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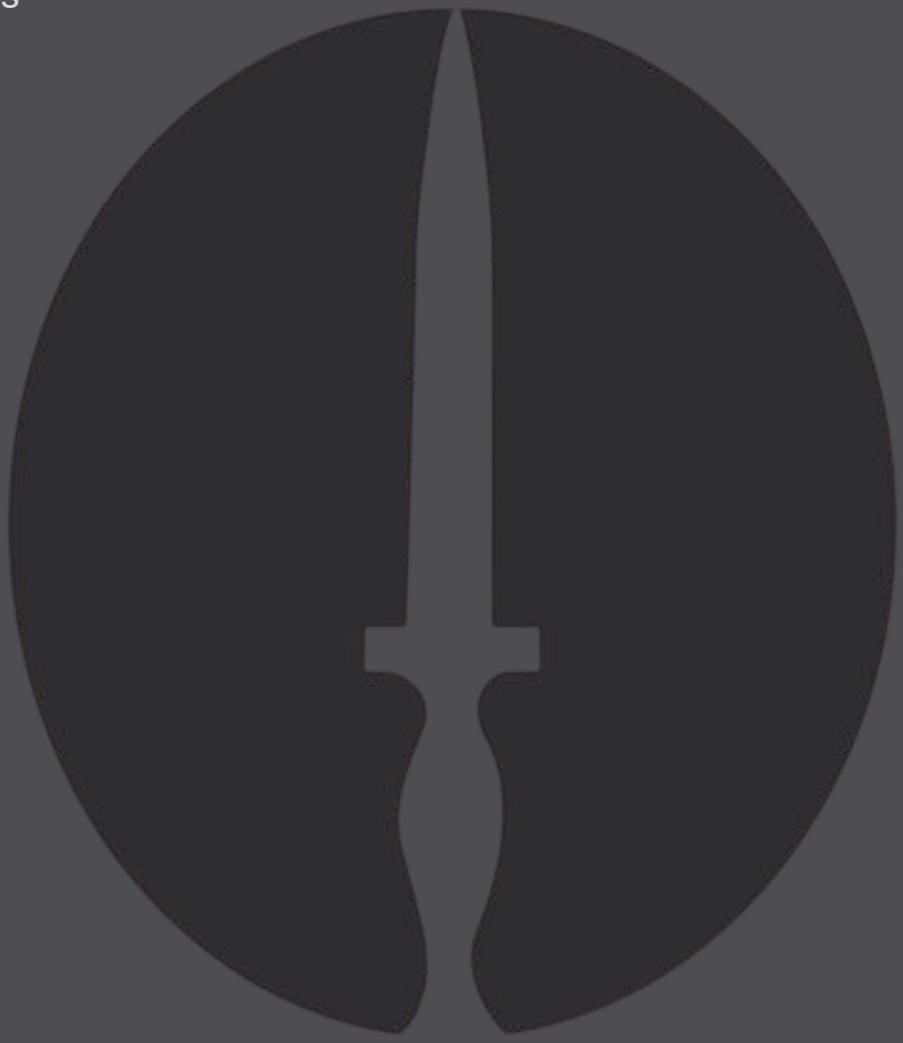

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Pushing the easy button: special operations forces, international security, and the use of force

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In the "golden age of special operations," elite forces have become a "go-to" form of military power. While special operations security practitioners have paid considerable attention to the increasing significance of elite forces in policy and practice, international relations scholars have generally overlooked this evolution in military affairs. In this essay, I argue that special forces, like drones, have become an attractive, "remote" option for decision-makers because of their clandestine nature, lethality, and comparatively small footprint. Because these qualities make it easier for decision-makers to privilege military instruments of power in statecraft, pushing the special forces "easy button" risks lowering the threshold for the use of force and, therefore, risks destabilizing regional and international security orders.

Keywords: SOF power, special operations forces, international security, use of force

To judge by media and Congressional reaction, the news that four U.S. soldiers were killed in an October 2017 firefight with militants in Niger came as a surprise to a considerable number of Americans: a *New York Times* editorial (2017) referred to the ambush as a "great mystery," while South Carolina Republican Senator Lindsey Graham admitted on NBC's *Meet the Press* two weeks later he had been completely unaware of the scale of the African deployment and its potential for violence (Callimachi, Cooper, Schmitt, Blinder, & Gibbons-Neff, 2018). The *New York Times* later described the ambush as having "set off a political storm in Washington" and "reignit[ing] a longstanding argument … over the sprawling and often opaque war being fought by American troops around the world" (Callimachi et al., 2018). It also refocused debate on the extent to which the post-9/11 Authorization to Use Military Force (AUMF) could be used to legitimize the use of military forces in parts of the world far from Afghanistan. More surprising than Graham's surprise, however, is the fact that a senior U.S. Senator (and member of the Senate Armed Services Committee) and military veteran, known for his professional interest in national security affairs, should have been at all surprised.

As many security analysts have observed, special operations forces (SOF) have been a growth industry since 2001 and, given their "lethal and stealthy capability," are likely to remain so, in both the United States and across the international system. As one scholar put it, "we are witnessing a virtual proliferation of SOF around the world" as countries large and small vie to

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"gain the status and capabilities that come from … such elite forces" (Marsh, 2017, p. viii) Particularly in the context of the global campaign against terrorist organizations, SOF "have become the tool of choice" for policymakers, especially given an increasing doctrinal and policy emphasis on the so-called "indirect approach" to the strategic environment (Robinson, 2013, p. 4). However, the very qualities that make SOF a "tool of choice" have also transformed SOF into a proverbial "easy button" for policymakers to push—which creates concerns at both the operational and strategic levels of analysis. This article comprises a first cut at analyzing the potential impact of the SOF evolution in military affairs. As I note below, the use of special forces poses three analytical puzzles for Security Studies: 1) Does the proliferation of special forces around the world tend to stabilize or destabilize regional and systemic security orders? 2) Given different authorities, does the relative ease with which U.S. presidents can employ special forces weaken norms of accountability and transparency in the use of force? 3) Does the lethality and effectiveness of special forces, coupled with the ability to use them in deniable ways as a form of off-shore engagement, change the strategic and political calculus in decisions to use force? In this article, I explore the first of these three concerns.

SOF POWER?

At the operational level, functioning as the tool of choice increases the probability of mis- and over-use of this particular modality of the military instrument of national power, including force attrition and depletion. In this article, I am interested in the policymaking ramifications of increasing dependence upon, and increasing utilization of, SOF. For example, will dependence upon SOF for "indirect" (or hybrid) operations increase the risk of blowback associated with the Patron's Dilemma—a kind of principal-agent problem in security force assistance? Do the capabilities that make SOF "special" also lower the decision-making bar for the use of force? In other words: Do SOF create a self-fulfilling prophecy in which the presumptive need for elite forces creates an incentive to use elite forces which then "proves" there was a need for elite forces in the first place?

At the strategic level, while the 2018 National Defense Strategy (NDS) has de-emphasized the importance of counterterrorism in U.S. strategy (and counterterrorism was the mission that drove the extraordinary growth of U.S. SOF), the NDS nevertheless refers to terrorism as a "persistent" condition in the international system and also describes challenges posed by near-peer competitors that can only be met by elite forces (United States Department of Defense, 2018). Strategically, then, could what now-Secretary of Defense James Mattis referred to in 2009 as the need for "persistent engagement"—that is, long-term (if small-scale) deployments of U.S. military forces—around the world actually have the effect of destabilizing regional balances of power?[1] I am also interested here in the effect of the global proliferation of SOF capabilities: can we conceive of a special operations "arms race" (or perhaps "capabilities race") as nation-states vie for these highly lethal and clandestine capabilities? If so, what are the implications of such a race for regional or systemic stability? Because nation-states tend to emulate success, the greater the awareness of SOF deployments and successes, the higher the probability that the preference orderings and strategic calculus of allied, aligned, and adversary countries will change to adapt to, and counter, these emerging threats. In the case of the United States, I am interested in the political implications of what has been called the "special force-ification" of international

security (Shamir & Ben-Ari, 2016). When SOF deploy—whether overtly or covertly—and engage in combat operations that come to public attention (and here, one need think not only of Niger but of how rapidly Operation NEPTUNE SPEAR, the raid on Osama bin Laden's compound in Pakistan, came to light), new questions and challenges arise for longstanding debates over congressional and presidential authorities over the use of force, congressional oversight of covert and clandestine operations, and the extent to which the Commander-in-Chief clause of the Constitution or the 2001 AUMF comprise blank checks for war-making below the level of "war." These issues and others, such as the ethics of unconventional warfare, are especially pronounced in an international system that can be characterized as one of "persistent conflict" (as then-Army Chief of Staff General George Casey referred to it in 2007) where special forces are often the default military instrument of choice.

Operational demands on SOF show no signs of abating, and the 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review called for SOF expansion to 69,700 personnel in 660 teams, excluding Civil Affairs (CA) and Psychological Operations (PSYOP) personnel, plus three battalions of Rangers and 300 piloted aircraft (United States Department of Defense, Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2014). By contrast, in the first years of the "post–Cold War" era, U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) reported a uniformed strength of 44,900, including CA and PSYOP personnel, and at the start of the current wars the Command reported just under 46,500 uniformed personnel (1993, p. C–1; 2004, p. 91). And though the input side of the supply function does not (and perhaps cannot) keep pace with demand, from a strategic point of view there remains a risk of what one might call "supply-push" utilization of SOF: we use SOF because we can, not because we should, and therefore demand will always outpace supply.

Though special forces comprise a very small percentage of the armed forces, in many respects they have assumed a disproportionately large share of the active (or kinetic) elements of U.S. global engagement. By one estimate, U.S. special operators had boots on the ground in 138 countries during 2017 (Turse, 2017). Many, perhaps most, of those deployments were undoubtedly fairly benign: historically, SOF have had a wide range of training missions with partners and allies, overseas rotations as part of U.S. military exercises, and miscellaneous programs coordinated with U.S. embassies overseas. In 1992, for example, USSOCOM reported to Congress 953 deployments in 103 countries (1993, p. 28). In 2017, as in 1993, those numbers reflected unclassified data; the number of kinetic engagements then, as now, is unknown and is usually only revealed after the fact by media; for example, in August 2018, U.S. Africa Command revealed that on February 28, 2017, a team of Marine Raiders on a three-day-long "train, advise, and assist" mission somewhere in North Africa engaged in a fierce gun battle with al-Qaeda militants (Fotre, 2018).

Like the abortive Niger mission, the Marine Raiders' firefight illustrates the fundamental challenge: even the "routine" employment of special forces overseas can, in an era of asymmetric conflict, quickly be transformed into combat missions—one thing that likely accounted for public surprise over the deaths in Niger. There was not supposed to be a "war" in Africa. Indeed, the *New York Times* later reported that between 2015 and 2017 U.S. Special Forces engaged in at least 11 separate firefights with extremists in West Africa (Savage, Schmitt, & Gibbons-Neff, 2018, p. A1). To Senator Graham's dismay, the combat put a spotlight on the fact that the United States is waging "an endless war without boundaries [and with] no limitation on time or geography," one pursued aggressively by the Obama administration and empowered by the Trump administration, which further delegated lethal authorities to lower-

level commanders and declared most of Yemen and Somalia to be "areas of active hostilities," broadening the scope and range of U.S. SOF (Savage, 2017, p. A1). Though such authorities may well make operational sense, they also create a strategic muddle, as Graham observed: "We don't know exactly where we're at in the world militarily," he concluded, or "what we're doing" there (quoted in Callimachi et al., 2018).

Special operations have been defined as tactical operations that produce political and strategic effects (Peterson, 2014, p. 4). While it is true that over the course of their history SOF have often been adjuncts to, or force multipliers for, conventional military operations (e.g., Special Air Service [SAS] raiding in North Africa and Special Boat Squadron [SBS] raiding in the Aegean and Dodecanese during World War II[2]), here I am interested in their independent use as the lead military instrument of U.S. strategy in what the USSOCOM 2000 Posture Statement once described as "missions that fall in the nexus between [the] political and [the] military" (United States Department of Defense, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense [SO/LIC], 1999). As I point out in the brief definitions section below, though there is a difference between "white" SOF (those who operate openly as uniformed U.S. military personnel) and "black" SOF (those that operate covertly), because this article seeks to identify and start examining some analytical puzzles for international relations (IR) I generally ignore those differences here.

This article comprises an extended thought experiment about the impact of SOF on international security and stability. Specifically, is there a SOF "balance of capabilities" in international security? Can we think of SOF capabilities as being inherently stabilizing or destabilizing? Might there be a SOF "capabilities race" as more countries seek to develop and/or expand their SOF capabilities—and, if so, what would be the likely effect of such a race on systemic or regional stability? Most importantly, do SOF lower the decision-making bar for policymakers in choosing to use military instruments of power—that is to say, does having an "easy button" to push create a perverse incentive to push it in lieu of doing the harder work of diplomacy or sustained civil and economic engagement? Further areas of research include the effect of robust SOF capabilities on norms of conflict, the decision to use force, and the ethical implications of training erstwhile "bad actors"—from an ethical point of view, for example, if a SOF advise-and-assist mission enhances the capabilities of one insurgent group over others, and that insurgent group should, in due course, attain power in its host country and then abuse it, to what extent is the United States morally culpable for those abuses? Each of these areas of inquiry is an article in itself, so here I focus specifically on two aspects of the problem: the possible effects of "SOF proliferation" on the use of force in the international system and ethical challenges to nation-states created by the "special force-ification" of national security strategies. In doing so, I will draw on a disparate range of literatures, from traditional IR theory to arms control, and from Just War doctrine to presidential war-making analyses to historical case studies. One especially important area of research upon which I draw is the rapidly growing literature on cyber and drone warfare, as well as the emergent literature on autonomous weapons systems, much of which is concerned with the impact of these new technologies on traditional systemic and regional stability.

LITERATURE, CONCEPTS, AND TERMS

There is a very large and growing SOF-relevant literature in an astonishingly wide range of disciplines, from emergency and sports medicine to psychology and family wellness studies, from international law to history (popular, operational, and scholarly), from comparative and

cross-national evaluations of SOF themselves to assessments of SOF interactions with conventional forces and intelligence services, and from doctrinal publications to operationally relevant monographs. As a number of SOF scholar-practitioners note, writing about SOF from anything other than a doctrinal or historical perspective is made particularly challenging by issues of classification and the SOF culture. The 2012 and 2014 controversies sparked by U.S. Navy SEALs publicly telling their Operation NEPTUNE SPEAR stories and the backlash against publication of defense correspondent Sean Naylor's "unofficial history" of Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) are familiar examples (Naylor, 2015; Owen & Maurer, 2012). Indeed, on December 8, 2015, General Joseph Votel, then the Commanding General of USSOCOM, expressed concern over the "increased public exposure of SOF activities and operations" in a memorandum to then-Secretary of Defense Ash Carter; it was time, Votel concluded, "to get our forces back into the shadows" (De Luce, 2016). Less charitably, former Defense Secretary Robert Gates recalled in his memoirs that he was so "outraged" at official White House descriptions of the bin Laden raid that he yelled at an administration official, "Why doesn't everybody just shut the fuck up?" (2015, p. 545). That limitation notwithstanding, the SOF literature can be divided into five general categories: doctrinal, historical-memoir, institutional-technical, legal-normative, and operational-theoretical.

Though I borrow some doctrinal concepts that attempt to define the nature of the current and emerging international system, the doctrinal literature is outside the scope of this essay. The historical-memoir literature is probably the best known—and certainly the most popular—portion of the special operations literature, not least because work from this area is often translated into television and movies; indeed, one could argue that, given its often breathless and admiring (trending toward hero-worship) tone, this genre has been a strong cultural influence on the politics of special operations employment, glamorizing past and present exploits by special operators and contributing to the notion that SOF comprise the military "easy button" for decision-makers today (illustrative examples are Bowden, 1999; Mazzetti, 2014; McRaven, 1995; Milton, 2016; Plaster, 1998). Likewise, there is a vast array of what I call "institutional-technical" literature, ranging from specialist articles on combat medicine to encyclopedias of the world's SOF, and much of this literature is primarily of interest to the SOF community itself (see, for example, Holcomb et al., 2007; Kirby, Harrell, & Sloan, 2000; Marquis, 1997; Russell, et al., 2016). Of greater relevance to me here are the legal-normative and operational-theoretical literatures; the former calls attention to issues of norms of democratic accountability in the use of clandestine and covert operations, while the latter emphasizes the "match" between doctrinal characterizations of the international system and operational requirements for the force, especially in terms of what Marsh calls the "proliferation" of SOF (on the legal-normative issues attendant to SOF, see Best & Feickert, 2009, and Wall, 2011, pp. 85–142; examples of operational-theoretical literature are Finlan, 2004, 2009). In the sections that follow, I will draw on those last two categories, as well as on concepts and debates from the IR literature (specifically, offense-defense theory, balancing and bandwagoning, and research on presidential use of force).

Terminology can be somewhat challenging in special operations research. Here, I use the term "special operations forces" somewhat loosely. In the U.S. armed forces, this is the broadest category and includes CA, PSYOP, Special Operations Aviation, and (in the U.S. Navy, for example) even explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) personnel. My primary focus here—with respect to both the United States and other nation-states—is on "special forces" (and I use the lowercase letters to distinguish them from "the" U.S. Special Forces, or Green Berets) that

operate both overtly and covertly/clandestinely, including in "Tier 1" or "Special Mission Units." Unless otherwise specified, then, when I refer to special operations or special forces, I am referring primarily to those elite units that engage in direct combat, often in an autonomous or independent way within the parameters of higher command authorities. Historically, most special forces and their operations were adjuncts to conventional military forces and campaign plans; during World War II, for example, they were often used in economy of force operations in peripheral theaters. Even during much of the Cold War, special forces in the United States and elsewhere, though they might conduct missions independently, were tasked with missions that supported the larger, conventional operations plan; early special forces in the West German *Bundeswehr*, for example, were tasked (as were other countries' forces) with special reconnaissance missions to locate Soviet tactical nuclear weapons (Denisentsev, 2017).

Current doctrinal discussions characterize the international system as "contested and disordered," defined less by direct military challenges to the United States than by "antagonistic geopolitical balancing" by "increasingly ambitious adversaries" who seek to influence and shape large parts of the international system in ways inimical to the interests of the United States, including so-called "near-peer" competitors like China and Russia (Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2016). Within this contested and disordered system, "special warfare" has been defined as a key strategic response. The U.S. Army defines "special warfare" as "activities that involve a combination of lethal and nonlethal actions … in a permissive, uncertain, or hostile environment," and both scholars and strategists view special warfare as an optimal "strategic and operational approach" for a disordered and contested system (USADA, 2012, p. 9). According to a recent RAND study, for example, special warfare is the "missing middle between … distant-strike operation … and costly, indefinite commitment of conventional forces" (Madden et al., 2016, p. iii).

A key change in the contemporary strategic environment, therefore, has been the growing centrality of special forces as primary (military) instruments of foreign policy, in the United States and among other nations, as Marsh and others have shown in analyses of "SOF proliferation." During the Cold War, special forces were a necessary adjunct for achieving strategic goals, but in the contemporary system they often appear to be thought of as a *sufficient* military instrument for achieving strategic goals. Indeed, it is this appearance of sufficiency that seems to make them so operationally desirable to policymakers, leading on occasion to "funhouse mirror" rationalizations for their use. For example, during an April 2016 press briefing, Associated Press reporter Matthew Lee and State Department spokesperson John Kirby hotly debated the term "boots on the ground"—a term that has become a synecdoche for the use of force and, as a result, a political third-rail in the domestic politics of foreign policy. In the wake of a White House announcement that President Obama was deploying more SOF personnel to Iraq and Syria, Lee asked whether or not this violated Obama's promise to "not put boots on the ground":

LEE: Within 24 hours, we have seen two headlines, one of them being President Obama rules out ground troops to Syria … and then shortly after, President Obama to deploy 250 more special forces troops to Syria. My question is: What is the difference between the troops that the president ruled out and the troops that he's going to send to Syria?

KIRBY: When we talk about boots on the ground … we are talking about conventional, large-scale ground troops. We're not doing that… . We've all recognized since

almost the outset we've had U.S. troops in Iraq [and their boots are literally on the ground, but] the colloquial meaning of the term … when they say "no boots on the ground" refer[s] to … large-scale combat ground troops.

LEE: So can the president send any number of special forces without calling them ground troops?

KIRBY: *They are not ground troops in the sense that they are not conventional ground troops* conducting combat operations on their own. … There's a big difference. (Department of State, 2016, emphasis mine)

With respect to the politics of foreign and security policy, the Obama administration insisted that special forces do not comprise "boots on the ground"—whether or not an individual special operator happens to be wearing boots and whether or not those boots happen to touch the ground. Because SOF were not conceived of politically as "boots on the ground," the Obama administration argued that the White House had no obligation for accountability and transparency in that use of force. Therein lies one challenge of SOF proliferation for the study of international security and presidential use of force: given their clandestine nature, and the fact that they can operate under several different sets of authorities, special forces can be used to avoid complying with norms in U.S. democracy for the use of force. As Grant Martin notes, "some have begun to question whether special operations forces can or should become the main U.S. entity advocating engagement in a given region or even in a single country" (2014, p. 416). Special forces are qualitatively different from conventional forces, and their employment seems to create qualitatively different politics for the use of force. Three analytical puzzles are associated with these dynamics:

1) Will the proliferation and use of SOF as a power-projection capability set conditions for regional and systemic stability or instability?
2) In the United States, given different authorities, does the relative ease with which presidents can employ special forces both overtly and covertly undermine norms of democratic accountability and transparency in the use of force?
3) Does the lethality and effectiveness of special forces, combined with the ability to employ them in deniable ways, change the strategic and political calculus in decisions to use force?

For the remainder this article, I focus on the first of the three.

PROJECTING SPECIAL OPERATIONS POWER

In a traditional balance of power system, a Great Power will project power to defend its vital national interests or to reset a regional balance of power that jeopardizes the stability of the international balance of power. In the case of the former, for example, on January 23, 1980, President Jimmy Carter enunciated the terms of what would come to be known as the "Carter Doctrine" during his State of the Union Address. Written by National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski, and responding to the regional disequilibria of the Islamic Revolution in Iran and the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, Carter's address declared that "an attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States" (Carter, 1980)—in effect, rendering the Persian Gulf

strategically analogous to the Caribbean under the Monroe Doctrine. This pronouncement had the effect of permanently imposing upon the United States both the responsibility—and the burden—of defending the Gulf region, even from its own members (as in the case of the two wars against Iraq). The problem (or "a" problem) for the United States, however, is that once it embraced this responsibility, it found it had to maintain it, regardless of consequences. On balance, however, the benefits derived from a stable world oil supply must, almost by definition, outweigh the costs of providing for its defense, otherwise a rational actor would not accept the burden. Moreover, the burden has not been without direct and indirect costs; one of the arguments for adopting regime change as official policy toward Iraq during the late 1990s, for example, was the rising cost (and force attrition) of maintaining the "no-fly zones" during Operations Northern and Southern Watch (Burgos, 2008, pp. 221–256). Similarly, the United States bore the direct costs of naval patrols in the Gulf (including the attack of the U.S.S. *Stark*) to defend re-flagged Kuwaiti oil tankers during the Iran–Iraq War, even as other countries were, in effect, invited to free-ride on that service (Palmer, 2003).

The use of "SOF power" in the context of the "indirect approach" to the complexities of the contemporary international system poses a similar puzzle (Celeski, 2012; Morrison, 2014, pp. 48–54). U.S. power projection into the Persian Gulf—a region that had been of only peripheral strategic interest to the United States—was a direct consequence of efforts to stabilize the Gulf region indirectly in the wake of Britain's withdrawal from "east of Suez" around 1969–1971. Indeed, the Nixon Administration's "Twin Pillars" policy was an attempt at stabilizing a region through an "indirect approach," one that relied politically on partners within the region (Iran and Saudi Arabia) as strategic subcontractors and militarily on the limited projection of U.S. conventional military power in the form of both show-the-flag operations and arms sales.

Given the doctrinal characterization of the international system today, especially at the level of regional power systems, would special warfare comprise a form of U.S. power projection? Given the recent emphasis on "train, advise, and assist" missions and the importance placed on "building partner capacity" as a means of avoiding more overt forms of U.S. intervention, I would argue that it does—and, therefore, that it poses the same long-term risks of escalating U.S. involvement that the early attempt at balancing the Persian Gulf strategic subsystem through partners did. One hypothesis for further research holds that the more frequently SOF power is projected into semi- and unstable regions, the higher the probability of strategic "stickiness" in America's relations with those regions—in other words, once special operators project U.S. power into a region, the more costly U.S. disengagement from that region will be (or be perceived). This, in effect, is the story of U.S. strategic overwatch and engagement in the Persian Gulf since January 1980: once the United States was on the job, the prospective costs of relinquishing strategic overwatch, especially to a rival Great Power, were strictly greater than the current costs of maintaining the operational tempo necessary to enforce what was, in effect, U.S. hegemony over the region. And, as was the case with the Persian Gulf, one fundamental question for U.S. policy at the strategic level that the projection of SOF power engenders is whether those regions do in fact comprise an area of strategic national interest: does the flag follow the interest (as it were), or is the "interest" an artifact of having planted the flag? This puzzle leads to the larger question of effects: all else equal, would the projection of SOF power tend to stabilize or destabilize those regions—and, as a result, would it tend to make sustaining U.S. engagement in those regions more or less likely?

Although the term "gray zone" has recently fallen out of favor within special operations literature, its basic features still characterize much of the way U.S. special operations strategists conceive of the international system: a lack of strategic and operational clarity, ill-defined interests and opportunities, the vulnerability of even highly developed nations to hybrid threats, and a spatial conception of the strategic environment in which hostile actors capitalize upon un-, under-, and ill-governed spaces while avoiding overt confrontation with the United States. Systemic, regional, and local opportunities, constraints, and tensions interact in dynamic and unpredictable ways that were once described by Rosenau (2003) as "glocalization" and "fragmegration"—local issues become globalized (and vice-versa) and are subject to recombinant processes of fragmentation and integration, or the simultaneous breaking apart and reassembling of political and security orders. As recent U.S. doctrine puts it, both state and non-state actors (including near-peer competitors like China and Russia) can be expected to engage in "antagonistic geopolitical balancing" against the United States while taking advantage of "weak and fragile states" (Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2016, pp. 29, 48). In essence, the United States will find itself militarily engaged in multiple operational domains against a variety of asymmetric and symmetric threats, in both kinetic and non-kinetic forms (Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2016, p. 44). Superimposed upon this dynamic is what Markus Lyckman and Mikael Weissmann call a "global shadow war"—a global, clandestine, and covert campaign in which special operations have taken both operational and strategic lead (Lyckman & Weissmann, 2015, pp. 251–262).

That operational and strategic lead creates risks for the force and, by extension, for a strategy that depends on the force. Retired U.S. Army Lieutenant General Mark Hertling described the situations to the *Los Angeles Times* as "strategic mission creep all over the world," and the USSOCOM commander, General Raymond Thomas, warned the Senate Armed Services Committee in May 2017 that SOF were, in a sense, being misused: "rather than a 'break-glass-in-case-of-war force,'" he noted, special forces were "'proactively engaged across'" the world—a situation he described as "unsustainable" (Hennigan, 2017). Despite policymakers' seeming desire that it be otherwise, Thomas told the Senate, "we are not a panacea; we are not the ultimate solution to every problem" (Hennigan, 2017).

Operationally, then, overdependence on special operations increases the risk that the force will be used to exhaustion, with decision-makers robbing a future Peter to pay today's Paul, and strategically this definition of the current international system essentially commits the United States to military engagement in an ever-growing number of states and "jurisdictions"—a term used in doctrine with maddening imprecision. This degree of engagement, which has been made possible in large part both by the highly elastic 2001 AUMF and by an institutional inhibition against saying "no," risks binding the United States to both actors and regions where direct U.S. national interests are vague. For example, during the Cold War, sub-Saharan Africa was a secondary or perhaps even tertiary region of interest to both the Soviet Union and the United States (to the detriment of the region's politics and often at the expense of the region's development); but if we take the notion of a gray zone literally, we are in effect defining every "state and jurisdiction" globally as potentially a primary area of interest, given that non-state actors and other strategic spoilers can capitalize upon both un- and under-governed territory as well as the cyber domain to engage in the kind of "antagonistic geopolitical balancing" the Joint Chiefs of Staff have warned against. Even when they are employing an "indirect approach," therefore, SOF comprise a form of U.S. power projection—a "political use of force," as Blechman and Kaplan (1978) termed it—that should be subject to the same considerations (political and strategic) as any other use of force.

PROLIFERATION, PRESENCE, AND (IN)STABILITY

Despite the glamor associated with them in the popular mythology of special operations, historically special forces have most often been engaged in what have been dismissed as "side shows." For example, raiding (whether by Colonels Daniel Morgan and Frances "Swamp Fox" Marion in the American Revolutionary War, by tribesmen in the Arab Revolt, or by the SAS during World War II) has never comprised a nation-state's primary military effort; raids always were adjuncts to broader, conventional campaigns, intended to harass the enemy and complicate his logistics for the benefit of the conventional military effort upon which the country's strategy rested. For example, the British Commando raids on Dieppe and St. Nazaire in 1942 were intended to force the German *Kriegsmarine* to send its capital warships through the English Channel, where they could be more readily attacked, in order to contribute to the broader strategic goal of security Britain's sea lines of communication (Ford & Gerrard, 2001, 2003). Indeed, even those special operations that SOF enthusiasts claim were "strategic," such as the 1940 German airborne raid on Belgium's Fort Eben-Emael, were far less than strategic in terms of their overall effects on anything beyond a local campaign plan (McRaven, 1995). Likewise, the behind-the-lines operations of Britain's Special Operations Executive (SOE) and America's Office of Strategic Services (OSS) provided some material support to anti-German and anti-Japanese partisans and helped keep burning a spirit of resistance against occupation—and forced the German and Japanese high commands to commit troops to rear area security, somewhat depriving their front-line formations of support—but the strategic and even operational centers of gravity were never behind the lines. As a result, special forces were long viewed with disdain as necessary (if ill-mannered and undisciplined) operational expedients by most traditional military institutions and, when hostilities ended, were among the first to have their ranks reduced and even eliminated (Kiras, 2006; Marquis, 1997).

Conventional military power, along with economic power and territory, lay at the heart of the strategic balance of power during the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries, to which nuclear weapons were added in the second half (though the relative balance of conventional military power always remained a concern, especially with respect to the NATO/Warsaw Pact strategic competition). The emergence of "brushfire" wars challenged some assumptions about the presumptive disutility of special forces, particularly in light of the U.S. experience in Vietnam; but when that war ended, so too did the notion that a Great Power needed robust special warfare capabilities. The re-emergence of terrorism in the 1970s sparked the development of specialized counterterrorism units like West Germany's *Grenzschutzgruppe* 9 (GSG-9) and America's "Delta Force" (with the SAS being brought to public awareness by the 1980 Iranian embassy siege in London), but these were SOF with a narrow brief. Terrorism did not change the basic strategic calculus of any Great or Middle Power and (as had been the case during World War II) special operations capabilities were not going to fundamentally alter the balance of power, and SOF were not an independent arm of action.

Given the central role played by SOF as the de facto military instrument of power in today's operational and strategic environment, it is worth considering whether or not special operations might have a direct effect on international stability analogous (though certainly not equal) to that hypothesized for nuclear weapons. Indeed, special operations are often described as "tactical operations" with "strategic effects" (though the literature is murky when it comes to identifying those "strategic effects," or even defining what is meant by "strategic" in that

context). I am using "strategic" here to refer to direct and indirect effects on the stability of the international system, and not to effects on military theater campaigns. In the next few pages, I draw on IR theory, debates in arms control, and recent theorizing about the possible systemic effects of other emerging war-making modalities: autonomous weapons systems, armed drones, and cyber-warfare. Like SOF, autonomous weapons, drones, and cyber-weapons ("logic bombs," hackers) can project national power with "small footprints" and with a relatively higher degree of deniability than can conventional forces—and recent debates in the Security Studies and IR literatures have centered on the possibility that those weapons are destabilizing.[3] I also explore the implications for stability of what might be called the "Patron's Dilemma" in security force assistance and partner capacity-building.

Cults of the Offensive

Although there is still debate within the literature over the utility of Offense–Defense Theory (ODT), the basic premise is useful as an exploratory mechanism for looking at the impact of SOF proliferation on international security (for a critique of ODT on empirical and methodological grounds, see Gortzak, Haftel, & Sweeney, 2005). Briefly, ODT hypothesizes that certain types of weapons tend to favor the offensive, and as a result can destabilize regional and even systemic balances of power (especially during international crises, when there might be an incentive to use-or-lose), while other categories of weapons tend to favor the defense and, therefore, preserve or enhance systemic stability. Among critiques of the theory is the simple fact that the same weapon can be employed both defensively and offensively, so distinguishing between them in terms of effects is dependent upon too great a variety of other variables to make the theory robust; as Sean Lynn-Jones (2004) put it, "Whether a weapon is offensive or defensive depends on the situation in which it is used" (p. xviii). However, it is not always the case that distinguishing between offense- or defense-dominance in a weapon system is situational; for example, much of the controversy over MIRVs (multiple independently targetable warheads) and on the rail-basing scheme for the MX intercontinental ballistic missile system (ICBM) was based on the assumption that MIRVs would fundamentally destabilize the strategic balance. MIRVs were destabilizing, it was argued, because of the accuracy and throw-weight of each warhead, multiplying the power of each ICBM and would, therefore, incentivize a launch-on-warning rather than launch-on-strike policy in the Soviet Union; rail-based missiles (like submarine-launched missiles) were thought to be more survivable because they were less targetable, also incentivizing first strikes (Potter, 1978). Because those particular types of systems made the offense more efficient, the argument went, they changed the strategic calculus of a state that could deploy them and, as a result, destabilized the balance of power.

Similar hypotheses are proffered in the contemporary literature about armed unmanned aerial vehicles ("drones"), autonomous weapons systems ("killer robots"), pathogens, and cyber-weapons (see, inter alia, Altmann & Sauer, 2017; Boyle, 2015; Gartzke, 2013; Koblentz, 2003/04; Kreps, 2016, esp. chap. 3). In each of those cases, there is an underlying assumption that qualitative enhancements in weapon technology can themselves pose a risk to regional or systemic stability.

With respect to special forces, then, the question is whether or not one can treat SOF as a category of weapon system for purposes of analysis. At a minimum, I would argue that SOF comprise a qualitatively distinct modality of warfare within the broader framework of the

military instrument of national power. Since special forces themselves call attention to their inherent "specialness"—that is to say, their unique capabilities and position within the armed forces as an institution—it seems reasonable to conclude that for purposes of analysis we can treat them differently than other forms of military power, especially given that special forces can be employed clandestinely or covertly and that they operate in small numbers (which is desirable in terms of both domestic and international politics)—two of the qualities that makes it easy, all else equal, for a decision-maker to push the SOF Easy Button.

Glaser and Kaufmann (1998) describe ODT as a "partial theory of military capabilities, that is, of a state's ability to perform" certain missions. In other words, the state's physical ability to perform a specific military task is itself a potential source of instability. Among the variables Glaser and Kaufmann (1998) call attention to is "military skill" or a state's ability to effectively employ military forces (pp. 44–82). Given the qualities that make special forces a unique form of military power, I would suggest that the use and proliferation of special forces can hold out the risk of offense-dominance in fragile polities and security orders characterized by weak governance, transnational extremism and criminality, migration flows, and opportunistic and rent-seeking behaviors by outside spoilers—the very reasons why SOF are deployed to such regions. More to the point, when they operate outside of combat zones (that is, when they are performing advise-and-assist or non-kinetic missions), SOF are deployed to *shape the strategic environment*—in other words, to induce adversaries and partners alike into modifying their own strategic preferences and capabilities. This, too, strikes me as meeting the definition of offense-dominance, which is one reason why SOF proliferation might also contribute to systemic instability, because nation-states will update the subjective expected utility of employing military power if they believe special forces are a more effective instrument in changing others' strategic preferences.

SOF Proliferation

As Christopher Marsh notes (2017, p. viii), there has been a proliferation of special forces across the international system in the past two decades. There has been, in effect, a kind of special warfare arms race or capabilities race, in which near-peer competitors and lower-tier powers at both global and regional levels seek to gain military advantage by developing their own highly lethal, highly specialized elite units. Because there is an "essential link between a state's power and its military capabilities" (Glaser & Kaufmann, 1998, p. 49), these nation-states appear to believe that elite unit capabilities will offset other military deficiencies; given their comparatively small size and high degree of combat effectiveness, special forces seem to hold out the promise of positive returns on investment. This is especially the case given the publicity U.S. Special Forces have had over the past 18 years—the very thing Votel and Gates feared. The use of force by one actor in the system always produces a signaling effect, with success or failure providing important information to potential adversaries about the nation's capabilities and military prowess. As a result, highly publicized incidents like the raid on Osama bin Laden's compound in Pakistan, coupled with a consumer market for fictionalized accounts of special forces derring-do, can provide a powerful stimulus for military emulation, leading states to believe that "what they really need" are some operators.

As Realist and Neorealist IR theory notes, emulation is one of the most common forms of behavior among nation-states in the international system. For example, as Kenneth Waltz noted

(1993, p. 46), during the U.S.–Soviet strategic interaction "advances made by one were quickly followed by the other" in a cycle where each superpower responded to operational or technological advances introduced by the other in order to restore the strategic balance. In other words, new capabilities, doctrines, and/or technologies that hold out the possibility of giving one side in a strategic interaction a decisive military advantage can be intrinsically destabilizing, as the new capability incites enough fear or creates enough uncertainty in the adversary that investment in like capabilities is viewed as strategically necessary (see, for example, Maurer, 1997).

Emulation is a rational choice for organizations trying to maintain (or acquire) advantage in resource-constrained, contested markets. DiMaggio and Powell (1983, p. 152) describe a tendency toward "mimetic isomorphism": imitation and emulation among organizations competing in an "environment [of] symbolic uncertainty." In other words, to cope with uncertainty, Actor B surveys the relevant system and, upon observing Actor A successfully coping (or appearing to cope successfully) with the uncertain environment, will rationally elect to mimic Actor A's behavior or procedures. Imitation, therefore, becomes an economizing cognitive heuristic. As João Resende-Santos argues (2007), since a nation-state's material resources will almost always lag the range of strategic challenges it confronts, "emulating the best military practices of others" (pp. 4–5) will prove to be a "security-enhancing strategy [and] the quickest and most dependable way to increase power" (p. 7). And since "battlefield performance [is] the truest observable measure of effectiveness" where military power is concerned, states are most likely to emulate militarily successful countries (Resende-Santos, 2007, p. 7). Since it is reasonable to assume that, in an anarchic international system, nation-states are constantly watching each other (whether through clandestine means, by military observers, or simply by watching television news), it is similarly reasonable to assume that the capabilities of (especially) U.S., British, and Israeli special forces are recognized by actors across the system—a phenomenon for which the popular mythology again likely creates a multiplier effect (Marsh). More importantly, Resende-Santos (2007) points out that "states display a selective approach to emulation," mimicking only "*specific categories of military capabilities*" (p. 7, emphasis mine). Given that SOF successes are often heralded in the media, it is reasonable to hypothesize that special forces are an especially appealing capability to emulate: highly lethal, deniable, deployable, and, as a result, seemingly cost effective. Indeed, this would explain the "SOF proliferation" to which Marsh (2017) alludes: states trying to maximize finite defense spending resources would likely conclude that a special operations capability would enhance their national security at comparatively low cost (Shimshoni, 1990-1991, p. 189). Indeed, Marsh notes (2017) that there is no "greater evidence of emulation than the fact that, first, the Kremlin created a 'command' for their newly-developed special operations forces [that is, emulating U.S. Special Operations Command], and second, that they attributed their actions to following the 'leading powers of the world'" (p. viii).

Though "the topic of military emulation is understudied in international relations theory" (Goldman & Eliason, 2003, p. 9), the tactical and operational advantages demonstrated by special forces—including private military companies (PMCs), like the former Executive Outcomes, that are special forces-like and non-state armed groups who recruit (and sometimes train like) special operations personnel—would likely accelerate the logic of a SOF capabilities race and, by extension, increase the risk of regional and systemic instability (on PMCs, see McFate, 2014; on armed groups, see Thompson, 2014).[4] Success breeds emulation; but, as Frederick Boehmke and Richard

Witmer point out (2004), success also leads to what they call "policy expansion": if, after adopting a particular innovation or technique, a state experiences success in an area where it previously knew failure, it will begin seeking out more opportunities for using that presumptively success-producing innovation or technique (pp. 39–51)—what Hertling called "strategic mission creep" (Hennigan, 2017). Moreover, proliferation and emulation also create a higher probability that otherwise non-kinetic special forces engagements (like the operation in Niger) will become more lethal as state and non-state adversaries reach for parity in capabilities. For example, in a recent commentary, three scholars from the Naval Postgraduate School (Blanken, Thaxton, & Alexander, 2018) discussed the implications of the proliferation of basic infantry tactics. Even something as seemingly mundane as better foot soldiering, they argued, can create strategic shock: as a Tier 1 special operator put it, "I miss the days of spray-and-pray" (Operator A, personal communication, January 22, 2018). Emulation and diffusion can erode the very type of strategic advantage that nation-states seek in attaining special operations capabilities, thereby increasing the probability of conflict escalation and, by extension, of greater instability as each actor seeks to offset their eroding advantage with increasingly lethal capabilities.

Persistent Presence

As the United States struggled to adapt to the post-9/11 international system, and as the costs of direct conflict in Afghanistan and (especially) Iraq mounted (with attendant domestic political costs), the United States began to embrace several related concepts, each of which is implicated in this analysis: gray zones, indirect approach, by-with-through, and building partner capacity (BPC).

- Gray zone. As most analysts note, there is no single, widely accepted, empirically robust definition of the "gray zone." As Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart said of pornography, we know it when we see it. Most definitions share several basic elements, however, which are reflected in the definition offered by USSOCOM in a 2015 White Paper: a set of security challenges defined by "competitive interactions among and within state and non-state actors that fall between the traditional war and peace duality [and] characterized by ambiguity about the nature of the conflict, opacity of the parties involved, or uncertainty about the relevant policy and legal frameworks" (United States Special Operations Command, 2015; see also Lohaus, 2016, pp. 75–91). The gray zone is said to require a multidomain, whole-of-government strategy based upon a combination of direct action, financial statecraft, governance building, and security sector reform, among other operations and tactics. The key tenet of the gray zone for purposes of this article is that it requires a long-term strategic response.
- Indirect approach/by-with-through. The "indirect approach" to conflict in the gray zone is premised on the utilization of SOF with mission sets including, but not exclusive to, direct action or surgical strike. The indirect approach was prominently featured in the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) and emphasizes "methodical long-term efforts [to] support and influence others through training, advice, and assistance" (Morrison, 2014, p. 50; Burton, 2012, p. 49). This takes the more familiar form of working "by, with, and through" partners in the regions and countries that comprise much of the gray zone. The 2010 QDR emphasized the "hands-on" quality of the indirect approach—that is, the need for persistent U.S. presence, from which the risk of policy "stickiness" emerges.

