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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

We are pleased to introduce the inaugural edition of the *West Point Journal of Politics and Security* (WPJPS). WPJPS is an undergraduate journal based in the Department of Social Sciences at the U.S. Military Academy (West Point). Published annually online and in print, it aims to be the premiere publication in the United States for undergraduate research on topics germane to U.S. and international political and security interests, broadly defined. To that end, WPJPS aims to showcase innovative undergraduate research from West Point and non-West Point undergraduates, primarily situated in political science and security studies, but extending into economics, history, sociology, and area studies.

Our first issue begins with Ms. Shira Cohen (IDC-Herzliya)'s article, which lays out the various scenarios that could lead to the first international crisis caused by the rise of artificial intelligence; importantly, it offers an innovative solution as to how such international crises might be avoided. Next, Ms. Zainub R. Ali (University of Georgia) engages with the rich debate surrounding the effectiveness of leadership decapitation as a counterterrorism strategy; Ali argues that despite the targeted killing of Iranian Major General Qassem Soleimani, the Quds Force is likely to survive and grow due to the bureaucratic nature of, and widespread support for, the organization.

Underscoring WPJPS' wide range of interests, Cadet Reed Bauer (U.S. Military Academy) offers WPJPS' first political philosophy submission: focusing on LTG (Ret.) James M. Dubik's Principle of Legitimacy for just war, Reed discusses challenges posed when war-fighting publics are disengaged from conflicts. In the fifth article, quantitatively focused, Mr. Jonah Isaac (University of Texas - Austin) looks at two broad periods of U.S. grand strategy—"the War on Terror" and the "Era of Near-Peer Competition"—to assess if, on the African continent, U.S. aid flows align with purported geostrategic interests.

The next piece draws from historical case studies: Mr. Adam Bollt (Brown University) assesses what factors allow small states to avoid getting drawn into larger powers' wars, and offers additional insights that extant literature has overlooked. In the final piece of the inaugural issue, Cadet Grace Brooks (U.S. Military Academy) explores the impact of artificial structures on levels of political violence by comparing the historical cases of Egypt and Panama. Overall, Brooks highlights the importance of artificial structures such as canals in shaping states' international behavior.

We are delighted to share the preceding outstanding examples of undergraduate research with our new—and hopefully growing!—readership. As we move into the coming years, we look forward to further support, and engagement with readers, and welcome feedback to continually improve the quality of this journal.

Go Army, Outresearch Navy!

Dr. Amira Jadoon

Dr. Jason Warner

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Submissions

WPJPS accepts submissions from current or recent undergraduate students based at West Point and outside of West Point. While WPJPS prioritizes publishing the work of current undergraduates, we will consider the publication of work by those who have already graduated, assuming that the work was produced while the author was an undergraduate. Authors should not have completed their undergraduate degrees more than two years prior to submission.

All submissions should include:

- A brief cover letter summarizing the article background, overarching research question, and main contribution to existing knowledge. The cover letter should also confirm that the submitted manuscript is original work, and has not been published or submitted elsewhere for publication.
- The proposed manuscript in Word (not PDF) format, which should be between 3,500 and 5,000 words, including a 200-word opening abstract. For citations, please use footnotes in Chicago style.
- A copy of the author’s CV.

Submissions should be sent to the Editors-in-Chief, Dr. Amira Jadoon and Dr. Jason Warner, at wpjps.editors@gmail.com

The First International Crisis of Artificial Intelligence: Imagining Scenarios and Responses

Shira E. Cohen

With the rise of artificial intelligence (AI), a new but underdeveloped literature has emerged to investigate how AI might impact international conflicts. Just how, this article asks, might the first international AI crises occur, and how might international actors respond to avoid catastrophe? After examining existing literature, this piece argues that the three major applications of AI in military systems that may lead to international crises include: AI-enabled autonomous weapons systems, AI-enabled nuclear weapons systems, and AI-enabled cyber weapons. While it is impossible to pinpoint one scenario or even one type of application that will cause the first international AI crisis, this article draws on the model of the “Doomsday Clock” (maintained since 1947 by the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists) to help give coherence to possible outcomes and responses. At its core, this article proposes a new model for early warning signs of an impending AI crisis—what it calls, the “AI Doomsday Clock”—which intends to offer a tool to decision-makers that will provide awareness of the early signs of an international crisis in AI, before developing into a potentially disastrous international crisis.

In recent years, there has been a consensus among security experts that technological developments in artificial intelligence (AI) will cause significant adaptations to current warfare.¹ This notion has encouraged many countries to produce their own national AI development strategies, expressing their desires to enter the race for global leadership in the field of AI.

What is known as the “AI arms race” is led by three countries, each with different strategic approaches. First, China, which has set a goal for itself to lead the world in AI by 2030, pursues an aggressive approach that focuses on developing AI that contributes to strategic decision-making. In practice, China is seeking to develop human-level AI that will portray the fluctuating circumstances of a battlefield, advise commanders in their decision-making, and make other tactical contributions. Second, the United States—which in 2019, via executive order by President Donald Trump, created the “American AI Initiative”—follows a more conservative approach that seeks to produce computers that would assist in decision-making, but not make them on their own. This strategy, rather than creating fully autonomous systems, emphasizes “human-machine collaboration”, meaning machines that provide data and analysis to human operators who then take action. Last of the three global leaders in the “AI arms race” is Russia, whose president, Vladimir Putin, in 2017 declared, “Whoever becomes the leader in this sphere will become the ruler of the world.” For its part, Russia aims to produce better military hardware that relies on AI but leaves decisions about deployment entirely in the hands of human operators. An example of this is the Russian project of self-guided missiles that are able to change course mid-flight in order to evade missile defenses.²

As with any arms race once it begins, a process emerges among competitors in which their relentless competition drives an almost constant state of instability.³ This phenomenon, seen in the current AI arms race, relates to new

1 James Johnson, “Artificial Intelligence & Future Warfare: Implications for International Security,” *Defense & Security Analysis* 35:2 (2019): pp. 147-169.

