijing, and Taipei hope to realize a “peaceful resolution” of the Taiwan issue.

US Policy

On 15 December 1978, the United States announced the establishment of full diplomatic relations with the PRC, which became effective 1 January 1979.² To guide “unofficial” relations with Taipei, the United States enacted the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA). The TRA “plus the so-called Six Assurances and the Three Communiqués, form the foundation of our overall approach [to Taiwan’s security].”³ In some respects, these documents appear contradictory. When one adds official US statements, proclamations, and secret assurances to the mix, American policy appears more confusing. This confusion has contributed to quarrels over policy—particularly arms transfers. The TRA commits the United States to sell Taiwan the weapons and defense services necessary to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability. However, in the 1982 US-China Joint Communiqué, Washington promised to reduce its sales of arms to Taiwan gradually, leading to a final resolution. The TRA also mandates that the President *and* the Congress shall determine the nature and quantity of arms transfers; however, members of

Dennis V. Hickey is Distinguished Professor and Director of the Graduate Program in Global Studies in the Department of Political Science at Missouri State University. He is the author of numerous books, scholarly journal articles, and editorials about Taiwan and the Chinese mainland.

1 William Lowther, “Taiwan Still a Top Buyer of US Arms,” *Taipei Times*, December 22, 2011, <http://www.Taipeitimes.com>.

2 To achieve normalization, Washington acquiesced to Beijing’s three long-standing demands: (1) termination of formal diplomatic relations with the ROC, (2) abrogation of the 1954 US-ROC Mutual Defense Treaty, and (3) removal of all US troops from Taiwan.

3 Kurt M. Campbell, Assistant Secretary of the US Department of State’s Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Testimony before the US House Foreign Affairs Committee in *Why Taiwan Matters*, Part II, October 4, 2011, <http://www.foreignaffairs.house.gov/>.

Congress often complain they have not been consulted.⁴ Meanwhile, the “Six Assurances,” a series of commitments made by President Ronald Reagan, appear to abrogate the 1982 US-China Joint Communiqué. However, some experts charge that recent US administrations have violated the pledge not “to hold prior consultations with the PRC regarding arms sales to Taiwan.”⁵ For example, on 16 July 2008, Admiral Timothy Keating, then PACOM Commander, reportedly confirmed that he had engaged in “discussions with PRC officials about their objections” to arms sales.⁶ Since that time, other high-ranking US officials have made similar statements when discussing which weapons might be sold to Taiwan.⁷

The TRA does not obligate Taiwan to allocate a specific amount of the resources for its own defense. Taiwan’s military budget as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has dropped from 3.8 percent in 1994 to 2.1 percent in 2013, and from 24.3 percent of total government spending to 16.2 percent in the same period.⁸ A Congressional study observed that the influence of Taiwan’s domestic politics over defense decisions was “undoubtedly unforeseen at the time of the TRA’s enactment [and] raises potentially consequential questions for Congress.”⁹ As one exasperated US official complained, “we cannot help defend you, if you cannot defend yourself.”¹⁰

Perhaps most contentious is the accusation that America has “abandoned” Taiwan. A former US Department of State official has charged that the United States has “cut Taiwan loose.”¹¹ Others quarrel with such claims. One study contends that “the Obama administration has been a solid friend of Taiwan in support of this policy, including selling unprecedentedly (sic) large packages of arms sales.¹² Moreover, Hillary Clinton, then US Secretary of State, boasted that “we’ve strengthened our unofficial relationship with Taiwan.”¹³

Naturally, PRC analysts share these assessments. They charge that “US arms sales to Taiwan during Obama’s eight years in office (2009-2017) will account for one-third of total arms sales to Taiwan since China and the United States established diplomatic relations in 1979. Obama

4 Shirley A. Kan, *Taiwan: Major US Arms Sales Since 1990* (Washington DC: Congressional Research Service, July 3, 2013), 43.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

7 For more information, see William Lowther, “F-16 Sale Subject to PRC Sensitivities: Gates,” *Taipei Times*, June 4, 2011, <http://www.taipetimes.com/News/front/archives/2011/06/04/2003504919>; William Lowther, “Panetta’s Praise of PRC Raises Concern,” *Taipei Times*, October 27, 2011, www.taipetimes.com.

8 Shirley A. Kan, *Taiwan: Major US Arms Sales Since 1990* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, July 23, 2013), 33-34.

9 Kerry Dumbaugh, *Taiwan’s Political Status: Historical Background and Ongoing Implications*, (Washington DC: Congressional Research Service, June 4, 2009), 4.

10 Kan, *Taiwan: Major US Arms Sales Since 1990*, 28.

11 See testimony of John Tkacik, Senior Fellow and Director of the Future Asia Project, International Assessment and Strategy Center, in *Hearing of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Investigating the Chinese Threat, Part One: Military and Economic Aggression*, in *Federal News Service*, March 28, 2012, in *Lexis/Nexis*.

12 Jacob Stokes and Nina Hachigian, *US-China Relations in an Election Year: Taking the Long View in a Season of Heated Rhetoric* (Washington, DC: Center for American Progress, March 2012), 26.

13 William Lowther, “US Has ‘Strengthened’ Relationship with Taiwan: Clinton,” *Taipei Times*, March 9, 2012, <http://www.taipetimes.com>.

is the only US president to twice approve arms sales to Taiwan.”¹⁴ Yet, ROC military authorities often express concerns about “delays and price increases” for various defense programs, and claim Washington is treating Taipei like a “sucker” and a “fool” by “jacking up” the prices for military hardware and trying to sell “piles of junk.”¹⁵

US Arms Sales and the Military Imbalance

Relations between Taipei and Beijing have improved enormously since Ma Ying-jeou was elected ROC president in 2008; and US military authorities are “encouraged” by recent developments. Admiral Robert F. Willard, Commander of the US Pacific Command, said that, “as they (PRC and ROC) improve their relationship economically and diplomatically, we think it should lower the likelihood of coercion or conflict taking place.”¹⁶ He cautioned, however, that “there is very impressive combat power across the Strait on mainland China . . . they continue to improve their capabilities, so in terms of a balance of power, it’s generally one-sided.”¹⁷ The US Department of Defense’s 2013 report on China’s military confirms that “dealing with a potential contingency in the Taiwan Strait remains the People’s Liberation Army’s (PLA) primary mission despite decreasing tensions there.”¹⁸ It warns that “preparation for a Taiwan conflict with the possibility of US intervention has largely dominated China’s military modernization program.”¹⁹

Indeed, the PLA budget has been trending upward for decades. In 2012, the US Department of Defense estimated that China’s military budget could have been as high as \$180 billion in 2011—double the stated budget (the declared budget is \$116.2 billion for 2013).²⁰ In 2010, Robert Gates, then US Secretary of Defense, characterized the military build-up directly opposite Taiwan as an “extraordinary” deployment.²¹ It represents the highest concentration of missiles anywhere on earth, and holds the potential to “destroy key leadership facilities, military bases and communication and transportation nodes with *minimal advance warning* [emphasis added].”²² The PLA is also boosting its military prowess by developing new anti-ship ballistic missiles, torpedo and mine systems, and combat aircraft. Such considerations led one study to warn that “the PLA’s air and conventional missile capabilities could now endanger US military forces and bases in the region should Washington decide to intercede on Taiwan’s behalf.”²³

14 Xiao An, “US’ Arms Sales to Taiwan Impede Sino-US Relationship,” *China.org.cn*, January 17, 2013, http://www.china.org.cn/opinion/2013-01/17/content_27716480.htm

15 Kan, *Taiwan: Major US Arms Sales Since 1990*, 18; “US Assessing Sale of Fighters, Subs to Taiwan,” *China Post*, February 1, 2010, <http://www.chinapost.com.tw/taiwan/national/national-news/2010/02/01/243094/US-assessing.htm>.

16 “US Commander Predicts Stable Cross-Strait Relations,” *China Post*, March 4, 2012, <http://www.chinapost.com.tw/taiwan/national/national-news/2012/03/04/333538/US-commander.htm>.

17 *Ibid.*

18 Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People’s Republic of China* (Washington, DC: US Department of Defense, May 2013), p.4.

19 *Ibid.*, 57-58.

20 Kan, *Taiwan: Major US Arms Sales Since 1990*, 33.

21 *Ibid.*, 30.

22 *Ibid.*

23 US-China Economic and Security Review Commission, *2010 Report to Congress* (Washington, DC: US GPO, November 2010), http://www.uscc.gov/annual_report/2010/annual_report_full_10.pdf.

Nonetheless, Taiwan's defense budgets have remained flat. The shift to an all-volunteer force will mean that a large share of military resources must be allocated to cover personnel costs. Military equipment is growing old and obsolete. Particularly worrisome is the state of the ROC Air Force. Its inventory includes 56 Mirage 2000, 145 F-16 A/B, 126 IDFs, and 60 F-5E/F fighters. According to a Defense Intelligence Agency study, many of these warplanes "are incapable of operating effectively."²⁴ Another report estimates that "by 2020, Taiwan's fighters would drop in number by 70% without new F-16s, and by 50% with 66 new F-16s."²⁵ It is clear that Taiwan's defense capability relative to that of the PRC has not been maintained.

There is a range of options available to a US administration that wishes to address the growing military imbalance. This study examines the four most obvious options and their consequences: (1) reduce or terminate arms sales and security ties with Taiwan, (2) maintain the present policy of boosting Taiwan's defensive capabilities, (3) increase those capabilities with new arms transfers, and (4) broker a deal with the PRC to reduce military deployments in the Taiwan Strait.

Option 1: Reduce or Terminate Security Ties

Some are calling on Washington to terminate security support for Taiwan. Admiral Bill Owens (ret.), former Vice-Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, has criticized arms sales to Taiwan as "not in our best interest" and suggested that "a thoughtful review of this outdated legislation [the TRA] is warranted."²⁶ Ambassador Chas Freeman (ret.) has argued that the TRA compels US decisionmakers to "confront the necessity to choose between the self-imposed shackles of longstanding policy and the imperatives of our long-term strategic interests."²⁷ Others have suggested "the US should consider backing away from its commitments to Taiwan."²⁸

Admittedly, terminating arms sales and reducing America's security commitment to Taiwan would benefit US interests in some ways. The change in policy "would remove the most obvious and contentious flash point between the US and China and smooth the way for better relations between them in the decades to come."²⁹ The likelihood for US conflict with China would decrease, while possibly increasing the prospects for cooperation in numerous fields—ranging from global warming to nuclear proliferation. Editorials in the PRC press even laud the "increasing number of far sighted Americans calling for repeal of the TRA."³⁰ This option would also reduce the likelihood that sensitive US military technologies or weapons systems might fall into the hands of the PRC.

24 See Dean Cheng, "Getting Serious About Taiwan's Air Power Needs," *Heritage Foundation Backgrounder*, Number 2616, October 14, 2011, 5

25 Kan, *Taiwan: Major US Arms Sales Since 1990*, 23.

26 Bill Owens, "America Must Start Treating China as A Friend," *Financial Times*, November 17, 2009, <http://www.ft.com>.

27 Chas W. Freeman, Jr., *Beijing, Washington, and the Shifting Balance of Prestige* (Newport, RI: China Maritime Studies Institute, May 10, 2011).

28 Charles Glaser, "Will China's Rise Lead to War? Why Realism Does Not Mean Pessimism," *Foreign Affairs*, March/April, 2011, 87.

29 *Ibid.*

30 Peng Guangqian, "US should abolish 'Taiwan Relations Act,'" *People's Daily* (Overseas Edition), September 26, 2011, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90780/7605019.html>.

As some Pentagon officials admit, military exchanges with Taiwan are riskier “in an environment of improving Taiwan-PRC ties.”³¹

However, this option might jeopardize America’s credibility with important allies—particularly Japan or South Korea. It could also raise questions about America’s commitment to democracy in other countries or regions of the world. Ironically, the move could raise questions about America’s trustworthiness. As President Ronald Reagan explained in 1984, “I myself have said to some representatives of the PRC that we would think that they would have more confidence in us if they knew that we didn’t discard one friend in order to make another. That should indicate to them that we’d be a good friend to them too.”³²

Any move to downgrade military links with Taiwan would surely generate domestic political fallout. Even PRC authorities acknowledge the Obama administration is under pressure to sell arms to Taiwan and cannot easily cut off the island.³³ Coming at a time when members of both major political parties are calling for Washington to enhance ties with Taipei, and when public opinion polls show many Americans still hold negative views of the PRC, an administration would have to be prepared for criticism. Conceivably, terminating America’s security support for Taiwan could cause some independence activists in Taiwan to take more aggressive steps to achieve their goal. In other words, the problem with this option is that there could be many unintended consequences.

Option 2: Maintain the Present Policy

The Obama administration has no plans to cut defense ties with Taiwan. US officials have reiterated this position repeatedly. In June 2013, President Obama reiterated his commitment “to Taiwan under the TRA including providing defensive weapons.”³⁴ Officials acknowledge a “fighter gap” between Taiwan and the PRC, and the “growing military threat to Taiwan.”³⁵ Thus far, Obama has approved two arms sales packages, and his “administration has sold over \$12 billion in arms to Taiwan,” which compares favorably to any period in US-Taiwan relations since the TRA.³⁶ He will not rule out future sales. Sales in 2010 included much-needed PAC-3 “Patriot” missiles for Taiwan’s air defenses, while the most notable portion of the 2011 package was its provision for an upgrade for Taiwan’s F-16 A/B fighter fleet. US officials explain the upgrade package is extensive and will “provide improved combat capability, survivability, and reliability to Taiwan’s 145 F-16 A/B

31 Kerry Dumbaugh, *Taiwan-US Relations: Recent Developments and Their Policy Implications*, (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, January 7, 2009), 18.

32 Dennis Van Vranken Hickey, “America’s Two Point Policy and the Future of Taiwan,” *Asian Survey*, 28, no. 8 (August, 1988): 895.

33 Andrew Jacobs, “Arms Sale Draws Angry, But Familiar, Reaction,” *The New York Times*, September 22, 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com>

34 Kelyen Huang and Jamie Wang, “Defense Ministry Urges US to Continue Arms Sales to Taiwan,” *Focus Taiwan*, June 9, 2013, <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/aall/201306090005.aspx>; “Xi Urges US to Cease Taiwan Arms Sales,” *Taipei Times*, June 10, 2013, <http://www.taipetimes.com/News/front/archives/2013/06/10/2003564416>.

35 Viola Gienger, “Taiwan Weighed for US Jet Sale at Risk of Riling China,” *Bloomberg*, April 27, 2012, <http://www.bloomberg.com>

36 US Department of State, *Background Briefing: Notification to Congress on the Sale of Arms to Taiwan, Special Briefing via Teleconference* (Washington, DC: September 21, 2011) <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2011/09/172936.htm>.

aircraft” and point out the deal also includes “an extension of the F-16 pilot training program.”³⁷

Critics suspect that the F-16 upgrade decision was adopted to limit the political fallout from China at a time when the United States seeks Beijing’s cooperation on a range of international issues. In fact, Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), then Chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, claimed the agreement is “woefully inadequate” and that it “has Beijing’s fingerprints all over it.”³⁸ Representative David Rivera, (R-FL), charged that the administration was “kowtowing” to China, and “has clearly been pressured by the Chinese to control Taiwan and Taiwan policy in every way possible.”³⁹ Senator John Cornyn (R-TX) said the upgrade decision reflected the administration’s “capitulation to Communist China.”⁴⁰ Legislation has been introduced in Congress to compel the administration to sell additional arms—including F-16 C/D fighters—to Taiwan. Such measures are included in both the Taiwan Policy Act of 2013 and the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014.

On the other hand, officials claim that the upgrade decision was “a smart defense policy—it makes a real and immediate contribution to Taiwan’s security.”⁴¹ The deal was described as a low-cost alternative for what is “essentially, the same quality” warplane as the F-16 C/D and notes that “we’re obviously prepared to consider further sales in the future.”⁴² It is also noteworthy that reaction to the F-16 upgrade was so low-key in Beijing (and Taipei) that Lin Chong-pin, a leading authority on cross-strait relations, speculated that “the whole thing suggested that Washington, Beijing and Taipei in a way all have consulted with each other.”⁴³ While that is unclear, what is clear is that, under the current policy, obsolete warplanes will not be replaced, while F-16s will be pulled out of service for extensive periods of time to be upgraded.

Option 3: Increase Military Support

This option is attractive to those who believe the Obama administration’s provisions for Taiwan’s security cannot meet the island’s defense needs. Representative Ros-Lehtinen and others are pushing the Taiwan Policy Act of 2013 (TPA) in an effort to strengthen American military support for Taiwan. If the TPA (or similar legislation) is passed and signed into law, it would almost provide Taiwan with *carte blanche* for procurement of US arms. The TPA’s provisions include the sale of F-16 C/D warplanes (in addition to the upgrade of the F-16 A/B fighters), modern surface-to air-missiles, vertical and short take-off and landing

37 Kurt M. Campbell, Assistant Secretary of the US Department of State’s Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Testimony Before the US House Foreign Affairs Committee in *Why Taiwan Matters*, Part II, October 4, 2011, <http://www.state.gov/p/eap/ris/rm/2011/10/174980.htm>.

38 William Lowther, “Taiwan to Receive US Arms Package,” *Taipei Times*, September 23, 2011, www.taipeitimes.com.

39 Shaun Tandon, “US Lawmakers Press for Jets to Taiwan,” *Google News*, June 16, 2011, <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5gmEFoHVmRM005bF9KevBUH1VhQ?doclid=CNG.e0a7053e6c093f750ec8db0f1cc01cc0.311>.

40 Stokes and Hachigian, *US-China Relations in an Election Year*, 26.

41 William Wan and Keith B Richburg, “Administration Defends Arms Package for Taiwan,” *The Washington Post*, September 20, 2011, in Lexis/Nexis.

42 *Ibid.*

43 Shih Hsiu-chuan, “Analysis: F-16 Decision Shows ‘Balanced Strategy,’ Analysts Say,” *Taipei Times*, October 9, 2011, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2011/10/09/2003515301>.

(V/STOL) combat aircraft, “cost effective” submarines, three guided missile frigates, mines, anti-ship cruise missiles, global positioning system (GPS)-guided short-range rockets, unmanned air vehicles, radar, and jamming equipment.

If the United States opted to provide Taiwan with all the weapons the ROC desires, one of America’s oldest friends might be assured of a “sufficient self-defense capability.” This could enable Taipei to negotiate with Beijing from a position of strength, not weakness. The additional military muscle would also give any potential adversary, including the PRC, cause to calculate whether an attack on Taiwan is worth the risks—deterrence would be enhanced. Should deterrence fail, the new arms would provide Taiwan with a boost during any military campaign. Moreover, American lawmakers and defense contractors have speculated that substantial economic benefits would accrue to the United States in the event of a massive arms sale. Finally, proponents of massive arms transfers assert that, while Beijing might complain or temporarily suspend military-to-military contacts with Washington, “past behavior indicates that China is unlikely to challenge any fundamental US interests in response to any future releases of significant military articles or services to Taiwan.”⁴⁴ “The Perryman Group estimates that the Lockheed Martin Taiwan F-16 program would generate some \$8.7 billion in output (gross product) and more than 87,651 person-years of employment in the US.”⁴⁵

To be sure, a sharp escalation in arms sales could advance US interests in some ways. However, any US administration must be prepared for a negative reaction from the PRC. This response could range from a suspension in US-PRC military-to-military contacts to a break in diplomatic relations. Beijing might even sell arms to states unfriendly to American interests. After the US sold 150 F-16 A/B fighters to Taiwan in 1992, for instance, “China transferred M-11 missiles to Pakistan and reached a formal agreement with Iran to cooperate on nuclear energy, thus breaking its February 1, 1992 promise to abide by the terms of the MCTR.”⁴⁶

In addition, Taiwan may not have the resources to buy the weapons. Taipei apparently finds it difficult to purchase the arms sales offered in 2010 and 2011. Adding 66 new F-16 C/D fighters to the tab would not make it any easier to pay the bill.⁴⁷ Moreover, where will the submarines and U/STOL aircraft come from? The United States stopped manufacturing diesel submarines decades ago, and it could be a decade before F-35-B Joint Strike Fighters are available for export. Finally, US

44 US-Taiwan Business Council and Project 2049 Institute, *Chinese Reactions to Taiwan Arms Sales*, (Arlington, VA: Project 2049 Institute, March 2012), http://project2049.net/documents/2012_chinese_reactions_to_taiwan_arms_sales.pdf.

45 Perryman Group, *An Assessment of the Potential Impact of the Lockheed Martin Taiwan F-16 Program on Business Activity in Affected States and Congressional Districts* (Waco, TX : Perryman Group, May 2011), http://www.us-taiwan.org/reports/2011_may_perryman_group_taiwan_f16_economic_impact_report.pdf.

46 Robert S. Ross, “The Bush Administration: The Origins of Engagement,” in *Making China Policy: Lessons from the Bush and Clinton Administrations*, eds. Ramon Myers, Michel Oksenberg, and David Shambaugh (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001), 32.

47 J. Michael Cole, “Difficult Choices Faced on F-16 Deals,” *Taipei Times*, May 7, 2012, www.taipetimes.com; J. Michael Cole, “Abandon F-16s, Seek F-35s: Senior Military Officials,” *Taipei Times*, May 8, 2012, www.taipetimes.com; Wendell Minnick, “Taiwan Might Delay F-16 Upgrade,” *Defense News*, May 5, 2012, <http://www.defensenews.com/article/20120505/DEFREG03/305050002/Taiwan-Might-Delay-F-16-Upgrade>.

officials must consider domestic politics in China. As Gary Locke, US Ambassador to China, observed, the political situation in the PRC is “very, very delicate.”⁴⁸ Decisionmakers must consider whether a spike in arms sales might create tremors in Chinese politics, perhaps weakening the position of the present leaders in Beijing.

Option 4: Negotiation, Compromise, and Arms Control

If a US administration opted to pursue this option, it could use arms sales as bargaining chips.⁴⁹ The administration might explore the possibility of reaching an agreement similar to that proposed by then-President Jiang Zemin when visiting with President Bush in Crawford, Texas, in 2002. Namely, Washington would agree not to sell new fighters, submarines, and other advanced arms to Taiwan in exchange for the removal of the missiles (and their infrastructure) that China has deployed directly opposite Taiwan. According to media reports, Chang Wanquan, PRC Defense Minister, raised a similar proposal when meeting with Chuck Hagel, US Secretary of Defense, on 19 August 2013.⁵⁰

This initiative may yield numerous dividends. First, it is likely Beijing would consider this proposal because removal of the missiles would generate goodwill among the Taiwanese, and the weapons could no longer be cited by local politicians as evidence of Beijing’s hostility. Public opinion polls reveal that a large percentage of Taiwanese believe Beijing is hostile to both the ROC government and the island’s population.⁵¹ President Ma has stated “the mainland should remove or actually dismantle all the missiles that are targeted against Taiwan, otherwise we won’t be interested in making further steps to negotiate a peace agreement with them.”⁵²

Second, it is clear the PRC will consider removing the missiles as part of a deal with the United States. As noted, President Jiang first raised the idea with President Bush. According to Chinese media accounts, the PLA has been debating the question of whether to withdraw the missiles opposite Taiwan for years. On 22 September 2010, Premier Wen Jiabao conceded that the missiles would “eventually” be removed. Prominent PRC political analysts with links to Beijing have responded favorably to such a proposal.⁵³

Third, Washington has telegraphed its willingness to reduce arms sales if Beijing removes its missiles. For example, in 2004, one high-ranking US official said that if the PLA’s military “posture” opposite Taiwan appears more peaceful, “it follows logically that Taiwan’s defense

48 Josh Rogin, “US Ambassador: Political Situation in China ‘Very Very Delicate,’” *Foreign Policy*, January 18, 2012, http://thecable.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/01/18/us_ambassador_political_situation_in_china_very_very_delicate.

49 The author first raised this idea in an editorial. See Dennis V. Hickey, “How a Few F-16s Can Buy Peace in the Taiwan Strait,” *Los Angeles Times*, November 11, 2009, A23.

50 “Beijing Should Renounce Use of Force to End US Arms Sales to Taiwan,” *Want China Times*, August 27, 2013, <http://www.wantchinatimes.com/news-subclass-cnt.aspx?cid=1701&MainCatID=17&cid=20130827000004>

51 Mainland Affairs Council, Republic of China, *Summarized Results of the Public Opinion Survey on “the Public’s View of Current Cross-Strait Relations, (March 30 to April 2, 2012)*, <http://www.mac.gov.tw/public/Data/2579302271.pdf>.

52 “No Peace Unless China Removes Missiles: Ma,” *China Post*, April 7, 2010, <http://www.chinapost.com.tw>.

53 Xu Shiquan, “US Arms Sales to Taiwan: Better to Assess the Costs and Recalculate,” *China-US Focus*, September 15, 2011, <http://www.chinafocus.com/print/?id+10136>

requirements will change.”⁵⁴ Indeed, Mark Stokes, a former Pentagon official has observed that, “it just makes sense: if the military threat was reduced, of course it would have an effect on arms sales.”⁵⁵

Fourth, Taiwan has indicated that it might not have an interest in purchasing so many US arms if the PRC missiles are removed. After all, they claim that arms purchases are linked directly to the threat posed by the mainland. Removing the missiles could be considered a “confidence building measure” because it promotes stability and “would increase warning time and thus build confidence.”⁵⁶

If a US administration chose to negotiate a deal to reduce arms deployments in the Taiwan Strait, it would have prepare the stage. The American armaments industry would oppose such an initiative. Arms sales to Taiwan are viewed by some as an economic stimulus plan, and lawmakers unabashedly describe the weapons transfers in terms of jobs generated for American workers. In short, the arms merchants and their allies will employ a full court press to derail any movement toward arms control in the Taiwan Strait.

Some politicians, academics, and media pundits will condemn any discussions between the United States and the PRC about arms sales to Taiwan, a reduction in arms sales, or any concrete moves toward arms control. The fact the United States has repeatedly held such discussions with China is ignored, and there is no mention of the pledge in the 17 August 1982 US-China Joint Communiqué to reduce arms sales. Rather, the administration will be told “it can’t be done.” The fact that a fourth US-China Communiqué might be drafted, the TRA amended, or yet another “assurance” provided, is likewise ignored.

Some analysts claim any agreement is useless because the missiles will not be destroyed. After all, the missiles could be returned to the coast, or the PLA could attack Taiwan with longer range missiles. Some high-ranking PLA military brass agree on this point. As Major General Luo Yuan (PLA-ret.) and other retired high-ranking Chinese military officers explained, “they could not understand why people in Taiwan care so much about the withdrawal of missiles from China’s coastal areas as Chinese missiles are capable of hitting Taiwan even if launched from Xinjiang in China’s northwest.”⁵⁷

Another issue associated with removal of missiles from China’s coastline is where will the missiles will be redeployed. During conversations with the author, PRC academics and officials repeatedly raised this issue. As one analyst observed, no matter where the Chinese missile brigades and their infrastructure are sent—closer to South Korea, Japan,

54 Kan, *Taiwan: Major US Arms Sales Since 1990*, 29-30.

55 “Missile Move Could Cut Arms Sales,” *Taipei Times*, September 30, 2010, www.taipetimes.com.

56 Mark A. Stokes and Ian Easton, *Evolving Aerospace Trends in the Asia Pacific Region: Implications for Stability in the Taiwan Strait and Beyond* (Arlington, VA: Project 2049 Institute, May 27, 2010), 36, http://www.project2049.net/documents/aerospace_trends_asia_pacific_region_stokes_easton.pdf.

57 For more information, please see Liu Ping, “Removal of Missiles Linked to Taiwan’s Military Purchases: Chinese General,” *Want China Times*, April 9, 2011, <http://www.wantchinatimes.com/news-subclass-cnt.aspx?id=20110409000073&cid=1101>.

India, or Russia—“you are going to have some extremely antagonized neighbors.”⁵⁸

Conclusions

In recent years, the military balance across the Taiwan Strait has shifted steadily in Beijing’s favor. In 2011, Taiwan’s Ministry of National Defense acknowledged that the PLA now possesses the capability to blockade the Taiwan Strait or conquer the ROC’s offshore islands. Pro-Beijing publications in Hong Kong boast that “the PLA has long had absolute strength to seize the command of the air over the Taiwan Straits and is also strong enough to blockade the Taiwan Strait with its shore-based long-range anti-ship and ground-to-air missiles.”⁵⁹

Unfortunately, the growing military imbalance across the Taiwan Strait presents decisionmakers with a situation in which it is difficult to arrive at a balanced policy. According to the 2010 National Security Strategy, the United States, “will continue to pursue a positive, constructive and comprehensive relationship with China. . . . [and it] will encourage continued reduction in tension between the PRC and Taiwan.”⁶⁰ The Obama administration also stated that “in the period ahead, we seek to encourage more dialogue and exchanges between the two sides, *as well as reduced military tensions and deployments*, and we have and will continue to meet our responsibilities under the TRA [emphasis added].⁶¹

Since American policy regarding Taiwan’s security is based upon a network of laws, joint communiqués, assurances, statements, and secret promises, decisionmakers must take care to ensure this network does not become a system of “self-imposed shackles.”

Sponsoring legislation to amend or revoke the TRA is not the answer to the predicament confronting Washington. The exercise of this option would undermine American credibility and possibly create tension within the US Congress. Although the prospects for conflict appear dim, cutting US military support for Taiwan “could create opportunities and incentives for Beijing’s political and military leadership to assume greater risk in cross-strait relations.”⁶² It might also prompt Taipei to accelerate development of its own anti-ship missiles, surface-to-air, air-to-air, and ballistic missiles. Even the long-dormant program to develop weapons of mass destruction might be revived.

58 “Missile Move Could Cut Arms Sales,” *Taipei Times*, September 30, 2010, <http://www.taipetimes.com>.

59 Lu Li, “Arms Sales to Taiwan Bring Nothing But Harm,” *Ta Kung Pao* (Hong Kong), September 27, 2011 in “Arms Sales to Taiwan to Harm Sino-US Ties—Hong Kong Article,” in *BBC Monitoring Asia-Pacific*, October 3, 2011, in *Lexis/Nexis*.

60 The White House, *National Security Strategy of the United States* (Washington, DC: US GPO, May 2010.), 43, http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/national_security_strategy.pdf.

61 Kurt M. Campbell, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of East Asian Affairs, *Asia Overview: Protecting American Interests in China and Asia, Testimony Before The House Committee on Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific* (Washington DC: March 31, 2011), <http://www.state.gov/p/eap/rls/rm/2011/03/159450.htm>.

62 Mark A. Stokes and Ian Easton, *Evolving Aerospace Trends in the Asia Pacific Region: Implications for Stability in the Taiwan Strait and Beyond* (Arlington, VA: Project 2049 Institute, May 27, 2010), 25, http://www.project2049.net/documents/aerospace_trends_asia_pacific_region_stokes_easton.pdf.

Similarly, providing Taiwan with *carte blanche* for procurement of US weaponry is risky. Many of those supporting this option view arms sales as an economic stimulus plan. One newspaper headline even trumpeted, “Selling F-16s to Taiwan Equals Jobs.”⁶³ The military imbalance in the Taiwan Strait is also employed as a means to launch partisan political attacks.

Selling scores of expensive military hardware to Taiwan—including submarines, F-16 C/D fighters, F-35-B Joint Strike Fighters, and a wide array of missiles—would solve little. As noted, the island is having difficulties purchasing the equipment offered. Moreover, it is not clear whether Taipei really wants these weapons.⁶⁴ This option would not encourage cross-strait dialogue and exchanges or reduce military tensions and deployments—declared objectives of US foreign policy. Rather, it would likely do the opposite.

For the reasons above, the United States should pursue *both* Option 2 and Option 4. The present policy (Option 2) enables Taipei to bolster its air defenses with upgraded F-16 A/B fighters, PAC-3 “Patriot” missiles and other arms. It also sends a powerful message to Beijing without being too provocative while retaining the option for future arms sales. However, Option 2 does not go far enough toward reducing the military imbalance or promoting reconciliation. Washington should immediately seek to negotiate a reduction in military deployments with Beijing (and Taipei). It should agree not to sell new fighters, submarines, or other advanced arms to Taiwan in exchange for the removal of the missiles (and their infrastructure) that China has deployed directly opposite Taiwan. The redeployment would increase warning time and help build confidence. It might even be considered as the first step toward a global ban on short-range ballistic missiles (SRBMs) and intermediate-range ballistic missiles (IRBMs).

In short, Option 4 helps reduce the chances for conflict and increases the prospects for the development of peaceful relations between Taiwan and the PRC. It might even help lay the groundwork for other confidence building measures. To be sure, it would require some new thinking—particularly among some US bureaucrats and those in the arms industry. And it would also require new thinking in China—especially among officers in the PLA. Such an initiative, however, could yield handsome dividends and is worth the effort.

63 “Senators: Selling F-16s to Taiwan Equals Jobs,” *The Wall Street Journal*, September 12, 2011, <http://blogs.wsj.com/washwire>.

64 Ralph Jennings, “Taiwan Offers Mixed Response to US Rejection of F-6 Fighter Sale,” *Christian Science Monitor*, September 22, 2011, in *Lexis/Nexis*

Regionally Aligned Forces: Business *Not* as Usual

Kimberly Field, James Learmont, and Jason Charland

ABSTRACT: Few understand the rationale or components of the Regionally Aligned Forces (RAF) concept. This article describes the concept and addresses its chief criticisms, namely, how it will account for diverse ground force requirements, how it relates to the Army's force structure, and its affordability.

The term Regionally Aligned Forces (RAF) is widely familiar today; however, few understand the basic elements of the concept, or the goals the Chief of Staff of the Army (CSA), General Raymond T. Odierno, wants to achieve with it. Officers in HQDA have been on the road communicating the RAF concept to as broad an audience as possible. But the concept has drawn its share of skeptics. The most common questions fall into three broad categories: 1) Regional alignment for what? What are the ground force requirements for today? What is the real demand? 2) Isn't this just a way for the Army to justify force structure? Is the Army really doing anything differently? 3) Is the RAF even affordable? Won't it "collapse under its own weight" due to our extraordinary fiscal challenges? This article addresses each of these broad questions and presents the basic concept and rationale for RAF.

Why RAF?

At its core, RAF is the CSA's initiative for aligning Army capabilities to an expanded set of requirements for the Joint Force—post-2014. As General Odierno stated at the Association of United States Army Eisenhower Dinner in October 2012, we will leverage the Army's mission command capability by "organizing our missions around highly trained squads and platoons—the foundation for our company, battalion, and brigade combat teams—for specific mission sets and regional conditions." This "*regional alignment of forces*" will not only offer combatant commanders access to the full range of capabilities resident in the Army today, it will "provide maximum flexibility and agility to national security decision-makers."¹

RAF is a critical first step in operationalizing the concept of "Strategic Landpower," which is the combination of land, human, and cyber activities that make decisive outcomes more likely, and increases

1 General Raymond T. Odierno, "Regionally Aligned forces: A New Model for Building Partnerships," *Army Live*, March 22, 2012, <http://armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2012/03/aligned-forces/>; General Raymond T. Odierno, *CSA's Strategic Intent*, February 5, 2013, <http://www.army.mil/article/95729/>

options for preventing and containing conflict.² RAF is integral to the Army vision of being “Globally Responsive and Regionally Engaged” and it is fundamental to our ability to “Prevent, Shape and Win” across the globe. It is essential to the US defense strategy and represents the Army’s commitment to provide culturally attuned, scalable, mission-prepared capabilities in a changing strategic environment characterized by combinations of nontraditional and traditional threats.