- Building partner capacity. Since its introduction in 2006, BPC has become a fashionable concept: more robust security services in other countries will lead directly to enhanced security for the United States. The term "refers to a broad set of missions, programs, activities, and authorities intended to improve the ability of other nations to achieve those security-oriented goals they share with the United States" (McInnis & Lucas, 2015). The commitment to BPC seems predicated largely on observations of the success of Iraq's Counter-Terrorism Service (CTS) and on the desire to minimize the scope of U.S. involvement in seemingly peripheral areas (like Niger) for the sake of public opinion in both the donor and host countries. Despite its popularity in SOF discourses, however, the term is empirically untested and intellectually undertheorized (McInnis & Lucas, 2015).

What each of these three concepts has in common is a requirement for *persistent presence* (or *persistent engagement*): each requires the long-term commitment of U.S. personnel (though admittedly on a small scale). On its face, there is nothing new in military and civilian advisers partnered with colleagues in developing countries. In the nineteenth century, for example, former Confederate soldiers performed what was, in effect, a military advisory mission (albeit a private one) for the Egyptian Khedive (Loring, 1884; see also Stoker, 2008). During the first two decades of the Cold War, Military Advisory and Assistance Groups (MAAGs) helped build and rebuild armed services in a number of countries, including Greece, Iraq, Laos, South Korea, and South Vietnam, and the U.S. military education system trained officers from throughout "the Free World" and often from countries in the "non-aligned" movement (Karlin, 2018; Ramsey, 2006).

There are two key differences, however, between the traditional advisory model and the "persistent engagement" model mooted for the contemporary international system: in the traditional model, foreign advising is of finite duration, whereas the contemporary, SOF-centric model is, by definition, "persistent." Moreover, the capacity-building aspects of persistent presence are joined with U.S., U.S.-led, or U.S.-directed direct action against "high-value targets"—precisely the kind of missions that led to the 2017 ambush in Niger. Judging by the controversy occasioned by the Niger ambush, U.S. public opinion has not been prepared for the loss of life in parts of the world where "we are not at war" (Turse, 2012).

From an international security point of view, then, the demand for persistent presence by SOF risks policy "stickiness"—once committed, in other words, the United States will find it difficult to disengage from any particular relationship. If (as the hybrid warfare model suggests) threats to U.S. national security can emerge "from anywhere"—and especially from under- and un-governed spaces—and if, as policymakers often aver, it is more desirable to "fight them over there," then persistent presence becomes Gordian knot, and the U.S. finds itself "at war" in an ever-increasing number of places—with predictable effects on stability in those areas. In effect, persistent presence is a recipe, if not for "forever war," then "forever maybe war"—and that war is made infinitely easier to wage owing to the small footprint and glamor attached to special forces. From a systemic point of view, the idea of persistent presence challenges the idea of differentiating between vital national interests and others: if "everywhere" is a vital U.S. national interest, then the very notion of a "vital interest" becomes untenable. More importantly, the physical presence of U.S. forces—temporary or persistent—can itself be destabilizing; once Americans are known to be in a particular country or region, that country or region becomes a target for those actors who wish to offset U.S. strategic advantage.

CONCLUSION

In this article, I have attempted a first cut at analyzing the effects of SOF proliferation on stability and instability. Though further research and analysis is needed, there are strong reasons to believe that the use (and overuse) of special forces can contribute to destabilizing processes in both regional and systemic security orders. In this sense, SOF pose a challenge for both scholars and policymakers similar (at least in broadly theoretical strokes) to that posed by technological enhancements in nuclear weapons systems during the Cold War. As special forces are seen to be economical and effective instruments of national military power, more and more states (and non-state actors) will seek to emulate those capabilities.

SOF have become a proverbial "easy button" for policymakers—especially U.S. policymakers—to push. Because they operate in small units, often covertly or clandestinely, and appeal to the public's taste for military glory, special operators do not seem to "count" as "boots on the ground" and, as a result, their use is seldom as charged politically as is the deployment of conventional soldiers. Indeed, one observes that in the fallout from the 2017 Niger ambush, public and media attention focused on the only non-special operator on the team, Army Sergeant La David Johnson.

Further research is needed not only on the strategic effects of special forces, but on the political and cultural factors that tend to enhance the desirability of special forces. For example, the mystique of special operations, which I analyze in other research, can have the effect of lowering barriers to the decision to use military power. Those decisions, furthermore, can be rationalized by appealing to the mythology of special forces, in much the way that both French metropolitan and French settler policy during the Algerian War was influenced by the "myth of the paratrooper" (Talbott, 1976, pp. 69–86). Similarly, more research is needed on the impact of covert authorities on the use of SOF; the fact that a president can employ special forces under different legal authorities than those that govern conventional forces (Titles 22 and 50, as opposed to Title 10, of the United States Code) means that the barrier to SOF employment might be lower, because covert use avoids much of the necessity of public transparency and justification for military operations. Finally, there is a need for further exploration of the ethics of special operations in much the same way that ethicists in and out of government have begun to examine the use of autonomous weapon systems and drones.

For example, one issue that merits further analysis is what might be called the "Patron's Dilemma"—an ethical problem scholars are beginning to engage with that focuses on the risk inherent in partnering with, and training, non-state actors whose interests may only tangentially and temporarily align with those of the United States (see, for example, N. Bowers, 2018). In terms of this essay, the Patron's Dilemma centers, in part, on the impact of training and advising other armed forces and armed groups on local and regional stability. In their classic doctrinal advisory role, for example, U.S. Army special forces detachments take a group of guerillas or a low-capacity partner force and train them to a much higher standard. That act alone can have the effect of destabilizing a local security order; if there is already strategic interaction between rival guerilla organizations (e.g., in Afghanistan, between al-Qaeda fighters aligned with Pashtun Taliban and Ahmed Shah Massoud's Tajik-centered Northern Alliance), then by picking one group from among several, a special forces detachment essentially destabilizes the balance of power that existed before their intervention, creating an incentive for those groups not favored by the United States to seek ways of reestablishing the balance of power or offsetting the new balance of power

(e.g., by seeking a patron of their own whose interests are adversarial to those of the United States).

SOF proliferation does appear to have destabilizing effects, especially when those special operators are employed by spoilers or as economy-of-effort tools to expand regional power; here, we need think only of the role Iran's Quds Force plays in Lebanon (though there is some debate within the literature as to whether the Quds Force should be considered a special operations or intelligence organization) and the role Russia's "Little Green Men" played in destabilizing the Crimea. As a power-projection capability, SOF can destabilize governments and regions at comparatively little cost and risk to the nation employing them, further incentivizing their use. SOF are a unique asset, and special forces capabilities have proven to be effective and desirable for large and small states alike. Increasingly, non-state actors and PMCs are also adopting special operations-like capabilities. There is little reason to believe that the proliferation and use of SOF will slow in the coming years. However, the impact of special forces on international security remains underexplored and undertheorized. This essay has sought to limn some of the analytical terrain and to start the process of defining a SOF-specific research agenda.

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NOTES

1. For example, the December 2017 *National Security Strategy of the United States* released by the White House speaks of a need to "enable forward-deployed field work beyond the confines of diplomatic facilities" (p. 33), while USASOC *Strategy 2035* overview refers often to the need for "persistent engagement."
2. There is a vast "adventure" literature on these and other topics. See, for example, Mortimer (2016), and Mortimer (2011); for similar treatments of recent U.S. SOF operations, see (among many) Maurer (2012).
3. In a study commissioned by the U.S. Army, the RAND Corporation explicitly compared Special Operations to Cyber Operations and argued that lessons from the evolution of special forces and their authorities and missions can directly inform the development and employment of "cyber forces" (see Paul, Porche, and Axelband, 2014).
4. Thompson points out, for example, that Mexico's Los Zetas narcotraffickers started operating in a paramilitary-like fashion after recruiting defectors from the Mexican Special Forces Airmobile Group (GAFE).

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ISIS and the Collapse of the "Caliphal Syllogism"

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This paper examines the way in which ISIS established the caliphate, justifying doing so by way of a kind of syllogism. "Were the caliphate to exist," ISIS argued, "it would possess certain characteristics (the major premise). We possess those characteristics (minor premise). Ergo, we are that caliphate and it would be a sin not to announce ourselves as such." At the same time, ISIS averred that setting up the caliphate constituted a clear sign of the end times. But this very physical caliphate constituted both ISIS's appeal and its greatest vulnerability. What would happen if coalition forces successfully crippled the "minor premise" and delayed ISIS's expected end time? This paper explores what did happen and specifically how coalition battlefield victories compelled ISIS to alter its appeals and its very narrative structure. It closes with a brief comment on what may come next.

Keywords: ISIS, caliphate, adnani, baghdadi, raqqa, mosul, eschatology

In an article for *International Security*, Alex Wilner and I (2014) contend that a key component in countering al-Qaida is that of delegitimating its metanarrative. On our view, while "delegitimization is far removed from traditional coercion, it shares a common goal: alter and influence adversarial behavior." That is, a carefully executed attack on al-Qaida's foundational story could deter, or at least ameliorate, the jihadist threat. The battlefield that ISIS has presented, however, represents a very different challenge. Where al-Qaida has long staked its bona fides on the coherence and salience of its broad narrative, that is not the case with ISIS.

Instead, it built its legitimacy primarily on the presence and viability of a physical caliphate and its military victories, and only secondarily on its narrative. I argue that ISIS's very successes, and especially the sheer physicality of its caliphate, proved to be its greatest weakness. In battling al-Qaida, one may rightly argue that *delegitimation is a key to deterrence. With ISIS, physical deterrence is key to delegitimation*.

And that is precisely what happened. As the caliphate shrank, ISIS' ability to recruit new members dropped. More importantly, ISIS was compelled to change the focus of its propaganda and to renarrate the contours of its basic project. Hopes of worldwide conquest slipped away. Promises of a near term apocalypse proved illusory. Physical deterrence delegitimated the dream.

A substantial literature has matured that examines how deterrence (whether as coercion or denial) might be used vis-a-vis al-Qaida, as well as a growing body of scholarly research on the employment of counternarrative.[1] With respect to ISIS, among many others, Bunzel (2014,

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2015a, 2015b), McCants (2015a), and Winter and al-Saud (2016) have done substantive work in profiling ideology and leadership. Berger (2015) and McCants (2014, 2015b)) have enabled scholars to engage the eschatology of ISIS. A number of significant contributions have appeared that unpack the visual (as well as written) messaging of ISIS propaganda, to include the seminal work of Zelin (2015). Particularly helpful in seeing how ISIS tailors its messaging are Winter (2015, 2018)) and Mahlouly and Winter (2018). Winkler has cogently explored messaging and the "about-to-die trope" in ISIS propaganda, most recently in Winkler, el-Damanhoury, Dicker, and Lemieux (2018). Pertinent to this present study is Amarasingam and Berger (2017), who explore how caliphal demise disrupts the crucial social feature of "entitativity." Similarly, Oosterveld and Bloem (2017) examine at length how the fall of the caliphate would break its "spellbinding quality." Yet there remains a gap in the research exploring ways that dismantling, or even simply disrupting, ISIS' caliphate would lead to its delegitimation. Moreover, understanding how physical disruption could discredit the jihadist enterprise makes this pertinent to a SOF pre-battlefield assessment. After the Iraq War, a large-scale commitment of ground forces to confront ISIS was not politically feasible, while ISIS—for its own propaganda—hoped we *would* make such a commitment.[2] But a smaller tailored force, in concert with indigenous troops and air support, could prove ideal.

It is that proposition—that physical degradation of the caliphate would delegitimate ISIS—that constitutes the basic research focus of this present study. Inter alia, this paper addresses three interrelated questions. What rationale did ISIS advance for establishing a caliphate? How did that rationale constitute both ISIS' power to recruit and its most significant vulnerability, thus yielding an opening for delegitimation? Finally, with the caliphate's collapse, what narrative has ISIS been compelled to develop and what threat remains?

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CALIPHATE AND ITS "SYLLOGISM"

Just over two weeks after the capture of Mosul in mid-June 2014, ISIS spokesman Abu Muhammad al-Adnani made the celebratory announcement that ISIS had re-established the caliphate. As he did so, he carefully connected the day's glad tidings to a critical theme that Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the putative godfather of ISIS, had consistently propounded: that the road to accomplish the jihadists' dreams would necessarily be sanguinary. Writing in his message *eina ahl al-maru'at ("Where is the Family of Noble Virtues?" (2004)eina ahl al-maru'at ("Where is the Family of Noble Virtues?" (2004)*, Zarqawi had assured adherents on the third anniversary of 9/11 that, "By God, the daily call (*da9wa*) is not to a road covered with roses and aromatic plants. The cost of the call is exorbitant. The cost of moving from principles to practical reality is an abundance of corpses and blood. The lamp of dawn cannot be lit apart from mujahideen and martyrs." Zarqawi's successor, then ISI leader Abu Umar Al-Baghdadi (2007), continued the trope in his famous speech three years later, "The Harvest of the Years." There he declared, "The Islamic State remains. It remains because it was built from the corpses of the martyrs and it was watered with their blood, and by this the market of paradise was convened."

Now in 2014, al-Adnani (2014a) followed suit. In his formal pronouncement, "This Is the Promise," which extends to 14 pages of Arabic text (and appearing also in English, Russian, French, and German), the ISIS spokesman stated that the caliphate had come into being because

of "the blood and corpses of thousands of your brothers who came before you… . They carried this banner and sacrificed everything beneath it. They liberally gave everything, even their own lives, to pass this great banner along to you … So protect this profound trust." Further on, he continues in the same way, boasting, "We poured out rivers of blood on its behalf [by which we] water the seedling. We set up [the caliphate's] foundations (*qawa9id*)[3] on our skulls and built its structure on our corpses. We were patient throughout years of death, imprisonment, and [suffering] broken [bones] and amputation."

Now that the longed-for day had come, Adnani could exult, "Onward, O Muslims! Gather closely round your caliph so that you may return to where you once were for long ages: kings of the earth, knights of war… . [B]y Allah, you will possess the earth, and East and West will submit to you. This is the promise of Allah to you. Hope has become a fact; the dream has become reality." And all this had come about with miraculous speed, truly ISIS' *annus mirabilis*.

> Allah has granted to this umma such victory in [only] a year such as he has not given others in years or, indeed, centuries… . By Allah's permission, the breaking of the dawn of honor has come anew and the sun of jihad has risen… . The sign of victory has appeared and that is the banner of the Islamic State, the banner of tawhid (monotheism)—high, wavering, fluttering—spreading its shade from Aleppo to Diyala, while the banners of [the tyrants] are lowered and their borders destroyed.

Adnani's announcement did not stand alone. A media choreography reinforced his grand proclamation. Within the space of mere days in late June and early July 2014, ISIS published two videos announcing the end of Sykes-Picot. The reference, of course, was to the secret agreement between the British and French in 1916 (and which President Wilson specifically attacked in his Fourteen Points) that carved out spheres of influence in what would become Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Israel. The video *kasr al-Hudud (kasr al-Hudud (*Breaking the Borders*) (2014)* offers dramatic footage of earthmoving equipment pushing down the sand berm that demarcated the Syria/Iraq border. Standing alongside Adnani, the Chechen jihadist and military commander Umar al-Shayshani observed, "We are destroying the borders placed by the corrupt tyrants (*tawaghit*) to prevent Muslims from traveling in their lands. The tyrants broke up the Islamic caliphate and made it into countries like Syria and Iraq … . Praise God, today we have begun the final stage." The video closes with a voiceover saying, "We have broken the borders in our minds and hearts and in reality on the ground." Significantly, at the close, the video shows Iraqi Shia prisoners who are compelled to engage in a call and response before their execution. One of the ISIS members shouts "Islamic State!" The completely-dispirited prisoners respond with, *baqiyah* (it remains), the phrase from abu Umar Al-Baghdadi's (2007) speech which became one of ISIS's favored slogans.

The companion video, *The End of Sykes-Picot (2014)The End of Sykes-Picot (2014)*, conveys a similar message. Speaking in English but with considerable Arabic interleaved, Abu Safiyya (identified as "an émigré from Chile) tells viewers that "we will break all the barriers until we reach al-Quds (Jerusalem) … . We are coming, enshallah." Then, as he ceremoniously raises the ISIS flag at a border checkpoint, abu Safiyya states, "The *rayat at-tawhid* (banner of monotheism) will be over all other flags of *shirk* (polytheism) and *kufr* (unbelief). There is only one country (*dawla* in the Arabic subtitles). We also have only *imam* (prayer leader) and one *khalifa* (caliph) and that would be abu Bakr al-Baghdadi."

At the same time, the first issue of *Dabiq*[4] magazine made its appearance. The inaugural issue's article, "From Hijrah to Khilafah" (2014), focuses on the five stages that culminated with the caliphate, beginning with Zarqawi's *hijra* (pp. 34–41).[5] But the special import of the first issue and, indeed its name, is that it specifically conflates the establishment of the caliphate and the end times. As with every subsequent issue, the magazine opened with Zarqawi's now famous statement from his 2004 speech: "The spark has been lit here in Iraq, and its heat will continue to intensify—by God's permission—until it burns the crusader armies in *Dabiq*." Zarqawi was invoking the hadith in Muslim 2897(n.d.) which describes the advance of the army of "Rome"[6] to the town of *Dabiq* in northern Syria as time draws to a close. The Islamic army will march forth and decisively defeat them. Shortly after their victorious return, Satan will appear, but Jesus son of Mary will descend to lead the Muslims in prayer, then destroy the arch-enemy, the hadith declares.

While others have termed this as ISIS's apocalypticism,[7] this is better described as "eschatological." Where "apocalyptic" generally connotes the horrific battles and calamities at the end of time, "eschatological" includes even more. It describes the end with its horrors, certainly, but it also draws attention to a recapitulation of the sacred past of Islamic history,[8] and the breaking *into the present* of a glorious future. And, indeed, al-Adnani (2014b) brings together all three—past, present, and future—as he describes the importance of the establishment of the caliphate. Adnani assures the troops of ISIS that they are preparing for the "final crusader campaign," one that will be accounted as "the decisive battle of battles in the history of Islam." Turning to the crusaders, he assures them that they will fail as in all previous campaigns, except that this time, "We will conquer your Rome, break your crosses, and capture your women." Indeed, Adnani tells America and its allies, "The results of [these] battles are decided before they (even) begin." Little surprise, then, that Adnani could encourage the soldiers of the caliphate, admiringly telling them, "You encounter death bare-chested. Under your feet is the transitory world. By God, I have not known a single one of you as other than racing toward the battle cry, coveting the place of death in every battle. *I see the Quran walking alive among you*." [emphasis added]

The coordinated projects culminated with the new caliph, abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi (2014), leading Friday noon prayers on 4 July in recently-captured Mosul. The newly-minted caliph[9] slowly climbed the steps of the minbar in the Mosul mosque, dressed in black and pointedly using a *miswak* to clean his teeth before beginning.[10] Remarking that the mujahideen had shown years of patience in fighting their enemies, he stated that God had now granted victory, allowing them to declare the caliphate. Then, as the new imam, he followed the pattern of the first caliph, his (adopted) namesake abu Bakr, and humbly stated that he had been "afflicted" (*ibtala*) with this heavy responsibility. "I was given authority (*wala*) over you but I am not better than you or more excellent. So, if you see me doing that which is right, then help me, and if you see me to be in some falsehood, then admonish me, and guide me to the right way." Thus the circle was complete in this week of jihadist choreography. By word and symbolic act, ISIS made clear that the era of the Rashidun—the rightly guided ones—had returned, that the caliphate had been established, and that believers stood at the very close of the age. Consequently, Muslims everywhere were now obligated to give the oath of allegiance, *bay9ah*, to the new leader of the restored caliphate.

THE SYLLOGISM AND ISIS'S VULNERABILITIES

Yet the critical issue inheres at just this point: mere announcements and symbolic acts don't produce a caliphate; there must be tangible evidence. And so, ISIS staked the entirety of its legitimacy as the caliphate based on what we might term the "caliphal syllogism." That is, ISIS described what the caliphate would look like, were it to be restored (its major premise). It then argued that it possessed all those features (its minor premise). Thus, the *ergo* follows naturally: ISIS is the caliphate. Or, as Abdullah al-Moldovi (2014) pithily expressed it: *iza kanat maujuda, fahiyya maujuda*: if it exists, then it exists.[11] Moreover, ISIS averred that, were it to refuse to acknowledge the reality of what it is, it would be in grave sin.[12]

The various caliphal characteristics that ISIS claimed to possess—and which mandated declaring the caliphate—are multifold. al-Adnani (2014a) stated this in a technical way, saying that the leading men (*ahl al-Hal wal-aqd*, lit., "those who have authority to loose and bind") had met and determined that the Islamic state possessed all the necessary "formative materials" (*muqawwimat*) to establish the caliphate. Similarly, al-Moldovi (2014) stated that, because the Islamic State had the strength (*qadr*) and military ability to effect its aims, it existed in reality (*Haqiqa*) and, importantly, had formal legitimacy (*mash-ru9iyya*). Unsurprisingly, Al-Baghdadi (2014) advanced the same idea in his inaugural sermon in July 2014. After many long years of patient jihad, he declared, God had granted success to the mujahideen and enabled them to achieve their aims. Thus, they quickly announced the caliphate and appointed a caliph.

Moreover, ISIS specified particulars of what this restored caliphate looked like, concrete facets that gave it legitimacy.[13] They fell in several categories.[14] Under religious and jurisprudential, implementation of sharia, establishment of proper courts, use of the *hudud* punishments, and unhesitating application of *takfir*, a formal charge of disbelief. Under administration, the development of a ministry structure, designation of *wilayat* (here, best rendered as "provinces"), and appointment of their respective governors. Under military and security, the taking and holding of territory, the "erasing" of borders and the repudiation of all nationalisms,[15] securing of roads for travel, and reduction of crime and brigandage. Under social,[16] the flourishing of families, care for widows and orphans, maintaining distinct roles and customs for men and women, and improving race relations. Under practical, provision of city services and a secure food supply. All this was neatly summarized in *Dabiq* #12. There, in the article "Paradigm Shift," Cantlie (2015) writes that scholars everywhere had to concede that ISIS was not simply an "organization" but a state.

> The reality of the caliphate is confirmed by many things, the people living under its governance, for one. For the first time in years, Muslims are living in security and their businesses are doing a roaring trade. The zakah system has been up and running, taking a percentage of peoples' wealth and dispersing it to the poor … . Sharia courts are established in every city … . Corruption, before an unavoidable fact of life in both Iraq and Syria, has been cut to virtually nil while crime rates have considerably tumbled (47).

Few things could so exemplify the formal instantiation of the state that Cantlie describes as the execution by burning of the Jordanian pilot, Muaz Kasasbeh, in January 2015.[17] ISIS produced a video in which the captured pilot "acknowledged" his guilt in taking part in the coalition air strikes against ISIS positions and Raqqa, in particular. The video then segued to the execution

scene. As Kasasbeh walked slowly to the place where he would die, soldiers flanked the path, standing in silent sentinel. All were dressed identically, wearing camouflage and camouflaged gloves. All held their rifles in the same position. All wore balaclavas. It thus becomes apparent to the viewer that this was a formal ceremony. And behind ceremony and video was the release of a formal justification. "The Burning of the *murtadd* [apostate] Pilot" (2015) presented an extended excursus in *Dabiq* #7 (pp. 5–8).

In sum, the caliphate had fully, visibly, *physically* returned. It was operative on every level, from the government's *hudud* punishments to education of children to care for the elderly. And as ISIS readily (and snarkily) pointed out, this was not simply the ineffectual statements of leaders al-Qaida, men who could not handle jihad "if it is far away from hotels and conferences," men whose only program is that of "postponement" (*irja'*).[18] No, this was fully realized. As al-Adnani (2014a) framed it, "Hope has become a fact (*taHaqqaq*); the dream has become reality (*Haqiqa*)". And not simply a static reality. The caliphate was *growing*. In "Baqiyah" (2015), the *Dabiq* editors include a feature article on the late Abu Umar al-Baghdadi's favored descriptive term for the ISI: *baqiyah*, it will remain. Noting that the speech in which it occurred ("The Harvest of the Years") appeared "during the dark waves of the *saHwah* (the "awakening councils"), *Dabiq* reveled in the glorious days that would follow. "The Islamic State not only remained in Iraq, it [has] spread to the Arabian Peninsula, Sham, North and West Africa, Khurasan, al-Qawqaz, and elsewhere." Unsurprisingly, it concludes, "May Allah keep the Islamic State remaining *and expanding* until the muwahhid mujahidin fight the armies of the crusaders near *Dabiq*" (pp. 17–18). [emphasis added]

But what ISIS had boasted as its greatest strength proved to be its greatest vulnerability. The sheer physicality, its literal visibility, had served as a powerful tool for recruiting and, more especially, legitimation. Indeed, ISIS made this its sharpest point of differentiation from al-Qaida, maintaining that the latter had doctrine without action or substance.[19] But in predicating the entire legitimacy of its project on the caliphate's objective reality—*Haqiqa*, as Adnani termed it—ISIS exposed its fatal flaw. Again, the syllogism. ISIS had limned the contours and facets of what a caliphate *would* look like—the major premise. It then claimed that its shura council had determined that ISIS possessed all the essential formative elements (*muqawwimat*) of a caliphate—the minor premise. And so the ergo: ISIS is de facto that caliphate. And that construct illuminated the counter strategy the coalition—and especially SOF—could use against it.

Nobel laureate Thomas Schelling (2008) closes his classic work, *Arms and Influence*, with a new 2005 Afterword. In it, he posits, "There is much discussion these days of whether or not 'deterrence' has had its day and no longer has much of a role in America's security. There is no Soviet Union to deter; the Russians are more worried about Chechnya than about the United States … and terrorists cannot be deterred anyway—we don't know what they value that we might threaten, or who or where it is" (p. 301)[20] But in fact we do know. In the case of al-Qaida, as Long and Wilner (2014) argue, the jihadists have long made a virtue of maintaining doctrinal coherence and seeking to convince multiple publics of the salience of its message, then using it as a weapon against the West.[21] Al-Qaida has believed that if its message loses traction, it loses adherents. The strategy in this case would be to *delegitimate the message in order to deter*. But in the case of ISIS, the strategy would work the other way around. Since ISIS' paramount goal has been to establish and expand a physical caliphate, it unintentionally aimed at something

tangible that coalition forces could put at risk, the loss of which would be universally patent. al-Adnani (2014a), perhaps unwittingly, articulated that risk. He had averred, in the glorious morning of the caliphate, that if it endured, even for an hour, it would be God's doing. He then added. "If it comes to an end (*zala*), know that [the cause] is from us, from our own hands." And so, unlike al-Qaida, the counter strategy with ISIS would be to *physically deter in order to delegitimate*.

Thus, if the final victorious battle at *Dabiq* did not come, if instead ISIS lost territory and the families of the caliphate saw increasing deprivation, then both caliphal and eschatological dreams would be dimmed, if not dashed.[22] This counter strategy would insure that life under "the shade of the caliphate" was simply more war and more war, more hudud punishments, more separation from loved ones, more sickness and death. It would make facts on the ground to be misery and endless waiting for a kingdom that never came. It would fragment ISIS' united kingdom, disrupt supplies, and obliterate convoys flying the black flag. In brief, this strategy would devastate the minor premise of the caliphal syllogism, thus destroying its conclusion. By doing this, coalition forces could compel it to lose control of its caliphal narrative and all that that would entail.

COLLAPSE AND RENARRATION

And so it happened. ISIS lost control of its major cities, saw its governmental structures compromised, its media output disrupted, and its financial streams blocked. That is, the once-functioning caliphate regressed, in Bunzel's (2015a) appropriate phrase, to a "paper state." That, in turn, meant both a sharp diminution of recruits, a marked harshening of conditions within the shrinking "borders" of the caliphate, and defection of members. Witte (2016) quotes Peter Neumann, director of the International Center for the Study of Radicalization at King's College London, on precisely this connection. "It's a massive falloff … basically because Islamic State is a failing entity now. The appeal of Islamic State rested on its strength and its winning. Now that it's losing, it's no longer attractive."[23] Or, as Oosterveld and Bloem (2017) posit in a report for The Hague Center for Strategic Studies, "The power and success of ISIS depend on its spellbinding quality. Breaking that spell is the key to defeating ISIS." The spell broken, recruitment shrank dramatically.

Moreover, ISIS publications themselves implicitly acknowledged that military operations took their toll on caliphal family life, that—as defectors suggest—life became harsh. As a result, ISIS issued repeat warnings about dissent, encouraged patience through difficulties, and demanded obedience. al-Adnani (2014a) had anticipated such a need when he laid out these principles at the same time he announced the caliphate. He asked what accounted for this "victory," then answered: absence of disagreement, obedience to leaders, and patience. He added, "And if anyone wants to break the ranks, split his head with bullets." The emphasis continued in "The Evil of Division and Taqlid" (2015) and in "Listen and Obey" (2015), the latter stressing need not only to obey one's leaders but also to "harshly denounce anyone who disobeys."

More striking were those articles addressed to women, urging them to accept the hard realities of life in the caliphate without complaining. A recurring series in *Dabiq* came from "Umm Sumayyah al-Muhajirah."[24] In her article, "A Jihad without Fighting" (2015a) Umm Sumayyah

asks women why they would complain, for they knew that this would be a difficult life. She reminds them of the patience of Job's wife who stood by her man even though she had lost money, children, and a former life of comfort. Indeed, she remained steadfast even after Job's flesh fell off, with only bone and nerves remaining. So, the jihadist wife should remain patient when her husband performs *ribat* (guard duty on the frontier), is captured, or killed. Hers is the privilege of "preparing the lion cubs of the khilafah" (p. 45). Her advice column continued in "Two, Three, or Four" (2015b), which encourages a Muslim wife to accept the sharia ruling that a man can have multiple wives, for in opposing it, she could fall into apostasy. Obviously, wartime deprivations complicated the hoped-for orderly life of the caliphate, especially for women and their children. ISIS, therefore was compelled to continue urging patience for those who bore the brunt.

The corollary message was to those who would leave the caliphate altogether. Describing it as a "dangerous major sin" (p. 22), the article "The Danger of Abandoning Darul-Islam" (2015) warned that those doing so were making a passage to *kufr*, unbelief. More to the point, they would expose their children to becoming Christians, atheists, or liberals who would do drugs, have sex, and forget Arabic. To reinforce the point, the article included a picture of Alan Kurdi, the young Kurdish boy who drowned, to dissuade refugees from going to the West. Similarly, the video *taHdheer al-laji'een min makr al-saleebiyeen (Warning to the Refugees of the Deception of the Crusaders) (2015)taHdheer al-laji'een min makr al-saleebiyeen (Warning to the Refugees of the Deception of the Crusaders) (2015)* cautioned of the deceptions of the West. The speaker declares that the unbelievers in the West have no real interest in extending a welcome.[25] No benefit, financial or otherwise, accrues to them. Rather, unbelievers in the West see it simply as an opportunity to compel Muslims to apostatize. On the other hand, those who perform hijra "have lives of honor [and are] not contemptible strangers." Similarly, ISIS continued to issue warnings to those who would not perform hijra and leave the West for the caliphate. For example, Abu Thabit al-Hijazi (2015) tells those who refuse to come that they "risk their entire hereafter." Moreover, by remaining in the lands of the "apostate *taghut*" (tyrant), they abandon their children to "wolves" for their education (pp. 33, 35). That ISIS would so focus on maintaining order within the caliphate, on seeking to dissuade Muslims from leaving, on seeking to persuade Muslims living elsewhere to come to Raqqa and its sister cities—all this underscored that life "under the shade of the caliphate" was not all sweetness and light.

But the more critical measure that military success was taking a toll on the caliphate is that it compelled ISIS to do a fundamental renarration and to change the topical focus of its productions.[26] Faced with obvious physical setbacks that the jihadists could not deny, ISIS began to reshape its messaging so to protect the legitimacy of the entire caliphal enterprise. The criticality of correct messaging is one that al-Qaida had long understood. For instance, in an undated letter to Mullah Omar, leader of the Afghan Taliban, Osama Bin Laden (n.d.) wrote that gaining the upper hand in the "information war" (*al-Harb al-'i9lamiyya*) represents 90% of the preparation for battle. And in one of his final letters from Abbottabad, Pakistan, Bin Laden (2010) warned,

> Here is the critical issue that behooves us to pay attention to: that if we don't give careful regard to the impact our operations can have on the sympathy (*ta9atuf*) of the majority of the umma for the mujahideen, this will lead to winning some battles but ultimately losing the war.

Significantly, Ayman Zawahiri (2005), then deputy leader of al-Qaida, had warned Zarqawi that, while he might enjoy being given the tile of "the shaykh of slaughter" by young jihadists, it was a two-edged sword. It was important to understand, Zawahiri told the godfather of ISIS, that "more than half the battle (*ma9rakah*) is in the battlefield of the media (*maidan al-i9lam*)" where they were "in a race (or contest, *sibaq*) for the hearts and minds of the umma." That understanding was not lost on ISIS.

So now, in May 2016, Adnani was compelled not simply to recalibrate but to reverse the ebullient 2014 announcement of the caliphate. In 2014, the ISIS spokesman (2014a) had said that where Muslims had long worn "the thaub of dishonor," they could now see that "the dawn of honor [has] broken… . [T]the banner of the Islamic State [is] high, waving, fluttering, spreading its shade from Aleppo to Diyala, [while] the banner of the tawaghit are lowered and their borders destroyed." But in 2016, Adnani offered a message that reads like a stunning repudiation of what he had, just two years prior, so boldly declared about the physicality of the caliphate.

Just three months before he would die in an airstrike, Adnani addressed the West.

> America, do you tally it a rout if a city is lost or territory forfeited? … Are we defeated and you victorious if you should take Mosul or Sirte or Raqqa or even every city and we [revert] to our original condition (*awwal Hal*)? Certainly not! … It is the same whether God favors us with consolidation (*tamkin*) or cuts us off in the desert and in vast open spaces. Whoever thinks that we are fighting to safeguard land or authority or that victory is contingent on it, has indeed traveled far into error (*ab9ada fee dalaal*). Rather, we fight in obedience to God and to be near him, and victory is that we live in the honor (*izza*) of our deen or die for it. It is the same whether God favors us with consolidation (*tamkin*) or cuts us off (*batta*) in the desert and in vast open spaces, as displaced and hunted people … . For us, the only (real) victory is to live as monotheists, disavow the tyrants (*taghut*), implement loyalty and disavowal (*al-wala' wal-bara'*), and establish the religion. If this is the case, then we are truly, in every situation, the victors.

In 2014, victory and, indeed, legitimacy meant physical territory. In 2016, victory had to be measured by a very different and non-physical metric. As he put it elsewhere in the 2016 message, ISIS could be considered to have lost the battle only if "the Quran is removed from our hearts."

Adnani's death three months later compelled a further renarration, though ISIS seemed reluctant to truly accede to realities on the ground. In *istishhad al-shaykh al-mujahid abi muhammad al-adnani ("Martyrdom of the Mujahid Shaykh abu Muhammad al-Adnani) (2016)istishhad al-shaykh al-mujahid abi muhammad al-adnani ("Martyrdom of the Mujahid Shaykh abu Muhammad al-Adnani) (2016)*, the official eulogy, ISIS described his death as a great misfortune (*musab*). But then it quickly declared that there was "good news" to announce which would keep the cowards in the "religious community of disbelief" (*millah al-kufr*) awake at night. A new generation had arisen, it boasted, one whose men loved death more than others love life, men who had "divorced" the world and would be spurred on to blood revenge (*tha'r*). The bold—and patently unwarranted—declarations continued, despite the crumbling of the caliphate. In the spring of 2017, even when the caliphal fate was certain, ISIS described the hundreds of new recruits who gave *bay9a* and told of significant battlefield victories around Mosul.[27] *Al-Naba* took aim at the various movements of the Arab Spring in rabi9 al-khilafah (Springtime of the caliphate)

(2017), dismissing them as mere *thaurat jahiliyya* (revolutions of ignorance) that sought to make "tyrannical manmade laws ascendant." It also continued to produce *nasheeds* to gain recruits and to stir the troops. One new release in March, bikasr al-jamajim (By breaking skulls) (2017) sang the glories of "cutting off heads" and drinking "tasty dark blood," while la ubali (I Don't Care) (2017) averred, "I don't care how I die," for it will "heal the chest."

But others took a more searching look at what was unfolding. One particularly searching article, *limadha khasarat al-daulat al-islamiyya bad al-manatiq al-khada9ah lisataratiha? ("Why Did the Islamic State Lose Some of the Areas Subject to its Control?") (2016)limadha khasarat al-daulat al-islamiyya bad al-manatiq al-khada9ah lisataratiha? ("Why Did the Islamic State Lose Some of the Areas Subject to its Control?") (2016)*, asked why the Islamic State had lost both territory and several of its leaders. Appearing in October 2016, two months after Adnani's death, the article studied history where "surprising lessons" emerged. Periods of consolidation (*tamkin*) had always been relatively brief. Moreover, Noah, Moses, and Jesus had experienced periods of great difficulty. These setbacks would help believers understand "the meaning of life" (*maghza al-Hayah*) and bring them back to real dependence on God and effect the correct worship that God calls for. Indeed, the word *maghza* (meaning) occurs 11 times in the five-page article, a significant word choice as this writer sought to resolve the dissonance between the ISIS hermeneutic and reality.

Equally important, the fundamental and undeniable losses interrupted ISIS's neat eschatological timetable. In June 2014, al-Adnani (2014a) could boast of history's great reversal. Where believers had endured centuries in which they had to "submit in humiliation to Kisra and Caesar,"[28] that had all changed with the establishment of the caliphate. Three months later, al-Adnani (2014b) could confidently discern both the recapitulation of Islam's early triumph ("I can see the Quran walking alive among you") and the triumphant close of history. Thus, he assured the believers that the "final crusader campaign" (*al-Hamlah al-salibiyyah al-akheerah*) was at hand, and that it would be the "decisive, conclusive" (*fasilah, hasimah*) battle of battles in Islam's history. In fact, he promised, the results of these battles were settled before they even began, an example of a realized eschatology.

But in 2016, this "last days" messaging was compelled to change. The loss of the key town of Dabiq pointedly illustrates the alteration of the narrative. In the "Introduction" (2014) to the first issue of *Dabiq*, the editors indicated that the choice of the title reflected the hadith[29] that spoke of the *malaHim*, the great epic battles, that would occur there. It then added the gloss that, in English, these battles are referred to as "Armageddon" (p. 4). But with the defeat at Dabiq in 2016, ISIS had to renarrate, which it quickly did. In *illa milHama dabiq al-kubra" ("On to the Epic Battle of Dabiq") (2016)illa milHama dabiq al-kubra" ("On to the Epic Battle of Dabiq") (2016)*, ISIS declared that, unlike the worshippers of the cross with their "filthy banners," the "believing murabitun in the trenches" knew that this was no "great moral victory [for] …the worshippers of the cross." This was merely "the lesser battle (*ma9raka*) of Dabiq," a mere hit and run skirmish (*al-karr wal-farr*). But these events in northern Syria, it added were "harbingers" (*irhasat*) of the coming *malaHim* (pp. 8, 9).

This language of *malaHim* that are coming-but-not-quite-yet continued. Baghdadi's audio message, "This Is what Allah and His Messenger Promised Us" (2016b),[30] drew its title from sura 33, al-aHzab. This Quranic sura describes the Battle of the Trench where the Makkan enemy outnumbered the believers in Madina by 3 to 1. After a winter siege, the tide turned, and

the Muslims proved victorious. Mosul, Baghdadi implied, was the 2016 counterpart. Although obviously outnumbered, the fighters of ISIS could know the martialing of enemy coalition forces was nothing other than a "prelude" (*taqdimah*) to their own victory, the "groundwork" (*irhas*) of conquest, the "beginning" (*bidayah*) of their triumph, and a sign that the "destruction" (*halak*) of the enemy is "near." Baghdadi offered the questionable assurance that the "hammers of affliction" (*matariq al-ibtila'*) were strengthening their faith, but he could not say that they were entering the culminating battles, the *malaHim*, of history. The following April, on the eve of the collapse of Mosul, the new ISIS spokesman, Abu Hasan Al-Muhajir (2017) would similarly seek to reassure the troops. Using a metaphor once favored by Osama bin Laden, MuHajir assured followers that America had once again plunged into the "swamp" (*mustanqa9*) of Iraq.[31] Like Baghdadi, he referenced the present, with its loss of territory, as a time of "affliction" (again, *ibtila'*). But, he promised, this was but the "ebb [of the sea]" (*jazr*), and it would be followed by victory and even "expansion" (*madd*). In fact, the "first gleam" (*bariqah*) of the *malaHim* had appeared.

But the gleam proved false. The final battles of history did not appear. ISIS's territory continued to shrink, not expand. Six months after MuHajir's appeal, something else came about in Raqqa, the putative capital of the caliphate. In October 2017, the Syrian Democratic Forces would announce they had retaken the city after months of fighting. And in place of the black flag of ISIS, a yellow flag—written in Arabic, Kurdish, and Syriac—would appear (Barnard & Saad, 2017). The minor premise of the caliphal syllogism had been crushed, and the newly-freed population of Raqqa would celebrate in the liberated streets.

WHAT COMES NEXT?

The physical caliphate has been effectively destroyed. Coalition successes have compelled renarration. ISIS no longer poses, if it could have been termed this, an "existential threat." ISIS leadership has been decimated, showing, in Bunzel's (2015b) apt phrase, that its leaders are not simply interchangeable "billiard balls" who can be easily replaced. And as Berger and Amarasingam (2017) observe, ISIS's ability to recruit, having seen its "entitativity" critically disrupted, will be seriously crippled. But the threat has morphed from potentially existential to persistent and more complex. Targeting Raqqa was straightforward because there was a there, there. What remains now is not simply an ideology but a hermeneutic,[32] a way of framing and understanding the world. That hermeneutic—and a kind of "virtual caliphate"—will continue to live a cyber life.[33] Now, would-be recruits, who no longer have a physical caliphate to which they can travel, can draw on those ideas and enlist in the battle as lone wolves. Such was the case when Sayfullo Saipov rented a truck and drove into cyclists in Manhattan in late October 2017. Saipov, inspired by ISIS videos, carried a note saying that the Islamic state would "endure,"[34] precisely the hallmark slogan Abu Umar al-Baghdadi had popularized in 2007 (Barrett, Zapotosky, & Berman, 2017). When ISIS issued a formal claim of responsibility two days later, it failed to name him, but it gladly claimed him as a "soldier" of the caliphate who had caused "great fear (*ru9b*) within crusader America."[35] A month and a half later Akayed Ullah detonated a pipe bomb in a New York Times Square subway station, injuring himself and several others (Feuer, 2017). ISIS again quickly claimed him as its own,[36] and other ISIS supporters quickly developed online posters (Robinson, 2017), one of which encouraged "the

brothers of *aqeedah* (doctrine) and faith" to carry on the fight, knowing "paradise [to be] under the shade of swords." The montage graphic in this case depicts both the Statue of Liberty surrounded by smoke and flames and the Eiffel Tower toppling over. At its base is the figure "2018" and the words *qareeban fee 9uqr diyyarikim*: "soon, in your very heartlands," a portent of what ISIS hoped to accomplish in the new year. And ISIS did just that in the Paris knife attack in May 2018. Before he died in the assault, "soldier of the Islamic State" 21 year old Khamzat Azimov produced a video in French containing his last testament.[37] In it he declared, "Did they shut the door of *hijra* in our faces? Then let us strike them in their heartland (dans leur proper terre)." Lest Arabic-speaking viewers miss the import of the French, ISIS' news agency Al-9amaq supplied the subscript: *fee 9uqr darihim*.