2 Adrian Pecotic, “Whoever Predicts the Future Will Win the AI Arms Race,” *Foreign Policy*, March 5, 2019.

3 Lewis Richardson, *Arms and Insecurity: A Mathematical Study of the Causes and Origins of War and Statistics of Deadly Quarrels* (Pittsburgh: Boxwood Press, 1960).

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AI-enabled technologies in autonomous weapons, nuclear weapons, and cyber weapons; a new technology with the potential to redefine the status quo in military operations is at the center of the competition, potentially leading to unintended consequences at the strategic level, to include crises.⁴

Therefore, this article will seek to examine the following question: How might the first international AI crisis occur, and how might international actors respond to avoid catastrophe? Since current AI applications are considered “enabling technology,” meaning that AI has had widespread applications similar to the development of electricity or the internal combustion engine, there are many possibilities that might lead to an AI crisis. After examining existing literature, this piece argues that the three major applications of AI in military systems that may lead to international crises include: AI-enabled autonomous weapons systems, AI-enabled nuclear weapons systems, and AI-enabled cyber weapons. While it is impossible to pinpoint one scenario or even one type of application that will cause the first international AI crisis, this article proposes a new model for early warning signs of an impending AI crisis, what it calls the “AI Doomsday Clock.” This model intends to offer a tool to decision-makers that will provide awareness of the early signs of an international crisis in AI, before entering a potentially disastrous international crisis. It should be noted that this article will focus on a strategic international crisis in AI, at the military level only and not at the civil level.

A Review of Definitions: Artificial Intelligence, Crises, and Military Technology

Military AI Definition and Applications

In current literature involving international crises and AI, there does not exist a universal definition of the term “AI,” as it refers to a wide range of applications and technological functions for improving the performance of automated or autonomous systems.⁵ This paper discusses AI in general terms, and therefore, the definition of the Defense Science Board’s Summer Study on Autonomy in 2016 for “AI” is adequate. AI is “the ability of a computer system to perform tasks that normally require human intelligence”.⁶

With such a broad definition, it is unsurprising that so many different types of AI technology exist. All current AI systems fall into the Narrow AI category, also known as Weak AI, which refers to algorithms that address specific problem sets like image recognition. In contrast, General AI, also known as Strong AI, refers to systems capable of human-level intelligence across a broad range of tasks. The most common approach to Narrow AI is Machine Learning, which involves statistical algorithms that replicate human cognitive tasks by deriving their own procedures through analysis of large training datasets.⁷ Another major type is Deep Learning, which is a form of machine learning that uses models of human neural networks in order to produce predictions that can be applied to new information in a hierarchical process.⁸ Finally, another key concept in AI is Natural Language Processing, which is a computational process that allows machines to both understand and produce written and spoken language.⁹

With such a variety of potential uses, in the military field, the utilization of AI technology systems can be seen in all dimensions of combat: land, air, sea, intelligence, and command, as well as in diverse military-security fields, such as nuclear, autonomous weapons, and information operations.¹⁰ Research regarding international crises in AI addresses three major applications of AI in military systems that may, under certain circumstances, lead to crises. These include Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS), which use sensor suites and computer algorithms

4 Johnson, “Artificial Intelligence & Future Warfare.”

5 James Johnson, “The AI-Cyber Nexus: Implications for Military Escalation Deterrence, and Strategic Stability,” *Journal of Cyber Policy* 4:3 (2019): pp. 442-460.

6 Forrest E. Morgan, Benjamin Boudreaux, Andrew J. Lohn, Mark Ashby, Christian Curriden, Kelly Klima, and Derek Grossman, *Military Applications of Artificial Intelligence: Ethical Concerns in an Uncertain World* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2020).

7 “Artificial Intelligence and National Security,” Congressional Research Service (CRS), 2020.

8 Juergen Schmidhuber, “Deep Learning in Neural Networks: An Overview,” *Neural Networks* 61 (2015): pp. 85-117.

9 Prakash M. Nadkarni, Lucila Ohno-Machado, and Wendy W. Chapman, “Natural Language Processing: An Introduction,” *Journal of the American Medical Informatics Association* 18:5 (2011): pp. 544-551.

10 Guilong Yan, “The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Hybrid Warfare,” *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 31:4 (2020): pp. 898-917.

to independently identify a target and employ an onboard weapon system;¹¹ AI-enabled nuclear weapons systems, primarily early warning, intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance (ISR), and command and control systems; and AI-enabled cyber weapons, which manipulate or destroy code in an adversary system, such as ISR systems or a deployed kinetic-weapons system. Therefore, this paper will focus on these three major applications.

International Crises and Military Technology

Due to limited research literature in the field of AI and international crisis, in order to imagine sources of responses to the first international crisis in AI, one must first examine the influence of military technology on international crises.

The literature regarding the development and proliferation of military technologies shows us that the assimilation of technological innovations has had significant implications for world order, strategic stability, the likelihood of war, and the formation of international crises.¹² The primary ways in which these technologies shape and influence global power relations are through both military and economic means.¹³

The impact of quickly evolving military technologies, as well as the risk that they pose in the form of destabilization and crisis, has led to international efforts to control the distribution, production, development, or deployment of certain military technologies.¹⁴ Two primary examples are nuclear weapons and cyberspace technologies. Both the Cuban Missile Crisis, which led to a drastic change in international relational dynamics,¹⁵ and the 1983 crisis following the Able Archer exercise and the Soviet Union's misconception about its purpose are relevant to the nuclear context.¹⁶ In the cyber context, the Stuxnet attack, which disrupted centrifuge enrichment activities at the uranium enrichment facility in Natanz, Iran, can be classified as an international crisis that drastically changed the way in which cyberspace was viewed.¹⁷ Another example is the cyber attacks on the computer networks of the U.S. Democratic National Committee in 2015 and 2016, which represented the expanding phenomenon of foreign cyber interference in the election.¹⁸

In recent years, researchers have compared nuclear and cyber technologies in international relations with AI technologies, including the likelihood of their impact on international crises. Payne¹⁹ argues that while each technology have different and distinct characteristics, both nuclear and cyber technologies have the potential to challenge strategic stability, which can lead to an international crisis given the proper preconditions. It should be noted that in cyberspace, there have been recent claims that cyber activities are unlikely to cause escalation as originally expected.²⁰

Placing military AI technologies in the same category of emerging military technology as cyber and nuclear technologies may help us understand their true impact on international relations and potential crises.