Army Regionally Aligned Forces are defined as 1) those units *assigned* to or *allocated* to combatant commands, and 2) those service-retained capabilities *aligned* with combatant commands and prepared by the Army for regional missions. They are drawn from the Total Force, which includes the Active Army, the Army National Guard, and the Army Reserve. They consist of organizations and capabilities that are: forward stationed; operating in a combatant command area of responsibility; supporting (or ready to support) combatant commands through reach-back capabilities from outside the area of responsibility. They conduct operational missions, bilateral and multilateral military exercises, and theater security cooperation activities. RAF specifically addresses those requirements that are enduring in nature for the combatant commander, from “set-the-theater” to the most-likely contingencies. Accomplishing such regional missions requires an understanding of the cultures, geography, languages, and militaries of the countries where RAF are most likely to be employed, as well as expertise in how to impart military knowledge and skills to others. Hence, much of the Army is and remains aligned by virtue of assignment or allocation to a combatant commander.

In contrast, Global Response Forces (GRFs) are the designated Joint GRF that maintains a 24/7 global mission to deploy anywhere in the world within 18 hours, as well as the other service retained units that are required to stay intact and at a high states of readiness. The Army will also provide a strategic forcible-entry package, as well as some of the other capabilities that are low density but required for the initial weeks of a limited or no-notice high intensity contingency operation.³

The RAF concept provides numerous benefits. Strategically, it offers the United States both influence in and access to host nations through enhanced trust and understanding facilitated by enduring engagements. Operationally, it enables better integration between conventional Army forces and special operating forces, as well as between the Army and interagency partners, specifically the Department of State and Country Teams.

In a sense, RAF means “forces—military and nonmilitary—with not only the ability to destroy but also the decisive ability to understand the population within the context of the operational environment and then take meaningful action to influence human behavior toward achieving

2 Additionally, the Army’s fiscal year 2013 Strategic Planning Guidance says the future force will provide regionally aligned, mission tailored forces scalable in size from squad to corps. Its personnel are to be empowered by technology and training to execute operations under the concept of mission command, underpinned by trust, flexibility, and proficiency. The operating force will, thus, comprise forces both regionally aligned in support of combatant command and those maintaining a global orientation for specific contingency missions. Headquarters, Department of the Army, *Army Strategic Planning Guidance*, 2013, 6.

3 Brigadier General Charles Flynn and Major Joshua Richardson, “Joint Operational Access and the Global Response Force, Redefining Readiness,” *Military Review*, July-August 2013.

the desired outcome.²⁴ At the tactical level, RAF drives cultural and regional expertise and language awareness training giving US forces an improved understanding of the operational environment. As a result, combatant commands receive units better prepared to work in specific theaters and better able to gain situational understanding when deployed anywhere, even to a region to which they are not aligned. It also fosters an expeditionary mindset for an Army that is more CONUS-based than ever, while also affording a greater degree of mission predictability and stability.

For nearly a decade, the Army had to respond to combatant command requirements, outside Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom, with personnel from the Total Force who were sometimes minimally prepared. As we reduce our commitment to Afghanistan and United States Central Command (USCENTCOM), regional alignment will improve the Army's ability to generate strategically, operationally, and tactically relevant forces for the geographic combatant commands on a broader basis.

With the recent availability of forces returning from the CENTCOM area of responsibility and the Army's commitment to provide whatever the geographic combatant commands request, the demand for Army forces is both significant and diverse. This demand appears in the increased requirements registered in the FY14-19 Program Objective Memorandum. The activities range from military police assistance in Africa to an increase in State Partnership activities in South America, to preparing the American contribution to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Reaction Force, to returning Pacific Command's aligned forces to its most likely contingency operations.

Currently, America's Army has more than 158,000 soldiers deployed or assigned overseas, with a substantial number engaged in stability operations in Afghanistan or executing missions in Korea, Kosovo, the Sinai, Guantanamo, the Horn of Africa, Honduras, and other locations around the globe. Even after the drawdown in Afghanistan, on any given day the Army will typically have at least 100,000 soldiers forward deployed. Land forces will continue to be the most engaged and employed of the Joint team, and through constant engagement and assessing the effectiveness of activities on the ground among humans, will be well positioned to continue to evolve direct and indirect options for the use of the military instrument for policymakers.

Regional Alignment for What?

The Defense Strategic Guidance of 2012 defined a new strategic direction for the Department of Defense, assigning the Joint Force the mission of addressing myriad complex threats in uncertain operational environments. The Army will not be sized for the types of operations it conducted in the last decade. The defense guidance further directed a rebalance to the Asia-Pacific Theater, while also giving high priority to the Middle East and to other partners and friends around the world. It directed that the Joint Force must be capable of performing 11 primary missions, but left it to the services to determine how:

4 Charles L. Cleveland and Stewart T. Farris, "Toward Strategic Landpower," *Army Magazine*, July 2013, 22.

- Counterterrorism and irregular warfare
- Deter and defeat aggression
- Project power despite anti-access/area denial challenges
- Counter weapons of mass destruction
- Operate effectively in cyberspace
- Operate effectively in space
- Maintain a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent
- Defend the homeland and provide support to civil authorities
- Provide a stabilizing presence
- Conduct stability and counterinsurgency operations
- Conduct humanitarian, disaster relief, and other operations

The defense guidance clearly implied that the “old ways” of conducting these missions were no longer suitable, either operationally or fiscally. Most of us agree the present era is one of persistent conflict and instability. The strategic and operational environments are driving the United States and its allies and friends toward an emphasis on “shaping missions” in unstable regions in addition to preparing for existential threats. We anticipate an expanding range of smaller, shorter, rapidly changing missions. These new requirements are compelling the Joint Force and the Army toward superior agility; expanded expeditionary capabilities; precise lethality; enhanced cultural awareness and people savvy; as well as a better ability to integrate with special operations forces and other agencies. Importantly, the concept of partnering with other countries and building the capacity of others is both inherent and explicit in this new paradigm.

The bottom line is the Army, as part of the joint force and in conjunction with foreign partners, must respond to the requirements of the combatant commanders which are those the defense guidance missions outlined. At the same time, it must ensure it can mass to conduct any high-end combat mission anywhere. Accordingly, the evolution of the RAF concept has been grounded in a number of critical principles driven by the operational and fiscal environment, defense guidance, and as expressed by the CSA:

- The Army, together with the Marines and the United States Special Operations Command, will continue to develop the concept of Strategic Landpower.
- The Army will remain capable of fighting and winning major combat operations.
- While maintaining a modular, brigade-centric structure, the Army will increase its agility through leader development at all levels, and world-class training, to include enhanced Combat Training Center rotations for as many brigades as possible.
- The reduction of forces will be conducted in a way that does not break faith with soldiers and Army civilians and their families and that maintains the most ready force possible to meet Combatant

Commander needs.

- Tough choices will have to be made regarding roles of Active and Reserve components in accordance with defense missions, but the Reserve Component will remain an essential part of the Total Army.
- With the redistribution of United States forces stationed overseas, the Army will be almost entirely based in the continental United States for the first time in many generations.

Embracing these principles will help offset the turbulence of today's strategic environment and underpin the development and execution of Regionally Aligned Forces. Over the past decade, the Army conducted both combat and counterinsurgency operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. We need to retain the knowledge and skills gained in those conflicts, and yet prepare for the broader range of requirements of the future environment under severe fiscal constraints. This is an incredible challenge, yet the current operating environment demands it.

Is the Army Really Doing Anything Differently?

Regional alignment is a fundamentally different orientation for the Army. As the Army further defines the concept of Strategic Landpower, RAF begins to provide for, organize, man, train, and equip operations and activities in the land, human, and cyber "domains." Rather than coming home from Iraq and Afghanistan to focus on training as the Army sees fit, our first priority is to understand the requirements of geographic combatant commands and to prepare forces for those activities. In addition to its decisive action training, an aligned unit is now preparing with an eye to the region to which it is focused. More forces will be assigned, allocated, and service-retained-combatant-commander-aligned than ever before for nonwartime missions: this is unprecedented for the Army. And, significantly, every geographic combatant command will have at least one brigade, as well as a division or corps headquarters with all the capabilities it provides.

Does this justify force structure? Certainly. These requirements, which will be dispersed with potentially degraded readiness over time, are both real and in addition to those associated with major contingency operations. But RAF is most centrally about an Army that is committed to meeting geographic combatant command needs, thereby retaining and refining its relevance in a changing operational environment.

RAF in Execution

Alignment of Service

Retained forces will provide unit training and education focus (predictable preparation), and these units will be the first called on if a combatant commander needs more personnel and capabilities than assigned or allocated forces can provide (predictable sourcing). Habitual alignment (lasting longer than one Army Force Generation [ARFORGEN] cycle) will occur at Echelon above Brigade (corps and division levels) and we are considering all options in the Global Force Management Implementation Guidance for FY15. Full habitual alignment will likely be achieved in FY17. While it is desirable to maintain habitual alignment at brigade combat team level, the realities of current

defense missions makes this aspirational rather than practicable. As a result, service-retained, combatant-command-aligned forces will rotate annually in accordance with the ARFORGEN process. Alignment is occurring under United States Army Forces Command's FY13/14 Mission Alignment Order (MAO). The FY15 MAO will increase global alignments, made possible largely because of the drawdown in Central Command's area of responsibility.

- Corps. For FY13, I Corps is assigned to Pacific Command, III Corps is allocated to Central Command, and the XVIII Airborne Corps is Service retained but aligned to the Global Response Force. These alignments will endure. Formalizing the relationship between corps and ASCCs and tethered brigade combat teams is subject to ongoing work from US Army Training and Doctrine Command.
- Division. Active component division HQs with their separate brigades will be habitually aligned to provide at least one Joint Force-capable HQ to each combatant command. This is perhaps the most important capability the Army is providing to geographic combatant commands, as it can access a full range of capabilities from planning to specific enablers. It is also capable of scaling to provide mission command for missions of various sizes, tailoring as the situations change. These headquarters will lean forward to support combatant commanders, working through the Army Service Component Command, as indicators and warnings of instability emerge. An example of this is the 1st Armored Division (1AD) as briefly described above. It deployed to Jordan as part of the joint exercise Eager Lion, having already coordinated with Central Command to understand the worsening crisis in Syria. From there, a tactical command post remained in Jordan to assist the Jordanians and other partners with a wide range of activities resulting from the mass humanitarian crisis to the north.
- Brigades and enabler units. For FY13, units below division are assigned, allocated, or service retained, aligned in varying strengths to geographic combatant commands, and to the Global Response Force. 2-11D Airborne Brigade Combat Team (ABCT), now allocated to the United States Africa Command, is the first brigade allocated in this manner. Since March 2013, they have conducted approximately 79 missions in more than 30 countries (as of mid-September 2013).

Training

The Army will adopt a revised ARFORGEN cycle based on a 24-month Active Component and 60-month Reserve Component sequence. It will cover Reset, Train, Ready (year 1) and Available (year 2). Training policy is to focus on achieving baseline proficiency of T1 level through decisive action training, involving unit maneuver preparation at the Army Combat Training Centers. Fiscal constraints may limit full implementation of that policy. However, all regionally aligned forces will be trained, prior to deployment, to the readiness level required by the combatant commander. Soldiers' baseline training will be supplemented, where necessary, by combatant commander-specified skill acquisition for their assigned missions. This additional training is subdivided into two components to enhance the US Army's ability to work with partners:

- Mission-specific training will be articulated by Army Service Component Commands (based on combatant command requirements) and organized through FORSCOM. Cultural and regional expertise and language awareness training will be conducted at home station throughout the training year and the year of availability, and be supervised by the division/brigade HQs. Other Army institutional and training capabilities will support as required. The 162nd Infantry Brigade, now focused on Security Force Assistance (SFA) training, will provide much of the support in the short-term. Future training support will come from regionally aligned formation headquarters and retained advise and assist expertise. As an example, Armored Brigade Combat Team “Dagger” 11D soldiers received specialized language, regional expertise, and cultural training at their home station in April 2012. This special cultural and regional orientation was known as “Dagger University.” Using Africa-born forces from within the brigade, African Studies students from nearby Kansas State University, and the 162nd Infantry Brigade from Fort Polk, Louisiana, the week-long training introduced cultural and linguist information specific to the regions of Africa where the soldiers would most likely work. Based on insights provided by the Africa-born 2nd ABCT Soldiers, as well as the Kansas State University African Studies students, Dagger University provided forces the knowledge they needed to accomplish complex mission sets.

Austere Environments

The Army’s deployment experience over the past 12 years focused on units deploying into a priority theater and then falling in on established Forward Operating Bases, some more austere than others, for a set period of time. As we focus on the challenges of operating around the globe in support of the national security strategy, which projects more balanced global support, Army units will develop an expeditionary mindset to ensure they are equipped to train and operate in remote, minimally supported environments. As a result, personnel should be prepared for change to what has been the norm in recent years. The deployment cycle will change from the current 6-12 months with a Brigade formation to a more cyclic tempo of deployments that will be episodic, lasting anywhere from one week to several months, and employing units, teams, and in some cases, individuals. Living conditions and theater-specific equipment and force protection (FP) measures will all be vastly different from the norm. The role of the combatant command and Army Service Component Command in providing basic life support and sustainment will be critical to the success of these deployments.

As an example, recent events in Mali significantly increased Africa Command’s requirements for Army support to the Department of State Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI)-funded training for partner nation security forces. Army Regionally Aligned Forces from 1-18 IN deployed a 22-person multifunctional training team to Oullam, Niger, on 27 May 2013 to help mentor and train a Nigerian Defense Force for deployment to Mali as part of the African-led International Support Mission to Mali missions. Through interagency collaboration with the Chief of Mission and the Department of State, US Army personnel were accompanied by seven PAE contractors to execute the training

mission. As a multinational dimension, French Army trainers provided tailored training on certain military capabilities; specifically artillery systems. Both the scale (22 people) and the duration (about 10 weeks) of the deployment are indicative of the new operating environment that confronts combatant commands. While conditions on the ground were austere and reflected the harsh nature of the environment, this mission proved popular as junior leaders were empowered to command. The relative short duration of the mission was popular with a cohort that has grown used to, and weary of, 12-month deployments. For many, the fact that they are operating in a different country with unique cultural characteristics and fresh challenges has energized them and provided a much needed operational and training focus.

Is the RAF Affordable?

Given these extraordinary fiscal times, the question of affordability is a good one and the Army continues to balance requirements inside its Operations and Maintenance (O&M) budget with most likely and most dangerous missions. While the institution has seen an increase in demand from combatant commanders, much of this demand is paid for by other parties. But there is no real possibility of it “collapsing under its own weight.” Already in the first year of regionally aligned forces execution, the Army has realized numerous efficiencies by being able to identify when to send squads rather than platoons. This agility will only increase over time.

Some of the direct costs associated with RAF are based on future training strategy, which includes readiness, language training, and the future viability of some training platforms. Costs linked to the actual implementation of regional alignment mostly will come from Title 22, Combatant Commander funds, joint exercise funds, and special authorities, such as the Global Security Contingency Fund. In fact, the initial alignment of 2/1 infantry brigade demonstrated that there are authorities and funding available for more effective and efficient alignment of execution capabilities. With regard to the use of regionally aligned forces in the traditional Title 10 sense where the Army foots the bill, HQDA has noted a 25 percent increase in the FY15 Program Objective Memorandum for security cooperation activities. Some of this is due to the increased availability of US forces to assist combatant commanders for their Theater Campaign Plans. This will require financial offset from elsewhere within the Army budget and the Army is analyzing the feasibility of this.

Nonetheless, the services—the Army especially—have to make tough choices in readying forces for a full range of military operations, from humanitarian assistance in the Pacific, to the crisis response requirements of “new normal” in Northern Africa, to major combat operations in the Middle East or North Korea. The Army has to be ready for each of these missions, yet it stays busy every day with keeping theaters set with intelligence, communications, and logistics architecture, supporting counterterrorism activities, and with military engagement with partners across the globe. The funding for both the readiness and some of the activity itself comes from the Army’s top line, its Operations and Maintenance dollars. Balancing readiness for the most likely and most dangerous courses of action has never been more difficult. Meeting

combatant commanders' specific day-to-day needs potentially requires a lower level of collective training than do major combat operations, yet those same forces must be ready for the toughest fight, particularly as the total number available for that fight decreases.

Conclusion: Business Not as Usual

Regional alignment will take approximately five years to implement fully. The effects of the reduced budget and the pace of drawdown of US forces from Afghanistan are the key constraints to quicker progress. However, as the concept matures through FY14, the Army's focus on regional alignment will increase across all combatant commands, to include increasing support to and integration with US Special Operations Command. For soldiers, RAF means real-world missions in exciting places. For policymakers and strategists, RAF means a more agile, responsive, integrated Army. To combatant commanders, RAF means many of the Army's capabilities in the continental United States have, in effect, become a part of their areas of responsibility. And for America's role as a global leader, RAF offers a very real mechanism to shape the operational environment, on the land and among humans, more consistently and in conjunction with a range of strategic partners.

Brigadier General Kimberly Field

US Army Brigadier General Kimberly Field was Deputy Director of Strategy, Plans and Policy, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-3/5/7. She recently became Deputy Director for Politico-Military Affairs (Middle East), J-5, the Joint Staff.

Colonel James Learmont

British Army Colonel James Learmont, as part of a US-UK exchange program, leads the Stability Support Division of the Strategy, Plans and Policy Directorate of the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-3/5/7.

Lieutenant Colonel Jason Charland

US Army Lieutenant Colonel Jason Charland is Lead Strategist in the Stability Support Division of the Strategy, Plans and Policy Directorate of the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-3/5/7.

Strategic Landpower and the Arabian Gulf

W. Andrew Terrill

ABSTRACT: In recent years, a variety of threats have become more ominous for Gulf nations, and these countries have sought to strengthen ties to the United States in ways that do not appear to compromise their sovereignty. The US Army has responded through a robust series of military exercises and through the development of regionally aligned forces. Consequently, the Army has played a vital role in meeting a variety of training challenges including preparation for conventional war, counterinsurgency, and missile defense. It has also asserted an important landpower presence in ways that reassure local allies and deter potential regional aggressors.

The Middle Eastern strategic environment has been especially dynamic in the last decade due to factors such as the 2003-11 US combat operations in Iraq, the Arab uprisings, and the continuing rise in sectarian tensions and violence throughout a number of regional countries. In the midst of these developments, the stability of the region remains of central importance to the United States according to numerous presidents who have enumerated the American interests in the region.¹ Most recently, President Barack Obama stated that US “core interests” in the Middle East include: (1) safeguarding energy supplies exported to the world, (2) counterterrorism, (3) countering the proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, and (4) the defense of Israel and advancement of the Arab-Israeli peace process.² Other US leaders have elaborated on the president’s views by noting the Middle East will remain vital to the United States even if Washington moves closer to energy independence.³ In this regard, America garners tremendous global influence by using its military forces to guarantee freedom of navigation for the transportation of Persian/Arabian Gulf energy supplies.⁴ If the United States relinquished this position, other powers, such as China, could become interested in this role and the global clout it provides.

The next decade will be a particularly important era for defining how Washington can best protect its interests in the Middle East and especially the Gulf region. The legacy of the Iraq war will contribute

1 For an overview of past Presidential priorities and policies toward the Middle East see Patrick Tyler, *A World of Trouble: The White House and the Middle East from the Cold War to the War on Terror* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009).

2 Office of the White House Press Secretary, “Remarks by the President on the Middle East and North Africa,” May 19, 2011, <http://www.whitehouse.gov>. In this speech, President Obama also spoke about the advancement of democracy and human rights but did not explicitly name them as core interests.

3 Lalit K. Jha, “Gulf Region Remains Important for US Interest: Dempsey,” *Press Trust of India*, March 19, 2013.

4 On the importance of Gulf oil exports for the world economy and the requirement for military forces, see Kenneth Katzman et al., *Iran’s Threat to the Strait of Hormuz* (Washington DC: Congressional Research Service, 2012) 13-15; David Crist, *The Twilight War: America’s Thirty-Year Conflict with Iran* (New York: Penguin Press, 2012) 569-570; Mohammed El-Katiri, *The Future of the Arab Gulf Monarchies in the Age of Uncertainties* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, June 2013), 28-30.

W. Andrew Terrill is the Strategic Studies Institute’s Middle East specialist. He served with the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory and US Air War College. Dr. Terrill has published in numerous academic journals on a wide range of topics, including nuclear proliferation. He has participated in the Middle Eastern Track 2 talks, part of the Middle East Peace Process.

to this debate since that conflict generated significant US public and policymaker concerns about the future use of military force to fight major ground wars and then engage in long occupations, nation-building efforts, and counterinsurgencies. Former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates represented this view in a particularly straightforward way when he stated, “In my opinion, any future defense secretary who advises the President to again send a big American land army into Asia or into the Middle East or Africa should have his head examined, as General MacArthur so delicately put it.”⁵ President Obama underscored Gates’s comment by indicating that he will seek to avoid using massive conventional military force except in cases involving US national survival interest.⁶ This reluctance reflects the current political values of American society and is motivated by the administration’s concern about developing open-ended military commitments to support secondary or peripheral interests in ways “that we can no longer afford.”⁷ Additionally, according to a variety of polls, the general public is extremely wary of getting involved in new Middle Eastern wars in places such as Syria and Iran.⁸ Likewise, Arab public opinion remains deeply concerned about future American military action in the region, although US favorability ratings improved beginning in 2011 as the United States implemented its withdrawal from Iraq.⁹

Nevertheless, understanding the dangers of military interventions does not allow one to reach the conclusion that conventional war and counterinsurgency actions will never again be required. Some challenges to US interests may not be viewed as immediate threats to national survival, but the long-term consequences such challenges could affect both US global leadership and economic future. If vital American interests are strongly threatened, large segments of the American public may consider future military actions as “wars of necessity.” Some interventions may still be required regardless of how conscientiously the United States leadership struggles to avoid them. Moreover, American and allied public opinion may change rapidly in such instances provided these publics view specific future conflicts as wars of necessity.

Preparing for future wars remains vital, but doing so through actions which deter such conflicts is an especially optimal outcome. Shaping the Gulf strategic environment through carefully tailored collaboration with Arab partner nations (including non-Gulf Arab allies) presents one of the best ways to prepare for a potential conflict and deter that conflict through United States and allied defense preparedness. In this environment, it is important that Washington has an array of forces to support and reassure local allies and deter aggression so war can be averted.

American interests will need to be protected in a number of ways, and the Gulf will be particularly important US strategy. Many Gulf Arab states have critical natural resources, a great deal of infrastructure

5 Greg Jaffe, “In one of final addresses to Army, Gates describes vision for military’s future,” *The Washington Post*, February 25, 2011.

6 David Sanger, *Confront and Conceal: Obama’s Secret Wars and the Surprising Use of American Power* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2012), 421.

7 Ibid.

8 Megan Thee Brennan, “Poll Shows Isolationist Streak in Americans,” *The New York Times*, May 1, 2013.

9 Shibley Telhami, *The World Through Arab Eyes: Arab Public Opinion and the Reshaping of the Middle East* (New York: Basic Books, 2013), 111.

wealth, and are concerned about their limited capacity for self-defense. Gulf leaders also consider their countries vulnerable to military pressure or attacks by larger neighbors as well as insurgencies along the lines of recent problems in Yemen and Iraq.¹⁰ To deal with either type of contingency, friendly states need allied support. Such support should have a landpower dimension while seeking to avoid a large troop presence that may cause resentment.¹¹ Such strategies will need to be strengthened and refined to continue serving the interests identified by President Obama and his predecessors.

Gulf Arab Threat Perceptions

Many US Arab allies in the Gulf believe they have solid reasons to be concerned about their future national security. The potential rise of Iran as a nuclear weapons state is particularly worrisome to a number of Gulf Arab allies.¹² This scenario could develop in a variety of troubling ways. On the basis of publicly available information, Tehran appears to be making the most progress toward a nuclear weapon via the uranium route (in this case using gas centrifuges) rather than the plutonium route. Nuclear weapons using uranium in the physics package for their warheads do not always require testing to assure that they are functional.¹³ Consequently, Iran could become an undeclared nuclear weapons power at some point and take advantage of a policy of nuclear weapons “opacity.” Tehran’s progress in obtaining a nuclear weapons option is not inevitable, but even crippling economic sanctions combined with covert action (such as cyberattacks) cannot guarantee the end of the program. A US or Israeli air campaign against Iran’s hardened and dispersed targets could guarantee severe damage, but such attacks might only delay the Iranian program, and also risk asymmetric escalation and the unraveling of current sanctions.¹⁴ Moreover, Tehran’s regional behavior could become more aggressive even if it only develops an undeclared bomb or a near-nuclear capability.

Complicating matters further, the Gulf states have also experienced a decline in political relations with Tehran along with the rise of the Iranian strategic threat. The near cold war between Iran and some Gulf states became especially intense following the March 2011 Saudi-led Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) military intervention into Bahrain and the outbreak of the Syrian civil war, which also began in the same month.¹⁵ Prior to the GCC move into Bahrain, the Iranians strongly supported the demands of Bahrain’s mostly Shi’ite demonstrators, who demanded a greater public role in the governance of the Sunni-led monarchy. Tehran was subsequently infuriated by the Bahrain intervention which propped up an anti-Iranian monarchy just as it was being challenged by at least

10 Anthony H. Cordesman, *Securing the Gulf: Key Threats and Options for Enhanced Cooperation* (Washington DC: Center for Strategic & International Studies, February 19, 2013), iii, 1-3.

11 Telhami, *The World Through Arab Eyes*, 123.

12 Trita Parsi, *A Single Roll of the Dice: Obama’s Diplomacy with Iran* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 16, 172, 211.

13 The uranium-based Hiroshima bomb (“Little Boy”) was never tested before its use, although the plutonium-based implosion design for the Nagasaki bomb (“Fat Man”) was tested on the Trinity site on July 16, 1945. See General Leslie M. Groves, *Now it Can be Told: The Story of the Manhattan Project* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1962), 288-304.

14 Sanger, *Confront and Conceal*, 229-230.

15 The GCC includes Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.

some pro-Iranian Shi'ite Bahrainis among the protestors. Although the GCC intervention forces never actually fought with the demonstrators, their presence was highly significant in bolstering Bahrain's government. Additionally, the outbreak of the Syrian civil war in the same month as the intervention in Bahrain further intensified Gulf Arab-Iranian tensions. At this time, Iran helped prop up the Assad regime, while most Gulf states strongly backed anti-government rebels. Adding to this deterioration of relations, older antagonisms were further inflamed when senior Iranian officials visited the disputed islands of Abu Musa and the Tunbs as a way of underscoring their physical control over them.¹⁶ The islands are also claimed by the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Gulf nations are concerned about Iran's conventional forces, which are large but have shortcomings. In this regard, a great deal of Iranian military equipment is aging and severely worn by overuse. While the Iranian military should be able to function effectively as a defensive force, these units would have serious problems projecting offensive power.¹⁷ The ability to project conventional military power across the Gulf is also limited by Iran's need to circumvent or neutralize United States, British, French, and Gulf Arab naval forces stationed there. Iran's ability to provide effective logistical support to its forces in hostile territory is especially doubtful even with countries which can be reached without crossing the Gulf (such as Iraq or Kuwait through Iraq). Iran has been under a highly effective United Nations (UN) arms embargo since 2010 and thereby been blocked from receiving conventional weapons from its most important former suppliers including Russia and China.¹⁸ Consequently, Tehran has been forced to rely on its domestic arms industry, which is incapable of compensating for Tehran's inability to import modern weapons. These shortcomings have limited Iran's ability to project conventional military power.

Nonetheless, Tehran maintains a strong capacity for asymmetric warfare with its naval and ground forces. Facets of this approach related to landpower include the use of irregular forces; the use of proxy forces as well as covert arms transfers; and providing training to such groups within a target country. One of Iran's most useful tools in projecting this kind of power is the al Quds Force of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC). The al Quds Force has a long record of working with Shi'ite and other revolutionary groups in a variety of countries including Iraq and Afghanistan.¹⁹ In both of these instances, they also supplied highly effective Improvised Exploding Devices (IEDs) to anti-American forces.²⁰

While Iran is the most important national security concern for Gulf Arab allies, it is not their only concern. Many Gulf states also view the future of Iraq as uncertain with considerable potential for developments to harm their security. Some Gulf leaders, especially Saudis and Kuwaitis,

16 "Iran Willing to Talk to UAE on Islands Row," *The Peninsula*, May 8, 2013; "UAE denounces Iran lawmakers' visit to islands," *Khaleej Times*, May 7, 2013.

17 Cordesman, *Securing the Gulf*, 15

18 "UN Arms Embargo on Iran," Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, <http://www.SIPRI.org>, October 11, 2012.

19 Anthony H. Cordesman and Martin Kleiber, *Iran's Military Forces and Warfighting Capabilities: The Threat to the Northern Gulf* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2007), 78-81.

20 "U.S. Blames Iran for New Bombs in Iraq," *USA Today*, January 31, 2007; "IED Attacks Up in Afghanistan, Down in Iraq," *Army Times*, November 15, 2007.

are deeply suspicious of most leading Shi'ite Iraqi politicians including Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki, whom many view as an authoritarian leader seeking to marginalize Iraq's Sunni Arabs politically. In addition, Kuwaitis do not feel that all of their problems with Iraq started and stopped with Saddam Hussein. While Saddam was their greatest enemy, he was not the only Iraqi head of state to claim Kuwait was part of Iraq. King Ghazi (reign 1933-39) and Prime Minister Qasim (in office 1958-63) made similar claims, although one was a monarchist and the other an Arab Nationalist revolutionary. Unsurprisingly, many Kuwaitis are uncertain that Iraqis have truly renounced previous beliefs that Kuwait is part of Iraq.²¹

Paradoxically, many Gulf Arabs who are concerned about a strong, overbearing, nationalist Iraq are also worried about an unstable Iraq sliding into sectarian chaos. Gulf Arabs, who are mostly Sunni, often blame the Shi'ite-led Iraqi government for the increase in Iraqi sectarianism, but many are also concerned about the continued rise of al Qaeda-related Sunni groups now that Iraq's Sunni-Shi'ite relations have become polarized. The July 2013 attacks on two Iraqi maximum security prisons by the al-Qaeda affiliate, "The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant" suggests a tough, competent enemy. In this professional and well-coordinated operation, over 100 guards were killed and 500 prisoners were freed.²² The danger of simultaneous al Qaeda progress in controlling territory within both Iraq and Syria only adds to the nightmare for Gulf nations that fear widening instability.

Basing and Military Exercises

In addressing current threats, Gulf states must balance domestic public opinion with defense needs. Many Arab states have endured long and problematic histories with Western military bases on their territory, and this background influences current Gulf Arab decisionmaking on how to organize military cooperation with the United States. Until at least the 1950s, great powers often maintained that their bases were designed to defend regional nations against foreign invaders, although the presence of such facilities was sometimes used to pressure and influence local client governments. In response to these concerns, as well as changing Western military requirements and economic pressures, the U.S. military presence in the Middle East steadily declined, and a number of major Western bases were evacuated in response to nationalist demands. By the early 1970s, Western military presence in the area had been dramatically scaled down. Western combat forces currently retain an ongoing presence at military facilities only in some smaller Gulf Arab states including Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The US Army also stationed significant forces in Saudi Arabia during and after Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm in 1990-91, but these forces were withdrawn in 2003.

In general, the Gulf Arab countries do not favor large numbers of ground forces permanently stationed on their territory, and they have

21 Ahmad al-Khaled, "Maliki Digs Up the Hatchet," *Kuwait Times*, July 7, 2006; W. Andrew Terrill, *Kuwaiti National Security and the U.S.-Kuwaiti Strategic Relationship After Saddam* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2007), 41-49.

22 Jabbar Yaseen and Liz Sly, "Iraq Jailbreak Highlights al-Qaeda Affiliate's Ascendancy," *The Washington Post*, July 22, 2013.

shown a preference for air or naval bases. Western facilities in Bahrain support the US Fifth Fleet, while Qatar and the UAE allow the United States Air Force to utilize key air bases, although only a limited number of US aircraft regularly use these facilities.²³ Most of the US combat aircraft currently used to protect the Gulf are naval aircraft stationed on aircraft carriers, although the US Air Force presence in the region can be expanded in emergency situations. Conversely, Kuwait has a much more extensive history with hosting both US ground and air forces, with many US troops stationed at Camp Arifjan, south of Kuwait city. Currently, Camp Arifjan is an important transit point for equipment being returned to the United States from Afghanistan.²⁴ At this time, around 13,500 US troops are stationed in Kuwait, down from 25,000 during the last stages of the US military presence in Iraq.²⁵

Yet, if some Gulf Arab countries display reticence about large numbers of foreign ground troops stationed permanently on their soil, this does not mean they fail to recognize the importance of landpower or they only seek cooperation with US air and naval forces. A number of Arab Gulf states are concerned that negative experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan will cause the United States to lose interest in the Middle East, especially as America becomes more energy self-sufficient.²⁶ The decision to reduce US Army forces in Europe from four to two brigade combat teams and supporting units also complicated US power projection into the Middle East.²⁷ Within the Gulf region, many Arab countries are extremely interested in working with the US Army to help them continue professionalizing their armed forces and raising their standards for conventional defense, joint operations, ground intelligence operations, counterinsurgency, and other capabilities.²⁸ US commitment to support these activities through both training and exercises is deeply reassuring to Gulf Arab states.

In this environment, many Gulf political and military leaders, as well as other Arabs, have found US-led bilateral or multinational military exercises to be an exceptionally valuable tool for their security. Exercises, unlike basing rights, do not involve a long-term military presence that can grate on domestic public opinion and provide the appearance of excessive US influence. Rather, military exercises can more easily be portrayed as a collaboration, in which the United States is showing its support for local militaries by working with them. Another advantage is that during times of domestic Arab political tension, exercises can be rescheduled in accordance with the wishes of the host government. Conversely, at times of regional tension, regularly scheduled exercises can be expanded and the number of US troops participating in the exercise can be increased to show support for the host government. Such expansions are generally seen in the region as a show of force, although their linkage to previously planned exercises allows the United States

23 Michael O'Hanlon and Bruce Riedel, "Land Warriors," *Foreign Affairs.com*, July 2, 2013.

24 "US Reducing Military Presence in Kuwait," *Kuwait Times*, December 20, 2012.

25 Kenneth Katzman, *Kuwait: Security, Reform and U.S. Policy* (Washington DC: Congressional Research Service, 2013), 16; Donna Casseta, "US Plans Significant Military Presence in Kuwait," *Associated Press*, July 19, 2012.