Coalition forces can claim remarkable success in degrading and thus delegitimating the physical caliphate and its "syllogism." That marks a critical lesson learned, for not all violent extremist groups carry the same vulnerabilities. But the strategic question has now morphed. It has changed from "How do we hold *the caliphate* at risk?" to the fluid and more difficult, "*What* do we hold at risk?"[38] The black banner has been lowered; it has not gone away. And at some point, ISIS fighters who escaped (Sommerville & Dalati. 2017) or new enlistees who embrace the hermeneutic available to them in cyber space will seek to raise the black banner again, the next challenge for the United States and its allies.

NOTES

1 Several extensive surveys of the applicable literature can be recommended, to include Wilner (2011), Long and Wilner (2014), and Lantis (2009). Maddaloni (2017) also offers a review in his discussion of ISIS. With respect to counternarratives, Winter (2015) is surely right that the real need is for an "alternative" narrative, not simply a counternarrative.

2 Callimachi (2015) makes this point forcefully and succinctly.

3 Adnani is likely punning here on the name "al-Qaida," for which "foundations" is the plural form. At multiple points, ISIS has sought to delegitimate its parent organization, claiming that it (ISIS) represents the "correct path" (*sirat mustaqim*) and the prophetic program (*minhaj al-nubuwah*). See, for instance, *'iqama ad-daulat al-islamiyya ("Establishing the Islamic State") (2017)'iqama ad-daulat al-islamiyya ("Establishing the Islamic State") (2017)*.

4 ISIS published 15 issues of *Dabiq*, with the last in July 2016. All issues appear in English, and several have been published in Arabic. ISIS then followed with *Rumiyah* (Rome), with the first issue appearing September 2016, just after Adnani's death and eulogizing him. 13 issued have been published, with the last in September 2017.

5 The stages are *hijra* (migration), *jama9ah* (forming a group), *tawahhush* (destabilization [of 'apostate' regimes]), *tamkin* (consolidation/strengthening), and *khilafah* (the caliphate).

6 The Arabic *ar-Rum* indicates the Byzantines, of course, but ISIS has made "Rome" one of its preferred terms for the West generally and the United States, in particular. One important instance of the latter is ISIS's statement, baris qabla ruma (Paris before Rome) (2015), which appeared six days after the massive Paris attacks in November 2015. In it, ISIS spoke of what was begun in Iraq and Sham, as now punishment in Paris, and which will eventuate in making "the so-called White House black with its fires."

7 Among them are Wood (2015) and McCants (2015b). See also Berger (2015) on the use of social media to rouse end-time fervor.

8 The classic statement of how this recapitulation of a sacred past functions is Eliade (1959). See especially pp. 68–113. For a discussion of how this invocation of the past forms a central part of the larger jihadist narrative, see Long and Wilner (2014), pp. 131ff.

9 The name "abu Bakr" is a nom de guerre referencing the first caliph in Islam, taking office upon the death of Muhammad in 632 A.D. While the press continues to refer to the ISIS leader as "abu Bakr," he generally now

refers to himself as "Caliph Ibrahim," reverting to his given name. McCants (2015a) offers survey of his rise from obscurity to his present position. See also Bunzel (2015a).

10 An analysis of the symbolic acts Baghdadi used in the Friday prayers is Husain (2014). They were intended to emulate those traditionally associated with Muhammad.

11 "Letter from the Brother Abdullah al-Moldovi" @ https://archive.org/details/AMessageFromBrotherAbdullahMoldovi.

12 This idea that the caliph *must* be announced, once the constituent elements are in place, appears often. Al-Adnani (2014a), for instance, is one of those who states that it would be a "sin" (*ithm*) not to do so.

13 The list that follows I have drawn from a broad range of sources, and the items are overlapping and often repeated. The sources include the issues of *Dabiq*; pronouncements by ISIS's primary spokesman, Adnani; statements by Baghdadi; occasional pieces like those about the breaking of the Sykes-Picot borders; and postings on Facebook and Twitter. *Dabiq* #1, The return of the khilafah (2014) offers an impressive list on its own.

14 I have regularized the list under these categories, but it is important to note that ISIS (and al-Qaida) are not haphazard in their approach. Both organizations frequently stress that they carefully follow the "prophetic methodology." The phrase is not incidental but draws directly from a hadith in which Muhammad says that a succession (the better translation for *khilafah* in this place) will one day come based on the prophetic methodology, *khilafah 9ala minhaj al-nubuwa*. See, for example, Ahmad 17939(n.d.).

15 One of the most striking examples appears in the video, "The Clanging of Swords, part 4" (2014). The video pictures a large gathering publicly destroying their passports. A spokesman declares (addressing Arab tyrants) that ISIS has "kicked away (*rakala*) your citizenship and repudiated (*tabari'a*) it."

16 An analysis of the visual propaganda ISIS deployed to show "normal" civilian life in the caliphate (as well as military training and implementation of *hudud* punishments) may be found in Winter (2015).

17 A link to the full, untitled video appears on the References page under "Jordanian Pilot Video" (2015).

18 The idea here is that al-Qaida spoke of having a grand program but never implemented it; they simply "postponed." The taunts appear in Al-Adnani (2014a).

19 One of its sharpest criticisms appeared in "From hijrah to khilafah (2014). "The weak-hearted methodology of *irja'* [postponement] is one that can never fuel the jihad caravan on its path to Khilafah, rather it only brings indecision and fear… . In short, these groups gave preference to popularity and rationalization over pleasing Allah and relying upon Him alone" (p.39).

20 In 2012, however, Schelling remarked that the historical development of traditional deterrence theory was precariously slow. "During the Cold War," he writes, "the U.S. government was scandalously slow to learn, or at least to put into operation, the rudiments of deterrence. We must hope that learning how to deter terrorists may go more smoothly and more rapidly." Quoted in Wenger and Wilner (2012), pp. vii–viii.

21 For a recent example of exactly this emphasis in al-Qaida on "getting the message right," see Hamza Usama Bin Laden (2017).

22 Indeed, western history itself has seen just that played out many times, among both violent and non-violent groups in Christendom: the primitive church, European peasant movements in the 13th and 14th centuries, the Muntzerites, the Taborites, radical Anabaptists, the Shakers, and the Millerites, among them. Millennial hopes rose, but with their continued delay, the groups either morphed or faded into obscurity.

23 Citing intelligence estimates, Witte indicates that foreign fighters crossing the Turkish border dropped from a high of 2,000 per month to 50. In a more recent study, Barrett (2017) describes the continued exodus and the national security implications of returning fighters.

24 The name is taken from that of the first martyr in Islam, a woman named Sumayyah bint Khayyat. No other information is given about the ISIS "Sumayyah" except the appended "al-Muhajirah," indicating she had migrated to the caliphate from elsewhere. The level of the classical theological training Umm Sumayyah reflects could indicate that she either has a silent male co-author, or that the pseudonym veils a male identity.

25 The Trump administration's policy on admitting refugees only added grist to the propaganda mill, an exploitable issue also picked up by al-Qaida. See, for instance, al-Masra #38 which carried an article on just this, titled, *tramb yaghliqu amreeka biwajh 7 duwal islamiyya ("Trump Shuts America in the Face of 7 Islamic Countries") (2017)tramb yaghliqu amreeka biwajh 7 duwal islamiyya ("Trump Shuts America in the Face of 7 Islamic Countries") (2017)*.

26 A particularly insightful study of a shift in focus of ISIS publications is Winter (2018). Winter shows how, in tandem with battlefield setbacks, ISIS publications moved from an emphasis on "utopia" to "military denialism."

27 As an example of the many such reports, see 500 *shaab yu9linun baya9tahum li-khalifah al-muslimeen* (500 Youths Announce their Allegiance to the Caliph of the Muslims) (2017), 13.

28 "Kisra" (or Khosrau) was the name of two important Persian kings, Kisra II (d. 628) being the last great ruler before the Muslim conquest. It is used here as a metonym for the Sassanid Persians, as "Caesar" indicates the Byzantines. Together, the dyad often referred to Islam's first great enemies … and triumphs. Bukhari 2953(n.d.) describes the fall of this pair.

29 Muslim 2897(n.d.).

30 For the Arabic text, I have used *hatha ma wa9adana allah warasuluhu* (2016), for which "This is what Allah and his Messenger Promised Us" is a precise translation. That ISIS would so quickly transcribe the Arabic audio, then translate it into English (a period of one week) shows how critical the situation had become.

31 Osama bin Laden coined the phrase "swamp of Iraq" in October 2003. See *bin laden: washinton tawarratat fee mustanqa9 al-9iraq* ("Bin Laden: Washington Has Become Entangled in the Swamp of Iraq") (2003).

32 On the jihadists' employment of a 'hermeneutic,' see Long and Wilner (2014), especially pp. 138–42.

33 Miller (2017). See also Winter (2017).

34 The note, in Arabic, would almost certainly have said "*baqiyah*."

35 Hujum li'aHad junud al-khilafa wasat (manhatan) fee amreeka (Attack by one of the soldiers of the caliphate in the center (of Manhattan) in America) (2017).

36 Hujum biqunbalah 9ala tajammu9 lilsaleebiyeen wasat newyork (Bomb attack on a crowd of crusaders in New York) (2017).

37 *wasiyyah munaffith 9amaliyyah al-ta9n bimadinah baris fi faransa (Testimony of the perpetrator of the knife attack in Paris, France). (2018)wasiyyah munaffith 9amaliyyah al-ta9n bimadinah baris fi faransa (Testimony of the perpetrator of the knife attack in Paris, France). (2018)*.

38 This is the question that underlies the work of Long and Wilner (2014).

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Georgia, Terrorism, and Foreign Fighters

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Some 200 foreign fighters from Georgia were among those who left their homes and traveled to fight in Syria and Iraq. The Georgian case is interesting due to the large number of foreign fighters but an apparent lack of previous direct experiences with terrorism. This article examines the profiles of Georgian foreign fighters and discusses the patterns that emerge. The analysis is based on an original dataset of 54 foreign fighters. The examination of their profiles reveals that even foreign fighters who share national origins differ in motivations for departure, group affiliations, and the way they arrange the journey.

Keywords: Foreign fighters, radicalization, terrorism, Georgia

In December 2017 media sources reported the death of Salahuddin Shishani. He was killed in an air raid in the Syrian Hama province. Salahuddin was a prominent insurgent commander who at one point represented the Caucasus Emirate in Syria but recently headed a group called Jaish al-Usrah, Army of the Protective Shield. A native of Georgia's Pankisi Gorge, Salahuddin was known at home as Feizulla Margoshvili. He was among some 200 Georgian foreign fighters who traveled to Syria and Iraq to join different insurgent groups.

The presence of Georgian foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq became apparent in 2013–2014, when several prominent figures were placed on international terrorist lists. The most famous of these was Tarkhan Batirashvili, nom de guerre Abu Omar al-Shishani, who was appointed as one of the ISIS commanders in 2013–2014 (Al-Shishani, 2013). In 2014 Batirashvili was listed on the U.S. Department of Treasury Specially Designated Global Terrorists list and in 2015 he appeared on the UN Security Council list of entities related to ISIS and Al Qaeda. Murad Margoshvili, nom de guerre Muslim al-Shishani, became another individual who made the presence of Georgian foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq known to the rest of the world. In 2014 Margoshvili was placed on the U.S. State Department list of Foreign Terrorist Fighters and in 2017 he was added to the UN Security Council list of terrorist entities related to ISIS and Al Qaeda.

Those who left from Georgia to fight in Syria and Iraq included individuals who had prior military training and those who had never seen a gun before. Some were religious radicals while others had only recently converted to Islam. Some foreign fighters wanted to avenge for personal grudges, while others learnt about ISIS online. A number of individuals from Georgia have been detained and arrested both in Georgia and abroad for foreign fighting in Syria and Iraq. For

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example, Davit Borchashvili who had traveled to Syria was arrested in November 2015 for participation in terrorist activities abroad (Zhitel' Gruzii Zaderzhan, 2015). In August 2016 the Tbilisi Court found him guilty of membership in a terrorist organization under Article 327 of the Georgian Criminal Code and sentenced him to 12 years of imprisonment (David Borchashvili v Gruzii, 2016). In June 2017 a Georgian citizen Ruslan Tsatiashvili was convicted in Grozny, Chechnya, for fighting in Syria and received a sentence of ten months of imprisonment (Grazhdanin Gruzii Osuzhden, 2017). Also in June 2017 another Georgian citizen Beslan Gaurgashvili was found guilty in Grozny of fighting in Syria and was sentenced to three years in prison (Petrov, 2017).

Some foreign fighters have come back to Georgia and many more might be on their way back home. In turn, returnees present significant security challenges for the Georgian government. For example, a counterterrorist operation that took place in Tbilisi on November 21–22, 2017 demonstrated that returnees pose potential threats of terrorism. During the operation that lasted almost 24 hours the State Security Service stormed an apartment building where a group of terrorist suspects was hiding. The group included returnees from Syria, among them infamous Akhmed Chataev, designated on international terrorist lists (State Security Service of Georgia, 2017a). Chataev resisted arrest and blew himself up. Along with Chataev, two more suspects (Ibragim Adashev and Aslanbeg Soltakhmadov) were killed and one was taken into custody. Based on the post-operation investigations, Georgian security services found that Chataev was planning to stage terrorist attacks in Georgia and Turkey (State Security Service of Georgia, 2017b). Chataev's group was suspected of having more cooperatives in Georgia who were involved in recruitment activities.

On December 26, 2017 security services conducted further counterterrorist operations in Tbilisi and the Pankisi Gorge leading to more arrests. During a controversial operation in Pankisi, one of the detained, 19-year-old Temirlan Machalikashvili received a fatal wound when he allegedly tried to resist arrest. The rest of the four detained – Zurab Gornakashvili, Ruslan Aldamov, Ramaz Margoshvili, Badur Chophanashvili – are being investigated under Article 331(1) (Financing, Providing other Material Support and Resources to Terrorist Activities) (State Security Service of Georgia, 2017b). These individuals have been allegedly linked to Chataev and provided support to his group.

The rise of Georgian foreign fighters parallels similar processes elsewhere. According to various estimates, between 35,000 and 40,000 individuals from various countries made their way to join insurgent forces in Syria and Iraq (Pokalova, 2018). At the same time, not much research has focused on the outflow of foreign fighters from Georgia (Clifford, 2018; Goguadze & Kapanadze, 2015). However, the examination of the Georgian case offers certain important insights. Georgia's strategic geopolitical location in the Caucasus makes it vulnerable as a potential transit zone. In fact, the U.S. State Department (2017) has already noted that "Islamist extremists have transited through [Georgia] between the Russian Federation's North Caucasus, Iraq, Syria, and Turkey." Due to such geographic position, the dangers of radicalization in Georgia can impact other regional and global actors. Further, Georgia is a majority-Christian country that has not been involved in an open interfaith conflict. It has had limited experiences with terrorism. And yet, a relatively large number of Georgians left to fight in Syria and Iraq.

This article examines the profiles of foreign fighters who departed from Georgia to Syria and Iraq. I analyze the information available about such individuals to glean what we can learn from the outflow of foreign fighters from Georgia. For the purposes of this analysis, foreign fighters

are defined as individuals who leave their countries of origin or residence and travel to join a conflict or support a conflict elsewhere. This definition includes women traveling to assume supportive roles, and individuals whose citizenship is impossible to ascertain but who had established residence in Georgia. The analysis is based on the original data on 54 Georgian foreign fighters that was retrieved by the author through open sources.

The article first discusses the numbers of foreign fighters from Georgia and reviews the data collection process. I then present the information on the regions affected by the foreign fighter outflow. The article proceeds by covering the affiliations of Georgian foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq. Next, two distinct waves of departures are analyzed. The article concludes with the lessons drawn from Georgia's experiences with foreign fighters.

GEORGIA'S FOREIGN FIGHTERS

Georgia has had limited experiences with the direct terrorist threat. Most of the terrorism-related security challenges affecting Georgia have been associated with the separatist regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Georgia's Pankisi Gorge has featured in the news covering the North Caucasus insurgency, but the region has experienced little violence itself. The main terrorism-related challenge for Georgia remains associated with foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq.

While no exact numbers of Georgian foreign fighters are available, the Georgian government has acknowledged the outflow of individuals to Syria and Iraq. For example, Irakli Gharibashvili, Prime Minister of Georgia at the time, noted the rising threat from ISIS in 2015:

> Our government has doubled and quadrupled interest toward the Pankisi Gorge. I would like to remind you that more than a hundred locals from the Gorge left for Syria before we came to power. After we took office, perhaps a very few juveniles went to Turkey. Later on, probably they moved to Syria. There might be three or four-to-five juveniles who have left. The problem of ISIS is a headache for the whole world and global leaders cannot find a solution on how to prevent and stop the movement of volunteers to Syria (Sigua, 2015).

Since 2015, different numbers of Georgian foreign fighters have been quoted. For instance, in November 2015, Levan Izoria, then at Georgia's State Security Service acknowledged that about 50 Georgian citizens were involved in Syria (Levan Izoria, 2015). In the same year, in the report issued by Member States to the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee, Georgia officially acknowledged 41 foreign fighters (UN Security Council, 2015). In 2016 the annual report of Georgia's State Security Service claimed a decrease in the number of radicalized individuals from Georgia (Dumbadze, 2017a). Other sources have cited up to 200 Georgians fighting in Syria and Iraq (Cathcart, 2016; Rimple, 2015; Varshalomidse, 2015), and Georgia's former president Mikheil Saakashvili claimed "several hundred Georgian citizens have been sent to Syria" (Paraszczuk, 2015b).

While the cited figures might not seem high, for a majority-Christian country with the total population amounting to just under four million people, the numbers of foreign fighters remain significant. Weighted by population, the range of 41–200 individuals constitutes 1–5 people per 100,000 of population. Further, the outflow of foreign fighters has impacted the Muslim population of Georgia more significantly. According to the 2014 population census, Georgian Muslim population amounted to 398,700 people, or 10.7 percent of the total population

(National Statistics Office of Georgia, 2016). Weighted by the Muslim population, the range of 41–200 individuals constitutes a much higher rate of 10–50 individuals per 100,000 people.

Men have not been the only ones who have left. Women from Georgia have also made their way to Syria and Iraq. For example, Elmira Suleymanova and Diana Gharibova from Karajala in Telavi region left their families and traveled to Syria through Turkey (Zakavkazskie Turchanki, 2015). Reports from the Pankisi Gorge indicate that a number of girls left for Syria with the intent to get married there. As Malika Kushtanashvili, sister of one of the male foreign fighters from the Gorge explained, "both girls and boys at my school say they want to go to Syria" (Varshalomidse, 2015). Another person from the Gorge confirmed: "Even the girls are caught up in Syria, and they tell the lads they'll marry them if they go and fight there. We have two senior grade girls who got married in Syria" (Jvania & Kupatadze, 2015).

In order to examine the profiles of Georgian foreign fighters, I collected an original dataset of individuals who went to Syria and Iraq. The data was collected through open sources as I searched for the information in the English and Russian languages. The list of Georgian foreign fighters along with their short biographies is presented in the Appendix. For some individuals, Georgian names are available, while for others I was only able to retrieve a *kunya*, or the adopted name. The final list contains information on 54 individuals and includes active foreign fighters, returnees, and deceased individuals. At the time of writing, at least 28 were pronounced dead in media accounts. For some individuals it was impossible to verify their citizenship. However, all the individuals included in the dataset had substantial connections to Georgia either through citizenship or residence. While the real number of those who departed Georgia is probably higher and ranges around 200, public information was only available for 54 individuals.

In order to substantiate the information available on Georgian foreign fighters through published accounts, I conducted a series of interviews with subject matter experts. I conducted over a total of 30 interviews – the majority took place in Tbilisi, Georgia, in July 2017. Several interviews were held over Skype. The interviews were structed on an open-ended question format, and each lasted between 30 minutes and one hour. The interviews provided additional information about Georgian foreign fighters and verified some of the accounts collected through published sources. Due to the sensitive nature of the subject, identities of interviewees are not revealed in the article.

FOREIGN FIGHTER GEOGRAPHIES

The largest share of Georgian foreign fighters (at least 42 based on the dataset – see the Appendix) come from the Pankisi Gorge. However, the problem is not limited to this area. Other parts of Georgia including Adjara, Guria, Kakheti, and Kvemo Kartli have been affected as well. At least two individuals departed from Adjara, three from Guria, three from Kakheti, and one from Kvemo Kartli. While the outflow of foreign fighters first started in the Pankisi Gorge, overtime it shifted to other regions of Georgia. Fighters with Pankisi connections made it to higher ranks of command among the insurgent groups in Syria and Iraq. Fighters from the other regions, on the other hand, have not featured as prominently among the command ranks.

Pankisi Gorge

Georgia's Pankisi Gorge is located south of the Georgia-Russia border in the district of Akhmeta. The territory is about eight miles in length and two and a half miles in width and is home to several villages scattered along the Alazani River. The Gorge is mainly populated by the Kist people. The Kists refer to the descendants of ethnic Chechens and Ingush who started migrating to the Gorge area from the north in the 1830s (Sanikidze & Walker, 2004). This way, the Kists share an ethnic affinity with the Chechens of the North Caucasus and have historically shared many cultures and traditions with their northern neighbors. At the same time, despite the shared identity, Georgian Kists are well integrated in Georgia (author interview with an academic scholar in Tbilisi, Georgia, July 13, 2017). In fact, before the influx of refugees from Chechnya, Kists in Pankisi felt 90 percent Georgian (Tsulaia, 2011, p. 129). The Kists have not demanded independence from Georgia, nor have they voiced ideas about unification with Chechnya. As one Kist stated, "The Kists will never be against Georgia… Kists will never betray Georgia" (Tsulaia, 2011, p. 133).

The Kist ethnic group is fairly small. In Pankisi the Kists live mainly in the villages of Shua Khalatsani, Duisi, Jokolo, Omalo, Birkiani, and Dzibakhevi. According to the 2002 national census, only 7,100 Kists lived in Georgia (Cagara, 2016). Since then many have emigrated and in 2014 their number went down to 5,700 (National Statistics Office of Georgia, 2016). At the same time, while Kists have been moving out, Chechens from the north have been moving in. The Pankisi Gorge experienced a large population influx during the second Chechen war that started in 1999 when Chechen refugees from the north sought safety with their ethnic brethren in Pankisi. Based on the UNHCR estimates, between 7,000 and 8,000 Chechen refugees found their way to the Gorge (Colville, 2001; Murray-Jones, 2010). While most of these refugees have long left the Gorge and resettled in Western Europe, their influx impacted the stability of Pankisi.

During the second Chechen war, along with the influx of the Chechen refugees, the Pankisi Gorge experienced the flow of criminal activities connected to the North Caucasus insurgencies. By the early 2000s the criminal activities in the Gorge were a cause for concern for both local and international security services. In 2002 U.S. diplomat Philip Remler stated that Al Qaeda fighters from Afghanistan were hiding in the Caucasus saying: "We are also aware that some of them are hiding in the Pankisi Gorge and are in contact with Al-Khattab, an Arab terrorist. The latter, for his part, is connected with Osama bin Laden. The Pankisi Gorge is an extremely dangerous place for Georgia" (Traynor, 2002).

Further, due to the criminal activities connected to the North Caucasus the Gorge became a controversial issue between Georgia and Russia. In 2016 Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov claimed that ISIS used the Pankisi Gorge "to train, rest and replenish their supplies" (Russia: ISIL Training Base, 2016). The Georgian reaction to the statement was swift and Prime Minister Kvirikashvili responded: "the Georgian Government exerts full control of the area. Currently several dozen people from Pankisi are fighting with IS but there is strict control over their return and they will face prison if they come back" (US Ambassador: Georgia, 2016). Further, Lavrov's statement provoked a reaction from the U.S. and Ambassador Ian Kelly in Tbilisi spoke in support of Georgia: "I can say that Georgia and the US are jointly opposing terrorism threats. We have listened to the statements made in Moscow. In response to the assertions I would repeat the Georgian PM's words when he said that Georgia utterly controls the situation in the Gorge and the US unconditionally supports Georgia in this direction" (US

Ambassador: Georgia and the US Jointly Fight Terrorism, 2016). Subsequently, Ambassador Kelly joined Georgia's President Giorgi Margvelashvili in a widely publicized visit to Pankisi.

Because of the affinity with the Chechens of the North Caucasus, Georgian Kists who went to Syria and Iraq are often lumped into a larger contingent of Chechen foreign fighters. Georgian Kists also adopt the same *kunya* of *al-Shishani* (Chechen), which makes it difficult to distinguish Chechens from Chechnya from Kists from Georgia. Many North Caucasus Chechens and fighters from Pankisi have fought together in Syria and have appeared together in propaganda materials. For example, in 2013 Abu Ibrahim al-Shishani, Chechen field commander Alkhazur Dasaev, appeared in a video along with Georgian Tarkhan Batirashvili (Paraszczuk, 2017c). Abdul Hakim al-Shishani, Chechen Rustam Azhiev who had participated in the Chechen insurgencies for nine years and became an Ajnad al-Kavkaz leader in Syria (Dzhikhadisty iz Chechni, 2016), featured in a video along with Georgian Murad Margoshvili and Feizulla Margoshvili (Paraszczuk, 2017a).

Further, what makes it difficult to distinguish Georgian Kists from the rest of the Chechens in Syria and Iraq is the presence of Chechen foreign fighters from Western Europe. According to some estimates, between 400 and 1,000 ethnic Chechen foreign fighters have been present in Syria (Al-Shishani, 2014). This number includes the Kists, Chechens from the North Caucasus, and Chechens from Europe. In fact, according to one foreign fighter, the majority of Chechens in Syria are not from the Caucasus but from diaspora communities across Europe. "They came from everywhere you can find a Chechen in Europe," he explained (Clayton, 2013). For instance, Georgian brothers Hamzat and Khalid Achishvili traveled to Syria from Austria where they were living as refugees.

Tarkhan Batirashvili remains the most famous Georgian foreign fighter from the Pankisi Gorge. Due to his ISIS fame, Batirashvili became a role model for the younger people in the Gorge, some of whom then followed him (author interview with a political analyst in Tbilisi, Georgia, July 13, 2017). Batirashvili produced a certain "Che Guevara effect" on the youths of Pankisi, who regarded him as a role model (author interview with a political analyst in Tbilisi, Georgia, July 21, 2017). As his aunt explained, Tarkhan is seen as "a big patriot. He was never a terrorist." "He is a hero for many here," she stated (Antidze & Tsvetkova, 2016).

Batirashvili conducted a PR campaign to attract more residents of Pankisi to follow him (author interview with a political analyst in Tbilisi, Georgia, July 13, 2017). He relied on his personal connections for recruitment purposes (author interview with a researcher in Tbilisi, Georgia, July 14, 2017). Further, another resident of the Gorge, Aiuf Borchashvili, was arrested on June 14, 2015 for alleged ISIS recruitment activities. According to the Georgian Ministry of Internal Affairs, Borchashvili was "a representative of the terrorist group, Islamic State, in Georgia, who was recruiting citizens to join the terrorist organization and arranging their travel to Syria" (Man Arrested for Allegedly, 2015). In March 2016 Borchashvili was found guilty of recruitment activities and was sentenced to 14 years of imprisonment (Imam v Gruzii Osuzhden, 2016).

Among those allegedly recruited by Borchashvili are Ramzan Baghakashvili, Amiran and Aslanbeg Borchashvili, Giorgi Khutunishvili, Giorgi Kuprava, Muslim Kushtanashvili, and Davit Pirisebia. According to Giorgi Borchashvili, Aiuf Borchashvili's relative, Aiuf tried to recruit him to travel to Syria. "Since my family is very poor and I cannot afford to support my wife and kids, I swore to Aiuf that I would obey him completely and he promised to help me financially in return," Giorgi said (Kmuzov, 2015). The promised help never materialized and Giorgi later disavowed the agreement. Muslim Kushtanashvili's mother Aminat blamed the

departure of her son on Borchashvili's recruitment work. "It seems that he [Muslim] used to meet up with Wahhabis secretly in this village, and in Jokolo… They were all locals. One of them [Aiuf Borchashvili] was arrested shortly after the incident, but his brother Giorgi is still free for some reason. I think that both were involved in sending my son to Syria," she said (Varshalomidse, 2015).

Based on the dataset of Georgian foreign fighters presented here, at least 42 out of 54 individuals traveled to Syria and Iraq from the Pankisi Gorge. Thus, Pankisi accounts for the largest share of Georgian foreign fighters. The outflow of individuals from the Gorge slowed after the 2015 arrest of Aiuf Borchasvhili. Notably, due to the high level of Kist integration in Georgia, foreign fighters from Pankisi, including Tarkhan Batirashvili, generally do not issue threats against Georgia. For example, one Pankisi resident claimed Tarkhan Batirashvili "fought for Georgia's unity, not against it" (Akhmeteli & Kiguradze, 2016). Further, after Batirashvili's death in 2016 his brother Tamaz sent a directive to Pankisi residents encouraging them to stay quiet "not to create problems for Georgia" (author interview with a political analyst in Tbilisi, Georgia, July 13, 2017). This way, the largest contingent of Georgian foreign fighters have not called for attacks against Georgia or the Georgian government.

Adjara and Guria

Another group of foreign fighters from Georgia come from the Western regions of Adjara and Guria. At least two individuals went to Syria and Iraq from Adjara and three from Guria (see the Appendix). Unlike the Kists of Pankisi, foreign fighters from Adjara and Guria are ethnically Georgian but come from Muslim communities that converted to Islam under the Ottoman rule. Muslim communities of Adjara have experienced certain tensions with the majority Christian population. As a result, foreign fighters from Adjara often blame Georgia for discrimination of Muslim populations and unfair treatment of Islam.

The Autonomous Republic of Adjara with an administrative center in Batumi is a south-western region of Georgia bordering Turkey. Due to its status of an Autonomous Republic, Adjara holds a special position within Georgia. Based on the Constitutional Law of Georgia on the Autonomous Republic of Adjara, the Autonomous Republic maintains jurisdiction over the adoption of laws, determination of government structure, its budget, and administrative management of the territory. Because of its location on the coast, Adjara retains control over sea shipments to Georgia. Due to its proximity to Turkey, Adjara has experienced a high level of migration of its citizens across the border. It was in Turkey that a number of Georgian individuals, including Khvicha Gobadze, were recruited to go to Syria and Iraq.

Guria borders Adjara in the north. This region of Georgia became affected by internal migration flows. Since the early 1980s the Georgian government initiated a number of resettlement programs targeted at individuals displaced from their homes due to natural disasters. The ecological situation and climate change significantly affected the living conditions in the mountainous areas. Because of flooding, landslides and avalanches many people from mountainous areas had to abandon their homes. Since 1981 around 60,000 of ecomigrants, mainly from Adjara and Svaneti, were resettled (Trier & Turashvili, 2007, p. 5). Many of them resettled in Guria.

The presence of foreign fighters from Adjara and Guria in Syria and Iraq became known after the release of an ISIS propaganda video in 2015. In the video four individuals were identified as

Badri Iremadze, Roin Paksadze, Mamuka Antadze, and Khvicha Gobadze (Tsuladze, 2015). Gobadze comes from Adjara, while the other three reportedly come from Guria, where their families resettled as ecomigrants from Adjara (Islamic State Group's, 2015). Another individual from Adjara is Tamaz Chagalidze who prior to his travel to Syria was a Muslim activist in Batumi. Chagalidze has also produced ISIS propaganda materials addressing the Muslims of Adjara. Unlike the recruitment propaganda targeted at Pankisi, recruitment materials produced by individuals from Adjara and Guria focus on the unfair treatment of Muslims in these regions. As a result, many of these propaganda messages issue threats against Georgia and the Georgian government.

Kakheti and Kvemo Kartli

Information about foreign fighters from the other regions of Georgia remains very limited. However, based on the available information, it is evident that other Muslim communities in Georgia have also been impacted by the outflow. At least three individuals have departed from Kakheti and one from Kvemo Kartli. The impacted areas in these regions are mainly villages populated by ethnic Azeris. Several people have left from the Azeri village of Karajala in Kakheti. These include Diana Gharibova, Elmira Suleymanova, and Beslan Mukhtarov. Murman Paichadze, a former Imam, comes from the village of Kokhta in Kvemo Kartli. While news reports about these and several other unnamed individuals suggest that the outflow of foreign fighters is much larger than just a Pankisi phenomenon, the lack of details about these individuals makes it difficult to analyze potential trends associated with their departures.

FOREIGN FIGHTER ALLEGIANCES

It has been typical for foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq to join groups based on their ethnic affiliations. For example, Syrian members of the Circassian diaspora formed their own combat group Katibat Ahrar. Ethnic Uzbeks have gravitated towards Imam Bukhari Jamaat. The majority of foreign fighters from Georgia joined ISIS. At the same time, ISIS has not been the only affiliation for Georgians, and individuals have engaged in conflict with each other through warring factions and have switched allegiances multiple times. The analysis of affiliations of Georgian foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq demonstrates that ethnicity and nationality are not definitive predictors of fighter allegiance and further shows how groups in Syria and Iraq are plagued by infighting and fragmentation.

Individuals from Georgia have fought with such insurgent groups as Jabhat al-Nusra, Ahrar al-Sham, Ansar al-Sham, Chechen rebel groups Junud al-Sham, Ajnad al-Kavkaz, Imarat Kavkaz in Sham, and others. It seems that Georgian foreign fighters who were the first to depart for Syria and Iraq fought for various rebel factions. Further, it appears that the first arrivals had connections to the North Caucasus insurgencies and as a result picked groups representing the Caucasus Emirate in Syria and Iraq. For example, Rustam Gelayev, Tarkhan Batirashvili and Ruslan Machalikashvili appeared around northern Aleppo in 2012 and formed one of the first groups to represent the Caucasus Emirate (Paraszczuk, 2016).

Since then, conflicts arose over the allegiance to the Caucasus Emirate. Some Georgian foreign fighters chose to stay loyal to the North Caucasus command while others pledged

allegiance to ISIS. Already in February 2013 Tarkhan Batirashvili appeared in a video along with Ruslan Machalikashvili in which he proclaimed the Kataib al-Muhajireen, the Immigrants Brigade, a group that fought against the regime of Bashar Assad (Obrashchenie Amira Brigady, 2013). In March 2013 Katibat al-Khattab and Katibat Jaish al-Muhammad joined Batirashvili's group to form Jaish al-Muhajireen wal-Ansar, the Army of Immigrants and Supporters, that subsumed many fighters from the Caucasus (Modzhakhedy "Dzheish Mukhammad", 2013). The group launched numerous assaults on Syrian military bases, played a major role in taking the Menagh air base in Aleppo Province (Barnard & Schmitt, 2013), and was involved in the 2013 Latakia offensive (Paraszczuk, 2013b).

In a controversial move, in November 2013 Tarkhan Batirashvili swore allegiance to ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, which effectively split Jaish al-Muhajireen wal-Ansar. While some fighters followed Batirashvili, others refused to join ISIS. Thus, Ruslan Machalikashvili did not follow Batirashvili's example. A conflict between them ensued as Batirashvili accused Ruslan of embezzlement. Ruslan insisted these disagreements were due to his lack of support for Batirashvili's move towards ISIS (Paraszczuk, 2013a). Subsequently, Ruslan abandoned his position of Batirashvili's deputy and briefly appeared leading the Jaish al-Khilafat al-Islamiya, Islamic Caliphate Army, group before he pledged allegiance to al-Nusrah Front in December 2013 (Paraszczuk, 2015a).

Batirashvili's pledge to ISIS did not receive unanimous support. The remaining fighters from Jaish al-Muhajireen wal-Ansar regrouped under the leadership of Feizulla Margoshvili. In December 2013 Feizulla confirmed the split with Batirashvili (Obrashchenie Amira "Dzheish, 2013). As Feizulla explained, he had previously pledged allegiance to the Caucasus Emirate leader Doku Umarov and his successor Aliaskhab Kebekov (Ali Abu Mukhammad) and was firm in retaining that pledge (Samoe Sil'noe Chudo, 2015). In July 2015 Feizulla pledged allegiance yet again to the new leader of the Caucasus Emirate – Magomed Suleimanov (Abu Usman Gimrinsky) - and called himself a representative of the Caucasus Emirate in Syria (Mudzhakhidy Imarata Kavkaz, 2015). He further briefly led a group called Imarat Kavkaz in Sham (Caucasus Emirate in Sham) before in 2016 he headed a new group in Syria - Jaish al-Usrah, Army of the Protective Shield (Sokirianskaia, 2016).

Murad Margoshvili is another Georgian fighter who refused to join ISIS. In the conflict between adherents of the Caucasus Emirate and ISIS Margoshvili remained neutral leading his own group Junud al-Sham, Soldiers of Syria. While preserving independence Junud al-Sham has cooperated with other groups and Margoshvili appeared in a video speaking against discord among mujahedeen (Razafimbahiny, 2013). Due to the group's neutrality, it eventually lost a lot of members to competing groups and by November 2016 Junud al-Sham effectively became defunct. Murad Margoshvili, however, continued to maintain his independence of other allegiances (Baric, 2017).

FOREIGN FIGHTER EXODUS: THE FIRST WAVE

The analysis of the profiles of Georgian foreign fighters reveals at least two distinct groups of individuals. The first wave of foreign fighters from Georgia to Syria and Iraq occurred in 2012–2013. These individuals are generally older, many have fighting experience, and many have been involved in the North Caucasus insurgency. The second wave of foreign fighters followed suit starting in 2013

and continued through 2015. These individuals are younger, most of them had no prior combat experience, and they seem to have been motivated by the examples of the first wave of fighters.

One of the first individuals with Georgian connections to arrive in Syria was Rustam Gelayev, son of the Chechen field commander Ruslan Gelayev. His father Ruslan was a well-known Chechen fighter, who during the second Chechen war was based in the Pankisi Gorge. From Pankisi Ruslan Gelayev staged raids into Russia. Rustam reportedly fought alongside his father from a very young age (Rustam Gelayev, 2012). In 2006 Rustam himself settled in the Pankisi Gorge. In August 2012 was killed in Aleppo.

The most famous of the Georgian foreign fighters, Tarkhan Batirashvili, also appeared in Syria early on, in 2012. Batirashvili was arrested in Georgia for illegal possession of weapons but was released under amnesty (Antidze & Tsvetkova, 2016). Soon after his release he traveled to Turkey to find work but was recruited there to travel to Syria. According to some accounts, it was not religiosity that led Batirashvili to Syria and Iraq, but rather his thirst for fighting (author interview with a political analyst, Tbilisi, Georgia, July 13, 2017). Georgian analyst Mamuka Areshidze stated that Batirashvili was a "true fighter, born to fight" (Kobaladze, 2015). Batirashvili served in the Georgian military but was discharged for health reasons. As his father recalls, Tarkhan explained his desire to go to Syria as follows: "Father, I should find my own way in life. This country [Georgia] does not need me" (Antidze & Tsvetkova, 2016). Since he could not continue his military career in Georgia he found other opportunities and succeeded in rising along the military ranks in ISIS while serving as Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's close adviser until his death in July 2016.

Other individuals from the first wave of foreign fighters from Georgia include Feizulla Margoshvili, Ruslan Machalikashvili, and Murad Margoshvili. All three allegedly arrived in Syria in 2012. According to an interview with Feizulla Margoshvili, at some point he attempted to cross the border from Georgia to Chechnya to join the insurgency there (Samoe Sil'noe Chudo – Eto Priderzhivat'sia Istinnogo Puti do Kontsa, 2015). However, as he failed, he went to Syria instead. Ruslan Machalikashvili was reportedly wounded in Chechnya and, after leaving the North Caucasus, could not go back. As a result, he ended up in Afghanistan instead (Shishani, 2014). He was killed in Aleppo in February 2014. Murad Margoshvili became widely known to international security services due to his activities involving training foreign fighters in a camp in Syria located close to the Turkish border (U.S. Department of State, 2014).

The first wave of Georgian foreign fighters mainly come from Pankisi. Many are older. For example, Murad Margoshvili was born in 1972. Ruslan Machalikashvili and Feizulla Margoshvili were born in 1978. Because of their age, many of these individuals have gone through military service. For example, Murad Margoshvili reportedly gained military training while serving in the air defense forces in Mongolia (Chechenskii Front, 2014). Further, Tarkhan Batirashvili served in the military. According to his father Temur Batirashvili, Tarkhan joined the Georgian army in 2007 and in 2008 fought in the war against Russia. His military colleagues appreciated Tarkhan Batirashvili's diligence and described him as an "excellent soldier" (Kak Gruzinskii Serzhant, 2014).

In addition to formal military training, the first wave of foreign fighters gained substantial combat experiences in the North Caucasus. As was discussed above, Rustam Gelayev supposedly fought along with his father in the North Caucasus. Batirashvili's brother Tamaz reportedly spent two years fighting in Chechnya (Kak Gruzinskii Serzhant Stal Liderom Dzhikhada v Irake, 2014). Murad Margoshvili fought along with Khattab and later with Abu Walid during the first Chechen war (Ibragim, 2014). In the 2000s he fought under Doku Umarov's command and participated in terrorist activities in Ingushetia. While in Ingushetia he was captured and spent over two years in prison. As he explained

in an interview, he escaped and later tried to return to the North Caucasus but could no longer cross the border (Paraszczuk, 2014a). Ruslan Machalikashvili also reportedly took part in the insurgency in Chechnya where he was wounded (Shishani, 2014). In turn, Feizulla Margoshvili claimed he had fought together with Ruslan Gelayev and was detained for crossing the Georgia-Russia border (Paraszczuk, 2015d).