11 "Artificial Intelligence and National Security."

12 Michael C. Horowitz, *The Diffusion of Military Power: Causes and Consequences for International Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010).

13 Michael C. Horowitz, "Artificial Intelligence, International Competition, and the Balance of Power," *Texas National Security Review* 1:3 (2018): pp. 36-57.

14 Matthijs M. Mass, "How Viable is International Arms Control for Military Artificial Intelligence? Three Lessons from Nuclear Weapons," *Contemporary Security Policy* 40:3 (2019): pp. 258-311.

15 James Johnson, "Artificial Intelligence in Nuclear Warfare: A Perfect Storm of Instability?" *Washington Quarterly* 43:2 (2020): pp. 197-211.

16 Ryan Kiggins, "Big Data, Artificial Intelligence, and Autonomous Policy Decision Making: A Crisis in International Relations Theory?" in Ryan Kiggins ed., *The Political Economy of Robots* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), pp. 211-234.

17 Louk Fasn, Bianca Torossian, Elliot Mayhew, and Carlo Zensus, "Conflict in Cyberspace: Parsing the Threats and the State of International Order in Cyberspace," *Strategic Monitor* (2019).

18 Michael Buratowski, "The DNC Server Breach: Who Did it and What does it Mean?" *Network Security* 10 (2016): pp. 5-7.

19 Kenneth Payne, "Artificial Intelligence: A Revolution in Strategic Affairs?" *Survival* 60:5 (2018): pp. 7-32.

20 Ben Buchanan, *The Hacker and the State: Cyber Attacks and the New Normal of Geopolitics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2020); Brandon Valeriano, Benjamin Jensen, and Ryan C. Maness, *Cyber Strategy: The Evolving Character of Power and Coercion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).

International Crises and AI

There are two features of AI technologies that lead to the undermining of strategic stability and crises: the arms races in AI and the characteristics of AI technology.

In the AI realm, there are two arms races taking place simultaneously: the “complex race” and the “narrow race.” The “complex race” focuses on developing AI technology that will assist in decision-making processes, and it is currently led by China and the United States. Conversely, the “narrow race” is similar to a traditional arms race, focusing on achieving the best military functions in AI, and it is led by China, the United States, and Russia. These two arms races take place in unison, as countries participating in the complex race still must invest in less advanced AI functions in order to compete in the narrow race. This is due to the fact that a country with more powerful military AI functions, such as drones and submarines with autonomous capabilities, will have a significant advantage on a future battlefield.²¹ It should be noted that the preconditions for an international crisis would likely develop more quickly in the narrow race, as some researchers claim that achieving operational AI maturity in the complex race will be possible in 2045 at the earliest and 2070 at the latest.²²

Along with the AI arms race, one can also study the particular characteristics of AI technology that may directly affect the potential for international crises. First, AI systems act and respond quickly, in a way that may lead to errors or unwanted actions. This rapid response of the systems can make it difficult for operators to address the error before it leads to a crisis.²³ Additionally, merging AI technologies with advanced weaponry may allow opponents to increase their pace of combat. This rapid increase in pace can make it increasingly difficult for commanders to contain or even end events.²⁴ Second, AI technologies are highly dependent on the reliability and pertinence of the data; if the data is inaccurate, then the system may make non-optimal decisions that could lead to devastating consequences.²⁵ Third, AI systems still depend on their encoded assumptions, by that of human engineers who risk sowing their biases into the systems that they program. These biases can then lead to errors in AI systems and thus cause instability and even crisis.²⁶ Fourth, in AI systems that include connectivity between multiple components, the behavior of the AI creates interactions in ways that are not directly visible, not linear, and sometimes not immediately understandable to the operator. This complexity makes it difficult for operators to understand or anticipate system behavior, especially in new environments or in unexpected scenarios. Additionally, this situation may reduce the operator’s ability to detect or isolate an error. In times of tension or instability, the detection of an error may be critical, and failure to do this may eventually lead to a true crisis.²⁷

Finally, in the field of AI, the future of warfare has much to do with the investments of and costs to the private sector. The gap between the military and private sector in this arena is only growing and may lead to countries’ reliance on military systems produced by the private sector, which notably has different interests than those of the state. This situation could lead to the acquisition of inferior systems of weaponry by the states, in addition to systems that do not fully conform to the military interests of the states.²⁸ Alternatively, in a state with a non-cooperative private sector, it could also cause domestic tension or the state to fall behind in an arms race.

21 Pecotic.

22 Mark Graves, “Shared Moral and Spiritual Development Among Human Persons and Artificially Intelligence Agents,” *Theology and Science* 15:3 (2017): pp. 333-351.

23 Mass.

24 James Johnson, “Artificial Intelligence, Drone Swarming, and Escalation Risks in Future Warfare,” *RUSI Journal* 165:2 (2020): pp. 26-36.

25 Asaf Tzachor, Jess Whittlestone, Lalitha Sundaram, and Sean O. Eigeartaigh, “Artificial Intelligence in a Crisis Needs Ethics with Urgency,” *Nature Machine Intelligence* 2 (2020): pp. 365-366.