26 See "US Looks to Allies to Secure Arabian Gulf," *The National* (UAE), April 24, 2013.

27 Michelle Tan, "Bradley Fighting Vehicles Set to Leave Europe by Next Year," *Army Times*, August 3, 2013.

28 Sanger, *Confront and Conceal*, 178-179. Cordesman, *Securing the Gulf*, 41-46.

and its allies to deny they are being provocative. Exercise Eager Lion, which is based in Jordan, and involves the United States and a number of Gulf Arab allies is an example of this approach.²⁹

Eager Lion has an especially robust landpower component, and many observers felt the enhanced 2013 exercise could have sent a message of solidarity with Jordan to the Syrian government, which believed Amman was too sympathetic to some rebel forces in the Syrian civil war. The message might have been reinforced by the US decision to leave a Patriot missile battery and a limited number of F-16 fighter aircraft behind for use in future exercises.³⁰ About 700 US Army and Air Force personnel remained in Jordan to support these systems following Eager Lion 2013, along with approximately 100 already there as a forward headquarters of the 1st Armored Division.³¹ Although Jordan is not a Gulf state, it is an Arab monarchy which works closely with both the Gulf Arabs and the United States on regional security matters. Gulf participation in a large multinational Eager Lion exercise may send an important message of US-Gulf solidarity. The Gulf states are also involved in numerous smaller bilateral exercises with the United States within their own territory as well as the GCC's Peninsula Shield exercises.³²

It is vital for Eager Lion to retain its strong landpower component and for the Gulf states to expand their participation in these exercises due to the uncertain status of future Egyptian-based Bright Star exercises.³³ In many Arab states, including those within the Gulf, the army is the dominant service; in all Arab countries it is an important military service. In only a few wealthy Arab states such as Saudi Arabia, has the air force been more favored historically (primarily because air force requires fewer human resources and armies can more effectively conduct anti-government coups). Consequently, military-to-military contacts and relationships are most often going to be built with Gulf army officers and to some extent with air force officers. All Gulf states have small navies that function primarily as coastal defense forces. US Navy joint exercises with Arab navies are important and must be continued, but they will probably never involve the level of US-Arab coordination and cooperation as exercises involving landpower.³⁴

Another reason for a vigorous US-Gulf exercise program with a strong landpower component is Iranian actions. The Iranians frequently engage in large-scale joint exercises, which they use for both training and propaganda purposes. The land component of these exercises is usually defensive, focusing on responding to a US-led invasion of the Iranian homeland, which is, of course, unlikely to occur. The Iranians

29 GCC participants in Eager Lion exercises have included Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates. See Combined Joint Task Force Spartan Public Affairs, "Eager Lion Commanders Hold Press Conference," *US Central Command Press Release*, May 15, 2012.

30 Michael R. Gordon and Thom Shanker, "U.S. to Keep Warplanes in Jordan, Pressing Syria," *The New York Times*, June 16, 2013.

31 Donna Miles, "Advance Headquarters Elements Operating in Jordan," *United States Department of Defense Press Release*, April 18, 2013, <http://www.defense.gov>.

32 Cordesman, *Securing the Gulf*, 2.

33 Bright Star has been repeatedly delayed or cancelled as a result of the political turmoil in Egypt, but planning for the exercise continues. See Phil Steward, "U.S. to Go Ahead with Joint Military Exercise in Egypt," *Reuters*, July 31, 2013.

34 When the author visited Iraq in 2008, he was somewhat amused by Iraqi officers who continually addressed US Navy captains serving as staff officers as "colonel" despite ongoing efforts to correct them.

usually proclaim these exercises to be resounding successes and routinely exaggerate the number of forces involved, but the exercises remain meaningful as political theater.³⁵

Regionally Aligned Forces

In addition to military exercises, one of the most effective ways of improving US military coordination with its Gulf allies is through regionally aligned forces. Regionally aligned forces are a Department of the Army initiative based on the lessons of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. The initiative is still in its early phases and may be subject to considerable modification on a trial-and-error process as it is implemented. The concept involves US Army maneuver combat units and support forces focused on a specific Geographical Combatant Command as part of their normal training program.³⁶ This concept was initially tested with a program to prepare the first such brigade for service with Africa Command (AFRICOM), where it was successful enough to be considered a model for the Army component of the other Geographic Combatant Commands.

Units assigned to regionally aligned forces are expected to receive cultural training and language familiarization for areas where they might be expected to operate. By working more closely with regional militaries on a recurring basis, US personnel will more quickly interface with their counterparts during an escalating crisis. Cooperation with local forces has also been strongly enhanced by the presence of numerous officers from allied nations who have received training and military education in the United States. It is also useful that English is widely spoken by officers in most Gulf militaries as well as some other militaries within the larger Middle East.

The 1st Armored Division, based in Fort Bliss, Texas, has been aligned with US Central Command and has played an important role in the Eager Lion exercises previously discussed. During Eager Lion 2013, the 1st Armored Division provided the bulk of the US Army ground forces assigned to the exercise. As part of the alignment with CENTCOM, 1st Armored Division assisted the Jordanians with integrated missile defense, humanitarian assistance, and disaster relief.³⁷ A strong working relationship with Jordan is particularly useful since forces operating out of Jordan can move into the Gulf area quickly if they are needed. The presence of such forces at times of crisis in the Gulf could be a restraining influence on potential aggressors. Adding to these advantages, the King Abdullah II Special Operations Training Center (KASOTC), about 20 kilometers northeast of Amman, has also proven to be an excellent command and control site for combined US-Jordanian operations.³⁸

35 Crist, *The Twilight War*, 569-570.

36 General Raymond Odierno, "Regionally Aligned Forces: A New Model for Building Partnerships," *Army Live, The Official Blog of the U.S. Army*, March 22, 2012.

37 C. Todd Lopez, "1st Armored Division Troops Aligned With CENTCOM Ready for Eager Lion Kick-Off," <http://www.army.mil>, *Official Homepage of the United States Army*, <http://www.army.mil>, June 3, 2013.

38 See "King Abdullah II Special Operations Training Center", <http://www.kasotc.com>.

Sharing the Lessons of Counterinsurgency

The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have reinforced the lesson that counterinsurgencies can take years if not decades to resolve. These operations require time, public patience, and significant numbers of troops trained in counterinsurgency tactics. Ideally, these troops should be provided by the government being threatened rather than an outside power. Air and naval forces also play important supporting roles in counterinsurgencies, but ground forces almost always have to take the lead. Armed drones have played an important role in countries such as Yemen, but strike weapons can only address certain aspects of the insurgent problem. They can kill insurgents but cannot reassert government authority in contested areas. Therefore, it is important for US Army forces continue to provide practical advice and assistance to friendly nations, while maintaining as light a footprint as possible.³⁹

Insurgencies currently exist in a number of Middle Eastern countries including US allies such as Iraq and Yemen. While the GCC states view both of these insurgencies as dangerous, they are especially concerned about the future of Yemen.⁴⁰ In Yemen, the insurgent group al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) was able to occupy and administer significant tracts of three major provinces including most of Abyan province until a Yemeni government offensive, heavily funded by the GCC, liberated the territory in May-June 2012.⁴¹ Although AQAP was defeated and lost overt control of the contested territory, it remains a strong terrorist and insurgent force and has not relinquished the idea of creating an al Qaeda emirate in southern Yemen, which could become a threat to Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states.⁴² In the long term, this insurgency can, in all likelihood, be eradicated only by a reformed Yemeni army that fights effectively and avoids large-scale corruption. Moreover, Yemeni troops that are inadequately trained for counterinsurgency can take significant casualties and make serious mistakes that harm the struggle against AQAP. Currently, US Army trainers are working with Yemen's military to advance their level of professionalization.⁴³ Fortunately for them, at least some Yemeni senior officers are also deeply committed to improving the quality of the force.⁴⁴

Iraq faces some of the same problems as Yemen. The al Qaeda affiliate in Iraq, the "Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant" is directing acts of terrorism against government facilities and institutions as well as Shi'ite citizens in partial response to Sunni grievances but also to

39 For an excellent discussion of how US troops became increasingly effective at counterinsurgency operations over time in Iraq see James A. Russell, *Innovation, Transformation and War: Counterinsurgency Operations in Anbar and Ninewa Provinces, Iraq, 2005-2007* (Stanford, CA: Stanford Security Studies, 2011).

40 The GCC has taken the lead in providing support and financial help for Yemen's transition to a more stable government including brokering the departure from power of longtime strongman President Ali Abdullah Saleh.

41 "Al Qaeda in Yemen on the Run as Military Regains Control over 2 of Its Strongholds," *The Washington Post*, June 12, 2012.

42 "Yemen Army Retakes al Qaeda Bastions," *Jordan Times*, June 12, 2012.

43 Casey L. Coombs, "Yemen to Get UAVs From the U.S." *Aerospace Daily & Defense Report*, September 26, 2012; Anthony H. Cordesman, Robert M. Shelala II, and Omar Mohamed, *U.S. and Iranian Strategic Competition: Yemen and U.S. Security* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, August 8, 2013), 10-15.

44 The author has been consistently impressed by the seriousness, commitment, and integrity of Yemeni officers he has met at the US Army War College and elsewhere.

advance the al Qaeda agenda. The US leadership will, therefore, have to make decisions on how to help the Iraqi government with advice and military equipment while pushing it to be more inclusive.⁴⁵ A key to any successful counterinsurgency is to place distance between the insurgents and the population where they operate. The Iraqi government cannot do this if it only serves the interest of its Shi'ite citizens. US Army training and other support must be closely linked to political reform, but military aid is vital once the Iraqi government begins a serious effort at reform and Sunni inclusion.

In imparting the lessons of counterinsurgency, the US Army will also need to work with Gulf Arab air forces as well as armies because many of the former own their nation's military helicopters. Only a few Arab armies possess attack helicopters like the United States Army. The most important exception in the Gulf region is the Royal Saudi Land Forces (RSLF) which has an army aviation branch which contains helicopters.⁴⁶ Regardless of service affiliation, all Arab rotary-wing forces can benefit from interface with US Army units. The United States Army made extensive use of helicopters during the counterinsurgency wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and have internalized a variety of useful lessons that can be passed along to friendly states.

Air and Missile Defense

Surface-to-surface missiles (such as Scuds) have been used extensively in some Middle Eastern wars, though never with unconventional (chemical, biological, or nuclear) warheads. In the Gulf area, conflicts involving surface-to-surface missiles include attacks made by both sides during the Iran-Iraq war and missile strikes against Saudi targets during Operation Desert Storm.⁴⁷ Saddam Hussein also reached outside of the Gulf area and fired 39 extended-range Scud missiles at Israel during the 1991 conflict. Elsewhere in the Middle East, Scud missiles were used by secessionist forces in Yemen during the 1994 civil war, and there have been some reports of Syrian government forces occasionally firing Scuds at rebel forces in the current civil war in that country.⁴⁸

Friendly Gulf military forces are extremely interested in systems to defend their airspace against air and missile strikes for a number of reasons including the significant resources that Iran has applied to its ballistic missile program and the fear that Iranian missiles will eventually be armed with unconventional warheads.⁴⁹ In any scenario where Iranian missiles are fired at a Gulf state, one might reasonably expect that US and Gulf air forces will seek to destroy as many of these systems

45 "Iraqi Official: Baghdad would welcome U.S. military help as Pentagon Considers Sending Trainers," *Washington Post*, June 27, 2013.

46 Tim Ripley, *Middle East Airpower in the 21st Century* (South Yorkshire, UK: Pen and Sword, 2010), 173, 188.

47 Thomas L. McNaugher, "Ballistic Missiles and Chemical Weapons: The Legacy of the Iran-Iraq War," *International Security* 15, no. 2 (Fall 1990): 5-34; W Andrew Terrill, "The Gulf War and Ballistic Missile Proliferation," *Comparative Strategy* (April-June 1992): 163-176.

48 Max Fisher, "What Syria's Scud Missile Launches Tell Us About the Regime's Thinking," *The Washington Post*, December 12, 2012.; Ben Hubbard and Hwaida Saad, "Syrian Government Blamed for Ballistic Missile Attack," *The New York Times*, July 28, 2013.

49 Kenneth Katzman, *The United Arab Emirates (UAE) Issues for U.S. Policy* (Washington DC: Congressional Research Service, March 18, 2013), 11-12. Suzanne Maloney, "Thinking the Unthinkable: The Gulf States and the Prospect of a Nuclear Iran," *Middle East Memo of the Saban Center at Brookings*, January 27, 2013, 11.

on the ground as possible. Such actions are indispensable, but there are continuing questions about how long this will take. The last US war against an enemy which was well-armed with missiles occurred in 1991 in Iraq. At that time, Saddam Hussein's forces were able to fire a number of Scuds and modified Scuds at coalition military forces and at Israel despite a substantial air campaign to destroy these assets.

While US capabilities for hunting missiles have undoubtedly improved since 1991, Iran has a larger and more diverse weapons arsenal than Iraq did. It is also a much larger country than Iraq. Many of Iran's longer-range missiles can be located in remote parts of the country and still strike the Gulf Arab countries. The Gulf Arab states, therefore, have an ongoing interest in a strong, layered defense for protecting their territory including land and sea-based systems. The most important components of this layered defense are the Patriot air and missile defense system and the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system (THAAD).⁵⁰ Many partner countries within the region already have Patriot systems, and are now acquiring PAC-3 anti-missile capabilities for those systems.⁵¹ With so much at stake, they are tremendously interested in working with the United States on missile defense.⁵²

Conclusions

US landpower will remain profoundly relevant to defending the Gulf and deterring recklessness by regional powers. Landpower can be especially valuable by asserting a US presence and helping local partners. While US national leadership can be expected to avoid large conventional wars, it will also be required to safeguard other vital national interests. These interests will need to be protected in creative and flexible ways that include landpower to underscore US commitment to deterrence and defense.

A useful approach to the application of landpower in the post-Iraq era has also been evolving in a way that reflects the lessons of that conflict. Rather than rotating significant military forces into bases throughout the region and thus establishing a permanent ground presence, the US Army leadership has chosen to emphasize a vigorous military exercise program and extensive collaboration with partner nations through regionally aligned forces. Organizing the timing, scope, and mix of forces for these exercises can be calibrated to meet regional threats while showing appropriate respect for the equality and sovereignty of US partners in the region. It is also possible, if not likely, that US regional partners will need greater reassurance if unfavorable political developments occur in Iran, Iraq, or elsewhere in the region. The development of an Iranian near-nuclear capability would be an especially serious threat requiring US reassurance of Gulf allies, beyond the stationing of air and naval forces.

The future of regionally aligned forces will be determined by senior US military leaders, but it currently looks very promising. In the face of growing threats, many partner nations are almost certain to welcome US support in providing regionally aligned forces to help improve their

50 Tom Vanden Brook, "Oil-Rich Emirates: A Key Part of Defense Against Iran," *USA Today*, April 25, 2013.

51 Cordesman, *Securing the Gulf*, 56.

52 Aaron Mehta, "Qatar, UAE Request THAAD Purchases," *Defense News*, November 5, 2012; Jim Wolf, "U.S. in 3.5 Billion Arms Sale to UAE and Iran Tension," *Reuters*, December 31, 2011.

military performance in such skills as air and missile defense, chemical and biological protection, counterinsurgency operations, intelligence, and other important aspects of modern warfare. Nevertheless, there are some issues of concern that bear watching. In particular, regionally aligned forces working with Middle Eastern and Gulf militaries will need to be properly supported with personnel, material resources, and funding for the ongoing training with counterpart militaries. If these units receive less than units aligned to the Pacific, this will be noticed by both Gulf allies and potential adversaries. The US government emphasis on the Pacific is important but cannot be allowed to seriously weaken other commands.

In sum, the long, difficult, and expensive wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have soured many American opinion leaders and large elements of the public on the idea of ever again using US ground forces for large-scale warfare in the Middle East. The sacrifices of the Iraq war, in particular, can also be contrasted with many of the early projections that the conflict would be quick and easy and not require a long occupation to prevent post-war chaos. Yet, to respond to the legacy of these conflicts by minimizing the potential contribution of ground troops in defense of the Gulf states risks a possible failure to deter precisely the type of war that both policymakers and public would largely like to avoid.

Strategic Landpower in the Indo-Asia-Pacific

John R. Deni

ABSTRACT: The US Army has a major, strategic role to play in the Indo-Asia-Pacific theater. That role can be broken down into three broad areas—bolstering defense of allies and deterring aggression, promoting regional security and stability through security cooperation, and ameliorating the growing US-China security dilemma. Employing strategic landpower in each of these areas is not without challenges—especially in the face of sequestration—yet not making use of the Army will result in fewer policy options.

In the rush to the Indo-Asia-Pacific theater prompted by the January 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance, it has become conventional wisdom to say the US Army has only a minimal role in the rebalancing effort underway. Advocates of this perspective assume that the Pacific theater—with its massive distances—is far more suitable to the platform-intensive Air Force and Navy, than the soldier-centric Army.¹ They then argue that, since the Army's primary mission is fighting and winning the nation's wars, the Army's role in the Pacific is largely limited to the Korean Peninsula.

The Army is not blameless in this respect. According to one prominent analyst, the Army's, "organizational culture continues to focus nearly exclusively on state-on-state war."² Organizational bias has also adversely affected how the institutional Army embraced the importance of promoting interoperability, developing coalition capability, and building partner capacity.³ And this bias persists despite efforts by General Ray Odierno, the Army's Chief of Staff, to change that culture by emphasizing the importance of shaping the international environment and preventing conflict in the first place, including through the development of the Regionally Aligned Forces (RAF) initiative.⁴

In fact, the US Army has significant strategic roles to play in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region that cannot be adequately performed by naval or air forces. They fall into three broad categories: bolstering defense of allies and deterring aggression; promoting regional security and stability through security cooperation; and ameliorating the growing United States–China security dilemma. As discussed below, the United States

1 Jan van Tol, Mark Gunzinger, Andrew Krepinevich, and Jim Thomas, "AirSea Battle: A Point of Departure Operational Concept, Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments," *Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments (CSBA)*, May 18, 2010, www.csbaonline.org/publications/2010/05/airsea-battle-concept/; T. X. Hammes, "Offshore Control: A Proposed Strategy for an Unlikely Conflict," *National Defense University Institute for National Strategic Studies (INSS)*, June 2012, www.ndu.edu/inss/docuploaded/SF%20278%20Hammes.pdf; Jonathan G. Odom, "What Does a 'Pivot' or 'Rebalance' Look Like? Elements of the U.S. Strategic Turn Towards Security in the Asia-Pacific Region and Its Waters," *Asian Pacific Law & Policy Journal* 14, no. 1 (December 31, 2012).

2 John Nagl, quoted in Julian E. Barnes, "Shrinking Budget Forces Army Into New Battlefield," *The Wall Street Journal*, May 10, 2013, p. 1.

3 Jack Midgley, "Building Partner Capability: Defining an Army Role in Future Small Wars," *Small Wars Journal*, February 20, 2012, at smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/building-partner-capability.

4 Ray Odierno, "The Force of Tomorrow," *Foreign Policy*, February 4, 2013, www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/02/04/the_force_of_tomorrow.

Dr. John R. Deni is a Professor of Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Multinational Security Studies at the US Army War College's Strategic Studies Institute. He worked for eight years as a political and legislative advisor for senior US commanders and consulted on national security issues for the Departments of Defense, Energy, and State.

faces some hurdles in wielding strategic landpower in each of these areas, yet *not* employing the Army will make matters worse.

Defense and Deterrence

This role is the most obvious one for the United States Army in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region, resting as it does on military commitments since the 1950s. Most are familiar with the Army's presence on the Korean peninsula, fielding a force of several thousand to deter large-scale North Korean aggression. The Army has deterred aggression in two ways: deterrence by punishment and deterrence by denial. The first entails the promise of punishment so severe as to outweigh any potential gains from aggression. American soldiers in South Korea accomplish this by playing the role of a "tripwire" that would trigger a larger response. Deterrence by denial—that is, preventing gains from occurring—was more credible when American forces on the peninsula were more numerous and deployed near the demilitarized zone. Today, the Army is relocating farther south and handing over wartime operational control to the South Koreans starting in 2015. While the South Korean military may continue to deter through denial, the US Army is gradually becoming less critical to that mission.⁵ Indeed, several years ago, US officials in South Korea stated that the future American role in the defense of South Korea would be mainly an air force and naval role.⁶

Although not as obvious as the case of South Korea, the US Army is also important to the defense of Japan, another critical treaty-based American ally. Roughly 2,000 American soldiers based in Japan perform vital theater enabling functions such as helping other US services fulfill their missions in support of Japanese Self-Defense Forces.

Likewise, the Army provides critical support to the other services if the United States were to become involved in responding to any Chinese aggression toward Taiwan. The Mutual Defense Treaty between the United States of America and the Republic of China was terminated in 1980, and Washington maintains a policy of strategic ambiguity regarding whether the United States would intervene in the event of a mainland Chinese attack on Taiwan. Nonetheless, if mainland China were to attack Taiwan and threaten vital American interests—including the security of current US treaty allies in the region—the Department of Defense would have to provide a range of options including military intervention. At a minimum, the US Army would bring to bear its considerable combat support and sustainment capabilities in the Indo-Asia-Pacific theater.

Aside from conventional scenarios involving the large-scale use of landpower assets, other situations would entail the commitment of sizeable US Army forces. For instance, in the aftermath of a limited nuclear exchange between Pakistan and India, the United States may be called on to lead or conduct consequence management operations in one or

⁵ As evidence of this, the South Korea-based 8th US Army is transforming to becoming a warfighting headquarters that could deploy to any area of the world to command and control subordinate units.

⁶ Mark E. Manyin et al., "U.S.-South Korea Relations," *Congressional Research Service Report for Congress*, April 26, 2013, www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R41481.pdf.

both countries.⁷ The Army's expertise in this area, and its ability to command and control large-scale multiservice and multinational missions, make it indispensable for such a scenario. In another example, if seismic activity in the South China Sea—for instance, along the Manila trench, which scientists estimate is the locus of two or three earthquakes of a magnitude 7.0 or greater every decade—caused a tsunami to inundate parts of the Philippines, the US Army would likely assist in disaster relief operations.⁸

In addition, the US Army also provides niche capabilities to strengthen regional defense and deterrence. The Army's intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities are of particular value in enabling the United States and its allies to achieve situational understanding and develop a common operating picture.

Along these lines, the Army also provides essential command, control, and communications capabilities. Indeed, when it comes to commanding and controlling large military operations with and among Indo-Asia-Pacific countries, which may not be comfortable working with each other, the US Army's capabilities are unmatched. The Army's communications network supports *all* US military services in the theater and enables operations within a noncontiguous battlefield framework, spanning time and distance; thus, it enhances the lethality, survivability, agility, and sustainability of US and allied forces.

Perhaps the most important capability the Army provides is ballistic missile defense. Some have argued the Army ought to assume *offensive* missile-related missions, such as coastal artillery, in the Pacific theater.⁹ According to this reasoning, the United States would seek to turn the Anti-Access / Area Denial (A2AD) challenge posed by China on its head, with US shore-to-ship coastal artillery batteries holding at risk the growing Chinese navy and frustrating its ability to project power.

Although this makes great sense strategically, and would certainly be seen as an Army mission, there are major drawbacks to pursuing this course of action in the short run. It would require the development of some capabilities the Army does not yet possess, such as the appropriate missiles, as well as the necessary doctrine, training, and manpower. In the sequestration era, the Army may be hard-pressed to find the resources necessary to take this on.

Nonetheless, other potential missions *are* possible today with little in the way of materiel or doctrinal development. Ballistic missile defense (BMD) of allied and partner countries is currently (and appears likely to remain) a growth industry for the Army, especially in light of perceived Iranian and North Korean missile threats.¹⁰ The Army already has the lead role in operating the road-mobile Patriot air defense missile

7 Michael O'Hanlon comments, "The U.S. Army in Asia: Opportunities and Challenges," *Center for Naval Analyses Workshop* (Arlington, Virginia, April 25, 2013).

8 Chiu Hon Chim, "Identifying Tsunami Risk in South China Sea," lecture, University of Hong Kong, April 23, 2007, www.slideshare.net/chiu/identifying-tsunami-risk-in-south-china-sea. For other scenarios like this that could entail the commitment of significant US Army forces, see Nathan Freier et al., "Beyond the Last War: Balancing Ground Forces and Future Challenges Risk in USCENCOM and USPACOM," *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, April 2013.

9 Jim Thomas, "Why the U.S. Army Needs Missiles," *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2013.

10 The US Army currently operates the only system for strategic missile defense of the US homeland—the Ground-based Midcourse Defense (GMD) system—which protects against the threat of limited intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) attack.

system, which is designed to detect, intercept, and neutralize short-range inbound ballistic missiles. The Army is also key to the Phased Adaptive Approach to ballistic missile defense currently being developed for use in Europe, the Persian Gulf, and the East Asia.¹¹ For years, the Army has operated an advanced X-band radar site in northern Japan near the town of Shiriki; it may soon operate a similar radar site in southern Japan. If the Aegis Ashore System planned for the European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA) is replicated in other theaters, it is likely the Army and Navy will revisit the issue of which service operates those facilities. Currently, the Navy is slated to do so, but it seems likely the Army will, and should, claim that mission at some point given that defense from the land is inherently a landpower function.¹²

Additionally, the Army is the lead service for the Terminal High Altitude Air Defense (THAAD) system, which is completing its test phase and entering operational service. The first operational THAAD battery deployment occurred earlier this year to Guam in response to heightened tensions on the Korean peninsula. It remains unclear to some whether or how, politically speaking, the system could ever be removed from Guam now that it has been deployed, even though the Department of Defense is only planning for a 6-month extension of the initial 90-day deployment.¹³

The Army's embrace of the ballistic missile defense mission is not without potential complications. The Defense Department faces a demand for THAAD systems far outpacing supply, with virtually every combatant commander requesting at least one and sometimes two, and the Army continues to face BMD-related manpower challenges likely to grow more difficult in an era of declining end strength.¹⁴

Nevertheless, America's allies and partners in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region are eager to host Army-operated ballistic missile defense systems and US soldiers on their territory for two critical reasons.¹⁵ First, these systems, when proven effective through rigorous, realistic testing, help deter aggressors. Second, Army BMD systems assure US allies of the American commitment, reduce the potential for political or other intimidation, and underwrite the promise of greater American involvement should hostilities occur. Although not always viewed by the traditional "maneuver tribes" within the Army—that is, infantry, armor, and artillery—as combat arms, and perhaps not always perceived as completely

11 In the European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA) for instance, the Army is responsible for overseeing operation of AN/TPY-2 radar system in Turkey.

12 Steven J. Whitmore and John R. Deni, "NATO Missile Defense, EPAA, and the Army," *Strategic Studies Institute* monograph, forthcoming in fall 2013 (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2013).

13 "First THAAD Deployment Is to Guam," *Mostly Missile Defense* blog, April 3, 2013, <http://mostlymissiledefense.com>; current plans call for acquiring six THAAD systems, but the validated requirement is actually nine systems; Ken Quintanilla, "Argun Introduces Resolution 186," *KUAM News*, July 8, 2013, www.kuam.com/story/22778740/2013/07/08/arguon-introduces-resolution-186.

14 Steven J. Whitmore and John R. Deni, "NATO Missile Defense, EPAA, and the Army," *Strategic Studies Institute* monograph, forthcoming in summer 2013 (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2013); current plans call for acquiring six THAAD systems, but the validated requirement is actually nine systems.

15 Although it addresses threat evolution and future trends, the latest draft of the Army's Field Manual 3-27 on "Army Global Ballistic Missile Defense Operations," somewhat ironically avoids any mention of the growing interest among US allies and partners in hosting Army-operated ballistic missile defense systems.

equal, air and missile defense represents a vitally important mission set for the Army in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region today, one that is very likely to grow, if not because of Washington's intent, then because US allies and partners demand it.

Regional Security and Stability

When the US Army is not engaged directly in defense or deterrence, its most important mission in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region is engaging in security cooperation activities. Previously termed "mil-to-mil" activities, security cooperation includes training events and exercises, senior leader visits, educational programs, cooperative research and development, and multilateral acquisition.

One example of these activities is the biennial Talisman Saber exercise with Australia. Conducted over the course of three weeks every odd-numbered year since 2005, Talisman Saber involves tens of thousands of American and Australian troops taking part in combat training, readiness, and interoperability exercises across a wide spectrum of military activities. Events include amphibious assaults, parachute drops, urban operations, and live-fire training. Another example is the "Yudh Abhyas" exercise series between the Indian and US armies. Restarted in 2004 following a 42-year lull, "Yudh Abhyas" has grown from relatively small annual exchanges focused on command post activities to a much larger series of exercises involving hundreds of soldiers from each country engaged in a peacekeeping exercise scenario. The annual event rotates between India and the United States; in May 2013, roughly 400 Indian soldiers traveled to Ft. Bragg, North Carolina, to participate in Yudh Abhyas 2013. The two-week exercise also included expert academic exchanges on logistics, engineering, information operations, and chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and high-yield explosives (CBRNE). Across the region, and especially in Southeast Asia, there is a growing interest among US partners and allies to engage in these activities with American counterparts, and especially with the Army.¹⁶

Many security cooperation activities are conducted under the auspices of the US State Department and its broad responsibility for American foreign policy. In this context, Army security cooperation activities truly are *strategic* in impact, directly advancing US foreign policy. A military exercise with Australia, for example, benefits the institutional Army insofar as interoperability is maintained with a critical ally through the development of common tactics, techniques, and procedures. However, the benefits of such an event to the United States and its allies and partners extend beyond the tactical. Security cooperation activities strengthen the capability of allies and partners to maintain stability and security domestically as well as regionally. At the higher end of the capability spectrum, the United States promotes the ability of allies, such as Australia and India, to take increased roles in safeguarding regional security and stability.¹⁷ Even among America's closest, most capable allies in the Indo-Asia-Pacific theater, plenty of room exists for interoperability improvement, especially in terms of command and

16 Ernest Z. Bower and Duane Thiessen comments, "The U.S. Army in Asia: Opportunities and Challenges," *Center for Naval Analyses Workshop* (Arlington, Virginia, April 25, 2013).

17 Derek S. Reveron, *Exporting Security: International Engagement, Security Cooperation, and the Changing Face of the U.S. Military* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press: 2010), 31-33, 46-48.

control interoperability, developing a common operating picture, and avoiding blue-on-blue casualties.

For other partners, the United States helps establish capabilities that support the rule of law, promotes security and stability domestically, and ameliorates transnational security challenges such as international criminals, smugglers, or terrorists.¹⁸ In the Indo-Asia-Pacific region, which is vital to the US economy today, stability and security are essential to the flow of capital and goods and to continued economic growth.

Most of these missions could not be fulfilled by naval or air forces. Certainly, air and naval exercises can build allied interoperability, or foster the ability of less-capable partner militaries to interdict smugglers. But air and naval forces cannot speak “army” to Indo-Asia-Pacific land forces, which is critical given the dominance of land components across the Indo-Asia-Pacific region.¹⁹ Seven of the 10 largest armies in the world are in the Pacific theater, and 22 of the 27 countries in the region have an army officer as chief of defense. Moreover, the Army has an unmatched source of regional expertise—in the form of Foreign Area Officers (FAOs)—that the other US military services have yet to replicate and which forms a critical enabler in Army security cooperation. In sum, although it is not impossible to engage such counterpart institutions and officers without wearing Army green, such engagements are undoubtedly easier and arguably more fruitful when it is Army to Army.

Despite the importance of security cooperation activities in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region, several challenges threaten to undercut the effectiveness of the Army’s efforts. First among these is the impact of sequestration on operations and maintenance (O&M) accounts—which fund exercises—and on the State Department’s foreign assistance budget, which funds many of the train-and-equip programs implemented by the Army.²⁰ Already in 2013, the US Defense Department has scaled down training and exercise events for all military units except those preparing for imminent deployment to Afghanistan. The Army’s plans to send a battalion to Europe for six months in 2013 to participate in NATO Response Force (NRF) training was downsized to a small headquarters cell. The Pentagon is doing what it can to protect training and engagement funds pegged for Southeast Asia, but it may only be a matter of time before sequestration causes the United States to scale down or eliminate Army participation in exercises and training events across the Indo-Asia-Pacific region.²¹

Similarly, the Army continues to grapple with how it will shrink from roughly 570,000 active-duty soldiers to 490,000, and possibly lower if the path of sequestration remains unchanged. As Army end strength declines, it will become increasingly difficult to generate the forces necessary for a rigorous security cooperation program in the

18 For a discussion on how military forces contribute to addressing transnational security threats, see Paul J. Smith, “Transnational Security Threats and State Survival: A Role for the Military?” *Parameters* 30, no. 3 (Autumn 2000): 77-91.

19 Robert B. Brown and John E. Sterling comments, “The U.S. Army in Asia: Opportunities and Challenges,” *Center for Naval Analyses Workshop* (Arlington, Virginia, April 25, 2013).

20 On the State Department’s FY 2014 budget submission, see www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/budget/fy2014/assets/sta.pdf.

21 Ernest Z. Bower comments, “The U.S. Army in Asia: Opportunities and Challenges,” *Center for Naval Analyses Workshop* (Arlington, Virginia, April 25, 2013).

Indo-Asia-Pacific theater and elsewhere in a cost-effective way. The Army appears to be focusing more of its existing manpower on security cooperation in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region by having, for instance, both I Corps in Washington state and the 25th Infantry Division in Hawaii focus solely on the Pacific region instead of engaging in other worldwide missions such as Afghanistan.²²

Dealing with the Security Dilemma

The greatest challenge facing the United States today with regard to rebalancing in the Pacific is to avoid provoking an escalation. The act of rebalancing may so aggravate China as to spur it to behave more aggressively, undermining the very security and stability the rebalance effort was designed to bolster in the first place. This is the classic security dilemma—a situation in which one country's efforts to strengthen its security engenders a sense of insecurity among other countries. Some of those other countries may subsequently take steps to bolster their security, furthering the first country's sense that it must do still more, and an escalation, especially in the form of an arms race, ensues.

Among many observers, particularly those in China, the rebalance appears to be a one-way ticket to great power rivalry with China.²³ To officials in Beijing, the Pacific pivot looks and sounds like the centerpiece of an American strategy to contain Chinese growth. Clearly, China fears encirclement, and as a country with three contiguous neighbors with which it has fought wars—India, Russia, and Vietnam—over the last half century or so, those fears are not without some historical justification. Today, Beijing's sense of being surrounded by hostile powers becomes particularly acute when regional cooperation among even *potential* enemies, such as India and Japan, appears to be on the upswing.²⁴ In response, China's leaders argue that, in fact, the Chinese benefit from the existing order, and that China is actually a status quo power, not one determined to upset the American-built order.

Of course, China's neighbors do not necessarily share these perceptions. Beijing's submission of its "nine-dash line" map to the United Nations in 2009—designed to depict and hence justify the extent of Chinese territorial claims in the South China Sea—caused dramatic, negative reactions among other countries of the region. This development, as well as evidence of China wielding its economic power as a political weapon, has spurred other countries to engage with the United States, especially militarily.²⁵ However, none wants to feel forced to choose between one or the other, and many are now faced with questions

22 William Cole, "As Afghan Duty Winds Down, Army Adjusts Its Focus," *Honolulu Star-Advertiser*, May 14, 2013.

23 He Yafei, "The Trust Deficit: How the U.S. 'pivot' to Asia looks from Beijing," *Foreign Policy*, May 13, 2013, www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/05/13/how_china_sees_the_us_pivot_to_asia.

24 For example, see "Manmohan Singh to visit Japan to discuss security cooperation," *Hindustan Times*, November 2, 2012.

25 Keith Bradsher, "Amid Tension, China Blocks Vital Exports to Japan," *The New York Times*, September 22, 2010, www.nytimes.com/2010/09/23/business/global/23rare.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0. Later, China reportedly ended the *de facto* ban on exports of rare earth metals to Japan.

over how to navigate between the rising economic giant and the one country capable of acting as a security guarantor.²⁶

The challenge facing senior American leaders is how to ensure vital US interests, such as freedom of the seas, are maintained while also avoiding negative security dilemma outcomes. Such a task is difficult given the degree to which Beijing views *every* American action in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region as part of a broad anti-Chinese conspiracy. At a recent conference on American policy toward Asia, former Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Michèle Flournoy relayed one anecdote that illustrates the challenge of changing Chinese perceptions.²⁷ During a meeting with her senior Chinese military counterparts, she presented an historical analysis showing the distribution of US military forces and the security agreements the United States had arrayed against the Soviet Union at the height of the Cold War. She then showed the same types of information vis-à-vis China, all dramatically less than the United States used to contain the Soviet Union. In reaction, “their jaws hit the floor in a moment of profound cognitive dissonance.” The Chinese officials said they did not believe the data: it clashed heavily with what has become conventional wisdom in China, even within elite circles.

