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# Infinity Journal



## IN THIS EDITION

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# A Note From The Editor

Welcome to Issue 1, Volume 2 of Infinity Journal. Keep and treasure all IJ issues, because they may well become collector items, as much as any PDF file can ever really be collectible.

Why? Because Infinity Journal is still being afflicted by a lack of useable articles. Yes, I have mentioned this before, but it is rapidly becoming an item of major concern. Very few people either have the ability or the motivation to want to write about strategy.

What makes this remarkable is should one wander out onto the Internet there is no shortage of pontificating and discussion as to strategy. Most of it is woeful, but when we keep being told that the major shortcoming of the US is a lack of a grand strategy, for example, it is amazing how little rigour the idea of "grand strategy" is actually subject to. If you have "grand strategy" where is the "grand policy?"

Infinity Journal exists to promote the discussion and education relevant to strategy. If there were the smallest chance that people understood strategy, then we would simply be out of a job, or inundated with papers about strategy. Neither seems likely, except we may be out of a job, because no one wants to write about it.

Conversely, Infinity Journal may become the publication that showcases a small and very rare band of men who care about the subject and can write about it. That may well be the future, because right now we have to reject the majority of article submissions. A great many never even reach the editorial board or review process because they simply fail the test of being about strategy. Infinity Journal does not exist to simply provide a forum for academics to be published. It exists as a venue designed to educate and inform.

Most students of international relations or security studies, soldiers, academics, and civil servants think they understand strategy. A very great deal of what they write demonstrates that they do not. Maybe it is time to stop writing and start learning. If that time comes, we at Infinity are absolutely here to help, but right now we need more help from those that can write on the subject.

Yes, that is paradoxical, and when everyone understands strategy, Infinity Journal should cease to exist - or we will have so many useful article submissions that we might have to 'go to print' more often. Clearly, we prefer the latter.

**William F. Owen**  
Editor, Infinity Journal  
December 2011

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# Strategy, Resources, and Reality

**Anthony H. Cordesman**

Anthony H. Cordesman holds the Arleigh A. Burke Chair in Strategy at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, DC.

During the next year, the US is going to get a grim lesson in the need to tie strategy to reality, and the limits of trying to shape US national security on the basis of prophecies about a distant future. The current budget crisis is going to force the Administration and the Congress to come to grips with reality in ways that both have systematically avoided for more than a decade.

The question is whether the US will have the courage to realize how vacuous and empty our efforts to draft documents like the National Strategy, the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), and the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR) have been. It is whether we will find better ways to tie realistic strategic planning to the programming and budgeting process. It is all too possible that we will simply adopt a "slash and burn" approach to cutting the national security budget, and go on living in a strategic fantasyland.

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## **It is possible we will simply adopt a "slash and burn" approach to cutting the national security budget, and go on living in a strategic fantasyland**

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In practice, however, we have every possible indication that our current approach to strategy is a failure. We focus far too much on trying to guess long-term trends and a conceptual future far beyond the time horizon we can actually plan for, and where current leaders can actually shape decision-making.

It is true that there are various definitions of the word 'strategy', but we seem to have lost sight of all that are relevant: "A plan of action or policy designed to achieve a major or overall aim;" "The science and art of using all the forces of a nation

to execute approved plans as effectively as possible during peace or war;" "A method or plan chosen to bring about a desired future, such as achievement of a goal or solution to a problem." Mere goals and concepts are more a form of a prayer than a strategy. A strategy only is a strategy if there is a specific plan to achieve a specific goal with specific resources in clearly defined ways, or a specified amount of time. From a Department of Defense viewpoint, you haven't got a strategy if you cannot lay out a specific, plan, and budget.

We seem unable to bring strategic focus to planning force levels, personnel, and procurement. We have failed to implement functional or consistent strategies in both the Iraq War and the Afghan conflict. We have left the military services to do strategic, force, and budget planning that should have been shifted to combatant commands over a decade ago, and we talk about integrating civil and military action without being able to develop either relevant strategic or functional programs.

### **Failure to Tie Strategy to the Implementation and Funding of Tangible Force, Personnel, and Procurement Plans**

Even if there were no coming cuts in defense spending, the failure to tie strategy to the implementation and funding of tangible force, personnel, and procurement plans would be critical.

Even without the coming budget cuts, Defense has to plan for significant cuts in active strength at a time when the Afghan and Iraq wars demonstrated that the US has serious military manpower problems with fighting two medium-sized, regional contingencies. Despite having nearly as many – and possibly more – US and foreign contractors and civilians directly supporting US forces and operations in each conflict than it had US military personnel.

Even without the coming budget cuts, Defense also has to reshape its overall manpower policies in ways that balance its strategic needs against rising costs and the need to fund readiness, rest, and procurement of new lead systems. At the same time, Defense must find a better balance between active and reserve forces that is tied to both the strategic need for rapid power projection, as well as a far better

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balance in tours of duty, recovery, and training. Defense must reconsider its dependence on contractors and the role of civilians. All of these choices must be made as the US withdraws most combat forces from Afghanistan and completes its withdrawals from Iraq. They must play out during FY2013-FY2018, and they must provide strategic and mission capability, apart from simply being exercises in cost management.

Personnel and readiness, however, are only a few of the issues needed to address with in pragmatic mix of strategy, resources and reality. No service possesses an affordable, implementable procurement plan in light of recent program cuts. The US Air Force F-22 and F-35 programs have escalated in cost and lagged in execution, to the point where major cutbacks in numbers procured have turned "force multipliers" into "force shrinkers."

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### **As for the US Army, its inability to tie strategy, force plans, and procurement together has reached the point where it does not even need any external enemies.**

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As for the US Army, its inability to tie strategy, force plans, and procurement together has reached the point where it does not even need any external enemies. Its Future Combat System program wasted not only nearly a generation of Army modernization efforts; its two primary spin-off efforts are a failure.

As the GAO noted in an investigation of the Army program, the Army started development of the Future Combat System (FCS) in 2003. It was the center of the Army's efforts to modernize into a lighter, more agile, and more capable combat force, and the Army expected to fully develop the program equipment in 10 years, procure it over 13 years, and field it to 15 FCS-unique brigades, as well as spin out key technologies and systems to current Army forces. In practice, the Army cancelled the program in June 2009 at an estimate cost of \$18 billion. The GAO estimates that the Army's efforts to implement three programs for follow-on Army brigade combat team modernization efforts – GCV, multiple increments of brigade modernization, and an incremental tactical network capability – have at best had marginal success.

#### **Making Strategy Real**

This need to tie strategy to resources and tangible, implementable plans is not an argument against trying to look at longer-term issues and trends. No strategy should be short term any more than it should be based on trying to predict the future beyond the point where it is knowable.

The priority, however, should be to come to grips with near-term challenges. Consider the strategic decisions we must make during FY2013-FY2018, and how critical those decisions will be relative to speculation about what might happen in the longer term. During this period, the US must:

- Develop a transition strategy and plan for the Afghan War, and actually implement it. This must be part of a broader strategy for future US commitments in Central and South Asia.

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### **The US must develop a transition strategy and plan for the Afghan War, and actually implement it.**

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- Reshape its strategy, force posture, deployments, and procurements in East and Southeast Asia. This effort must reflect China's emergence as a power that can operate beyond the second island chain, and conduct a fundamentally different kind of air sea battle. It must deal with Taiwan's declining defense capabilities and commitment to its own defense, and with a Japan caught up in a prolonged economic crisis coupled with the aftermath of a natural and nuclear disaster.
- Rethink and reshape the US posture in South Korea to deal with an emerging nuclear and missile power in North Korea; a far stronger South Korea; and the same tensions over US bases and deployments it faces in Japan.
- Deal with the steady erosion in the size and relative capability of European NATO forces as well as British and French power projection capabilities. At the same time, it must encourage European willingness to play the lead role in North Africa, and ensure that a stable strategic relationship exists with Russia.
- Reshape the US posture in the Middle East and the Gulf to deal with withdrawal from Iraq, the success or failure of a strategic partnership with Iraq, the needs of the Southern Gulf states, and the threat of Iranian proliferation and growing capabilities for asymmetric warfare.
- Deal with the evolving security and stability challenges emerging from the broad unrest in the Arab world, and its potential spread to other areas. Create a new set of strategic relationships with Egypt and Jordan; deal with the rising tension between Arab states, Turkey, and Israel; and deal with the potential emergence of new strategic relationships between Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon.
- Reshape the fight against terrorism to look beyond Al Qa'ida and the needs of ongoing wars, to deal with far more diverse and splinter movements and the fact there will sometimes be no clear separation between counterterrorism, counterinsurgency, state terrorism and asymmetric warfare. The emerging debate over COIN vs. CT is inherently dysfunctional, but the US must find a practical, implementable strategy for dealing with hybrid warfare.
- Establish programs that can reshape and modernize its conventional and nuclear global strike capabilities in the form of a new bomber, strike aircraft, UCAVs, and/or cruise missiles.
- Determine the right architecture for national and theater

missile defense and deploy it. The FY2010 budget request halts plans to increase the number of current ground-based interceptors in Alaska, cancels the second airborne laser (ABL) prototype aircraft, and terminates the Multiple Kill Vehicle (MKV). It adds \$700 million to field the terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) System and Standard Missile 3 (SM-3) programs, but cuts the overall Missile Defense Agency program by \$1.4 billion.

- Rethink mobility, power projection, and prepositioning in the light of the failure of the Army's FCS program, cutbacks in amphibious forces and modernization, recent lessons about air and sea mobility needs, the restructuring of US combat forces, and the lessons of the Afghan and Iraq Wars.
- Define strategies for hybrid warfare that make explicit choices about the proper force mix for hybrid warfare – "conventional," "irregular," and "mixed" warfighting capabilities – and how they should be shaped and funded. Former Secretary Gates has said that while the US must shift resources and institutional weight towards supporting the current wars and other potential irregular campaigns, the United States must still contend with the security challenges posed by the military forces of other countries – from those actively hostile to those at a strategic crossroads. While laying out conceptual goals for US strategy, he provided no details and no clear force plans to explain what choices—if any— have actually been made about the strategic goals of US warfighting capabilities and how these translate into shifts in force plans, future equipment strength, and budgets. Explicit plans and choices need to be made and trade-offs need to be justified.

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### **Explicit plans and choices need to be made and trade-offs need to be justified.**

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- Deal with changes in the security needs on both borders: carefully evaluate the worsening situation across the border with Mexico, and its post-Columbia posture in Latin America. At the same time, consider what posture the US needs with the reemergence of new trade routes and security issues in the Arctic Circle and their impact on Alaska and US support of Canada.
- Create a new and effective intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (IS&R) architecture: the FY2010 budget request adds some \$2 billion to the past request for IS&R funding. It fields and sustains 50 Predator-class unmanned aerial vehicle orbits by FY11 and maximizes their production, which is a 62 percent increase in capability over the current level, and 127 percent from over a year ago. It increases the number of cyber experts this department can train from 80 to 250 students per year by FY2011. At the same time, it terminates the \$26 billion Transformational Satellite (TSAT) program, and purchases two more Advanced Extremely High Frequency (AEHF) satellites as alternatives.
- Evaluate US national security strategy within the broader context of peer competitors in the EU and China (Asia)

at the economic level. US strategy must adjust to the fact that while the US may – on paper – spend some 70% of all the world's military budgets, its global economic role is shifting fundamentally as its industrial base declines in capability and as a share of the US GNP; and as other powers emerge as major global economies. The US already faces serious issues in terms of defining its future role in East and Central Asia, and a serious gap between NATO's well-meaning strategy and goals, and the actions of European powers. It urgently needs to appraise its national security in global economic, as well as military and political terms.

These are all real world cases where strategy, force planning, and all the elements of force development, readiness, and power projection must be translated into real world plans and budgets in the coming Future Year Defense Plan. All of these challenges show that the US needs to emphasize inter-service jointness in shaping its strategy and implanting it, giving such efforts decisive priority over service-oriented priorities and planning.

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### **the US needs to emphasize inter-service jointness in shaping its strategy and implanting it**

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#### **Tying Strategy to Mission-Oriented Planning, Programming, and Budgeting**

The impacts of these resource issues, critical planning and budget problems, as well as new strategic needs; all combine to reveal the need to shape a national security strategy based on reality. The US must not continue to focus on concepts and efforts to project the future beyond the bubble point. It must stop decoupling strategy from tangible action plans, budgets and the FYDP, and clearly defined action milestones and measures of effectiveness. It must junk the kind of approach used in the QDR and QDDR, and the current conceptual strategies issued by the military services and State Department

Our focus should shift to developing strategy documents that always include detailed near term plans of action, provide clear statements of resource requirements and budgets, and define milestones and timescales. We need strategies that shape tangible results in terms of measureable outcomes in force levels, deployments, mission capabilities, personnel, and procurement.