26 Johnson, “Artificial Intelligence, Drone Swarming, and Escalation Risks in Future Warfare.”

27 Mass.

28 M. L. Cummings, Heather M. Roff, Kenneth Cukier, Jacob Parakilas, and Hannah Bryce, “Artificial Intelligence and International Affairs: Disruption Anticipated,” *Chatham House Report*, 2018.

A Schema for Types of International Crises in AI

The vague definition of AI technologies, the varied applicability of AI in defense systems, and AI's complex characteristics make it difficult to predict which type of AI technology applications will lead to the first international crisis.

In order to offer some coherence to just how and why the first international AI crisis might emerge, this article lays out the following three scenarios.

First Application – Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems

First Scenario – Claims of an Accident: An international crisis may result from an accident that has occurred, or that the other party believes has occurred, due to the use of Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS). A possible hypothetical scenario in this context, proposed by Leys,²⁹ is based on an incident in 2015 whereby Turkey shot down a Russian military plane. However, in the hypothetical, it is a Russian anti-aircraft system located near the Syrian-Turkish border that shot down a Turkish military plane. The Russian military claimed that it suspected that there may have been a malfunction in its autonomous monitoring system. In such a situation, there is no way to determine the truth of Russia's claims, as Turkey demanded U.S. military action against Russia, under the North Atlantic Treaty. This example supports the notion that AI technology adds yet another layer to battlefield uncertainty, similar to the concept put forward by Carl von Clausewitz of the "fog of war". This situation, on the one hand, allows leaders a wider scope of plausible deniability for unsavory state behavior. That is because in some cases, LAWS are designed to operate without a human decision-maker, and therefore states are able to take actions that would be otherwise unavailable to them, under the guise of a machine malfunction. On the other hand, even if both parties recognize that the situation is due to machine malfunction, the malfunction results may be severe and therefore generate pressures that can lead to a crisis.

Second Scenario – Deterrence: Another potential issue stems from the will to deter the opponent that can lead countries to use LAWS before the technology has reached sufficient operational maturity. As long as adversaries fear that the capability may exist, they can be deterred. However, deploying such systems can lead to systems or human errors, and increased sensitivity to disruption and sabotage, as well as a failure of deterrence that may lead to a crisis.³⁰ For example, the growing competition between China and the United States in the South China Sea may lead either or both to use LAWS, such as submarines before it is technologically mature in order to deter the other from taking action. This premature use can lead to unwanted errors either in the technology or in the decision-making process, eventually leading to a crisis.

Third Scenario – Hyper War: An international crisis may result from "hyper war," meaning a state of conflict in which human decision-making is almost non-existent, and therefore, responses are immediate and potentially destructive.³¹ A relevant example, which is borrowed from the financial realm but can also contribute to the field of LAWS, is the 2010 stock market flash crash. According to the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, the rapid crash was due to the use of autonomous financial trading algorithms, which led to a trillion-dollar market decline in just a few minutes. In the military field, high-speed LAWS may push the pace of combat to a point at which human commanders might lose control of the process. This challenge of keeping the human in the decision loop is one of the most significant challenges that militaries face regarding the implementation of AI. Additionally, unlike the financial market, there is no overarching authority in international relations that can enforce the AI-based mechanisms if they do fail. Therefore, a similar event in the military field, characterized by an arms race and instability, may quickly lead to an international crisis.³²

29 Nathan Leys, "Autonomous Weapons Systems and International Crisis," *Strategic Studies Quarterly* 12:1 (2018): pp. 48-73.

30 Edward Geist and Andrew J. Lohn, "How Might Artificial Intelligence Affect the Risks of Nuclear War?" (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 2018).

31 Liran Antebi and Inbar Dolinko, "Artificial Intelligence and Policy: A Review at the Outset of 2020," *Strategic Assessment* 23:1 (2020).

32 Johnson, "Artificial Intelligence in Nuclear Warfare;" Mass.

Fourth Scenario – Withdrawal of Human Military Forces: Replacement of currently deployed human military forces with LAWS may lead to a number of unstable scenarios. First, withdrawing forces can cause a country's allies to question its commitment to the alliance as a result of reduced presence and protection. As Leys³³ noted, although small forces of U.S. troops stationed on allied soil cannot repel a mass invasion, if they are killed, the potential political costs for a U.S. leader who chooses not to respond all but guarantee a military response, restoring U.S. credibility in the event of a military response. It should be noted that in response to the replacement, the ally may work to strengthen its military in order to defend itself, leading to regional tensions. Another scenario resulting from the substitution of human force would be an increase in the use of military force, due to reduced fear of injuries or deaths of soldiers. This scenario would likely increase aggression, therefore increasing tensions between the parties and leading to crises.³⁴ Finally, this replacement may lead to increased operations below the escalation threshold, such as the use of drones. Such operations may exacerbate ambiguity and incite violent means, thus leading to a crisis.³⁵

Second Application – Nuclear Warfare and Artificial Intelligence

First Scenario – Disrupting the Balance of Nuclear Power: All of the leading countries in the AI arms race are nuclear states. Both strategic competition and the possibility of machines to accomplish many tasks that once required human effort or were considered impossible to change shifted the balance of power. That is because it might portend new capabilities that could spur arms races or increase the likelihood of nuclear force being utilized.³⁶ Additionally, many countries possess nuclear capabilities, which creates an increasing number of pathways by which violence can be escalated, as each country naturally chooses different responses to emerging technologies in the digital age due to inherent cultural differences. An example of the destabilization between nuclear states occurred in 2016 when China captured a U.S. underwater drone, claiming that it posed a danger to Chinese naval navigation. This incident ended with China returning the naval AI drone, after several days of diplomatic controversy. Although this case did not lead to a serious crisis between the nuclear-armed countries, the incident demonstrates the possible risk of escalation caused by the ambiguity surrounding the deployment of new technology.³⁷

Second Scenario – Combining AI Systems with Nuclear Systems: This type of combination may drastically alter AI's current capabilities through the assimilation of new nuclear technologies. For instance, recent reports suggest that China is considering the assimilation of AI capabilities into nuclear-powered submarines, and possibly even into nuclear-armed ones. In theory, these capabilities could enable China to receive and process large amounts of signal data, while also supporting a wide range of naval operations and providing the nation with advantages on the naval battlefield. That being said, these new nuclear technological capabilities may disrupt the delicate balance that exists today.³⁸ It should be noted that military organizations have to overcome a number of hurdles to use the new technology effectively, and therefore, it is important to put into perspective the impact of that new technology on military effectiveness.