If the United States is to have any chance of reshaping those closely held Chinese perceptions, confidence- and security-building measures will be critical. They permit two or more countries to exchange information regarding the size, composition, disposition, movement, or use of their respective military forces and armaments, and to conduct bi- or multilateral activities to verify that information. If constructed and wielded successfully, they can help ensure normal military activities are not mistakenly perceived as threatening, thereby ameliorating the security dilemma.

The US Army has a strong record of success with such measures. Beginning with the intrusive on-site verification regime of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty approximately 25 years ago, and continuing with inspection and verification measures under the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) treaty, the Vienna Documents, and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the Army has decades of experience in building confidence through transparency and hence furthering strategic American interests.²⁸ Examples might include notifications of troop movements and exercises; exchanges of information on doctrine, strategy, unit locations, and defense budgets; inviting observers to exercises and training events; facilitating independent technical verification means; exchanges of personnel at military schoolhouses; establishment of “hotlines”; and multinational military training such as for disaster relief or other humanitarian missions.

26 David J. Greene, “U.S. Strategy In Southeast Asia: Power Broker, Not Hegemon,” *Joint Forces Quarterly* 64, 1st Quarter 2012: 131-133; Kenneth Lieberthal, “The American Pivot to Asia: Why President Obama’s turn to the East is easier said than done,” *Foreign Policy*, December 21, 2011, www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/12/21/the_american_pivot_to_asia?page=0,5; and Christian Jack, “Australia’s strategic and economic position between Washington and Beijing,” *East Asia Forum* blog, April 8, 2011, www.eastasiaforum.org/2011/04/08/18430/.

27 Michèle Flournoy comments, “The U.S. Army in Asia: Opportunities and Challenges,” *Center for Naval Analyses Workshop* (Arlington, Virginia, April 25, 2013).

28 The Army FAO program played an important role once again, this time in facilitating the development of confidence and trust.

In limited cases, the Army and the other services are pursuing some of the examples noted above. Since 2002, China has observed the annual Cobra Gold exercise between the armies of the United States, Thailand, and several Southeast Asian countries. For 2014, China has accepted an offer by the US Navy to participate for the first time in RIMPAC, the world's largest maritime exercise event. China has also joined the US Navy in counter-piracy training events. American critics argue that Beijing's participation in such activities only provides more opportunities for Chinese military intelligence officers to collect information regarding American military techniques and procedures. In all likelihood, this was also true in the Col War, with both Americans and Soviets/Russians collecting intelligence on each other whenever and wherever possible. However, at least in part, that is the point: to increase transparency for all involved, and in so doing, to build confidence and bolster security.

Aside from managing security risks in conducting such activities, another challenge may be the lack of formal mechanisms for such measures. Those mentioned above were implemented under the terms of binding treaties or other agreements, resulting in a formalized approach with less reliance on *ad hoc* tools and mechanisms. Although formal treaties may be a bridge too far in the short run, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' (ASEAN) Regional Forum—which already has as one of its objectives the development of “confidence-building and preventive diplomacy”—and the ASEAN Defense Ministers Plus meetings may provide the ideal venues for developing such measures between the US Army, the People's Liberation Army (PLA), and the armies of ASEAN member states.

Conclusion

Conventional wisdom holds that the US Army's primary role in the Indo-Asia-Pacific theater is guarding against a North Korean invasion. Arguably, the Army itself has promoted this over the last several years, placing great emphasis on campaign planning on the Korean peninsula. But such a conceptualization of how landpower is or could be utilized in the pursuit of American vital interests is unnecessarily limited. The strategic use of landpower in what is typically seen as a Naval or Air Force theater offers more benefits to the national security of the United States and its allies than is commonly acknowledged.

Defense and deterrence are critical roles the US Army plays on the Korean peninsula, but the aperture needs to widen beyond discussing potential responses to Pyongyang's aggression. It is logical to expect the Army to play a key role in any number of defense and deterrence related scenarios—assuming sequestration does not force a precipitous drop in Army end strength. This is especially true regarding ballistic missile defense throughout the Indo-Asia-Pacific region and well beyond Korea.

At the same time, the Army will continue shaping the international environment and preventing conflict, even though much of this mission is fundamentally diplomatic in nature. The other US military services cannot replicate Army-led security cooperation, especially in terms of engaging with the armies of critical allies and partners like India, Australia, Vietnam, and the Philippines. The US Army must overcome

institutional as well as budgetary challenges to fulfill its missions completely.

Finally, the Army can help the United States resolve the security dilemma with China. It may take a generation or more to convince the Chinese that the United States does not seek containment, and that US mil-to-mil engagement throughout the region actually benefits China. It is, however, an effort worth making.

A War Examined: Afghanistan

Todd R. Greentree

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ABSTRACT: After more than a decade of effort and cost in Afghanistan, the United States is withdrawing from combat without bringing the war to a decisive end. There are important strategic lessons of limited war to be relearned from the recurring problems of policy, strategy, and performance that the United States has experienced in the four largest and most protracted military interventions it has undertaken since World War II.

Comprehensive assessments of the US-led intervention in Afghanistan will necessarily have to wait until the undertaking ends. Later, when history passes judgment, things may well come to look different than they seem today. At this point, however, nearly a dozen years after the United States reacted to 9/11 by launching what would become its most protracted direct foreign military intervention, there is scope to outline some strategic lessons that can serve as guideposts in future contingencies.

Perhaps it is inevitable that current appraisals tend to emphasize errors of both policy and performance while predicting that the best we can expect in Afghanistan is to muddle through.¹ Still, critical analysis should not be an excuse to ignore important accomplishments. If the costly, long, and trying intervention in Afghanistan has achieved only a rough approximation of success, it cannot be called misfortune or defeat. Afghanistan has remained stable, and despite the sufferings the war has entailed, a majority of Afghans say the country is moving in the right direction.² The current drawdown is not withdrawal, and substantial US and international commitment to Afghanistan is almost certain to continue in some form. Even though the American appetite for overseas expeditions has dulled, the United States military has endured prolonged strain to remain proficient, cohesive, and preeminent. These are not inconsequential results.

And yet, the sum of these accomplishments has not yielded a decisive outcome. This circumstance suggests a first-order question:

Why has more than a decade of enormous effort and cost in Afghanistan led to such inconclusive results?

A search for the answer at Carlisle or Newport would naturally involve consulting Thucydides, Sun Tzu, Clausewitz, and their fellow

1 See, for example: Anthony C. Cordesman, "Afghanistan: The Death of a Strategy," *CSIS Commentary*, February 27, 2012, <http://csis.org/publication/afghanistan-death-strategy>; Bob Woodward, *Obama's Wars* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010); Rajiv Chandrasekaran, *Little America: The War within the War for Afghanistan* (New York: Random House, 2012); Tim Bird and Alex Marshall, *Afghanistan: How the West Lost Its Way* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011); Matt Waldman, "System Failure: The Underlying Causes of US Policy-making Errors in Afghanistan," *International Affairs* 89, no. 4 (2013): 825-843.

2 The Asia Foundation, "Afghanistan in 2012: A Survey of the Afghan People," <http://asiafoundation.org/country/afghanistan/2012-poll.php>

Todd Greentree is a member of the Changing Character of War Program at Oxford University. A former US Foreign Service Officer, his experience serving in five conflicts includes El Salvador and Afghanistan. His current research is on the consequences of the Reagan Doctrine Wars in Central America, Angola, and Afghanistan.

strategists for historical perspective. One way of applying the method to Afghanistan is to reframe the original question:

Why has the United States failed to achieve decisive outcomes on its terms in Afghanistan, Iraq, Vietnam, and Korea, the four major and protracted wars it has fought since World War II?

True enough, major differences caution against risking facile comparisons and false analogies. In addition to contrasts in geography and geopolitics, Korea was essentially a conventional war; Afghanistan has been an irregular war; Vietnam and Iraq combined elements of both. Korea and Vietnam were conflicts over divided nations within the Cold War; Iraq and Afghanistan were post-9/11 “new wars.” After dangerous escalation, Korea successfully restored a tense status quo; Vietnam became a quagmire that ended in disaster; and in Iraq and Afghanistan, regime change provoked virulent insurgencies that persist today.

Nevertheless, a fundamental pattern recurred in each of these US wars. Robert Osgood first pointed to the problems in his 1957 book about Korea, *Limited War: The Challenge to American Strategy*, which he updated in 1979 with *Limited War Revisited* about Vietnam. Others have reflected comparably on our recent limited wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.³ In all four, US leaders found themselves responding by force of arms to what were perceived as urgent security challenges, and in the process transformed what had been countries of secondary or peripheral interest into centers of national mission. However, the more intractable these interventions became, the more they also became publically controversial. As the United States struggled to withdraw forces from combat, the level of political intensity declined, even though less than triumphal outcomes disproved the conviction that “in war there is no substitute for victory.”

The following seven lessons are a first cut at answering why Afghanistan has been so inconclusive and why it fits this larger pattern. Rather than explanations based on the complexities of Afghanistan itself or the new character of war in the 21st century, the principal issues stem from the nature of limited war, along with the enduring problems of policy, strategy, and performance that have always accompanied prolonged US military interventions. The emphasis here is on the “know yourself” half of the strategic equation, although there is not space to offer more than an outline of analysis and recommendations.

The Lessons

Judging the Nature of War

This often-quoted passage from Clausewitz seems a good starting point:

³ Robert E. Osgood, *Limited War: The Challenge to American Strategy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957); Robert E. Osgood, *Limited War Revisited* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1979); for contemporary commentary, see Hew Strachan, “Strategy or Alibi? Obama, McChrystal and the Operational Level of War,” *Survival* 52, no. 5 (October–November 2010): 157–182; Etienne de Durand, “Stabilization Operations in the Era of ‘New Wars’: Addressing the Myths of Stabilization,” paper presented at a symposium on the Role of the Military in Peacebuilding, Japanese National Institute for Defense Studies (NIDS), February 3, 2009, <http://www.nids.go.jp/english/event/symposium/e2008.html>.

The first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgment that the commander and the statesman have to make . . . is the kind of war on which they are embarking; neither mistaking it for nor trying to turn it into something that it is alien to its nature.⁴

Contrary to this basic wisdom, civilian and military leaders have persistently misconceived the war in Afghanistan—and Afghanistan itself—as something to be turned into something else. If over-reaction to the first major foreign terrorist attack on US soil can be excused, the same cannot be said for inappropriate handling of military intervention and counterinsurgency. The most directly relevant parallels come not from the often-cited British and Soviet experiences in Afghanistan, but from the American experience in Vietnam. Rather than dismissing comparison between the two as “a false reading of history,” parallels abound, and at their root is how over-confidence in wealth and power led America astray. As Robert Komer, the first director of the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) pacification program in Vietnam, concluded, “. . . the U.S. grossly misjudged what it could actually accomplish with the effort it eventually made. In this sense at least, the U.S. did stumble into a quagmire.”⁵

Although it does not mount to the same level of tragedy as Vietnam, our misconception of the nature of the war in Afghanistan similarly distorted our approach to policy and strategy. Pashtun tribesmen who join the insurgency (and virtually all of them are Pashtuns) are, in David Kilcullen’s insightful phrase, “accidental guerrillas.” They fight US soldiers (and most Afghans refer to foreign troops as Americans) because foreign soldiers happen to be in their space, and because they come from a proud warrior culture where jihad against infidel invaders is a universally understood cause.⁶ By precisely the same logic, US troops in Afghanistan are accidental counterinsurgents. We fight the Afghan Taliban because the Taliban supported the terrorists who got into our space when they attacked New York and Washington, DC. But this war is not an accident that sprang from nowhere; al Qaeda and its Taliban hosts spawned from the mujahedin who fought the Soviet invaders in Afghanistan with US sponsorship in the 1980s. The point is not that the Cold War caused 9/11, but that the United States, through action and inaction, has been a contributing if unwitting protagonist since the origin of the Afghan conflict 34 years ago.

National Interest and the Changing Value of the Object

The “value of the object” drives the strategic dynamics of war in Afghanistan. War aims have been determined politically and vary according to perceptions, with the duration and level of effort dedicated to achieving them changing in accordance.

The US national interest in dismantling, degrading, and defeating al Qaeda in Afghanistan is, in principle, intrinsically high value. The

4 Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 88.

5 The first quote is from President Barack Obama, “Address to the Nation on the Way Forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan,” United States Military Academy, West Point, NY, December 1, 2009; Robert Komer, *Bureaucracy Does Its Thing: Institutional Constraints on US-GVN Performance* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 1972), vi.

6 David Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

problem is that this goal has largely been accomplished. Additional intervention to reduce the Taliban insurgency, protect the Afghan people, and build the Afghan state is indirectly linked to counterterrorism. Because these aims are of less obvious value, and therefore vaguer, policy and strategy are more complicated and difficult to sustain.

The level of US (and the International Security Assistance Force [ISAF]) effort has consisted of two cycles, both of them reactive. The initial counteroffensive to overthrow the Taliban and expel al Qaeda in 2001-02 saw an area of marginal interest transformed momentarily into the highest national priority. The value of the operation in Afghanistan declined as the shock of 9/11 receded, the Taliban and al Qaeda appeared to have been defeated (despite missing Osama Bin Laden), and US attention diverted to Iraq. In the second cycle, the shift to NATO command in 2006 signaled renewed interest, which increased as it became apparent that the Taliban insurgency had not only revived but gained the initiative. System lag—including presidential elections followed by extensive reassessment—consumed almost another three years before the response came in the form of the surge, which lasted only from 2009-11. Prompted by frustration and fatigue, the current ISAF reduction represents a de facto lowering in the value of the object. The result is a curtailment of effort and duration with correspondingly limited aims of transition to Afghan responsibility by 2014 and negotiated conflict resolution with the Taliban, while maintaining a level of commitment to permit residual in-country counterterrorist capability and maintain basic stability.

The United States is not Exempt from the Limits of Power

Afghanistan reaffirms that the United States, despite its exceptional character, is not exempt from the governing influences of limits. There are three types: The first type of limits result from intentional policy- and strategy-making to determine war aims and the means to achieve them. The second are external constraints of power in the form of, for example, prevailing moral and ethical norms, international laws, and the preferences of coalition partners or host governments. The third set of limits, and often the most determining, are the demands of war, which result from interaction between political and military effects in the course of conflict.⁷

There is widespread agreement that overthrowing the Taliban and establishing a new Afghan state was a just, timely, and well-executed response to the 9/11 attacks.⁸ Problems arose from the dynamics of war that emerged afterward. In hindsight, elevating the manhunt to eradicate al Qaeda from Afghanistan into a vengeful and single-minded Global War on Terror amounted to an exaggerated reaction to an unfamiliar threat. The subsequent slide into deeper military intervention and coun-

7 S.T. Hosmer, *Constraints on U.S. Military Strategies in Past Third World Conflicts* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 1984); Bradford A. Lee, "Strategic Interaction: Theory and History for Practitioners," in *Competitive Strategies for the 21st Century*, ed. Thomas G. Mahnken (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012).

8 Stephen D. Biddle, *Afghanistan and the Future of Warfare: Implications for the Army and Defense Policy*, (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, 2002); Henry Crumpton, *The Art of Intelligence: Lessons from a Life in the CIA's Clandestine Service* (New York: Penguin Books, 2012); James F. Dobbins, *After the Taliban: Nation-Building in Afghanistan* (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2008).

terinsurgency warfare did not result from the failings of the Afghan government, nor did the Taliban and their associates demonstrate superior political or military competence in the revived insurgency. Rather, the primary reason the experience has been so costly, protracted, and inconclusive rests with the United States. Despite meaningful adaptation, critical policy contradictions have remained unmanaged and strategy has been largely reactive. Performance in securing and stabilizing Afghanistan has proved feckless, first through underinvestment, and subsequently through an over-ambitious yet time-bound surge followed by a hasty and fatigue-induced drawdown.

Multiple limits to power in Afghanistan are obvious: Insurgents exploit asymmetrical advantages of irregular warfare to offset ISAF's overwhelming superiority. The Taliban has enjoyed sanctuary and support in Pakistan because the United States cannot afford escalation there. Other constraints are self-determined and include restraining violence, avoiding civilian casualties, and respecting human rights to comply with legal, ethical, and humanitarian norms whether or not they make optimal strategic sense. The legacy of the Vietnam syndrome ensures that minimizing US casualties is an imperative; avoiding casualties drives even stricter caveats among coalition partners.

Time is a critical dimension of power, both in the negative effects of protraction and in the sense of timing embodied in the concept of the culminating point, where power begins to decline once it has reached its peak. The initial culminating point in Afghanistan came with the overthrow of the Taliban when the United States served as the arbiter of power to establish the new Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. Once the government was in place, the United States required the cooperation of the Karzai regime and was unwilling to do anything that might prove destabilizing. As time unfolded, the war continued and intervention dragged on. US pressure to reform clashed with Afghan doubts about commitment and sensitivities over sovereignty. Trust was undermined. As a result, despite Afghan dependence on American and international support, dissension increased over elections, corruption, replacement of officials, civilian casualties, control over prisoners, and so forth. Caught in a commitment trap, "our leverage declined as our involvement deepened," as Komer put it about Vietnam.

Competing and Contradictory Aims

Paradoxes of limited war, intervention, and irregular warfare in Afghanistan have resulted in a pervasive set of contradictions that greatly complicated the relationship of ends to means. These contradictions have remained largely unmanaged. Among the most difficult are wicked problems, which occur when efforts to attack one problem set give rise to new contradictions.

For example: the Islamic Emirate fell in a matter of weeks with relatively little effort engineered by a few dozen Special Operations Forces (SOF) and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) operatives, while ten years later over 100,000 ISAF troops and 300,000 ANSF struggled to prevail over perhaps 30,000 Taliban insurgents. Counterterrorism and counterinsurgency methods have been at odds with state-building goals and sometimes with each other when Afghans hired to mobilize manhunters

became new “warlords” or key political leaders became targets on the kill/capture list (Joint Prioritized Effects List [JPEL]). The tactical imperative of force protection separates soldiers from the people they are supposed to protect without necessarily separating insurgents from the population. Poppy eradication has supported counternarcotics goals, but feeds the insurgency by depriving Afghans of their livelihoods, thus undermining counterinsurgency. Rapidly pumping billions of dollars into development programs in one of the world’s poorest countries was a sure way to promote corruption, as was the money that flowed into trucking, fuel, and private security contracts needed to sustain ISAF. Reliance on Pakistan for counterterrorism (CT) cooperation and overland access to Afghanistan has allowed it to provide essential sanctuary and support to the Taliban without penalty. Short rotation cycles helped sustain the force for the protracted conflict. However, the United States (and ISAF) have suffered from Groundhog Day syndrome, fighting, as in Vietnam, for 12 years one year at a time.

Overly Ambitious Aims

The US view of war as a transforming mission has guided intervention in Afghanistan. Unfortunately, strategy has failed for the most part to assess the distance between desire and possibility. Even when ambitions were grounded in reality, performance could never overcome the absence of a unified political-military approach or a reasonable timeframe.

Military defeat of the Taliban was never feasible for many reasons, but the primary problem was political. However necessary and reasonable it seemed to establish a competent Afghan government, the attempt to turn the country into something that was alien to its nature amounted to a gross form of mirroring by an often over-bearing patron. The prescription for “fixing” Afghanistan through combining a hypercentralized state, “democracy at the point of bayonets,” and governance programs, supplemented with expensive development projects, was based on modern liberal norms and social engineering methods largely disconnected from Afghanistan’s reality as a diverse and underdeveloped Islamic nation corroded by a generation of war.⁹ Even if this ambitious and enormously complex project had been feasible, execution swung from handing off nation-building to COIN by coalition, followed by an intensely compressed US effort that accompanied the surge to connect people to their marginally functioning government. Despite professions of support for “whole of government,” institutional divisions limited US performance by retarding the integration of political and military strategies, even after the belated embracing of COIN in 2009.¹⁰

The Struggle for Strategic Sufficiency

In Afghanistan, the U.S. military found it extremely difficult to lay down the conventional battlesword, long after it proved to be a disadvantage, and pick up the rapier of counterinsurgency (COIN). The essence of strategic sufficiency required adapting to the paradoxes of irregular

⁹ Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012).

¹⁰ Todd R. Greentree, “Bureaucracy Does Its Thing: US Performance and the Institutional Dimension of Strategy in Afghanistan,” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 36, no. 3 (March 2013): 325-356.

warfare by carefully limiting the employment of force while increasing force levels, balancing enemy-centric operations with population-centric COIN, and giving priority to Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) development. These measures were all essential elements of an even more important underlying strategic principle: the unity of political and military dimensions.

The problem with the full-fledged adoption of COIN in 2009 and the accompanying surge was not that it was the wrong strategy, but that it was implemented too late. Although successful in stemming the Taliban resurgence, the adjustment was, in essence, a reactive effort that attempted to compensate for strategic errors that had begun to accumulate immediately following the overthrow in late-2001.

The signal error was failure to develop the ANSF while the Taliban and al Qaeda were at their weakest. Doing so early on would have made it possible for the ANSF to maintain internal security while remaining a modest and sustainable size. Instead, ISAF focused on doing the fighting itself with aggressive SOF raiding (often conducted independently under US-UK Operation Enduring Freedom), task forces that conducted “clear and clear again” operations, and islands of armed development associated with Provincial Reconstruction Teams. Conducted as economy of force operations, the combination amounted to strategic insufficiency. The most damaging effect was GEN Stanley McChrystal’s “insurgent math” where kinetic actions, especially when they caused civilian casualties, produced more insurgents than they eliminated.

The more sophisticated approach that resulted from the realization that “you can’t kill or capture your way to victory in Afghanistan” amounted in fact to a rediscovery of the basic principles of irregular warfare and counterinsurgency. The increase in force levels made it possible to synchronize targeted enemy-centric actions with phased clear-hold-build campaigns conducted under restrictive rules of engagement, and supplemented by governance and development programs, all intended to secure and protect the population. Underlying the adaptation was the fundamental strategic principle that in war political and military dimensions are unified. Whereas in conventional war this relationship is handled, as Clausewitz put it, “at the level of cabinet,” in an internal conflict political and military interaction occurs at all levels: strategic, operational, and tactical.¹¹

However, that adaptation came after the war had become so protracted and had suffered from multiple counter-strategic limitations raises a serious question: Is big COIN inevitably a second-best solution? It was evident from the outset that belated embracing of COIN was never going to be sustainable for the length of time it would take to have full effect. Declared by the president in 2009 to be time-bound in the face of low domestic support, the US troop surge and the programs associated with it were enormously expensive and came as other ISAF forces had already begun to withdraw. Compounding this problem, allowing a Marine Expeditionary Force to concentrate in Helmand Province reduced ISAF operational flexibility by confining a majority of surge forces to an area that contained less than three percent of the Afghan

¹¹ For a brilliant soldier’s eye view see Emile Simpson, *War from the Ground Up: Twenty-First Century Combat as Politics* (London: Hurst & Co., 2012).

population and was not the insurgency's center of gravity. It was also recognized that the rapid jump in the ANSF to over 300,000 was beyond institutional and financial capacities, while the parallel governance push expected too much of the Afghan government too soon. The so-called "civilian surge" and accompanying injection of development funds were based on specious assumptions about performance and efficacy. Not only was there a failure to "break the interagency phalanx," the military remained over-dominant while civilians were never really "at war."¹²

It is too early to sort out the enduring effects, but the entire approach puts in mind advice from an earlier war, T. E. Lawrence's famous 27 Articles, the guide he wrote for British officers assigned to support the Arab revolt against the Ottoman Turks in World War I. Of these, the key lesson is contained in Article 15:

Do not try to do too much with your own hands. Better the [Afghans] do it tolerably than that you do it perfectly. It is their war, and you are to help them, not to win it for them. Actually, also, under the very odd conditions of [Afghanistan], your practical work will not be as good as, perhaps, you think it is.¹³

The Most Important Thing About a War is How it Ends

Afghanistan demonstrates that no matter how well you fight, the most important thing about a war is how it ends.¹⁴ Yet, in Afghanistan, as in Korea, Vietnam, and Iraq, the United States is exiting its combat mission unilaterally without terminating the war.

Even though the United States is not withdrawing altogether from Afghanistan, the President's assertion that "the tide of war is receding" gives rise to several observations about strategy and war termination. The first is that as protraction and costs increased without demonstrable success or clear aims, the value of the object declined. As with Vietnam, a principal consequence of Afghanistan (and Iraq) for the United States will be a lack of popular and political will to risk costly and protracted military interventions that is likely to endure, perhaps for a generation. Conversely, the tide is not receding for Afghans, and in fact the outcome may well be another rise in the cycle of war that has continued in one form or another since 1979. This is also the second time around for them with the United States. After the mujahedin forced the Soviets to withdraw in 1989, the US interest in Afghanistan declined and America downgraded its investment in conflict resolution. The resulting chaos ultimately led to the rise of the Taliban.

The idea of reconciling with the Taliban occurred several years ago, even while the notional aim was to defeat it. Again, conflict resolution is a much more limited aim than victory. Prospects are further constrained when force and diplomacy are misaligned. At this stage, aside from the dubious wisdom of power-sharing with Islamic extremists, attempting to wrangle the Taliban into negotiations at the same time troops are drawing down means that leverage is slipping away. The answer to the

12 Austin Long, *On "Other War": Lessons from Five Decades of RAND Counterinsurgency Research* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2006).

13 T. E. Lawrence, "Twenty-seven Articles," *Arab Bulletin*, 20 August 1917.

14 Fred C. Iklé, *Every War Must End*, revised edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

problem of ending the war in Afghanistan lies irrevocably in the past and in the traditional Afghan view of victory. As soon as the Taliban were overthrown in November 2001, most of them ceased fighting and were ready to align themselves with the victors. The new Afghan government was eager to settle these fighters back into their communities. However, the United States, focused single-mindedly on hunting terrorists, over-ruled reconciliation in any form and by doing so failed to exploit the advantage it held at the culminating point.¹⁵

There is additional risk in opting for exit short of ending the war. Bruce Hoffman points out that as a result of the withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan and the permissive environment in Pakistan, “. . . Al Qaeda may well regain the breathing space and cross-border physical sanctuary needed to ensure its continued existence.”¹⁶

Conclusion

The strategic lessons of Afghanistan, placed alongside those of Iraq, Vietnam, and Korea, resolve into a recurring pattern of problems and challenges that transcend the obvious differences. These lessons are attributable in differing degree to the nature of limited war, foreign military intervention, democracies at war, and irregular warfare, and all are common to US historical experience. On the assumption that Afghanistan will not be the last time intervention becomes a compelling national urgency for the United States, the premium here is on understanding and institutionalizing these lessons so they may be remembered in time.

There is a notion that a solution lies in having a unifying grand strategy. Often implied as nostalgia for the strategic coherence of the Cold War, it is just that, a notion. There may be reasons why the world would be a better place if the United States had a grand strategy. However, it is worth keeping in mind that having one focused so exclusively on containing communism offered no immediate solutions to the problems of limited war the United States encountered in Korea, while using combat troops to prevent dominoes from falling led to disaster in Vietnam. Likewise, it is not clear how a grand strategy in the high policy sense of “engagement” or “offshore balancing” would have helped guide US interventions in Afghanistan or Iraq once they were underway.

More useful than a unifying intellectual concept are workable approaches to policy, strategy, and performance that hold out the chance of improving on the historical record. There is nothing revolutionary in the practical fixes suggested below. Most of the lessons were learned in Vietnam and are being relearned today.¹⁷ There have been any number of subsequent efforts at interagency fixes, notably the 1993 Presidential Decision Directive 56 (PDD-56) “Managing Complex Contingency Operations” that followed the Black Hawk debacle in Somalia. Our

15 Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History*; Peter Tomsen, *The Wars of Afghanistan: Messianic Terrorism, Tribal Conflicts, and the Failures of Great Powers* (New York: Public Affairs, 2011).

16 Bruce Hoffman, “Al Qaeda’s Uncertain Future,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 36, no. 8 (June 2013): 635-653.

17 For example, there is more than an echo of Vietnam in the recent re-embracing of the core role and mission of the Special Forces advocated among the Special Operations community. See Hy S. Rothstein, *Afghanistan and the Troubled Future of Unconventional Warfare* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2006) and John D. Waghelstein, “Ruminations of a Pachyderm or What I Learned in the Counter-Insurgency Business,” *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 5, no. 3 (June 1994): 360-378.

recent interventions have prompted a new round of analyses and reports.¹⁸ Most of their recommendations point in a similar direction, where the first order of business is to get our own house in order. US institutions, with the partial exception of the Special Forces and CIA, were designed for purposes other than the complex and intractable political-military situations that prompt intervention. Adaptations that imply new legislation or major institutional reform may be beyond reach, but others are within decisionmaking grasp and a matter of leadership.

Probably the most important lesson of Afghanistan embodies the wisdom of Lawrence's Article 15 in the current desire to avoid large COIN-style intervention in favor of keeping the footprint small. As always, the problem lies not so much in recognizing what must be done, but rather in actually changing organizations and the ways they do business.

Fixing Policy, Strategy, and Performance

1. Build a systematic approach to mission and contingency planning beginning with three basic criteria for making policy determinations: (1) Identify interests, (2) Decide a degree of commitment, and (3) Estimate the probability of success at different levels of cost and risk.¹⁹
2. Develop a strategic framework to establish the basis for matching means to ends: (1) Analyze the nature of the situation as the first requirement for judgment; (2) Determine aims, including definitions of political and military success; (3) Describe the desired end state and how it is to be achieved, for example, through military victory, negotiated war termination, international peacekeeping, mediated conflict resolution, or ongoing management; (4) Identify limits, distinguishing between ends and means as tools of strategy, demands of war such as avoidance of escalation, and self-determined constraints; (5) Use net assessment as a basic tool for analyzing complex political and military interactions among multiple actors at global, regional, and internal levels, further distinguishing among national, regional, and local levels; (6) Assess risks from factors such as contradictions in aims, mismatches between aims and means, separation of military and political dimensions, and consequences of underinvestment; (7) Reassess, adapt, and repeat.
3. Develop a mission or campaign plan based on the strategic framework to include: (1) All instruments of power, using a principle of strategic sufficiency such as diplomacy, development, and defense (3D), (2) Align coalition and alliance contributions, including arrangements for leadership, command, coordination, and division of labor; (3) Plan force levels, distribution, and employment; (4) Integrate political and military operational planning that gives highest priority to: (a) state-building, including accountability, institutional bureaucracy, and rule

18 Some of the best of these include: Linda Robinson, "The Future of U.S. Special Operations Forces," *Council on Foreign Relations, Special Report No. 66*, April 2013; U.S. Army Special Operations Command, "ARSOF 2022," *Special Warfare* 26, no. 22 (April-June 2013); James Dubik, "Building Security Forces and Ministerial Capacity: Iraq as a Primer," *Institute for the Study of War*, April 2009; MG Michael T. Flynn, CPT Matt Pottinger, and Paul T. Batchelor, *Fixing Intel: A Blueprint for Making Intelligence Relevant in Afghanistan* (Center for a New American Security, January 2010).

19 This approach to policy determination was originally proposed in Graham Allison, Ernest May and Adam Yarmolinsky, "Limits to Intervention," *Foreign Affairs* 48, no. 2 (January 1970): 245-261.

- of law; and (b) force development (or security sector reform), including police; (5) Design supporting programs and projects; (6) Prepare to manage and mitigate the impacts of limits and risks.
4. Using the strategic framework and integrated political-military campaign plan, tailor an organizational structure to fit the specific situation and level of threat or conflict: (1) Seek unity of effort based on shared goals and maximize unity of command; (2) Establish clear civilian or military lead with designated authority determined by level of conflict and commitment; (3) Create a corresponding integrated civil-military team based on the Country Team or a Regional Command model; (4) Establish interagency structures in the field and Washington, DC, that mirror each other; (5) Strive for maximum continuity through extended assignments, repeated rotations, and maintaining stable leadership by establishing semipermanent headquarters and commands.
 5. Build a cadre of civilians who are trained, equipped, and oriented to operate as part of a civil-military team prepared for self-protection in conflict environments. Emphasize civilian capabilities and authorities to conduct political action in addition to program management and related responsibilities such as reporting and analysis.
 6. Refine doctrine and guidance, beginning for example, with a national policy study and directive, interagency guidance, and Department of Defense (DOD) joint publications, not limited to field manuals. Educate civilian and military officials from multiple organizations together and elaborate a shared civil-military doctrine. Consult the growing body of research on multiple aspects of counterinsurgency in Afghanistan and Iraq, such as the contribution of development projects to COIN, the effectiveness of the surge, and operational assessments.²⁰
 7. Make every effort to obey Article 15 by not trying to do too much. At the same time avoid doing too little. Maximize leverage, but respect the limits to power. Identify local allies and establish relationships of trust, but beware of commitment traps and the dangers of expediency. Consult widely. Spend more time listening and less time trying to dictate.

20 Eli Berman, Jacob Shapiro, Michael Callen, and Joseph Felter, "Do Working Men Rebel? Unemployment and Insurgency in Afghanistan, Iraq, and the Philippines," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 55, no. 4 (August 2011): 496-528; Stephen Biddle, Jeffrey A. Friedman, and Jacob N. Shapiro, "Testing the Surge: Why Did Violence Decline in Iraq in 2007?" *International Security* 37, no. 1 (Summer 2012): 7-40; and William P. Upshur, Jonathon W. Roginski, and David J. Killcullen, "Recognizing Systems in Afghanistan: Lessons Learned and New Approaches to Operational Assessments," *Prism* 3, no. 3 (June 2012): 87-104.

Cutting Losses: Ending Limited Interventions

David C. Brooks

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ABSTRACT: This article compares three limited interventions—the Bay of Pigs (1961), Beirut (1983), and Mogadishu (1992-93). Using Clausewitz’s idea that the pursuit of military victory must be linked to a “political object,” this essay focuses on the “retreat skill set” that allowed Presidents Kennedy, Reagan, and Clinton to conclude interventions whose costs had outrun potential benefits. These interventions can instruct today’s strategic leaders, who will confront terrorist movements located in the failed states and mega-cities of the 21st century.

“Once the expenditure . . . exceeds the value of the political object, the object must be renounced”

Carl von Clausewitz¹

Most American presidents have committed military force believing the outcome will be successful. Nonetheless, as the past half-century has shown, America’s uses of military force sometimes failed to yield satisfying results. This review compares three US interventions—the Bay of Pigs (1961); Beirut (1983); and Mogadishu (1992-93)—which fell short of the hopes of the administrations that launched them. These three cases, which span four decades and the end of the Cold War, share a number of striking and suggestive similarities. They speak to the problems not only of limited interventions, but also of larger operations, including our dilemmas in Afghanistan and Iraq, and likely challenges in future operations against terrorist actors. Each episode under study here was presidentially driven and used limited military force as a catalyst for political change in a target country. In every case, the target society had a recent history of political-military conflict and contained what demographers call a “youth bulge,” a population curve skewed in favor of the young, which included many military-age males.² In all three, the mission’s outcome shocked the American president who had authorized it. Finally, in each instance, the US chief executive chose to end the operation and cut his losses rather than pursue victory. The president made his decision when, to borrow from the Prussian military theorist Carl von Clausewitz, the operation had reached the crossover point where its growing costs exceeded the value of its original “political object.”³ All three were regarded as political “disasters” in their times. Nonetheless, two of these presidents easily won reelection and in all likelihood John F. Kennedy would have done the same.

David C. Brooks is a 20-year veteran of the US Foreign Service. He speaks Spanish, Polish, and Portuguese. He has a PhD in Latin American History from the University of Connecticut and a Master’s Degree from the National War College, where he wrote this essay. He has published articles in the *International Herald Tribune*, *Marine Corps Gazette*, and *The Journal of Latin American Studies*.

1 Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. and ed. Michael E. Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 92.