The profiles of Georgian foreign fighters suggest that individuals who were the first to depart for Syria and Iraq mainly came from the Pankisi Gorge and had connections with the North Caucasus insurgents. They were older and had prior military expertise. Due to this expertise, many of them achieved high-ranking positions in insurgent groups in Syria and Iraq. Some of these veteran foreign fighters who had previously fought in Chechnya seemed dedicated to North Caucasus cause. This wave seems quite distinct from the younger fighters who followed.

EXODUS CONTINUES: THE SECOND WAVE

The second wave of foreign fighters from Georgia started in 2013 and continued through 2015, eventually dwindling by 2016. This outflow was more numerous and more indiscriminate. This wave was no longer confined to the Pankisi Gorge but affected other regions of Georgia. Few of the individuals who departed between 2013 and 2016 had prior militant experiences or connections to the North Caucasus insurgency. This wave rather resembles the departures of individuals from other Western countries, where it has been difficult to established clear patterns of foreign fighter profiles.

The second wave of foreign fighters from Georgia are generally younger individuals, born in the 1980s and 1990s. Due to their age, most of these individuals did not go through military service. As one Pankisi resident described these individuals: “Most of those traveling to Syria have no idea what a weapon is, they don’t know how to shoot, most of them have never been farther than their own villages” (Paraszczuk, 2015c). This wave also includes women.

When it comes to Pankisi, it seems many foreign fighters of the second wave were following the example of Tarkhan Batirashvili and others of the first wave. As one local woman explained the departures, “they [young people] watch videos on the internet and they are in contact with people who have already left.” “To them, those who have left are heroes,” she said (Jvania & Kupatadze, 2015). As a result, many of them appeared in Batirashvili’s close environment. For example, Mukhammad Khangoshvili who left in 2014 served as Batirashvili’s bodyguard (Dumbadze, 2017b). Beka Tokhosashvili who appeared in Syria in 2014 fought alongside Batirashvili (Eshche Odin, 2016). Due to the connections to Batirashvili, the overwhelming majority of the foreign fighters of the second wave joined ISIS in Syria and Iraq.

Many among the second wave left with their brothers (Beka and Kakha Tokhosashvili), relatives (Amiran and Aslanbeg Borchashvili), or friends (Muslim Kushtanashvili and Ramzan Baghakashvili). Some left universities to become foreign fighters (Aslanbeg Borchashvili, Ramzan Pareulidze). In addition to Pankisi, individuals included foreign fighters from Adjara, Guria, Kakheti, and Kvemo Kartli.

While the first wave of foreign fighters from Georgia had a distinct coloring of being connected to the Pankisi Gorge and the North Caucasus insurgencies, no overarching characteristics seem applicable for the second wave. The only unifying theme here seems to be the appeal

of ISIS. While many among the first wave did not recognize the authority of ISIS, those of the second wave mainly responded to ISIS propaganda.

CONCLUSION

The outflow of foreign fighters to Syria and Iraq has puzzled many observers. In this respect, the outflow of Georgian foreign fighters has also posed many questions. As one person observed commenting on Khvicha Gobadze, foreign fighter from Adjara, "I have not seen him around here for a while, already two years. He was a decent religious guy, tried not to skip prayers. I did not notice any interest on his part in radical teachings. That is why I was very surprised when I saw him in that [propaganda] video" (Mchedlishvili, 2016b). The departure of some 200 Georgian foreign fighters from the majority Christian country remains perplexing.

What the analysis of the profiles of 54 Georgian foreign fighters does reveal is that the phenomenon is very complex. Despite the common belief that the outflow is confined to the Pankisi Gorge, foreign fighters have departed from Adjara, Guria, Kakheti, and Kvemo Kartli as well. Georgian foreign fighters did not exclusively join ISIS but have fought for many groups and have often switched allegiances. In this respect, the Georgian case illustrates how complex insurgent infighting and fragmentation are: individuals who share the same ethnic and national roots have fought and conflicted with each other. It further illustrates how foreign fighter departures follow diverse trajectories.

One can distinguish two distinct waves of departures in the Georgian case. The first wave of 2012–2013 included individuals who were generally older and mostly had previous military experience. Many of these individuals were connected with the North Caucasus insurgency, and many of them do come from the Pankisi Gorge. Due to its geographic location on the border with Russia, and because of the ethnic affinity between Russian Chechens and Georgian Kists, the dwellers of Pankisi were especially affected by the Chechen wars. Some of the first individuals to leave Georgia for Syria and Iraq had fought against Russia in Chechnya and had established connections with the Caucasus Emirate.

The second wave of foreign fighters left Georgia predominantly starting in 2013. The dynamics behind this wave is similar to that of many other countries. In this case, younger individuals departed from Georgia as a result of targeted recruitment, online propaganda, and in response to persuasion from friends and relatives. Foreign fighters of the second wave are generally younger, with the majority born in the 1980s and 1990s. What is particular in the Georgian case, is the presence of the figure of Tarkhan Batirashvili. His rapid rise through the ranks if ISIS produced a certain aura of success, and for many youths back in Georgia he became a role model worth of emulation. This "Che Guevara effect" impacted many younger individuals in Georgia who departed to fight along with ISIS.

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APPENDIX. GEORGIAN FOREIGN FIGHTER PROFILES

The list was constructed based on open source information. As such, the list might be incomplete and might include information that is hard to verify.

Name and Biography	*Reported year of birth*	*Home city*	*Reported affiliation*	*Reported year of death*
Achishvili, Khalid Brother of Hamzat Achishvili. Lived in Austria as a refugee. Followed his brother and traveled to Syria.	1989	Jokolo, Pankisi	ISIS	October 2013
Achishvili, Hamzat Brother of Khalid Achishvili. Lived in Austria as a refugee.	1987	Jokolo, Pankisi	ISIS	July 2013
Alkhanashvili, Zurab (Abu Turab al-Shishani) Reported as second in command to Murad Margoshvili (Paraszczuk, 2014b).	1971	Omalo, Pankisi	Junud al-Sham	
Antadze, Mamuka Left Georgia in August 2015 to work in Turkey but later sent a message to his parents from Syria (Parents of ISIS Militants, 2015). Previously worked in IT in a hospital in Batumi (Father of One, 2015). Featured in the Adjara propaganda video that issued threats to Georgia.	1992	Nasakirali, Guria	ISIS	
Baghakashvili, Mukhmad Was married and had two children (V Irake Pogib, 2017).	1992	Duisi, Pankisi	ISIS	May 2017
Baghakashvili, Ramzan Departed with friend Muslim Kushtanashvili in 2015. Crossed the border to Turkey from where he made his way to Syria (Varshalomidse, 2015). Was allegedly recruited by Aiuf Borchashvili (Vlasti Podtverdili Gibel', 2017).	1996	Dumasturi, Pankisi	ISIS	December 2016

(*Continued*)

(*Continued*)

Name and Biography	*Reported year of birth*	*Home city*	*Reported affiliation*	*Reported year of death*
Batirashvili, Tamaz (Abdurahman al-Shishani) Brother of Tarkhan Batirashvili. Fought in the Chechen wars (Kak Gruzinskii Serzhant Stal Liderom Dzhikhada v Irake, 2014). Father Temur Batirashvili described his son: "Tamaz was Tarkhan's mentor. He obtained significant experience during the fighting in Grozny and came back alive. But in Syria Tamaz is not visible" (Brat Omara ash-Shishani, 2016). Reportedly is responsible for financial questions and security issues among the Russian speakers in ISIS (Sokirianskaia, 2016). In 2017 reportedly was sent to Afghanistan (Dvali, 2017).		Birkiani, Pankisi	ISIS	
Batirashvili, Tarkhan (Abu Omar al-Shishani) In 2007 joined the Georgian military. In 2008 took part in the Russo-Georgian war. Became sick with tuberculosis and was discharged from service. Served a sentence for illegal possession of weapons but was released under the 2012 amnesty (Antidze & Tsvetkova, 2016). He went to Turkey and then appeared in Syria in 2012. Initially fought with Kataib al-Muhajireen and Jaish al-Muhajireen wal-Ansar, but in 2013 swore allegiance to ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. On September 24, 2014 the U.S. Department of the Treasury listed Batirashvili on the Specially Designated Global Terrorists list. On January 23, 2015 was listed on the UN Security Council list of entities related to ISIS and Al Qaeda. Was killed in Iraq.	1986	Birkiani, Pankisi	ISIS	July 2016
Borchashvili, Aiuf Served as an Imam in Pankisi. Was arrested in 2015 on charges of recruiting individuals for ISIS. Prosecutors believed Borchashvili traveled to Turkey multiple times and had also visited Syria (Suspected IS Group, 2015). In 2016 Tbilisi court found him guilty of recruitment activities and support to a foreign terrorist organization and sentenced him to 14 years of imprisonment (Imam v Gruzii Osuzhden za Verbovku v IG, 2016).	1980	Jokolo, Pankisi	ISIS	
Borchashvili, Amiran Traveled to Turkey for work with cousin Aslanbeg Borchashvili in August 2015 (22-Year-Old Georgian, 2016). From there he made his way to Syria. Was allegedly recruited by Aiuf Borchashvili (V Pankisskom Ushchel'e ne Podtverzhdaiiut Fakt Gibeli Ikh Zhitelia v Sirii, 2016).		Pankisi	ISIS	

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(*Continued*)

Name and Biography	*Reported year of birth*	*Home city*	*Reported affiliation*	*Reported year of death*
Borchashvili, Aslanbeg Before his departure was a third-year student at Telavi State University. Was allegedly recruited by Aiuf Borchashvili (V Pankisskom Ushchel'e, 2016). Traveled to Turkey for work with cousin Amiran Borchashvili in August 2015 (22-Year-Old Georgian Islamist Militant Killed in Syria, 2016). From Turkey he made his way to Syria.	1994	Dumasturi, Pankisi	ISIS	June 2016
Borchashvili, Davit Reportedly traveled to Turkey for work in 2014. From there made his way to Syria. Was arrested in November 2015 for participation in a foreign terrorist organization and support for terrorist activities (Zhitel' Gruzii Zaderzhan po Podozreniiu v Terrorizme, 2015). In August 2016 Tbilisi Court found him guilty of breaking Article 327 of the Criminal Code criminalizing membership in terrorist organizations. Was sentenced to 12 years of imprisonment (David Borchashvili v Gruzii Prigovoren k 12 Godam za Terrorizm, 2016).	1986	Jokolo, Pankisi	ISIS	
Borchashvili, Jamlet Left for Syria in April 2015 (Another Local Leaves, 2015).	1996	Dumasturi, Pankisi	ISIS	
Borchashvili, Turpal Left Georgia to look for work in Turkey (Thirteenth Georgian Dies, 2015). Was killed in Kobani, Syria.	1992	Dzibakhevi, Pankisi	ISIS	June 2015
Bugiev, Vakha Native of Chechnya, arrived in Georgia in 2000 as a refugee. Was married and had three children. Was connected to the 2012 Lapankuri incident and was under surveillance of security services (Another Georgian Citizen, 2016). Left for Syria in 2015.	1977	Tsinubani, Pankisi	ISIS	April 2016
Chagalidze, Tamaz (Ahmad al-Jurji) Before going to Syria was a Muslim activist in Batumi. Featured in ISIS propaganda messages addressing the Muslims of Adjara.	1989	Batumi, Adjara	ISIS	
Gaurgashvili, Beslan A citizen of Georgia, in June 2017 was sentenced in Grozny with a three-year imprisonment term for taking part in the fighting in Syria. Was in Syria since 2013 but returned to Chechnya in 2014 (Petrov, 2017).			ISIS	
Gelayev, Rustam Son of the Chechen field commander Ruslan Gelayev. Ruslan Gelayev spent time in Pankisi Gorge during the second Chechen war. Reportedly, Rustam fought along with his father (Rustam Gelayev: Ubiitsa ili Zhertva? 2012). In 2006 arrived in Georgia, where he got married; afterwards, moved to Belgium, and from there to Egypt to study Islam (Muradov, 2012). Arrived in Syria in 2012. Was killed in Aleppo and was buried in Duisi, Pankisi.	1988	Lived in Pankisi since 2006		August 2012

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Name and Biography	*Reported year of birth*	*Home city*	*Reported affiliation*	*Reported year of death*
Gharibova, Diana Abandoned her children and made her way to Syria through Turkey along with Elmira Suleymanova (Zakavkazskie Turchanki Brosili Detei i Otpravilis' na Voinu v Siriiu, 2015).		Karajala, Telavi		
Gobadze, Khvicha (Abu Maryam al-Jurji) Studied Islam in Egypt. Before appearing in Syria left to work in Turkey in 2015 (Parents of ISIS Militants Who Threatened Georgia Speak Out, 2015). At home had a wife and a child. Featured in the Adjara propaganda video that issued threats to Georgia.	1993	Didadjara, Adjara	ISIS	January 2016
Gumashvili, Adam Left for Syria with his son Sultan in 2013 (Kmuzov, 2016). Has been reported to be a prominent member of ISIS (21-Year-Old IS, 2016).		Dumasturi, Pankisi	ISIS	
Gumashvili, Guram Left home to work in Turkey. Had previous experience of working in Turkey (Pri Shturme Siriiskogo, 2014). Was killed in Kobani, Syria.	1992	Duisi, Pankisi	ISIS	October 2014
Gumashvili, Sultan Son of Adam Gumashvili. Left for Syria with his father in 2013 (Kmuzov, 2016).	1995	Dumasturi, Pankisi	ISIS	August 2016
Iremadze, Badri Was married in Georgia and was expecting a child when in August 2015 he decided to travel to Turkey for work (Parents of ISIS Militants Who Threatened Georgia Speak Out, 2015). Featured in the Adjara propaganda video that issued threats to Georgia.	1983	Nasakirali, Guria	ISIS	
Kavtarov, Ruslan In 2003 moved to Chechnya and from there to France; appeared in Syria in 2014 (V Sirii Pogib, 2016). Had a wife and three children.	1982	Duisi, Pankisi	ISIS	July 2016
Khangoshvili, Mukhammad Left for Syria in 2014. Served as Tarkhan Batirashvili's bodyguard. Was killed in Mosul, Iraq.	1992	Duisi, Pankisi	ISIS	November 2016
Khutunishvili, Giorgi Was recruited by Aiuf Borchashvili but was arrested in 2015 at Tbilisi Airport as he was trying to travel to Syria. Was sentenced to eleven years of imprisonment (Imam iz Pankisskogo, 2016).	1992	Pankisi	ISIS	
Kuprava, Giorgi Was recruited by Aiuf Borchashvili but was arrested in 2015 in Tbilisi as he was preparing to depart for Syria. Cooperated with prosecution and was sentenced to one year in prison and five years of conditional imprisonment (Imam iz Pankisskogo Ushchel'ia Poluchil v Gruzii 14 Let za Verbovku dlia IG, 2016).	1994		ISIS	

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Name and Biography	*Reported year of birth*	*Home city*	*Reported affiliation*	*Reported year of death*
Kushtanashvili, Besik (Beso) Left Pankisi to travel to Turkey for work in the summer of 2014 (Sixth Georgian, 2014).	1996	Omalo, Pankisi	ISIS	September 2014
Kushtanashvili, Muslim Departed with friend Ramzan Baghakashvili in 2015. Crossed the border to Turkey from where he made his way to Syria (Varshalomidse, 2015). Was allegedly recruited by Aiuf Borchashvili (Vlasti Podtverdili Gibel' Urozhentsa Pankisi v Sirii, 2017).	1999	Dumasturi, Pankisi	ISIS	October 2017
Machalikashvili, Ruslan (Sayfullah al-Shishani) Reportedly took part in the Chechen wars where he was wounded; afterwards, he could not come back to Chechnya and went to Afghanistan instead (Shishani, 2014). Arrived in Syria in 2012. First fought in Kataib al-Muhajireen and then Jaish al-Muhajireen wal-Ansar. In 2013 split with Tarkhan Batirashvili over the pledge to ISIS. Headed Jaish al-Khilafat al-Islamiya and in December 2013 joined to al-Nusrah Front (Paraszczuk, 2015a). Was killed in Aleppo, Syria.	1978	Duisi, Pankisi	Jabhat al-Nusra	February 2014
Margoshvili, Beslan Traveled to Syria through Turkey. According to his relatives, has returned to Georgia (Lomsadze, 2015).	1997	Pankisi		
Margoshvili, Feizulla (Salahuddin al-Shishani) Also believed to be Giorgi Kushtanashvili (Paraszczuk, 2015d). First appeared in Syria in 2012. Initially fought along with Jaish al-Muhajireen wal-Ansar and emerged as the group leader after Tarkhan Batirashvili pledged allegiance to ISIS in 2013. Previously attempted to cross the border to Russia to fight in Chechnya (Samoe Sil'noe Chudo – Eto Priderzhivat'sia Istinnogo Puti do Kontsa, 2015). Pledged allegiance to the Caucasus Emirate leader Doku Umarov and his successors Aliaskhab Kebekov and Magomed Suleimanov. In 2015 he called himself a representative of the Caucasus Emirate in Syria (Mudzhakhidy Imarata Kavkaz v Shame Dali Baiat Amiru IK Abu Usmanu Gimrinskomu, 2015) but in 2016 headed Jaish al-Usrah (Sokirianskaia, 2016).	1978	Pankisi	Jaish al-Usrah	December 2017
Margoshvili, Murad (Muslim al-Shishani, Muslim Abu al-Walid al-Shishani) Appeared in Syria in 2012. Reportedly served in air defense forces in Mongolia (Chechenskii Front v Sirii – "Dzhunud ash-Sham.", 2014). During the first Chechen war allegedly fought along with Khattab and later with Abu Walid (Ibragim, 2014). He later fought under Doku Umarov's command. Participated in training foreign fighters in Syria close to the Turkish border (U.S. Department of State, 2014). Was designated on the U.S. State Department list of Foreign Terrorist Fighters on September 24, 2014. On July 20, 2017 was listed on the UN Security Council list of entities related to ISIS and Al Qaeda.	1972	Duisi, Pankisi	Junud al-Sham	

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Name and Biography	*Reported year of birth*	*Home city*	*Reported affiliation*	*Reported year of death*
Margoshvili, Omar (Abu Ali Pankisi) Left Georgia for Turkey in 2015. From there he went to Syria. Was married and had children. In Syria he reportedly fought in the ISIS Yarmouk Brigade under the leadership of Ahmed Chataev (Charkviani, 2016).	1977	Duisi, Pankisi	ISIS	June 2016
Mukhtarov, Beslan Was a medical student in Istanbul, Turkey. Crossed into Syria from Turkey in 2015 (Tsuladze, 2016).	1986	Karajala, Telavi	Jabhat al-Nusra	December 2016
Mutoshvili, Abdul-Malik Reported as one of the individuals from Georgia killed in Syria (22-Year-Old Georgian Islamist Militant Killed in Syria, 2016).	1973	Pankisi		July 2013
Paichadze, Murman (Abu Asia) Before moving to Syria, for ten years served as an Imam in the village of Kokhta in Kvemo Kartli (Paresishvili, 2015). Featured in propaganda messages encouraging Georgian Muslims to join ISIS.	1959	Kokhta, Kvemo Kartli	ISIS	
Paksadze, Roin Featured in the Adjara propaganda video that issued threats to Georgia (Tsuladze, 2015).	1995	Zoti, Guria	ISIS	
Pareulidze, Ramzan (Abdul Wahhab) Arrived in Syria in 2015. Prior to leaving for Syria was a third-year student of Telavi University. In Syria got married to a girl brought from Pankisi (Mchedlishvili, 2016a).	1992	Birkiani, Pankisi	ISIS	January 2016
Pirisebia, Davit Was recruited by Aiuf Borchashvili but was arrested in 2015 at Tbilisi Airport as he was trying to travel to Syria. Was sentenced to ten years of imprisonment (Imam iz Pankisskogo Ushchel'ia Poluchil v Gruzii 14 Let za Verbovku dlia IG, 2016).	1997	Pankisi	ISIS	
Shishani, Abu Bakr Georgian name unknown. An ethnic Kist from Pankisi. A close relative of Ruslan Machalikashvili (Siloviki Oprovergli, 2015).		Pankisi	Ahrar al-Sham, Ajnad al-Kavkaz	
Shishani, Abu Musa Georgian name unknown. Military commander of Ansar al-Sham with reported roots in Pankisi (Cecire, 2015). Traveled to Syria through Turkey. Reportedly related to Feizulla Margoshvili.		Pankisi	Ansar al-Sham	
Suleymanova, Elmira Abandoned her children and made her way to Syria through Turkey along with Diana Gharibova (Zakavkazskie Turchanki Brosili Detei i Otpravilis' na Voinu v Siriiu, 2015).		Karajala, Telavi		
Sviakauri, Davit Reported as one of the individuals from Georgia killed in Syria (Another Pankisi Gorge, 2015).	1991	Khalatsani, Pankisi		February 2015

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(*Continued*)

Name and Biography	*Reported year of birth*	*Home city*	*Reported affiliation*	*Reported year of death*
Tokhosashvili, Bekkhan (Beka) Brother of Kakha Tokhosashvili. Supposedly left to Turkey for work. Was in Syria since 2014. Allegedly fought alongside Tarkhan Batirashvili (Eshche Odin Grazhdanin Gruzii Pogib v Sirii, 2016). In 2015 he reportedly married a 17-year-old niece of Aiuf Borchashvili who arrived in Syria from Pankisi (V Sirii Pogibli eshche, 2016).	1990	Birkiani, Pankisi	ISIS	July 2016
Tokhosashvili, Ceasar/Levan (Al Bara al-Shishani, Al Bara Pankisi) Left for Syria in 2013, where he was with his wife Leila Gaurgashvili and four children (Dvali, 2017). Reportedly left Georgia to work in Turkey. Was allegedly close to Tarkhan Batirashvili. Was allegedly the leader of Vilayat Gurjistan (Cecire, 2017). Was reported dead in August 2017, but in September 2017 was confirmed alive (Paraszczuk, 2017b).	1986	Omalo, Pankisi	ISIS	
Tokhosashvili, Kakha Brother of Beka Tokhosashvili.		Pankisi	ISIS	
Tokhosashvili, Ruslan (Hamza) Was allegedly a bodyguard of Tarkhan Batirashvili (Pogibshii v Sirii Zhitel', 2016). Featured in propaganda audios encouraging dwellers of Pankisi to join ISIS.		Pankisi	ISIS	
Tsatiashvili, Ibrahim Was married and had three children. Allegedly left for Turkey in 2015 before he appeared in Syria (33 Year Old, 2015).	1982	Tsinubani, Pankisi		May 2015
Tsatiashvili, Israpil Brother of Zelimkhan Tsatiashvili. Was killed along with his brother in Kobani, Syria.	1996	Birkiani, Pankisi	ISIS	December 2014
Tsatiashvili, Ruslan Citizen of Georgia, in June 2017 was sentenced in Grozny to a one year and ten months imprisonment for fighting in Syria. Was in Syria since December 2013 but in 2014 returned to Chechnya (Grazhdanin Gruzii Osuzhden v Chechne za Prichastnost' k Siriiskim Boevikam, 2017).				
Tsatiashvili, Zelimkhan (Jabrail) (Jundallah al-Shishani) Brother of Israpil Tsatiashvili. Was close to Tarkhan Batirashvili (Close Ally of Omar, 2014). Was killed along with his brother in Kobani, Syria.	1993	Birkiani, Pankisi	ISIS	December 2014
Turkoshvili, Mukhmad Was married and had a child. Traveled to Syria through Turkey (Mchedlishvili, 2016a).	1994	Omalo, Pankisi	ISIS	January 2016

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New Concepts of Security Affecting Stabilization and Reconstruction

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The United States military Civil Affairs community desires to increase its relevance to future operations and missions of the U.S. Army as part of the joint force. To do so, it must adapt to the changes and challenges of the dynamic and uncertain operational environments in which the joint force operates. One key component of these environments concerns the ability of the joint force to reestablish and maintain security in the wake of crises and catastrophes. This paper demonstrates that the concept of security itself has evolved and continues to do so in ways that require fundamental changes in the ways and means that the Civil Affairs community goes about its security tasks. Prominent among these changes is the fracturing of the concept of security into specialized forms, especially Human, Environmental and Informational Security. This paper provides some possible adaptations that the Civil Affairs community can make to accommodate these changes in the security environment.

Keywords: Civil Affairs, stability operations, econstruction

The contents of this paper solely reflect the opinions of the author, and do not reflect the position, doctrine, or opinions of the United States Government, the Department of Defense, or the Special Operations Command.

Whatsoever therefore is consequent to a time of war, where every man is enemy to every man, the same consequent to the time wherein men live without other security than what their own strength and their own invention shall furnish them withal. In such condition there is no place for industry, because the fruit thereof is uncertain: and consequently no culture of the earth; no navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by sea; no commodious building; no instruments of moving and removing such things as require much force; no knowledge of the face of the earth; no account of time; no arts; no letters; no society; and which is worst of all, continual fear, and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.

- Thomas Hobbes, The Leviathan, Chapter 13.

Societies require stability in order to function. That stability is based on good public order enabling a sense of security among the populace. This is a core argument of The Leviathan, its most

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Color versions of one or more of the figures in the article can be found online at www.tandfonline.com/uops.

famous passage quoted above as the first paragraph. Security reduces the uncertainties that societies and individuals regularly face to manageable levels. The challenge for societies is how to achieve such security, herein defined as a safe and secure environment. There are many options for such a societal creation. They run the gamut from an extreme police state, like the ill-named Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea or Hobbes' utopian Leviathan state, to the laissez-faire, market-based democratic republic called the United States of America. Societies that suffer from the effects of significant disruptions, either human or nature caused, inherently have trouble establishing or reestablishing safe and secure environments. When such societies fail, they are referred to by the rest of the world as fragile, failing or failed nation-states. The populaces that live in such nation-states exist in a world that often comes close to the hell described by Hobbes where the "life of man" becomes "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short."

The current paper explores the concept of security in the context of stabilization and reconstruction as it exists in the 21st Century. It does so from the perspective of a research project, Governance Innovation for Security and Development (GISD), recently completed for the United States Special Operations Command (SOCOM.) The major argument of the paper is that security concepts pertaining to the development of stable governance need to be revisited, and at least two emerging security aspects, information and environment, should be incorporated in the planning for re-establishing or maintaining security in the wake of either natural or human-made crises. To make this argument, the paper is organized into the following sections: first, an introduction to the GISD project, including the major theoretical model for stabilization and reconstruction used in the project; second, an exploration of the concept of security as it relates to safe and secure environments from a systems' perspective; third, a discussion of current security concepts; fourth, the argument that current security concepts do not encompass the totality of what security, through safe and secure environments, entails in the 21st Century; and fifth, conclusions concerning changing the concept of security to be more comprehensive.

The Governance Innovation for Security and Development Project (GISD):

The GISD Project had its roots in the perceived shortfalls of military governance during the recent United States-led military actions and occupations in Iraq and Afghanistan (Guttieri et al., 2014). In part, these shortfalls were the result of a complex organizational arrangement between the agency that provided the manpower required to manage military governance and the agency that uses that manpower. The lead military agent for civil affairs, and therefore military occupation responsibilities, was and is the United States Army. It provides trained and educated civil affairs specialists to the major command that implements military governance missions, the Special Operations Command (SOCOM.) The problem occurred because both agencies were on equal standing within the Department of Defense and both agencies shared the responsibilities for training and education, and for operating doctrine on civil affairs. This problem could not be ignored or evaded by the US military because military governance in occupied nation-states is an international legal responsibility (The Hague Convention of, 1907 as amended, 1949). The resolution of this problem was the invention of a new organization, within SOCOM but staffed by Army personnel, called the Institute for Support to Military Governance, or IMSG (United States Special Warfare Center and School Brief, 1 May 2014). The first major task of the IMSG was to "revitalize military governance capabilities." (United States Special Warafare Center and School Brief, 1 May 2014, Slide 3) As a critical component of this revitalization, the IMSG established a research effort to explore how to accomplish its

tasks, specifically focusing on the development of new civil affairs specialties for military governance. The GISD project was that effort.

To orient its work, the project adopted a framework regarding military governance that directly addressed both theoretical and practical issues of stabilization and reconstruction in both natural and human-made crisis environments. This framework was the "Strategic Framework for Stabilization and Reconstruction" developed by the United States Institute for Peace (USIP) and the United States Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute (PKSOI) (United States Institute for Peace and the United States Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, 2009. Section 2). Figure 1 depicts this framework:

The Guiding Principles for Stabilization and Reconstruction, which contains and describes this framework, found that the five end states or sectors corresponded well to the consensus of the literature discussing stability operations and the tasks necessary to make these operations successful (United States Institute of Peace and the United States Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, 2009, pages 1–5). The end state sector of interest to this paper was a Safe and Secure Environment. It also is important to note that security is a cross-cutting

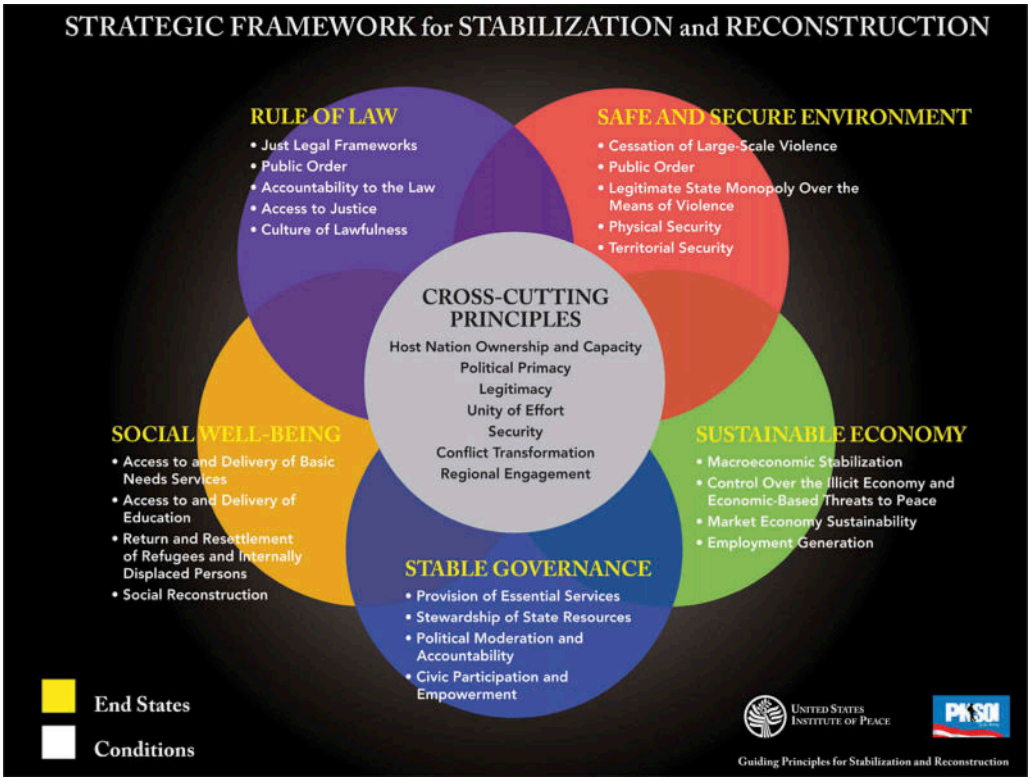

FIGURE 1 USIP/PKSOI Strategic Framework for Stabilization and Reconstruction.

principle according to this framework. Establishing safe and secure environments is necessary but not sufficient to achieve security.

A Systems' Perspective for Safe and Secure Environments and Security

Generic systems have four basic parts: inputs, processes, outputs and feedback; all systems have boundaries that define that which is part of the system and that which is outside the system. According to Ackoff, the nature of systems is such that:

1. A system is a whole that is defined by its function(s) in one or more containing systems.
2. Every system contains at least two essential parts and these must satisfy three conditions.
3a. Every essential part of a system can affect its behavior or properties.
3b. The way an essential part affects the properties or behavior of the whole depends on the state or activity of at least one other part of the system.
3c. Groups of essential parts, subsystems, also can affect the behavior and properties of the whole system and none has an independent effect on it.

Some important properties of a system derive from its definition.
When a system is taken apart it loses its essential properties.
No part of a system can carry out the function that defines the system.
When a system is taken apart its essential parts lose their ability to carry out the function they have in the whole.
(Russell L. Ackoff and Jamshid Gharajedaghi, unpublished revision to 1996 article)

Additionally, systems can have purpose as well (Ackoff & Emery, 2005). For example, the purpose, or function, of a safe and secure environment system can be thought to be an acceptable level of security to the relevant stakeholders of such a system. In this relationship, the output of a safe and secure environment system would be just that: a safe and secure environment; this output would contribute, but not fully determine, the outcome, an acceptable sense of security held by stakeholders. These system properties and relationships are complex, and provide a fertile ground for emergent behaviors that defy prediction. In that case, it becomes apparent that one cannot isolate the cause and effect of a part of a system without considering the context of the whole (Russell Ackoff, 1974, Chapter 1.)

Societies, and their political, ideological, economic, and military components, have systems-like qualities (Michael Mann, 2012, Chapter 1.) * One specification of society, the nation-state, has had a long intellectual history of being considered a system (Easton, 1971). These two observations are critical to the current essay because the focus of the Strategic Framework for Stabilization and Reconstruction are nation-states under stress. Indeed, the Framework itself represents a systems approach to explaining and prescribing behaviors to rectify that stress. As the authors of the Guiding Principles… emphasize, their approach should be holistically applied in order to achieve the best chances for success (United States Institute for Peace…2009, pages 1–6.)

One major implication of the Strategic Framework, as can be discerned in Figure 1 above, is the idea that the five end state sectors themselves are bases for interrelated systems that, together, make up the Framework. Assuming this to be the case, it is reasonable to consider safe and secure environments as a sub-system. In this way, the system can be described as follows: the major (but not only) output is a safe and secure environment; the major system outcome is security; the controls and enablers of this system are international and domestic law and rules of engagement; the inputs are the relevant forces (units, organizations) and stakeholders, like the media, other interest groups in the operating environment of the system, non-

governmental organizations (NGOs), inter-governmental organizations (IGOs), and other interested nations. The main processes of the safe and secure system are (1) provision of peace (public order) – a radical de-escalation of the use of force in the operating environment, especially by those individuals and/or groups not under state control; (2) disarmament and demobilization of relevant groups (combatants in a war) according to an agreed upon protocol; (3) reintegration of these relevant groups into normal society; and (4) where necessary, the reform of security systems, including and especially security organizations, mainly accomplished through training and education (United States Institute for Peace…, 2009; Section 6; International Forum for the Challenges of Peace Operations, 2010; especially Chapter 4.) Though the literature typically combines the second and third processes, I believe that the reintegration process is by far the most challenging to security forces and should be considered a process in its own right. The Safe and Secure Environment system (simplified) is depicted in Figure 2 below:

The complexity of the safe and secure environment system is increased because the system is scalable: an essential question for parties to the system is what is/are the level(s) of security for which the safe and secure environment is designed? A closely related question is: security for whom? Scalability in this effectively creates system boundaries, and those boundaries are

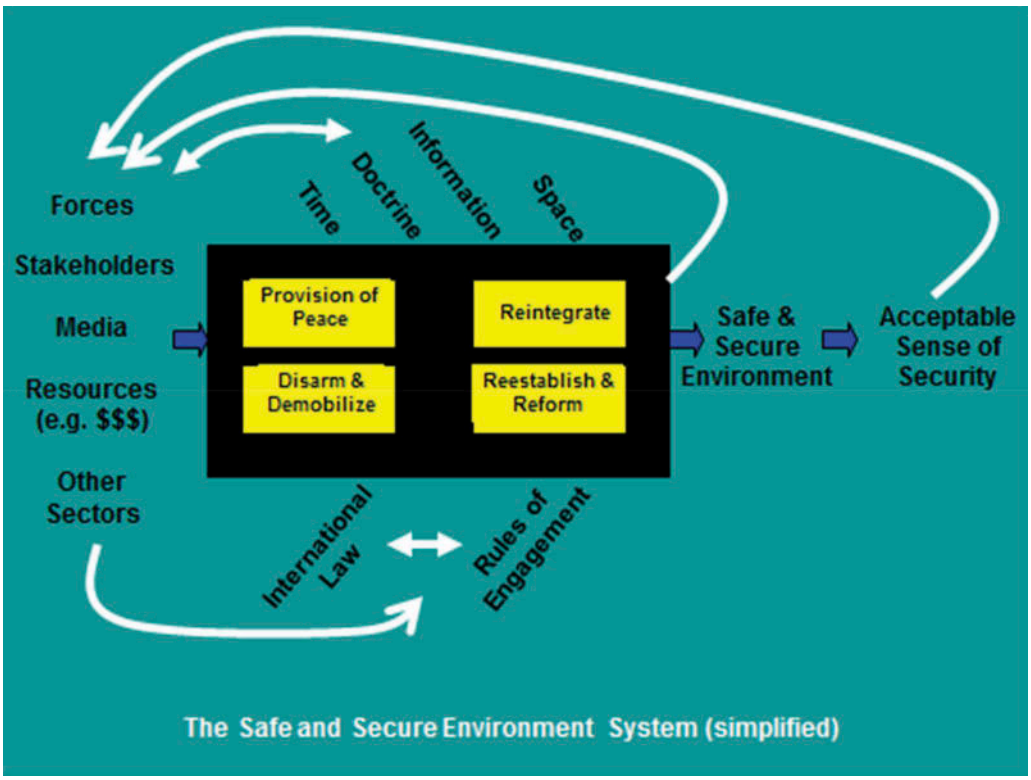

FIGURE 2 The Safe and Secure Environment Sub-System.

completely dependent on the context derived from the answers to the above questions. In this regard, this paper takes a wider view of security than traditional theory; this view involves more than military security, more agents than the nation-state, and more societal sectors than simply the military (the approach is called securitization; Buzan, Waever, & De Wilde, 1998, Chapter 2.) The range of levels or scales exists from the personal or individual level, through neighborhoods and communities, all the way to national and trans-national (planetary) levels. For example, the safe and secure environment system to provide security from stray asteroids obviously is an illustration of a planetary system; alternatively, the safe and secure environment system to provide security from insurgents can be construed as national, community, and/or personal systems. All the levels interact with each other in ways that are indeterminate, thus complicating efforts of those who are designing and executing the system(s.) (based on Adaptive Cycle Theory, in Gunderson & Holling, 2001.)

CURRENT SECURITY CONCEPTS

Safe and secure environments exist where affected populations "have the freedom to pursue daily activities without fear of politically motivated, persistent, [random] or large scale violence." (United States Institute for Peace… 2009, pages 6–38) These environments are characterized by "an end to large-scale fighting; an adequate level of public order; the subordination of accountable security forces to legitimate state authority; the protection of key individuals, communities, sites and infrastructure; and the freedom for people and goods to move about the [community], country and across borders without fear of undue harm to life and limb."(United States Institute of Peace and United States Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, 2009) Establishing a safe and secure environment is a necessary condition for enabling the functioning of all other sectors of civil military operations; however, because of the extreme interdependence complexity among the sources of social power in any given societal unit, safe and secure environments are insufficient by themselves to enable further redevelopment of the other sectors (Mann, 2012, Chapter 1.) For post-hostilities situations, developing safe and secure environments is an integral element of conducting transition operations (Armstrong and Chura-Beaver, September 2010, page 3.) Time can be considered the preeminent factor for obtaining a safe and secure environment; if the state fails to decisively act to begin creating a safe and secure environment within a 72 hour window following the crisis or conflict, communities begin to fail irreversibly, thus allowing alternative and perhaps threatening competitors for state order to develop (Dourandish, Zumel, & Manno, 2007.)

The Guiding Principles… provides five necessary conditions for a safe and secure environment:

- Cessation of Large Scale Violence
- Public Order
- Legitimate State Monopoly Over the Means of Violence
- Physical Security
- Territorial Security (United States Institute of Peace and United States Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, 2009, 6–38-6–39)

The pictorial representation of these relationships is shown in Figure 3 below:

FIGURE 3 Safe and Secure Environment Conditions. (United States Institute for Peace. . .page 6–37).

These seem to apply to any crisis operation, whether conflict or disaster induced. One should note the conditional relationships with the other sectors: Public Order is closely correlated with Rule of Law; Physical Security is closely related to Social Well Being. Presence of all the conditions enables effective governance and a well-functioning Economy and Infrastructure. These conditions also to a great extent characterize much of the literature on safe and secure environments. Typically, one finds the safe and secure environment literature falling into one of three categories: (1) actions related to the immediate cessation of violence; (2) disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (into civilian society) (DDR); and (3) security sector reform (SSR.) Some documents even consider DDR to be a subset of SSR (Smith-Hohn, 2010, page 26.) These categories form the processes of the safe and secure environment system described in earlier paragraphs.

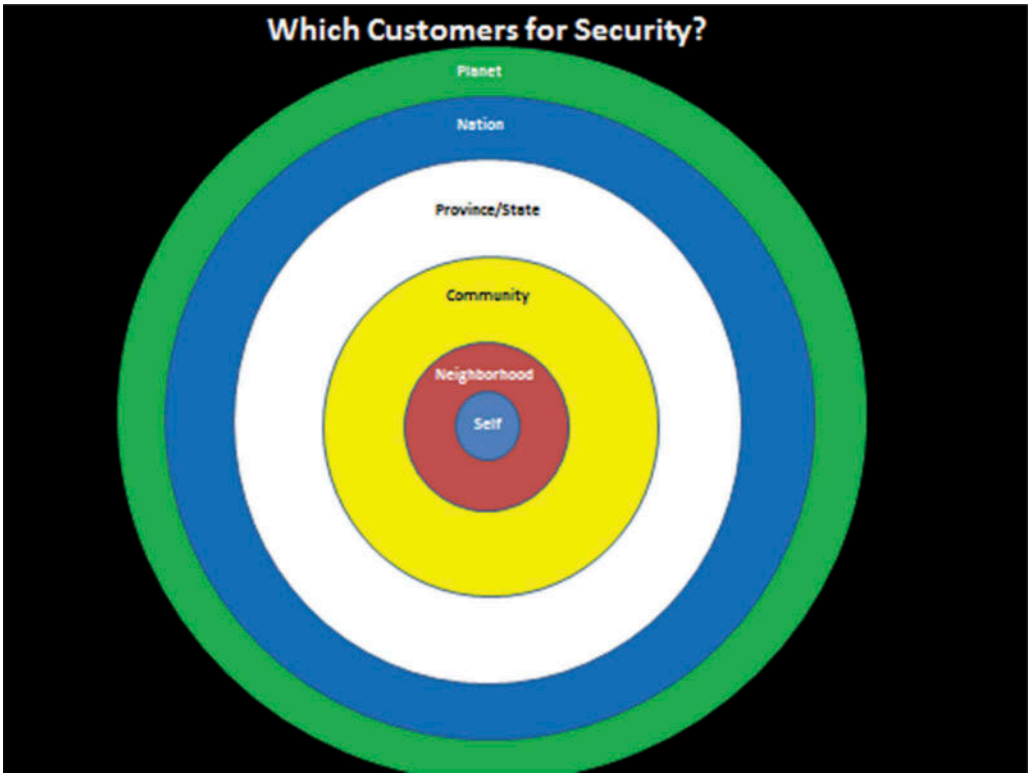

FIGURE 4 Customers for Security.