Third Scenario – The Use of Autonomous Weapons to Protect Strategic Nuclear Assets: Countries with nuclear weapons can use autonomous weapon systems to protect strategic nuclear assets, by using them to control launch facilities and command and control systems, in ways that affect nuclear deterrence and security. This will become a new and increasingly enticing asymmetric option to undermine an adversary's military readiness, deterrence, and resolve, and thus alter the current balance of power that includes certain equality in the nuclear capabilities of the various sides. For example, a country with nuclear capabilities could use AI drone swarms, which are considered low-risk and low-cost AI-augmented autonomous weapons with ambiguous rules of engagement, to protect its strategic

33 Leys.

34 Ibid.

35 Johnson, "Artificial Intelligence & Future Warfare."

36 Geist and Lohn.

37 Johnson, "Artificial Intelligence in Nuclear Warfare."

38 Stephen Chen, "China's Plan to Use Artificial Intelligence to Boots the Thinking Skills of Nuclear Submarine Commanders," *South China Morning Post*, February 4, 2018.

nuclear assets.³⁹

Third Application - Cyber Attacks and Artificial Intelligence

First Scenario – Increasing the Potential Scope for Cyber Attacks: Although future attacks will probably be similar in shape to today's attacks, the difference lies with two aspects: increasing the amount of "hackable things," which will allow for hackers to break into new systems and infrastructures; and increasing the number and volume of attacks, in a way that will make the response more complex.⁴⁰ When these aspects are combined with cybersecurity risks that are unique to AI systems, the consequences of a successful attack can be severe. For instance, the U.S. Defense Department⁴¹ mentions the "adversarial machine learning" within which AI systems can be harmed by the "contamination" of data, which includes changing algorithms or making other important adaptations that can completely change a system's purpose.⁴² Attacks of this kind in greater quantities and on new infrastructures such as electricity, water, and hospitals may increase the possibility of a crisis.⁴³ It should be noted that scholars have argued recently that cyberspace has not proven as escalatory as early theorists anticipated.⁴⁴

Second Scenario – Increasing the Speed of Attack: Another scenario stems from the fact that the new generation of improved cyber capabilities in the field of AI will increase the risk of accidental escalation due to the increased speed of the warfare itself. Cyber AI reinforces the effects of current, advanced capabilities, thus increasing speed of combat and reducing the decision-making time frame. Additionally, the high speed of AI cyber tools can allow for an attacker, with relatively limited skills, to exploit a narrow window of opportunity and hack his opponent's cyber defenses.⁴⁵

In conclusion, in all three applications described, there are many possible scenarios for international AI crises. As broadly presented as they are, all of these scenarios are likely to occur, and to the best of this author's knowledge, none of them can be refuted with certainty. Therefore, due to the inability to pinpoint one scenario, the following research will offer a model for raising awareness to early warning signs of an impending crisis.

A Model for Early Warning Signs of an International Crisis in AI

While the above section presented ways in which the first international AI crises might emerge, the article now proposes a model intended to help mitigate the impacts of the crisis once it begins. The goal of the model proposed is to offer decision-makers a means that will provide awareness of the early signs of an international crisis in AI before it occurs. Given the successful identification of an impending crisis, decision-makers would be able to act accordingly in order to reduce tensions and ultimately prevent the crisis.

The Original "Doomsday Clock"

The conceptualization of the model is based on the "Doomsday Clock," which has been maintained since 1947 by the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists (BAS). The clock attempts to estimate the world's proximity to a global catastrophe that could ultimately endanger the future of humanity. Originally, the clock sought to measure the degree of proximity to a nuclear war in the context of the arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union. The estimation is presented on a clock that measures "minutes to midnight," with "midnight" representing the point at which a nuclear war will break out. It should be noted that the longest distance from midnight was 17 minutes in 1991, after the end of the Cold War. On January 23, 2020, the clock was moved to the closest position so far to midnight, at 100 seconds before midnight. The movement of the dial is influenced by relevant international events,

39 Johnson, "Artificial Intelligence in Nuclear Warfare."

40 Antebi and Dolinko.

41 "The National Artificial Intelligence Research and Development Strategic Plan," U.S. Department of Defense, October 2016.

42 Johnson, "Artificial Intelligence, Drone Swarming, and Escalation Risks in Future Warfare."

43 Johnson, "Artificial Intelligence & Future Warfare."

44 Buchanan; Valeriano, Jensen, and Maness.

45 Johnson, "The AI-Cyber Nexus."

and their influence is determined by experts in the field.⁴⁶ The clock has become a universally recognized indicator of the world's vulnerability to catastrophe⁴⁷ and has been mentioned extensively in mainstream media, including CNN, CBS News, *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and ABC News. This exposure has led to an increase in public awareness to the danger posed by nuclear weapons, thereby influencing decision-makers' awareness as well. It should be noted that since 2007, the BAS has included climate change considerations in the calculations of the doomsday clock.⁴⁸

A Proposal for an "AI Doomsday Clock"

This article explores the idea behind an AI version of the "Doomsday Clock" that would bring awareness to an impending AI crisis. It should be noted that according to the BAS,⁴⁹ AI will eventually mature into a transformative national security technology, on par with nuclear weaponry, which explains this paper's propensity to use the nuclear clock in the AI field. This particular clock will consist of three separate dials, with each dial representing one of the three main applications of AI in the military realm. Each of the dials will operate independently because each dial can individually cause an international crisis. Similar to the original clock, whenever an event occurs that brings us closer to or further from a crisis, the dials will move accordingly; midnight will symbolize the point at which an international crisis in AI will occur. It should be noted that since the future of AI is still vague, and because it is impossible to understand all of the arenas in which AI will be integrated, the model allows us to insert additional dials that will correspond to those new areas. Furthermore, regarding the developing applications of AI, the next section will examine the possibilities of linking one moving dial to another; an application in cyberspace may affect, for example, the nuclear.