2 Jack A. Goldstone, Eric P. Kaufmann, and Monica Duffy Toft, *Political Demography: How Population Changes are Reshaping International Security and National Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 5.

3 Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, 92.

This analysis maintains that studies of American warfare are too “victory centric.” When scholars examine defeats, reversals, or frustrating results, they frequently use a victory-tinted lens. They ask, “What went wrong?” as they try to locate the reason for the absence of victory, a reason that is hopefully reversible in future operations. This approach treats victory as the norm and military frustration as an aberration, an attitude that distorts our understanding of conflict and its unpredictable results. Consequently, while this commentary elucidates certain classic problems in limited interventions, it focuses on “the loss-cutting skill set,” those abilities that enable strategic leaders to accept a tactical reverse to avoid remaining mired in a protracted and likely more costly imbroglio.

The cases start when the president received word his mission had gone awry. Historical background follows.⁴ Finally, this essay analyzes how three presidents responded to mission failure and relates those responses to recent and likely future political-military challenges.

JFK and Playa Girón

On 18 April 1961, President John F. Kennedy hosted the annual Congressional Reception. During the event, bad news came in from *Playa Girón* (Giron Beach), the landing site for the Bay of Pigs invasion. The president had inherited this enterprise. The scheme provided logistical backing and limited air support to a 1,200-man, CIA-trained brigade of Cuban exiles that would land in Cuba and overthrow Fidel Castro. Kennedy had continued the project, but he prohibited overt US military intervention.

By that evening, the Cuban exiles’ mission “was going in the shit house,” according to one JFK advisor.⁵ Castro’s pilots had sunk two of the exiles’ supply ships, stranding them on the beach. After the party, Kennedy’s advisors—including CIA Deputy Director Richard Bissell, the invasion’s chief architect, and Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Arleigh Burke—urged direct US intervention. Suddenly, the new President faced possible war in Cuba.

A Complex Neighbor

Cuba was a difficult target. A large island with a mountainous interior, Cuba had been ruled for four centuries by Spain and, as a consequence, had become a society that featured sharp divisions of race and class. After 1898, Cuba fell under American influence. Turbulence and rampant corruption blighted the country’s politics. As Cuba entered the 1960s, its society contained something of a “youth bulge,” with just under a third of the population below the age of thirty.⁶ Rebel forces led by Fidel Castro and Che Guevara came to power in 1959. Castro then polarized Cuba with a radical communist program. He attracted support from the young, the poor, rural peasants, and Cuba’s black population.

4 Graham T. Allison, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: Little Brown, 1971).

5 Kenneth O’Donnell quoted in Peter Wyden, *Bay of Pigs: The Untold Story* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979), 268.

6 On Cuba’s 1960 demographics, see United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *Population Pyramids of the World from 1950-2100*, <http://populationpyramid.net/Cuba/1960/>.

Simultaneously, Castro's leftward lunge alienated middle- and upper-class Cubans, many of whom fled. The United States broke relations with Havana in 1961.⁷

JFK's Advisors at Odds

Kennedy received his first Bay of Pigs briefing one week after inauguration. The plan divided his advisors, a split represented by Richard Bissell, a CIA officer on one side, and Arthur Schlesinger, President Kennedy's Special Assistant, on the other. Bissell was confident the Cuban exiles could overthrow Castro. Seven years earlier, the CIA had organized dissident Guatemalan army officers to bring down Jacobo Arbenz, Guatemala's leftist President. The CIA believed it could do the same in Cuba.⁸ Moreover, Bissell and CIA Director Allen Dulles thought that, if the exiles faced defeat, Kennedy would order US intervention.⁹ In contrast, JFK advisor Arthur Schlesinger worried the exiles lacked an adequate political program. When the CIA passed the group's draft to Schlesinger, he found it filled with appeals to "the foreign investor, the banker, the dispossessed property owner, but [it] had very little to say to the worker, the farmer or the Negro."¹⁰ These doubts were compounded by an even greater strategic challenge. Before the exiles had even landed, their foe knew American strategy. Fidel Castro's comrade-in-arms, Che Guevara, had witnessed the 1954 coup in Guatemala. Consequently, Castro had purged the army and created large, armed militias that reportedly numbered as many as two hundred thousand.¹¹

Picking Up the Pieces

Pushed to intervene, Kennedy refused. He said later that the CIA and the Joint Chiefs "were sure I'd give in [and order in the U.S. military] . . . Well, they had me figured all wrong."¹² Though proud in private, Kennedy was contrite in public. He held a press conference where he said: "Victory has a hundred fathers, but defeat is an orphan." Later, in response to probing questions, Kennedy stated: "I am the responsible officer of the government."¹³ Days afterward, speaking to newspaper

7 On Castro's leadership style, see *Edward Gonzalez, Cuba Under Castro: The Limits of Charisma* (New York: Houghton Mifflin) 1974. For a historical background on Cuba and its complicated relationship with the United States, see Louis A. Pérez, *Cuba and the United States: Ties of Singular Intimacy* (Athens: University of Georgia, 2003).

8 The phrase "regime change" is of more recent vintage, but it appears to apply here. On the CIA-sponsored coup in Guatemala in 1954, see Stephen Kinzer and Stephen Schlesinger, *Bitter Fruit: The Story Of The American Coup In Guatemala* (Boston, Harvard University Press, 2005) and Richard Immerman, *The CIA in Guatemala: The Foreign Policy of Intervention* (Austin: University of Texas, 1983).

9 For Allen Dulles's opinion that the President might relax restrictions on the operation, see Lucien S. Vandembroucke, "The Confessions of Allen Dulles: New Evidence on the Bay of Pigs," *Diplomatic History* 8, no. 4 (1984): 369; for Richard Bissell's opinion on the same issue, see Richard M. Bissell, "Response to Lucien S. Vandembroucke, 'The Confessions of Allen Dulles: New Evidence on the Bay of Pigs,'" *Diplomatic History* 8, no. 4 (1984): 380.

10 Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), 260.

11 Jon Lee Anderson, *Che Guevara: A Revolutionary Life* (New York: Grove Press, 1977), 142-145; Jorge G. Castañeda, *Compañero: The Life and Death of Che Guevara* (New York: Knopf, 1997), 69-71; Wyden, *Bay of Pigs*, 323.

12 Robert Dallek, *An Unfinished Life: John F. Kennedy 1917-1963* (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 2003), 365.

13 David Greenberg, "The Goal: Admitting Failure Without Being a Failure," *The New York Times*, January 14, 2007, http://www.nytimes.com/2007/01/14/weekinreview/14green.html?_r=0; see also: "The American Presidency Project," *The President's News Conference*, April 21, 1961, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=8077>

editors, Kennedy rhetorically shook his fist at Castro, asserting that the United States would intervene against further “communist penetration” in the Western Hemisphere.¹⁴

This combination of frankness and fist-shaking worked. Kennedy scored an 83 percent approval rating in the next Gallup poll. A perplexed Kennedy remarked, “The worse I do, the more popular I get.”¹⁵ Despite his popularity, the President’s Cuba tribulations continued. The United States later gave Cuba \$53 million in aid to free the men captured at the Bay of Pigs.¹⁶

Ronald Reagan: Bad News from Beirut

On Saturday, 22 October 1983, President Ronald Reagan was at the Augusta National Golf Course.¹⁷ At 2:30 a.m., National Security Advisor Robert McFarlane called and told him that a suicide bomber had driven a dynamite-laden truck into the Marine barracks in Beirut, and 241 Marines had perished.¹⁸

How did this happen? US forces had entered Lebanon to forestall conflict, not fall victim to it. Israel had invaded Lebanon on 6 June 1982 to eliminate the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). Yet Israel’s attack drew international criticism. The besieged PLO looked for a way out. The United States contributed troops to a multinational operation to extricate the PLO.¹⁹ All went smoothly and 15,000 PLO fighters left for Tunisia and the multinational forces withdrew.²⁰

Success, however, proved fleeting. In September, a one-two punch hit Lebanon. On 14 September, Lebanese President Bashir Gemayal, a Maronite Christian and US ally, was assassinated. From 17 to 19 September, Lebanese Phalangist militia massacred 700 Palestinian refugees in Israeli-controlled territory.²¹ On 29 September, President Reagan returned 1,200 Marines to Beirut to “provide an interposition force” so the Lebanese government could pacify the country.²²

14 Edward T. Folliard, “Bay of Pigs,” *The Washington Post*, April 21, 1961, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/national/2000/popup0421.htm>.

15 Dallek, *An Unfinished Life*.

16 The aid came in the form of baby food and medicine, which was exchanged for the imprisoned Cuban exiles. “The Bay of Pigs,” linked from the *John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum*, <http://www.jfklibrary.org/JFK/JFK-in-History/The-Bay-of-Pigs.aspx>

17 Ronald Reagan, *An American Life: The Autobiography* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2011). Kindle Edition.

18 Reagan, *An American Life*. The truck and its cargo exploded with an estimated force of 12,000 pounds of TNT; Thomas Collelo, ed., *Lebanon: A Country Study* (Washington DC: Library of Congress, 1989), 207.

19 David Howell Petraeus, “The American Military and the Lessons of Vietnam: A study in Military Influence and the Use of Force in the Post-Vietnam Era,” (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1987), 173.

20 *Ibid.*, 174.

21 *Ibid.*, 176.

22 Adam B. Lowther provides an excellent summary of Lebanon’s disintegration. Adam B. Lowther, *Americans and Asymmetric Conflict* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2007), 5; accessed April 6, 2013, from Praeger Security International Online database: <http://psi.praeger.com.ezproxy6.ndu.edu/doc.aspx?d=/books/gpg/C9635/C9635-538.xml>

Many Societies, One State

Lebanon had a long history of ethno-religious division.²³ The country's main groups—Maronite Christians, Sunni Muslims, Shiites, and Druze—all possessed distinct lineages, loyalties, and religious visions. Israel's victory in 1948 and Jordan's King Hussein's expulsion of the PLO in 1970 sent thousands of Palestinians into Lebanon, adding to the volatile mix. Desperate to control the PLO, the Lebanese government asked Damascus for help, so the Syrians expanded their influence. In 1975, civil war erupted and the Christians were pitted against Muslims.²⁴ In reality, the contest was multisided with both the Israelis and the Syrians supporting local factions.²⁵ By 1983, fighting had destroyed much of Beirut. Religious division drove the violence, but even more than in the case of Cuba, demographic factors fed conflict. With over a third of the population under age 30 and fully a quarter under age 20, there were ample recruits for sectarian factions, and this same youth bulge was guaranteed to strain the social systems of any attempt at national governance.²⁶

A Vision-Driven Mission

In returning the Marines to Lebanon, President Reagan, Secretary of State George Shultz, and National Security Advisor Robert McFarlane were motivated by a broader vision for Middle East peace. In Lebanon's tragedy, they saw possibility. Reagan hoped peace in Lebanon would create a "golden opportunity . . . toward achieving a long-term settlement."²⁷ The administration launched a plan that would offer the Palestinians a semi-autonomous territory federated with Jordan.²⁸

Where some saw opportunity, however, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger saw danger. Weinberger did not perceive a US vital interest in Lebanon and opposed the deployment.²⁹ In the end, the mission went forward, albeit cautiously. About 1,500 Marines took positions at the Beirut airport, and strict rules of engagement governed their operations.

Although welcomed initially, the Marines' relations with various Lebanese groups soon soured. In the fall of 1982, US forces bolstered the Lebanese army in its fight against Syrian allies, effectively evaporating any notion of the Marines' neutrality.³⁰ On 16 April 1983, a van laden with explosives detonated at the US Embassy, killing scores of Americans and Lebanese employees.³¹ Then on 25 October, a second vehicle-borne bomb delivered the fatal blow that destroyed the Marine barracks. The peacekeeping mission had become a massacre.

23 Kamal Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered* (Berkeley: University of California, 1990), 173.

24 Lowther, *Americans and Asymmetric Conflict*, 1-4.

25 Elizabeth Picard, *Lebanon: A Shattered Country* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1988), 148.

26 For a graphical representation of Lebanon's 1980 population-age skew, see United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *Population Pyramids of the World from 1950-2100*, <http://populationpyramid.net/Lebanon/1960/>

27 Reagan, *An American Life*.

28 Robert C. McFarlane, *Special Trust* (New York: Cadell and Davies, 1994), 212.

29 Caspar Weinberger, *Fighting for Peace* (New York: Warner Books, 1990), 146.

30 Timothy J. Geraghty, "25 Years Later: We Came in Peace," *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, 134/10/1,268 (2008): 3.

31 Reagan, *An American Life*; Lowther, *Americans and Asymmetric Conflict*, 7.

Reagan Responds

The bombing devastated and angered President Reagan. Nonetheless, he saw little purpose in retribution since, in his words, it was “difficult to establish . . . who was responsible.”³² Reagan spoke to the nation on 27 October 1983. In this address, he had a bit of the “luck of the Irish.” Just two days before, the United States had invaded Grenada. Years later, Secretary Shultz noted how the images of victory from Grenada balanced the bad news from Beirut.³³ Beyond Grenada, “the Great Communicator” was at his best that evening. He explained why he had sent the Marines to Lebanon, taking responsibility for the tragedy. Reagan cited Beirut, Grenada, and the Soviet shoot-down of a Korean airliner to demonstrate that the world was filled with danger, and he called for continued US engagement in the Middle East.³⁴

In the following months, the Marines hunkered down at the airport and later moved to ships off shore. The United States undertook air strikes and battleship bombardments against Syrian positions but launched no specific retaliation for the Marine barracks bombing. In a confrontation with the Syrians, anti-aircraft fire downed two US aircraft. The Syrians captured US Navy pilot Lieutenant Robert O. Goodman and held him from December 1983 to January 1984, when he was released to the Reverend Jesse Jackson.³⁵ In March, President Reagan withdrew the Marines. As he later wrote: “Our policy wasn’t working. We couldn’t . . . run the risk of another suicide attack [And] no one wanted to commit our troops to a full-scale war in the Middle East.”³⁶

Clinton and Mogadishu

President Clinton altered his Sunday schedule for 2 October 1993. Typically, he attended a Methodist church, but on this day he went to a special mass at St. Matthew’s Cathedral.³⁷ While the President listened to the sermon, his aides monitored breaking events in Somalia. American troops were in that country as part of a United Nations (UN) mission (UNOSOM II) to conduct famine relief. For some time, the military muscle of the mission, Task Force Ranger (TFR), had pursued Mohammed Farah Aidid, a recalcitrant Somali warlord whose followers had killed twenty-four Pakistani peacekeepers.³⁸

After the service, Clinton returned to the White House and gathered with his advisors. The reports from Mogadishu turned ominous. Instead of capturing Aidid, Task Force Ranger had encountered a hail of resistance. Somali militia had killed six Americans and combat raged. In response, Clinton exploded, saying: “I can’t believe we’re being pushed

32 Reagan, *An American Life*.

33 George Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph: Diplomacy, Power, and the Victory of the American Ideal* (New York: Scribner and Sons, 1995). Kindle Edition.

34 President Ronald Reagan’s Televised Address to the United States, October 27, 1983, *The Beirut Memorial Online: They Came in Peace*, <http://www.beirut-memorial.org/history/reagan.html>

35 See *Ebony Update*, May 1987, http://books.google.com/books?id=Gp2ts_89clMC&pg=PA124&clpg=PA124&dq=robert+o.+goodman&source=bl&ots=v98SVE95ks&sig=-G2aenqBDNj8wBvDqJubg110i8&hl=en&sa=X&ei=uIRfUf38DYSj0QHmu4GgBw&sqi=2&ved=0CEf0Q6AEwBw#v=onepage&q=robert%20o.%20goodman&f=false

36 Reagan, *An American Life*.

37 George Stephanopoulos, *All Too Human: A Political Education* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2000). 211. Kindle Edition.

38 *Ibid.*, 212

around by these two-bit pricks.”³⁹ George Stephanopoulos, Clinton’s Senior Advisor on Policy and Strategy, sympathized with the president. The US intervention had saved thousands of Somalis by guaranteeing them access to food aid. Now, instead of providing security, US troops were trapped and taking casualties in the rabbit warren that was Mogadishu.

Land of the Clans

Somalia was an impoverished society, but not a simple one. Clan and sub-clan affiliations dominated the country’s culture.⁴⁰ The warrior ethos of Somali men powered the clan system. British scholar I. M. Lewis traced the roots of Somali males’ militant individualism to their history as herdsmen, which cultivated a sense in each Somali man that he had to rely on himself and his clan to defend his family and flock.⁴¹ Somalia’s history bore out Lewis’s reading. In the early 20th century, the country spawned a celebrated hero of Muslim anticolonial resistance: Mohammed Abdullah Hassan. Dubbed “the Mad Mullah,” Hassan fought the British, the Italians, and the Ethiopians from 1900-1920. For a time, he established a Muslim state in the Somali hinterland. A literate man, Hassan once sent a taunting note to his British pursuers that read like a Somali warrior *haiku*.

I like war, and you do not . . . The country is of no use to you. If you want wood and stone you can get them in plenty. There are also many ant heaps. The sun is very hot.⁴²

Eventually, the British broke the Mad Mullah’s Muslim state with air power. Even so, they never captured Abdullah Hassan.⁴³

Since Hassan’s time, Somalia lurched between anarchy and strongman rule. Nine years after gaining independence in 1960, Major General Mohammed Siad Barre took power in a coup. He governed with an iron hand for two decades. In January 1991, Barre was forced from power by an opposition that devolved into factions with his departure. The resulting chaos led to starvation, and clan leaders used control of food aid as a weapon. By 1992, Somalia’s suffering had gone global, attracting the attention of the United Nations and the United States.⁴⁴ Despite the horrific conditions, Somalia possessed the most dramatic “youth bulge” of the cases under study here, with about a third of the population under age 20, an ominous statistic in a country with strong clan and

39 Ibid., 214.

40 Ioan Lewis, *Blood and Bone: The Call of Kinship in Somali Society* (Lawrenceville, NJ: Red Sea Press, 1994).

41 John L. Hirsch and Robert B. Oakley, *Somalia and Operation Restore Hope: Reflections on Peacemaking and Peacekeeping* (Washington DC: Institute of Peace Press, 1995), 4.

42 Andrew Cockburn, “Somalia: A Failed State?” *National Geographic Online*, July 2002, <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/0207/feature3/>

43 The so-called “Mad Mullah” died of influenza in December, 1920. Abdisalam M. Issa-Salwe, “The Failure of The Daraawiish State, The Clash Between Somali Clanship and State System,” (Paper Presented at the 5th International Congress of Somali Studies, December 1993, Thames Valley University, London, UK) <http://www.somaliawatch.org/archivemar03/040629602.htm>

44 Joshua L. Gleis, *Withdrawing Under Fire: Lessons Learned from Islamist Insurgencies* (Washington DC: Potomac Books, 2011), 62.

military traditions.⁴⁵ Pressure grew on the United Nations and the Bush administration to respond to the unfolding horror in the Horn of Africa.

Negotiation and "Disarmament Lite"

The UN's first Somalia mission (UNOSOM I, April-December 1992) failed because its military forces could not handle local warlords like Mohammed Farah Aidid. (UNOSOM I never had more than 1,000 personnel on the ground.) In the wake of the UN's failure, a reluctant Bush administration pondered its options. National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft expressed the skeptics' case best when, during one meeting he said: "Sure, we can get in But how do we get out?"⁴⁶

Nonetheless, Washington yielded to international pressure and organized a new Unified Task Force (UNITAF), US-led and sanctioned by the UN, that went ashore on 5 December 1992. UNITAF contained 37,000 soldiers from 14 countries, including 25,000 Americans. The task force's muscled-up military was matched with a method heavy on diplomacy. President Bush sent Ambassador Robert Oakley to Somalia. He negotiated with clan warlords, in particular Mohammed Farah Aidid. Oakley saw such talks as a pragmatic necessity. The warlords were hardly models of statesmanship, but they were not necessarily ideologically anti-American. No effort was made to forcibly disarm the clans.⁴⁷ This approach—a significant military presence, negotiations with warlords, and "disarmament lite"—brought relative peace to Mogadishu from March to June 1993.⁴⁸

Mission Creep or Mission Leap?

With conditions stabilized, UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Gali wanted the United Nations to assume an expanded mission that included: full disarmament, resettling refugees, and restoring "law and order throughout Somalia."⁴⁹ Toward this end, UNOSOM II took over in May 1993. A Turkish general headed the operation with US Admiral Jonathan Howe acting as Boutros-Gali's special representative. UNOSOM II was far smaller than UNITAF, with a maximum of 12,000 troops.⁵⁰

Relations between the UN and the Somalis, particularly Aidid, plunged under UNOSOM II. Aidid did not respect the UN, while Boutros-Gali and Admiral Howe saw an outlaw in the Somali clan

45 For Somalia's population pyramid in 1990, see United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *Population Pyramids of the World from 1950-2100*, <http://populationpyramid.net/Somalia/1990/>

46 Gleis, *Withdrawing Under Fire*, 63.

47 Ibid.

48 Jonathan Stevenson, *Losing Mogadishu: Testing U.S. Policy in Somalia* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1995), 90.

49 The UN Refugee Agency, *Resolution 814 (1993) Adopted by the Security Council at its 3188th Meeting, on 26 March 1993*, <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3b00f21143.html>; for Boutros-Gali's and Admiral Howe's conviction that Somalia required "a comprehensive disarmament," see Robert F. Baumann, Lawrence A. Yates, and Versalle F. Washington, *My Clan Against the World*, US and Coalition Forces in Somalia 1992-1994 (Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2004), 100-101; for a diplomatic perspective on the gear-shift from UNITAF to UNOSOM II, see Hirsch and Oakley, *Somalia and Operation Restore Hope*, 101-114.

50 Gleis, *Withdrawing Under Fire*, 67.

leader.⁵¹ After an abortive 5 June 1993 raid on Aidid's radio station, UN forces attacked several of his power centers.⁵² Days later, the UN command published a wanted poster that put a \$25,000 bounty on Aidid's head, in effect making him "Public Enemy Number One" as far as the UN mission was concerned.⁵³

While the UN/US forces pursued Mogadishu's most-wanted warlord, the Clinton administration sought to trim its exposure in Somalia, withdrawing heavy weapons and, in the early fall, denying requests for armor and AC-130 gunships. As frustration over the Aidid manhunt mounted, US commanders got help in Task Force Ranger. On 4 October, TF Ranger raided Aidid's headquarters in an operation remembered as "Black Hawk Down."⁵⁴

The story of the Battle of Mogadishu is well known.⁵⁵ For this study, only key features that contributed to US defeat are relevant. First, the US airmobile tactics did not surprise the Somalis, who had seen the United States use such an approach several times before.⁵⁶ Second, the Somalis, likely with Islamist assistance, put timers on rocket-propelled grenades to use against helicopters. Employing this tactic, Aidid's militiamen downed two of TF Ranger's Blackhawks.⁵⁷ Finally, Task Force Ranger confronted a sociological challenge. Once the shooting started, armed Somalis attacked from all sides, using children as spotters and women as human shields.⁵⁸ Although American marksmanship skewed the casualty balance—the United States lost 18 soldiers, with 1 captured (helicopter pilot Mike Durant) while the Somalis lost between 500 and 2,000—when global media broadcast Somali mobs dragging a US soldier's corpse through the streets, the mission was seen as a failure.⁵⁹

Clinton Responds

On 6 October, Clinton's national security team met. The commanders in Mogadishu wanted to hunt down Aidid.⁶⁰ Nonetheless, Clinton refused. He feared that, even were Aidid captured, Washington "would own Somalia, and there was no guarantee that we could put it together . . ." ⁶¹ Clinton sent Ambassador Oakley to negotiate to free Mike Durant, which the Ambassador did after eleven days of talks with Aidid.⁶² US forces increased and the Clinton administration imposed a 6-month deadline for withdrawal. On 7 October 1993, Clinton addressed the

51 Aidid harbored a personal grudge against Boutros-Gali, an Egyptian diplomat whom Aidid suspected had supported former Aidid's old foe, Somali dictator Siad Barre. See Baumann, Yates, and Washington, "My Clan Against the World," 118.

52 Baumann, Yates, and Washington, *My Clan Against the World*, 125.

53 *Frontline Interview with Admiral Jonathan Howe*, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/ambush/interviews/howe.html>

54 The term "Black Hawk Down" is the title of the classic book on the Battle of Mogadishu by Mark Bowden. Mark Bowden, *Black Hawk Down: A Story of Modern War* (New York: Penguin Putnam, 1999).

55 The best tactical account is Bowden, *Black Hawk Down*.

56 Stevenson, *Losing Mogadishu*, 94.

57 Baumann, Yates, and Washington, *My Clan Against the World*, 144.

58 *Ibid.*, 147.

59 Stevenson, *Losing Mogadishu*, 94-95; Gleis, *Withdrawing Under Fire*, 73. On bodies dragged through the streets, see Bowden, *Black Hawk Down*, 398.

60 Bowden, *Black Hawk Down*, 379-380.

61 William Jefferson Clinton, *My Life* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), 551.

62 Bowden, *Black Hawk Down*, 401-402.

nation. He pledged the United States would leave Somalia “on our terms.” In concluding, he said, “Our mission from this day forward is to increase our strength . . . , bring our soldiers out, and bring them home.”⁶³ By March 1994, all American forces had left Mogadishu.

Beyond Traditional Lessons

The three interventions examined share certain patterns. First, in no case did the president “drill down” and rigorously question the mission’s plan prior to its execution. All three chief executives were “hands-off” leaders, something that Kennedy and Clinton regretted and swore they would never repeat. In Cuba and Somalia, US opponents understood the strategies and tactics employed against them and, thus, could thwart the same. Both Beirut and Somalia fell victim to “mission creep” (or, better said, mission leap) as political goals expanded without the means to accomplish them. In every case, sociological factors upended US plans: Castro’s militia and the urban combat arenas in Beirut and Mogadishu favored local forces. Finally, each president was bedeviled by a hostage crisis: Kennedy had to ransom the Cuban exiles; Reagan had to rely on Jesse Jackson to free Navy pilot Goodman; and Clinton had Ambassador Oakley negotiate Robert Durant’s recovery.

None of the above are offered as traditional lessons in the sense of constituting easily correctable tactical errors that, but for their commission, victory would have ensued. Instead, they represent classic (and perhaps fatal) symptoms of limited interventions gone bad. In the view of this author, each of these interventions had entered what economists call “the area of diminishing returns.” Even a perfect amphibious assault would not have overcome Castro’s militia at this early, militant stage in the revolution he led. Even a better defended Beirut barracks would not have permitted the Marines to control Lebanon’s surging sectarian groups. And had Clinton continued after Mohammed Farah Aidid, his capture was hardly assured and the ensuing combat, while almost certainly featuring a kill ratio in favor of the United States, would also have likely multiplied enemies among Mogadishu’s teeming militias.

While the three presidents can be faulted for launching these operations, they deserve credit for recognizing—belatedly—that the interventions had entered the operational phase where rising costs had rendered their original political objectives either too risky or beyond reach.⁶⁴ Seeing further difficulties down the road and no natural end point, all three presidents cut their losses. In the aftermath, all proved “great communicators” who wove effective “retreat narratives” wherein they explained their decisions to withdraw and took responsibility for the defeats that occurred. Finally, all three rhetorically shook their fists at their enemies and in two cases added forces even as they made plans to bring the troops home.

The record suggests presidents must take care when considering interventions long on promise (a new Cuba, Middle East peace, an orderly Somalia) and short on means. In all three cases, a “youth bulge” guaranteed that the shaky states or political entities the United States

⁶³ Clinton, William Jefferson, *Address on Somalia (October 7, 1993)* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia, The Miller Center), <http://millercenter.org/president/speeches/detail/4566>

⁶⁴ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, 92.

hoped to support (all of them long shots: a Cuban exile-dominated government, stabilized Lebanese/Somali regimes) would have had a plethora of clients to satisfy and, more importantly, their enemies would have had an ample recruiting pool. In two cases, the urban context (Beirut and Mogadishu) masked US opponents and muted US firepower. In Beirut and Somalia, America's adversaries appeared indifferent to casualties. Lebanese radicals obliterated themselves with their bombs. And in Mogadishu, years later Mohamed Farah Aidid's son publicly celebrated the Somalis' 1993 "victory" over the United States (despite the casualty skew and despite his being a former US Marine).⁶⁵

These experiences are worth remembering because limited interventions are unlikely to disappear. The continued struggle against terrorism—combined with the fatigue factor resulting from the recent long wars in Afghanistan and Iraq—could create conditions where operations of the type described here come under consideration. (Indeed, as this is being written, France is intervening against Islamists in Mali.) The cases described remind us how such operations can bring on a host of knotty problems, including urban spaces that muffle firepower, the likelihood that casualties inflicted on adversaries inspire, rather than diminish, local resistance, and the difficulty in attributing acts of terrorism. In fact, in a world where population growth is fueling rampant urbanization, these factors could return with a vengeance.

One key figure who emerges from these three cases, and whose role speaks to possible future limited interventions, is Ambassador Robert Oakley. His pragmatic approach to peacekeeping in Somalia, which involved maintaining "constant dialogue and close vigilance over a tough adversary like Aidid," while also keeping Aidid in the dialogue loop, along with the other Somali warlords, reduced violence and improved the situation.⁶⁶ Later, when the subsequent UN mission and its American authorities designated Aidid "public enemy number one" (when he was but one of many Somali warlords), the situation deteriorated into confrontation, combat, and hostage-taking. Oakley's pragmatism in undertaking admittedly morally ambiguous dealings with a figure like Aidid deserves more scrutiny than this paper can provide. Nonetheless, in future operations, Oakley's work could provide a template for the sort of ground-level facilitator adapted to the warlord demimonde; one who could bring about "good enough" results that might enhance the possibilities for the likely limited successes a limited intervention could produce.⁶⁷

Though the interventions here were discrete and small in scale, their stories also throw light on problems that affected much larger operations. For example, mission creep (or mission leap/mission morph) factored heavily in both the Afghanistan and Iraq wars, as operations originally dedicated to a short-term concept of "regime change" morphed into decade-long, multiagency efforts at nation-building. Likewise, in

65 Ron Kampeas, "From Marine to Warlord: The Strange Journey of Hussein Farrah Aidid," *Associated Press*, February 11, 2002, http://www.boston.com/news/daily/11/somali_warlord.htm

66 Hirsch and Oakley, *Somalia and Operation Restore Hope*, 157.

67 Much of diplomatic training involves learning the protocol of state-to-state relations governed by the Vienna Convention. Doing diplomacy with substate/nonstate actors (militias, factions, warlords) is likely an art in itself, one that would benefit from greater study. Oakley provides an excellent example.

those cases, the initial military forces deployed proved too small for the multiple tasks at hand, requiring subsequent military “surges” in both countries.⁶⁸ Moreover, strategic leaders in large-scale interventions—as with the presidents under study here—often confront the problem of diminishing returns and have to decide when the result is “good enough” to bring the troops home.⁶⁹ Just as this paper considers JFK, Reagan, and Clinton, a larger such study could also consider and compare Presidents De Gaulle (Algeria), Nixon (Vietnam), and Obama (Iraq, Afghanistan) as strategic leaders who also faced the *hold ‘em or fold ‘em* dilemma at a far higher level of military scale and political import.

In the end, the decisions made by Presidents Kennedy, Reagan, and Clinton proved sound. Their stories should instruct future leaders who, while they may plan on victories, will likely also have to manage reversals, particularly in a world with more mega-cities and potentially at least partly radicalized populations. In undertaking intervention in turbulent societies, a strategic leader must know, in Brent Scowcroft’s wise words, not only “how to get in,” but also how—and when—to get out.

68 On the Iraq surge, see Thomas Ricks, *The Gamble: General Petraeus and the American Military Adventure in Iraq* (New York: Penguin, Random House, 2009). On Afghanistan, see Rajiv Chandrasekaran, *Little America: The War Within the War for Afghanistan* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012).

69 The phrase “good enough” is derived from “Afghan good enough,” an appraisal that the United States and its NATO allies reportedly were making of the possibilities in Afghanistan in 2012. See Helen Cooper and Tom Shanker, “U.S. Redefines Afghan Success Before Conference,” *The New York Times*, May 17, 2012, available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/18/world/asia/us-redefines-afghan-success-before-conference.html?smid=pl-share&r=0>

Cyberwar to Wikiwar: Battles for Cyberspace

Paul Rexton Kan

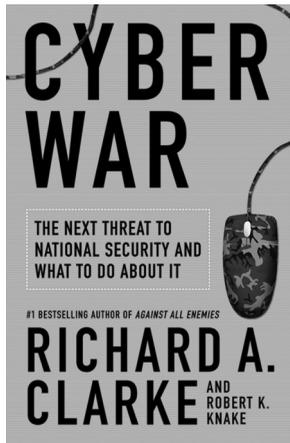
ABSTRACT: National leaders warn of a cyberwar and cyberterrorism that may lead to a potential “cyber Pearl Harbor.” To prevent such an occurrence requires cyber defense or even some sort of cyber deterrence. Some policymakers even want cyber arms control. However, these concepts are a retrofitting of those used in the physical domain to describe violent acts and responses to them. Do these concepts help policymakers, national security professionals, and scholars understand aggressive acts perpetrated in cyberspace?

A few days after the bombings at the Boston Marathon in April 2013, the Associated Press (AP) reported via Twitter, “Breaking: Two Explosions in the White House and Barack Obama is injured.” The Dow Jones Industrial lost nearly 150 points; \$136 billion of equity was suddenly gone. The AP’s Twitter account, whose feed had been integrated into the reporting algorithms of the New York Stock Exchange a few days prior, was hacked by a group calling itself the Syrian Electronic Army, allowing it to tweet the fake message. Fortunately, the loss in national wealth was short-lived as stocks recovered their value within three minutes.

How do we place a context around what happened within those three minutes? Was this a salvo in a cyberwar initiated by the Syrian regime or a prank by an unaffiliated group for “lulz” (a corruption of “lol,” “laugh out loud”)? There was no permanent loss of capital and aside from the perpetrators, few would have actually laughed out loud. But there is still a sense of seriousness about this episode that reveals the genuine limits of our understanding of the cyber domain in the national security arena. Given the newness of the digital domain, its man-made origins, and its constantly changing nature due to manipulation by human beings, it should not be surprising that national security professionals reach for comfortable and familiar approaches. “Cyberattacks” are a daily, or more accurately a nanosecond-after-nanosecond, occurrence that requires “cyber security.” National leaders warn of a “cyberwar” and “cyberterrorism” that may lead to a potential “cyber Pearl Harbor.” To prevent such an occurrence requires “cyberdefense” or even some sort of “cyberdeterrence.” Some policymakers want “cyber arms control” to limit what types of cyberattacks can be perpetrated against another country. These concepts are a retrofitting of those used in the physical domain to describe violent acts and responses to them. Do these concepts help policymakers, national security professionals, and scholars understand aggressive acts committed in cyberspace?

Richard Clarke in his book, *Cyber War: The Next Threat to National Security and What to Do About It*, believes these concepts are not only relevant, but also consistently overlooked by policymakers. For Clarke, a cyberwar refers “to actions by a nation-state to penetrate another nation’s computers or networks for the purpose of causing damage or disruption” (6). In his first chapter, he details “trial runs” which are incidents

Paul Rexton Kan is Professor of National Security Studies and the Henry L. Stimson Chair of Military Studies at the US Army War College. He is the author of the books *Drugs and Contemporary Warfare* and *Cartels at War: Understanding Mexico's Drug-Fueled Violence and the Threat to US National Security*. His recent article, “Cyberwar in the Underworld” appeared in the *Yale Journal of International Affairs*.