This will not be as much of a shift in our approach to national security as it may seem. We used to make these requirements the focus of our defense planning efforts and issue them in both classified and unclassified form. In the past, the Secretary of Defense and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs did issue annual posture statements; and these did link strategy directly to force plans, personnel, RDT&E and procurement, basing and deployments, missions in broad terms, and projected defense expenditures for the coming Future Years Defense Program.

In tying strategy to resources and reality the central challenge now is to restore the past focus on connecting the strategy to real world plans and budgets, and to make the reforms in

the PPBS that are now close to half a century overdue. There are, however, a wide range of additional steps that can and should be taken:

- Require the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Staff to issue revised forms of the annual posture statements that lay out US strategy in each key mission area, rather than by service, and that clearly tie strategy to detailed force plans, personnel plans, procurement plans and the FYDP. Provide both classified and unclassified versions in detail to ensure accountability, public debate, and improved understanding by the Congress and the media.
- Restructure key elements of the present Department of Defense planning cycle so that the six regional combatant commanders (NORTHCOM, EUCOM, CENTCOM, AFRICOM, PACOM, and SOUTHCOM) and the three worldwide combatant commanders (STRATCOM, TRANSOM, and SOCOM) have primary responsibility for strategy, planning, and budgeting by mission area. Reduce the role of the four services to an administrative and support role. Halt the issuing of strategy documents by the Service Chiefs of Staff, and make this the responsibility of the regional and worldwide combatant commanders.
- Restructure the program budget to breakout spending by mission areas as defined by the areas covered by each regional and worldwide combatant command. Declassify most or all of the resulting Future Year Defense Program – again to ensure better accountability, public debate, and improved understanding by the Congress and the media.

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### **Build up the strategy, planning, and budgeting capabilities of the regional combatant and worldwide combatant commanders**

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- Downsize the headquarters staffs of each Service and sharply reduce their role in Joint Staff. Build up the strategy, planning, and budgeting capabilities of the regional combatant and worldwide combatant commanders. Set up suitable staff sections at the Pentagon, and make them key parts of the Joint Staff.
- Create staff sections for each command in the OSD Policy Cluster, Comptroller, and PA&E. Add State Department representation at the senior level. The Comptroller needs shifting away from a short-term focus on line item budget issues and refocusing on the function of FYDP. PA&E needs to be greatly strengthened in its ability to examine hard decisions, trade-offs, and “what ifs” within a broad strategic context, and used to compensate for the policy cluster’s lack of planning, programming, and budgeting capability.
- Greatly strengthen the capability of the NSC to coordinate and integrate civil-military strategy, planning, and budgeting. The interagency process and National Security Council needs reform to ensure that operations

and policy are truly integrated, rather than left to interagency coordination that does not take place, lacks depth, or simply remains stove-piped in both practice and implementation. The problem does not, however, stop at the Beltway. A better approach is needed to ensure such cooperation in the field, in wars like the Iraq and the Afghanistan-Pakistan conflicts, in dealing with complex regional issues; and in budgeting combinations of military and civil activity that ensures the civil side has the proper resources and influence over plans and operations.

- Require integrated strategies and plans for civil-military activities and budgets in key mission areas that parallel the six regional commands, and for major crises and all conflicts. The Iraq War and the Afghan-Pakistan conflict have been brutal demonstrations of the almost total failure of the State Department and USAID to plan and manage an effective large-scale effort in armed nation building, and to provide adequate numbers of civilians with the needed background and expertise. The Special Inspector General for Iraqi Reconstruction has shown that the State Department’s efforts in Iraq represent one of the worst failures in basic governance and administration in modern US history. Providing adequate resources is one part of the story; forcing the Deputy Secretary of State and head of USAID to effectively plan and implement is yet another. The US cannot afford to continue making such efforts some of the worst planned and managed activities in the US government.
- Create an independent inter-service strategy, procurement plan, and auditing system. Decades of effort at procurement reform and efforts to improve contracting and efficiency have shown that such efforts have only marginal impact in creating stable procurement programs that meet the nation’s overall strategic goals, as distinguished from Service priorities. A fundamental defense-wide inability to realistically estimate and control costs, constant problems with configuration control, service-dominated cuts in total procurement, force size, and effectiveness have continued to slowly escalate since the McNamara era. Some tools are needed to force procurement planning to be attached to strategy, overall force plans, and key missions. At the same time, no effort will succeed unless the Service Chiefs of Staff and Secretaries are held personally accountable for success – and cost and configuration control – on a top down basis. A GAO study in March 2011 documented the lack of progress to date: The total cost of DoD’s 2010 portfolio of major defense acquisition programs has grown by \$135 billion, or nine percent, over the past two years, of which about \$70 billion cannot be attributed to changes in quantities of some weapon systems. Ten of DoD’s largest acquisition programs account for over half the portfolio’s total acquisition test growth over the past two years.

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**Fewer than half of the programs in DoD’s 2010 portfolio are meeting established performance metrics for cost growth**

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- Fewer than half of the programs in DoD's 2010 portfolio are meeting established performance metrics for cost growth. DoD's buying power has been reduced for almost 80 percent of its portfolio of major defense acquisition programs; and on average, the majority of cost growth materialized after programs entered production. This means they continued to experience significant changes well after the programs and their costs should have stabilized.
- Require integrated interagency strategy, planning, and program budgeting for Homeland defense. OMB indicates that the cost of the interagency effort, including DOD has risen to \$72 billion for the federal government alone in FY2012. This spending total is not the result of any integrated strategy or plan; it has just evolved over time. It is too expensive and too stovepiped to continue.

The US needs to use as many of these tools as possible in order to take a new approach to strategy that shapes an overall defense program with carefully defined and contained

costs; and that is truly affordable. If a nation cannot afford to actually implement a strategy, then it has no real meaning, and focusing on unaffordable illusions has usually done great harm.

Finally, making this approach to strategy, the way ahead requires changes in leadership perspectives and management. These include defining strategies in practical terms, and being honest about resource requirements and difficult trade-offs. There is a broader problem, however, in many US national security efforts, particularly at senior policy levels in Washington. There is a tendency to avoid confrontation and hard choices, or to defer them until there is little other choice. There is almost no direct, personal accountability at the top. More than that, it often seems to be enough that everyone has the right intentions, uses the current "buzzwords", and is literally "politically correct". It is past time to set a different standard. Like they say in every other major aspect of government, there are no good intentions, there are only successful actions.

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# The Futile Decade: The US Failure in Afghanistan and Its Lessons

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Dr. C. Dale Walton is a Lecturer in International Relations and Strategic Studies at the University of Reading (UK). His works include *Geopolitics and the Great Powers in the Twenty-first Century* (2007) and *The Myth of Inevitable US Defeat in Vietnam* (2002). His *Grand Strategy and the Presidency* will be published by Routledge in early 2012. His research interests include strategic relationships and security problems in Asia, geopolitics and the changing geostrategic environment, and U.S. strategic history.

Although American leaders have not quite yet admitted it publicly — or, apparently, even privately — the US war in Afghanistan has been a strategic failure. After nearly ten years of frustration, the Obama Administration is clearly looking for a reasonably graceful exit that will provide — to recycle a phrase from the Vietnam era — a “decent interval” between US withdrawal and the complete collapse of the country into chaotic violence. The American inability to create a thriving, stable Afghan polity offers vital lessons concerning the sort of “deep” nation-building missions that Western countries should, if at all possible, avoid in the future. A forensic examination of the Afghan failure also points us toward operational concepts that will better serve the strategic ends of the United States and its allies: efficient, ruthless grand raids that are limited in time scale and not intended to “fix the unfixable.”

## A State that Is Not a State

Afghanistan’s central government has never been capable of convincingly exercising a monopoly on violence over most of its national territory, much less performing the complex functions necessary for modern governance and related economic development. (In this regard, Afghanistan is quite unlike Iraq, which was ruled, brutally but effectively, from Baghdad until the Persian Gulf War and the no-fly-zones that denied Saddam Hussein military access to parts of the

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## American inability to create a stable Afghan polity offers vital lessons concerning the sort of “deep” nation-building missions that Western countries should avoid in the future

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country.) Even the Soviet Army — an institution with a solid record of imposing Moscow’s writ over reluctant “liberated” populations — found Afghanistan to be ungovernable.

There is no Afghan nation, in any reasonable sense of the term; demographic maps of the country shows a chaotic distribution of myriad ethnicities reminiscent of a Jackson Pollack painting. “Afghanistan” essentially is just a geographical expression that history turned into a parody of a nation-state. Moreover, the landlocked country is desperately poor, overpopulated (given its largely agricultural economy and shortage of arable land), and has a staggering rate of illiteracy. In gross domestic product terms, even after tens of billions in development aid doled out over a decade, it still is rated as a least-developed country. Afghanistan’s main export product remains illegally-grown opium.

Afghanistan is, in short, one of the least promising states in Eurasia for would-be nation-builders; a basic examination of the country’s circumstances makes it clear that its prospects for becoming stable would, under the best of circumstances, appear to be extremely dim. Nevertheless, after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks (9/11) and the subsequent refusal of that country’s Taliban government to surrender Osama Bin Laden to the custody of the United States, the G.W. Bush administration promised to engage in “fixing” Afghanistan, [i] providing the country a better future. Vague promises soon expanded to a full-fledged commitment to democratization, modernization, and stabilization that became the metric by which American success would be judged.

The decision to yoke American victory in Afghanistan to the success of nation-building in Afghanistan was a very imprudent one, and represented a gross failure of strategic prudence. In the days following the 9/11 attacks, the American citizenry clearly demanded that *Al Qaeda* be dealt with harshly. Although a simple desire for rough justice

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drove the public, retaliating for the attacks was also the only strategically sound response that the administration could make. It was incumbent on the Executive branch to demonstrate that terrorist attacks on US soil, or the sponsorship and protection of those who would do so, would not be tolerated. After the Taliban did not promptly and meekly surrender Bin Laden, therefore, invading Afghanistan was the correct decision in both domestic political and strategic terms: the US public would enjoy the satisfaction of seeing a particularly nasty Islamist government crushed by its armed forces, while the act of doing so would serve as a useful warning to other governments that might be inclined to harbor groups such as *Al Qaeda*.

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### **It was not, however, necessary to offer to reconstruct (or, more accurately, construct) Afghanistan after removing the Taliban from power.**

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It was not, however, necessary to offer to reconstruct (or, more accurately, construct) Afghanistan after removing the Taliban from power. There was very little demand on the part of the American citizenry that their government take responsibility for Afghanistan's fate—frankly, most Americans did not care much whether or not Afghanistan became a thriving country. The notion that the United States would take responsibility for Afghanistan helped somewhat to blunt criticism of the US invasion, but, strategically speaking, this was a poor trade. The actual benefits for Washington were quite minimal. Given the international "state of play" in late 2001, it was obvious that regardless of whether the United States took responsibility for Kabul's long-term fate, many states and organizations would oppose an American invasion of Afghanistan and the United Nations would not sanction such an endeavor.

In fact, the commonly accepted belief that the United States enjoyed overwhelming international sympathy and support for its actions in the months immediately following Afghanistan - and that this support only waned because Washington acted in an increasingly unilateral manner - is gravely flawed. Two months after the 9/11 attack President Bush addressed the UN General Assembly; notably, the UN was an institution that had been specifically threatened by Osama Bin Laden and, of course, the headquarters where Bush spoke is located in New York City itself.

Yet as the *New York Times* tartly noted at the time, "Mr. Bush's address seemed to affirm a new faith in multilateralism. Nonetheless, the speech was not interrupted by applause. Neither was the speech of Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani at the United Nations in October." [ii] This silence was significant, as it made clear precisely how much support the United States truly enjoyed from the in much of the international community after the 9/11 attacks. Of course, the United States was far from wholly isolated—NATO, for example, took the step of invoking Article V of its Charter to show solidarity with the United States. *As a whole*, however, the international community did not rally to Washington's side—which was hardly surprising, given the results of a Pew survey of opinion leaders globally undertaken in November and December 2001. Leaving the Americans surveyed aside, 58% of those

surveyed believed many or most people in their country thought that US policy was responsible for the attacks; 70% of those surveyed believed that many or most people in their countries believed that, "It's good that Americans now know what it's like to be vulnerable." [iii]

### **Sending the Message**

Even if the international community's support could have been purchased in exchange for American guarantees in regard to Afghanistan's future, it likely would have been of relatively little practical value. Militarily—contrary to many agitated media predications about supposedly battle-hardened  *jihadis* and the clichéd "brutal Afghan winter"—the Taliban was very weak. The Afghan government lacked a modern air force, or much in the way of advanced weaponry in general, and Taliban forces essentially were an undertrained and ill-disciplined rabble. The *Al Qaeda* fighters in Afghanistan were, man-for-man, somewhat more formidable, but small in number. Lacking air support and high-technology weapons, there was little they could do to resist the American onslaught.