Regarding the factors that affect the movement of the clock dials, there are "macro factors," which affect the movement of all three dials, and "micro factors," which affect each of the dials separately. All factors are based on the characteristics of AI.

Macro Factors Influencing an "AI Doomsday Clock":

- **International Events** – International events have a definitive effect on the movement of all three dials. For example, signing an international treaty concerning AI will increase the dials' distance from midnight, while an international military incident that increases tensions will bring the dials closer to midnight.
- **A New Player in the Arms Race** – A new country that acquires military AI capabilities, conducts experiments, and assimilates the systems may disrupt the current balance of world power, thus bringing the clock dials closer to midnight.
- **Actions Below the Escalation Threshold** – Actions and events below the threshold of escalation, which are subjective to and determined by each country, may shorten response times, causing decisions that could lead to a crisis. For example, the repeated use of drones for spying or targeted hits may increase tensions, thus bringing the clock dials closer to midnight.

Micro Factors Influencing an "AI Doomsday Clock":

- **Accelerated Development** – Significant advances in one of the three technological applications of AI may undermine stability and thus bring the dials closer to midnight. That is, as part of the AI arms race, only one of the three dials will move in accordance with the type of technology that has been improved.
- **Placing AI Systems in a New and/or Unstable Environment** – Placing AI technologies in a new or unstable environment may exacerbate existing risk, due to new options for increasing the pace of combat. Thus, depending on the technology installed, the corresponding dial will be moved closer to midnight.

46 "Frequently Asked Questions," Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists (BAS), (n.d.), accessed at <https://thebulletin.org/>

47 John Mecklin, "It is Now Two Minutes to Midnight," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, January 25, 2018.

48 "Frequently Asked Questions," BAS.

49 Ibid.

- **Expanding or Reducing Collaborations** – Institutionalization or the termination of cooperation between countries, states, or the private sector regarding R&D and the acquisition of systems may move the dials. More specifically, cooperation may disrupt the strategic balance of power, causing the relevant dial to move closer to midnight. Similarly, cooperation that promotes stability will move the dials increasingly apart.

In accordance with the BAS “Doomsday Clock,” this paper proposes that the new clock will be proprietary to a public body, which will be responsible for moving the clock dials and thus raising awareness of a potential crisis. A public organization would presumably use publicly available information, and therefore, decision-makers may be less inclined to rely upon it for making policy. However, making the information accessible to the general public may raise public awareness and thus create public pressure to reduce the tension. Another advantage of publishing the information by a public body is that in the AI arena, beside the political decision-makers there are many other players, such as the private sector. Therefore, it is important that the information provided by the clock raises awareness for the decision-makers in these sectors as well.

Conclusion

Given the fact that there exists a wide range of AI military applications, there are also many possible scenarios for an AI international crisis. This article has sought to delineate what the three most probable sources of the first AI crises might be—lethal autonomous weapons systems; nuclear; and cyber—and has proposed one means by which to offer early warnings to decision-makers to stave off an impending AI catastrophe, in the form of the “AI Doomsday Clock.”

The model’s descriptive nature raises the awareness of an impending crisis and therefore makes it possible for decision-makers to take steps to de-escalate tension. The importance of bringing awareness to the very real possibility of an international crisis in AI lies in the fact that AI is an issue that is not a top priority for most governments, due to the relatively new and innovative nature of the field. However, fast-growing interest in AI among countries around the world reflects the importance of the field and thus the need to bring its potential for creating international crises to the forefront of conversation.

In the future, the complex arms race, which focuses on developing AI technology to assist in decision-making processes, will reach greater maturity. At that point, the success or failure of this model will be determined based on how well and how quickly it manages to alert the world before catastrophic AI events transpire. If the model succeeds, a separate, similar model will be formed in order to detect an impending crisis in the complex arms race specifically. Likewise, given this new model’s possible failure, adaptations will need to be made in order to address the true needs of this arms race.

Assessing the Effectiveness of Leadership Decapitation as a U.S. Counterterrorism Strategy: The Case of Iranian General Qassem Soleimani's Death by Drone Strike

Zainub R. Ali

Following the January 2020 killing of Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps-Quds Force Major General Qassem Soleimani by a U.S. drone strike, it is paramount to examine the effectiveness of leadership decapitation as a counterterrorism strategy employed by the United States. This paper explores the effectiveness of leadership decapitation via drone strikes by analyzing the case study of Soleimani's killing and its impact on the Quds Force, and its continued operations, along with Iran's support of proxy groups across the region and desire to become a regional hegemon. Within this article, I first discuss the specifics of Soleimani's death, the history of drones and their use in counterterrorism, and the socio-political implications of drone proliferation. Taking into consideration prior research, I apply the charismatic leadership framework offered by Michael Freeman (2010) to Soleimani, highlighting his role in Iran and the Quds Force. Leveraging Jenna Jordan's (2014) theory of organizational resilience, I argue that after Soleimani's death, the Quds Force is likely to survive, grow, and potentially retaliate due to the high level of bureaucracy and communal support maintained by the organization. Overall, this paper highlights the limited effectiveness of leadership decapitation when factors such as bureaucratization and communal support are strongly established.