New York: HarperCollins, 2010. 320 pages.
\$17.58.

of cyberwar perpetrated most notably by the Russians, North Koreans, and Israelis. These episodes are now well-known—the Israeli “owning” of Syria’s air defense system in 2007; the suspected Russian distributed denial of service (DDOS) attacks against Estonia in 2007 and the more sophisticated cyberattacks against Georgia in 2008; and the North Korean botnet attack against US websites in 2009. From these episodes, he derives four maxims: cyberwar is real; cyberwar happens at the speed of light; cyberwar is global; and cyberwar has begun. These maxims form the core of his book as he presents more accounts of the “cyberwarriors” in the “battlespace” and how the United States should prepare, defend, and retaliate.

Clarke spends the majority of his time reemphasizing these maxims throughout the book with brief examples. Clarke appears to be most worried about China, which he argues is “systematically doing all the things a nation would do if it contemplated having an offensive cyber war capability and also thought that it might itself be targeted by cyber war” (54). Clarke’s chief concern is that the United States is lagging far behind countries like China. “Indeed, because of its greater dependence on cyber-controlled systems and its inability thus far to create national cyber defenses, the United States is currently far more vulnerable to cyber war than Russia or China. The US is more at risk from cyber war than are minor states like North Korea” (155).

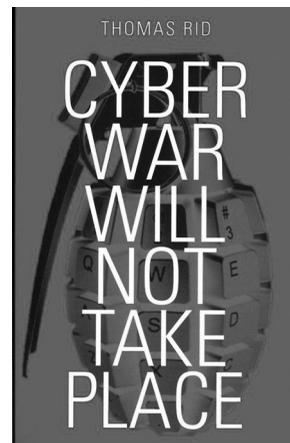
Given the seriousness of Clarke’s assessment and the examples of grave consequences of previous cyberattacks, his book deserves particular scrutiny. The narrowness of Clarke’s definition of what constitutes a cyberwar is problematic. Do the myriad events he details really constitute “war”? Causing damage or disruption is a rather large range of consequences—from defacing a website to crippling a power grid. In the physical world, one act could be interpreted as vandalism and the other may be viewed as malicious destruction of property. Without a coercive intent to achieve a political goal, would the range of attacks—cyber or otherwise—be considered an act of war?

This is where Thomas Rid’s, *Cyber War Will Not Take Place*, is especially useful in clearing up much conceptual fuzziness surrounding cyberwar. In contrast to Clarke’s book, Rid’s is a more scholarly work. Rid, a reader at King’s College in London, makes the argument that all the disruptive acts perpetrated via cyberspace do not constitute war or warfare, nor are they even particularly violent. “No cyber offense has ever caused the loss of human life. No cyber offense has ever injured a person. No cyber offense has ever seriously damaged a building” (166). Taking Clausewitz’s theory of war, Rid argues “if the use of force in war is violent, instrumental and political, then there is no cyber offense that meets all three criteria. But more than that, there are very few cyber attacks in history that meet only *one* of these criteria” (4, emphasis in the original). For Rid, the events via cyberspace recounted by numerous

national security professionals such as Clarke fall into one or more categories of espionage, sabotage, or subversion. “Despite the trends the ‘war’ in ‘cyber war’ ultimately has more in common with the war on obesity than the Second World War—it has more metaphorical than descriptive value” (9).

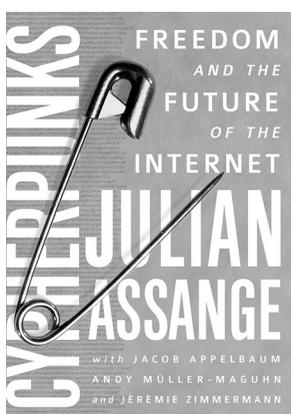
Rid’s point about being careful with metaphors and concepts in a new domain is well taken. The goal of his book is “to attempt to help consolidate the discussion, attenuate some of the hype and adequately confront some of the most urgent security challenges” (ix). Much thought has been brought to bear on the mechanics of nefarious acts in cyberspace, but comparatively little time has been spent on putting the acts into context. Understanding the motivations of groups and individuals who act in cyberspace is essential. Rid’s main argument and his subsequent chapters on “Violence,” “Sabotage,” “Espionage,” and “Subversion” are powerful tonics to some of the more alarmist literature on cyberwar. His conclusion is as interesting as it is provocative—cyberattacks are an attack on violence itself. Because activities like sabotage, espionage, and subversion can now be accomplished in cyberspace, fewer personnel are needed to conduct such activities in the physical world. Where at one time special forces would have been sent to destroy a facility, spies would have been dispatched to steal secrets and mobs organized to protest government policies, cyberattacks can now accomplish these goals simply and clandestinely. This conclusion, however, needs to be treated with great caution. It is vaguely reminiscent of early airpower theorists who predicted that the airplane would make wars less violent by shortening their duration. Secondly, while cyberattacks may only indirectly create destruction or disruption in a targeted nation, there may be direct costs to pay in the physical world. Digital acts may be met with kinetic reprisals. Sabotage, espionage, and subversion may not fit into the definition of war, but they have served as *casus belli* for the outbreak of wars in the past.

Where Rid is helpful in clearing up the parameters of the discussion over cyberwar by focusing on stricter definitions, clearer concepts, and more apt metaphors, he does not delve deeply enough into cyberattacks perpetrated by nonstate groups. Rid’s chapter on “Subversion” only lightly touches on the topic of nonstate groups who use the digital domain to change the behavior of states. These groups should not be overlooked because another question surrounding the fake AP tweet that sent the stock market plunging is who exactly is the Syrian Electronic Army? Is it a group of a state-sponsored “patriotic hackers,” an unaffiliated association, a loose assemblage of individuals sympathetic to the regime of Bashar Assad, or some combination of each? With the anonymity that cyberspace affords, both Clarke and Rid agree that the problem of attribution is difficult. If the Syrian Electronic Army is an unaffiliated collective of some kind, the cyberwar



London: C. Hurst & Company Publishers, 2013. 256 pages. \$27.95.

debate fails to capture the significance of its activities. Cyberwar between countries does not occupy all the space in the debate, much like interstate war does not cover all aspects of war. Dispersed groups of hacktivists engage in many of the same damaging cyber activities as nation-states. This demonstrates a uniqueness of the cyber domain. Due to the ease of entry into cyberspace, hacktivists have committed the same online acts like defacing websites, stealing proprietary information, DDOS attacks, and launching botnets that are in the repertoire of cyberattacks conducted by countries. As a result, hacktivists have much the same power in cyberspace as the infamous Chinese hackers of the People's Liberation Army. But unlike countries that launch cyberattacks for political reasons linked to foreign policy, hacktivists use the Internet to advance political and social goals that center around the Internet itself.



New York: OR Books, 2012. 186 pages.
\$9.99.

Groups like Anonymous and WikiLeaks see themselves as combatants in a war to achieve the goal of Internet freedom. For them, human liberation begins with the liberation of information. In Julian Assange's book, *Cyberpunks: Freedom and the Future of Internet*, this belief comes into sharp focus. The book takes its name from the cypherpunks movement that emerged in the late 1980s; it believed in the widespread use and availability of cryptography to protect and foster human liberty against intrusive state surveillance. The book is a compilation of discussions of fellow believers in the cypherpunks' slogan of "privacy for the weak, transparency for the powerful." The discussions occurred with Assange, the

founder of WikiLeaks, while he was under house arrest in the United Kingdom awaiting extradition to Sweden, but before he sought asylum at the Ecuadorean Embassy in London where he continues to reside. The conversations reveal how the group sees itself as engaged in a violent struggle against what it views as the "coming surveillance dystopia" organized by countries and powerful corporations. They argue they and their fellow believers have "had conflicts with nearly every powerful state. . . . We know it from a combatant's perspective, because we have had to protect our people, our finances and our sources from [them]."

But it is not only countries that are the subject of the discussions. Google is the subject of the chapter, "Private Sector Spying." There is a typical but thought-provoking exchange between two group members:

Jeremie: State-sponsored surveillance is indeed a major issue which challenges the very structure of all democracies and the way they function, but there is also private surveillance and potentially private mass collection of data. Just look at Google. If you're a standard Google user Google knows who you're communicating with, who you know, what you're researching, potentially your sexual orientation, and your religious and philosophical beliefs.

Andy: It knows more about you than you know yourself.

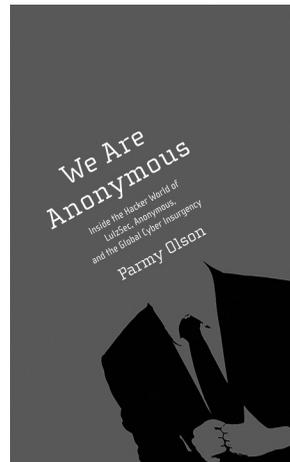
Jeremie: More than your mother and maybe more than yourself. Google knows when you're online and when you're not.

Andy: Do you know what you looked for two years, three days and four hours ago? You don't know; Google knows.

The rhetoric of the conversations can be overly dramatic; labels like “Nazi youth camp” and “Stasi acts” are bandied about without care. The chapter on “The Militarization of Cyberspace” begins with Assange arguing that all communications linked to the Internet are monitored by military intelligence organizations. “It’s like having a tank in your bedroom. It’s a soldier between you and your wife as you’re [texting]. We are all living under martial law as far as our communications are concerned; we just can’t see the tanks” (33). For many, the group’s constant use of metaphors, analogies, and rhetoric of war will be off-putting. However, it is important to wade through and come to grips with the implications of their arguments rather than get bogged down in their use (or abuse) of language. Most problematic is its ideology of Internet freedom. An ideology centered around the free use of technology becomes ironic, especially in the case of the Syrian Electronic Army. It is unclear whether the group of cypherpunks would approve of another hacktivist group’s online activities done in the name of a tyrannical regime in Damascus, a regime that has used an Internet “kill switch” to stop Internet traffic out of its borders. Yet, if the Internet were entirely “liberated,” the activities of the Syrian Electronic Army would be permitted if perpetrated against a surveillance state like the United States. In short, not all hacktivism serves human liberation; it can cut both ways. To paraphrase one technology observer, Farhad Manjoo, the Internet is just a series of tubes without ideology.

While *Cyberpunks* lays out the ideology as espoused by a core group of hacktivists, Parry Olson’s book, *We Are Anonymous: Inside the Hacker World of LulzSec, Anonymous, and the Global Cyber Insurgency*, is a richly detailed, journalistic account of the history and acts of a cyber group that pushes this ideology forward with its cyberattacks. Unlike the inner circle of WikiLeaks, Olson’s book chronicles the rise of a hacktivist collective that is now more like a social cyber movement. One of the most important observations by Olson is the misconception that Anonymous is a “small clique of super hackers.” In fact, only a few in the collective were hackers and the rest were “simply young internet users who felt like doing something other than wasting time [in anonymous chat forums]” (81). The rallying cry for Anonymous mirrored that of the cypherpunks, “information wants to be free.”

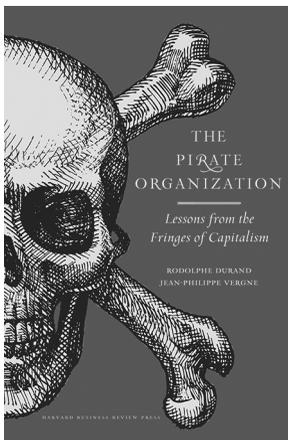
If Russian attacks against Estonia and Georgia are the *sine qua non* of cyber war in the interstate realm, the attacks by Anonymous against the Church of Scientology, PayPal, and Sony are the *sine qua non* of hacktivism in the hacking world. Olson details how Anonymous gained



New York: Back Bay Books, 2012. 528 pages. \$16.00.

notoriety for its 2008 operations against the Church of Scientology. In that year, the church pressured YouTube to remove a leaked video of church member and actor Tom Cruise. Such pressure exerted by the Church of Scientology ran counter to the Anonymous ethos of transparency. In response, Anonymous launched an operation to bring down the church's website that combined DDOS attacks with pranks such as phone calls with repetitive music, constant faxing of black paper to drain printer cartridges, and ordering unwanted pizza deliveries and taxi service. The group has found common cause not only with WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, but the Occupy movements, and accused leaker Bradley Manning. Olson also covers the numerous Anonymous' operations aimed at agencies and institutions such as PayPal, Mastercard, and Visa, which refused to process payments for websites that were raising funds for the legal defense of Assange, Manning, and those associated with Occupy movements.

Particularly revealing in Olson's book is the notion that the ethos of the group is also how the group is structured. Information on the Internet is dispersed and decentralized, as is Anonymous. Marshall McLuhan proclaimed the "medium is the message"; for hacktivists the medium is the ethos. The structure of the collective is also a reflection of its ethos. As a loosely affiliated group of online social activists, Anonymous takes pride in being unstructured without a hierarchy or central authority. This nebulous structure has strategic advantages, but operationally, as Olson covers in her chapter "Civil War," these characteristics have proven troublesome. Due to Anonymous's loose structure, any operation can move forward or be cancelled in a capricious manner. Furthermore, as a collective, members can do more than just dissent against a planned operation and opt out; they can actively work against the operation by launching counterattacks against factions with whom they disagree. They can also prevent members from accessing online fora, where many members find each other. Internal schisms have occurred among Anonymous members who wanted to undertake operations in accordance with the hacker ethos, others who wanted to take on morals-motivated attacks against organizations that suppress human freedom in the physical world, and yet others who were purely interested in hacking for "spite and fun."



Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing Corporation, 2013. 208 pages. \$22.00.

Finally, unlike a book written for a popular audience, an academic work, a collection of discussions and a journalistic investigation, *The Pirate Organization: Lessons from the Fringes of Capitalism* is an essay written by Rodolphe Durand and Jean-Philippe Verne. Although the authors do not focus exclusively on the cyber domain, they do discuss the historical struggle between sovereign actors and those who seek and exploit ungoverned areas. For them, a pirate organization,

regardless of time, share the following features: they enter into a conflictive 'relationship' with the state, especially when the state claims to be the sole source or sovereignty; they operate in an organized manner, from a set of support bases located outside this territory, over which

the state typically claims sovereign control; they develop, as alternative communities, a series of discordant norms that, according to them, should be used to regulate uncharted territory; and ultimately, they represent a threat to the state because they upset the very ideas of sovereignty and territory by contesting the state's control and the activities of the legal entities that operated under its jurisdiction, such as for-profit corporations and monopolies. (15)

Given this definition, WikiLeaks and Anonymous fit easily inside the parameters of a pirate organization. In fact, the authors make it clear that concentrating solely on contemporary maritime piracy is misplaced. "Blackbeard, for example, has far more in common with a cyberpirate than with a Somalian peasant who uses a Kalashnikov to attack a fishing boat from a makeshift craft" (15). The authors insightfully and succinctly go through the history of pirate organizations—the 17th and 18th century buccaneers, radio DJs at sea, cyberpirates on the Web, and biopirates in the lab. According to the authors, pirate organizations emerge because a new, ungoverned territory is ripe for exploitation. As seen in the four previously reviewed books, cyberspace is the ultimate ungoverned territory. Hacktivists, as understood through the definition of a pirate organization, are in some ways more central players in the cyber domain than nation-states.

Groups like Anonymous and WikiLeaks clearly represent one side of the tension between sovereignty and stateless actors. Also, the way the authors set up the tension between such an organization and the state is a useful tonic for those like Clarke who see hacktivism as a "fairly mild form of online protest" (55). Those who set their sights on a cyberwar occurring between nation-states would do well to read this book to gain a broader perspective on what they are missing from the larger discussion of cyberwar.

There is plenty to quibble about when it comes to their definition of pirate organizations, and their glib dismissal of maritime piracy off the Horn of Africa is a pity; a deeper understanding would show that it is a more complex activity, which in fact supports their thesis. Contemporary maritime piracy takes advantage of regional and global networks of finance, insurance, and shipping that occur far from the acts of high seas hijacking. The network is dispersed, somewhat durable, and resilient to detection and elimination.

The five books portray the growing complexity of conceptualizing malicious online actions. Policymakers, national security professionals, and scholars often dismiss hacktivists or cyber pirates as collections of socially awkward malcontents who find a sense of belonging by creating mischief online. Instead, they focus on cyberwar conducted or supported by nation-states. Placing complicated changes in the security environment back into the nation-state box is easy, but to do so would be short-sighted. We have done this before not so long ago and to disastrous effect. Between the fall of the Berlin Wall and the fall of the World Trade Center, nonstate actors were ignored in favor of state-based challenges. Even today, after more than a decade of the War on Terror and wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, our grasp on topics like terrorism, insurgency, and asymmetric war is not completely firm.

Moreover, given the newness of the cyber domain and its rapidly changing nature, it would be a mistake to disregard any groups who

have as an ethos the desire to define cyberspace through online acts that challenge the fundamental elements of national security. This is especially so if some of those groups feel they are besieged by governments and routinely use the rhetoric of war—“this seemingly platonic realm of ideas and information flow, could there be a notion of coercive force? A force that could modify historical records, tap phones, separate people, transform complexity into rubble and erect walls, like an occupying army?” (3) Policymakers, national security professionals, and scholars have previously dismissed groups who believe they are acting in self-defense and who then strike out unexpectedly and in unanticipated ways only to our surprise and detriment.

What is present in varying degrees throughout the literature about cyberspace and cyberwar are the five distinct ongoing debates about this new domain and how to act within it. The debates include who sets the boundaries of cyberspace; how should online information be controlled; to whom should information be available; can hierarchies and networks of people coexist in cyberspace; and what is the difference between “war” and “crime” in cyberspace.¹ In the reviewed books, it is evident that each cyber attack or cyber assault not only adds to these debates but helps the cyber domain gain more definition. Paradoxically, the debates to define cyberspace are occurring via cyberspace.

The paradox will likely become ever more acute with the advancement of cyber technology and the increasingly intertwined nature of the internet with our daily lives. With the advent of the “wearable web” like Google Glass, the Apple Iwatch, and even the potential for spray-on wi-fi, this intertwined nature will become incarnate. We won’t be in cyberspace; we will be cyberspace. Being prepared for this future makes these five books essential reading.

1 For a very solid exploration of the debate over what is “war,” “crime,” and “violence” in the cyber domain, please see the series of articles by John Stone, Gary McGraw, Dale Peterson, Timothy Junio, Adam Liff, and Thomas Rid in the “Cyber War Roundtable” of the *Journal of Strategic Studies* 36, no. 1 (February 2013).

EXAMINING WARFARE IN WI-FI

A Review

Wiki at War: Conflict in a Socially Networked World

By James Jay Carafano

Reviewed by Dr. Jeffrey L. Groh, Professor, Information and Technology in Warfare, US Army War College

Dr. Carafano constructs a compelling narrative examining the implications of socially connected populations in the context of conflict and warfare. The author's general thesis is that "engaging in the war online is not optional." The book begins an investigation of the history of social networking. The author takes the reader on an interesting course starting with the importance of "language as technology." Language provides the medium to build relationships, culture, knowledge, and as a tool to share judgments. He effectively uses vignettes to demonstrate how the legacy of tribal language formed the basis of early social networks throughout history. The intriguing stories of how language played a key role in conflict and warfare, beginning with the Mongol Empire and Genghis Khan and the great hunt or the *nerge*, the Iroquois League during the American Revolution, and the early-nineteenth-century Zulu kingdom in southern Africa, set the tone for the power of social networking. The journey continues to describe the power of myth and storytelling to transfer knowledge within and across social networks. The evolution of sharing information by messenger systems dating back four thousand years to the optic telegraph in the Napoleonic wars through today's digital systems revolutionized how humans communicated in peace and in war. The historical portion of the book does an excellent job establishing the importance of the message, language, and story enabled by the technology to enhance the concept of social networking.

The author moves to contemporary history with a chapter describing the birth of the computer age and Web 2.0. The invention of the Electronic Numerical Integrator and Computer (ENAC) by Professor John Mauchly (1942-45) was a watershed moment for the potential of social networking as well as communication in warfare. Dr. Carafano argues that the invention of the computer sets the stage for creating many kinds of machines enabling communication. Think about today's smart phones, digital music players, personal computers, and tablets. The ENAC was a key enabler to enhance the ability of humans to communicate in the context of social networking. The next piece of the puzzle was to create architecture for computers to communicate. Carafano spends time discussing the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency invention creating a communication system linking computers to share data over long distances (ARPRANET). The development of ARPRANET is a fascinating story of technological innovation that ultimately evolved into the World Wide Web. Most of us probably know the general facts surrounding the birth of the computer and the World Wide Web. This section provides a much deeper comprehension of the people and technology leading to the advanced social networking tool available today.

The remaining chapters in the book travel through the implications of social networking today. The author points out that social networking

WIKI AT WAR

CONFLICT IN A
SOCIALLY NETWORKED
WORLD



JAMES JAY CARAFANO

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and connected populations present significant challenges to senior policymakers, military leaders, and planners. The nature of the adversary online is extremely diverse. Dr. Carafano provides a useful framework to consider several varieties of adversaries. There are state actors, enabler states, and slack states that have lax laws and enforcement means to allow nefarious actors to operate. Understanding the complexity of this domain continues with a detailed dialogue of the combatants. There are lawful combatants who fight under the control of state as well as unlawful combatants (e.g., criminals) who operate outside acceptable norms and rule-based regimes. The problem planning operations is that lawful and unlawful combatants use similar techniques to achieve objectives in cyberspace (e.g., the threat of violence and espionage) by changing behavior. The author provides convincing evidence to the challenges from China's hacker army to military operations and civilian networks. Russia also has a robust hacker community. The cyberattacks in Estonia (2007) and during the Russia-Georgia war (2009) are examples of the potential danger. The interesting analysis of the loosely connected hacker groups, criminals (e.g., Russian Business Network), and the general population through networking technologies is worth reflection for military planners at all levels.

Dr. Carafano conducts an interesting examination of the US government and military struggle to leverage cyberspace to achieve goals. He points to early successes using the grassroots movement of a few young Army officers to create a social media site "Companycommand.com" to share ideas about company command; however, scaling this idea by the US government became a challenge. The United States continues to improve its ability to create a Web 2.0 environment to connect with the American people. Whitehouse.gov and USA.gov are examples of the push to use the power of the Internet to share public information with US citizens. There are military examples demonstrating the value of cyberspace in military operations. The Department of Defense has clearly declared cyberspace an important domain of warfare by creating US Cyber Command in 2009.

The book closes with a serious warning in the epilogue. "Winning the web will not happen by happenstance." Carafano outlines some simple laws of wiki warfare. The first is to know all the competitors in cyberspace. Next, empower people to leverage Web 2.0. This will take skilled leaders who understand the cyberspace domain. The final law is for leaders to develop a vision and strategy to win in cyberspace. A criticism of the book is the recommendations and conclusions in the epilogue provide only a broad framework of a strategy to leverage cyberspace and address the challenges of social media. Future research should expand on the recommendations to develop a more holistic strategy for operating in the cyberspace domain.

The book is an easy read that provides ample evidence to support the notion that there is an ongoing competition in cyberspace using social networks to advance security objectives. *Wiki at War* expands the dialogue on significant contemporary international security issues. Dr. Carafano provides excellent analysis for military planners and senior civilian and military leaders to reflect on the implications of social networking in national and military strategy development as well as operating in the cyberspace domain.

Commentaries and Replies

On “The Lure of Strike”

Charles J. Dunlap Jr., Major General, USAF (Ret.)

This commentary is in response to the special commentary, “The Lure of Strike” by Conrad Crane published in the Summer 2013 issue of Parameters (vol. 43, no. 2).

As an admirer of Dr. Conrad Crane, it genuinely saddens me to see his new essay, “The Lure of Strike.” Here we have a distinguished historian becoming, in essence, an “interservice hit man,” and chief spokesperson for the Army’s small but burgeoning neo-Luddite wing. Regrettably, his essay sounds too much like that of a 1930’s cavalryman fulminating against the internal combustion that was altering the way the Army would fight wars.

Dr. Crane starts by expressing the belief that because of what he seems to think is a nefarious Air Force, America suffers from the delusion that technology inevitably produces what he calls “short, tidy wars with limited landpower commitments.” Where he gets this notion isn’t clear. The Air Force, which sandwiched a decade of no-fly zone enforcement years of wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, certainly does not view conflict that way. Nor does the general public, whose rejection of stand-off strikes against Syria is ample evidence that it has no illusions about the potential unintended consequences of any use of force.

Regardless, defending Army force structure is plainly the *raison d’être* of Crane’s piece. Indeed, “The Lure of Strike” is reducible to a simple syllogism: if technological developments allow for “short, tidy wars with limited landpower commitments” then that will inevitably mean (in his thinking) a smaller Army. To him, a smaller Army is, ipso facto, bad. Ergo, technology is bad. Classic Neo-Ludditism.

Exactly why Dr. Crane is not advocating that the Army develop its own method for conducting “short, tidy wars with limited landpower commitments” is also unclear. After all, such conflicts would limit the risk to America’s most precious resource: her sons and daughters and, particularly, those in Army uniforms. It is especially baffling given that a weary Army is just emerging from exactly the opposite: long, untidy wars with massive manpower commitments that produced results most charitably described by Army Colonel Gian Gentile as “unsatisfying.”

Unfortunately, Dr. Crane does not attempt to bring to bear his formidable skills as a historian to address some of the very questions that have spurred the nation’s search for the technology-based alternatives that he rails against. For example, why is it that the best-trained, best-equipped, and most valorous army in the history of warfare was, nevertheless, unable to fully defeat the largely uneducated and lightly-armed tribesmen it significantly outnumbered and wildly outgunned?

Moreover, why did the Army, as it implemented its manpower-intensive strategies in Iraq and Afghanistan, ignore a fundamental lesson of COIN history, that is, that the most powerful insurgent recruitment

Major General Dunlap served 34 years in the United States Air Force before retiring in 2010 to become the Executive Director of the Center on Law, Ethics and National Security at Duke Law School where he is also a Professor of the Practice. His many publications include *Shortchanging the Joint Fight? An Airman’s Perspective on FM 3-24 and the Case for Developing Truly Joint COIN Doctrine*, Air University (2008).

tool is not, as some narratives would have it, the use of high-technology means (such as stand-off strike), but rather the physical presence of foreign troops? Should not the Army ask itself why its leaders repeatedly characterized its warfighting mission as “protecting the Afghan (or Iraqi) people” when the actual assignment was about protecting the *American* people as Congress’ Authorization to Use Military Force made crystal clear?

And even among those Soldiers who did grasp the true mission, why did so many think that the way to go about it was to try to turn infantrymen armed with high school degrees into social workers, civil engineers, nurses, schoolteachers, and boy scouts as Dr. Crane’s COIN doctrine importuned? And then give them the Sisyphean task to transform hostile, ancient cultures into pacific, Westernized societies? Even if that scheme somehow could work, did they not realize that al Qaeda would easily outflank it by decamping to Pakistan, Yemen, and North Africa—not to mention burrowing into urban areas around the globe?

Instead of grappling with those substantive questions of recent history, Dr. Crane launches a lengthy and startlingly venomous attack on America’s most high-tech force, the United States Air Force. According to Crane, not only does airpower fail at every turn, it is Airmen who are disingenuously and deceptively corrupting the national security dialogue. Of course, these hackneyed myths have been rebutted repeatedly, but picking apart the many flaws and omissions in Dr. Crane’s rendition is actually unnecessary. In fact, his essay amply illustrates the limits of the historian’s art when it comes to the technology of war. It really doesn’t matter, for example, what airpower could or could not do during World War II or, for that matter, yesterday, as the only thing that really counts is what it can do today.

And that is plenty. As the President and others have come to learn from material found in bin Laden’s lair and elsewhere, what America’s most dangerous enemies fear the most is not chai-drinking soldiers, female engagement teams, or even masses of infantrymen lumbering about in Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles, but rather being relentlessly hunted by high-tech surveillance and strike platforms.

Of course, no one believes that stand-off, precision strike is always the answer, but—sometimes—it can be. As Tom Ricks’s book *Fiasco* reports, 1998’s Operation Desert Fox—a few days of air and missile strikes—effectively ended Iraq’s nuclear weapons’ program. David Kay, the former United Nations arms inspector, said that after the strikes the Iraqi weapons programs “withered away, and never got momentum again.”

America is a technological nation, and the Army ought to embrace and celebrate that fact even if it means changes. Yet as a developer of robotic ground vehicles told *The New York Times*, “there is a resistance to new technologies being introduced in and around soldiers.” Although infantrymen are hardly obsolete, their numbers and employment strategy is—and should be—reevaluated because of what technology can now offer.

The Army needs to calm itself. Everyone whose opinions anyone should care about knows America needs a robust and dominant Army. There is, in fact, a powerful case to be made for such an Army, but it

is not one premised on denigrating another service, or—especially—suggesting that technology does not and cannot change the *calculus* of warfighting. In short, our Army must resist “the lure of Neo-Ludditism.”

The Author Replies

Conrad C. Crane

I assume that MG Dunlap, like myself, was under a time crunch to get his submission into the journal, so I will accept the possibility that he might not have had time to read my article thoroughly. After acknowledging the important role of airpower in the American Way of War, my intent was to ensure policymakers do not expect too much of it. They must retain the full range of capabilities of the joint force to keep all military options open. As has been apparent in recent Congressional testimony by the service chiefs, they are all concerned that precipitous cuts in force structure will threaten capabilities necessary to preserve national security. I am equally concerned about exorbitant claims that cyber capabilities will be able to plug the gaps.

I was rather appalled by MG Dunlap’s assault on the Army’s record in Iraq and Afghanistan. There is not enough space in this issue to allow me to address that in much detail. While that might be a topic worth a full issue of the *Quarterly* in the future, it will also be debated in a wave of historical works to come. Much of his opinion is rooted in his well-known opposition to FM 3-24, and the counterinsurgency operations it proposed. He makes the common error of attacking the tool of COIN, rather than the strategies and policies it supported. Decisionmakers need to have a full toolbox to address security interests. Sometimes necessary approaches will be highly kinetic, but MG Dunlap’s disdain for nonkinetic solutions is apparent. He remains convinced you can fight these kinds of wars from 20,000 feet. He argues that large land force presence always has a self-defeating backlash, ignoring the fact that the Afghan president’s most vociferous complaints to commanders were about the perceived excesses of airpower, not too many Soldiers or Marines. No topic causes more concern among the international students at the Army War College than the issue of drone strikes, which might be good counterterrorism for us, but are often detrimental to counterinsurgency efforts in targeted countries, and can create more enemies in the long run.

I must agree with MG Dunlap that the widespread reluctance to engage in air attacks against Syria is a positive sign that the limitations of technology are being considered by decision makers, though the full scenario has still to unfold. At the same time the complexity of that situation, and these recognized technological shortcomings, highlight the necessity for a wide range of options to be available for policy makers. Meaningful land force commitments are obviously a last resort, but having that capability reassures allies, gives adversaries pause, and adds to the menu of possible solutions to apply to difficult problem sets, especially as potential allies also reduce their military force structure

and the world becomes more urbanized. Advanced technology remains an important part of that national security equation, and America has to retain that asymmetric edge. Sometimes a few bombs or a few electrons will be enough to accomplish national objectives. But when they are not, there must be other tools in the military toolkit. Sometimes boots on the ground will be necessary.

On “Women in Battle”

Sarah Percy

This commentary is in response to the featured articles “The Female Soldier” by Anthony C. King; “What Women Bring to the Fight” by Ellen L. Haring; and “Gender Perspectives and Fighting” by Robert Egnell published in the Summer 2013 issue of Parameters (vol. 43, no. 2).

The thought-provoking Summer 2013 issue of *Parameters* examines the integration of women in combat roles. The essays by Ellen Haring, Anthony King, and Robert Egnell make a number of valuable contributions to our understanding of the challenges of placing women in combat. As always, there are areas that could be further explored, and I would like to offer three.

First, it is worth considering that the decision to put women in combat roles came about gradually, but is still extraordinary. It differs from decisions to integrate other types of previously excluded groups. Examining how and why this revolutionary change took place at an evolutionary pace leads us to two more interest areas for further research concerning the relationship between gender and the military, and the changing nature of war.

Joshua Goldstein, in his definitive book *War and Gender* (Cambridge 2001), reveals that, across culture and across history, women have never played a significant role in combat at any stage before the twentieth century; even during the World Wars, they performed limited combat roles. In short, states have developed a tradition and history of warfare that has excluded women, and by placing women in combat roles states are reversing hundreds of years of history and cultural practice.

In this way, the integration of women into combat roles differs considerably from racial integration and the gradual acceptance of open homosexuality in the military, discussed by all three authors. Every race in the world has fought wars and been in combat. Racial integration may have caused (or been perceived to have caused) issues surrounding unit cohesion but both historical evidence and the practical experience of soldiers fighting against soldiers of other races suggested that race was not an obstacle to effective combat.

Likewise, the increasing acceptance of homosexuality in the American services differs from female combat integration. Homosexuality has never been a bar to effective combat (and famously in some cultures homosexuality is part of the warrior ethos). There have always been gay and nonwhite troops, but quite simply, until recent years there have almost never been women. King discusses how women may still challenge unit cohesion because of problems created by sexual relationships between soldiers. This, of course, has also been true of homosexuality. While women will face broader challenges because they have rarely been used as combat troops, the ways in which sexual challenges have been dealt with in the case of homosexuality may be helpful. Interestingly,

Sarah Percy is Professor of International Relations at the University of Western Australia. She has published widely on military and security issues, and is particularly interested in unconventional combatants (including piracy, mercenaries, and private security companies); how norms influence war and military change; and the impact of international law on international relations.

there is some historical evidence suggesting that the prevalence of sexual relationships in mixed units has not always been problematic. The introduction of women into British anti-aircraft batteries in World War II was accompanied by moral panic about the prospect of sexual fraternization, but to the surprise of many skeptics, it was a nonissue (D'Ann Campbell, "Women in Combat," *The Journal of Military History* 57, no. 2).

In researching how it became possible to reverse the almost universal military practice of excluding women from combat, we can hypothesize that two things had to change: the way civilian society viewed gender and the way the military viewed gender. Clearly, the interplay between the two is essential in explaining how US Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta was able to make his momentous announcement in January 2013. A promising avenue for future research is, thus, considering this question from a comparative perspective. Other inquiries along these lines include: Is it possible to maintain all-male combat forces in societies where gender equality has rapidly advanced? How has that rapid advance affected the identity of the military as well as its practices?

To an extent, gender integration in the military in Western societies has been an inevitable consequence of the onward march of gender equality. But the process has been accelerated by changes on the battlefield.

The nature of contemporary combat has rendered the divisions between frontline combat roles and rearguard roles a fiction. In reality, although designated combat positions remained closed to women, women have been engaging in combat, and have been casualties of combat, as all three authors correctly note. Another question for future research is, therefore, how the "fig leaf" of American policy was allowed to obscure reality for so long. Why make the pretense that women were somehow not engaged in combat? Feminist scholarship on international security and on the specific question of gender integration has some interesting answers to these questions, and the absence of this scholarship is one of the few faults in such an interesting collection of articles. King discusses the association between concepts of masculinity and the military. Without understanding the way the military has evolved as a masculinized institution, and the role gender politics plays in it, it is very difficult to understand the degree of resistance towards opening combat positions to women. This is especially true because the reality of physical testing means very few women will enter some combat roles.

Engel, however, makes the interesting point that perhaps these physical tests also ought to change, as physical strength is not the only useful requirement for a soldier in a world where combat, particularly counterinsurgency, requires other skills. Haring and King also point out that women will bring different skills to the table and these skills may be essential in conducting the types of war militaries now face. But are these changes entirely due to the changing nature of war, or do they reflect something we already know about the effectiveness of mixed gender groups in broader society? In other words, we know that, when confronting any problem, there may be benefits to using both men and women.