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### **Even if the international community's support could have been purchased in exchange for American guarantees it likely would have been of relatively little practical value.**

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The only truly important military help that the United States required for its Afghan expedition was the cooperation of the local Northern Alliance—which of course was fighting the Taliban and therefore delighted to collaborate with the Americans—and the granting by Pakistan of overflight rights to the United States. The United States accomplished the latter through old-fashioned bribery and threat: very substantial US military and other aid to Pakistan was announced shortly after the 9/11 attacks and Washington made it quite clear to Islamabad that its assistance in the Afghan campaign was not optional.

Given these realities, the most strategically sensible course for the United States to pursue was a straightforward one: a grand raid whose purpose would be to displace the Taliban government and capture or kill as many Taliban and *Al Qaeda* fighters as possible, with Osama Bin Laden being (for obvious reasons) by far the most important individual target. Thus, while the wisdom of specific military choices (such as the decision to pause combat operations during the Battle of Tora Bora) during the winter of 2001-02 may be debated, the general character of American operations during the early period of the Afghan conflict was appropriate.

The fundamental error was not an operational one, but the political-strategic one of accepting a task—the creation of a "new" Afghanistan—that would be extraordinarily difficult (if not impossible), expensive; and would guarantee that Washington would undermine the message to its friends and enemies alike that it was capable of winning a speedy and decisive victory *on its own terms* over terrorists and their

allies. There are two broad objections to framing the Afghan conflict in this way, but neither of them can withstand cold-eyed scrutiny.

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## **The fundamental error was not an operational one, but the political-strategic one of accepting a task—the creation of a “new” Afghanistan**

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The first objection, and the more narrowly “strategic” one, is the contention that only a long-term presence in the country would ensure that the Taliban would not return to power and allow Afghanistan would not again become a terrorist haven. This is true, insofar as it goes—only a comprehensive nation-building exercise would turn Afghanistan from a potential enemy to an American ally. Indeed, Kabul is officially now a US partner in the struggle against *jihadi* terrorism. It would be more accurate, however, to describe it as a weak client state whose government is entirely dependent on Washington for its survival.

This relationship is not, substantively speaking, any more beneficial to Washington than a less formal relationship would be. It makes perfect sense to prop up an anti-Taliban regime with military and financial aid, but this does not require that the United States take responsibility for its survival. Indeed, that is the usual case with US relationships with dubious or unstable regimes, including those in the Muslim world. For decades, the United States enjoyed fruitful relationships with many Arab countries whilst never publicly guaranteeing that their citizens would enjoy domestic political stability, much less democracy. (In recent months, unfortunately, the United States has begun to deviate from this sensible policy, as its Libyan adventure demonstrated dramatically.)

Certainly, the government of Hamid Karzai should have been supported generously, but it was unnecessary and counterproductive for US/NATO troops to stay in the country and take responsibility for the survival of the new regime. A well-supplied Afghan government should have been able to keep control of Kabul and other major cities, though it probably would not have *de facto* authority over much of the countryside—a situation not very dissimilar from the one today. If the Taliban seriously threatened the Afghan government’s position in any of the major cities, the temporary provision of US air support—and, if absolutely necessary, small numbers of ground troops—should have sufficed to ensure that the Taliban was beaten back.

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## **A well-supplied Afghan government should have been able to keep control of Kabul and other major cities**

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The notion that it was necessary to remake Afghanistan in order to prevent it from again becoming a terrorist haven was doubly flawed. There is the obvious point that much of rural Afghanistan still is controlled by the Taliban—a situation that was entirely predictable, given the geographical character (physical and human) of the country. The United States could

have permanently maintained a force as large as the one it later placed in Iraq, and this still would not have prevented the reconstitution of the Taliban. Afghanistan, after all, is an entity noticeably larger than Iraq in both physical and population terms, and the portion of the state bordering Pakistan is wild country clearly beyond the control of any occupier unwilling or unable also to operate on the ground in Pakistan.

Moreover, an international terrorist group is, by its nature, mobile. While it was certainly useful to Bin Laden to have the full resources of even a weak country at his disposal, once the control of the machinery of the Afghan state was no longer in the hands of his allies there was no special advantage to operating in Afghanistan, as opposed to any of dozens of other feeble or failed states (or even relatively ungoverned portion of otherwise fairly stable states) where there is some popular sympathy for Islamic radicalism. Given that the entire world cannot be “fixed”, there was no reason to focus particularly on fixing a piece of it located in the center of Eurasia.

For obvious reasons, “draining the swamp” in principle is indeed preferable to periodically spraying DDT, but in actual practice the costs of doing the former often are so much greater that the latter clearly is the more sensible course. This point also all-too-clearly applies to Iraq. The Bush administration quite justifiably was exasperated by Iraq’s constant troublemaking, but after its invasion quickly discovered that the price of containing Iraq and coping with Hussein’s misbehavior was infinitesimal in comparison to that of implementing a comprehensive solution to “the Saddam problem.”

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## **one certainly can argue that Afghanistan’s human rights violators should be dealt with using military force**

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The second objection to implementing a raiding strategy in Afghanistan is based primarily on humanitarian concerns: in short, that a mere raid would do nothing to provide the people of that country with the opportunity to grasp a better future. There perhaps was a strong moral case to be made that the United States should take on the burden of creating a more humane Afghanistan. The plight of Afghan women, in particular, shocked the conscience. Leaving aside the complex ethical question of whether Western countries should engage in Kiplingesque imperial endeavors, however, the strategic answer as to whether the United States should have attempted this project is a resounding “no.” Afghanistan’s human rights record—and, again, especially the mistreatment of woman in Afghan society—was appalling, and one certainly can argue that Afghanistan’s human rights violators should be dealt with using military force.

However, that is a moral, not a strategic, argument and it is vital that the two not be confused. If Americans and others wish to use their armies to slay monsters, they are free to do so—and perhaps should be congratulated on their vigorous enforcement of decency—but such endeavors should not be expected to render any profit strategically.

Indeed, it is somewhat perverse that the United States decided that it must help the people of Afghanistan because their country contained a great many people who dedicated themselves to inflicting harm on innocent Americans. By contrast, few individuals in the Democratic Republic of Congo, for instance, have dedicated themselves to anti-American terrorism or similar activities. Yet here, the United States has done virtually nothing to bring order and prosperity to a country whose horrific and long-running civil disorder claims lives every day—the endless strife in that country has killed millions and left tens of millions impoverished, emotionally or physically damaged, forced to flee their communities, or otherwise suffering.

Compared to Afghans, however, the Congolese have received little help from the United States—or the international community in general—and certainly no multi-hundred billion dollar guarantees to rebuild their country into a prosperous and stable democracy. Indeed, their plight has not even received significant notice in the US media—most Americans have little, if any, knowledge regarding the situation in Congo.

The tragedy of the Congo is, of course, only one of many that could be cited to make the point that the nation-building project in Afghanistan is fundamentally different from the American reconstruction of Japan and (West) Germany after the Second World War. The latter enterprises were fundamentally strategic, not humanitarian, in character: American leaders believed, correctly that if those countries did not become stable and prosperous democracies, they might eventually present a significant threat to the United States (either as Soviet allies or “rogue” powers).

Relieving the personal plight of German and Japanese citizens was an incidental benefit—though a very great one, in humanitarian terms; it did not drive US policy. While many US leaders no doubt believe sincerely that the reconstruction

of Afghanistan is important to US security, it frankly is not—it is a humanitarian endeavor masquerading as a strategic one. Even if nearly every Afghan were to reject Islamism and come to respect the United States—a highly improbable development—this would merely eliminate some potential recruits for organizations like *Al Qaeda*; the overall strategic threat presented by Islamist terrorism would not decrease dramatically.

### Conclusion: Minimize Risk, Maximize Return

Historically, the great risk of raiding strategies has been the possibility that some misfortune—the enemy fleet appearing at the wrong time, a traitor revealing the plans for the strike, etc.—would result in the decimation of the raiding force. Today, given their superiority in equipment and training—and, perhaps most critically, the ability to call on airpower assets for devastating fire support—even relatively small units belonging to first-rate military organizations can defeat large numbers of second-rate foes.

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Poorly armed and organized forces like the Taliban can be dealt with effectively only if one applies appropriate operational concepts that will allow the attainment of *reasonable* strategic goals. The US had inappropriate strategic goals in Afghanistan, however, and the result was a quagmire. The lesson for the future is clear—the world cannot be fixed one failed state at a time, and attempting to do so is a fool’s errand.

## References

[i] “Our aims in Afghanistan are well known to the American people and this Committee. We seek to bring about an Afghanistan that is free of terrorists, that no longer is a source of poppy, and that allows its citizens—including an estimated five million refugees and an unknown number of internally displaced persons—to return to their homes and live normal lives in which opportunity replaces misery.” Richard N. Haass, Director of the Office of the Policy Planning Staff, and U.S. Coordinator for the Future of Afghanistan, Testimony Before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, 6 December 2001, “Future of Afghanistan,” accessed at <http://www.state.gov/s/p/rem/6757.htm>

[ii] Elisabeth Bumiller, “A Nation Challenged: The President,” *New York Times* online ed., 11 November 2001.

[iii] Pew Global Attitudes Project, “America Admired, Yet Its New Vulnerability Seen As Good Thing, Say Opinion Leaders,” 19 December 2001, accessed at <http://www.pewglobal.org/2001/12/19/america-admired-yet-its-new-vulnerability-seen-as-good-thing-say-opinion-leaders/5/>



# Covert Operations and Policy

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Nonstop covert operations against America's enemies occur simultaneously in Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia. But as the counterinsurgency wars in Iraq and Afghanistan give way to a worldwide shadow conflict, popular discussion of covert operations erroneously assume that these discrete capabilities are largely without precedent. Perhaps more perniciously, covert operations are often equated with direct action—the capture and killing of terrorists and insurgents. But covert operations are more than simply direct action writ large, and they have a distinguished historical pedigree. While daring exploits make the news, they also obscure the utility and limitations of covert action as a tool of policy.

## What's Covert About Covert Operations?

**Covert action can broadly be defined as operations that seek to influence political, economic, or military conditions abroad without exposing or highlighting the role of the state conducting them.**

Covert action can broadly be defined as operations that seek to influence political, economic, or military conditions abroad without exposing or highlighting the role of the state conducting them.[i] The tools of covert action range from direct action to sophisticated propaganda and other forms of political manipulation. Given the term "covert" and the legal emphasis on concealing the hand of the state, it is

easy to assume plausible deniability is the essence of covert actions. However, a focus on secrecy alone is misleading.

The American drone campaign in Pakistan is *overt*, and neither the Iranian support of Iraqi insurgents nor the Pakistani Interservices Intelligence (ISI) backing of the Taliban can be described as particularly stealthy. Many covert operations are simply too large to conceal. This is not a failure of tradecraft so much as a reflection that the shape and tactics of the covert operation is dictated by policy. Policy dictates the shape of the covert plan and the particular set of tactics that constitute it. Some policies will dictate a set of ends, ways, and means that can be effectively concealed, other policies will demand operations that end up on CNN.

Because of the multiplicity of forms that covert operations can take, it is difficult to generally describe them. They occur in both peace and war, and are used to influence and coerce friend, enemy, and neutral alike. Rather than come up with a general explanation that is as vague as the legal definition, it is more useful to describe some of the general features of covert operations and their interaction with policy. It is impossible to do this, though, without an understanding of what policy *is*. Although policy and strategy are routinely conflated in strategic discourse, strategy is a purpose-built bridge between policy and violence. It is a time-limited and disposable instrument that flows out of the policy.[ii] In turn, policy is not an action but a condition or behavior. It generates political purpose which in turn creates a strategy for action.[iii]

Covert operations give policymakers an option to achieve objectives when disarmament of the enemy through direct military operations (or the threat of those operations) is undesirable. Covert operations often fall short of provoking a direct military response, or present enough ambiguity to constrain a target state from climbing to a higher "rung" of escalation dominance.[iv] As long as certain red lines were not crossed, the Soviet Union's range of retaliatory options against the American and Pakistani support of Afghan insurgents was severely circumscribed.