The news of Quds Force Iranian General Qassem Soleimani's death by drone strike brought the world into a tense and anxious state. Policymakers, analysts, and academics considered the ramifications of the death of Soleimani, while young people bombarded social media with jokes about the outbreak of WWII.¹ Drone technology and usage has matured and developed extensively since the conclusion of the Cold War period and initial boom in technology during the early 2000s period, which brought about the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA).² In the past 20 years, American presidents have claimed strategic and tactical victories following the deaths of high-risk terrorist leaders and organizers; in this context, this study explores the implications of the death of a leading official, General Qassem Soleimani, for the future of the Quds Force. With the case of Soleimani, the drone strike was effective because it killed him, but what is the strike's impact beyond that one marker? Will the removal of Soleimani dispel U.S. concerns over the increasing influence exercised by the Quds Force in pursuit of Iran's goal to be a regional hegemon? This analysis may inform other studies as well, such as how the death of Soleimani by drone strike advanced U.S. foreign policy interests.

I apply the theory of leadership offered by Michael Freeman (2010) to dive into Soleimani's inspirational and operational role to illustrate why this made Soleimani a leader worth targeting.³ By applying the theory of organizational resilience, offered by Jenna Jordan (2014), I argue that despite the charismatic leadership displayed by Soleimani, the Quds Force will remain functional, cohesive, and steadfast in its goal to serve as a militaristic and political force in Iran and the region broadly—primarily due to its highly institutionalized nature and social,

1 Ian Bogost, "A New, Meme-Fueled Nostalgia for War," *Atlantic*, January 2020.

2 Jacek Bartosiak, "The Revolution in Military Affairs," *Geopolitical Futures*, November 25, 2019.

3 Michael Freeman, "The Headless Horseman: A Theoretical and Strategic Assessment of Leadership Decapitation," Calhoun Institutional Archive of the Naval Postgraduate School, February 2010, p. 1.

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political, and economic influence.⁴ This paper builds on existing scholarship analyzing the limited effectiveness of leadership decapitation when factors such as bureaucratization and communal support are strongly established. By focusing on a state-sponsored terrorist organization with official constitutional and political ties to the state government, this analysis of leadership decapitation broadens critiques of this U.S. counterterrorism tool beyond the consideration of traditionally covert terrorist groups operating either against their government or under their denunciation. The findings of this study are impacted by two temporal factors: one, it only examines the immediate impact of leadership decapitation, which can be difficult to definitively discern, and second, the COVID-19 pandemic has severely limited Iran's economy and ability to fund militia groups.⁵ Written in the near aftermath of a high-profile assassination, this paper offers a foundation for future research to draw upon when evaluating the long-term impact of Soleimani's death on the future operations and status of the Quds Force.

Targeting Qassem Soleimani

On January 2, 2020, the Department of Defense (DoD) released a statement announcing the death of Qassem Soleimani, Commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)-Quds Force. In 2019, President Donald Trump designated the IRGC, including its Quds Force, as a Foreign Terrorist Organization.⁶ The DoD stated that General Soleimani was "actively developing plans to attack American diplomats and service members in Iraq and throughout the region."⁷ Additionally, the Quds Force, under the guidance of Soleimani, managed the attacks on coalition bases in Iraq, which led to the death of American and Iraqi personnel.⁸ Soleimani has been described as "a terrorist kingpin; [who] destroyed the lives of countless people across an entire region for more than a decade; he had Syrian, Iraqi, Yemeni, Lebanese, and American blood on his hands."⁹ After his death, several members of Congress spoke out against the actions of Soleimani while also underscoring the lack of consultation with Congress by the executive branch about the strike.¹⁰ It is widely accepted that Soleimani was a formidable force who orchestrated immense violence, destruction, and suffering; however, it is crucial to examine the socio-political context of his death as well as its effectiveness and its implications.¹¹

Soleimani was killed by an American MQ-9 Reaper drone.¹² Drones are used in multiple contexts with the consequences differing in impact. Horowitz et al. (2016) identify five primary contexts in which drones have somewhere from little to significant strategic consequences for the proliferator and associated actors: counterterrorism, interstate conflicts, crisis onset and deterrence, coercive diplomacy, and civil war and domestic conflict.¹³ They argue that drones provide their greatest consequential utility in situations pertaining to counterterrorism and civil war/domestic conflict.¹⁴ The DoD highlights that the "strike was aimed at deterring future Iranian attack plans", which seems to be a hybridization of two of the contexts Horowitz et al. (2016) point to: counterterrorism and crisis onset and deterrence.

U.S. counterterrorism strategy relies on leadership decapitation as a "core feature" of its international response to

4 Ibid., p. 4; Jenna Jordan, "Attacking the Leader, Missing the Mark: Why Terrorist Groups Survive Decapitation Strikes," *International Security* 38:4 (2014): p. 11.

5 Amin Mohseni-Cheraghloo, "Iran and the economic fallout of COVID-19," Middle East Institute, April 14, 2020.

6 "Statement from the President on the Designation of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as a Foreign Terrorist Organization," The White House, April 8, 2019.

7 "Statement by the Department of Defense," U.S. Department of Defense, January 2, 2020.

8 Ibid.

9 Kathy Gilsinan, "It Wasn't the Law That Stopped Other Presidents From Killing Soleimani," *Atlantic*, January 4, 2020.

10 Ibid.

11 For commentary on this attitude toward Soleimani, see Kim Ghattas, "Qassem Soleimani Haunted the Arab World," *Atlantic*, January 3, 2020, or Mohammad Sadat Khansari, "Who Was the Vicious Criminal Qassem Soleimani," National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI), January 5, 2020. (NCRI is a democratic political coalition founded in Tehran in 1981.)