Finally, it is clear that changes on the battlefield have also facilitated the ability of states to open combat roles to women. The blurring of lines between combat and noncombat roles, and the necessity of using women in certain types of counterinsurgency operations, forced the

hands of policymakers. The idea that a woman could be a combat soldier would be unthinkable without advances in gender equality; however, the reality that women were already acting as combat troops in all but name brought the change to fruition.

On “Women in Battle”

Megan H. MacKenzie

This commentary is in response to the featured articles “The Female Soldier” by Anthony C. King; “What Women Bring to the Fight” by Ellen L. Haring; and “Gender Perspectives and Fighting” by Robert Egnell published in the Summer 2013 issue of Parameters (vol. 43, no. 2).

Three questions dominate the articles by Haring, Egnell, and King on women in combat:

- Will the inclusion of women impact military cohesion and culture?
- Can and should women be required to meet the physical standards required for combat roles?
- Do women improve or diminish troop readiness and effectiveness?

While the authors raise important points related to these questions, there is plenty of room to push the discussion further and to move beyond “can they” and “should they” questions towards a more frank discussion of women’s current and historical contributions to warfare, the drawbacks to military cohesion, signs of the need to revise military culture, as well as gender issues within the military that the removal of the combat exclusion will certainly not solve.

All three authors address what has become a central concern related to women and combat: physical standards. The authors cover the most significant arguments on both sides of this debate. King argues that women will need to prove themselves against existing standards “just as ethnic minorities and gay men have,” while Egnell and Haring point to both the gendered nature of the standards and their potential antiquatedness given the changes to modern warfare. Haring makes an often-overlooked point that *should* make this debate mute—there are, in fact, no established set of occupational standards for combat.

In terms of military cohesion and culture, it is encouraging to see Egnell and Haring question both the nature of military cohesion and the presumption that current military culture requires preservation rather than revision. King ascribes some of the most disappointing arguments relevant to this discussion. In particular, King gives credence to van Creveld and Kingsley Browne’s position that the military is an inherently masculine institution that has, and will continue to be, corrupted and weakened by the inclusion of women. It is perplexing that Martin van Creveld continues to be called on as an expert when it comes to women in combat. Van Creveld established his position on women in 2000 when he stated that war was “an assertion—the supreme assertion—of masculinity” and that women inherently diminish the core qualities of an effective military (Martin van Creveld, “Less than we can be: Men, Women and the Modern Military” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 23, no. 2). Since then, van Creveld has cherry picked research to support

Megan MacKenzie is a lecturer in the Government and International Relations department at the University of Sydney. Her research on female soldiers and post-conflict reconstruction bridges security studies, feminist theory, and critical development studies. Her recent publications include her book *Female Soldiers in Sierra Leone: Sex, Power and Post-Conflict Reconstruction* with New York University Press and a lead essay in Foreign Affairs, “Let Women Fight: removing the combat exclusion for women.”

this opinion. Scholarship based on the premise that women are inherently inferior to men in any other venue would be described as sexist; the hesitation to give van Creveld's work this classification continues to baffle me. In my view, when it comes to debates on women in combat van Creveld's work should be treated as editorializing at best, with much of the content trending towards sexist polemic.

There is extensive research indicating that women do not negatively impact military culture and cohesion (*Women Content in Units: Force Development Test* [MAX WAC]). Moreover, Egnell and Haring hint that current military culture may require revision rather than preservation. In doing so, they raise an important question: would it necessarily be detrimental if the current military culture were altered? Given that the last decade of US war operations has included low points such as the Abu Ghraib abuses, images of soldiers urinating on corpses, record suicide rates, and a rampant sexual violence epidemic, the negative aspects of group cohesion and the potential need for cultural evolution within the forces should be taken more seriously.

When it comes to physical standards and military culture, there is a potential to talk in circles. This stagnation is particularly surprising for three reasons: first, women were de facto serving in combat roles long before the restriction was lifted. Women have been going through combat training since 2003 and by January 2013, more than 280,000 women had served in Iraq and Afghanistan, with hundreds receiving Combat Action Badges. The US military has carved out specialized roles for women in combat in the form of Female Engagement Teams (FETs) and has recognized women's roles in combat operations by providing combat pay to some of these women. Among the women who died in Iraq, 78 percent of the deaths were categorized as "hostile," providing evidence that women are putting their lives at risk in war.

In addition to acknowledging women's existing contributions to war, it should be remembered that the United States is certainly not breaking new ground by including women in combat; as such, rather than blind speculation, important lessons can be learned about women and combat and gender integration from countries that have already opened combat positions to women. Finally, those focused on women in combat should be reminded there are other important gender issues to be addressed within the military. Opening combat positions to women will not "solve" broader gender concerns such as discrimination, hyper-masculine culture, or the sexual violence epidemic. Any discussion of gender equality or women's empowerment within the US military must include a frank discussion of sexual violence within the forces.

In addition to sexual violence, the military must address the "macho" culture of the military and its historic problem with retaining women and promoting them to leadership positions. King identifies sexual attraction, pregnancy, and fraternization as "problems" that will continue to serve as obstacles to full gender integration (it is interesting to note that these issues are only ever obstacles for women, though they tend to involve both a man and woman). Such assertions indicate we have a long way to go when it comes to defining gender equality within the forces. The argument that men and women cannot control their sexual urges in close confines is largely insulting to men and presumes that the US military is unable to maintain professional standards in its

ranks. King's vague, romanticized, and generalized remarks about West African (where in West Africa? when?) troops that forced women to swear to celibacy is confusing and inappropriate for current discussions about pregnancy in the forces. Women get pregnant and this is a fact that has been dealt with in other occupations; moreover, both sexes in the military can become parents and still do their jobs. Celibacy has yet to be considered for male troops.

Like it or not, women have been and will continue to serve in combat positions. What remains to be seen is whether the US military can learn from its international peers and accept that gender integration should challenge the core identity and culture of the institution.

The Author Replies

Anthony C. King

It is widely acknowledged that the only people whom revolutionaries despise more than their political enemies are rival radical groups with ostensibly similar goals. Some of Lenin's most acidic vitriol was directed not at Tsar Nicholas and the Whites but at the "renegade" Karl Kautsky: as a socialist, he was insufficiently communist. Reading Megan MacKenzie's response to my article on the possibility of women's accession to combat roles, I begin to empathize with Kautsky. I seem to have been interpreted as a masculinist opponent of female integration into the combat arms because I sought to engage with the polemical works of Martin van Creveld and Kingsley Browne and then identified a series of issues which female integration over the past decade has raised. I am accused of making "vague, romanticized, and generalized remarks" and that I "ascribe [to] some of the most disappointing arguments." To confirm: my article was explicitly intended to outline the real possibility of female integration which now exists and to suggest some conditions which should be met to ensure it is successful—for the female soldiers who choose combat roles and for the armed forces. It was not intended to oppose Panetta's decision to extend full accession to women but to facilitate it.

Nevertheless, the misunderstanding is useful in that it provides an opportunity to clarify the issues which MacKenzie raises about my comments on physical standards and sexuality. She complains that my observation that women have to pass the same physical standards as men to serve in the infantry may be a surreptitious attempt to exclude them. On the contrary, both female and male soldiers who have served in combat have emphasized the requirement for equal standards; trust and professional credibility depend upon it. Crucially, although only a small minority of women are likely to meet the criteria for ground combat duties, the fact that objective standards apply to both men and women has been found liberating by female soldiers. The institution of generic professional standards ensures they are no longer prejudged as women but assessed by what they can do as soldiers.

MacKenzie is right to suggest that masculine norms can and have infected the definition of military standards. There are numerous examples when male soldiers have not been able to apply the same professional standards to men and to women. Female soldiers are regularly discriminated against so that performances, which would be judged as entirely competent if the soldier were a man, are unfairly denigrated. The additional research, which both MacKenzie and Sarah Percy call for, might identify arbitrary forms of discrimination like this with a view to eliminating it. This research, however, is unlikely to disprove the need for equal standards. On the contrary, it appears predicated on an assumption that standards should be genuinely universal and are the route to less gendered military.

MacKenzie is also critical of my discussion of sex in combat units. She raises an important point about which I seem unwittingly to have been insufficiently clear. It is easy to assume that because sex potentially undermines cohesion in combat units, women (having apparently introduced sexuality) are the problem. On the contrary, as MacKenzie rightly maintains, it is as much—if not normally more—the fault of male soldiers if fraternization occurs and it is only the masculinized culture of the armed forces which allows women, and only women, to be blamed and, indeed, vilified for any sexual misconduct which does occur. Although MacKenzie appears to have ignored it, I explicitly stated all this in my article and concluded that a divisive double standard is at work which needs to be addressed (page 23). Nevertheless, the identification of this double standard does not disprove the point, affirmed by both male and female soldiers, that heterosexual relations between serving personnel in the same combat unit tend to undermine discipline and cohesion. Sex alters the relations between the males and females involved and between them and the rest of their unit.

My article was not then an argument against integration, as MacKenzie presumes. The challenge in the coming decade is to create a sufficiently professional ethos in the armed forces to ensure these issues are addressed coherently and honestly so those women who are willing and able to serve in the combat arms are able to contribute fully to those services. The purpose of my article was to make some small contribution to that end.

The Author Replies

Ellen L. Haring

Both MacKenzie and Percy rightly point out that there has been little empirical research in the area of women combatants. This is extraordinary given that most of the literature in the 1990s predicted that the distinction between front lines and rear echelons would largely disappear. Over the last decade, in fact, women were consistently engaged in combat operations.

While individual research efforts have been enlightening, they have only been able to scratch the surface of what should have been a series

of research studies on this topic. Presently, the military departments are conducting research relative to validating or establishing gender-free occupational standards. Yet, much more remains to be done. The commentators have highlighted a number of fruitful avenues for future research, and the US military would do well to support those avenues by increasing its funding opportunities for researchers and by permitting greater access to test populations.

Book Reviews

HUMAN & INHUMAN WAR

Warrior Geeks: How 21st Century Technology is Changing the Way We Fight and Think About War

By Christopher Coker

Reviewed by Dr. Janne Haaland-Matláry, Professor, the University of Oslo and the Norwegian Defence University College

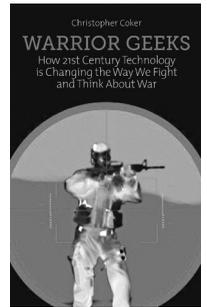
This is a brilliant and difficult book about a rather nightmarish topic, i.e., how technology now enables us to become post-humans, a term that by now has become familiar in debates about certain types of technological advances.

Professor Coker has been preoccupied with the ethos of the warrior and the ethics of war in several previous books. Steeped in classical knowledge of the Greeks and their warrior culture, he also has an in-depth knowledge of modern military technology and its most recent developments. In particular, he is interested in how technological developments in robotics, neuroscience, and cybernetics influence the soldier, and the prospects for what we can term post-human warfare.

This book is the culmination of many years of deep study of these phenomena, and it is not only a very important book but also a deeply disconcerting one. Coker starts by quoting C. S. Lewis's *Abolition of Man*: "Human nature will be the last part of Nature to surrender to Man. The battle will then be won. . . . But who, precisely, will have won it?" (1943). The prospect of post-human human beings is already beginning to be a reality in terms of genetic manipulation and eventually the cloning of humans. The knowledge of humanity, of what we should be as persons, is less and less widespread—fewer heed classical insights into human nature and the virtues, and technological possibility seems to be "good" in the sense that what can be done, will be done. The world looks increasingly less like that of the Greeks and more like that of the geeks, who do not care about ethics, but only about technology, argues Coker. God is dead in this universe as there is no longing for the transcendent, but the possibility to manipulate away pain, fear, and the need for courage. This is, in Coker's comparison, like Mustapha Mond's life in *Brave New World*—with existing, but mostly future technology, the soldier can be rendered into an actor who need not risk anything, fear anything, or sacrifice anything.

What does he mean by this radical and disturbing hypothesis? In his own words:

What I have tried to do in this book is to examine the likely impact of early 21st century technologies—digital, cybernetic, and bio-medical—upon our understanding of how war and our humanity will continue to co-evolve. Throughout this book I have been skeptical of the direction in which we are taking war. I am concerned that if soldiers are denied their private thoughts and are embedded in a cybernetic web they may be denied the chance for personal development . . . if we were ever to sub-contract responsibility for ethical decision-making to robots . . . if we could ever engineer courage or



London: Hurst & Company,
2013
317 pages
\$37.50

blot out conscience through drugs we would severely compromise what we value the most—our individual free will (pages 292-93).

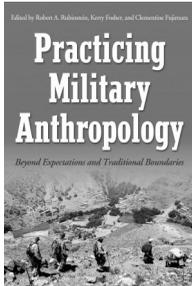
War online, as videogames, drone pilots who kill and go to fetch the kids from kindergarten, drones that can target on their own, robots that take the risk out of battle and make decisions, soldiers whose brains are manipulated through neuroscience to blot out fear and conscience—the list is disturbing and long. This reviewer cannot claim to understand the details of new technology, but Coker writes in great detail about it and illustrates the role it may come to have with science fiction and fiction, ancient and ultramodern. Avant-garde technology is accompanied by works of science fiction, computer games, and films—all of which the classically educated Coker seems to know as well as his classics.

This is a very demanding book, intellectually and conceptually. It is disconcerting because it deals with imminent reality; some of this technology is here now. Drone pilots experience trauma not from being in the battlefield, but from being away from it—they kill, but are not in battle, hence no risk, no danger, and no sacrifice. The ethical issue is the difference between war and murder. Until now, drone pilots have been uniformed, but for how long? Then the work will be wholly “technical,” civilian, and not different from a war game, it would seem. What are the ethical implications of such a development? Lawyers are speaking about humanitarian law applied to autonomous weapon systems—a contradiction in terms, literally speaking.

Coker writes very well; his pen is an elegant one. The reader is treated to a literary feast, and it is not easy to digest the many courses served. The final chapter reflects on technology’s impact. He writes:

Character is at the heart of this change, it is being relentlessly challenged by the march of science. It is being undermined by genetics, by evolutionary psychology, and by neuro-science (the idea that behaviour is determined by modules of a hard-wired brain) (page 293).

This book is not only about warfare under technology’s spell, but, more importantly, about man’s general condition today. It is in the battlefield that the contrast between the Greek and the Geek is most pronounced, for here the human being has always—or so far in history—been asked for supreme courage and sacrifice, for character. If war can be rendered riskless and rid of sacrifice, is it still war? And more importantly, are soldiers in such a war still soldiers?



Practicing Military Anthropology: Beyond Expectations and Traditional Boundaries

Edited by Robert A. Rubinstein, Kerry Fosher, and Clementine Fujimura

Review by Dr. James Dorough-Lewis Jr., Senior HUMINT Instructor for the Department of Defense and former Social Scientist for Human Terrain Systems

For a researcher in the social sciences, putting one’s career at the service of the military involves a degree of professional risk; however, it is far from the terminal move a vocal minority, especially though not exclusively found within the anthropological community, might have

one believe. Social scientists operate under imperatives of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice that strike some as being at odds with their interpretations of military institutions. And yet, as Rush discusses in the first chapter of *Practicing*, the defense and academic communities have long histories of productive partnerships in which social scientists are no more or less beholden to standards of ethical practice than within purely academic settings. Over the course of its seven chapters, *Practicing Military Anthropology* fills a critical gap in knowledge about the frequently marginalized first-hand perspectives of anthropologists who have built fruitful relationships with the military in spite of, and sometimes by virtue of, the apparent challenges.

True to its subtitle, this work approaches a contentious topic with surprising articulation and authenticity. Rubinstein, Fosher, and Fujimura introduce *Practicing Military Anthropology* with the hope of shedding light on the breadth of interaction occurring between the military and the social sciences as well as where the military has repeatedly demonstrated itself to be a worthwhile subject of anthropologists' attentions. Fujimura's explanation of becoming a military anthropologist (Chapter 2) and Holmes-Eber's description of her daily life as a professor of culture at the Marine Corps University (Chapter 4) bookend Turnley's narrative of moving through a gambit of successes in applied anthropology eventually bringing her into contact with the intelligence community (Chapter 3). These chapters express a range of victories and hurdles, of pride and self-consciousness that constitute an invaluable repository of lessons learned about the practical side of doing social science research for the military. *Practicing Military Anthropology* performs superbly its intention of speaking to social scientists already working with the military or those considering doing so, particularly young scholars who may have limited exposure to careers in the defense sector. It is very much a collection of reflective essays by, for, and about applied researchers within the military context, and on its surface appears to have little to offer outside that audience.

That said, eavesdropping can have its advantages. *Practicing Military Anthropology* would likely benefit senior members of the defense community for two reasons. First, the authors are anthropologists active in their specialties and, in my experience, solidly representative of their colleagues. In this context they confront the central critiques and concerns among social scientists about working for military institutions. They do so in terms that demonstrate both how seriously they consider these tensions and how profoundly personal experiences inform the reasoning by which they have negotiated them. The authors speak with sincerity and clarity, refreshingly free of guile or political wordsmithing about their own journey towards an appreciation of the military as a constantly evolving institution and a collection of intelligent, curious, and very human professionals. To take a phrase from Fosher a bit out of context, "[N]othing replaces a native informant" (page 94). *Practicing Military Anthropology* holds the potential to improve the relationship-building capacities of senior leaders working with or depending on members of the social science community. Any member of the defense community interested in concrete examples of how social scientists have tackled controversies associated with working with the military, and found the experience rewarding and affirming, will find this book uniquely insightful.

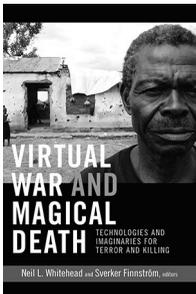
Second, the authors in several places outline areas of strength and opportunity for the military's incorporation of embedded social science capabilities. Turnley, for instance, mentions how one perspective on social network analysis popular in military circles undermines rather than supports an understanding of organizational effectiveness, and then refers the reader to more promising alternatives. Fosher discusses the shortcomings of approaches to training that treat culture as rules of etiquette over processes for making sense of the world. She goes on to outline how her work with the Marines led to improvements on the ground (Chapter 5). Additionally, anyone seeking a glimpse of what right looks like in terms of leveraging applied social science research towards mission success would do well to review Chapter 6. There, Varhola—himself a military officer and anthropologist—describes the nexus of maximum synthesis between military operations and field ethnography. In this respect, *Practicing Military Anthropology* represents a wealth of opportunity for mutually beneficial cooperation between academe and the military.

Rubinstein closes with what may be one of the most astute and succinct analyses of the ongoing conflict between those who support a formal military-social science relationship and those who do not (Chapter 7). He points to traditions in anthropology privileging diversity of opinion and encouraging the exploration of key social institutions, among which the military counts. Though brief, the reader, whether an inquisitive social scientist or a senior leader, can expect *Practicing Military Anthropology's* stories, suggestions, and raw information to provide a return on the investment of time and interest.

Virtual War and Magical Death: Technologies and Imaginaries for Terror and Killing

Edited by Neil L. Whitehead and Sverker Finnström

Reviewed by Dr. Robert J. Bunker, Distinguished Visiting Professor and Minerva Chair at the Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College



Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013

200 pages
\$24.95

Army readers will find that the late Neil L. Whitehead and Sverker Finnström, anthropologists from the University of Wisconsin and Uppsala University respectively, have edited an intriguing—yet at times vexing—book on virtual war. The work offers a masterful ethnographic perspective on virtual war, stemming from a synthesis of the “techno-modern” with the “magico-primitive,” while providing a critical analysis of the Army’s Human Terrain System (HTS). To be fair, the work draws upon scholarly arguments derived from lessons learned from anthropology’s colonial and neo-colonial legacies and is not meant to be overbearingly antagonistic in its approach. Still, for at least some of the chapter contributors, it is readily apparent that the HTS is indeed viewed as the equivalent of a present-day “military invasion of anthropology.” Additionally, the angst generated within that academic discipline concerning what is legitimate and ethical scholarship permeates the work, especially in regard to some perspectives taken on embedded HTS anthropologists, and high profile scholars, such as former program spokesperson Dr. Montgomery McFate.

The origins of the work can be traced back to a panel of the American Anthropological Association meeting in Philadelphia in 2009 on “Virtual War and Magical Death” and took three years to complete as a document. While the work is written primarily for other academics, specifically anthropologists, it may provide far more utility for defense and security analysts and senior military officers than the contributing scholars intended.

The book is organized into eleven chapters with acknowledgments and an introduction in the front section and ample references, a listing of contributors, and an index in the back section. Along with the two editors, who have also written chapters, nine contributing authors exist. These authors all appear to hold Ph.D.'s in anthropology or closely allied fields, except for one doctoral candidate, and while mostly representative of United States scholarship, also hail from universities in Belgium, Sweden, the Netherlands, and New Zealand. The various chapters in the work focus on topics related to ethical issues surrounding the use of ethnography in support of the state (Neil Whitehead); the Human Terrain System and its interrelationship to remote and drone warfare (David Price); human social cultural behavioral modeling (Roberto González); the military invasion of anthropology (R. Brian Ferguson); the Lord's Resistance Army and witchcraft (Sverker Finnström); night vision technology as a hostile perceptual filter—much like a dark magical artifact—that allows US soldiers to dominate in nocturnal combat (Antonius Robben); the use of cognitive laborers as virtual soldiers/mercenaries (Robertson Allen); virtual counterinsurgency (e.g., drone strikes) in the tribal zones of the Af-Pak theater (Jeffery Sluka); impunity as the generator of an alternative dimension in which chaos and death are the norm in Guatemala (Victoria Sanford); the shamanic-like use of music in war (Matthew Sumera); and a conclusion that argues the global political-economic order is a “carrion system” dependent on the growth of profit (Koen Stroeken).

The central theme of the work is an initially difficult construct to absorb. It appears to be a juxtaposition of magical-primitivism—drawing upon concepts of “assault sorcery,” which is injurious magic leading to physical harm and even death—with virtual-visual killing, night vision dominance, and electronic intelligence dominance representative of components of techno-modernism. The premodern and the postmodern elements of conflict are in essence viewed as being closer to each other than conventional elements of warfare. As a result, violent nonstate actors and special operations forces, both practitioners of virtual warfare in highly unpredictable operational environments, are theoretically integrated into this ethnography. This synthesis thus promotes a form of symmetrical anthropology that is said to better describe premodern and postmodern conflict than the military doctrine of “asymmetric warfare.” This reviewer sees quite a bit of merit in this approach and the need for the cross-pollination of military science by other disciplines such as anthropology; in fact, this is one of the underpinnings of the HTS.

With this in mind, the critical theme underlying the work, while very much dominated by academic misgivings and feelings of betrayal concerning anthropologists working for the US government, should not be considered solely in the polemic. Better understanding these

criticisms should be of some interest to Army audiences for the insights they provide into the academic mind—one which at times is in great variance with military thinking. Some components of this critical theme are as follows. First, the use of anthropologists as a component of the HTS is ethically questioned from a humanistic approach. Ethnocentric values and “weaponized culture”—hence, *de facto* “weaponized anthropology”—to support US military counterinsurgency programs are highlighted. Second, the issue of “traditional harmful practices” in need of eradication is touched upon. Such culturally specific practices, such as honor killings, are viewed in variance with liberal democratic values. This returns us to the old “civilizing the savages via their children” controversies tied into foreign aid and development programs. Third, a concern over the question of endless post-9/11 cycles of violence (e.g., the global war on terror) is raised. Rather than being viewed as an anomaly, the editors now suggest such cycles have become “. . . a fundamental aspect of liberal Western democracy itself, and as such it is an inbuilt tool in the development of the world, . . .” (page 23), that is, a fundamental component of our economic system.

Still, Army readers will mostly benefit from the work’s major theme which seeks to blend the techno-modern with the magico-primitive in a new ethnographic perspective on virtual war and killing (spectacide). Such a techno-magico synthesis is inherently strategic in nature, provides an emerging appreciation for the importance of virtuality and dimensionality in conflict, and ultimately may offer us new perspectives on cyberspace that will someday be of tangible benefit to the Army’s strategic leadership.

CONTEMPORARY WAR

War Comes to Garmser: Thirty Years of Conflict on the Afghan Frontier

By Carter Malkasian

Reviewed by Dr. Joseph J. Collins, Colonel (USA Retired), Professor, National War College, and author of *Understanding War in Afghanistan* (NDU Press, 2011)

The twelve years of this “Decade of War” have produced many good books on counterinsurgency. Carter Malkasian’s *War Comes to Garmser: Thirty Years of Conflict on the Afghan Frontier* will be ranked among the best of them. Indeed, the value of this book extends beyond the case in question. It speaks to the unchanging nature of war and the complex, changing character of war in the information age.

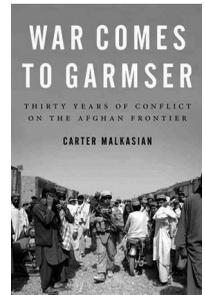
The author is well educated on the subject and has performed yeoman service on the ground as a scholar and diplomat in both Iraq and Afghanistan. In the latter theater, Malkasian learned Pashto, the local language, and stayed two years in one area, achieving great prominence as a T. E. Lawrence-like diplomatic operative. He downplays his own role, but in August 2011, *The Washington Post* wrote of “Carter Sahib” that:

The adoration [of the local population] stems from his unflinching politeness (he greeted people in the traditional Pashtun way, holding their hands for several minutes as a series of welcomes and praises to God were delivered), his willingness to take risks (he often traveled around in a police pickup instead of in an American armored vehicle with a squad of Marines), and his command of Pashto, the language of southern Afghanistan (he conversed fluently, engaging in rapid-fire exchanges with gray-bearded elders). Afghan officials and U.S. commanders credit Malkasian with playing a critical role in the transformation of Garmser from one of the country’s most violent, Taliban-infested districts to a place so quiet that some Marines wish they had more chances to fire their weapons.

To make war in a place like Afghanistan means you must immerse yourself in that milieu. In addition to friendly and enemy forces, there will be other actors. Local power centers, competing tribal structures, religious sects, drug lords, and parties to land disputes, are norms, not aberrations. Conducting war under these conditions requires soldiers who are as culturally sensitive and well educated as they are trained for the kinetic fight.

Real people are central to *War Comes to Garmser*. Malkasian modeled his outstanding book, on the famous Vietnam-era text, *War Comes to Long An* by Jeffrey Race. In both books, the study of counterinsurgency begins with an intense examination of a war in a small area. Malkasian’s book is population-centric counterinsurgency under a microscope. More than 31,000,000 Afghans live in 34 provinces that contain over 400 districts. This book is about one of those districts and fewer than 150,000 Pashtun tribesmen.

Taking advantage of a few years in Afghanistan, Malkasian researched conflict in Garmser, a district in the south-central part of Helmand Province and, at times, a Taliban stronghold. Contrary to



New York: Oxford University Press, 2013

321 pages
\$20.29

most American books about Afghanistan, the main characters in this book are nearly all Afghans. It is not just about the Taliban versus the Government of Afghanistan and the Coalition in the Garmser district. This book is all about powerful tribal leaders, feuding Pashtun tribes, narcotics, land disputes, religious figures, and competing power structures. The dominant American characters here are mud Marines and a handful of US and British diplomats who fought and worked in Garmser from 2009 to 2011.

Malkasian's focus is on how and why the Taliban came to power, were ousted in 2001, and came back five years later. "In other words, why did things go wrong, and did they ever go right?" Like a good novel, the characters tell the story: men like the intrepid Abdullah Jan, the on-again, off-again District Governor, who, bereft of resources, tried to keep the tribes together to thwart the 500-man Taliban offensive, led by the treacherous Mullahs Naim Barech and Dadullah Lang. In Garmser, in 2006, the center could not hold. The Taliban seized the district and held it for a few years. It took three years of hard, dangerous work by 1,000 Marines and squads of diplomats and development experts to take it back.

In Malkasian's conclusion, he cites three key problems in Garmser, all of which are smaller-scale models of nationwide issues: "first, rifts within society and within the government, particularly the reluctance of Afghans opposed to the Taliban to ally together; second, Taliban safe-havens in Pakistan, and third, the after-effects of the [US-sponsored 1960s] canal project," which introduced landless immigrants into the area. The canal system, a potentially important feat of agricultural development, laid the foundation for a legal and ethical problem of such magnitude and sensitivity that Coalition diplomats and development experts were ordered to stay out of the land reform business. This "us-versus-them" issue became a fertile breeding ground for Taliban support. The Coalition's refusal to deal with it ensured land reform will remain a sore point in the future.

In the end, what does this book tell us about the future of Afghanistan, in particular, and counterinsurgency, in general?

Malkasian sticks to his knitting and does not try to provide the reader a roadmap for success. Judging by his analysis of problems in Garmser, he is a moderate optimist, happy about the buildup of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), which could have blocked the Taliban were it strong enough in 2006, but concerned today about the Coalition's staying power and whether the Afghan government can survive after the departure of the Coalition expeditionary force in December 2014. On that subject, the ANSF is fighting well and paying the price for doing so. Today, the Afghan Minister of the Interior is in trouble with the Parliament for losing up to a few hundred policemen per week. In a similar vein, a senior American officer assigned to the theater told this reviewer in July 2013 that, today, virtually all the fighting is being done by Afghan forces, more than three-quarters of which are fighting "unilaterally," that is, without US support or partners. The Taliban has had few successes in the latest fighting season.

The press is full of pessimism, bombast, and Karzai's latest antics. Subtracting from a message of unity and resolve, the US government has vaguely threatened a post-ISAF "zero option," which could only

benefit Mullah Omar. Afghanistan is about ten months away from an election that will tell us—if it is honest—how the Afghan people assess the contending narratives and view the future. The Coalition and the Government of Afghanistan can only help the pre-election narrative by completing the future security agreement and agreeing on the post-ISAF advise-and-assist force.

This book is proof positive of how difficult and costly counterinsurgency is. It requires tremendous resources to achieve gains that often prove temporary. At the height of the surge, the Coalition used 140,000 foreign troops and over 350,000 Afghan soldiers and police officers to block 30,000 full-time Taliban and their local recruits. Success in Garmser, one of Afghanistan's more than 400 districts, required 1,000 Marines for a few years. Indeed, Rajiv Chandrasekaran, in his 2013 book, *Little America: The War within the War for Afghanistan*, judged the Helmand deployment to be excessive, given greater needs elsewhere in theater. In my own trips to Afghanistan in 2011 and 2012, it was not unusual to see Army brigades in the eastern part of Afghanistan responsible for three provinces.

Whether or not Chandrasekaran was right, the Marines in Helmand did great work, and one can be sure that their Grunts never felt they had an excessive number of troops. The Marines in Garmser lived up to the traditional aggressive fighting standards of Marine infantry, a hardy perennial that has not gone out of style in the information age. They were among the Marine contingent awarded a Presidential Unit Citation.

Financial resources also rose to incredible heights under the Obama surge. From 2010 to 2012 inclusive, by Congressional Research Services (CRS) calculations, total US expenditures averaged 109 billion dollars per year. It is fair to ask how many more conflicts on the scale of Iraq or Afghanistan that the United States can afford in the future.

The counterinsurgency effort is not only huge and costly but also organizationally complex. Security is paramount, but it is only one line of operation. Diplomacy, development, capacity building, and rule of law are all part of what some call “armed nation-building,” and others refer to as population-centric counterinsurgency. The military surge required a civilian surge. In the Coalition, interagency cooperation was in high demand but short supply. As the overwhelming presence of coalition combat forces fades, one may expect the impetus for interagency cooperation will tend to do likewise. More importantly, while the Afghan security forces are robust, the civilian government is still weak, corrupt, and illegitimate in many eyes. Pakistan, beset by its own Taliban revolt, remains both ally and antagonist. At the risk of understatement, the uncertainties associated with the future of the conflict in the Hindu Kush are considerable.

Another dimension of the complexity here is knowledge. Large-scale counterinsurgency requires thousands of experts with area knowledge and language skills. Local intelligence officers need to understand their districts with the same level of expertise that Malkasian and the Marines did in Garmser. Sadly, many of our “strategic corporals,” to borrow General Krulak's phrase from 1997, and many of their officers have not always shown such sophistication.

The unique character of such conflicts poses tough questions for force planners: Are these levels of knowledge and language skills reasonable expectations for general purpose forces and a poorly resourced State Department? Is large-scale, expeditionary-force counterinsurgency even do-able? (The last undisputed US success was in the Philippines in 1902.) Can large-scale expeditionary forces avoid the mistakes of Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan? Can forces focused on high-intensity combat rapidly transition to fighting a counterinsurgency or vice versa?

On counterinsurgency, it would seem wise to get in early and light with well-trained, area-educated forces. In this technique of COIN Lite, the advise-and-assist force should focus on developing the host nation forces and turning operations over to them as quickly as possible. All of this, of course, is more easily typed than accomplished.

It is difficult to be completely optimistic on prospects for success in Afghanistan. In the end, the future of Afghanistan will be in the hands of the Afghan government and its people. We can provide assistance and advice, but Afghans will have to win the Afghan war, if the “w” word even applies to wars in the Hindu Kush. While this challenge is daunting, it pales in comparison to what Taliban leaders will have to accomplish to have a successful outcome.

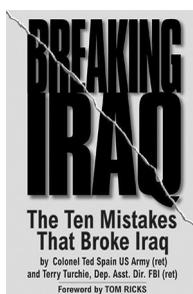
Lest he be accused of local-itis, the broad-minded Malkasian concludes that “thinking objectively about strategy demands a degree of attachment that the individual on the ground must foreswear—at least if he is to do his job. Emotional commitment, with all of its biases, is irreplaceable. Grand strategic calculations on costs and benefits are best left to far-off policy-makers” (page 274). Statesmen must figure out when, where, and on what scale to engage in this form of war among the people. No amount of skill in counterinsurgency techniques can remove the burden of strategic decisions from our nation’s leaders.

Breaking Iraq: The Ten Mistakes That Broke Iraq

By Ted Spain and Terry Turchie

Reviewed by LTC David G. Fivecoat, US Army, former Infantry Battalion Commander in Afghanistan, and veteran of three tours in Iraq

Since the 2003 invasion of Iraq, thousands of books have been published on the conflict. Regrettably, very few have been written by the hundreds of officers who led battalions and brigades in Mesopotamia for a year or more in combat. By my count, only six battalion commanders and one brigade commander—Chris Hughes of 2nd Battalion, 327 Infantry; Nate Sassman of 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry; Steve Russell of 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry; Pat Proctor of 2nd Battalion, 32nd Field Artillery; Jim Crider of 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry; Harry Tunnel of 1st Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment and Pete Mansoor of 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division—have written about their experiences. *Breaking Iraq: The Ten Mistakes That Broke Iraq*, by Colonel Ted Spain, US Army Retired, and Terry Turchie, adds to the short list by describing Colonel Spain’s experience leading the 18th Military Police (MP) Brigade in Baghdad, Iraq, from April 2003 to February 2004. Unlike other commander’s memoirs, *Breaking Iraq* attempts to go one step further by



Palisades, NY: History Publishing Company, 2013

310 pages

\$28.95

critiquing ten operational and strategic decisions that made the mission more challenging. Unfortunately, the book struggles to do both tasks well.

Utilizing the 18th MP Brigade's experience, the authors demonstrate the impact of ten operational and strategic decisions on the military policemen patrolling Baghdad's streets. Paraphrasing the authors, the ten mistakes were: the failure to deploy enough military police, to emphasize the establishment of law and order, and to rebuild the Iraqi police force; the lack of a clear definition on prisoners; the ill-defined roles between interrogators and military police; the decision to assign Brigadier General Janis Karpinski to run Abu Ghraib prison; the focus of General Ricardo Sanchez on combat operations; the ineffectiveness of the Coalition Provincial Authority; the unhelpful role of Bernie Kerik; and the utilization of allies who saw the mission differently than the United States. Ten years after the invasion, there is little debate that these decisions, and others, contributed to the insurgency's growth and additional challenges for all soldiers deployed there. While the strategic and operational critiques were conveyed better in James Fallows's *Blind Into Baghdad* or Tom Ricks's *Fiasco*, the authors' emphasis on military police and law and order is a new and insightful twist on the debate. Exploring the hypothetical, the authors contend that deploying more of the US Army's military police force might have prevented the rise of the insurgency. Had their book been published in 2005 rather than 2013, Spain and Turchie could have had a greater impact on the discussion of the factors responsible for the Iraqi insurgency's growth.