There are many situations when states cannot, for political, material, or strategic reasons, use their most prominent strengths to achieve policy goals. The operation to kill Osama bin Laden is a prominent contemporary example. The leaders of al-Qaeda live unmolested in Pakistan. The United

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States cannot positively induce the Pakistanis to capture or kill al-Qaeda or the Taliban leadership. Threatening Pakistan with direct military action would be useless, as Pakistan controls a prominent North Atlantic Treaty Organization logistics route and possesses nuclear weapons. Any military strategy to destroy al-Qaeda and Taliban elements cannot be reconciled with other elements of the "Af-Pak" policy, such as nuclear stability or creation of a desirable Afghan state. However, unilateral covert action generated a strategy (the covert bypassing of the Pakistani state) and a set of tactics (surveillance, reconnaissance, and the kill operation itself) to achieve the policy goal of propelling bin Laden into the afterlife.

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### **There are many situations when states cannot, for political, material, or strategic reasons, use their most prominent strengths to achieve policy goals.**

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Covert operations are similar to war in that they can *decide* major political issues.[v] The Tehran and Guatemala coups literally decided the political composition of several governments. More modest covert operations can influence a state's decision-making calculus. The American-Pakistani effort to generate proxy war in Afghanistan did not, on its own, directly force the Soviets to leave Afghanistan. However, the costs incurred as a result of the covert operation were ultimately too much for the Soviet Union to bear over such a limited objective, relative to their other foreign policy and domestic commitments.

#### **A Tool of National Power**

Covert operations are a dimension of policy that is often ignored when considering different instruments of national power. Policymakers, when faced with a choice between empty threats of force that can never be used and accepting an unfavorable political outcome, do not have to throw up their hands and curse fate. A state that does not wish, for whatever reason, to turn over a particular terrorist is not likely to be convinced by a smarter political message or more aid assistance. But they can be undermined through covert means or bypassed altogether. Moreover, dealing with terrorists and insurgents does not necessarily require manpower-intensive counterinsurgency or anything more than a transactional political relationship with the host nation that enables the use of standoff force to capture or kill enemies of the state.

Covert operations are not a standalone tool and are often employed to enhance or complement the effectiveness of other approaches. Covert operations to influence political and economic conditions in Europe were only one facet of an overall American policy of political-military defense against Soviet expansion. Covert operations, as seen in the Vietnam War and today in Pakistan, can also occur when a state is unable to project decisive force into an important theater of war. During irregular warfare bordering states that support enemy operations or cannot eject insurgents from

their territories often become battlegrounds themselves. But due to diplomatic sensitivities, the force employed must be subtle, indigenous in origin, or in the case of drones, robotic.

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### **The Stuxnet virus, often touted as an example of so-called operational cyberwarfare, is in fact a fully automated covert operation.**

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The Stuxnet virus, often touted as an example of so-called operational cyberwarfare, is in fact a fully automated covert operation. With a military air campaign ruled out (for now), the virus retarded the progress of Iran's nuclear program. Best yet, there is still much dispute over which state(s) created and employed it. In short, Stuxnet was a model covert operation. In some ways, cyberspace will enable many more covert operations because they can be carried out from vast distances, do not involve human agents, and can often (though not always) be effectively disguised.[vi]

Some states can also use covert operations to build hegemony in a region conducive to subversion. Iran's influence in the Middle East, for example, is far out of proportion to its actual (and underwhelming) military capabilities. The revolutionary state's robust covert operations networks allowed it to flex its muscles in regional battlegrounds ranging from Lebanon to the Gaza Strip. In effect, Iran aims to use its spies to create a shadow empire in the Middle East and win a geopolitical game against Israel.[vii] It speaks volumes that Saddam Hussein, a man who twice defied the will of the world's greatest military power, deeply feared Iranian subversion. However, Iran's game is not purely subversion. There is force behind its covert operations. Tehran can threaten the use of force through its proxies, posture with its own irregular capabilities, and is in the process of developing a nuclear umbrella that could facilitate an escalation of such activities.

#### **Risks, Rewards, and Limitations**

Movies are chock-full of nations stung by "blowback" from covert operations, but this risk is severely exaggerated. The wailing and gnashing of teeth associated with Cold War coups reflects not so much on the operations itself as the fact that politics – which inform policy and thus operations – have significantly changed since the bare-knuckled height of the US-Soviet great game.[viii] Operations that occurred in a Cold War context are now reviled, but this does not constitute proof that the policy or operations themselves were ill-advised or didn't achieve their aims.

We must look at the logic of strategy to discover the weakness of covert action. Covert operations are indirect actions – but this is both strength and an important weakness. While some, most prominently the strategist Basil Liddell-Hart, have argued that indirect approaches are always superior to direct ones, evidence suggests otherwise. Most successful military strategies are a combination of both, and strategic history recommends that we view promises of victory without a blood price with great skepticism.

The indirect approach's weakness also extends to international politics. If a given state has a firm conception of its interests, it is difficult to see how anything except a convincing promise of sufficient coercion will force it to change its behavior. No amount of development or clever diplomacy will change, as the Soviets put it, the "correlation of forces." Compare, for example, the United States' difficulty in coercing Pakistan today with successful post-9/11 demands for Karachi to assist in the destruction of the Taliban regime.

Today's threats are simply toothless as long as the Pakistanis dictate NATO logistics and possess nuclear firepower. However, the immediate post-9/11 demands levied on Karachi were completely persuasive. Threats, as Thomas Schelling suggests, are often effective when they do not appear to be entirely rational.[ix] One doesn't have to believe that Pakistanis were literally told that America would bomb them "back to the Stone Age" to see the credibility of American coercion in a time when a desire for retaliation was politically paramount. [x] Washington was able, in those chaotic months after 9/11, to convey to the Pakistanis that the rules had changed and a price of blood would be exacted.

Looking at this scenario, it is difficult to see how any sort of post-9/11 covert operation in Pakistan could have been more effective at achieving the policy goal than a simple, blunt, and above all else *credible* threat. Moreover, if Kermit Roosevelt Jr., architect of the Tehran coup, was tasked with generating a sufficiently coercive or transformative covert operation against Pakistan today, he would be stymied by the military's strong hold on the state and Pakistan's ability to easily retaliate by threatening the integrity of the Afghan mission. Hence the United States bypasses the Pakistanis through the drone campaign, which has clearly had tactical and operational successes but does not solve the policy problem of sanctuary. If the policy is "bin Laden must no longer breathe," bypassing the Pakistanis is inconsequential. Solving the larger problem of sanctuary, however, is a different issue.

**If the policy is "bin Laden must no longer breathe," bypassing the Pakistanis is inconsequential. Solving the larger problem of sanctuary, however, is a different issue.**

At the end of the day, states determined on a course of action and in possession of certain strategic trump cards simply will not be coerced or politically transformed by indirect economy of force operations. The root of the Bay of Pigs disaster was an attempt to use indirect means (Cuban exiles) to change the political composition of the Cuban government. Those planning the revolutionary *coup de main* fatally underestimated the strength of the regime. Even if the operational components of the invasion had been correctly planned it is difficult to see how the exiles could have overturned the Cuban state, absent massive external support.

Most dangerously, covert operations can seem like deceptively cheap solutions, but have the capacity to draw states into undesired commitments. President John F. Kennedy

and Central Intelligence Agency director Allen Dulles both understood that once they had put a sizable exile brigade in training camps in Central America, they risked a "disposal problem" if the operation was cancelled. Without a concrete use, the exiles would compromise the operation, and forcibly disarming them created problems of an entirely different sort. Because the exiles could only go to Cuba, the strategy and tactics of the operation in effect *dictated* the policy.[xi]

The simplistic notion of blowback aside, covert operations that are not properly aligned with policy will exact costs. Policy, in turn, must be sound and domestically supportable. The continued existence of the state of Israel is an obviously sound and popular policy among its citizens, and this requires the continued targeting of enemies of the state. The likely Mossad culpability in a 2010 operation to kill Hamas leader Mahmoud al-Mabhouh is of little consequence. Such an operation's success or failure will not exact domestic or international costs that will compromise the policy. There will always be those who will reflexively criticize covert and overt uses of force in both domestic and international forums, but this need not be an obstacle to effective covert action. The real questions a policymaker should be asking, however, are: whether the policy itself is sound, can be maintained domestically, and whether the covert instruments to achieve it are capable of realizing state goals. If any part of this crucial relationship is unbalanced, covert operations and the policies that guide them are unlikely to fulfill their promises.

#### Conclusion: A Wilderness of Mirrors

**Despite their risks and limitations, covert operations are a useful tool of policy**

Despite their risks and limitations, covert operations are a useful tool of policy. Covert operations are not simply direct action, and today's discourse ignores their wider utility. While strategic and political history can suggest situational principles of employment and tradecraft, politics ultimately dictates their shape and content. In a time when budgetary woes and the growing nuclear and conventional capabilities of other powers increasingly restricts freedom of action abroad, a robust covert operations regime will be key to American national security and diplomacy.

Covert operations, by definition, will upset those who deny the realities of international power politics, the consistency of human conflict, and states' need to defend themselves and shape the international system to their advantage. These audiences will seek, as they have done many times in the past, to limit or ban covert operations altogether. Just as worrisome, however, is the increasing equation of tactical intelligence support and direct action with the sum of intelligence activity.[xii]

Excellence in covert action on all levels of engagement, whether the training and operation of proxy forces or the covert influencing of foreign political systems, should not be neglected in any discussion of American security and strategy.

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[i] This definition borrows from US law—50 U.S.C. 413b(e).

[ii] See Colin S. Gray, *The Strategy Bridge: Theory for Practice*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

[iii] Gray, 15-54.

[iv] See Herman Kahn, *On Thermonuclear War*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960, for a description of escalation dominance.

[v] Colin S. Gray, *Defining and Achieving Decisive Victory*, Carlisle Barracks: Strategic Studies Institute, 2002, 7.

[vi] See Lukas Milewski, "Stuxnet and Strategy: A Special Operation in Cyberspace?" *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Issue 63, 4th Quarter 2011, 64-69 for an example of the tactics of Stuxnet as a special operation and its role in strategy.

[vii] Robert D. Kaplan, "Iran's Postmodern Beast in Gaza," *The Atlantic*, 5 January 2009, <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2009/01/iran-apos-s-postmodern-beast-in-gaza/7237/>

[viii] See, for example, Stephen Kinzer, *All the Shah's Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror*, Hoboken: Wiley, 2008, which fails to prove the causal relationship suggested by its title.

[ix] Thomas C. Shelling, *Arms and Influence*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967, 35-92.

[x] "US 'Threatened To Bomb' Pakistan," *BBC*, 22 September 2006, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/5369198.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/5369198.stm)

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[xii] John G. Heidenrich, "The State of Strategic Intelligence: The Intelligence Community's Neglect of Strategic Intelligence," *Studies in Intelligence*, Vol. 51, No. 2, June 2007, <https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/studies/vol51no2/the-state-of-strategic-intelligence.html>.

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# Is There a Future For Targeted Killing?

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Danny Steed is a graduate of the Department of War Studies at King's College London, and is currently undertaking PhD research at the University of Reading as part of the ongoing Liberal Way of War program. His thesis is exploring the relationship between strategy and intelligence.

Targeted killing today is a rich avenue of analysis, due to its increased exposure in the media and subsequent policy discussions. The focus of this exposure has not yet, however, penetrated the core issues associated with targeted killing from the viewpoint of the strategist. Instead, most analysis has become bogged down in the stalemate between strategic theorists and legal experts. Strategic theorists recognise the effectiveness of Targeted killing whereas legal experts consider the act as extrajudicial killing, usually condemning the practice accordingly.

This is most clearly true in the case of the killing of Osama bin Laden, whereby not only has the methodology of targeted killing now been given a thorough airing, but it has also highlighted the debate between strategy and law. Indeed, while it may be argued that the bin Laden raid was not a targeted killing in the first place, it is the view of this article that this was indeed the case for a simple reason; even though there was intent to capture *if possible*, the end result was bin Laden's slaying. There was only ever a minute chance of his being taken alive, bin Laden would have had to offer his immediate surrender, which he did not do.