As mentioned above, safe and secure environments enable, but do not determine the cross-cutting principle of security. However, security can mean many different things to different people. Three different perspectives become apparent from a casual reading of security texts: (1) a focus on the customer/consumer of security, (2) a focus on the security provider, and (3) a focus on specific types or kinds of security. Together, these perspectives allow one to well-define and bound discussion of safe and secure environmental systems.

First, consider the customers for security. Figure 4 provides a taxonomy of these customers:

Traditionally, the nation-state has been the major customer of security that is addressed in the security literature, and that literature is voluminous (for example, Buzan, Waever, de Wilde, 1998; Caldwell and Williams Jr.,2011; Kay, 2011; Snow, 2013) The idea of national security has evolved over time; although there is no one consensual definition of the term, Harold Brown's conception adequately captures its essence:

> National security then is the ability to preserve the nation's physical integrity and territory; to maintain its economic relations with the rest of the world on reasonable terms; to preserve its nature, institution, and governance from disruption from outside; and to control its borders (Watson, 2008, page 5.)

As observed in the above quotation, characteristically, national security mainly addresses establishing and maintaining safe and secure environments as they relate to territories and physical things (for example, buildings and infrastructure.) Note in the quotation the impersonal perspective: national security is just that – security for the state. Implicit in this conception is the importance of the state superseding that of its citizens. However, in recent decades, the focus of consumption of security has changed – mainly due to United Nations attention – to the individual self and local neighborhoods and communities. The concept developed in the wake of the end of the Cold War with the apparent emergence of hitherto suppressed social conflicts around the world often leading to intense violence within and between societies, not necessarily states (Henk, 2005, pages 91–106.) In 1993, the UN Development Program (UNDP) first used the phrase, human security, in its annual report. The following year, the report laid out the concept in much greater detail. At the beginning of Chapter 2, "New Dimensions of Human Security," the Report read:

> The concept of security has for too long been interpreted narrowly: as security of territory from external aggression, or as protection of national interests in foreign policy or as global security from the threat of a nuclear holocaust. It has been related more to nation-states than to people. The superpowers were locked in an ideological struggle-fighting a cold war all over the world. The developing nations, having won their independence only recently, were sensitive to any real or perceived threats to their fragile national identities. Forgotten were the legitimate concerns of ordinary people who sought security in their daily lives. For many of them, security symbolized protection from the threat of disease, hunger, unemployment, crime, social conflict, political repression and environmental hazards (United Nations Development Programme (1994), page 22.).

The Report went on to define human security: "Human security can be said to have two main aspects. It means, first, safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression. And second, it means protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life-whether in homes, in jobs or in communities. Such threats can exist at all levels of national income and development." (United Nations Development Programme, 1994, page 23.) Thus was born an entire sub-discipline of international security studies (Paris, 2001, pages 87–102.)

Second, safe and secure environments can be achieved by a variety of security providers, including citizens themselves. Figure 5 places potential providers in the context of potential customers:

Accustomed to considering only national security and the provider of that kind of security, the military, international relations literature scarcely deals with alternatives to military security providers. With the emergence of security sector reform, a process within the safe and secure environment system, this scarcity is being rectified to an extent. Most of the security sector reform discussion occurs outside military channels, (United States Army, October 2008, especially Chapter 6) the major reason for this being the objective of SSR, best described in an OECD document: "The overall objective of security system reform is to create a secure environment that is conducive to development, poverty reduction and democracy." (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2005, page 17) Clearly, militaries

FIGURE 5 Potential Security Providers.

appear to be unsuited to lead operations dealing with these issues (United States Army, October 2008, page 6–2.) The more localized the security challenge, in communities, neighborhoods and/or individuals, the less relevant are military solutions. Instead, police, community militias, neighborhood civilian organizations, and, most of all, recognized leaders are the appropriate providers (Security Sector Unit, 2012, page 4.) While the foregoing points are true, it is also all too true that most often it is the military that receives the mission to attempt to implement such reforms, and thus must be prepared to conduct security sector reform operations even when the chances of success are at best problematic.

The third perspective on safe and secure environment systems focuses on the kinds and types of security. Research for the GISD project revealed at least twelve types of security, listed below[1]:

1. Physical Security
2. Environmental Security
3. Economic Security
4. Information Security
5. Human Security

6. Logistical Security (known in U.S. military doctrine as Rear Area Security or Secure Supply Chains)
7. Cultural Security
8. Social Security
9. Religious Security
10. Political Security
11. Governmental (state) Security
12. Cyber Security

The safe and secure environment sector research team consolidated this list into four supra-types of security: (1) Physical or Institutional Security; (2) Human Security; (3) Environmental Security; and (4) Information Security. While there is nothing sacred about this list, it does appear to reflect the main threads of discussion in the broad security literature (Schneier, 2008.) Of these four supra-types, the last two, Environmental Security and Information Security, usually are considered as special or separate categories of security, whose outcomes affect societies. The argument in the next section of this paper finds that the two newer concepts need to be incorporated into a holistic, systemic view of security.

The Need for Security to include Environmental and Informational Aspects

Reiterating the discussion in this paper so far, I have presented a case that security is an outcome of establishing safe and secure environments, and that safe and secure environments can be understood as a system. The boundaries of the safe and secure environment system can be defined in three ways: consumer, provider, and type. Security consumers can vary from nation-states to individuals, providers from military to neighborhood organizations, and security types combined into four categories: physical, human, information and environment. Traditional discussions of information and environmental security consider them as separate aspects of security.

However, if safe and secure environmental processes, inputs and enablers do compose a system that influences security, then systems logic requires that researchers and stakeholders of safe and secure environment systems consider the subject from a holistic perspective: that is, security is an intrinsic quality that must consider all types, all consumers, and all providers together in order to achieve a reasonable probability of success in creating safe and secure environments. This is a daunting mission for any organization to attempt, regardless of the size of the security effort. Indeed, it may be the case that the complexity of the safe and secure environment system is a major reason why stabilization and reconstruction efforts often fail (Autesserre, 2010.)

One major GISD Project task was to develop possible job specialties that would enhance the US military capability to conduct military governance in fragile, failing or failed nation-states where the U.S. military is deployed. For the safe and secure environment sector, specialties were organized around the taxonomy of security to be provided (Czarnecki & Moore, 2014, page 23.) The US military has doctrine that effectively encompasses Physical, Territorial, or Institutional Security and Human Security as applied to military governance (Guttieri et al., 2014, pages 31–33.) Consideration of Information and Environmental Security for military governance is virtually a blank slate. Below, the paper addresses all four types of security that need to be integrated into a holistic approach for developing safe and secure environments.

Physical (Territorial or Institutional) Security

Physical security is what most people identify as the objective of establishing safe and secure environments. It certainly is the most clear-cut and arguably the most tangible.

The United States Joint Chiefs of Staff defines physical security as:

That part of security concerned with physical measures designed

to safeguard personnel (people); to prevent unauthorized access to equipment, installations, material, and documents; and to safeguard them against

espionage, sabotage, damage, and theft (Joint Publication 1-02, 8 November 2010, page 205.)

One can summarize this as physical measures to safeguard people and things from a variety of threats. In this project, we combine physical security with territorial security to capture the scope of this form of security. The United States Institute of Peace (USIP) defines territorial security as a "... necessary condition in which ordinary citizens and legitimate goods are able to move in relative freedom within the country and across its borders, while illicit commodities and individuals that present threats to security are denied free passage." (United States Institute of Peace and United States Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, 2009, page 6–57.) Closely related to this definition is the concept of border security. Though couched in terms of people, the idea of territorial security seems more relevant to the security of the nation-state. Of course, as a defining element of state legitimacy, state security and the security of the populace should be closely and positively correlated; this is the basis of the Lockean notion of the state existing with the "consent of the governed." (Locke, 21 April 2014) However, in reality often the two notions are at odds; in police states, security of the state trumps security of the populace, a condition that leads to either complete population submission to the state (think of the current (2014) ill-named Democratic Republic of North Korea) or to rebellion by the populace (think of the current (2014) situation in Syria.)

Physical and territorial security traditionally has been accomplished by armed forces, with paramilitary forces (for example, border police) and national police forces augmenting the armed forces capabilities. US joint doctrine aptly captures this in its manual concerning joint security operations (Joint Publications 3–10, 3 February 2010.) The use of such uniformed forces reflects the primacy of the nation-state for this type of security. However, with the emergence of several and different schools of international security theory, the possible agents for physical security have expanded significantly (Buzan et al., 1998, Chapter 3.) This expanded universe of security actors is important to the provision of physical and territorial security. If a foreign intervener provides assistance and/or advice to the nation-state and sees the physical/territorial security challenge with the traditional nation-state lens, they run a serious risk of misunderstanding and mis-addressing the wrong security problem. Severine Autesserre makes this very point about UN peacebuilding operations in the Congo; the UN peace forces understood the security problem from the "top-down" in her lexicon, but the real cause of the need for territorial security (and human security) was local, requiring a "bottom-up" lens to complement the existing framework (Autesserre, 2010, pages 10–11.) As Autesserre and Buzan, et. al., also note, while the literature on international security, especially physical/territorial security, is extremely large, for the most part it focuses on traditional military-oriented, state-to-state security issues (Autesserre, 2010; Chapter 1; Buzan et al., 1998; Chapter 1.) Theories and research now abound with alternative explanations on how physical security is provided; there is little consensus on which theory holds the most weight within the international security studies discipline (Baldwin, 1997, pages 5–26.)

HUMAN SECURITY

If physical/territorial security is the established tradition in the security studies, then human security must be considered the "new kid on the block."[2] The concept developed in the wake of the end of the Cold War with the apparent emergence of hitherto suppressed social conflicts around the world often leading to intense violence within and between societies, not necessarily states (Henk, Summer 2005, pages 91–106.) Not unexpectedly, the leading agent for this idea was the United Nations. As noted earlier in this paper, the UN Development Program (UNDP) first used the phrase, human security, in its 1993 annual report.

As the UNDP defined human security, the concept is narrow, primarily focusing on food, health, political and economic aspects of security. These closely correspond to Abraham Maslow's lowest and most fundamental rung in his hierarchy of human needs, physiological needs (shelter, health, food, water.) (Maslow, 2013, pages 68–99) A more catholic definition, by Taylor Owen, is "human security is the protection of the vital core of all human lives from critical and pervasive environmental, economic, food, health, personal and political threats." (Owen, 2004, pages 373–387) The Owen definition opens the door to consider cultural security, which is the protection of human cultural heritage and artifacts, within the scope of human security.

More recently, Derrick Reveron and Kathleen Mahoney-Norris expanded the concept in the book, Human Security in a Borderless World (Reveron & Mahoney-Norris, 2011.) They would consider human security in terms of civic, economic, environmental, maritime, health, and cyber issues.

The discussion herein has formulated human security to exclude economic, environmental and cyber issues; this is done for two reasons. First, exclusion allows a comparison of providers and clients on consistent levels: economic security concerns production, trade and finance, with the foundations based in labor, capital and information that transcends all borders; environmental security concerns natural resource issues that cross borders, often including the entire planet (think climate change); cyber issues involve a specialized domain (cyberspace), specialized access (Internet), and special skills (software literacy.) Second, exclusion allows the paper to focus on aspects of human security that are enduringly human – people, relationships, human artifacts.

Both the Guiding Principles… and the UN Considerations… explicitly address human security needs, as discussed in the first section. Both understand the tension that exists with respect to human security and state security, and provide guidance on how to deal with that tension, if it exists in the relevant operating environment. Illustrating this consciousness, one can refer to the UN Considerations… Civilians Protected output. The document reads, "A central element of the social contract between citizens and their government is the expectation that the latter will provide physical security of persons and property and maintain law and order." (International Forum for the Challenges of Peace Operations, 2010, page 70.) The tension seems resolved, at least in the public discourse, in favor of protecting people, which is human security.

However, doctrinally, from a U.S. military perspective, the tension is resolved in favor of state security, not an unexpected result given the civil-military relationship in this country: the military answers to the state. The joint publication dealing with civil-military operations, in which human security issues would arise, identifies four main components: (1) Support to Civil Authorities; (2) Population Resource Control; (3) Foreign Humanitarian Assistance; and (4) Nation Assistance (Foreign Internal Defense.) (Joint Publication 3–57, 11 September 2013, pages 1–7 to 1–9.) All four emphasize support to a host nation-state; no mention is made of populace protection from the nation-state.

Joint Doctrine for the more general category of Stability Operations is more flexible, particularly as it addresses the instances of transitional military authority, which is the military occupation of a foreign nation-state. The stated goal of transitional operations still is the establishment of a functioning government, thus emphasizing state security. However, later in the same paragraph, the doctrine states that "in return for such (the indigenous population's) obedience, the inhabitants have a right to freedom from unnecessary interference with their individual liberty and property rights. Subject to the requirements of the military situation, CDRs (commanders) must observe the principle of governing for the benefit of the governed." (Joint Publication 3–08, 29 September 2011, page D-1.) Interestingly, although the Stability Operations doctrinal manual addresses in several places significant aspects of human security, for example humanitarian assistance consisting of, among others, public health, shelter, education and food; the manual never uses the term human security.

The concept of human security continues to evolve, both in practice and in research theory-building. There is no reason to expect a consensus on its meaning or its practice any time soon.

INFORMATION SECURITY

Though the term, information security, seems very modern, the concept in actuality goes back to the oldest civilizations. Egyptian pharaohs encoded official messages to protect the contents from interception. Information is more than digital data; it is data and the meaning that humans attach to the data through learning, perception and genetic memory (Joint Publication 1–02, 31 October 2009.) Information involves the message within which information resides, the medium by which it is transmitted and received, and the matter or physical manifestation of information in the universe in which we reside (Arquilla & Ronfeldt, 1997, pages 141–171.). When nation-states and their citizens undergo a crisis, all three aspects of information become endangered or actually are compromised, creating an environment of information in-security of which the reconstruction of a safe and secure environment in the crisis's wake must take account.

Information security focusing on the message requires reestablishing institutional trust among the societal organs of the nation-state, and the personal trust among the people who populate the nation-state (Schneier, 2012, page5.) For institutional trust to occur, the relevant societal components of a nation-state must have confidence in the actions of each other. This confidence can best be achieved through effective institutional societal pressure, like acceptance of Rule of Law, and through effective use of actual security systems, which can include police forces, cryptologic systems and burglar alarms (Schneier, 2012, Chapter 9 and 10.) Personal or intimate trust is best achieved through different mechanisms: moral and reputational societal pressures (Schneier, 2012, Chapter 7 and 8.) In post-crisis operations, there is usually insufficient time and social legitimacy to build personal trust. However, if these operations do extend into an indefinite future, as in the case of peace operations and nation assistance, the development of personal trust not only becomes possible, but most desirable in order for intervening forces to be effective (Autesserre, 2010; Robinson, 2013) To achieve such personal trust, any intervening force, even one from the affected nation-state, must be persistent, patient, and responsive (Manea, February 6, 2014.)

For intervening forces to achieve institutional trust requires a sense of legitimacy by both the nation-state and its citizenry. Legitimacy can be achieved through the application of appropriate

institutional pressures, such as an accepted protocol for the force to be present in the affected location, and especially through its implementation of an even-handed – "honest broker" – effort in carrying out its mission(s.) (Van Der Lijn, 2009, pages 45–71.)

Information security focusing on media is a technical field that encompasses both hardware and software. When hardware is involved, the US doctrinal term is communications security. Communications security has two facets: the first is to deny unauthorized agents from the possession and study of telecommunications; the second is to mislead, to deceive unauthorized agents in their interpretation (Joint Publication 1–02, 8 November (2010, page 49). Clearly, communications security focuses on state security as opposed to personal security, though the two are related because personal messages can flow over the state-owned or state-sanctioned electromagnetic spectra.

A different perspective arises when the security question concerns software. The US doctrinal term for this is computer security. Computer security concerns all measures to deny unauthorized access and exploitation of computer systems (Joint Publication 1–02, 8 November 2010, page 50.) In this case, security covers a wide range of possible defenses ranging from elaborate firewalls maintained for state security to commercially available anti-virus software and individual computer firewall protection for the citizenry. The literature on computer security, associated software and computer security systems is both extensive and highly technical (Andress, 2011; Lehtinen, Russell, & Gangemi, 2006) The critical issue for computer security for intervening forces is, however, straightforward and non-technical: the force must decide whether to extend protection of computer assets to the citizenry. A positive decision would mean dispersion of security efforts literally to the individual citizen level, thus making the computer security efforts vulnerable to attack in detail by nefarious elements ranging from criminal groups to organized combatants.

Information security focusing on information as a physical element or matter is akin to physical security addressed in above paragraphs. Arquilla and Ronfeldt advise that militaries should treat all military systems as information, even those that appear not to be particularly information-worthy, for example an individual rifle (Aruqilla and Ronfeldt, 1997, page 158.) They further advise that information provides intervening forces a capability that may prove more efficient and more effective than using traditional mass (people, units) and energy (bombs, shells) methods of applying force. This requires a very different way of thinking about operations than currently is considered in most doctrine; it implies using information as strategic, operational and/or tactical communications to convince, disable, paralyze, or generally neutralize those opposing groups and forces who wish to profit from the chaos in the post-crisis situation (Arquilla & Ronfeldt, 1997, page 159.) Used in this manner, information security can both benefit the state and the citizenry as the implication here is use of information as matter can offset the necessity to apply kinetic force, thus limiting collateral damage. This way of thinking about information and information security remains at an early developmental stage. Though there is significant doctrine on Information Operations, the integration of information warfare, information security and conventional stability operations remains at a most primitive level (Joint Publication 3–13, 27 November 2012.)

ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY

The idea of environmental security is quite recent, originating in the first generation of environmental thinking and theorizing during the 1970s. The threat discussed by environmental

security is bi-directional: there is an existential threat to the natural environment caused by the actions of human populations, and there is an existential threat to the human population caused by significant changes to the natural environment. In an early monograph on the subject, Lester Brown summed up the situation:

> The military threat to national security is only one of many that governments must face. The numerous new threats derive directly or indirectly from the rapidly changing relationship between humanity and the earth's natural systems and resources. The unfolding stresses in this relationship initially manifest themselves as ecological stresses and resource scarcities. Later they translate into economic stresses – inflation, unemployment, capital scarcity, and monetary instability. Ulltimately,
>
> these economic stresses convert into social unrest and political instability. (Brown, 1977, page 37.)

A little more than two decades later, Thomas Homer-Dixon provided the substantive analysis to support Brown's argument. Looking back over centuries, Homer-Dixon found a consistent pattern leading to political instability and violent conflict; that pattern always involved environmental stress (Homer-Dixon, 2000, pages 104–106.)

The salient observation that we should take from this relationship is that it is asymmetric: humans cannot survive without a receptive natural environment, but the natural environment can survive without humans. In the wake of either human-made or natural catastrophes, both states and citizens are extremely vulnerable due to environmental insecurity. This can be as straightforward as food shortages caused by crop destruction, as in the case of the 2010 Haiti earthquake; or as intricate as the widespread famine affecting the continental European populace in the wake of World War II due to a variety of military forces' actions to deprive their enemies of foodstuffs during and following combat (Katz, 2014; Lowe, 2012)

There is little guidance on how to conduct environmental security in current documents. The UN Considerations. . . is silent; the Guiding Principles. . . addresses the provision of food and water under the subject of Social Well Being, but doesn't speak to the issue of environmental protection to reduce downstream environmental scarcity (United States Institute of Peace and United States Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, 2009, pages 10–166 to 10–168); the US Joint Publication 3–57, Civil Military Operations establishes foreign humanitarian assistance as a pillar of American civil military operations, thus reinforcing much of the Guiding Principles. . . discussion, but goes no further (Joint Publication 3–57, 11 September 2013, page IV-3.) The idea of potential non-human threats to states and populations is absent from operational planning and thinking.

Nonetheless, intervening forces likely will have to deal with the effects of environmental insecurity in the aftermath of crises. For example, consider the challenges to governance in as advanced a state as the United States following the impact of Superstorm Sandy along the Northeast coast in late October, 2012. The storm itself was huge – more than 1,000 miles across – which in turn distributed immense damage over a very large area. The damage estimates have exceeded $68 Billion, and though any loss of life is tragic, the human toll from the storm did not exceed 300. There was a substantial domestic intervening security force employed throughout the affected region. Federal military forces alone totaled almost 15,000 service members. The number of state and local police forces and first responders providing security-related tasks has not yet been tallied, but must have exceeded 100,000 personnel (Federal Emergency

Management Agency, July 1, 2013; Office of the Mayor, May, 2013.)*[3] There is ample evidence that the terrific effects of the storm were enhanced by sea-level rises associated with environmental climate changes, and that these changes will continue into the foreseeable future (Walsh, October 29, 2013.) What should intervening forces do to ensure some degree of environmental security for the affected citizenry? Only NYC has presented a plan to separate the rising sea levels from its population; this plan, if implemented, would be accomplished through legally enforced zoning changes and relocations (PLAN NYC, June, 2013.)

The US is just finishing its participation in two campaigns within the Global War on Terror, one in Iraq, started in 2003 and lasting until 2011, and the other in Afghanistan, begun in 2001 and now winding down in 2014. Both were assumed and planned to be short-term affairs. It would appear a wise course for US military governance doctrine to reconsider what Brown has called "non-military" environmental threats.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The GISD final report recommended that new military specialties in military governance be developed for each type of security. If implemented, the specialties would provide a basis for a more comprehensive approach to the development of safe and secure environments. However, that likely would be insufficient to truly concentrate on the systemic nature of security. As argued at the beginning of the previous section, a systems approach requires seeing the system as a whole, from all perspectives. This paper has argued that there are three perspectives for safe and secure environments: consumer, provider, and type. The specialties only address type. If the personnel holding these specialties are to have any chance of effecting positive change to safe and secure environments in whatever situation they find themselves in, they must also be able to comprehend, assess and act on the other perspectives, concerning security consumers and providers. That will be a difficult task that will require a level of maturity, situational understanding, and moral courage possessed by very few people. Whether the American military can find, recruit and maintain such people remains an open question.

NOTES

1. This list should not be considered comprehensive. Just about any prefix can be added to security that can create a form or type of security.
2. Perhaps not so new. Though the term, human security, is very recent, the subject is anything but. The Old Testament in one sense contains a major narrative relating the various and many privations of Jewish human insecurity and the many privations the Jews perpetrated on other societies in the name of their god. A little forward in recorded history is the Peloponnesian War, in which the many incidents of organized violence imposed on many city-states throughout greater Greece are poignantly reported by Thucydides; read Robert B Strassler's magnificent edited version of Thucydides history. More recently and somewhat overshadowed by the conventional agony of World War II, the incredibly inhumane treatment of entire populations of people in Central and Eastern Europe at the end of that war most certainly falls under the topic of human security; read Keith Lowe's Savage Continent; for a detailed guide to the hell on earth that typified much of Europe from 1945 through 1947.
3. Two main After Action reportsdo not provide any numbers other than their own. FEMA deployed more than 7,000 agents; NYC deployed most of its police force (around 50,000) as well as a substantial portion of its fire department (no numbers provided) in addition to emergency medical and facilities management personnel. Based on these figures, I consider the 100,000 number to be on the low side.

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NATO Special Operations Forces: Even if It Is Not Broken Yet, It Needs to Be Fixed

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During their recent operations in Iraq, Afghanistan and Africa NATO Special Operations Forces (hereafter NATO SOF) have become the best tactical counterinsurgency force in the world, but it also fell into the trap of these experiences. While fighting insurgents and terrorists around the world NATO SOF has not encountered or more importantly have not developed effective theories against near-peer adversaries and their innovative concepts. In addition, NATO SOF has fought hard to become a recognized independent service within the alliance, but as part of this process it has gone through a very high level of "conventionalization" and almost lost its "strategic edge." This study finds that NATO SOF commanders and NATO Special Operations Headquarters (hereafter NSHQ) staff members mostly agree with this assertion. The analysis shows that the degradation in capability has doctrinal, organizational, training, educational, and resource-based causes.

Keywords: NATO, special operations forces, doctrine, organization, training, education, resources

Many would argue that War on Terror that followed the 9/11 terrorist attacks against the US has been the single most important factor determining how one looks at the characteristics of future conflicts, but the truth is we have had some events since with more important effects. The birth and rise of the "ISIS brand," the Chinese activities linked to her Unrestricted Warfare[1] theory, North Korea's nuclear ambitions and the reemergence of an aggressive Russia with her new concept of conflict – Hybrid Warfare – are presenting a never seen complexity in current and future conflicts.

As these recent developments have demonstrated both state and non-state opponents clearly understood that they cannot compete with NATO have chosen to offset the West's conventional military superiority with highly adaptive and innovative concepts. It is fair to say that the NATO and its adversaries are not looking at conflict through the same lenses anymore. The challengers of the Western values are putting the entire world on a total war setting where the use of all means is acceptable. NATO's adversaries appear to believe that the natural condition of the world must be a "continuous struggle for relative advantage, albeit to varying degrees of intensity." (Dziak, 1981) At the same time, NATO concludes if there is no state of war between the West and its adversaries than there must be peace or at least a "Gray zone." (Philip, 2015) This "war and peace polarity, nevertheless, is only a Western idiosyncrasy that is not shared by its adversaries." (Dayspring, 2016)

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NATO is being trapped in its strategic legacy assumptions, norms, and behavior patterns that "have been entrenched through decades of environmental conditioning and discourse." (Blanken, 2016) These factors fundamentally constrain NATO to plan and act outside of a given space and with that it is unable to effectively respond to the new challenges. With Ted Hopf`s words: "Institutionalized settings in general, whether international organizations… or foreign policy bureaucracies, are likely sites for the operation of the logic of habit because of their associated routines, standard operating procedures, and relative isolation from competing ideological structures." (Hopf, 2010) In other words, NATO is working with outdated command and force structure and "battling outdated cognitive awareness regarding the threat environment." (Blanken, 2016) United States Army (Ret.) Lieutenant General David Barno's words describe NATO's problem best and it is worth to quote in length: "[O]ur military today is in a sense operating without a concept of war and is searching desperately for the new "unified field theory" of conflict that will serve to organize and drive military doctrine and tactics, acquisition and research, training and organization, leader development and education, material and weaponry, and personnel and promotion policies in ways that could replace the legacy impact that Cold War structures still exert on all facets of the military." (Barno, 2009) Although these issues are relevant across NATO's command and force structure it seems to have the most effects on the alliance's so-called spearhead capability, the NATO Special Operations Forces (hereafter, NATO SOF).

During their recent operations in Iraq, Afghanistan and Africa NATO SOF has become the best tactical counterinsurgency force in the world, but it also fell into the trap of these experiences. While fighting insurgents around the world NATO SOF has not encountered or more importantly have not developed effective theories against near-peer adversaries and their innovative concepts. In addition, during the last decade NATO SOF fought hard to become a recognized independent service within the alliance, but as part of this process it has gone through a very high level of "conventionalization" and it appears to have lost its "strategic edge" over its possible future adversaries.

This analysis intends to discover the causal mechanisms behind the decreasing capabilities by answering the question: Why do NATO SOF might be less prepared for future conflict against near-peer adversaries? The paper will proceed in six parts. It starts with a short introduction of NATO SOF, which will be followed by a revision of the existing literature of the topic. Then, I proceed to explain the key concepts utilized in this paper followed by a detailed discussion of the research method and empirical strategy. I then conduct my empirical analysis and discuss the main findings. In the conclusion, I will summarize my findings and will discuss several policy implications.

NATO SOF

Although almost all NATO member states do have their own definition for Special Operations, the NATO definition can be found in MC 437/2, Special Operations Policy while the Special Operations Characteristics are described in NATO's AJP-3.5, Allied Joint Doctrine for Special Operations: "Special operations are military activities conducted by specially designated, organized, trained, and equipped forces, manned with selected personnel, using unconventional

tactics, techniques, and modes of employment. These activities may be conducted across the full range of military operations, independently or with conventional forces, to help achieve the desired end-state. Politico-military considerations may require clandestine or covert techniques and the acceptance of a degree of political or military risk not associated with operations by conventional forces. " (NATO, 2013)

Currently, NATO SOF has three principal tasks military assistance (hereafter, MA), special reconnaissance (hereafter, SR), and direct action (hereafter, DA). Military assistance "encompasses training, educating, and supporting military allies, usually 'on-site' or 'in theatre' outside the provider's national borders. The 'classic' ambition in MA is to carry out specific sub-tasks in the mission until the allied military forces are capable of carrying them out themselves." (Steder, 2106) Special reconnaissance contains "reconnaissance and surveillance actions normally conducted in a clandestine or covert manner to collect or verify information of strategic or operational significance, employing military capabilities not normally found in conventional forces (hereafter, CF)." (NATO, 2013) Finally, Direct Action "entails short-duration strikes and other small-scale offensive actions conducted with specialized military capabilities to seize, destroy, capture, exploit, recover, or damage designated targets in hostile, denied, or diplomatically and/or politically sensitive environments." (NATO, 2013)

These above concepts and definitions have evolved significantly over the last three decades. Although the Special Operations Forces of NATO member nations have been putting these tasks into actions almost continuously in expeditionary operations around the word in the early days they executed their missions unilaterally, using ad hoc command and control and organizational arrangements and did not utilize coordinated agreements. During this process, NATO SOF learned "important lessons about how to operate more effectively together as elements of joint (national) and coalition (multinational) teams. At the same time, their parent nations learned the critical roles that their SOF units can play in the dynamic and uncertain current and future security environment." (Robinson, 2012) NATO SOF's operations from the 1991 Gulf War to the operations in Iraq and Afghanistan have highlighted "gaps in policy, organization, interoperability, and resourcing that have caused these highly valuable forces to operate inefficiently and at times at cross purposes." (Robinson, 2012) As a result of this NATO members recognized that NATO SOF "staff structure was inadequate for the new security environment and that their national SOF were being employed under ad hoc coalition command arrangements" (Robinson, 2012) This recognition led to the NATO SOF Transformation Initiative (NSTI) in December 2006, which was followed by the establishment of the NATO Special Operations Coordination Centre (NSCC), an initial structure designed to coordinate and advocate on behalf of NATO SOF. This new organization quickly proved its usefulness and in 2010 was transformed into the NATO Special Operations Headquarters (NSHQ). "Building on the lessons learned from decades of allied joint special operations around the world a maturing NSHQ is now leading the way on education, training, evaluation, force generation, standardization, and integration of NATO SOF." (Jim & Andrew, 2006)

PREVIOUS WORKS ON NATO SOF

However, the traditional secrecy of special operations forces can account for some of the lack of research on the topic, NATO SOF seems to be overlooked in scholarly works. Most research papers dealing with the topic date back to the years prior to the establishment of NSHQ and overwhelmingly reside in the archives of advanced level U.S. military schools written by students of security studies

focused masters programs. The rare journal articles dealing with the topic are mostly from the period of 2006–2008 and solely focus on advocating for the creation of NSHQ (Gompert & Smith, 2006), addressing the need for SOF transformation within NATO (Jones, 2017), the integration of SOF elements into NATO Response Force structure (Mihalka, 2005) or proposing a unified task list and a standing, deployable command and control node capability within NSHQ (Jim & Andrew, 2006).

Besides two, - NSHQ sponsored NATO SOF studies conducted by researchers from U.S. defense contractor company, Booz Allen Hamilton in 2008 and 2012 there has been very limited attention paid to the operational relevance of NATO SOF. In 2012, Linda Robinson put forward a detailed study titled "The Future of Special Operations, Beyond Kill and Capture" and discussed the possible future utilization of special operations forces (Robinson, 2012) however her essay mainly focused on policy recommendations for U.S. SOF and only partially touched on the topic of NATO SOF. The situation seems to be changed in 2014, when due to the reemergence of an aggressive Russia and its "new" approach to warfare in Ukraine (Petersson, Magnus and Andres, 2015); and multiple successful spectacular terrorist attacks on European soil the status and future relevance of NATO SOF became an interest of many researchers.

Following the above events NSHQ, in collaboration with Norwegian SOF Command sponsored a study called NORSOF 2025, which was conducted at the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School by a group of military officer students from Canada, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and the USA with the aim to identify characteristics of the future operational environment and based on that provide policy recommendations regarding organization, training, resourcing of NORSOF forces and summarize the individual traits of the future SOF soldier. While the primary focus of this research project was on NORSOF it also intended to draw common conclusions applicable across the NATO SOF enterprise. (Espen & Roberts et al., 2017) Although the study demonstrates rigor and provides some useful insights into the overall issue of NATO SOF, the question of its future relevance remained extremely open.

Also in 2014, Austin Long put forward his analysis titled "NATO Special Operations: Promise and Problem." As Long (2014) notes "events in Afghanistan, Ukraine, and elsewhere underscore the fact that SOF will be critical to future NATO operations. Their development in the alliance framework should be a major focus of NATO efforts. While the alliance has made substantial progress in developing NATO SOF, significant challenges remain." (Long, 2014) However, he made the bold arguments that "in order to make truly effective use of SOF the alliance needs to make fundamental changes to its decades old system" (Long, 2014) and "NATO SOF may, therefore, represent not only some of the most capable but also the only usable NATO ground forces for most missions" (Long, 2014) he focused only on the question of intelligence shearing and ignored the rest of the issues[2] surrounding NATO SOF.

This study takes on that challenge and aims to fill that void. Through a comprehensive analysis of NATO SOF basic characteristics, this essay will contribute to the better understanding of existing issues and will put forward several policy recommendations to enable decision makers to maintain NATO SOF relevance in future operations against near-peer adversaries.

THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE ANALYSIS

To analyze the issues surrounding NATO SOF operational adequacy and effectively address the proposed research question the study will utilize a modified DOTMLPF model. (Operation of

the Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System, 2012) The acronym used by the United States Department of Defense to describe a process for analyzing operational relevance involving any combination of doctrine, organization, training, material, leadership and education, personnel, and facilities. This study does not address the leadership, personnel, and facilities elements separately, but merges them with some other elements. In addition, the study introduces a new element related to the understanding of the operational environment. With these changes, the model became DUOEM model (Doctrine, Understanding the operational environment, Organization, Education, Training, Exercise and Evaluation (ETEE); and Resources). To be able to fill the acronym with content and present a rigorous argument this study utilizes multiple research methods. First, I drew information from my personal observations and the information I gathered during my assignment to NSHQ from July 1, 2014 to June 15, 2017. During this period, I participated in command meetings and briefings multiple times each week where I was exposed to both staff level officers and high-ranking decision makers. As NSHQ's Assessment and Evaluation Branch Head I was responsible for writing, teaching and supervising the execution of NATO SOF doctrine regarding force standards and evaluation practices. I was a co-developer and course director of NATO SOF Evaluation course between May 2015 and June 2017 where I had a chance to meet and discuss NATO SOF related issues with evaluation representatives from more than 20 NATO nations and two partner nations. I also rely on experiences and information I gathered as a senior evaluator during four major NATO exercises[3] between 2014 and 2017. I did not approach the meetings, exercises, and my conversations with individuals with the aim to specifically gather information for this study. However, I still believe that I can utilize information from these sources to either deny or further support my findings from the other methods I am about to utilize. In addition, I conducted a thorough archival research of official NATO documents, previous NATO SOF studies, research articles, and national newspapers to be able to further strengthen or disprove my findings derived from my other sources.

THE DUOEM MODEL

Doctrine

Today, NATO SOF doctrine, manuals, and publications are almost exclusively based on the best practices and lessons learned from the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Africa; and was built on the foundation of the current doctrine of the US Special Operations Forces. (NATO, 2013) The current doctrine clearly demonstrates the faulty assumption that the future capabilities needed by NATO`s spearhead force are the same they have needed for more than a decade in those previously mentioned wars. The doctrine almost exclusively focuses on counterinsurgency and counterterrorism capabilities and procedures. In addition to that, it has also been painfully clear that the framework derived from the US SOF doctrine cannot be implemented in most NATO members' defense systems. It is simply unaffordable and fundamentally alien to most existing national defense frameworks. The problem is further complicated by the fact that while all other services capability requirements can be aligned at least to some level with national capabilities (battalions, brigades, air wings, carrier strike groups, etc.) NATO SOF organizations such as task units, task groups, and Special Operations Component Commands are hardly identical with any

national formations. The same issue applies to the previously described tasks of Special Forces. NATO SOF's three principal tasks and their three different levels give a really hard time for nations to align with existing national tasks. This doctrinal problem causes some serious confusion and results in duplicity in organization and training to meet both national and alliance's requirements. This situation ultimately leads to improper allocation of scarce resources and a waste of time and effort. The doctrinal issue is further complicated with the fact that NATO SOF is simply not following its own controversial doctrine.

Although NATO SOF doctrine provides clear guidelines on organization and command and control structure during an operation neither Afghanistan nor Iraq seen the materialization of this doctrine. In both countries, NATO SOF has been reorganized and reassigned so many times that even the most seasoned NATO SOF staff officers have become completely lost. The continuous change in required formations, assigned tasks, and superior commands has completely prevented NATO SOF to become really familiar with its own doctrine and master its own tactics, techniques and procedures in those areas of operations. This fact has been preventing the identification of possible problems in the existing doctrine regarding current operations and completely denies a chance to develop a proper framework for future conflict.

One must admit the sheer existence of NATO SOF doctrine and additional publications are already representing some great steps forward since they never existed before. On the other hand, one also must see that they present at least as many problems as solutions. NATO SOF must make every effort to refine its current doctrine. Recently, an unnamed SOF commander said, NATO SOF's biggest weakness is that commanders and unit members believe that they can conduct every task they are given, and they never say no to anything. It is important to avoid this kind of "confidence" and all kind of "political correctness," and NATO SOF must start asking the question: what NATO SOF really is and what it should be? While NATO SOF must maintain its edge in counterinsurgency and counterterrorism capabilities it also must develop and master effective practices against near-peer adversaries and their innovative approaches to conflict. As things stand today and expected to be tomorrow it is time for a complete revision of purpose and tasks to stay relevant and to be able to deliver the expected results. That revision should start with NATO SOF's taking a critical look on the understanding of the future operational environment.

Understanding the Operational Environment

Since the end of the Cold War NATO has been struggling to find its purpose and to define the operational environment in which the alliance will fight its future wars. Although one could have witnessed many statements from politicians and high-ranking military commanders praising the relevance and adaptation capabilities of the alliance, the reality is NATO has not been able to form a strategy meeting the post-Cold War challenges. In its quest to redefine itself, instead of working on a long-term strategic approach NATO has been chasing short term, "shining objects" like asymmetric warfare, counterinsurgency and most recently hybrid warfare and counter-terrorism. This issue is even more troubling since NATO is doing this with an overwhelmingly conventional mindset, utilizing outdated command and force structure and outdated cognitive awareness regarding the current and future operational environment." (Blanken, 2016) NATO SOF is not different. As a part of the big machine, NATO SOF is struggling with the same issues as the alliance. Instead of remaining adaptive and innovative NATO SOF is being conventionalized in its views on the future operational environment. NATO SOF's potential adversaries are

looking at the operational environment from a completely different angle. It is obvious that both state and non-state actors challenging NATO has understood that they cannot compete with the alliance on traditional terms. While they evolved and changed their view on what war is "NATO remained trapped in legacy assumptions, norms, and behavior patterns" (Blanken, 2016) and has been dragging NATO SOF into this. It is paramount for the future of NATO SOF and the rest of the alliance to achieve some conceptual breakthroughs by exploring the future of war and identify the operational environment.

General Valerij Geraszimov, Chief of Defense of the Russian Federation, describes the future operational environment as "long-distance, contactless actions against the enemy are becoming the main means of achieving combat and operational goals. The defeat of the enemy's objects is conducted throughout the entire depth of his territory. The differences between strategic, operational, and tactical levels, as well as between offensive and defensive operations, are being erased." (Gerasimov, 2013) Colonels Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui from the Chinese People's Liberation Army suggest "principles of warfare are no longer 'using armed force to compel an enemy to submit to one's will', but rather are using all means, including armed force or non-armed force, military and non-military, and lethal and non-lethal means to compel an enemy to accept one's interests." (Liang & Xiangsui, 2002) They also argue that everyday aspects of a society such as culture, economics, politics, and immigration "will cause ordinary people and military alike to be greatly astonished at the fact that commonplace things that are close to them can also become weapons with which to engage in war." (Liang & Xiangsui, 2002) All these characteristics and their implications best summarized and explained in a recent British Ministry of Defense study titled the *Strategic Trends Programme Future Operating Environment 2035*. The study argues that the future operational environment can be described through five interconnected characteristics, called the 5Cs (congested, cluttered, contested, connected, and constrained).

The analysis argues that the future operational environment will be congested, because all the domains (land, sea, air, space, cyber) "will be populated by civilian, commercial and military activity." (Future Operating Environment 2035, 2015) The study also suggests that "armed forces may seek to avoid a densely populated or congested operating environment as it limits their freedom of maneuver. Yet we will need to bring military effects to bear wherever they are needed – congested spaces are not always avoidable. By contrast, violent conflict and natural disasters may cause operating environments to rapidly decongest. Although as activity migrates away from such areas, congestion may occur elsewhere." (Future Operating Environment 2035, 2015)

The future operational environment will also be cluttered, which will deny military forces from "easily distinguish individuals, items or events, particularly in congested environments." (Future Operating Environment 2035, 2015) This is extremely dangerous since the potential inability to avoid civilian casualties could lead to a reduction of legitimacy and many other consequences that will have negative effects on mission success. This problem might be solved or at least lightened by modern technological developments, which help military forces to "declutter" the operational environment. Also, future adversaries "may seek refuge in uncluttered remote or harsh terrain, where they rely upon physical isolation for protection." (Future Operating Environment 2035, 2015)

According to the British study, the future operational environment will also be contested to varying degrees. "The challenge will be in understanding where these contests are merely a result of competition, or where they could lead to confrontation or conflict." (Future Operating

Environment 2035, 2015) The most important take away for NATO SOF from this is the fact that "failing to recognize the difference could lead to serious miscalculation" (Future Operating Environment 2035, 2015) and responses further escalating the problem.

The fourth element of the 5Cs is connectedness. "The trends of interconnectivity and globalization have resulted in dramatic increases in connectivity – across all environments." (Future Operating Environment 2035, 2015) This coupled with NATO's obvious technological superiority over its competitors and NATO's over-dependence on modern technology leads to some situation where future adversaries will either deliberately create a disconnected operational environment or restrict activities into poorly connected areas.