The year 2003 was a chaotic time in Iraq, as units did their best to understand the environment, learn counterinsurgency and nation-building skills, and craft an effective way ahead. The military's experiences in Panama, Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo, and Afghanistan seemed to lack relevancy. Colonel Spain and the 18th MP Brigade's challenges of dealing with uncertainty, inadequate plans, the breakdown of Iraqi society, and reestablishing order will be familiar to any veteran who served in the early days of Iraq. The letters and after-action reviews from his officers and soldiers add to the narrative and are particularly insightful.

Colonel Spain pulls no punches as he shares his unique perspective and opinions on key leaders he encountered, especially Bernie Kerick, James Steele, Lieutenant General Ricardo Sanchez, Major General Geoffrey Miller, and then-Major General Martin Dempsey. The section on the Brigade's experience with Abu Ghraib prison and the turn over to Brigadier General Janis Karpinski provides another perspective on how the scourge of torture and prisoner abuse materialized inside the prison walls. Finally, the description of the events surrounding the death of Lieutenant Colonel Kim Orlando, Battalion Commander for the 716th MP Battalion, and one of the highest ranking soldiers killed in Iraq, sheds some light on the events of that confusing night in Karbala.

Regrettably, the book has several shortcomings: a need for an editor to clean up a reoccurring problem of words running "togetheronthepage," a lack of maps, and a requirement for better organization. A factual error involving Colonel Spain's encounter with the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment (ACR) in 2003 (pages 70-71) raises questions about the accuracy of the memoirs. While the 2nd ACR was indeed in Iraq in 2003, it didn't field Stryker vehicles until 2005, and it didn't deploy

with Strykers until 2007. Also, the authors' additional research appears limited to a small number of senior leader memoirs and a few newspaper and magazine articles. Perhaps drawing from other works published in the intervening decade, like the US Army's excellent *On Point I* and *On Point II* or Mark DePue's *Patrolling Baghdad: A Military Police Company and the War in Iraq*, might have added more context to Spain's experience.

Throughout the book, the authors criticize every higher headquarters above the 18th Military Police Brigade, including Combined Joint Task Force-7, the Coalition Provincial Authority, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and the President of the United States. Some of the criticism is warranted, but very few leaders in the chain of command seem to escape Colonel Spain's ire. Despite his rigid standards for others, there is little self-assessment of the successes or failures of the 18th MP Brigade. Spain's appraisal of the rebuilding of the Iraqi police force, the change in the security situation in Baghdad over the year, and the Brigade's role in the recovery of artifacts from the Baghdad museum, would have added to the book's impact. With ten years of perspective, some degree of introspection into the Brigade's accomplishments and shortcomings would have been welcomed.

Colonel Spain should be commended for possessing the courage to write *Breaking Iraq*, only the second memoir by a brigade commander who served in Iraq. It is a solid book for military policemen, individuals who served in Baghdad in 2003 and 2004, and future postwar planners. However, it adds little to the narrative on the poor operational and strategic choices that fueled the insurgency's growth in Iraq. Hopefully, Colonel Spain will write another book that tells the full story of the challenges he experienced leading the 18th MP Brigade.

AMERICAN POWER IN THE NEW ERA

War, Welfare, & Democracy: Rethinking America's Quest for the End of History

By Peter J. Munson

Reviewed by Major Nathan K. Finney, US Army, strategist and veteran of Iraq and Afghanistan, and a current student in the Basic Strategic Art Program at the US Army War College

In the wake of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, much ink has been spilled relating servicemembers' personal experiences or discussing the misapplication of American foreign policy. Few of them do both, let alone place such events in the greater context of history. In *War, Welfare, & Democracy*, Peter J. Munson does both by providing the reader a deep look into the driving factors in American foreign policy, punctuated by vivid images from his personal travels. Readers will find this book both enlightening and engrossing.

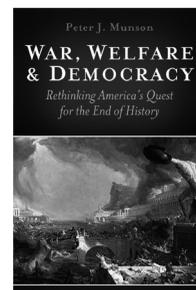
The thesis of this book is that the major challenges in the world today stem from the same source—the states' struggle to manage the flows of economic activity driven by globalization and the sociopolitical modernization that comes with it. In seven quick chapters, Munson synthesizes international relations theory, history, and economics to describe how the modern international system has developed into one of stark inequality, driving the instability and conflict seen across the globe today. Wealth and power are not distributed equally, with Western states providing too many resources to their populations through welfare states and developing nations failing to provide enough.

In addition to economic disparity, Munson uses Fukuyama's "end of history" theme to suggest that America's belief in the inevitable triumph of western liberalism helps explain the last decade's foreign policy choices. Munson describes how, as a nation, we have forgotten where, and the historical context in which, these concepts originated. His comparison of the morally dubious attempts at state-building in medieval Europe to the attempt to build government in societies dominated by tribalism and corruption particularly resonates.

Quoting from Kalyvas' *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*, he suggests that modern insurgencies can be seen "as a process of competitive state-building." In Munson's view, our recent quest to drive foreign nations to speed the "end of history" through military adventurism, has stymied local attempts at state-building, not supported them. America tried to spread Western values through force, mistaking the illusion of elections for good governance and modernization for progress.

Munson balances his pessimism with optimism about the American propensity for change. In his view, instead of exporting their perceived success, Americans need to focus on re-creating the conditions at home that made our country great. In so doing we will act as an exemplar in foreign policy, not a crusader.

If these prescriptions sound both obvious and vague, you are not alone. While Munson does an outstanding job describing the historical



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240 pages
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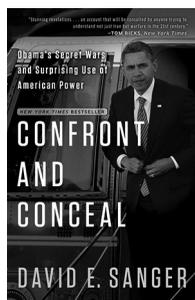
narrative leading to today's issues as well as illustrating them with examples from his own travels around the world, his solutions are easier said than done. Many American presidents have come into office focused on improving the economic standing of the country and reducing our commitments overseas. Both the complexity of the task and the complexity of the contemporary world make this a more difficult task than it seems.

Overall, *War, Welfare, & Democracy* is a well-researched and authoritative look at what drives us as a nation and how we arrived at where we are today. Munson's fluency with international relations theory, contemporary history, and economic theory provides the reader with a clear picture of global trends and provides a useful framework that points the way into the future. While his solutions lack specificity, Munson's framework is valuable for national security professionals to understand. This book is highly recommended.

Confront and Conceal: Obama's Secret Wars and Surprising Use of American Power

By David E. Sanger

Reviewed by Dr. W. Andrew Terrill, Research Professor, Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College



New York: Random House,
2012
496 pages
\$28.00

In *Confront and Conceal*, David Sanger, the chief Washington correspondent of *The New York Times*, examines President Obama's approach to US national security. He considers the president's actions in Afghanistan and Pakistan, the Middle East, China, and North Korea, and argues an "Obama Doctrine" of sorts has emerged. It calls for the United States to confront the actions of its adversaries through a variety of ways including engagement, sanctions, covert actions, propaganda war, cyberwar, working closely with allies, and employing drones and Special Operations Forces. Conversely, the use of massive conventional military force is something the Obama Doctrine seeks to avoid except in cases involving US national survival. This reluctance is motivated by the president's concern about developing open-ended commitments and long occupations "that we can no longer afford" (page 421). Throughout the work, Obama is portrayed as deeply engaged in foreign policy, which he views through a realist lens (an approach that James Mann has without irony called that of a "Scowcroft Democrat"). He is also presented as seeking to manage other world powers and friendly states through intensive diplomacy and a keen understanding of their interests and goals.

Sanger maintains that Obama's approach to national security is reflected in his willingness to accept what the administration was reported to have called "Afghan Good Enough" as the basis for a US withdrawal from that country. This policy seeks a decent outcome in Afghanistan but is primarily concerned with ensuring the country never becomes a sanctuary for al Qaeda or other international terrorist organizations. Sanger maintains that Obama considers Pakistan and Iran to be more difficult problems than Afghanistan, and the president is described as viewing a loose Pakistani nuclear weapon as his most frightening foreign policy contingency. The Obama administration has struggled a great deal with this question but never reached a satisfactory solution

largely due to the Pakistani's claim that their weapons are 100 percent safe and the obvious fact that even a safe arsenal can become unsafe if Pakistan implodes.

Some of the most interesting analysis of this work involves US policies to prevent or at least delay Iranian development of a nuclear weapon. Here much of what Sanger presents is an account of US-Israeli covert war against the Iranian nuclear weapons program based on investigative reporting and not confirmed by official United States government statements. Sanger describes aspects of the covert war in some detail considering issues such as cyberattacks and sabotage against Iranian nuclear infrastructure. In one of the more amusing aspects of the book, Sanger also discusses a US-sponsored propaganda effort against Iran that appears modeled on "The Daily Show," whereby two US-based Iranian comedians highlight some of the most absurd aspects of their leadership's statements and actions. Moreover, while the covert and propaganda wars have been occurring, Obama has been steadily tightening economic sanctions on the Tehran regime by convincing foreign leaders that Iran has refused a reasonable diplomatic solution. This tightening has been a slow process since China and Russia initially showed almost no interest in confronting Tehran over this issue, but were eventually brought along.

Sanger comments extensively on the Obama administration's use of drones, which he maintains is substantial. Again, his accounts are detailed but often unsubstantiated by official US statements or documents. He maintains that drones are highly effective and over time have become much more accurate thereby reducing collateral damage in countries where they have been used in recent years. Nevertheless, Sanger strongly objects to one aspect of Obama's drone policy, which is the secrecy surrounding many aspects of the program. Sanger states that the Obama administration's decision to keep many details of its drone program secret has allowed US enemies to dominate the discussion of these systems with wildly exaggerated claims of the suffering of innocent victims. Sanger maintains the United States could win the argument on the morality of the drone program if it had not forfeited the option of doing so through excessive secrecy. This criticism may have value, but such decisions almost always involve the host government and not just the US administration. Recently, the much greater openness of Yemeni President Abed Rabbo Hadi (elected 2012) about drones has allowed the Obama administration to lift at least some of the secrecy about such activities in Yemen, although clearly not nearly to the extent Sanger is advocating.

In his discussions of the Arab Spring, Sanger states that Obama was viewed throughout the Arab World in an extremely positive light upon taking office. His landmark 2009 speech in Cairo was given to a widely approving audience, whose members occasionally shouted, "I love you." This approval was not to last, however, and the US president lost much of the luster with young Egyptians when he was perceived as dragging his feet on renouncing the Mubarak regime. He later showed another side of his cautious approach with Libya by refusing to send US ground troops into the conflict. Sanger quotes Obama National Security Advisor Tom Donilon as stating, "When you are on the ground, you own the result—and it is not long before you are resented by the local

population” (page 346). Additionally, while the United States did commit air units to the early phase of the NATO intervention in Libya, it was unwilling to accept even this level of involvement in the much more complex and difficult situation in Syria.

Sanger spends less time discussing China and North Korea, but he does consider potential problems between China and the United States. He states that Chinese leaders were delighted with the Bush-era wars, which they saw as weakening the United States and causing Washington’s attention to be diverted from Asia. This situation has now changed with the US pivot towards Asia, which the Chinese view with suspicion. Sanger suggests that an important part of the new US focus on Asia involves concern over the erratic and aggressive behavior by North Korea, but he correspondingly notes that China has shown little inclination to restrain that country in ways that would assuage US concern. He further states that China has alienated many of its neighbors over the past few years with efforts to advance its territorial claims in the South China Sea. Unsurprisingly, many of the countries most concerned about these Chinese actions are currently seeking to strengthen their ties to the United States. Sanger also discusses some of the divisions reflected in Chinese government publications on whether that country is better served by an assertive or a restrained foreign policy. The uptick of US tension with China came at a particularly bad time as the Chinese were terrified that the Arab Spring would leap the Pacific. Hence, they became especially sensitive to any US actions they perceived as meddling in Chinese domestic politics. Reflecting this concern, there were countless government-sponsored news stories about the end of “normal life” in Arab Spring countries.

In sum, Sanger presents an administration that jumps enthusiastically into the world of technological and other covert actions to fight America’s enemies but shows tremendous restraint about major commitments of military forces. He describes the president’s diplomacy and other foreign policy actions as meeting a number of important challenges with “patience and ingenuity” in ways that have led to favorable outcomes without incurring huge costs. The central foreign policy criticism that Sanger presents is his belief that Obama has been too tactical and reactive in his approach to national security. He maintains the president has come up short in developing and explaining “an overarching strategy to maintain and enhance American leadership and power in the world” (page 426). There may be some truth in this criticism although Sanger also seems to answer his own critique by suggesting the American public is not interested in such a strategy, and both the US public and Congress are more attentive to the “can we afford it questions” and the need for “nation-building at home.” This book is strongly recommended for those interested in the formulation and implementation of President Obama’s foreign policy and how his administration views national security issues.

NETWORKS & SECURITY STRATEGY

Convergence: Illicit Networks and National Security in the Age of Globalization

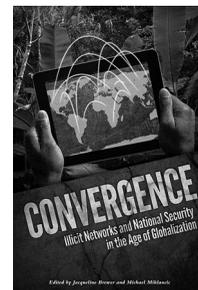
Edited by Michael Miklaucic and Jacqueline Brewer

Reviewed by Dr. Robert J. Bunker, Distinguished Visiting Professor and Minerva Chair at the Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College

Michael Miklaucic, director of research, information, and publications, and editor of the security studies journal *PRISM*; and Jacqueline Brewer, an analyst, both with the Center for Complex Operations (CCO), Institute for National Strategic Studies, at the National Defense University, have created a useful and timely edited publication. The genesis of the book emanated from the conference, “Illicit Networks in an Age of Globalization,” sponsored by the Center for Complex Operations, 8-9 February 2011. This book is in the same genre as James J. F. Forest’s edited work *Crime and Terror* (Routledge 2013), Jennifer L. Hesterman’s *The Terrorist-Criminal Nexus* (CRC Press 2013), and my own, with coauthor John Sullivan, *Studies in Gangs and Cartels* (Routledge 2013), all appearing this year. *Convergence*, along with these other works, focuses on varying aspects of the blending of violent nonstate actor (VNSA) forms, the rise and spread of the illicit networks in which they are linked, criminal forms of international political economy (Dark IPE), and the increasing threat these hostile entities represent to the sovereign state.

This splendid edited collection includes a foreword by James G. Stavridis; acknowledgments; an introduction; fourteen chapters divided into four parts themed “A Clear and Present Danger,” “Complex Illicit Operations,” “The Attack on Sovereignty,” and “Fighting Back”; and contributor notes. The individual chapters include the following:

- Chapter 1: “Deviant Globalization” (Nils Gilman, Jesse Goldhammer, and Steven Weber)
- Chapter 2: “Lawlessness and Disorder: An Emerging Paradigm for the 21st Century” (Phil Williams)
- Chapter 3: “Can We Estimate the Global Scale and Impact of Illicit Trade?” (Justin Picard) in part one
- Chapter 4: “The Illicit Supply Chain” (Duncan Deville)
- Chapter 5: “Fixers, Super Fixers, and Shadow Facilitators: How Networks Connect” (Douglas Farah)
- Chapter 6: “The Geography of Badness: Mapping the Hubs of the Illicit Global Economy” (Patrick Radden Keefe)
- Chapter 7: “Threat Finance: A Critical Enabler for Illicit Networks” (Danielle Camner Lindholm and Celina B. Realuyo)
- Chapter 8: “Money Laundering into Real Estate” (Louise Shelley) in part two
- Chapter 9: “The Criminal State” (Michael Miklaucic and Moisés



Washington, DC: Center for Complex Operations (NDU), 2013

298 pages

\$29.95 (Paper)/Free (PDF)

Naim)

- Chapter 10: “How Illicit Networks Impact Sovereignty” (John P. Sullivan)
- Chapter 11: “Counterinsurgency, Counternarcotics, and Illicit Economies in Afghanistan: Lessons for State-Building” (Vanda Felbab-Brown) in part three
- Chapter 12: “Fighting Networks with Networks” (David M. Luna)
- Chapter 13: “The Department of Defense’s Role in Combating Transnational Organized Crime” (William F. Wechsler and Gary Barnabo)
- Chapter 14: “Collaborating to Combat Illicit Networks Through Interagency and International Efforts” (Celina B. Realuyo) in part four

Each chapter contains its own endnotes and a small number of figures are available in the overall text.

The contributors are representative of an academic (Ph.D.) through practitioner (military and governmental agent) continuum with quite a bit of gray area expertise drawn from both poles, along with some investigative journalistic and policing hybrids also evident. This allows for a healthy mix of skill sets represented in the work. The reviewer has worked with, is working with, or is presently tracking a good portion of the scholars found in this edited collection. For this reason, a couple of observations can be readily made. For readers not familiar with the book’s themes, this work presents a great initial introduction to the writing of the prolific scholars who contributed to this work, including Douglas Farah, Vanda Felbab-Brown, Moisés Naim, Louise Shelley, John P. Sullivan, and Phil Williams. For those readers more steeped in the literature, the works of quite a few of the subject matter experts who have had less publication exposure are of much more value—especially the works found in “Part IV Fighting Back” by David M. Luna, William F. Wechsler, Gary Barnabo, and Celina B. Realuyo. This was a most welcome section because too often scholars are willing to define and outline a problem or threat but are either unable—or unwilling—to recommend solutions to mitigate or respond to it. Still, some of the solutions offered draw upon approaches known about for well over a decade and a half still have not been implemented, which suggests that we are still long on problem definition and short on solutions to these growing threats.

Focusing on some of the specific contributions themselves, it is of some importance that an intentional linkage was made in this work—via the first chapter contribution of Nils Gilman, Jesse Goldhammer, and Steven Weber. That chapter summarizes the main points of their acclaimed book *Deviant Globalization* (Continuum 2011) and, in so doing, helps provide some of the theoretical foundation for *Convergence*. The Douglas Farah chapter should also be mentioned for providing a trenchant overview of the circular flows of goods and cash and the “fixer” chains—what are essentially the “feedback loops” of illicit transactions. While much discussion of VNSA and illicit networks is made in this edited collection—the dying vestiges of our modern world are still defined by the legitimacy and sovereign rights bestowed upon territorial states. For this reason, the discussions and analysis

provided in Chapter 9, “The Criminal State” by Michael Miklaucic and Moisés Naim, is also of great theoretical significance with its coverage of degrees of state criminality and the development of the “Criminal Sovereign” construct.

Neither an index nor, more importantly, a comprehensive reference listing is included in the book, which is a slight detraction. Due to the small font size utilized in the physical book, readers will likely prefer digitally accessing the work and enlarging the font size using the zoom function of a PDF reader. In summation, this is a quality work, on an increasingly important topic of national security, and free in PDF format—all boons for the reader.

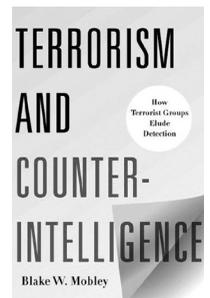
Terrorism and Counterintelligence: How Terrorist Groups Elude Detection

By Blake W. Mobley

Reviewed by Mr. Ross W. Clark, Graduate Student, School of International Affairs, Pennsylvania State University

Combating terrorism has been the focal point of US policy following that fateful day on 11 September 2001. Many in both the academic and professional worlds often fail to realize the most prominent terrorist groups in media headlines are not backwoods ad hoc organizations. They are not the groups of disturbed children or adults attempting to find their place in society as some analysts tend to portray. Many of these organizations are, in fact, quite sophisticated, well-organized groups that control their members via opportunities for improved living standards and an agenda in line with the population’s values at the time. Sophisticated organizations, both past and present, such as al Qaeda, the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA), Egyptian Islamic Group (IG), and Fatah all use a variety of techniques described throughout this book to evade their adversaries’ most effective counterintelligence methods, and it is these four groups the case studies represent.

Terrorism and Counterintelligence: How Terrorist Groups Elude Detection examines the intricate webs that make a terrorist group successful, and begins its review by defining the words “terrorism” and “counterintelligence.” Academics and other professionals often disagree on the basic definitions of these broad and manipulative terms, which in turn cause problems in the thorough analysis and interpretation of the reasoning behind a group’s actions. In a society with a plethora of definitions of terrorism and counterintelligence, the author does an exceptional job of defining these terms in line with the key underlining message of this book, which is to scrutinize the structure of these organizations and attempt to understand how they function from the inside out. The counterintelligence techniques used throughout the case studies include basic denial, adaptive denial, and covert manipulation. Basic denial includes training members of the group in basic counterintelligence techniques such as limited information of the telephone and internet networks and maintaining a low profile. Adaptive denial is adjusting the group’s counterintelligence techniques to combat an adversary’s intelligence methods; lastly, covert manipulation, uses double agents and false defectors to



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340 pages

\$36.00

provide false information to the adversary. All these tactics prove useful and both the adversary and the terrorist group must create new forms of intelligence and counterintelligence techniques to combat older tactics. This book does not discuss specific terrorist plots or provide the reader with dramatic stories; it is rather a book with an in-depth focus on the inner workings of how terrorist cells relay information and the degree to which they keep their most sensitive information secret.

Mobley uses a variety of case studies to provide the audience with a comprehensive look at terror organizations throughout their growth and decline. Instead of classifying an organization as the same entity throughout the span of its life, he breaks these organizations into blocks of time during which they have grown stronger or weaker. The characteristics used to describe the prominence of each group are as follows: organizational structure, popular support, controlled territory, resources, and adversary counterterrorism. Throughout each case study the author explores these characteristics of the various terrorist groups and meticulously details counterintelligence strategies of the terror organizations. Some of these tactics include but are not limited to: controlling territory, recruitment numbers small enough to effectively train, face-to-face meetings, codes for sensitive phrases, and constant movement of leaders. The book describes the specific counterintelligence tactics of each organization in a way that does not immortalize the group. For each counterintelligence measure that is described for terrorist groups to evade detection, an opposite reaction by their adversaries is just as meticulously detailed and implemented to counter them. These adversaries are often state directed and therefore have greater resources and personnel at their disposal to intercept telephone calls, e-mails, or to disseminate agents into the group.

Understanding how terrorist groups evade their adversaries and undermine intelligence collection efforts is what Mobley outlines. The sources used in researching this book are extensive and allow the author to present a compelling case. The use of charts provides the reader a graphic description of these groups. The author understands the complexities of larger, more resourceful terrorist organizations and advises that each group has personality traits that make it unique. In lieu of these individual traits, it is up to the adversary to find these characteristics, and exploit their weaknesses in order to gain crucial inside knowledge. *Terrorism and Counterintelligence* is an intellectual rollercoaster that shows the ups and downs of the biggest and most prominent terrorist groups the world has dissected so far and leaves the reader with a renewed sense of the power and control these groups have on traditional society.

WWI: STRATEGIES & STRATEGISTS

Engineers of Victory: The Problem Solvers Who Turned the Tide in the Second World War

By Paul Kennedy

Reviewed by Dr. F. G. Hoffman, Senior Research Fellow, Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University

In his new book, *Engineers of Victory*, Paul Kennedy has crafted a unique and lively history of the Second World War. His frequently incisive tale takes a different tack from the more traditional historical focus on the decisions of senior statesmen or military leaders. Instead of “Masters and Commanders,” the author narrows his scope to the often unknown middle-rank officers and government officials who resolved critical operational gaps with the key organizational or technological breakthroughs that made victory possible. In 1942, the sweeping strategic strokes laid down by President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill represented more aspiration than executable plans. While the ends were clear, the means were not immediately at hand, and numerous shortfalls in capability were not yet even evident. Over a span of just a few years, enormous technological advances and organizational solutions were tested, refined, and fielded. Without such ways and means, the strategy of the Grand Alliance was mere paper.

Long a student of grand strategy, Kennedy has held the Dilworth Professor of History at Yale for three decades. While well recognized for his broad strategic and historical work, including *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* and *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery*, here the author confirms his ability to weave operational detail and the tools of war into a cohesive and reader-friendly assessment.

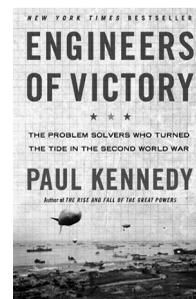
While acknowledging that no single variable can explain success, Kennedy’s underlying metanarrative is that wars are ultimately won by a superior organization imbued with a culture of innovation that actively encourages inquiry, experimentation, and interdisciplinary problem solving. Kennedy’s thesis is succinctly captured:

The most important variable of all, the creation of war-making systems that contained impressive feedback loops, flexibility, a capacity to learn from mistakes and a “culture of encouragement” that permitted the middlemen in this grinding conflict the freedom to experiment, to offer ideas and opinions and to cross traditional institutional boundaries.

This variable is the intangible factor of strategic or organizational culture that was ultimately needed to bring about the explicit and unconditional victory sought by the Allies. This was the “ghost in the machine” that brought down the Axis.

Kennedy’s masterfully told story is arrayed across five distinct operational challenges, and largely within the early 1943 to late 1944 time period.

The first case study involves the Battle of the Atlantic, which required relearning how to employ convoys to overcome the ruthless



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416 pages
\$29.95

efficiency of Admiral Doenitz's U-boats. In 1942, the Allies had lost 6.3 million tons of shipping to U-boats, mainly off the coast of the United States. The introduction of convoy systems, intelligence, radar, capable escorts equipped with Sub-killing Hedgehogs, and determined commanders like Royal Navy Captain F. J. Walker won the one campaign that kept Winston Churchill awake at night.

Once forces and their material could cross the ocean, Allied forces needed to command the air. Here Kennedy excoriates strategic bombing advocates and the obstinate thinking that continued to commit large numbers of crews at risk for little gain until the Allies learned how to suppress German air defenses. Here the principal story is how Ronnie Harker, a British test pilot, proposed the merger of the powerful Rolls-Royce Merlin engine with the anemic American P-51 Mustang, producing a superb escort fighter.

The third case study addresses ground combat challenges, particularly the impact of German armored warfare. Kennedy naturally starts with the British battle against Rommel in North Africa, but he then reaches out to the Clash of Titans in the Eastern Front. "This struggle was unique in its grand combination of mechanized destructive power with Asiatic-horde-like warfare," Kennedy notes. "The existential struggle between Teutons and Slavs was now entwined with an increasingly complicated and ever-changing technological competition." The author details how a team of US engineers from Aberdeen critically assessed the numerous deficiencies of the initial models of the T-34, which helped the Russians modify their design and manufacturing.

The next competition required the Allies to learn how to project power from the sea. From the initial debacle of the Dieppe raid, Kennedy traces the steady learning curve from Operation Torch in North Africa to the subsequent evolutions in Sicily, Salerno, and Anzio. These demonstrated careful orchestration abetted by detailed planning. The culminating point for this organizational learning was D-Day, ably crafted by Admiral Bertram Ramsay, RN. In keeping with his focus on problem solvers, Kennedy lionizes Major General Percy Hobart for his numerous tank alterations, which the troops fondly called "Hobart's Funnies." He also notes the contribution made by the American Army Sergeant Curtis Culin, who fashioned the hedgerow-slicing Rhinoceros that allowed US armored units to avoid getting tied down in Normandy's bocage country.

In his final case history, the author shifts to the Pacific and the problem of defeating the "tyranny of distance" in that immense theater. Kennedy offers an extended discussion of the strategic options available to Allied planners but ultimately gets around to the key sub-components of waging war across such vast and contested distances: Andrew Higgins's flat-bottomed landing craft, the long-range B-29 Superfortress, and the unrestricted warfare conducted by US Navy submarines once the defective torpedoes were corrected. Disappointingly, in the latter case Kennedy chose not to include any discussion of how US submarine performance was enhanced by a feedback loop on best practices comprised of war patrol reports, endorsements up and down the chain of command, and the distribution of Submarine Bulletins. The extension of American fighting forces across the Pacific was abetted by a gigantic engineering organization, the Construction Battalions led by Admiral

Ben Moreel. His fighting “Sea Bees” built the bases, airfields, repair docks, and hospitals that were the essential infrastructure for Nimitz’s and MacArthur’s inexorable thrust towards Japan. Kennedy describes Moreel as “one of those neglected middlemen who made Allied grand strategy work.”

In each chapter, Kennedy’s demonstrated mastery of the historical record is matched by maps of extraordinary quality.

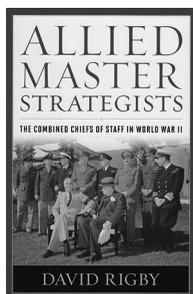
Engineers of Victory is a brilliant synthesis of these discrete developments, weaved into a coherent story that defines the real foundation of the grand alliance and its success. The key message is that it is not enough for policymakers to define great aspirations. While seldom a subject of serious inquiry, strategy has to be actionable and the ways and means harnessed to its ends must be practical. Success is gained only in the face of contingency and thinking opponents. The dynamics of strategic success must often be engineered by practical men and women who overcome the seemingly insurmountable.

Kennedy joins a growing field in military innovation studies. While there are books that address innovation before wars, particularly *Military Innovation in the Interwar Period* (Oxford University Press 1998) edited by the American duo of Williamson Murray and Allan Millet, until recently few historians have explored the process of innovation and adaptation that must occur *during* war. Murray’s later *Military Adaptation in War: With Fear of Change* (Cambridge University Press 2011) is devoted to some of the same cases but extends the historical range to the 1973 war between Israel and its Arab neighbors. Most recently, our understanding of adaptation in contemporary conflict was measurably improved by insights about lessons generated from the bottom up at the tactical level by Dr. James Russell of the Naval Post Graduate School in *Innovation, Transformation, and War: Counterinsurgency Operations in Anbar and Ninewa Provinces, Iraq, 2005-2007* (Stanford University Press 2010).

Kennedy’s assessment adds to these studies by showing that in more traditional forms of conflict, where materiel and technological capacity matter more, we should “mind the middle” to find the neglected realm of oft-forgotten individuals who provide the means of victory. The lesson for policymakers and strategists is that victory is not always found at the policy summit or even in the trenches or the cockpit. Sometimes it emanates from battle captains or “lab rats” in between with a keen appreciation for getting things done. Such mid-level genius does not spontaneously or routinely occur, however, and Kennedy might have buttressed his theme with the recognition that senior leaders must nurture and sustain the culture that allowed the “engineers” to have their ideas aired and tested. Both Roosevelt and Churchill were avid collectors of eclectic ideas and organizational mavericks.

Overall, Kennedy has succeeded in providing a riveting overview of the main competitions of the war as well as his “analysis of how grand strategy is achieved in practice, with the explicit claim that victories cannot be understood without a recognition of how those successes were engineered, and by whom.” Because of Kennedy’s superb narrative and research, this book will appeal to and is recommended to a wide range of readership, from civilians interested in history to senior defense leaders

grappling with engineering solutions to today's seemingly insurmountable defense problems.



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Allied Master Strategists: The Combined Chiefs of Staff in World War II

By David Rigby

Reviewed by Dr. Bianka J. Adams, Historian, Office of History, US Army Corps of Engineers

While most histories of the Anglo-American Alliance in World War II mention the existence of the Combined Chiefs of Staff (CCS) in passing, not many go into detail about its members, their biographies, their relationship with each other, or their work with their trans-Atlantic counterparts. David Rigby's *Allied Master Strategists* is an attempt to fill that particular gap. Over the course of eight chapters, the reader becomes very familiar with each individual, his role on the staff, and the CCS's importance for the conduct of Allied warfare.

Organized thematically with a rough chronological overlay, the book begins with a biographical chapter that introduces full-fledged members of the CCS as well as those who did not “quite make the cut” (page 43). The second chapter focuses on the organization of the CCS and the negotiations at the Casablanca Conference in 1943. Chapter three deals with the war in the Pacific, and the next chapter compares the effectiveness of the Alliance with the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis. Here, Rigby attributes the success of Allied coalition warfare in large part to the efforts of the Combined Chiefs of Staff. The fifth chapter details how the CCS helped reduce inter-Allied friction regarding Operation Overlord.

In the final three chapters, the author defends his thesis “that it was the Combined Chiefs of Staff organization, not politicians, diplomats, or bureaucrats that was the most important planning agency behind the military victories achieved by the Western Allies during the war” (page 7). In chapter six, the author details how members of the CCS had to fend off their political masters' attempts at making strategy, and in chapter seven Rigby gives examples of how individual members of the CCS supervised actions of their subordinate commanders in the field. The last chapter explores how the Combined Chiefs of Staff handled issues not traditionally military in nature, such as war production, management of raw materials, and diplomacy.

To undertake a subject in the well-plowed field of Allied strategy and planning during World War II with the intent to offer new insights is an ambitious undertaking, at which the author only partially succeeds. His well-researched, well-documented, and well-indexed study certainly breathes life into an institution that scholars of World War II mostly take for granted—never stopping to think about the men who served as the Combined Chiefs of Staff. Rigby humanizes this planning body. He carefully crafts short biographical sketches of each member, pointing out their strengths and weaknesses, though their weaknesses are never so grave as to make any of them unworthy of being a member of the CCS. Quite the contrary, each brought the right mix of prickliness or charm or an uncanny ability to handle either President Franklin D.

Roosevelt or Prime Minister Winston S. Churchill. The author also gives examples of how each service chief contributed directly to the war effort by limiting mistakes through decisiveness at the right moment. They all had their faults, to be sure, but Rigby paints overwhelmingly positive portraits of the chief Allied planners.

So positive are Rigby's descriptions of their qualities and concerns for the welfare of the Alliance and the conduct of the war that the politicians responsible for the overall Allied war strategy look foolish by comparison. The author's low opinion of the political leadership on both sides of the Atlantic finds its best expression in the title of chapter six: "Keeping the Armchair Strategists at Bay." Here, Rigby channels what might well have been the anguish some members of the Combined Chiefs of Staff felt towards their political leadership. Rigby directs most of his wrath against Churchill, whom he describes as a petty micromanager and a highly intrusive armchair strategist (pages 146-58). Compared to Churchill's offenses, Roosevelt's interventions appear minor. While the author concedes that Churchill was the right leader for a beleaguered Great Britain, he condemns the prime minister's meddling in the affairs of strategic decisionmaking. His judgment about Roosevelt is milder (page 157). The point Rigby seems to be missing is that politicians are supposed to "intervene" in strategic decisionmaking. Indeed, following the dictum of the primacy of politics/policy, they have a duty as leaders of governments to formulate strategic goals and to determine how best to achieve those goals.

The author's strong prejudice in favor of the CCS notwithstanding, *Allied Master Strategists* is a contribution to the field of World War II history, well worth researchers' attention. I recommend, however, reading the book in conjunction with other, more balanced studies on Allied warfare such as Mark A. Stoler's *Allies in War: Britain and America Against the Axis Powers, 1940-1945* (Bloomsbury 2007). Stoler provides much-needed context for a proper understanding of the significance of the creation of the Combined Chiefs of Staff. While Rigby points out the CCS was an unprecedented institution in the history of coalition warfare, he fails to explain how unlikely this close cooperation was in light of the antagonism that persisted in Anglo-American relations before Churchill and Roosevelt decided that it was in their mutual interest to become not only allies but also friends.

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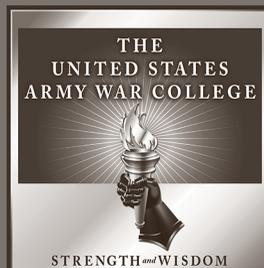
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