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be expected to become increasingly  
relevant to strategic practitioners**

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In light of such events, the purpose of this article is to consider whether there is a future for targeted killing and

will argue one simple idea; targeted killing as a military strategy will enjoy not only a future, but can be expected to become increasingly relevant to strategic practitioners. This is because the experience of recent years has proven it to hold considerable strategic utility. So long as a strategy produces the desired results in its application and is cost effective, then it will always represent an attractive option to policy makers.

## The debate so far

Although this article seeks to consider a primarily strategic viewpoint, it is necessary to briefly consider the current state of literature on targeted killing. That literature contains two main arguments alluded to above: those from strategic studies, who believe targeted killing works<sup>[i]</sup>, and legal experts, who either question its practice on legal grounds or simply do not fully understand its practice. Kurth Cronin represents the latter when she conflates targeted killing with assassination, and doubts the effectiveness of targeted killing in practice. <sup>[ii]</sup> Solis serves as an alternative to Kurth Cronin's view by detailing how targeted killing and assassination are different in legal terms. <sup>[iii]</sup> Murphy and Radsan represent the former in calling for a clear system of due process if the practice is to be continued. <sup>[iv]</sup> Byman reflects this argument by insisting that the practice of targeted killing can only be preserved 'by bringing it into the light rather than keeping it in the shadows.'<sup>[v]</sup>

Yet it is only Blum and Heymann who reveal the deeper complexity of the issue when they recognise that 'targeted killing operations display the tension between addressing terrorism as a crime and addressing it as a war.'<sup>[vi]</sup> This observation should drive future research into the place targeted killing holds between the realms of strategy and law. <sup>[vii]</sup> However, that is not the purpose of this article, for it misses the key strategic question one must ask of targeted killing; what future does it hold to practising strategists?

## The strategic logic of effectiveness

To gauge this future, a basic strategic framework must be adopted, taken from Stahl and Owen, and Brodie respectively. Stahl and Owen argue that targeted killing is neither a policy nor a tactic, it is indeed a strategy utilised in the application of force. <sup>[viii]</sup> Accepting that targeted killing is a military strategy

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is essential, for this informs the next step adopted from Brodie, who declared that 'the question that matters most in strategy is: Will the idea work?' [ix]

## Accepting that targeted killing is a military strategy is essential

Taken together this fundamental framework is very simply about effectiveness, which informs the expected utility; in short, targeted killing should be judged on its effective application. That effectiveness of course will depend on the policy being sought; in Iraq during the surge it was instrumental to "defibrillating" the political process by contributing to the reduction in violence. Its success and cost-effectiveness will be the primary concerns to decision makers who must choose which strategies to apply in seeking their desired political objectives. To further explore this, the present practice of targeted killing should be assessed. This will not be done by looking at the Israeli case however, as that has already been well covered by Byman, Stahl and Owen respectively. Instead, this article will start by looking at what will here be dubbed the "American model."

The American model consists of three forms of tactical implementation: Air strikes, such as the killing of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in 2006[x]; Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) strikes that killed Anwar al-Awlaki in Yemen[xi] (prolific also throughout Pakistan[xii]); and Special Operation Forces (SOF) raids like that in Abbottabad.

These three tactical instruments are supported by extensive planning and intelligence networks designed to "find" and "fix" targets before being "finished." This model was refined during the Surge in Iraq (2006-2008) when General Stanley McChrystal was commanding the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC). Strangely enough, analytical focus on the importance of JSOC operations – fundamentally centred on targeted killings – have been omitted from most analyses of the turnaround in Iraq.[xiii] Woodward so far stands alone in recognising their relevance when he includes JSOC as the first of three key factors in the success of the surge. He detailed further that JSOC's success was based on what McChrystal called "collaborative warfare." This collaborative model used 'every tool available simultaneously, from signals intercepts to human intelligence and other methods, that allowed lightning-quick and sometimes concurrent operations.' [xiv]

This model has since become the focus of an impressive study by Lamb and Munsing, whose central focus is to ensure that the lessons learnt from this system are not lost but incorporated into future practice.[xv] The intelligence and organisational underpinnings of the American model – generally termed Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) within the American military[xvi] – rather than the forms of tactical implementation themselves, are what make this model so formidable in practice.

Contrary to some perceptions, the focus of the American model of targeted killing is not to eliminate solely leadership targets. This misapprehension has been informed by the high-profile killings of al-Zarqawi, bin Laden, and al-Awlaki respectively. The model was instead always designed to collapse the network of professionals within a terrorist

organisation, by targeting what regular forces would call their senior non-commissioned ranks and subalterns.[xvii] Byman sums up the logic well by saying that terrorist resources are finite., as recruiting and retaining skilled personnel is a slow and fragile process. 'When these individuals are arrested or killed, their organisations are disrupted. The groups may still be able to attract recruits, but lacking expertise, these new recruits will not pose the same kind of threat.' [xviii]

## Contrary to some perceptions, the focus of the American model of targeted killing is not to eliminate solely leadership targets.

The real effectiveness of targeted killing lies not with leadership killings – where one can reasonably question their wider impact[xix] – but in the cumulative degrading of terrorist infrastructure. In Baghdad in particular targeted killings conducted by JSOC were very successful in removing the terrorist capability to cause harm. This was done by removing as many personnel from the battle space as could be achieved. The British Special Air Service (SAS) contribution to JSOC alone is estimated to have removed some 3,500 insurgents from the Baghdad battle space.[xx] Hunter is consequently wrong in his assessment of targeted killing as holding little strategic utility, simply for the fact that he only considers the elimination of leadership targets.[xxi] This sentiment is also reflected by Erwin in questioning the impact of the al-Zarqawi killing.[xxii]

Instead, a true assessment must consider the objective of such operations as a whole. That objective in Iraq was a holistic degradation of terrorist infrastructure, achieved via relentless targeting and elimination of its operational personnel, in order to reduce violence and create space for a political process. Targeted killing is not designed to produce spectacularly fast results, but to wear the enemy machine down until it poses a negligible threat. It should be noted that this is an objective entirely in accordance with not only wider counterinsurgency objectives, but also the fundamental Clausewitzian principle of destroying the enemy's forces.[xiii]

### Questions of morality in the "American model"

The American model of Targeted killing is unquestionably effective, but it is not perfect. The occurrence of civilian casualties has become an issue of scrutiny. Upon taking command of the ISAF mission in Afghanistan, McChrystal declared to NATO officers: 'Civilian casualties are not just some reality with the Washington press. They are a reality for the Afghan people. If we use airpower irresponsibly, we can lose this fight.' [xxiv] The simple nature of air and UAV strikes, involving the delivery of high-explosive ordnance, coupled with the difficulties of grappling with an enemy embedded among civilian populations, make it inevitable that civilian casualties will occur.

What was not expected was the level of public backlash that would result, including rebukes from the United Nations.[xxv] The issue of incurring civilian casualties has become very acute and can be viewed as the Achilles heel of targeted

killing when carried out by aerial means. The declaration that the effectiveness of targeted killing is the driving concern dominating its utility to policy makers is true, but a large part of what might make targeted killings *ineffective* is whether it becomes deemed immoral.

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## a large part of what might make targeted killings *ineffective* is whether it becomes deemed immoral

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As Gray wisely warns, moral advantage 'can be secured if the enemy is seduced into breaking his own rules, flouting his own standards.' [xxvi] An increased use of aerial platforms, incurring greater civilian casualties, would be a flouting of these standards and would fast erode the moral advantage of the counterinsurgent. It could even, if occurring widely, erode the moral claim that a liberal state proclaims to have over other dictatorial forms of governance if it proves unable to reduce unnecessary risk of civilian deaths. The American ability to reduce and avoid such casualties will be crucial to not only achieving sought strategic objectives, but also in redressing America's moral image in the world.

American political culture must be briefly appreciated however, in order to reveal the complexities and controversies the adoption of targeted killing has within America. The line between targeted killing and assassination, while clear in conceptual theory, can appear very thin if not absent in public perceptions. The debates over the legality of American actions in Pakistan in May 2011 [xxvii] go a long way towards revealing the fragile state of opinion on the use of these methods, although it is notable that the US Attorney General insisted that the Abbottabad raid was not an assassination. [xxviii]

Yet were there to be a public outcry against these methods, conceivably induced by increased public awareness of "collateral damage" resulting from air and UAV strikes, then one could expect a curtailing or scaling down of these operations. This is not yet the case however, and the bottom line on American political culture at this stage should be to note that while the American political left is generally against such use of force, it is a left-wing President who has expanded the targeted killing program. Unless targeted killing negatively impacts President Obama's poll rating, their use will continue under his Administration, and the success of the bin Laden killing has done much to convince Americans of this strategies effectiveness.

Indeed the operation resulting in the death of bin Laden represents the pinnacle of targeted killing so far. That a covert insertion into Pakistan could be achieved not only without detection, but to then assault a target containing 17 non-combatants, [xxix] only to then kill all combatants including bin Laden and leave without sustaining casualties or causing civilian deaths, tells the story of more than simply tactical success. It is argued here that the Abbottabad raid represents the most ethical targeted killing yet conducted. Diligent intelligence work led to the target, which was assaulted by a well-oiled and much-practised machine deployed by McChrystal in Iraq, and refined thereafter by Admiral McRaven.

So, whilst arguments abound as to whether bin Laden should have been captured, such arguments miss the point that lies behind the method. What occurred in Abbottabad was not only a defining chapter in the War on Terror, [xxx] but a very dramatic public demonstration of what targeted killing is; how it works, and how successful it can be. Only time will reveal the full importance of bin Laden's killing, but the strategic logic is clear; American policy since 9/11 has been to hunt down and eradicate core al Qaeda members. Targeted killing has proven so far to be the most suitable military strategy to achieving this.

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## What occurred in Abbottabad was a very dramatic public demonstration of what targeted killing is; how it works, and how successful it can be

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### Conclusion

There is a future to be expected from targeted killing, because it is an effective, relatively cost-effective military strategy that from the perspective of the American model in practice, enjoys a proven record of success. Consider this with the current realities of the world, and one can identify additional reasons why targeted killing can be expected to have a future.

First, the world financial state encourages cheaper strategies; now that the era of austerity measures and public spending cuts are taking hold of western states it has to be expected that protracted counterinsurgency missions like Iraq and Afghanistan will not represent the short- to medium-term future. The reduction of personnel deployed as well as the financial benefits of targeted killing programs over personnel-heavy occupations will be attractive to austere policy makers seeking affordable solutions to difficult problems.

Second is that current and emerging security problems lend themselves towards targeted killing; consider piracy emanating from Somalia. It is unlikely that a western military force would be committed to addressing the underlying problems within Somalia, but nor would the current NATO convoy/blockade approach be sufficient were piracy to reach levels whereby commercial insurance rates and corporate profit margins were adversely affected. Should this situation deteriorate a targeted killing program could plausibly be more attractive than a prolonged intervention and/or occupation, especially given the recent memories of Iraq, as well as the previous American experience of Somalia. The situation in Yemen has also resulted in an expansion of American UAV deployments into that particular area, [xxxi] with the killing of al-Awlaki resulting.

A further point to be noted is that operations in Libya have also enjoyed a heated debate over the legitimacy of targeting Colonel Gaddafi personally, with the argument becoming most pressing in the UK. In that particular case it is intriguing that the political leadership insisted on the legitimacy of targeting Gaddafi at the outset of the campaign in March, whereas the military leadership disagreed entirely. [xxxii]

Targeted killing is a military strategy that in the past six years has developed a proven record for success in Iraq, Pakistan, and Yemen. This coupled with facing financial difficulties on western states and emerging security issues combine to reveal a perhaps ugly truth: as targeted killing has utility

to strategic practitioners, it will therefore have a future. The big question for liberal states is whether they can justify its use morally and legally to support their goals in the world. However, this grand-strategic question should always be asked well before using force.

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# Transforming Counterinsurgent Strategy: Using the Topography of Intelligence

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*"The ultimate determinant in war is the man on the scene with the gun. This man is the final power in war. He is control. He determines who wins."*[i] This is just as true in counterinsurgency as it is in regular warfare. There is, however, a significant military strategic debate going on as to where 'the scene' is with respect to irregular warfare: the populace or the foe himself? Current COIN doctrine seems to default to the former, the populace: in part due to an inability to locate and campaign seriously against an insurgent foe, whose strategy is founded upon his elusiveness. Yet eventually it is the foe who must be defeated, despite the man with the gun not actually being on the scene, and thus unable determine the outcome of the war.

Is there a tool capable of directing the man with the gun to where he must be? Arguably there is: intelligence. Technological improvements enable counterinsurgent strategy to accommodate the topography of intelligence, in which the connections within insurgent networks are mapped, attacked, and remapped within a continuous targeted and high tempo offensive operation, permitting a move from a reactionary cumulative strategy to one where sequential gains are made and consolidated.