Last, but not least the future operational environment will be heavily constrained. Individual member states and the alliance's legal and societal norms will impose certain restrictions on the conduct of military operations, while NATO's potential adversaries most probably will "not be so constrained and may operate without restraint." (Future Operating Environment 2035, 2015)

NATO SOF must make every effort to distance itself from the current mainstream NATO strategic thought and by utilizing the characteristics described in the 5Cs approach provide an "outsider" view in strategy formulation. NATO SOF must serve as an example and a catalyst for change for the rest of NATO's services in establishing a unified theory about future war. NATO SOF must be in lead in the formation of long-strategy addressing foreseeable contingencies. NATO SOF must avoid NATO`s legacy assumptions, norms, and behavior patterns and through its own internal revolution, it must lead the alliance towards a future of relevance. To achieve this goal some restructuring might be necessary.

Organization

While all other services require nations to contribute command and control elements and tactical units for NATO's force pool almost identical with national organizations, current NATO SOF policy calls for organizations that do not exist within most NATO members' national defense structure. This fact has a serious hindering effect on NATO SOF and prevents it to deliver the desired capabilities. Non-aligned organizational structures and their non-standard internal processes prevent effective, maintainable and interoperable education, training and exercising. Nations assembling their staff elements, combat and supporting forces ad hoc ways to meet NATO's SOF specific organizational requirements. After the fulfillment of this obligation, most member states simply disperse these elements within national structures. Because of this the readiness of these formations, the level of training of individuals, the effectiveness of internal processes and the quality of operational products cannot be maintained at the desired level. These facts paired up with national SOF's never seen level of operational tempo have led to serious force generation issues and caused that NATO SOF is very far from meeting the alliance's current ambition level for both NATO's forces pool and NATO Readiness Forces.

To tackle this challenge NATO SOF must rethink its approach to organizing its forces and commanding and controlling (C2) those assigned elements. Just because all the other services have a certain type of C2 node or organizational structure within NATO's operational structure it should not mean that NATO SOF must follow the same pattern. By considering the unique constraints and restrains of national SOF and rediscovering those six fundamental SOF principles (Purpose, Simplicity, Speed, Security, Repetition, and Surprise) suggested by Admiral (ret) William H. McRaven NATO SOF must identify what type of C2 arrangement and organization

the best suit its needs and then be brave enough to implement necessary changes. NATO SOF is designed to be innovative and a catalyst for change. It should not be tied to the frameworks or terms of other components but focused on the capabilities needed to be delivered. NATO SOF must be multi-dimensional and can seamlessly transition from one threat to the next. At first, it might look like a downsizing of ambitions and reversing some of the results already achieved, but it still must be done to achieve long-term greatness.

One possible solution could come from studying the organizational history of national SOF and SOF like entities including not only western examples, but our adversaries' special elements. A serious consideration should be given to revisit and utilize the organizational lessons of historic organizations with a timeliness and global outlook. NATO SOF cannot afford to celebrate itself as the best special capability of all times and without shame must start "stealing" ideas from history and from the enemy. NATO SOF should be open-minded toward any organizational structure that fits the purpose and delivers the required capability. Who knows the solution might be found by combining the organizational characteristics of terrorist groups, insurgent organizations or old institutions like the OSS or the KGB. NATO SOF should loosen up its standardization principles at every level including areas like formations, platform capabilities, and hardware and processes interoperability. Instead of organizing to be able to conduct all three principle tasks, NATO SOF should embrace a variety of capabilities and develop proper procedures to effectively incorporate the great number of varying national capabilities into an effective structured system. Groundbreaking ideas like standing multinational SOF elements and C2 nodes or peacetime joint basing of NATO SOF will prove their merit in the very near future. Thinking outside of the box might not be enough here and the time to think without the box must come. The revolution must not stop at the organizational level it must affect NATO SOF education, training, exercises, and evaluation system as well.

Education, Training, Exercises, and Evaluation (ETEE)

NATO SOF as part of the alliance both fully benefiting and suffering from NATO`s education, training, exercises, and evaluation program. It benefits because the program provides an unparalleled opportunity to train and exercise alongside with all other services and additional stakeholders increasing their ability to fight jointly. On the other hand, NATO SOF suffers, because the system is completely conventionally driven and not considering NATO SOF specific characteristics. Current NATO ETEE program is designed around the existing C2 practices, NATO Command and Force structure organizations and Cold War doctrine spiced up with lessons learned from the last wars against insurgents and terrorists. NATO and its member states' ETEE related interests seem to be lightyears away from each other. NATO ETEE and as part of that NATO SOF's ETEE program scenarios are completely imaginary with locations and adversaries lacking any meaningful relevance to our current and future reality. At the individual level nations are more interested in education, training, exercising, and evaluation based on the most probable locations of future conflicts, including Eastern- Europe, the high-north, and Europe's southern flank and instead of "fighting" against made up and unrealistic enemies, they seem to be focused on the development and maintenance of capabilities that could be used against the real order of battle of the most probable future foes. By ignoring all those requests NATO and NATO SOF are currently violating the most basic rule of the military profession, the principle of the train as you fight. It is painfully obvious that to ensure NATO SOF relevance for the future a completely remodeled ETEE program is needed.

To build a new and relevant NATO SOF ETEE system the scenario and existing organization driven mindset must be changed. The new program must be innovative, adaptive, and most importantly it must address reality. The new ETEE system must be designed based on the most probable locations of future conflicts and against the order of battle and capabilities of the most probable enemies. This kind of thinking should not be restricted on a back to the Cold War and fight the Russians scenario, but must address all possible future threats NATO might face. NATO SOF must lead this transformation by getting out from its counterinsurgency and counterterrorism-based comfort zone as quickly as possible and take a critical look at the future. NATO SOF can do so by introducing several new elements and reintroducing numerous "forgotten" characteristics of Special Forces into the new ETEE program.

NATO SOF must prepare for future conflicts, in which NATO will not always have the superiority one has been experiencing in recent conflicts. NATO SOF must master old skill sets like navigating and commanding and controlling without electronic assets (GPS) in difficult terrain (urban, jungle, arctic, desert, etc.) and under severe weather conditions. Training and exercising different insertion and extraction techniques utilizing non-standard platforms and practicing never used covert infiltration and exfiltration methods must become a routine procedure for NATO SOF. Capabilities including better survivability and combat effectiveness under heavy enemy fire and in nuclear, biological and chemical environment must be made an ETEE priority. NATO SOF must be educated and trained to operate in an environment heavily covered by the adversaries' electronic warfare activities, unmanned vehicles and other transformational technologies. Although language and cultural training have been improved by many member states' SOF on an individual level it is crucial to further standardize and institutionalize the ETEE program for such capabilities for the entire NATO SOF. These radical changes are crucial but cannot be implemented without providing the necessary resources and material to enable its execution.

Material and Resources

NATO has been operating in a resource-scarce environment for a long time. This seemed to be changing when as a reaction to the reemergence of Russia and her actions in Eastern-Ukraine at the NATO summit in Wales in 2014, member nations pledged to spend 2% of their GDPs on defense. This promise has been confirmed many times since, but no meaningful results could be observed. Furthermore the 2% "rule" is a very misleading theory since it means nations spending 2% of their GDPs on their own defense, which does not necessarily have any relevance to NATO`s capabilities. The spending can mean a lot of different things. It can serve to increase the salary of soldiers to keep them in the system or simply as an "economic stimulus package to develop local defense industries, bringing jobs and growth." (Layton, 2017) Since all nations have individual security concerns and perceive threats differently one might invest in bases, while the others focus on airplanes, buy many tanks or develop cyber capabilities. Neighbor competitions and geopolitical ambitions can lead to an unbalanced situation when a certain type of capabilities is becoming overly redundant while others are mainly missing. This situation is worsened by the eternal competition for resources of the different services. NATO SOF, just like the land, air, and maritime capabilities is fighting to prove its relevance and secure its future by receiving the necessary funds. NATO nations must conduct a cost–benefit analysis and realize the relative utility of NATO SOF "in comparison to other allocations of defense budget resources." (Robinson, 2012) NATO nations must understand that a "small world-class SOF force possessing the appropriate level of skills, capabilities, and experience is

preferable to a larger force of inferior quality." (Robinson, 2012) As a recent NATO SOF study states "the cost of one Eurofighter is €77 million, an NH-90 helicopter €16 million a copy, and the A400 aircraft approximately €100 million per unit… Comparatively, an investment of approximately €13 million could completely outfit a 110-man land oriented SOF company/squadron sized organization with equipment including vehicular mobility, communications, computers, weapons, night vision, surveillance optics, and various other specialty equipment." (Robinson, 2012) If one looks at these figures it becomes clear that a nation could theoretically outfit almost six SOF units only from the cost of one warplane. From another perspective, the cost of a single state of the art SOF unit would stay way below 5% of any NATO country`s annual defense expenditure. "For a relatively inconsequential proportional investment, a nation can equip a world class SOF organization and enable a significant national strategic capability. Clearly, other annual costs are incurred in terms of schooling, operations and maintenance, and other non-operational costs; but this major cost is clearly a small fraction of larger defense budgets when compared to other defense systems and platforms." (Robinson, 2012) Investments made to develop SOF will result in relevant and diverse strategic capabilities relative to the anticipated operational environment and are prudent decisions. NATO SOF must enable this process by providing relevant and realistic resource requirements.

NATO SOF must realize its realistic and affordable needs. NATO SOF must move away from pursuing "high-tech" to the "right-tech" approach. Most of today's sophisticated and powerful SOF weapons are not only irrelevant in the current operational environment but are coming with an unaffordable price tag for most member nations. NATO SOF needs to depart from the idea of fighting the fight that fits its hardware and start developing technologies to fit the fight. It is imperative to reverse the current process by which a revolution in weapons technology precedes a corresponding revolution in military affairs. NATO SOF can and must free itself from its slavery to technology. The world is at the point in technological development, when one can choose his way of fighting first and then develop the proper hardware in support of it. NATO SOF's new approach should only focus on technologies that take away the advantages of the adversaries' modern systems or make those irrelevant. Man-portable, affordable and maintainable transformational technology that enables and enhances the special operator in the field must be developed and employed. This "right-tech" technologies must consist of non-standard kinetic and non-kinetic strike capabilities including electromagnetic pulse technology, lasers, mini robots, masking technologies, next-generation remote controlled surface, subsurface and Arial unmanned platforms, cyber offense capabilities and man-portable electronic warfare equipment just to name a few. This kind of changes will not only enhance the special operators and change the mindset of NATO SOF leadership, but will have a significant effect on doctrine, organization, and ETEE program as well.

Conclusion

NATO SOF has gone thru an incredible transformation during the recent years and managed to fight its way to the table of the other three traditional services within NATO. However, NATO SOF has become the victim of its own success. NATO`s conventionally built and heavily bureaucratic system reinforced by the recent experiences from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan seems to have forced NATO SOF into a "conventionalization" path. To stay "special" and remain relevant in the future NATO SOF must conduct a reality check and continue harvesting from the edges of strategic thinking instead of simply becoming NATO`s "fourth" service.

NATO SOF must internalize (Ret.) General Sir Rupert Smith`s thoughts about change. Smith argues that "NATO and nations are currently focused on 'transformation' but unfortunately it neither does encompass a change of paradigm, rather than tools, nor does it encompass the idea of change as a constant factor rather than a single step. It is one thing to recognize change and quite another to act on it, and such action is not yet apparent. Until this need for deep change to our institutional thought patterns and structures is understood and acted upon there can be no real transformation." (Smith, 2005) It is time for NATO SOF to act upon the need for deep change and follow Frank Hoffman`s advice and start exploiting non-traditional modes of war.

NATO SOF must start its journey for transformation by asking the question: what NATO SOF really is and what it should be? The answering of those questions must start with a revision and redefinition of the characteristics of the future operational environment is paramount. In this process, NATO SOF must make every effort to distance itself from the current mainstream NATO strategic thought and utilize the 5Cs approach to describe the characteristics of future conflicts. NATO SOF must serve as an example and a catalyst for change for the rest of NATO's services in establishing a unified theory about future war. NATO SOF must avoid NATO`s legacy assumptions, norms, and behavior patterns and through its own internal revolution, it must lead the alliance towards a future of relevance.

It is time for NATO SOF to completely revise its purpose and principal tasks. This must lead to some serious adjustments in the way NATO SOF is organized. A serious of historical studies and comparisons must be conducted to find the best organizational solutions for the future. NATO SOF cannot afford to celebrate itself as the best special capability of all times and without shame must start "stealing" ideas from history and from the enemy. As part of this process, NATO SOF should loosen up its standardization principles in areas like formations, platform capabilities, and hardware and processes interoperability. NATO SOF should embrace a variety of capabilities and develop proper procedures to effectively incorporate the great number of varying national capabilities into an effective structured system. Prioritization and direct assignment of roles and responsibilities during both peace and wartime to these differently organized entities must be done for not only serving as a solution for the structural problems of NATO SOF, could serve as the starting point for the much-needed restructuring of the entire alliance.

Doctrinal and organizational change will result in an immediate need for the reorientation of the ETEE program of NATO SOF. The new program must be innovative, adaptive, and most importantly it must address reality. The new ETEE system must be designed based on the most probable locations of future conflicts and against the order of battle and capabilities of the most probable enemies. NATO SOF's ETEE program must prepare the forces for future conflicts, in which NATO will not always have the superiority one has experienced in recent years. Besides maintaining all the skills NATO SOF recently mastered it must also build and sustain new ones. These skills must include navigation and commanding and controlling under severely limited conditions, different insertion and extraction techniques, covert infiltration and exfiltration methods, capabilities including better survivability and combat effectiveness under heavy enemy fire and in nuclear, biological and chemical environment. NATO SOF's effectiveness in cultural and language skills also must be further developed.

All the above described radical changes will require serious investment from NATO members. NATO nations must conduct a cost–benefit analysis and realize the relative utility of NATO SOF and the fact that the small forces possessing the appropriate level of skills, capabilities, and experience are preferable to a larger force of inferior quality. Investments made to develop SOF will result in relevant and diverse strategic capabilities relative to the anticipated operational environment. NATO

SOF must enable this process by providing relevant and realistic resource requirements. In this process, NATO SOF must move away from pursuing "high-tech" to the "right-tech" approach. NATO SOF needs to depart from the idea of fighting the fight that fits its hardware and start developing technologies to fit the fight. It is imperative to reverse the current process by which a revolution in weapons technology precedes a corresponding revolution in military affairs. NATO SOF's new approach should only focus on technologies that take away the advantages of the adversaries' modern systems or make those irrelevant. Affordable and maintainable transformational technology must be developed and employed to enable NATO SOF`s future success.

NATO SOF is at a historical turning point. It is not broken yet, but still needs to be fixed to stay relevant and deliver those effects expected NATO SOF must change fundamentally. This change should be achieved by abandoning yesterday's dusty concepts and stop using yesterday's broken tools. (McLuhan, 1967) If this can be done than the internal revolution of NATO SOF will not only serve its own purposes but will ultimately lead to a better prepared and more relevant alliance.

NOTES

1 Chinese People's Liberation Army Colonels Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui developed the Unrestricted Warfare theory. It suggests that the "principles of warfare are no longer 'using armed force to compel an enemy to submit to one's will', but rather are using all means, including armed force or non-armed force, military and non-military, and lethal and non-lethal means to compel an enemy to accept one's interests." (Liang & Xiangsui, 2002) They also argue that every day aspects of a society such as culture, economics, politics, and immigration "will cause ordinary people and military alike to be greatly astonished at the fact that commonplace things that are close to them can also become weapons with which to engage in war." (Liang & Xiangsui, 2002).

2 Long (2014) seems to ignore possible challenges associated doctrine, organization, command and control, training, exercises, education, evaluation and resources.

3 Exercises in chronological order: Trident Juncture-2014 (TRJE14), Trident Jaguar-2015 (TRJR15), Trident Juncture-2015 (TRJE15), and Trident Juncture 2016 (TRJE16).

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Training Special Operations Forces to Conduct Maritime Surveillance: A New Approach

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Special Operations Forces personnel must conduct maritime surveillance in a variety of settings, for a variety of purposes, using a wide range of tactics and resources. This paper describes an effort to use innovative methods to define training and technology gaps/needs and provide validated training and technology to meet those needs for maritime SOF individuals and teams. A Delphi survey approach was used to build consensus among the SOF personnel about the most important training needs. Maritime Domain Awareness and Command and Control for maritime mission operations were defined as the two most important training needs. A series of novel Course Design Events were used to test the effectiveness of the training in its formative state and make needed revisions. The SOF teams were able to try out the new training in a culminating exercise. In addition, the development team was able to find, modify, and test technology in the areas of communication, visual surveillance equipment both for day and night suitable for use on the water, and Unmanned Aerial Systems. The resulting training and technology will make SOF teams better prepared and more effective in their maritime surveillance missions.

Keywords: Maritime Training, Special Operations, maritime domain

For the last fifteen years, SOF forces have been largely concentrating their operations on land-based missions. This focus has largely consumed the attention of SOF forces. In the last few years, maritime SOF forces have been shifting their focus back to maritime missions, while still conducting some land-based missions. This shifting is producing new requirements for training personnel to conduct surveillance. While surveillance skills generically apply regardless of what domain in which they are exercised, the maritime environment presents some unique challenges that require new approaches to training them.

In addition, the years of focus on land missions has also had a deleterious effect on the capability of SOF forces to conduct maritime operations around harbors, littoral waters, and on the high seas. A knowledge base of maritime facts and concepts must be established in younger personnel and re-established for senior personnel. These facts and concepts include information about commercial vessels and their operations, harbor procedures, navigation aids, and similar maritime concepts. These

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facts and concepts and how to use them in operations are called Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA). In addition, SOF personnel must understand and leverage Command and Control principles to plan maritime surveillance missions.

Taken together these two areas of expertise, Maritime Domain Awareness, and Command and Control for planning surveillance in maritime environments represent two major current gaps in the skills sets of Special Operations Forces. The project described in this paper was undertaken to first identify those two gaps as the most important of a variety of other gaps. The needs analysis process used is described along with the resulting training development project and its evaluation. The result is a model program for helping the Special Forces conduct important missions in and around the water for the future. The goal of the training development effort is stated as: "Conduct effective persistent maritime surveillance operations, in support of Reconnaissance and Surveillance (RS) activities, for no less than 24 h using multiple tactical and technical collection platforms within a maritime environment."

Many surveillance skills are the same regardless of the operational environment. For example,

- Mission planning.
- Effective preparation
- Execution of the mission
- Timely and effective assessment of the mission
- Use of observation equipment

However, some knowledge and skills are unique to the maritime environment. For example,

- *Maritime domain awareness, including understanding port procedures*. SOF needs to understand how a port operates in general. That is, what vessels are in port, what is their function? What are Rules of the Road in port? What is the general pattern of life for a specific port?
- *Ability to blend in with the local population in a harbor setting*. What specific characteristics of a port's pattern of life must be complied with if a SOF operators wishes to fit it? Who are the key people to know in the port management? What is considered to be normal and abnormal behavior?
- *Use of observation equipment specialized for a maritime environment*. How can equipment be steadied for the operation while the boat is motion? How can equipment be concealed while surveillance is taking place? How must equipment be protected in a harsh maritime environment?
- *Understanding how cargo flows into, through and out of a harbor*. What are normal freight flows? What ships are most likely to carry cargoes of interest? What are the modes of transport most likely to be used for smuggling operations?

NEED/GAP ANALYSIS

The development team used the Delphi technique to determine the training gaps that affected SOF teams as they re-focused on maritime operations. The Delphi Technique (Hsu & Sandford, 2007) is a method that helps to determine the degree of consensus amongst a group of people. It has multiple stages. For this project, in Phase I each member of the SOF unit's middle

management was sent a sheet asking them to list the top six training and equipment gaps or needs in the units of which they were members. Middle managers, who were all senior enlisted or warrant officers, were selected because they were in day to day management contact with the enlisted personnel who performed the maritime surveillance function. The development team interviewed Officers about their general feeling about training gaps, but there was no attempt to formally survey them because they are not involved in day to day training of the SOF forces.

The development team received responses from sixty-five mid-level managers. The team synthesized the large number of responses from the Delphi participants down to thirty-six from well over 100 initially received. The synthesizing was done to merge needs/gaps that were described differently by the respondents, but had the same meanings.

The synthesized list was then sent back out to the Delphi respondents, and the respondents were asked to rank order the gaps from "1" (the most important), to "36" (the least important) in terms of helping the surveillance teams accomplish their missions. The development team sent the new, synthesized list back out to those who had responded to the first survey (65) and received back 50 responses. Table 1 lists the steps that were taken in the Needs assessment.

Definition of Maritime Domain Awareness and C2 Mission Planning

"According to the National Plan to Achieve Maritime Domain Awareness, MDA is the effective understanding of anything associated with the maritime domain that could impact the security, safety, economy, or environment of the United States…The National Plan also states the purpose of MDA is 'to facilitate timely, accurate decision making that enables actions to neutralize threats to U.S. national security interests." (p. 6). (Navy Maritime Domain Awareness, 2007).

"MDA Objectives:

- Persistently monitor in the global maritime domain:

TABLE 1.
Nine Steps Taken to Assess Training and Equipment Needs/Gaps

1. Discussion with SOF management about needs for MLOIC
2. Front End Analysis proposed for SOF units that included need/gap analysis
3. Delphi Analysis method proposed as best way to build consensus view of needs/gaps across SOF maritime units
4. First Delphi round held where each middle manager in SOF maritime units were asked to name six biggest needs/gaps in training and equipment.
5. First round input analyzed and synthesized by development team, which resulted in 36 needs/gaps categories
6. The 36 needs/gaps were then sent out to first round Delphi respondents. First round respondents were each asked to rank the 36 needs/gaps in order of importance.
7. Second round rank ordering from individuals were statistically averaged to form a final rank order list. Maritime Domain Awareness was ranked as most important need/gap, and C2 Mission Planning was ranked as the second most important.
8. These two needs/gaps were confirmed by SOF management and training was developed in those areas.
9. In addition, the most important technology needs/gaps by rank order were identified, and development team explored options to fill those need/gaps and demonstrations were prepared for the target audience.

- Vessels and craft
- Cargo
- Vessel crews and passengers
- All identified areas of interest
- Access and maintain data on vessels, facilities, and infrastructure
- Collect, fuse, analyze, and disseminate information to decision makers to facilitate effective understanding.
- Access, develop, and maintain data on MDA-related mission performance. "(p. 3) (National Plan for Navy Maritime Domain Awareness, 2007).

Command & Control (C2) knowledge, awareness, and mission planning skills are required of SOF surveillance teams due to the broad nature of US and partner organizations with which a team must effectively coordinate, and the wide range of environments in which a team must operate. Skills and knowledge in this area must be taught if a team is to be effective.

The content area of the two training need gap/need areas, MDA and C2 mission planning, are quite large and it became clear that the resources of the project would only allow training development and evaluation for these two areas. However, given the broad-ranging nature of these two concepts many of the other training gaps developed via the Delphi analysis would be addressed by addressing MDA and C2.

TRAINING DESIGN

The purpose of the instruction was.to successfully conduct technical and non-technical maritime surveillance operations in a non-standard, low observable environment. Training was focused on supporting anticipated global theater special operations command requirements in the maritime domain to illuminate Improvised Explosive Devices, and related combatant networks. In addition, training was provided in C2 Mission Planning. By enhancing SOF's ability to successfully conduct maritime surveillance, it is anticipated that the global movement of illicit combatant supplies will be reduced. Therefore, the following is a critical component that can be incorporated into larger culminating maritime surveillance programs of instruction for the SOF community. The proposed capability gaps within this instruction is to be incorporated into training that can be adjusted by SOF personnel to meet currently evolving operational theater requirements.

Training and Evaluation Method

The developers used the Systems Approach to Designing Training to design, develop, and evaluate the training for the SOF personnel. The model (Instructional Systems Development Approach to Training and Education, 2001) is sometimes referred to as the ADDIE model based on the five (5) phases it entails:

Analysis

In the analysis phase, the instructional problem is clarified, the instructional goals and objectives are established and the learning environment and learner's existing knowledge and skills are identified. The Delphi process described earlier and in-depth discussions with the end users represented the needs analysis for the project.

Design

The design phase deals with learning objectives, assessment instruments, exercises, content, subject matter analysis, and lesson planning and media selection.

Development

The development phase is where instructional designers and developers create and assemble the content assets that were blueprinted in the design phase. In this phase, storyboards are created, content is written and graphics are designed. If e-learning is involved, programmers work to develop and/or integrate technologies.

Implementation

During the implementation phase, a procedure for training the facilitators and the learners is developed. The facilitators' training should cover the course curriculum, learning outcomes, method of delivery, and testing procedures.

Evaluation

The evaluation phase consists of two (2) parts: formative and summative. Formative evaluation is present in each stage of the ADDIE process. Summative evaluation consists of tests designed for domain-specific criterion-related referenced items and providing opportunities for feedback from the users, which were identified.

ADDIE is an iterative model with multiple opportunities for the result of each phase to feedback to earlier phases to improve the quality of the instructional product. The ADDIE model corresponds nicely to the CDE approach taken in this project.

TECHNOLOGY NEEDS/GAPS

In addition to the examination of training needs/gaps, the Delphi survey also asked about technology needs/gaps. The SOF leadership had seen new and innovative technology as a possible major area of study and asked that technology be included in the survey. The survey revealed that there was indeed user interest in better ways to communicate, better surveillance visual technologies both for day and night, and better Unmanned Aerial Systems. The development team scoured the industries that supply such technology and demonstrated for the SOF units how the technology worked in operational settings. The development team arranged for

the supplying companies to train the SOF personnel on the new technologies. In addition, the development team arranged for boats on which the demonstrations were conducted. In some cases, the development team worked with the supplying companies to have modifications made that made the technologies more custom fit for the SOF missions.

Members of the SOF teams evaluated the technologies and compared them to what is currently available to them for missions. With this evaluation information the SOF management is in a good position to choose new and better technology options for the maritime forces in the future.

MDA AND C2 PLANNING COURSE GOALS

Course Goals for Maritime Domain Awareness

Appendix A lists in detail the course goals for MDA, but they are summarized here. The development team had very experienced commercial ship Captains present this instruction. A broad range of MDA topics were addressed that included; harbors, their equipment (e.g., cranes, docks, shore vehicles,), their operations (e.g., docking, loading/unloading, inspections), and their personnel (e.g., harbor masters, government inspection personnel, shipping company managers). In addition, instruction was given about various ships types, their cargoes, and normal operations. Remember that while the SOF personnel were familiar with military operations on the water, they did not necessarily have knowledge of how commercial operations are conducted or why they are vital to maritime surveillance operations.

The instruction also gave a broad overview of maritime law and its impact on maritime surveillance operations. This included legal concepts related to surveillance operations in littoral waters and on the high seas. Along the same lines, lectures were given about how best to leverage MDA coordination and capacity for partner building and access, and placement of SOF resources.

Finally, the MDA instruction included visits to a commercial port both on the water and via land. The commercial ship Captains accompanied the SOF personnel on the tours and provided explanations to the personnel about what the trainees were seeing and hearing as they talked to port and Coast Guard personnel.

Course Goals for Command and Control Mission Planning

Appendix B presents in detail the course goals for Command and Control (C2) mission planning. While some SOF personnel had training and experience in this topical area, the Needs Assessment revealed that that was not the case for all SOF maritime surveillance personnel. That is why it was the second most important rank-ordered need/gap. The C2 course was taught by two highly experienced former SOF personnel who had worked with a number of different U.S. agencies and embassies. They were not very familiar with the formal authorities that had to be obtained to conduct maritime SOF missions and legal issues related to that process. As with MDA, some of the SOF personnel had experience with C2 for mission

planning in partner countries, but they were in the minority of SOF personnel. For many personnel, this was their first instruction on the topic.

The instructors taught the Standard Operating Procedures for C2 so that the SOF teams could better coordinate with embassies, interagencies, and host nation entities. A sub-goal of this instruction was to help the SOF team members to use intelligence analysis tools and operational reach-back from the mission location. This instruction was designed to help the trainees identify intelligence collection requirements and gaps. SOF personnel in these types of situations must have a good ability for collecting data using different types of sensors, and they must be able to do it with C2 and intelligence support, therefore instructional time was spent in that area. Key to the C2 instruction was helping the SOF personnel to understaff how Battle Staff planning relied on the surveillance produced by the SOF teams. Finally, a key goal was to teach SOF teams about planning operations in MDA settings. There are enough differences in planning maritime operations versus land-based operations that it was necessary to explore that topic.

COURSE DESIGN EVENTS

Following the ADDIE principle of continual improvement via formative evaluation, the development team established three Course Design Events (CDEs) during the twenty-two month design, development, and evaluation process. The development team conducted Course Design Events (CDEs) with personnel from composite Special Operations teams comprised of many different skill sets. The purpose of the CDEs was to develop a program of instruction for Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) and C2 Mission Planning.

The SOF personnel who participated in the CDEs served as evaluators of the instruction, providing daily feedback to the design team through both written survey feedback and interviews. The development team called these participants "evaluators" because the design team wanted them to think of themselves as evaluators who were critiquing the course rather than trainees. The development team continually stressed that the evaluators were providing the course designers' advice on what worked and what did not work instructionally. In many cases, the evaluators were encountering new learning material they had not been exposed to before and so learning was taking place. It was vital for the ADDIE process that feedback from the evaluators be provided so that iterative improvement of the course material would be facilitated.

The instructors in the Course Design Events were highly experienced, world-class experts in MDA and C2 planning. The MDA instructors were all commercial ship Captains with 25 plus years of experience. The C2 planning instructors have years of experience at SOF operations in a variety of theaters, and have worked with Embassies, other Government agencies, and partner nations on numerous occasions. Both the ship Captains and C2 planning experts teach courses and give lectures at a variety of training establishments. In addition to giving lectures to CDE-3 SOF participants, the C2 planning experts acted in the roles of Embassy and other Government personnel as the SOF teams made their plans.

The SOF individuals and teams who were evaluators in the formative evaluation represented the cross-functional pillars of: Naval Special Operations: special operators, mission support, analytics and targeting, special collections, and unmanned aerial systems. In CDE-1, the MDA program of instruction consisted of five-and-a-half days of classroom instruction followed by

four days of labs. The labs were usually time spent on boats transiting in a busy harbor while the MDA instructors provided a narrative of port operations. In addition, CDE-1 provided the participants/evaluators training on maritime law as it relates to MDA. The evaluators were told that their experience would be of great value in determining if the MDA topics taught were relevant to NSW needs, and would help determine whether the instruction was effective.

Surveys and Interviews

After each class session, the evaluators filled out surveys asking about the relevance and effectiveness of the instruction. In addition, the evaluators were frequently interviewed by the course developers so topics beyond the survey could be explored.

CDE-2 was focused on Command and Control planning for MDA missions. It too took almost two weeks with classroom instruction and labs underway where the evaluators got to practice the knowledge and skills they learned in the lectures, and survey/interview periods for formative evaluation feedback.

CDE-3 was conducted in a different manner than CDE-1 and CDE-2. In CDE-3 some instruction was given on MDA and C2 planning but the instruction was not as intense as happened in the first two CDEs. Rather, CDE-3 was part of a threeweek-long regularly scheduled SOF exercise that is done before SOF teams deploy to their mission areas. This gave the design team a good opportunity to determine if the additional training and resources injected into the exercise beyond the usual exercise activities were worthwhile.

After each CDE round, the development team was able to make needed changes to the training based on the feedback of the SOF evaluators. In general, the evaluators valued the majority of the program of instruction. The development team believes the iterative approach to course improvement was well worth the effort and the final product delivered to the End User provides a considerable increase in MDA and C2 planning knowledge and skill for the SOF personnel who will receive the training in future. Based on the CDEs the design team developed Programs of Instruction that can be used by SOF teams in the future.

CONCLUSION

Naturalistic Decision Making (NDM) (Klein, 2008), is a method of studying decision-making that takes place in the field away from controlled laboratory settings. Many professional fields require key decision makers to make decisions quickly with sometimes limited amounts of information upon which to base their decisions. Whereas a financial planner might have considerable time and a great deal of information to aid them in making a long-range financial plan for their client, decision makers like Fire Chiefs, power plant operators, and SOF teams often are in situations where they have to make decisions quickly with limited amounts of information. This project was aimed at providing the knowledge and skills in MDA and C2 planning for SOF operators in maritime situations so they can make good naturalistic decisions when they are deployed.

The authors believe strongly that the iterative improvements made in the courses designed via the Course Design Events have led to better instruction. The reader is invited to consider this approach in future training development for SOF forces. The End User is convinced that

the training in MDA and C2 planning have provided important knowledge and skills for SOF forces going forward.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: COURSE GOALS FOR MARITIME DOMAIN AWARENESS

(A) Introduce Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) course concepts
(B) Explain organizational Structure of US MDA Strategy – Describe National Strategy for Maritime Security:
(C) Determine where to leverage MDA coordination and capacity for partner building and accessand Placement
(D) Summarize maritime Laws - Maritime security policy, regulations, and authority:
(E) Recognize vessel vulnerabilities, including maritime security considerations:
(F) Understand port and maritime operations at both the macro and micro levels
(G) State vessel and port operations and conditions by giving an overview of the nature and characteristics of port systems
(H) Create SOF overview of MDA as it pertains to maritime operations:
(I) Explain threat identification and assessment in MDA settings.
(J) Experience port/terminal field trip and familiarization. This component of MDS instruction included a trip to the Port Operations Center in Norfolk, Va.

APPENDIX B: COURSE GOALS FOR C2 PLANNING

(A) Develop staff planning and execution standard operating procedures (SOP) of C2
(B) Develop coordination process for inter-agency, and host nation operations
(C) Become proficient with intelligence analyst tools and operational reach-back from theoperational environment and support development of intelligence collection requirements and gaps
(D) Develop operational agility by utilizing multi-sensor collection redundancy in coordination withC2 and intelligence support
(E) Develop coordinating functional support procedures with maritime operations C2/ Battle Staff/Intel
(F) Plan operations in MDA settings.

APPENDIX C: THIS APPENDIX SHOWS SOME OF THE MAJOR QUESTIONS ASKED OF THE SOF EVALUATORS IN THE SURVEY IN CDE 1

In regards to time, do you think the Maritime Domain Awareness introduction was given?

i. Too much time
ii. Too little time

   iii. Appropriate amount of time

1. Was the instructor knowledgeable of the subject?
   i. Yes
   ii. No
2. Was the material presented clearly?
   i. Yes
   ii. No
3. Was the material presented in a logical sequence?
   i. Yes
   ii. No
4. How relevant was the topic to your job?
   i. Very relevant
   ii. Slightly relevant
   iii. Irrelevant
5. How knowledgeable did you feel about the subject prior?
6. Are you more confident in your knowledge of the subject after the presentation?
7. Are there any aspects of the MDA introduction you think should be covered in more detail?
8. Are there any aspects of the Maritime Domain Awareness introduction you think should be covered in less detail?
9. Do you think you will use this knowledge in future operations?
10. Did you have any unanswered questions regarding the topic?

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Illuminating Venezuelan Opposition: Network Analytics for Phase Zero Planning

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The growing number of low-intensity conflicts around the world calls for greater attention by military and political strategists to identify and target pre-crisis intervention points for Phase zero operations. The pre-conflict environment of Phase zero is more complex than ever and requires a multivariate analysis. This article uses a method of quantitative analysis to illuminate the various facets of the Venezuelan crisis to provide decision-makers with the necessary information to make better-informed decisions for Phase zero operations. This may include *who* the influencers are and *how* they can be leveraged, *what* the indicators of conflict are, *when* there are opportunities to act, and *where* there are key locations of political competition. By using exploratory methods in the fields of social network analysis, social movement theory, and statistical analysis, this article develops an alternative quantitative model of analysis to answer the questions of *who, what, where, when*, and *how* for Phase zero operations in Venezuela.

Keywords: phase zero, Venezuela, low intensity conflict

This article uses a method of quantitative analysis to illuminate the various facets of the Venezuelan crisis that can be used for a deeper analysis. With this information, commanders can make better-informed decisions about what to do in phase zero operations. This may include who the influencers are and how they can be leveraged, what the indicators of conflict are, when there are opportunities to act, and where there are key locations of political competition.

Phase zero operations consist "of shaping operations that are continuous and adaptive. Its ultimate goal is to promote stability and peace by building capacity in partner nations that enables them to be cooperative, trained, and prepared to help prevent or limit conflicts." (Wald, 2006) The military community and scholars have recently refocused on the importance of phase zero operations and analyses in light of the gray zone concept (Votel, Cleveland, Connett, & Irwin, 2016), but there has been little discussion about how to collect and analyze data to determine what to do in phase zero operations. The intelligence community relies on qualitative methods of analysis that provides the context to decision makers. This method is more susceptible to human error and biases than quantitative methods, where the data speaks for itself, while highlighting the importance of "the human domain" approach (Fussell and Lee, n.d.).

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Color versions of one or more of the figures in the article can be found online at www.tandfonline.com/uops.

WHY VENEZUELA?

Latin America has seen a shift in its political landscape since the 1990s from centrist-leaning governments to socialist-Leftist governments in a phenomenon dubbed the Pink Tide. Over the past 20 years, the Pink Tide has ebbed and flowed across Latin America, reaching its peak somewhere around 2011 with 11 countries under leftist control. Though the Pink Tide has receded since that time, the countries that remain under Leftist regimes continue to decline socially and economically – with regimes appearing to exhibit more authoritarian-like patterns of behavior. Unchecked, these regimes pose an increasing threat to the people of the countries, neighboring states, and the international community. The question then becomes, how does one begin to analyze and understand the problem of countering the Pink Tide for phase zero operations?

We began by analyzing the Pink Tide network (Figure 1) created by Bauer, Maggard, and Murray to determine the critical actor's central to the Pink Tide. (Bauer, Maggard, & Murray, 2017) The intent of this process is to identify the critical actor or actors that could be targeted in an effort to degrade the network and overall effectiveness of the Pink Tide. The idea is to remove the lynch pin that holds it all together in an effort to get a cascading effect that then would degrade and diminish the effects of other actors within the transregional, transnational threat network.

Bauer, Maggard, and Murray found that the Government of Venezuela is #1 on their list of the "Top 10 most central actors of the Pink Tide Network" (Bauer et al., 2017). One could have come to this conclusion through qualitative means, however, this quantitative analysis provides

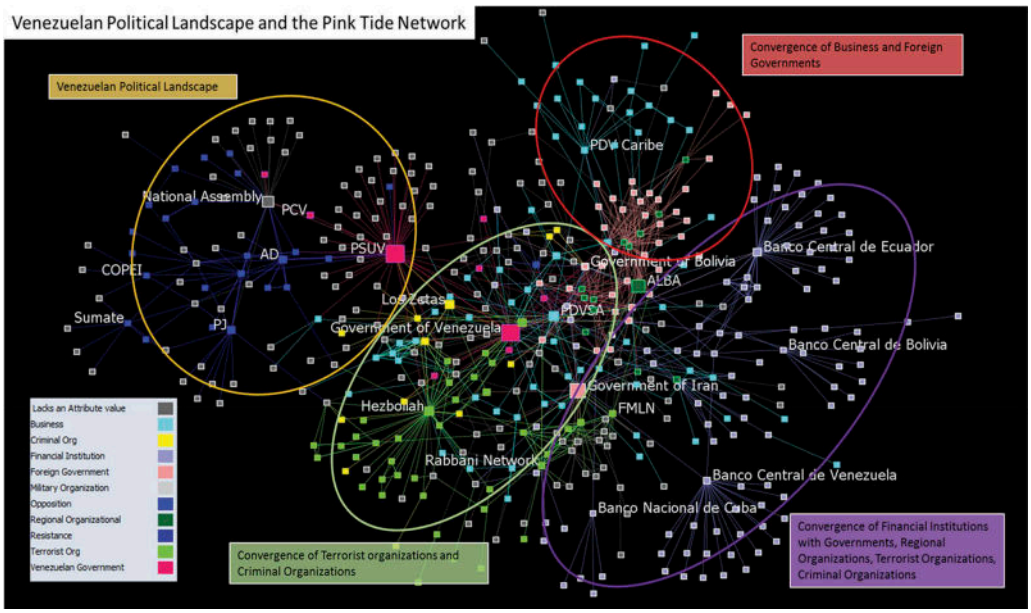

FIGURE 1 Pink tide network with attributes noted in legend.

much more insight into the complexities of the situation and provides unequivocal evidence that, mathematically, it is the most central actor in the Pink Tide network. With this information, we are then prepared for further analysis of Venezuela that must be considered for phase zero planning and operations.

DATA COLLECTION

Collection of data and intelligence, in the absence of an in-country intelligence apparatus, can often be a cumbersome task for analysts in the context of phase zero planning. However, in the information age, much of what one needs can be found through various open source outlets on the internet. To support this argument, the data used in this study was collected using open source materials, a combination of data mining tools, and existing databases. The data consisted of Venezuelan election results, protests, social media usage, population statistics, and various economic, and political factors.

The election data results were retrieved from the Venezuelan Consejo Nacional Electoral (National Electoral Council) website and ESDATA, which provided a breakdown of the official results of the presidential election by candidate at the national, state, and municipal level for each of the presidential election years examined from 2000–2013 ("Esdata - Página Principal, n.d.).

We created the database by inputting our search criteria for sources that included the words protest and Venezuela during the time period from January 2000 – March 2018. Additionally, we prompted the results to include a categorized breakdown of the event date, source country, source (referenced person or group making the statement), source sector, event type, target country, target, target sectors, publisher, sentence number, and headline (Boschee et al., 2018).

Since there is no existing repository or database on protest in Venezuela that captures the specifics of each of the protests, specifically one that includes the location of the protest – which is necessary for our analysis, we used the Integrated Crisis Early Warning System (ICEWS) iData data mining system ("Lockheed Martin's ICEWS Records 10,000 Dataset Download, n.d.). The result was a dataset that included 6,369 observations of protest categorized by the aforementioned criteria. We scrubbed the data to the best of our ability to ensure that the observations were not duplicated or included countries other than Venezuela and the resulting dataset used for this study consisted of 4,669 observations.

The social media data used in this study was generated using their search engine parameters for social media usage in Venezuela from "Mar 2009 – May 2018" (Browser Market Share Bolivarian Republic Of Venezuela, n.d.). The resulting data set was a monthly breakdown of the percentage of usage by social media platform, which included Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest, StumbleUpon, Tumblr, Google+, and Other.

The population data was collected from citypopulation.de, which provides population estimates for Venezuelan municipalities for 2001 and 2011, as well as a population projection for 2017 ("City Population - Site Search, n.d.). Though it did not have the population data for the election years in this study, we extrapolated and reduced based on the values provided in 2001 and 2011 to create estimates for the population data in the election years of 2000, 2006, 2012, and 2013.

The economic and political factor datasets were obtained from The Global Economy Database and consisted of the annual data from 2000 to 2017 for the GDP, government corruption, political stability, and inflation.