## Technological improvements enable counterinsurgent strategy to accommodate the topography of intelligence

### Sequential and accumulative models examined

The American admiral and theorist J.C. Wylie posited two

types of strategy: sequential and cumulative. Sequential strategy is a step-by-step process in which major operations depend directly upon previous ones. Due to its character, it was believed to take place only on land or in campaigns in which the land was a significant factor. A sequential strategy allows a strategist to take control over the course of the war, and to exercise that control. The nature of taking control requires a medium that can be physically retrieved and occupied, ruling out four of the five geographic dimensions of warfare, and leaving only land.

Cumulative strategy, on the other hand, is a diffuse process of multiple parallel actions, in which no single action is necessarily dependent upon any other. The effects of these actions accumulate over time. Cumulative strategy disallows taking and exercising control; it can only deny control to the enemy, to prevent him from controlling the course of the war. The French general André Beaufre suggested that "any dialectical contest is a contest for freedom of action." [ii] In this regard cumulative strategy is unlike its sequential counterpart, in that it strategically restricts neither belligerent's freedom of action. Each can operate against the other with relatively little difficulty. Cumulative strategy is most frequently the strategy of the weak, and operationally it is defensive, as the cumulative strategist must be able to evade his enemy freely. [iii] One of its specific forms is insurgency. For intelligence to transform counterinsurgent strategy, it must enable a sequential campaign to become the prime achiever of effect, rather than an endless cumulative effort of population protection.

It is the cumulatist insurgents' evasion ability which confounds Western armies currently engaged in counterinsurgency operations. It forces them to revert to cumulative strategies of their own, including population control. Common wisdom holds that counterinsurgency takes a long time; this must logically be so, especially when both actors are pursuing cumulative strategies which seek to deny their foe control. Unfortunately, in such a contest the insurgents have a necessary advantage, as they are much less visible than their conventional counterparts. It is thus much easier for insurgents to inflict damage and casualties upon regular soldiers than it is for those soldiers to retaliate significantly. All counterinsurgency writers acknowledge that only intelligence can close the gap, but rarely do they provide any insight into how that might be accomplished.

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## Intelligence and strategy

Strategists' attitudes toward intelligence span two extremes: that it *may* be useful but is rarely reliable; and that it is the key to victory. The difference between these extremes is one of emphasis. Both treat intelligence primarily as a force multiplier, due to its inherently supportive role. "To reduce an argument *ad absurdum*, it can be suggested that while waging war successfully without intelligence might be dangerous and expensive but still possible, attempting to do so with excellent intelligence but no army is impossible." [iv] The role of intelligence is clearly to improve the efficiency of force, allowing it to enhance the likelihood of victory and achieving greater effect at lesser cost, without changing the character of the strategy employed.

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### The role of intelligence is clearly to improve the efficiency of force, allowing it to enhance the likelihood of victory without changing the character of the strategy

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The insurgents' success at elusiveness triggers persistent failure among counterinsurgents unable to locate them—a failure of intelligence which transforms the weaker insurgents' options from a futile sequential strategy to a plausible cumulative strategy. No strategist questions the wisdom of a weaker party resorting to guerrilla warfare and cumulative strategy as a method of countering a stronger threat. Yet counterinsurgents take this failure of intelligence for granted, and subsequently resort to tactics based upon population control as a means of gaining intelligence on the insurgents. The result is the *de facto* acceptance of insurgent terms of warfare: a long, operationally indecisive war, predicated solely upon denial of control, with the foreign counterinsurgents, rather than the native insurgents, bearing the burden of responsibility to the populace.

These entrenched attitudes toward intelligence in counterinsurgency serve existing COIN praxis. The US Army Counterinsurgency Field Manual 3-24, for example, suggests that "Intelligence in COIN is about people. U.S. forces must understand the people of the host nation, the insurgents, and the host-nation (HN) government. Commanders and planners require insight into cultures, perceptions, values, beliefs, interests and decision-making processes of individuals and groups. These requirements are the basis for collection and analytical efforts." [v] Yet insight into another culture alone will never defeat an insurgency; missing from this laundry list is the question of *where the insurgents are*.

Mastery of such cultural intelligence which has been operationally executed without friction may prevent the insurgency from growing larger—although this is a significantly context-dependent proposition—but it will not in and of itself *diminish* an existing insurgency.

More worryingly, current COIN tactics draw considerably from Cold War counterinsurgent writing, none of which anticipates the technological changes which have significantly affected intelligence gathering, and offer opportunities Cold War counterinsurgents never experienced.

## Intelligence strategies in the information age

Modern technology has widened both intelligence and mainstream communications capabilities, the latter frequently used to direct a geographically dispersed insurgency. This broadening of capabilities works in two directions. Not only do counterinsurgents gain new methods of intelligence gathering, including persistent or near-persistent audiovisual surveillance capacity, but the insurgents also suffer potential new vulnerabilities that may be exploited for intelligence purposes. Through a newly expanded mobile communications network, Iraqi insurgents may have gained a tool for easy self-coordination, but simultaneously this same tool provided the Coalition a chance to find them. "By May 2005 the number of Iraqis using cellular phones had grown to around 1.75 million. Mobiles were becoming a vital intelligence source. Just the details of a call between two numbers could be the start of an operation." [vi]

Michael Flynn, an architect of this intelligence-centric approach, also notes that "*nodal analysis* is spatially connecting relationships between places and people by tracking their patterns of life. While the enemy moves from point to point, airborne ISR (Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance) tracks and notes every location and person visited. Connections between those sites and persons to the target are built, and nodes in the enemy's low-contrast network emerge." [vii] Surveillance of insurgent mobile phone use provides one layer within the wider nodal analysis process. The threshold for acquiring actionable intelligence decreases substantially, after development and analysis, due to the abilities and vulnerabilities of modern technology, immediately improving counterinsurgent chances of making contact with the enemy on his own terms.

There is one sole instance when this new intelligence capability was used in conjunction with surveillance assets to exceed the traditional COIN intelligence process. Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) under Stanley McChrystal took advantage of the new capabilities and new enemy vulnerabilities in Iraq to conceive of "an aggressive targeting model known as *find, fix, finish, exploit, and analyze* (F3EA) which features massed, persistent ISR cued to a powerful and decentralized all-source intelligence apparatus in order to *find* a target amidst civilian clutter and *fix* his exact location." [viii] Not only would the target be swiftly located by special operations forces—and capture was preferred to killing due to the greater intelligence potential—but the strike team would take anything of plausible intelligence value in the immediate environment to be investigated, thus generating more intelligence. Indeed, the elimination of targets was secondary to the generation of new intelligence, although clearly the two tasks cannot be separated, as special operators cannot collect potential intelligence sources without securing the location first.

It was suggested above that sequential strategy, the type of strategy that allows strategists to assert and exercise control, traditionally only occurs on land. Armed forces reside and act on land, they take and protect it, and in this way armies limit the options available to the enemy, remove his freedom of action and take control of the war. Yet without the ability to pinpoint insurgents this is all in vain. The futility of locating insurgents is the prime incentive for armies to

employ cumulative strategies founded upon population protection. In Iraq, McChrystal and JSOC developed in F3EA a method by which sequential strategy could be practiced against insurgents and terrorists. They termed it "industrial counterterrorism," yet at its core it was a sequential strategy based upon a 'taking' relationship not with land, but with intelligence.

## **The futility of locating insurgents is the prime incentive for armies to employ cumulative strategies founded upon population protection.**

### **Strengths and limitations of a sequential intelligence strategy**

Taking a particular geographical position allows an army to move beyond that position to the next; similarly, special forces operators struck a particular target and gathered intelligence that fuelled strikes at other targets. Without the first strike, subsequent attacks could not happen for lack of intelligence, just as particular geographical positions cannot be taken without first taking those in front. Wylie noted that terrain "is the fixed field within which [the soldier] operates. It is the limitation within which he must function." [ix] Terrain in Iraq, rather than being physical geography, had been turned into the topography of intelligence, and the counterinsurgents advanced and took control of the war based on that intelligence.

This marks an important alteration. A theater of operations whose limits are defined by physical geography may easily hide the enemy. A theater of intelligence will be only insignificantly larger than the enemy himself, albeit the real extent of the theater may only be known in hindsight—its limits, unlike those of a geographical theater, will not be apparent from a map. The strategist of course cannot guarantee that every strike will generate intelligence, but in Iraq only a fraction of operations returned no intelligence, a potential indication of future effectiveness. The insurgent has difficulty hiding within such a theater, and the counterinsurgent may therefore pursue the sequential strategy that allows him to seize control.

The ability to conduct a sequential strategy to take control of the war primarily by taking intelligence from the enemy represents a potential transformation of strategy in the context of waging counterinsurgency. Achievement of the intelligence-action-intelligence cycle allows the counterinsurgent consistently to employ force against insurgent units and organizations, on his own terms. If the pace of operations is fast enough, the insurgent organization can be destroyed more quickly than it regenerates, a result JSOC successfully imposed upon Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). This results in a decreasing insurgent presence both amongst and outside the population and a diminishing number of insurgent-initiated actions. The final result is an overall improvement in security.

However, the tempo required to destroy AQI was intense. Multiple strikes per night were needed, and the burden was shared amongst only a handful of American and British

special operations organizations. Indeed, most likely only special forces have the blend of training and capabilities necessary to perform such precision operations at such a rate, usually without relying upon support forces, to remain as low-key as possible.

This focus on a small group highlights a distinct limitation to this transformation. Intelligence assets must be massed to achieve the necessary density for a sequential campaign. "Inherent in massing is rejecting the commonly held practice of 'fair-sharing' ISR among multiple units. Massing implies focus and priority. Selected parts of the enemy's network receive focus, which should be unwavering for a specified time. This is counterintuitive to those who feel the need to fair-share assets as a way to cover more space and service more priorities. The problem with a low-contrast and fleeting foe, however, is that enemy actions are not easily predictable. Without prediction, the next best things are redundancy and saturation." [x]

Thus, the primary internal limitation is the issue of scale. An entire army cannot wage a sequential campaign against insurgents based upon intelligence; there are simply not enough assets, analysts or time in the day to analyze the necessary amount of information without losing the needed tempo and effectiveness. Prioritization in assets must thus be given to the most dangerous insurgent threats, and to the forces most capable of such intelligence-driven operations.

One might consider the expansion of armies during the 19th and 20th centuries as a parallel example. As armies grew larger, they required more space to maneuver and to fight. Conveniently, such physical space was available. Yet similarly, the larger the forces acting upon a topography of intelligence, the more intelligence is necessary to sustain their operations. When considering the analysts, hardware and other support required to interpret the increasing amount of intelligence gathered, a fixed limitation to the amount of space available in any physical theater of operations becomes apparent.

Historically, the availability of these assets proved enough to absorb increasing army sizes up until the World Wars. That is no longer the case. The support required for analysis now has a soft limit—it can be increased, but increasing the limit takes its own time and resources, and the limit can be reached quickly in a theatre despite significant expansionary efforts. Thus practical limitations necessarily restrict intelligence-based sequential strategy to smaller outfits such as special forces, even if regular forces are deployed in support of individual strikes. It is thus impractical for an entire army or counterinsurgent force to operate solely within the topography of intelligence.

The other primary limitation is external - insurgent countermeasures aimed at decreasing the efficiency of the entire intelligence gathering system, including persistent audiovisual surveillance and ensuing nodal analysis. Basic insurgent security measures may deny surveillance opportunities to gather or develop information on insurgent patterns. However, other possible countermeasures may decrease not just counterinsurgent but also insurgent capabilities. If mobile phones, for instance, cannot be secured, then their widespread use might be largely abandoned, denying counterinsurgents this level of nodal analysis. This

simultaneously also decreases the ease of coordination amongst both insurgent groups and individual insurgents within groups, affecting their operational efficiency if they remain dispersed. It may also increase their vulnerability if they group together to maintain efficiency.

Other communications technologies may allow for greater security—the internet, for example, permits the presentation of inconstant identity to evade tracking, while maintaining constant aliases so that fellow insurgents recognize each other. Such methods of communication are not as convenient in highly fluid operations, however, and may stand out. Indeed, insurgents have many countermeasure choices available, but most have costs as well as benefits. As such, insurgents seem unlikely to deviate from their current *modus operandi*.