The "Who": Social Network Analysis and Its Use in Phase Zero Planning

Social Network Analysis (SNA) illuminates an actor or actor's relationships to one another (Cunningham, Everton, & Murphy, 2016a, p. 3). Actors (nodes) can be defined as people, businesses, events, or organizations, etc. This level of analysis provides insight for planners in phase zero that are seeking to understand vulnerabilities, resistance potential, gaps, and potential partnerships. Everton states, "Army Special Forces (SF), for example, are often active in a diverse set of networks in their area of operation, including tribal, political, and organizational networks" (Cunningham et al., 2016a, p. 4).

Additionally, phase zero planners can identify who key influencers are or are not, which nodes are on the periphery and easily influenced, who can span across the network, or simply, through attributes and relationships, how actors are connected (Cunningham et al., 2016a, p. 4). Ultimately, supporting planners and commanders, based on the development of a network, the resistance potential needed for phase zero operations.

We analyze Venezuela's political parties using three examples to illustrate the process using the topography of the networks, structural changes within networks over time, and centrality measures. Furthermore, overlaying attributes to identify if the nodes are pro-Chavez/Maduro, opposition, and independent, the political spectrum of the nodes from their affiliations politically left to right, and if they are politically excluded from elections as in 2018.

> *"Where elections are used as a tool of political legitimation, resistance potential follows. The key is to maintain continuously updated information about political events and elections in countries of interest. Even draconian regimes tend to allow elections if only to achieve international legitimacy. This provides a unique opportunity to map the political landscape of the regime"* (Lee, 2017, p. 135).

Topography Analysis of the Venezuelan Political Networks

Analyzing the topography of a network is considered a basic initial measurement that has implications about the networks' structure, centralization, and strategies to use for or against a network (Cunningham, Everton, & Murphy, 2016b, p. 85). Here we analyze the topographical measurements of Venezuela's Political networks, temporally, through snapshots of the political networks within five different elections cycles to understand if, how they are structured, how they operate, their efficiency, and effectiveness, played a role in the opposition's attempt to create political reform (Cunningham et al., 2016b, p. 85). Additionally, these measurements provide empirical data to support events that transpired during the elections cycles that illuminate the opposition's inability to create political reform. Moreover, using basic measurements (size, links, and diameter) and centralization metrics (degree, betweenness, eigenvector, and closeness) shows these empirical changes between each cycle, see Table 1.

This provides quantitative trends for analysts, in phase zero, to project change in the future and implications, through data and visualizations. In other words, this is the data that supports qualitative analysis traditionally conducted in phase zero. To provide insight to the process we analyze the political network of Venezuela.

One example of how we used the SNA empirical process was in the 2012 and 2013 election cycles when the opposition had the best chance to politically reform. Empirically, the network increased in size with 71 organizations, decentralized to .036 (second lowest of the five

TABLE 1.
Topographic measurements of Venezuela's Political Networks.

Political Networks		*2000*	*2006*	*2012*	*2013*	*2018*
Basic Metrices	Size	23	61	71	60	60
	Links	107	139	157	170	94
	Diameter	15	7	7	7	9
Centralization Metrices	Degree	.034	.159	.036	.086	.270
	Betweenness	.240	.367	.103	.403	.045
	Eigenvector	.706	.559	.866	.824	.770
	Closeness	.669	.015	.003	.016	.003

networks), and became less interconnected (Figures 2 and 3). Due to consolidation by coalitions on both sides, a betweenness centralization score reduced to .103, the second lowest out of all five networks. Moreover, correlation between Eigenvector Centrality (EC) scores and presidential candidate's organizations appears again with the opposition's MUD scoring high with .909. However, there is no correlation between the highest EC scores and their ability to win the Presidential elections. This was a missed political opportunity for the opposition, but with Chavez's death in April 2013 (BBC News, 2017b) another opportunity arose.

By 2013, another election cycle provided an opportunity for political reform, this time with acting President and Presidential incumbent candidate Nicholas Maduro (Turner, 2015, p. 414). Due to this snap election cycle, the network became slightly more centralized with a degree centralization score of .086, a decrease in political parties to 60 due to co-optation of organizations in hopes of a more collective opposition front, and no change in diameter with 7.

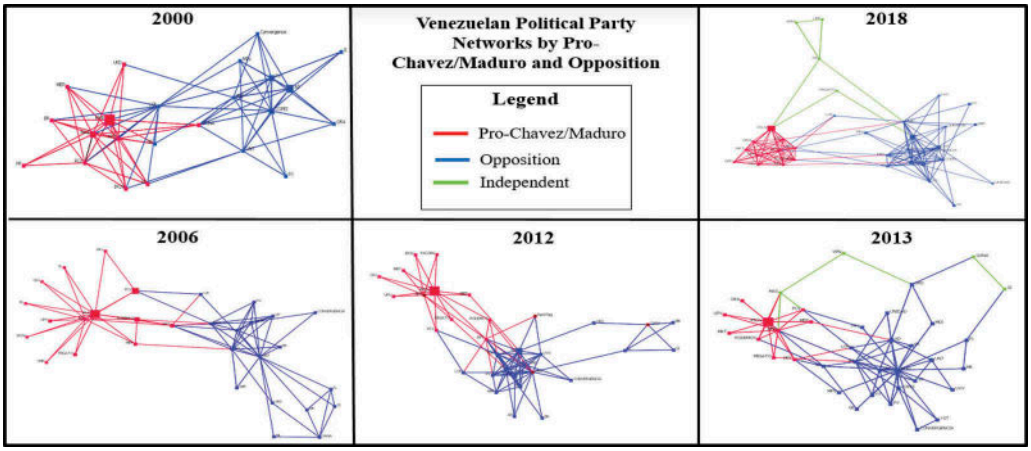

FIGURE 2 Venezuelan political networks per election cycle with no Isolates or Pendants and nodes sized by the number of electoral seats in Venezuela's National Assembly.

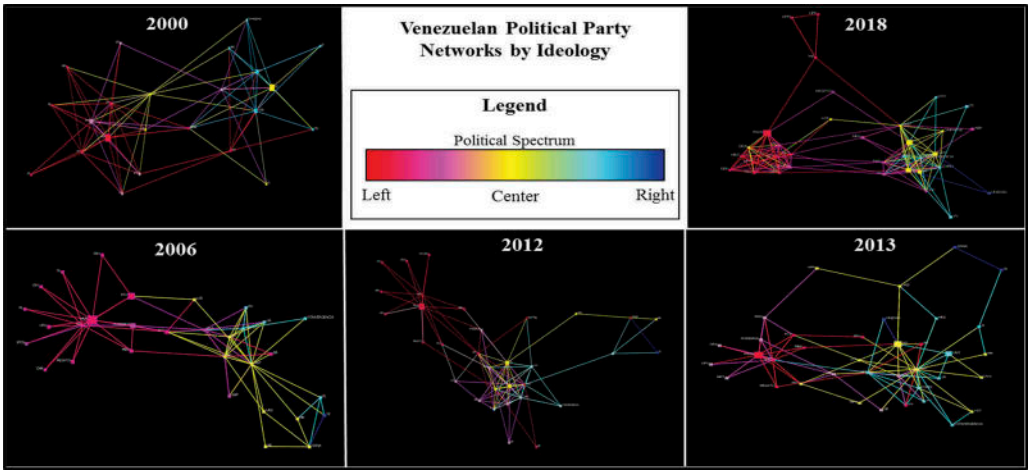

FIGURE 3 The political spectrum of Venezuelan political networks per election cycle with no Isolates or Pendants and nodes sized by the number of electoral seats in Venezuela's National Assembly.

In Figures 2 and 3, independent political parties emerge from split parties, solely representing their party and not a coalition party. This is due to increasing discourse amongst the two opponent coalitions, MUD and PSUV.[1] Additionally, the opposition uses the same candidate through the same political organization, the MUD (EC score of .887), continuing our correlation between EC scores and presidential candidates. Maduro succeeded Chavez as President of Venezuela, but only by a slim 1% margin showing that the Bolivarian movement has waned since the earlier overwhelming elections.

Additionally, the people of Venezuela proved that political change is desired. However, the next opportunity for political reform will not come until May 2018. In the meantime, many political referendums took place, economic plunders, and further consolidation of power through changes in the constitution under Maduro caused more shifts ideologically and politically.

Understanding and identifying the nodes within any network holding the highest Eigenvector centrality score helps to identify social groups with resistance potential in the operational environment. Everton says, "Eigenvector centrality assumes that ties to highly central actors are more important than ties to peripheral actors, so weights an actor's summed ties to other actors by their centrality scores" (Everton, 2012, p. 15). Additionally, these political networks are undirected, meaning bi-directional, the EC scores then become "hubs and authorities scores" (Everton, 2012, p. 400) which assume these nodes or in this case political parties have power within the network. This level of analysis in phase zero allows for planners and commanders to understand who to partner with, systematically, in addition to previous qualitative analysis.

An additional example we use identifies who the powerbrokers are within the networks based on empirical evidence. In Table 2, our results find correlation between presidential candidates' political organization and their Eigenvector Centrality (EC) scores of that election

TABLE 2.
Top Centrality Measurements of Venezuela's Political Parties per Election Cycle

Election Cycles	*2000*	*2006*	*2012*	*2013*	*2018*
Eigenvector Centrality	LCR (.847)	UNT (.653)	MUD (.909)	MUD (.887)	PODEMOS (.348)
Degree Centrality	PPT (.055)	MVR (.174)	MUD (.039)	MUD (.091)	MUD (.386)
Betweenness Centrality	MAS (.305)	MVR (.379)	PSUV (.108)	MUD (.427)	MUD (.296)
Closeness Centrality	UNT (.393)	PRV (.029)*	AP (.003)*	Convergence (.026)	MS (.092)

Ea. centrality measure represents the highest organization's score * = Number is tied with several other nodes

cycle year. For example, in 2000, LCR had the highest EC score and was the opponent to Hugh Chavez's MVR. LCR was the powerbroker within the opposition political parties. These trends continue into the 2006, 2012, and 2013 election cycles where more political parties are formed through the rise of the Bolivarian leftist movement.

For example, within these political networks over time, the nodes with the highest scores, or the powerbrokers, are LCR, UNT, MUD, and PODEMOS. This shows a shift in power over 18 years. Moreover, in this operational environment, there may be a need to shift efforts towards power brokers, over time, depending on the operation's nature.

In authoritarian systems of power, like the Maduro regime, the opposition is increasingly limited in its capacity to create political reform as was the case in the 2018 elections (Figure 3). Arnson and Torre, describe Venezuela's political circumstances by stating, "After 16 years of Chavismo, Venezuela has been polarized into starkly antagonistic camps that make democratic dialogue difficult" (Arnson and Torre 2014). This holds true structurally within Figures 2 and 3, as the pro-Maduro networks consolidate and co-opt to retain power and the opposition side of the network struggles to form a cohesive network preventing collective action against the Maduro regime. However, their lack of co-optation is not the only causal force. Maduro's political exclusion of opposition parties in response to the upcoming election is equally to blame (Figure 4).

Maduro fiercely reduced his competition to retain power for the upcoming elections shown in Figure 4. The first key event, in January 2016, proved contentious when Maduro's Supreme Court coerced members of the MUD to give up their National Assembly seats, reducing their electoral power (BBC News, 2017b). Second, President Maduro in March of 2017, conducts a self-coup d'état replacing the 1999 constitution created by Chavez with a new Constituent Assembly (BBC News, 2017a). In response, the opposition created an unofficial referendum that was supported by seven million Venezuelans. These are three examples of how SNA is used to understand, systemically, a network for the advantage of know who is who in an operational environment.

THE "WHAT" AND "WHEN": MOBILIZATION OF OPPOSITION AND THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

The proliferation of technology and social media play an ever-increasing role for phase zero operations and requires analysis to determine what platforms are used to promulgate information. The use of this analysis in phase zero enables the analysts to determine what social media platforms are worth focusing on for collection, information operations, and future mobilization

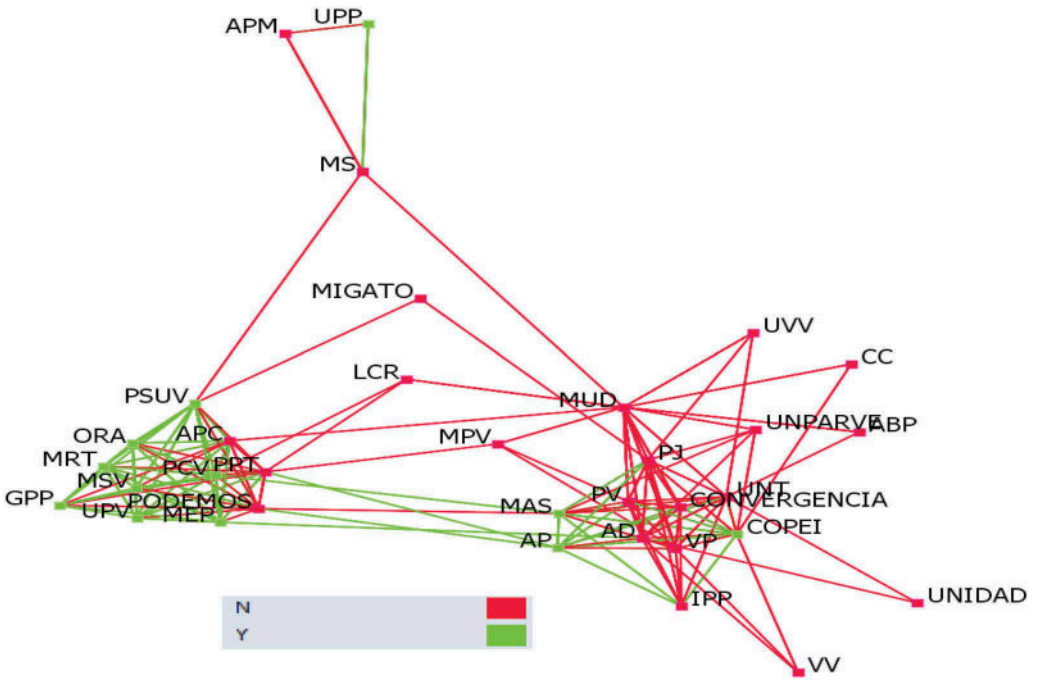

FIGURE 4 2018 political network color-coded by the election participation attribute.

efforts. In the case of Venezuela, how do we quantitatively determine what social media platforms are best suited to mobilize opposition for protests and when do opportunities arise to employ information operations?

Due to the Venezuelan population's mistrust of private and government-controlled media outlets, social media outlets such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube played an important role for the opposition to inform and mobilize the population.[2] Figure 5 indicates that twitter was the most preferred social media platforms for mobilization. We then found it important to analyze our hypothesis, statistically, through a poisson regression model to determine the top platforms used since since Jan. 2011 to Feb. 2018. This time frame includes two of the most significant protest periods in Venezuela's modern digital age, 2014 and 2017.

The data on social media use in Venezuela retrieved from Statscounter (Social Media Stats Worldwide, n.d.) overlaid on the protest data used in this study provides insights into what social media platforms are used as they relate to protest by month. Visually, it appears that spikes in protests correlate with changes in the social media use by platform. However, we took this a step further to analyze these variables statistically through regression to determine their significance.

The regression model compares the usage of social media to protests to understand mobilization in the modern and digital age. The purpose of the model is to understand which social media platforms are most significant for Venezuelans mobilizing protests. Protest is the

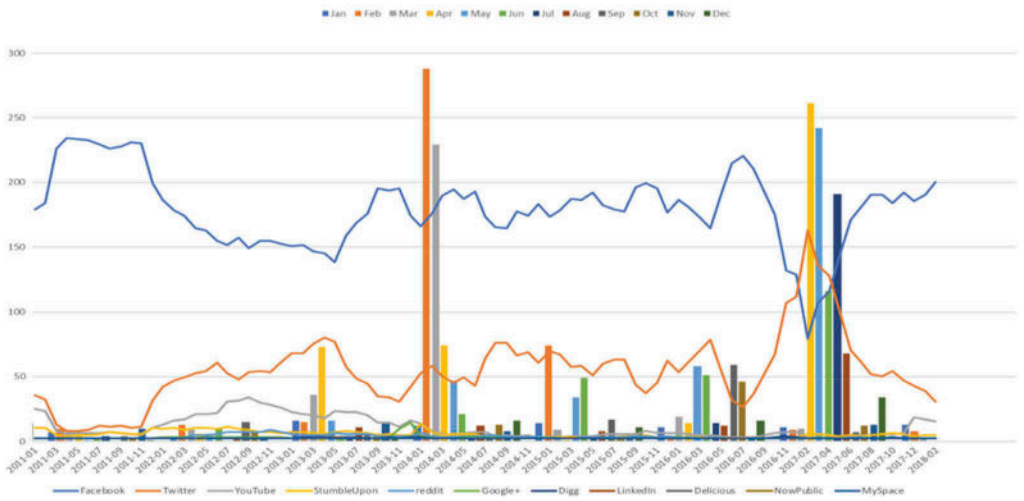

FIGURE 5 Social media platforms by percentage 2011–2018 with protest by data.

population's form of addressing grievances and potentially incite change, specifically in Venezuela, where reform is uncommon in the last 20 years.

The dependent variable in the models is protests by count over time (one month). The independent variable within the models is social media usage per platform over time (one month). The platforms we focused on were Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Stumble upon, Reddit, Google+, Digg, LinkedIn, Delicious, Now Public, and Myspace. However, due to the lack of significance for Stumble upon, Reddit, Google+, Digg, LinkedIn, Delicious, and Now Public we left them out of our models. The unit of analysis used in the model is months. We determine that, based on the data used, the month was the best way to connect the dependent and independent variables over time.

The results of the Poisson regression models, in Figure 6, match our hypothesis that Facebook and Twitter are the dominant platforms for social media in Venezuela. We use R studio, to run three Poisson regression models including different combinations of social media platforms to understand which the preferred platform is determined in our findings.

Model 1 (left column in Figure 6), after running the necessary variables listed, determined that Facebook was most significant with a coefficient of 1.809 and Twitter, second, with a score of 1.178. In this model, we used the log function to ensure that the data is reduced exponentially. Additionally, we ran a lag function moving time one month to the left to determine if there was significance in social media usage in Facebook and Twitter with protests occurring one month later, proving negative and significant. However, the lag function did determine that protests are perpetual. Meaning, that if there was a protest the month prior there, with high significance, another protest will follow. This determination held true throughout each model.

In the second model, we removed YouTube and Myspace due to their insignificant results in the first model. The results show no changes from model 1 to which platforms are significantly

	Dependent variable		
	protest		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
log(Facebook)	1.809***	1.907***	0.924***
	(0.260)	(0.257)	(0.077)
log(Twitter)	1.178***	1.244***	1.021***
	(0.134)	(0.133)	(0.057)
log(Facebook_lag)	-1.092***	-1.007***	
	(02.55)	(0.252)	
log(Twitter_lag)	-0.210*	-0.161	
	(0.120)	(0.118)	
log(YouTube + 1)	-0.134***		
	(0.029)		
log(MySpace +1)	0.028		
	(0.091)		
log(protest_lag)	0.572***	0.578***	0.555***
	(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.016)
log(protest_lag2)	-0.186***	-0.181***	-0.185***
	(0.016)	(0.016)	(0.016)
Constant	-3.692***	-4.945***	-4.791***
	(0.657)	(0.494)	(0.479)
Observations	96	96	97
Log Liklihood	-1,641.683	-1,654.214	-1,665.838
Akaike Inf Crit.	3,301.367	3,322.428	3,341.676
Note:		*p < 0.1; **p < 0.05; ***p < 0.01	

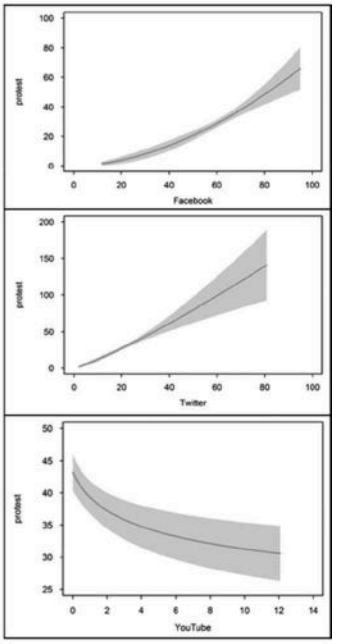

FIGURE 6 Poisson regression models comparing social media platforms against Protests.

being used for protest mobilization. Also, we see the lag results of Facebook, Twitter, and protests remain similar as with the rest. However, we do observe a lack of significance in lagging the social media platforms by one month. There is potential to analyze a lag down to one week to determine if the organization of the masses takes place the week prior to large-scale protests. Model 3 determined that Twitter was the best platform to use for instantaneous mobilization in Venezuela. However, Twitter was significant by a minimal margin with a difference of only .097. This also shows that Facebook is just as preferred by the masses.

The results suggest that Twitter and Facebook are most highly correlated with protest and are the preferred social media platforms used by the opposition to organize and mobilize protest. Moreover, due to the instantaneous nature of social media and its ability to move trends quickly through the diffusion of social networks, we did not find a positive correlation between protests and social media trends over the unit of time analyzed (month), but the relationship between the timing of usage of social media platforms and protests likely becomes more significant at the week or day unit of analysis. Meaning, the social media usage a month prior does not account for a protest in the next month, but it is likely that the social media platform usage that occurred yesterday will have an impact on the protest tomorrow. Additionally, the results suggest that Twitter, by a small margin, is the most preferred social media platform of the opposition. This may be due to the twitter interface's conduciveness for

coordinating a social movement due to the simplistic hashtags that can easily be followed in addition to following individuals.

The results also demonstrate that the opposition makes a conscientious choice to use social media platforms that facilitate the use of followers, groups, and connections to easily and rapidly message to the masses for organizational purposes, which is vital to mobilization and protests in the digital age of Venezuela.

In determining which platforms are best or safe to use for mobilization purposes we must understand how the Maduro regime sees and understands these platforms as they are used by opposition. The Maduro government recognizes the oppositions reliance on social media as their preferred method to organize, but has had difficulties in censorship. An attempt was made in 2014 to censor twitter "by preventing users from posting and see photos on Twitter, throttling and shutting down the Internet in certain areas of the country, and blocking the walkie-talkie app Zello" (Franceschi-Bicchierai, n.d.). It failed to achieve the desired effects when Twitter provided a work around. More recently, in October 2017, Maduro passed anti-hatred legislation "which… requires immediate actions, including administrators of social media accounts to remove any hateful posts and the creation of a commission to enforce the anti-hate legislation" (Venezuela's New Anti-Hate Law Derided as Censorship, n.d.). The government uses social media as well as a propaganda platform and has allegedly purchased followers, created fake accounts, and even hired trolls to harass critics (Franceschi-Bicchierai, n.d.). Though the regime's use of social media is not as broad as the opposition's, they do use twitter to denounce the protest and further criminalize the opposition.

In sum, social media plays an increasingly important role for the opposition in informing and mobilizing the population with the increasing censorship of the Maduro regime. Furthermore, understanding which social media platforms are used to organized protest is important for phase zero planners and analysts too as it can provide indicators to rise of movements and better prepare governments and NGOs to the aftermath of violent clashes or even regime changes.

The "Where": The Effects Of Protest on Elections

Knowing where to conduct phase zero operations are more complex than conducting map or terrain analysis. By overlaying the changing political and social data over physical terrain, key trends and locations begin to emerge that would otherwise go unnoticed. This provides operational implications for employment during phase zero by illuminating areas of interests that require further levels of analysis. In Venezuela, we overlaid population density, protests, and physical terrain in Figure 7 and protest data and election results in Figures 8 and 9 to shed light on locations of interest in phase zero operations.

Figure 7 illustrates the relationship between population densities, protests, and terrain. By overlaying the roadways and elevation features one can begin to understand the challenges associated with mobilizing the population in Venezuela. The data suggest that a population and protest beltway exists in the northwestern part of the country spanning from Tachira to Miranda. This suggests a need to further analyze the suitability of the beltway for phase zero operations. For example, the beltway identified by this analysis shows that, due to the proximity to the border, support from the neighboring country can be leveraged. Additionally, the beltway's sentiment, based on the protests by the population can be utilized, and if needed, logistically supported in phase

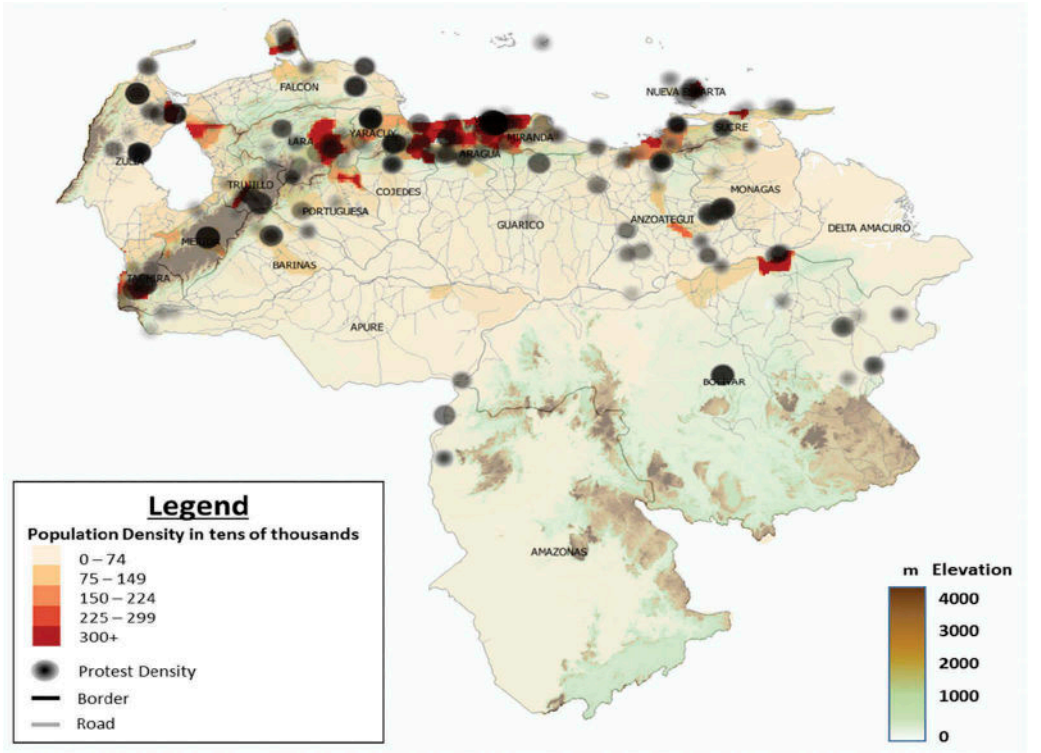

FIGURE 7 Population density, terrain, and protests of Venezuela from 2000–2018.

zero operations. However, this analysis alone is insufficient, which is why we also analyzed protests in concert with economic data and election results.

The increasing social unrest and overt disapproval of the government would leave one to believe that it would have effect on voting patterns of the populace to oust the Chavez or Maduro governments. This leads us to the question, are protest having an effect on the voting habits? And what other factors are contributing to the change in voting patterns? We began by overlaying the presidential election results for the years 2000, 2006, 2012, and 2013 with the georeferenced locations of the protest that took place during the time between the election cycles.

Though the visualization makes for some interesting observations about where the protests are taking place and the voting results of those municipalities, it does not sufficiently determine if the protest is having effects on changing the vote away from the leftist Chavez and Maduro regimes. In order to determine if they were having an effect, we visualized the change in votes by election cycle to illustrate if municipalities experiencing protest were more susceptible to changing their voting pattern. The result is depicted in Figure 9, which suggests that changes in voting patterns are occurring, however, it is difficult to determine the degree to which they are having an impact.

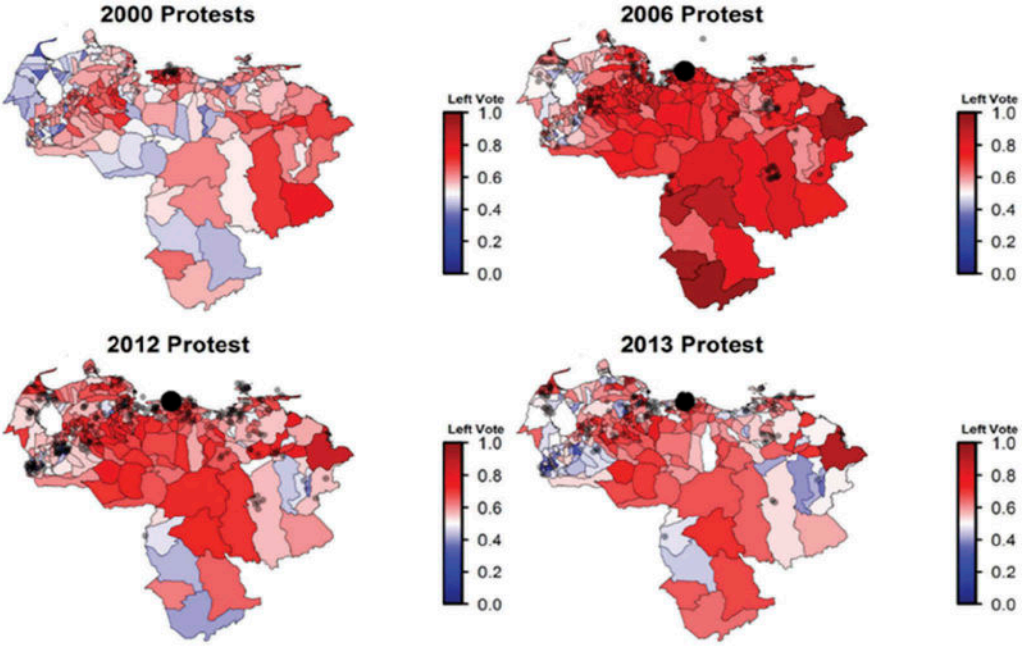

FIGURE 8 Presidential election results by municipality overlaid with protest.

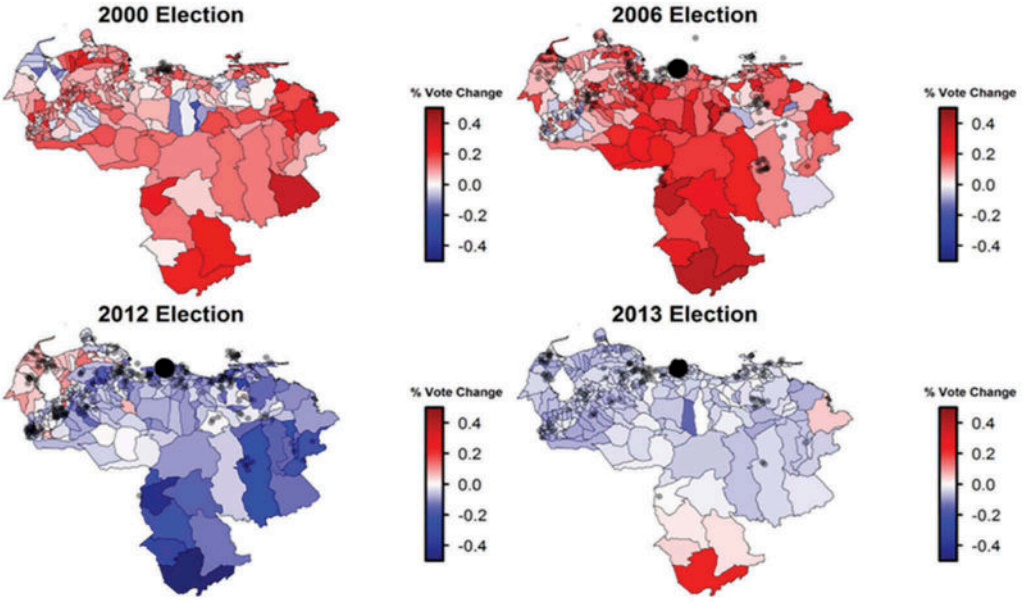

FIGURE 9 Change in Presidential election results by municipality overlaid with protest.

	Dependent variable:	
	leftgov_diff	
	(1)	(2)
Corruption	0.002	
	(0.001)	
GDP	-0.00003***	
	(0.00000)	
Protest Rate	-0.0002	
	(0.0003)	
Inflation	0.004***	
	(0.001)	
log(Corruption)		0.007
		(0.010)
log(GDP)		-0.244***
		(0.024)
log(Protest Rate)		-0.004
		(0.005)
log(Inflation)		0.134***
		(0.040)
Constant	0.119***	1740***
	(0.035)	(0.135)
Observations	144	144
Log Liklihood	178.350	178.313
Akaike Inf Crit.	-346.700	-346.625
Note:	*p < 0.1; **p < 0.05; ***p < 0.01	

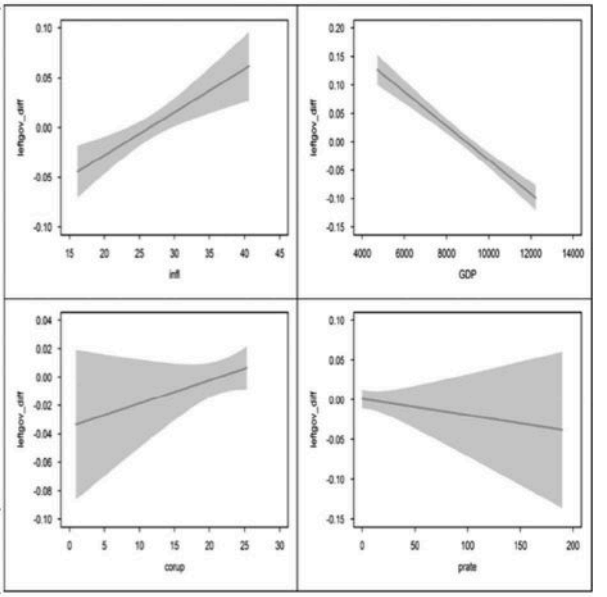

FIGURE 10 Linear regression model.

To determine the extent that protest was impacting changes in voting patterns at the municipal level we developed a statistical model using linear regression with the unit of analysis as the municipalities and election years. Additionally, we used other factors such as GDP, inflation, and corruption as variables in the model as they are commonly used in qualitative analysis by scholars and media outlets to describe the deteriorating situation in Venezuela (Figure 10). Also, to ensure that outliers were not having an impact on our model, we ran the linear regression for the independent variables and the log of the independent variables. The results are depicted below.[3]

The results suggest that as inflation increases, one can expect that the voting patterns will change, with fairly high confidence, in favor of the Chavez and Maduro governments.[4] Intuitively this makes sense because the socialist government can leverage the high inflation to garner more votes by incentivizing people to vote for them and their socialist ideology, wealth distribution. Recently, in the 2018 election, Maduro incentivized people to vote for him by handing out food in return for votes, stating "I give and you give" (Casey & Neuman, 2018). Counter to the inflation results, the GDP results suggest that as GDP increases voters are more likely to vote for the opposition. This too makes sense, because wealth then allows people to be less reliant on the government and less likely to be coerced into voting for the socialist government.

The insufficient amount of protest data that was used in this statistical model may explain the statistically weak results on the protest rate. Approximately half of the protest data in our database

was for years after 2013. Additionally, the highest protest rates occurred in the years after 2013, however, without the 2018 election results, our study was not able to use them in this model. Including this data into our model could potentially result in a significant finding, but for now the theory that protest can affect changes in voting, statistically, remains unfounded.

CONCLUSION

This article highlights how to unpack and illuminate intense political competitions between the incumbent and opposition movements. Its findings suggest three key implications about how planners analyze organic resistance potential. First, the Venezuelan case study indicates social media is expectedly a major operational space where both the regime and opposition try to mobilize their constituents and conduct information operations. Second, special warfare planners should pay keen attention as to how to leverage the latest open source data analytics to illuminate key actors the U.S. government may want to access. Third, geospatial data of political protest can anticipate the expected electoral success of opposition movements, which can potentially inform special warfare planners how to refine and narrow down specific areas to further analyze.

It is also worth noting that protest, in the context of this study, could be an epiphenomenon to the change in voting patterns and the true factors of actions that the government takes to lose the confidence of the voting populace. Additional research and data will be needed to continue this study to further refine the results and determine if there is statistical significance to the relationship of protest and voting patterns. The findings have far-reaching implications for how to plan for phase zero operations, the application of social movement theory, and the applicability to special warfare options to identify opposition and resistance movements that could support the U.S. government's policy objectives (Gompert & Binnendijk, 2016).

NOTES

1. The MUD is the Mesa de la Unidad Democratica which translates to English as the Democratic Unity Roundtable, an electoral coalition of the opposition. The PSUV is the Partido Socialista Unido de Venezuela which translates as the United Socialist Party of Venezuela. Although the PSUV is a political party and not an electoral coalition, the PSUV did garner support and allegiance of other political parties during elections.
2. A Pew Research Center study found that Venezuelans primarily use social media to access political news, mobilize protest, and expose government corruption and human rights violations. ("Social Media Key for Venezuelan Protesters, n.d.)
3. The dependent variable used in this model was the change in the vote between election years. This value was the percentage change in the vote for the Chavez and Maduro regime from the previous election and is depicted in Figure 9. The independent variables used were the rate of protest by municipality during the time between election years, the mean GDP, inflation rate, and government corruption levels between election years. The reason the mean values were used is because dependent variable occurred only for the year 2000, 2006, 2012, and 2013 and the research aimed to include all the independent variables that were affecting those changes that occurred in the year's in-between the elections.
4. There is negligible difference in regression models between the log model and the non-log model, with an AIC difference of only .075. The results depicted above are of the non-log model with only GDP and inflation having statistical significance with values of −0.00003 and 0.004, respectively.

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APPENDIX A – NETWORK CODE BOOK

Political Networks (2000, 2006, 2012, 2013, & 2018) Code Book
(Organization to Organization Relationships)

Political Organizations in Venezuela

1. Political Party (one mode) – Any member of the political organization that is mentioned in an official capacity with the organization.
2. Affiliate Organization (one mode) –Organizations that have a relationship with another political organization. They are affiliated with them in some capacity for collaboration or communication.
3. Split From (one mode) – Organization that had cooperative relationships, previously, then severed ties and created ties with other political organizations. Typically, establishing ties with different affiliate organizations.
4. Political parties supporting affiliate organizations (one mode) – Organizations that align ideologically with other political parties and their affiliate political parties. These ties are typically clear during election cycles in Venezuela.

Attributes of Political Organizations in Venezuela

1. Spectrum – The political party's spectrum of ideology. Ideology is simply defined by the party's spectrum from left to center-left to center to center-right to right. This provides changes temporally of how parties swing within the ideological spectrum.
2. Identity – The political party's identify delineates their affiliations between three factors. These three categories are opposition, government, or independent. Opposition is defined by parties who are opposing current government policies. Government is defined by current parties aligned with the government. Independent is defined by political parties that do not align with either government or opposition.
3. Assembly seats – The National Assembly seats is indicative of who is in power within the national assembly (comparative to the House of Representatives in the U.S.). Prior to each election cycle, there are elections associated with which political parties hold seats in the National Assembly.
4. Election Participation (only for election cycle 2018) – Election participation is defined by the specific political parties that are allowed to participate in the upcoming Venezuelan elections. Only specific political parties are allowed to participate under the dictation of the President.

List of Political Parties (nodes)

1.	ACCIÓN DEMOCRATICA (AD)
2.	Proyecto Venezuela (PV)
3.	Comité de Organización Política Electoral Independiente (COPEI)
4.	Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS)
5.	La Causa Radical (LCR)
6.	Primero Justicia (PJ)
7.	Patria Para Todos (PPT)
8.	Un Nuevo Tiempo (UNT)
9.	Alianza Bravo Pueblo (ABP)
10.	Movimiento V Republica (MVR)
11.	Partida Communista de Venezuela (PCV)
12.	Organizacion Autentico de Renovacion (ORA)
13.	Movimiento de Integridad Nacional (MIN)
14.	Opinion Nacional (OPINA)
15.	Izquierda Democratica (ID)
16.	Convergencia (Convergence)
17.	Solidaridad Independente (SI)
18.	Union Republica Demoratica (URD)
19.	Gente Emergente (GE)
20.	Bandera Roja (BR)
21.	Movimiento Electoral del Pueblo (MEP)
22.	Independientes por la Comunidad Nacional (IPCN)
23.	Venezuelan Revolutionary Currents (CRV)
24.	Fuerza Liberal (FR)
25.	Movimiento Democratico Independiente (MDI)
26.	Movimiento Independiente Ganamos Todos (MIGATO)
27.	Patriotic Pole (PP)
28.	Movimiento Laborista (ML)
29.	Movimiento Revolucionario Tupamaro (MRT)
30.	Por La Democracia Social (PODEMOS)
31.	Union de Republica Democratica (URD)
32.	Vanguardia Popular Nacionalista (VPN)
33.	Socialista Liga (SL)
34.	Independientes por la Comunidad Nacional (IBCR)
35.	Movimiento Civico Militante (MCM)
36.	Movimiento por la Democracia Directa (MDD)
37.	Movimiento Nacional Independiente (MNI)
38.	Unidad Patriótica Comunitaria (UPC)
39.	Fuerza Popular (FP)
40.	Cuentas Claras (CC)
41.	Partida Socialistas Unidades de Venezuela (PSUV)
42.	Vanguardia Unitaria Comunista (VUC)
43.	Unidad Vision Venezuela (UVV)
44.	Gran Polo Patriatico (GPP)
45.	Movimiento de Integridad Nacional (UNIDAD)
46.	Organized Socialist Party in Venezuela (PSOEV)
47.	National Youth Action Unit With Bimba (JUAN BIMBA)
48.	Venezuela Movement Responsible, Entrepeneurial and Sustainable (MOVE)

(*Continued*)

(*Continued*)

49.	Networks of Responses of Communitary Changes (REDES)
50.	Republican Bicentennial Vanguard (VBR)
51.	Vente Venezuela (VV)
52.	Unidos para Venezuela (UPV)
53.	Revolutionary New Way (NCR)
54.	Marxist-Leninist Communist Party of Venezuela (PCMLV)
55.	Revolutionary Middle Class (CMR)
56.	Progreso (PRG)

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"Kill and Tell": The Cultural Resonance and Reverberation of Creative Nonfiction on Special Operations Forces

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This exploratory study investigates the social and cultural significance of creative nonfiction books about Special Operations Forces. It makes three arguments. First that these volumes are constructed along the classic lines of "hero" narratives that center on the experiences of protagonists overcoming adversity and danger to succeed. Second, with the advent of "post-heroic" warfare. SOF operatives function as a sort of compensatory heroism that at once harks back to classic hero stories and places them within contemporary circumstances. Third, that the importance of cultural entrepreneurship at the base of many publications is aimed at creating and cultivating the unique reputations of SOF.

Keywords: Special operations forces, nonfiction, popular culture, books, heroism, entreupreneurs

How does one explain the popularity of books about Special Operations Forces (SOF) today? To be sure, "kill and tell" or "shoot and tell" accounts have long been a staple of writings about the military found in biographies and autobiographies, official and unofficial chronicles of units, and in an abundance of novels and tales. But even a cursory view of today's book scene reveals the impressive popularity of volumes dedicated to a variety of special forces. Appearing prominently in regular bookstores and airport shops, on the best-seller lists of newspapers and publishers, or in dedicated websites devoted to readers' recommendations, such tomes seem to have moved from a rather interesting but peripheral position to a central one in the contemporary popular books scene.