### The future of intelligence-based counterinsurgency strategies

Given these important restrictions, can intelligence truly transform the character of a strategy? One must be mindful of certain limitations. First, there has been but a single example of this sort of intelligence-based sequential strategy, waged by McChrystal and JSOC in Iraq from 2004-2008. This might prove a special case, as Iraq teetered on the brink of civil war simultaneously with counterinsurgency efforts, which at times targeted both Sunni *and* Shia warring sides. There was thus an extraordinary level of insurgent and terrorist activity to track, providing bountiful intelligence opportunities that may not be available in more sedate counter/insurgent environments. As noted above, AQL was effectively destroyed by the special operations campaign conducted.

## can intelligence truly transform the character of a strategy?

Nevertheless, this success was tempered by the remaining patchwork of rival Sunni and Shia insurgent organizations which continued to operate. Given that the theater of intelligence offers no hiding place even to a sparser insurgent environment producing a lower absolute amount of intelligence, the result is greater effect from organizational destruction caused by the sequential strategy.

JSOC also only grew to a few thousand people, a figure that may be contrasted with the several hundred thousand Coalition and Iraqi army and police forces also engaged in other counterinsurgent efforts. To what extent can such a numerically limited operation be said to have transformed a strategy whose means comprise two orders of magnitude more personnel in theater? If the characters of strategies are defined disproportionately by their effects, then one might suggest that five thousand men might indeed transform the strategy pursued by five hundred thousand. Strategists only attempt to deny control when they cannot reasonably attempt to take it, a state of affairs that characterizes not just insurgents but frequently also counterinsurgents. If the counterinsurgent is capable of employing even a fraction of his force in an intelligence-led effort to take control, regularly defeat the opponent's attempts at denying control, and diminish his presence, it may be surmised that the truly effective aspect of the counterinsurgent's strategy is his intelligence-led campaign and indeed that the strategy has been transformed. Ultimately, regardless of original insurgent or intelligence levels, victory in the theater of intelligence is most likely achieved once intelligence can no longer be generated from any further operations, as this would denote a catastrophic collapse of the insurgent network.

Ultimately, modern technology has succeeded in enabling new intelligence assets and capabilities to trigger a transformation in the character of strategies pursued in defeating insurgencies. The advent of such sequentially-conducted intelligence-based campaigns allows the counterinsurgent to strip away the one piece of protection every insurgent relies upon: the ability to avoid his enemy. With this defence gone, almost any insurgency might be open to destruction as was AQL, provided that the necessary intelligence assets—manpower, hardware and software—are available.

The scale of insurgency, however, may determine that only a superpower may prove able to concentrate the sheer amount of assets—intelligence and special forces—necessary fully to achieve this change and defeat the insurgency. Such a transformation to sequential strategy may avail itself only to an exclusive membership, one which has the necessary resources to utilize fully the topography of intelligence as a basis for seizing control.

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# Covert Operations and Strategy

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Covert operations provide a cost-effective method for pursuing policy aims internationally with reduced risk. 2011 has provided strong evidence in support of this proposition. March brought allegations of Colonel Gaddafi enlisting some distinguished Western universities to launder his reputation, thwarted apparently only by press attention following the opening of military operations against him; news soon followed of a British 'diplomatic team', incorporating personnel from the Secret Intelligence Service and 22 Special Air Service Regiment (22 SAS), detained while liaising with anti-Gaddafi rebels inside Libya.[i] By April, 'former' SAS men and 'Private Military Companies' were reported inside Libya providing 'support and advice' to the rebels.[ii] Interestingly, this period saw published Duff Hart-Davis' excellent account of a previous generation of 'ex'-SAS men, backed secretly by the UK and Saudi Governments, providing similar 'support and advice' to the Imam of Yemen's resistance to the Egyptian occupation of the 1960s.[iii] Gaddafi has used covertly supported proxies against his enemies before, sponsoring the IRA and al Fatah, and, responding to the 2011 NATO airstrikes against him, promised that hundreds of Libyans would 'martyr' themselves in Europe in retaliation.[iv] Then, 27 July saw the US, UK and French Governments recognise the anti-Gaddafi rebels as the 'sole governmental authority' in Libya and release over £90 million in Libyan assets held in Western banks to assist them further.[v] Beyond Libya, 2011 saw several mysterious incidents in Iran: two scientists involved in Iran's nuclear programme and one of the founders of its ballistic missile programme were killed by bombs planted by persons unknown, and in November 2011 another bomb detonated near Iran's main nuclear facility in Isfahan, as the Obama

administration stated openly that 'covert action' was part of a strategy to prevent Iran acquiring nuclear weapons.[vi] Throughout 2011, stories emerged of a veritable 'reputation laundering' industry in London, some elite consultancies being employed allegedly by unenlightened and sometimes vicious regimes to connect them with high-profile apologists and front-men in the UK, including a former Prime Minister, serving Members of Parliament and a prince of the Royal Family.[vii]

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**strategy is an intrinsically political activity, and politics is far from the neat, sequential affair many think it is**

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It was put by some that supporting the Libyan rebels was strategically pointless and imposing dangerous levels of overstretch on British forces committed heavily already to Afghanistan at a time of fiscal belt-tightening, demonstrating thereby the current British Government's strategic illiteracy (e.g. 'As we attempt to wage intervention on the cheap, we are unprepared conceptually and militarily to wage war on a sovereign state again... This crisis demonstrates some disturbing flaws in the country's capacity to think coherently and plan strategically').[viii] Such views reflect a purist - and mainly academic - view of strategy as using armed force to pursue clear policy goals via a comprehensive and immutable plan unfailingly matching a single means to the end in point. This is rarely the case in real life - strategy is an intrinsically political activity, and politics is far from the neat, sequential affair many think it is. Politics is the means by which clashes of interest between collectives of people are resolved, and, as both Machiavelli and Clausewitz realised, effective political activity must be reactive and opportunistic, even the most long-term of policies having to use various means in combination, and adapt to shifting contexts if they are to stay relevant; it must also, in many cases, be duplicitous and obfuscatory of both ends and means if interests are to be pursued effectively against competition.[ix] A Machiavelli might, therefore have argued that Britain and France seized opportunities presented by the Libyan rebellion, managing the situation cost-effectively via combining hard power, diplomacy and covert operations; likewise, if the Iranian bomb attacks come from covert activity by outside powers, then this forms part of a coherent policy programme as well. [x] Indeed, so convinced are some countries of the efficacy

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of such activities that they have created 'fourth forces' specialising in them; the Second World War saw Britain create Special Operations Executive (SOE) to 'set Europe ablaze', followed by the American Office of Strategic Services (OSS); more recent events have been shaped by organisations such as the Central Intelligence Agency's (CIA) Special Operations Division and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard's al Quds Force. Establishing the importance of such activity on paper is problematic, nevertheless, most obviously because it *is* covert, therefore covered by official secrecy beyond examples decades past; moreover, the sheer range of covert activities – from bloodless, subtle propaganda of the 'cultural diplomacy' variety to deploying Special Forces in surreptitious paramilitary support of friendly forces engaged in war – hinders the kind of grand general theorising underpinning much of the academic study of strategy.

### Covert Operations and Strategy

Yet, these activities can be differentiated from others. Where open, peaceful methods are used to pursue external policy, it is called diplomacy; if force or threat of force is used overtly, it is called strategy; where external policy utilises means clandestine and concealed from the target government and its own public, it is called covert activity. All are instruments of policy; all have the same objective, each uses a different path to get there. It is put commonly that covert operations in peacetime are a tool of foreign policy, in wartime, of strategy.[xi] Remember, however, that strategy never stops. [xii] There are grey areas in which states clash short of open warfare when use of subversion, sabotage and fighting by local proxies may be a preferred strategic option to overt commitment of regular forces; moreover, given that much non-violent covert activity aims at undermining the target state's military preparedness and will to fight, and steering its strategic decision-making processes, there are important strategic dimensions here, also.

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### if force or threat of force is used overtly, it is called strategy

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A covert operation, therefore, is a single mission aimed at creating a particular situation in another country with concealed means and intent. Non-violent covert operations create disaffection among the target state's population, weakening its will to affect the world around it, or steer surreptitiously its decision-making via placing agents in key positions. Violent covert operations include sabotage, assassination, and paramilitary support of armed insurgency against the opposing power. To reduce political fallout if things go wrong, peacetime covert operations should have 'plausible deniability': put bluntly, if things go wrong, the head of the originating government should be able to deny they authorised the operation or even knew of it. Therefore, official records might not be kept, and use will be made of front organisations, middlemen and local allies, including indigenous insurgencies, private military companies, tame media outlets, private consultancies and PR companies.[xiii] It is conceded that this brings risk to the policymaker, due mainly to there being no clear definition of what should be 'deniable' under such circumstances and how 'plausible' the

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## Hizballah was engaged in a massive program for re-equipping with medium-range rockets produced in Iran and Syria

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deniability should be. It may be that the President or Prime Minister is not informed at all of what is going on, allowing them to be truthful when they say they did not know about it; not only can this make them appear incompetent but it can also conceal 'rogue' agencies pursuing their own idea of the national interest, and thereby undermining state policy – the Lavon Affair comes to mind, here.

### Non-violent Covert Activity

Non-violent covert operations depend heavily upon 'agents of influence', persons able to influence either the government of the target country or opinion among its people. Those working directly upon the government tend to be taskable agents of the attacking power's intelligence service, while public opinion can be steered by other agents or just as often, and with more 'plausible deniability', through what Lenin (purportedly) called 'useful idiots', influential apologists duped into propagandising for the attacker through being propagandised thoroughly themselves. [xiv] Whether taskable agents or 'useful idiots' are used depends upon intent, opportunity, and the political culture of the target state: the endemic corruption and factionalism characterising many 'developing' states makes recruitment of local agents relatively easy. Economically developed liberal democracies are less prone to these things but with their multiple competing parties expressing multiple competing agendas, plethora of organised special interest groups, powerful and often aggressively querulous mass media and cultural mores emphasising unfettered freedom of expression and the 'right to protest', they actually offer no end of entry points for subversion via a judicious mixture of agents and 'useful idiots'. Indeed, 'useful idiots' were a cornerstone of 'permanent revolution' as advocated by Leon Trotsky, the USSR's Commissar for Military Affairs, in the 1920s, which was aimed specifically at undermining democracies. Trotsky saw the USSR as the vanguard of a 'world revolution', combining conquest by the Red Army with hastening the internal collapse of 'bourgeois' states through 'entryism' – finding sympathisers among opposing states' education system, trade unions and mass media who would agitate schoolchildren, students and industrial workers, leading to them to form revolutionary cells and repeat the process seen in Russia before 1917.

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### Non-violent covert operations depend heavily upon 'agents of influence'

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The Communist Party of the Soviet Union controlled other communist parties worldwide via the Comintern from the 1920s onwards, maintaining plausible deniability by claiming this was an international fraternal organisation of such parties, rather than an arm of the Soviet state.[xv] Soviet bloc

intelligence agencies also infiltrated 'peace' movements in the West, albeit with limited success. The majority of the membership of the British Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) fit firmly into the 'useful idiot' category, MI5 noting with some amusement the willingness of senior CND figures in the 1970s to accept 'briefings' from the Soviet Embassy in London at face value.[xvi] However, active 'entryism' was also apparent: at one point in the 1970s, eight of the fifteen seats on CND's national executive were held by members of the staunchly pro-Soviet Communist Party of Great Britain, while in 1999 it was revealed that Professor Vic Allen, who ran for the organisation's leadership in 1985, was 'in regular communication' with the East German secret service at a time when CND was campaigning to remove American cruise missiles from British soil and had steered the Labour Party's defence policy towards Britain scrapping its nuclear deterrent and pressuring European allies to do likewise.[xvii]

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### **Soviet bloc intelligence agencies also infiltrated 'peace' movements in the West, albeit with limited success.**

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Similar operations were pursued by William Casey, the Director of US Central Intelligence from 1981 until shortly before his death in 1987. Having observed the effective Soviet use of covert operations, Casey concluded that religion could form a potent counter-ideology behind covert resistance to atheist communism worldwide.[xviii] Consequently, he provided the Polish trade union, *Solidarity*, which developed gradually throughout the 1980s into a peaceful mass movement, opposing the communist government of Poland in alliance with the Polish Catholic Church, with money and printing presses alongside smaller-scale support for Jewish and Muslim dissident groups within the USSR.[xix] However, Casey's most ambitious covert operation was in Afghanistan in the 1980s, to be discussed in the context of other armed operations.

#### **Armed Covert Operations**

Integrating armed covert operations into theatre-level strategy was pioneered in the First World War, the best-known example involving the British providing weapons, engineers and aircraft to the Hashemite revolt against the Turks in the Hejaz region of Arabia in 1917-1918. The technique was perfected by Nazi Germany in the 1930s, using the Austrian Nazi Party and pro-Nazi movements among the *Volksdeutsche* of the Sudetenland and Silesia to instigate and steer the crises of 1937-1939, and in 1940, agents of the *Brandenburg* Special Operations Organisation of the *Abwehr*, German military intelligence, wearing French or Dutch uniforms or civilian dress, carried out deep reconnaissance and sabotage ahead of the advancing *Wehrmacht*. The activities of *Brandenburg*, combined with the rapid collapse of resistance in France and the Low Countries, led the British to assume that Germany had created a Europe-wide network of 'Fifth Columns', based on emigrant communities or pro-fascist traitors, to spy, sabotage and subvert ahead of the *Blitzkrieg*. [xx]

It is therefore unsurprising that British strategy, post-1940,

incorporated the 'encouragement of revolt' in Axis-occupied territory. At the behest of the War Office, Lieutenant Colonel Colin Gubbins authored *The Art of Guerilla [sic] Warfare*, a manual for armed covert operations which was distributed in the hundreds of thousands in dozens of languages, and also became operational doctrine for the best known 'fourth force' in history, SOE – of which Gubbins, promoted major general, was Director from 1943. Gubbins described conditions for such operations to succeed still holding true now – an occupier or government unloved by the populace, overstretched in space and time and facing threats on its borders, a credible leader-figure or government in exile around whom the resistance could coalesce and providing it with a motivating cause, and physical and political geography enabling the maintenance of concealed lines of communication to the insurgents. To exploit this situation, teams of specialist military personnel should infiltrate insurgent territory, to provide local partisans with logistical support, professional staff work and technical advice, but, more importantly, ensure their activities furthered Allied policy.[xxi]

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### **It is unsurprising that British strategy, post-1940, incorporated the 'encouragement of revolt' in Axis-occupied territory.**

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This is possibly what the outside 'advisors' were doing in Libya in 2011, and has been observable elsewhere throughout the Postwar period. Much has been made recently about trans-national 'networked insurgencies' producing a 'new paradigm of war'. [xxii] This is a sensible strategy for attacking the democracies in the 21st century, given their propensity for large-scale, open-ended 'humanitarian intervention' in the developing world, allowing them to be drawn into proxy insurgencies and other local conflicts, while the questionable strategic value of many such interventions can lead to exploitable controversy back home, particularly in cases such as Iraq, 2003, when intervening governments obfuscate their aims and motivations.[xxiii] However, the 'paradigm shifters' might try reading some more history, the method being neither new nor unprecedented.[xxiv] This is what SOE, OSS and the Soviet NKVD did in the Second World War, and in the 1950s, Nasser's Egypt organised Palestinian *Fedayeen* for cross-border raids from Sinai into Israel while pursuing a policy of ejecting British and French 'imperialists' from the Middle East via providing weapons, money and training to insurgents in Algeria, Oman and, later, Aden. The strategy was soon applied again globally: observing the success of the 1959 Cuban revolution, in 1961, Aleksandr Shelepin, chairman of the KGB, proposed supporting 'national liberation movements' in the Third World to build Soviet influence globally while forcing the USA and its allies to disperse armed strength away from Europe.[xxv] By the 1970s, not only were the Soviets supporting the Vietnamese National Liberation Front, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and insurgencies in South Africa and Rhodesia, but via their proxies, Cuba, Libya (Gadafi), South Yemen and the Palestine Liberation Organisation, were arming and training insurgents and would-be insurgents in Venezuela, Guatemala, Uruguay, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Peru, Northern Ireland, Italy, West Germany, Angola, Mozambique and Oman – covert operations within covert operations.[xxvi]

And, of course, this is what the USA developed in Afghanistan in the 1980s, via a three way alliance between the CIA, the Saudis, and the Pakistani secret service, Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), one of the most effective and experienced covert warfare organisations in the world. The Americans provided training, coordination, planning and, later, weapons. The Saudis funded the operation, and recruited foreign *Mujahedeen* to fight alongside the Afghans. ISI supplemented the funding, created training camps on the Northwest Frontier, and used networks built up over the previous thirty years in Afghanistan and Central Asia to provide liaison with the resistance.[xxvii]

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### **this is what the USA developed in Afghanistan in the 1980s, via a three way alliance between the CIA, the Saudis, and the Pakistani secret service**

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This clandestine alliance benefited from the conditions for success laid out by Gubbins forty years before, and it changed the course of history. One outcome was the Soviet ejection from Afghanistan, a factor in the USSR's discrediting as a world power; another was the birth of al Qaeda. Abdullah Azzam and Osama bin Laden founded the Afghan Services Bureau in 1984, with the probable backing of Prince Turki, head of Saudi intelligence, to improve the training and supply of Muslim volunteers going to Afghanistan.[xxviii] They built up a worldwide net of covert fundraisers, and by 1985, had their own training camp in Pakistan and some 3,000 professional guerrillas from all over the Muslim world, trained by American and Pakistani Special Forces. This formed the kernel of al Qaeda, whose true claim to originality is that it is a *non-state* actor carrying out a transnational terrorist insurgency on a global scale – a Salafist SOE or OSS which works in not dissimilar ways. Like those organisations, it provides these local groups with training, planning and tactical advice via the internet and other media, occasionally attaches agents to local groups to coordinate them with the aims of the overall movement, and sometimes withdraws operatives for training at the home base.[xxix] This 'hands off' approach worked, taking the USA almost a decade to realise that numerous apparently unconnected local incidents formed part of a coherent global strategy – yet, its frequent reliance on disgruntled minorities, and the steady elimination of local leader-figures is likely to cap al Qaeda's success. A concurrent, less high-profile but possibly more efficient linked insurgency has been run by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps al Quds Force via its proxy, Hezbollah, which in addition to setting up a mini-state in southern Lebanon and executing terrorist attacks on Israel, has allegedly hit Jewish interests in Latin America, and US facilities in Saudi Arabia. Iran also inserted agents into majority Shi'ite areas of southern Iraq, following the abortive uprising of 1991, recruiting locals who became the kernel of the Shi'ite insurgency which ejected

British forces from Basra in 2009.[xxx] In 1996, the uncovering of a Hezbollah-backed *coup d'état* plot in Bahrain led to President Clinton contemplating military action against Iran. [xxxi]

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### **While deficient in planning, Hezbollah showed sound strategic logic**

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While deficient in planning, Hezbollah showed sound strategic logic here, as perhaps the most efficient covert operations of all neutralise potentially hostile governments altogether via coups d'état, following the Sun-Tzu-like path of finding dissenting elements in a strategically important state's armed forces and security services, turning them into strategic instruments in our own hands, and using them to replace their government with one more pliable. This was a favoured method of Western powers during the Cold War period. Probably the best-known covertly-organised *coup* of the modern era was also in the Gulf region, that against Mohammed Mossadegh, Prime Minister of Iran, organised by the CIA in 1953 on behalf of the British after he nationalised Iran's British-owned oilfields, which ensured the Shah would remain in command of Iran for another 26 years. This particular operation bears study not just for its historical impact, but for its illustration of what goes into a successful outside-sponsored coup – an ostensibly popular but actually divisive government, powerful vested interests ideologically sympathetic with the intervening power, and a credible alternative leader-figure willing to cooperate fully with the interveners.[xxxii] And it appears that clandestine warfare goes on there still....

#### **Conclusions**

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### **This is growingly important for liberal democracies, needing as they do to reconcile the demands of Realpolitik**

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The unseen hand of clandestine warfare lies behind many historical and current events. It played its part in shaping recent global history, including the evolution of the Cold War, the recent history of the Middle East and events before and after 9/11, and continues in Libya and, possibly, Iran. This is growingly important for liberal democracies, needing as they do to reconcile the demands of Realpolitik with their liberal and ethical self-image and the apparent post-Iraq public distaste for large-scale foreign adventures. As such, they will need to consider options which leave the lowest possible political-strategic footprint. Moreover, the nature of such operations allows countries to 'punch above their weight' globally and cost-effectively, Libya 2011 indicating the UK Government may realise this.

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- [ix] Refer to Hew Strachan, 'Strategy and Contingency', *International Affairs*, Volume 87 Number 6, November 2011, pp.1281-1296, for a view of strategy somewhat at variance with the popular consensus
- [x] A discussion of why this happened, or whether this constituted 'good' or 'bad' policy is irrelevant to this paper; whether policy is 'good' or 'bad' has no bearing whatsoever on the efficiency of the methods used to pursue it.
- [xi] *Ibid.*, pp.75-76 provides a good summary of covert activity as a tool of foreign policy.
- [xii] We should all be indebted to William F. Owen and A.E. Stahl for this aphorism
- [xiii] Abram N Shulsky and Gary J Schmitt, *Silent Warfare: Understanding the World of Intelligence* (Washington DC: Potomac Books 2002), pp.91-95
- [xiv] The term is often attributed to Lenin, but there is no direct evidence linking him with its origin.
- [xv] Shulsky and Schmitt, *Silent Warfare*, pp.86-87
- [xvi] Christopher Andrew, *The Defence of the Realm: The Authorized History of MI5* (London: Penguin 2010), pp.673-675
- [xvii] 'I regret nothing, says Stasi spy', [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/special\\_report/1999/09/99/britain\\_betrayed/451366.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/special_report/1999/09/99/britain_betrayed/451366.stm); 'So who else spied on us? More about the Mitrokhin Archive and British spies', <http://www.guardian.co.uk/theguardian/1999/sep/21/guardianletters3>. Professor Allen was unapologetic about his activities, and went unpunished for it, possibly because several members of Tony Blair's Cabinet, including Mr Blair himself, and Lord Robertson, the then Secretary General of NATO, had all been members of CND in the 1980s and the whole affair therefore had the potential for immense embarrassment were matters taken further.
- [xviii] Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan and bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001* (London: Penguin 2004), pp.92-93, 97-98
- [xix] George Friedman, *America's Secret War: Inside the Hidden Worldwide Struggle between the United States and its Enemies* (London: Little, Brown 2004), p.15
- [xx] AJP Taylor, *The Origins of the Second World War* (London: Hamish Hamilton 1961), pp.8, 51, 112-115, 176-179. For what the British suspected about Brandenburg in 1940, see FO Miksche, *Paratroops* (London: Faber and Faber 1943), p.65; PRO WO 208/2998, 'Enemy Air-Borne Forces', pp.10, 25
- [xxi] Lieutenant Colonel C McV Gubbins, *The Art of Guerrilla Warfare* (London: MI(R) 1939), especially pp.1-4, 6-7, 9, 16-17
- [xxii] See Colonel Thomas X Hammes USMC, *The Sling and the Stone: On War in the 21st Century* (St Paul, MN: Zenith 2006), pp.1-15, 130-152; David Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One* (London: Hurst 2009), pp.5-29 Both these are excellent works, and Colonel Kilcullen in particular is to be congratulated for exploding a lot of the nonsense surrounding insurgency, but, sadly, like many other good books on strategy, both have been seized upon by certain others who have cherry-picked certain themes and ideas for their own agendas.
- [xxiii] Friedman, *America's Secret War*, pp.32-35
- [xxiv] I am grateful to Colonel David Benest for suggesting this line of investigation. It is worth noting that Colonels Hammes and Kilcullen both have an excellent understanding of historical context, but some taking inspiration from them certainly do not.
- [xxv] Mitrokhin II, pp.9, 40, 150, 432-433
- [xxvi] *Ibid.*, pp.246-262, 443-449; Robert Asprey, *War in the Shadows* (London: Little, Brown 1994), pp.1062-1121
- [xxvii] For an inside view from the ISI, see Mohammad Yousaf and Mark Adkin, *The Battle for Afghanistan* (London: Pen & Sword 2007)
- [xxviii] Coll, *Ghost Wars*, pp.155-156; Hammes, *Sling*, pp.131-132
- [xxix] Coll, *Ghost Wars*, pp.474-475, 489; Hammes, *Sling*, pp.134-138
- [xxx] Friedman, *America's Secret War*, pp.249-250, 301-302; Richard A Clarke, *Against All Enemies: Inside America's War on Terror* (London: Free Press 2004), pp.101-104
- [xxxi] Clarke, *Against all Enemies*, pp.111-121
- [xxxii] See Donald N Wilber, *Regime Change in Iran: Overthrow of Premier Mossadeq of Iran November 1952-August 1953* (Nottingham: Spokesman 2006)



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