One ready answer to the question of the popularity of SOF books appears to be that it is a simple reflection of their prominence and the intensity of their use in today's conflicts such as the ones in the Middle East, parts of Africa or the frontiers of Europe. It seems that in the public imagination SOF have somehow become linked both in terms of military action and symbolically to contemporary armed struggles and that a primary expression of this development can be found in popular publications. But today's wars also include significant use of

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conventional forces. And indeed, while one can find many accounts of such forces, many volumes emphasize their close cooperation with or the similarity of their modes of action to SOF. In addition, today's wars have seen the utilization of combat flight crews, drone squadrons, anti-missile formations or intelligence units. Here again, there are publications about their exploits but these are relatively rare and certainly not in the lists of bestsellers.

Similarly, one could make a case that the non-kinetic role of SOF has been no less central to today's conflicts than their kinetic operations (Glicken Turnley, 2018). And once more while some of these operations and activities have been described and documented in popular books, these "softer" types of missions are generally not considered as kinetic operations (Spencer, 2018) and popular books about them are usually far from being best-sellers. Clearly, then a simple explanation of the popularity of books on SOF in terms of their heightened use does not suffice. There seems to be more here. If, in fact, today's icon of SOF is the US Navy Seals then the epitome of their operations is the killing of Osama Bin-Laden (Pfarrer 2012). Unsurprisingly the account of one US SEAL sniper Chris Kyle was transformed from a best-seller (Kyle, McEwen, & DeFelice 2011) to blockbuster movie and the book by the man claiming to have shot Bin-Laden became a New York Times best seller soon after it was published (O'Neill, 2017). In addition, a very successful volume "Horse Soldiers" about the landing of American SOF in Afghanistan as a prelude to the wider conflict was again turned into a smash hit movie entitled "12 Strong". Evidently, then there is something about the way SOF are depicted in popular books that somehow appeals to popular readerships and ripples out via Hollywood to cinemagoers around the world.

Against this background, our exploratory article deals with the prominence of popular SOF narratives to argue that there are actually three interrelated questions involved. First, why are these books so successful? Our answer is they are constructed along the classic lines of "hero" narratives that center on the experiences of protagonists overcoming adversity and danger to succeed. Second, why are they successful *now*? Here we will show that with the advent of "post-heroic" and risk-transfer warfare (Luttwak, 1995; Shaw, 2005) SOF operatives function as a sort of compensatory heroism that at once harks back to classic hero stories and places them within contemporary circumstances. Third, given that so many of these books are by former members or are based on close cooperation with units, what kind of collaborations and joint ventures underlie the publication of these books? Answering this question, we shall demonstrate the importance of cultural entrepreneurship at the base of many publications aimed at creating and cultivating the unique reputations of SOF.

We emphasize that this article is an exploratory study in the sense of investigating a field not previously studied. Thus, our aims are to sketch out key problems, set out the criteria for selecting subjects and establish some basic arguments about the relations between different social and cultural phenomena (Shields & Rangarajan, 2013). As such the examples of creative non-fiction books we put forward are intended as illustrations rather than being definitive or simply representative of wider populations. Hence, we contend that the value of this study lies in uncovering a hitherto unexplored dimension of SOF today.

BACKGROUND: SOF AND SOF BOOKS TODAY

The militaries of the industrial democracies have long been involved in a variety of small wars, insurgencies, and asymmetric warfare, but these have always been at the margins of the main

preoccupation of the armed forces. Whether called New (Kaldor 1998), Hybrid (Hoffman, 2009) or Fourth Generation (Lind, 2004: Vest, 2001) Wars, what is clear is that in today's armed conflicts including various combinations of symmetry and asymmetry, high- and low-tech means, and direct and indirect use of violence and that the type of units waging such wars has changed. It is not that the specter of major war has disappeared but that as it now appears, such conflicts will most probably involve various forms or elements of warfare (Gray, 2005) in which SOF will figure prominently.

No less important, the social context of military actions has changed with the emergence of public expectations about humanitarian interventions, casualty aversion, risk-transfer war, and precision strikes (Ben-Ari, Glicken Turnley and Michael 2018). Accordingly, in today's conflicts marked by the constant pursuit to avoid, prevent escalation of and in the long run resolve conflicts has increased the demand for flexible and adaptive forces, viz. SOF. Consequently, the use and demand for SOF have grown considerably in recent decades (Eriksson & Pettersson, 2017; Kiras, 2015). Notably is that SOF has been and are known as a closed community (Danielsen, 2015). The point is, even with a short history, SOF have become highly prominent during the latter half of the 20th century and into the 21st century. While not the surefire key to solve any complex conflict, SOF military capabilities are seen as already offering a way of beginning to address aspects of hybrid threats and also lay the foundation for a resistance enabled society (Eriksson & Pettersson, 2017). Furthermore, SOF and special operations have resurfaced in almost all types of military context, within a wide variety of states, and also within the whole spectrum of conflicts.

Accordingly, it is not unexpected that a plethora of various types of writings about SOF has appeared during the past two decades. For instance, publications about SOF include a significant category of military theory and doctrines mostly written by people within the military establishment and by strategic and security experts outside of it. A much smaller set are peer-reviewed studies published by researchers within different scientific disciplines. In the popular field, forming the focus of our study, there has been a veritable explosion of fiction focusing on SOF (operating alone or with intelligence units) that include such genres as thrillers, adventures, action narratives, and sexualized romances. In this article, however, we focus on what is called creative non-fiction accounts of SOF in book form. While terms like "special forces" or SOF are often contested, we focus on books that self-identify using these terms since for the purposes of this project we are not interested in doctrine, nor in the formal designation of a unit. By creative non-fiction, we do not mean that the publications are somehow false but that they are written using a variety of literary styles and elements found in fiction to make the stories they tell more compelling, alive or appealing to readers (Lounsberry, 1990; Gerard 2018). This kind of use of literary means applies both to personal creative nonfiction such as memoirs telling the writer's particular story (often with the help of professional writers) and public creative nonfiction that is mostly somebody else's story. We focus on the genre of creative nonfiction for a number of reasons.

First, this genre is based on an assumption of authenticity and realism: of a tale about something that "really" happened and is not the figment of someone's imagination and therefore credible. It is this assumed genuineness as based on fact or true to the protagonist's own personality and character that grants the book's basic believability. Such books tell the stories of real flesh and blood people as individuals that readers can reach out to and at times identify with. Moreover, authenticity intensifies the belief that the tale itself is worth telling because the

protagonist an individual, a small group, a unit, a leader – has not only done something worthwhile but that telling the credible story somehow changes readers: for instance they are moved emotionally, informed about a field, or learn a lesson. Second, creative nonfiction has a long history in writings about the military that cross and often intermingle journalism, biography, memoirs, travelogues, personal essays, meditations or cultural commentary. The point is that given the historical richness of military non-fiction, readers are pre-prepared to read such books. Indeed, by echoing some key plots of such genres such volumes seem to answer expectations about how such tales should be told, understood and indeed felt.

Third, because this is creative non-fiction, the literary aspects of the books can be analyzed for *how* they create their appeal – for example, through characterizations, descriptions of settings, or plots. In this sense "creative" implies that paying attention to the literary craft, the techniques writers use to present the factually accurate account can teach us about how they succeed (or not) in telling their stories. Fourth, because creative non-fiction almost always necessitates links with witnesses, experts or participants their production involves a different dynamic than that of fiction. For scholars, this means that such nonfiction volumes often involve links to the individuals or units they depict and their input.

While a full-fledged quantitative analysis of publications is beyond the confines of this exploratory study, to get an idea of the popularity of SOF nonfiction look at three types of websites devoted to reporting sales or recommending and documenting books. The first is the New York Times Best Seller List one of the most well-known, if not the most well-known, catalog of successful book sales. Out of ten volumes (including fiction) in the 2016 list under Espionage (the newspaper does not have a separate one for military): one was about SOF but it stood in the first place. Entitled "Rogue Heroes," it told that story of Britain's SAS. The second website is Goodreads, an Amazon-owned company that is the world's largest site for readers and book recommendations with about 55 million users. In December 2017 we found that in the list of most recommended popular military nonfiction books, of 46 volumes fully 22 are about SOF and the first five are about such units. The third, The Military Times is a popular website about military commentary for both professionals and the lay public. In 2015, out of the review of all current military books three were about SOF. Moreover, all of the following publications have been top bestsellers of SOF on Amazon: Delta Force: A Memoir by the Funder of the U.S. Military's Most Secretive Special-Operations Unit, Delta-Force-Militarys-Secretive-Special-Operations, Gentlemen Bastards: On the Ground in Afghanistan with America's Elite Special Forces and Lone Survivor: The Incredible True Story of Navy SEALs Under Siege.

WHY NOW? ICONS OF HEROISM, MANIFESTATIONS OF MYTHS

Since the end of the Cold War, the industrial democracies have used mass forces only in a small number of instances such as the First Gulf War or in the initial incursions into Iraq and Afghanistan after 9/11. For most of this period these armed forces have been involved in a variety of anti-terror and anti-insurgency actions and it within these kinds of operations that SOF have come to the fore. Culturally, to follow Shamir and Ben-Ari (2016) they have begun to be cultivated as icons of heroism in a sort of "compensatory heroism": as the conventional forces are seen to participate less and less in the perpetration of and participation in "action", it is SOF who are the "true" heroes since they put their lives at risk, face danger and the

possibility of death and injury. To be clear, we in no way denigrate or diminish the role of regulars but rather emphasize the central *cultural* position SOF have come to take in the popular imagination. Along these lines, SOF operatives very often exemplify the ultimate republican ethos of military service since participation in such units is voluntary (in the US triply so – they volunteer for the military, volunteer to be in the elite infantry and then volunteer to be in SOF). While professionals in the sense of being paid for their work, they also personify a military career as a calling and as a republican emphasis on contributing to the collective by defending the nation. Indeed, even a cursory review of memoirs by former operatives reveal this idea of operatives being motivated by patriotism and a voluntary ethos.

An analysis of the nonfiction books published about SOF reveals three types of master narratives (with some volumes mixing all three). The first and the most dominant one is the hero tale: a story of a protagonist as the center of the plot overcoming obstacles, finding himself, and then meeting the ultimate tests of soldierhood and manhood. Such stories, evoking a long string of tales beginning with classic myths (Booker, 2004) provide a template involving a hero who embarks on a journey and in a decisive crisis is victorious and then comes home often somehow changed. Military hero stories especially and tales of SOF operatives exemplify this point especially emphasize such elements as being avengers of the weak and defenders of national interests and the course of justice (Spencer, 2018). Firmin and Pearson (2010) tell the story of the Iranian Embassy Siege in London by providing a day to day account leading up to the climax of the assault on the site. The dustcover relates that the book, entitled "Go, Go, Go" tells the action-packed story of the 1980 Iranian embassy siege… by an ex-SAS soldier "takes us to the heart of Operation Nimrod. Another excellent example is Pete Blaber´s The Mission, the Men, and Me: Lessons from a Former Delta Force Commander, published in 2010. The book is marketed with the following text: "As the smoke clears from exciting stories about never-before-revealed top-secret missions that were executed all over the globe, readers will emerge wiser, more capable, and more ready for life's personal victories than they ever thought possible". Michael Durant (the pilot downed in Mogadishu) thanks the two Delta operators who risked (and lost) their lives to protect him. The book itself is constructed as a classic tale of heroism (of a number of people) (Durant & Hartov 2003): it begins with his own experience and leads up to the climax into which the courage of the Delta operators is interwoven. And the book by Wasdin and Templin (2012) takes readers are taken behind the scenes deep into the world of Navy SEALs and Special Forces snipers". And "Bravo Two Zero: The Harrowing True Story of a Special Forces Patrol Behind the Lines in Iraq" by Andy McNab is crafted as an adventure. Finally, take the story written by Mitchell Zuckoff "13 Hours: The Inside Account of What Really Happened in Benghazi." It tells the tale of a team of six American security operators who (we are told on the dustcover) "went beyond the call of duty, performing extraordinary acts of courage and heroism, to avert tragedy on a much larger national scale when terrorists attacked the US State Department Special Mission Compound and a nearby CIA station referred to as the Annex in Benghazi, Libya in 2012."

A close variation of this kind of narrative is stories about joining and enduring the trials and tribulations of SOF to finally become an operator and serve one's country. Tony Schwalm (2012) again takes such a personal perspective to write a memoir about how officers in the Green Berets are created. On the dustcover, a good place to see how books are marketed, one commentator (Eric Greitens, himself a New York Times bestselling author of "The Heart and the First") calls the book "a fine tale of courage, compassion, and selflessness from one of our

country's finest". And Couch's (2006) tome entitled "The Finishing School: Earning a Navy SEAL Trident" tells the collective story of a class that is constructed along the lines or a rite of passage towards membership in a community. Large parts of A slightly different account is related by Haney's (2002) volume entitled "Inside Delta Force" follow a similar narrative trajectory.

The next type of narrative, another variation of the hero tale, centers on SOF innovators often the founders of such units. These types of stories include an emphasis on enlightenment on the part of the hero (understanding a lack of weakness of the armed forces in pursuing conflicts), overcoming opposition within the military organization and finally succeeding in establishing an SOF unit or a new kind of capability. These founding or foundation myths are then told and retold afterward often with additions and embellishments so that they form part of the cult that surrounds such leaders. Thus, in such accounts as the founding of the British SAS by David Sterling, the OSS by (Wild) Bill Donovan (Menand, 2014) or the US Seals by Richard Marcinko as the story unfolds we get a picture of a group of intense, often adoring, loyalists following charismatic actors marked by leadership and rhetorical abilities (for an Israeli example see (Brichta & Ben-Ari, 2018). Good examples of such foundation narratives are books by Lewis (2011) on the SAS and Beckwith (1983, re-released in 2000 and 2013) on Delta Force. Both tomes are historical but are constructed in a manner that interweaves insights about the nature of SOF with descriptions of key missions. The wider appeal of these kinds of accounts, we conjecture, lies in these being tales that are enervating and motivating for readers. It is in this sense, for example, that the adoption by commercial businesses of SOF types of practices should be seen.

And finally are accounts of group efforts centered on courage, innovation, and audacity. Probably the most famous such story today is that of the killing of Bin-Laden: a story of cooperation and competition, uncertainty and perseverance, and dead alleys and near misses all leading to the volume's final climax. Thus, for example, while the actual operation of killing Bin-Laden took only a few hours and the gathering of intelligence, planning and training may have taken years, in the books describing it the actual operation takes pride of place and forms their peak. In such tales, centered on organizational success, other actors in contemporary conflicts – for example, drone and helicopter pilots, intelligence personnel or local collaborators – are usually cast in minor, if at times important, roles. Thus, for instance, Robert M. Gillespie wrote "Black Ops, Vietnam: The Operational History of MACVSOG" was published in 2011. It takes place during the Vietnam War and focuses on the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam Studies and Observations Group (MACVSOG) a highly classified joint-service organization that consisted of personnel from Army Special Forces, the Air Force, Navy SEALs, Marine Corps Force Reconnaissance units, and the CIA. Team effort was highly valued since they were the only team with an operational mandate that authorized missions to take place *over the fence* in North Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. A more emotionally evocative rendering example focusing on brotherhood is "Service: A Navy SEAL at War from 2014" by Luttrell. The story is crafted as a moving tribute to the warrior brotherhood, to their beliefs that nobody goes it alone, and no one will ever be left behind.

Coloring these kinds of the narrative is a strong emphasis on the masculinity of the SOF operatives (Spencer, 2018; and Gibbons, Nelson, & Suchan, 2018). This prominence does not go for the overtly macho Rambo type of operative but for a much quieter professional identity that nevertheless centers on courage and physicality. As Spencer (2018) observes such stories

(sometimes Hollywoodized) have a strong appeal of the somewhat rogue, ultra-masculine warrior who can single-handedly save the world. While not necessarily always SOF, these characters can generally be construed as SOF-like. We can now understand that part of the appeal of SOF thus lies not only in their providing suitable means for pursuing conflicts but how their seductiveness (Noonan, 2015) also involves capturing the imagination of decision-makers and the public.

COMPETITIONS, COLLABORATIONS AND REPUTATIONS: ENTREPRENEURS

Look at the marginal parts of many books about SOF – say their preface or acknowledgment sections – and you will find evidence of the fascinating links between the authors and contemporary or past operators or mentors of the units. What types of dynamics underlie the publication of words of thanks to members of SOF units or the writing of preambles by mentors? We suggest that they are related to the role of SOF cultural entrepreneurship that figures in the competition between SOF (especially within one nation), and the cultivation of public images of units. Let us take each of these in turn. SOF are not unlike other units in participating in the competitive dynamics characterizing armed forces. While SOF units belong to different service cultures, have different histories and traditions, specialize in (at times overlapping) missions the competition between them is nevertheless intense. For example, Urban (2010) relates how the SAS competed with other classified units for their "slice of the action in Iraq". Creative non-fiction contributes to this competition over public knowledge about which unit was closest to the "action" to the violent tip of the spear. Simons and Tucker (2003: 84–7) point out that within the US special forces one finds a hierarchy between the high prestige "putting steel on a target" or action-oriented troops and the low prestige operatives dealing with longer-term counter-insurgency and staffing the civil affairs and PSYOP parts of SOF. And indeed looking over SOF bestsellers clearly these are the most popular books.

At the base of competition likes what Suttles (1984) elsewhere terms "reputational content", that is, the kinds of imagery that somehow conveys the special quality or ethos of a unit. As Ben-Ari, Glicken Turnley and Michael (2018) suggest reputations of SOF often center on fantasies of super-heroes, of soldiers that can carry out any mission, and thus answer contemporary anxieties about security. But this is not enough since while such reputations, like that of any organization, may emerge over time out of unintended actions, they are very often products of the intentional activities of actors and especially SOF cultural entrepreneurs. These entrepreneurs operate both inside and outside the armed forces to promote the reputations of their units. The writing and publication of books should be seen in this light. A good place to see how authors are embedded within networks of current and former operators on which they depend for information, support, and promotion is the acknowledgments sections of the volumes. Thus, Wasdin and Templin (2012) thank a number of people in and around the SOF community for their aid in writing their book. And Mark Urban (2010) similarly thanks anonymously members of the task force in Afghanistan for talking to him and to protect them uses pseudonyms as does Hastings (2012) in his books about the operations initiated by the US forces and spearheaded by SOF in Afghanistan. Firmin and Pearson (2010) thanks members of the SAS assault team who released the hostages in Iran's London embassy. Similarly, Smith

(2011) author of "Killer Elite" writes that he is "grateful to those who helped me in the writing of this book. Most cannot be named, for obvious reasons". And Chuck Pfarrer (2012), a former SEAL, acknowledges comrades, and friends from the "gray world".

Pfarrer's volume is instructive in this respect. While ostensibly about the raid on Osama Bin Laden's hideout in Pakistan, the actual chapters devoted to the raid cover only about a quarter of the text. The rest of the book's 17 chapters (framed by a sort of preface and explanatory sections) provide a background about the SEALs and especially Team Six (selection, training, weapons, and operations in such places as Beirut, Granada, or Kuwait). But Pfarrer is a man with a mission: to counter an article published in The New Yorker that argued that the SEALs had assassinated Bin Laden. Pfarrer is convincing in showing (evidently since the SEALs want to get the record straight) that Bin Laden did not give up but reached for his weapons and that the SEALs did not kill women and children on the way up to his room. Another mission is to counter the CIA's attempt to take full credit for finding Bin Laden as portrayed in the movie "Zero Dark Thirty" where the ground forces are given short shrift.

It is often this kind of entrepreneurial activity that may extend out from creative nonfiction to other forms of popular culture. A number of the most successful US examples are movies about SOF based on books such as "American Sniper" or "Lone Survivor". But apart from full-length films, one also finds a multitude of documentaries, commercial products (t-shirts, watches, knives, or shoes, for example), video games, YouTube movies that depict SOF in a very positive light, or public spectacles (such as SOF parachuting displays at sports games). A historical case is related by Drory, Lewin, and Ben-Ari (2018) who describe how the leaders and mentors of one of Israel's SOF promoted their unit in the early 1970s through flattering news reports, popular songs, and indeed books. The wider point here is that all of these popular expressions reverberate among and between each other. Finally, we can hypothesize that these processes are intensified by the "special forcification" of many regular units (Ben-Ari, 2015; King, 2015) in which they are becoming more and more similar to the SOF in dress, action, doctrine, and use.

However, we need to be careful here because there are differences between units and nations, while US SOF have been accused of orchestrating their image on the scale of a blockbuster Hollywood movie, the Canadian SOF have preferred to stay out of the limelight (Spencer 2011: 206). And within the US Delta is much more closed than other SOF.

CONCLUSION: RESONANCES AND REVERBERATIONS

In this exploratory study, we have explained the appeal of creative non-fiction books published in the field of SOF. By way of conclusion let us return to the resonance and reverberation (Ben-Amos & Ben-Ari, 1995) found in the article's title since these two images may capture our main contentions and point to some avenues of possible future research. We use these two acoustic metaphors to argue that creative non-fiction books resonate and reverberate with other popular genres and products centered on SOF and, to a great degree we conjecture, form the images through which the general public understands and politicians conceivably decide and act upon such forces. Resonance refers to the increase of intensity of a sound by the sympathetic vibration with other bodies while reverberation is not simply a re-echoing of sound but a multiple reflection or prolongation within a certain space

after its initial source has stopped. Accordingly, we sketched-out some processes by which creative non-fiction increases the power of messages about SOF and ripples out these messages into other popular genres.

The various literary means by which stories about SOF are told are purposely designed to create interesting, often riveting accounts. In this way, such tales are devised to resonate with the feelings and sentiments of readers. In fact, given their impressive popularity, we suggest that they provide grounds for identification with operators and with reactions of pride at their efforts. Resonance thus refers to the ways in which such genres affect readers emotionally. Accordingly, these kinds of volumes are part of the way that the mystique and appeal of SOF have been created and form one of the key bases in SOF's attempts to justify their own existence, procure funding for development and recruit future operators. Future research on SOF we would suggest could benefit from understanding how popular identification with SOF is translated into support for awarding them missions and resources.

Yet the wider import of our analysis lies precisely in the reverberations between books about SOF and other popular cultural products. As we suggested, books, full-length movies, documentaries, commercial products, websites You-tube films or spectacles, respectively, reverberate with each other in a process that constructs public images of SOF. Indeed, the reference to the US Navy SEALs as "Jedi Knights" (Wasdin and Templin 2012) is probably the best example of the close connection between different genres, in this case, Hollywood movies and books. Thus, the seductiveness (Noonan, 2015) of SOF lies both in the believability of stories about them but also perhaps because they seem to offer an almost superhuman all-solution tool for the problems many governments now face. Against this background, we end with a cautionary note. Given the image of SOF in popular culture and the fact that many such units around the world have created solid myths about themselves, we could conjecture that they also influence the way political leaders perceive such forces and possibly shape some of their decisions. Our concern is just this, that elites' perceptions of SOF are similar to a great degree to those of the general public (Last and Thornton 2005). To follow (Rhodes & Parker, 2013) who have written about our popular "common-sense" understandings of organizations, if the common-sense among elites is a romanticized view SOF then caution would seem to be necessary in specific decisions about using such units.

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BOOK REVIEW

The US Special Forces—What Everyone Needs to Know. John Prados. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015, ISBN 978-0-19-935428-3.

Reviewed by **Tor Bukkvoll**
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This short, well-written, and engaging history of US Special forces is published as part of the Oxford University Press series, *What Everyone Needs to Know*. These are short monographs on important topics written by leading scholars in their respective fields. They distinguish themselves from other similar projects by being written in a question-and-answer format. For example, one question in the present book is "How did air force special warfare develop?" This subheading is followed by three pages answering that question before a new question is launched

Prados' book covers the period from the Second World War until today. It tells the story of US Special Forces chronologically, and a "who is who in special forces" is added as an appendix at the end. Unconventional warfare skills had been in high demand during the Second World War, but in the immediate post-war era their continued relevance came under question. Additionally, they were not very popular among some of the other branches of the US military. According to Prados, the Korean War was the decisive event that demonstrated the continued need for special operations. One of the major contributions of Prados' book is to give more or less equal attention to all periods in the six decades of the historical development of the current US Special Forces. This makes his work different from other recent books on the same topic. The latter tend to discuss history briefly in the introduction and then jump to present times. Prados' book is also different from more journalistic accounts in not going into great detail on specific operations. There are of course descriptions of operations, but they are primarily there to illustrate a larger point. Further, Prados is not a detached analyst of his topic. At several points in the book he offers personal points of view and criticism of conclusions drawn by others.

The book is an excellent option for those who want to get a general understanding of these forces and their role in American warfare, and who have limited time for reading (149 pages of text plus the appendix). It is also valuable to the more scholarly community by bringing up a number of issues that pertain to the phenomenon of special operations as such. They include: (1) the tendency for special operations forces (SOF) to have special relations with political

leaders; (2) SOF's often troubled relations with the other branches of the armed forces; and (3) the sometimes difficult division of labor between SOF and civilian law enforcement and the intelligence community. One thing that can be questioned is to what extent the author is successful in reaching his own stated goal of writing an explanatory rather than a narrative account. Generic SOF issues and dilemmas tend to be analyzed mostly in the concrete historical situations in which they occur. An alternative could have been to treat them as general research questions to be compared across time. This, however, may have been difficult to combine with the chronological structure of the book.

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BOOK REVIEW

Rise and Kill First: The Secret History of Israel's Targeted Assassinations. Ronen Bergman. New York: Random House, 2018, ISBN-13: 978-1400069712.

Reviewed by **Robert Tomlinson**
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It may be slightly unusual that a journal dedicated to the academic study of Special Operations Forces (SOF), the theory and culture surrounding their activities, would review a book on targeted assassinations. Yet Ronen Bergman's newest book, *Rise and Kill First*, has important information to offer anyone studying special operations and their theories of action. In a world where nations spend enormous resources to counter terrorism and contain hybrid threats, Ronen Bergman's examination of Israel's use of "targeted killings" to mitigate these threats deserves our attention. Highlighting the use of Israeli intelligence and SOF in these efforts is prominent throughout this book.

Bergman is not a novice at studying Israeli intelligence or Israeli special operations. As a senior military and intelligence correspondent to Israel's most popular daily newspaper, Bergman has written extensively about Israeli intelligence and military operations. With a doctorate from Cambridge University and several books to his credit, his foray into Israel's targeted assassination program, though daunting, is well within his capabilities. Yet, of all his writing on Israeli intelligence and the use of military force to combat Israel's enemies, *Rise and Kill First* is undoubtedly his most ambitious work. Bergman's book provides the most comprehensive inquiry into the assassination and targeted killings program carried out by Israel's government agencies in both peacetime and wartime.

Although the topic of Israel's assassination program is exciting, the reader should be forewarned: this is no quick read or page-turner that can be devoured in a night. The well over 600-page book is detailed and in some instances turgid, as it systematically covers the origins of Israel's intelligence and special forces programs and chronicles their many successes and some of their spectacular failures. For the novice in studies of the Israeli intelligence and special operations activities, the formation of Mossad (Israel's external intelligence agency), Shin Bet (Israel internal intelligence and counterterror agency), and AMAN (Israel's military intelligence agency) are covered in detail. Additionally, Bergman deftly covers the early history of the Israeli intelligence and special operations programs by acknowledging groups such as the Stern Gang, Gmul, and Haganah. These organizations

were precursors to the professional intelligence and special operations activities that Israel adopted after its formation as an independent state in 1948.

After Israel's declaration of independence, it was immediately attacked by its neighbors. Outmanned and outresourced, the Israelis developed specialized military organizations that could attack their enemies behind the lines and impose a high cost on their conflicts with Israel. These early special forces were effective at deterring the activities of some of Israel's many enemies. It was also a stepping-stone for some of the most prominent politicians in Israel. Ariel Sharon, the legendary prime minister, led one of these groups, Task Force 101.

In recounting the story of the early development of Israel's special forces, Ronen makes an important distinction between Israel's SOFs and those of most Western nations. Israeli special forces were an integral part of its intelligence agencies. In the United States, such teams as Delta Force and SEAL Team Six are under the command of Joint Special Operations Command; they do not normally act under the purview of the Central Intelligence Agency or military intelligence. In Israel, special operations units were under the direct control of the intelligence agencies, Mossad and AMAN.

From its early formation and the targeting of scientists working on Egyptian missile technology programs in the 1960s, through its war with the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and the elimination of Iranian scientists, Bergman sketches a detailed picture of the work and the integration of Israeli intelligence and SOF. Forces such as Flotilla 13 (the Naval Commando unit similar to SEAL Team 6) and Sayeret Matkal (the special reconnaissance and direct action group, similar to Delta Force or the British Special Air Service) are examined closely throughout the book. While these units were extremely successful in the targeted assassination program, their efforts did not always end in success. The spectacular raid into Beirut in 1973, conducted by Sayeret Matkal, targeted and killed three senior operatives of the PLO, as highlighted in news reports. Failures such as the death of twelve Flotilla 17 Commandos killed in a Hezbollah ambush while attempting to assassinate a Hezbollah leader, however, were given less publicity by the Israelis. Overall, the success of Israel's targeted assassination program of eliminating its intended victims has been extraordinary.

In conclusion, despite the overall success of the Israeli targeted assassination program, Bergman asks a fundamental question: Is a targeted assassination program ultimately successful, and legally and ethically justifiable, for a nation? Despite the incredible talent of Israel's intelligence and SOF, Bergman points out that in the end, it is not the warrior or the intelligence operator who must make the ultimate decision about the greater good of such action, but the people and the government who gauge its efficacy. I highly recommend this book not only for its detailed chronology of Israel's tactical actions but for outlining the larger question about the ultimate purpose of our use of targeted assassinations in defense of the state.

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BOOK REVIEW

Vanguard of the Imam: religion, politics, and Iran's revolutionary guards by Afshon Ostovar, New York, Oxford University Press, first paperback publication 2018, 306 pp., $24.95, ISBN: 978-0-19-088289-1

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As President Trump tweets to adversaries in Iran, Ostovar's *Vanguard of the Imam* provides timely insight for American policymakers: "If war was ever to come to Iran, Jafari [IRGC Commander] ensured that the Basij would be the core of the resistance." With the first comprehensive exploration of Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps, Afshon Ostovar provides scholarly detail for a readership with less-than-academic timetables. By structuring the book in almost military fashion, the introduction offers an immediate breakdown of his methodology and findings, as well as identifying other authors in this small but growing field. The author examines the history of the IRGC as only a native Iranian can, utilizing significant amounts of sources from the Corps' publications. His unique lens examines the organization from three vantage points: pro-clerical coercive activism, devotion to the Supreme Leader, and the impact of conflict on the IRGC's organizational and state development. These themes contextualize a historical analysis of the IRGC, from its infancy to modern methods of meddling throughout the Middle East and beyond. In utilizing the three optics, Ostovar reveals the organizational culture of the IRGC and its entangled primacy with Iran's Supreme Leader.

Starting with the IRGC's fledgling initiatives from previous decades, Ostovar maps how the IRGC acquired its current power status in the region. By "exporting the Islamic Revolution," Iran's Jerusalem Force (Quds Force) demonstrates the legitimacy of long-term Special Warfare. In detailing the IRGC's support to Lebanese Hezbollah, the Supreme Council of the Islamic Republic of Iraq, and Iraqi militant groups such as Kataib Hezbollah, Western military professionals can identify the subtleties of Iranian influence from their own experiences in the Middle East. Following the U.S. withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the author articulates some of the challenges that lie ahead. Whether it be a campaign of influence or a full military incursion, the IRGC, and its Basij (militia) force, maintains the posture and autonomy that rivals any of *Red Dawn*'s Wolverines.

An important topic that Ostovar dedicates adequate attention to is the celebrity of Qassem Soleimani. In a time where external pressure is on the rise, the Quds Force Commander offers

Iran a daring hero who coordinates the covert activities of the IRGC and contrarily shares selected successes on social media platforms. Fundamentally, Soleimani's exploits provide readers with a useful model for modern irregular warfare. In this regard, a significant shortcoming of Ostovar's work is the lack of attention afforded to IRGC media and cyber-regulation.

Although the lifespan of the organization is relatively short, the IRGC has demonstrated startup-like abilities to learn and forecast future requirements. In response to Iran's 2009 Green Movement, the IRGC acquired Iran's largest telecommunications company and, subsequently, established a Cyber Defense Command. The state-sanctioned entity is responsible for monitoring potentially subversive internet activity throughout Iran. The bulwark of these information instruments highlights one of Ostovar's fundamental principles in a modern framework: the IRGC's constant state of conflict. Ostovar rightly dedicates a chapter to the IRGC's emphasis on messaging and self-image but misses the role modern information systems play in mitigating internal social movements, both in Iran and early in the Syrian civil war. Iran's Digital interconnectedness is only increasing the significance of these capabilities, and the IRGC maintains pole position. Though not as detailed as Ostovar's work, the U.S. Institute of Peace highlights the IRGC's investments in information technologies in *The Iran Primer* edited by Robin Wright.

As the Middle East continues to present international security concerns, it is imperative that Western policymakers, researchers, and defense personnel understand the most capable adversarial actor in the region. Secretary Mattis' "Guidance" memorandum from October 2017 fully acknowledges the significance of irregular warfare in future competition and names Iran as one of the critical adversaries with which the United States must contend. Ostovar provides an opportunity to better understand the most effective paramilitary and security apparatus of that adversary. Conveniently, he concludes his work by highlighting challenges the IRGC must address moving forward. If the West effectively targets these stress-points, the IRGC is likely to suffer diminished capability, domestically and abroad. Pertinently, Iranians who did not experience the Islamic Revolution and subsequent Iran–Iraq War are now of age to enter politics. This previously unifying cultural dynamic is currently yielding a schism that is raising concern among legacy leaders in the Islamic Republic: how to relate to its majority-youth demographic.

As Ostovar identifies, the IRGC must decide how it will co-opt this new generation – or coerce it. The Iranian regime knows what is at stake given IRGC efforts in regular Basij youth programs throughout Iran. Juxtaposed, the United States is beginning to invest in capabilities to counter the IRGC's information and influence activities. The 2017 National Security Strategy includes information statecraft and associated priority actions. The U.S. Agency for Global Media has received funding and guidance to increase content development and delivery into Iran. The Department of State's Global Engagement Center has received guidance to expand its charter beyond non-state actors. These actions are appropriate but nascent in comparison to the decades-long efforts of Iran (and other geopolitical actors). The real challenge for the United States will be to shake off the residue of combating terrorism and all its metric-minutiae. Irregular measures of effectiveness will be challenging, and results will be slow-growing. Consistency will be the determining factor to compete with Iran in this long-term irregular arena.

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BOOK REVIEW

Drones: what everyone needs to know, by Sarah E. Kreps, New York, Oxford University Press, 2016. pp 200., $16.95 (paperback), ISBN 978-0-19-023535-2

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By 2020, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) expects to incorporate 30,000 drones in the United States (US) National airspace as the billion-dollar market for commercial drones increases in both interest and capacity. This projection does not account for the increased reliance on military drones, often referred to as unmanned aerial systems or vehicles (UAS/UAVs), to fight wars and interdict enemy combatants abroad. With great technology comes great responsibility. In 2015, a small drone measuring 2′ in diameter and 2lbs in weight gracefully showed up on the White House lawn at 3 am. Too small and too low to be detected by radar, the drone's inebriated operator haphazardly landed it on the South lawn. This event illustrates just one of the potential concerns for the future of drones. From MQ-1C Gray Eagles providing defensive fires in support of coalition forces along the Middle Euphrates River Valley (MERV), to beverage drones refilling your beer at an overcrowded concert, the utility of UAS is irrefutable.

Sarah Kreps, a professor at Cornell University and former Air Force officer was first introduced to UAVs while working in the Airborne and Warning and Control System (AWACS) office outside Boston. In the wake of September 11th, then-Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld assigned Kreps and her organization with the task of arming Predators with Hellfire missiles. Seventeen years later, the Predator progressed to General Atomics' upgraded title of "Gray Eagle," and maintains a payload of up to four Hellfire missiles. The sophisticated drone features increased endurance, sensor improvements, as well as manned-unmanned teaming (MUM-T) with AH-64E Apache helicopters. Furthermore, the Army's Gray Eagle is second to its much larger Air Force brother, the MQ-9 Reaper, whose endurance, payload, and size are superior. As Kreps discusses in detail, these highly advanced pieces of equipment provide several advantages in armed conflict. One such benefit is that drones offer precision strike capability and covert profiles that shield the government from the public scrutiny that large troop deployments invite. Inevitably, their roles in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, and Syria have increased substantially in the past decade. She cleverly points out that although society may have falsely misread the future of flying cars by 2015 in "Back to the Future II," the idea of sophisticated and prevalent automated systems buzzing around daily life was not entirely lost.

Kreps argues that while the prospect of ubiquity concerning drones is still debatable, one thing is not; drones are here to stay and will seriously impact not only the way in which the world operates but the rules by which it is govern. Kreps provides a relevant and practical guide through a chronological framework. Although primarily focused on US military analysis, the book, transcends country borders, peace and conflict, air and ground, commercial and military, and nearly all aspects of the drone conversation from novice enthusiasts to the Global Hawk operator. The overall theme is for the reader to weigh opportunities and concerns that drones project for the future. Kreps articulates several dilemmas associated with drones and automated systems. Early on she raises the complex question if drones are creating more terrorists than they are removing or if post-traumatic stress is causing more negative effects on operators than is worth unmanning the system. These two discussions convey that advanced technology, specifically with drones comes at a cost. The cost-benefit analysis of opportunity and concern is the ultimate paradox. The computation she argues will be the aggregate of the following tradeoffs: security vs. privacy, safety vs. convenience, economic growth vs. civil liberty, efficiency vs. ethics, reduced risk vs. moral hazard, hurting vs. helping, international superiority vs. regulation, and quality of life vs. over-regulation.

Kreps provides a thoughtful and forward-looking account that describes the drone revolution of the 21st century and indicates the challenges both decision makers and society will face. Her A to Z synthesis of drones covers a lot of ground quickly; however, she did not overtly address a few significant areas of concern. Her chapter on the future of drones discusses nano-drones. The commentary is suggestive of their potential use for terrorism and even likens their resemblance to insects. Without overtly stating it, the pursuit of miniaturization, faster, stealthier, and more capacious drones pose a significant security dilemma. She writes that size and stealth advantages of mini-drones make them difficult to regulate and defend. If a drone can end up on the White House lawn, what is preventing a swarm of insect-like-nano drones from assassinating members of government or likewise caring out chemical or biological warfare in public places? CNN raised several questions concerning the feasibility of drone assassinations and security protocol for heads of state when it reported in August that two armed drones exploded in Caracas during a speech by Venezuela's President, Nicolas Maduro. Last fall, the Future of Life Institute released an alarming short film at the United Nations Convention on Conventional Weapons called *Slaughterbots*. The disturbing sci-fi film provides a sobering reminder that artificial intelligence (AI) powered and miniaturized killer drones can take a dark turn if the weapon falls into the wrong hands enabling the assassination of politicians, activists, and students. Furthermore, the increased responsibility to safeguard the technology will pose immense difficulties moving forward. The widespread use and development of drones invite an adaptation in criminal activity in the form of illicit activities. Maligned adversaries will seek opportunities through cyber technology to interrupt operating systems, disrupt private and public industry, and ultimately hijack these borderless, omnipresent aerial vehicles.

In the wake of 9/11, nearly two decades later, the need remains to prepare for the next black swan which may take the form of a hijacked drone rather than a 767. This is the other area of concern that *Drones* does not address. What do drones and automation in vehicular movement mean for domestic transportation and combat troop movement? Kreps' military analysis focuses primarily on "hunter-killer" drones, but aerial vehicles serve several other purposes.

Kreps addresses the possibility of replacing fighter pilots with remote systems, but due to Tom Cruise's reverence in *Top Gun*, phasing them out would come with extreme reluctance.

She also mentions the enthusiasm by the Pentagon to remove the "man" out of "unmanned" through greater automation. Sandra Jantz, a long-time war correspondent and journalists for Signal Magazine and the Armed Forces Communications and Electronics Association (AFCEA) describes the Defense Department's road map for unmanned systems in the DOD document "Unmanned Systems Integrated Roadmap FY2013-2038." She distinguishes between simply unmanning and autonomous systems while extracting the future ethical dilemma associated with the technology. She cites the document's call for improved capabilities to eliminate specific human activities while also addressing the DOD's awareness of the challenges involved in designing overarching guidance principles for autonomy and insurance for system performance within intended parameters. Autonomy entails removing remote piloting all together and a reliance on robotic programs for ethical adapters to make tough decisions, or in other words AI.

Focusing on fighter pilots and ethical dilemmas with AI is important, but the narrative applies to an even more fundamental dilemma that coincides with intentions to remove the pilot. At what point do we start transporting human life on autonomous aircraft? Will helicopter pilots become obsolete during direct action raids? Will a pressurized, hardened shell in the form of a UAV climb to thirty-thousand feet and expeditiously descend to a pre-programmable target on the ground to deliver special forces to the inaccessible corners of the earth? Will American Airlines feature pilotless aircraft on programmable routes like the terminal trains in the airports themselves? This is an enormous ethical dilemma. How will we cope with the first aircraft incident transporting human lives that cannot be attributed to "human error?"

Perhaps we will never progress entirely to pilotless aircraft for human transportation or automated deployment of troops on the battlefield. A hybrid solution may be more digestible in which the lead aircraft of a helicopter assault force is an automated drone, guiding, deciding, and sequencing the flight onto the objective. Removing the need for a Flight Lead in a unit such as the 160th Special Operation Aviation Regiment may be culturally abrasive, but it may provide incorruptible accuracy and a reduction in force generation costs. Removing the pilot on a C-17 Globemaster II carrying combat troops in support of contingency operations may lead to increased maneuverability and deployability due to the absence of crew endurance. The future of drones will inarguably make our military more lethal and our industry more efficient. Consequently, removing the aviator from the aviation asset will come at a price.

As Kreps argues, the future of drones undoubtedly will continue to reshape civilian and military life. Where society draws the line on the novelty of the technology is unclear. In one instance, communities accept surveillance cameras on city light posts but reject the Los Angeles police departments' use of drones to surveil the metropolitan area for infringement of the 4th Amendment rights of US citizens. In another instance, individuals favor drones to secure borders and interests abroad in the face of adversaries but reject them to regulate and secure borders from within. In that regard, Kreps' stimulating read offers one final overarching paradox for society. Is the use of drones a double standard? In other words, do societies want the luxuries of the technology without paying the personal, private, and ethical costs?