12 "Statement by the Department of Defense."

13 M. Horowitz, S. Kreps, and M. Fuhrmann, "Separating Fact from Fiction in the Debate over Drone Proliferation," *International Security* 41:2 (2016): pp. 7-42.

14 Ibid.

high-risk terrorist organizations.¹⁵ Cronin (2008) notes how “past experience with the decapitation of terrorist groups ... is just beginning to be studied in a systematic way and ... the relationship between decapitation and a group’s demise is not straightforward.”¹⁶ Because this type of analysis is relatively young, Price (2012) reasons that “country- and region-specific case studies help policymakers and scholars understand more about this controversial tactic,” and that is the rationale I use with the case of Soleimani’s death and its implications broadly.¹⁷ For the purpose of this paper and research, I will focus primarily on assessing the role of leadership decapitation via drone strike as a key U.S. counterterrorism strategy in the case of Soleimani’s death to hypothesize what it holds for the future of the Quds Force and U.S.-Iran relations.

The U.S. Drone Program: A Brief History

Before diving into one of the most recognizable drone strikes during the Trump administration, it is important to briefly highlight the history of the U.S. drone program as used for leadership decapitation. While drone technology had been developed and deployed since the early 1960s, it was during the mid-1990s that the United States produced the prolific Predator drone, defined by the Center for New American Security (CNAS) in its June 2017 report as “an operationally viable persistent surveillance aircraft that could be controlled via satellite communications.”¹⁸ Today, state and non-state actors have acquired access to drones with weaponized and/or surveillance technology.¹⁹ Based on Bergen et al. (2019) research on global drone capabilities and stockpiles, it is clear that there is mass distribution and deployment of drone technology across the world.²⁰ Insofar as drone proliferation is concerned, the CNAS highlights how “basic drone technology is already too widespread to halt its proliferation.”²¹ The United States exports drones to 55 countries (several of which are NATO members) and was one of the first states to acquire and deploy drone technology.²² As such, it is common for scholars and policymakers to focus on U.S. drone usage in the contexts of counterterrorism, human rights, and transparency.²³ While future research should address the role of drone usage by other countries, such as Israel and China (top drone producers and sellers along with the United States), it is important to focus on high-profile cases like the assassination of Soleimani because such analysis can inform understanding of the effectiveness of leadership decapitation via drone strike, and more specifically, the future of the Quds Force, and U.S.-Iran relations and stability.

Drones in Counterterrorism

As mentioned previously, drone technology was in development before 9/11; however, the al-Qa`ida terrorist attack heightened concerns about U.S. military and security strategy and emboldened the use of drones as a counterterrorism strategy.²⁴ Former President George W. Bush began his term determined to “institutionalize military transformation,” which was executed by his Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld.²⁵ November 2001 saw the first armed drone strike on “a convoy of vehicles believed to be carrying jihadi leaders along a road in Kabul,”

15 Jordan, “Attacking the Leader, Missing the Mark,” p. 1.

16 Audrey Kurth Cronin and International Institute for Strategic Studies, *Ending Terrorism : Lessons for Defeating Al-Qaeda* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2008), p. 27.

17 Bryan C. Price, “Targeting Top Terrorists: How Leadership Decapitation Contributes to Counterterrorism,” *International Security* 36:4 (2012): p. 12.

18 E.C. Ewers, L. Fish, M.C. Horowitz, A. Sander, and P. Scharre, “Drone Proliferation Policy Choices for the Trump Administration,” Center for New American Security, June 2017, p. 6.

19 P. Bergen, M. Salyk-Virk, and D. Sterman, “International Security World of Drones,” *New America*, November 22, 2019.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid., p. 4.

22 Ibid.

23 E.C. Ewers, L. Fish, M.C. Horowitz, A. Sander, and P. Scharre; C. Grut, N. Shah, L. O’Neill, S.M. Saadoun, and Z. Hutchinson, “Counting Drone Strikes Deaths,” Human Rights Clinic, Columbia Law School, October 2012.

24 P. Dombrowski and A. Ross, “The Revolution in Military Affairs, Transformation and the Defence Industry,” *Security Challenges* 4:4 (2008): p. 21.

25 Ibid., p. 18.

Afghanistan. Ewers et al. (2017) describe this as the moment “[the United States’] use to kill terrorists from afar started a new pattern of war.”²⁶ Thus, drones began to figure prominently in U.S. counterterrorism strategy. Former White House Counterterrorism Chief Richard Clarke supported a push to arm Predator drones because of the “potential for armed drones to shorten the kill chain [to] strike bin Laden.”²⁷ Drones used in the modern age (1995 and onwards following the first deployment of the Air Force Predator reconnaissance aircraft in Bosnia) allowed the United States to “[degrade] terrorist networks, particularly in regions where U.S. troops were not deployed on the ground in large numbers.”²⁸ Scholar Jordan (2014)—whose work will be explained in greater detail later on—highlights the use of drones as “one of the primary ways to target terrorist leaders.”²⁹

To put drone strikes into context from president to president, the Obama administration dramatically expanded the U.S. drone program, “ordering an estimated 506 strikes as of early 2016 that killed approximately 3,040 terrorists.”³⁰ Just as drone proliferation as a counterterrorism tool expanded, controversy over the expansion of drone usage against terrorists “‘outside of areas of active hostilities’ such as in Pakistan, Somalia, and Yemen” continued to gain momentum among civilians in both the United States and countries abroad.³¹ In light of this, the Obama administration took active steps to promote transparency in the midst of what was considered to be a mass escalation in the proliferation of drone strikes abroad. By the time the strike to kill Soleimani occurred, the Trump administration had conducted approximately 300 drone strikes in just three years.³²

A great deal of emphasis is placed on the context around the decision to proliferate a drone. When the proliferating state understands that the capture of a terrorist target is not feasible because the target is armed and does not possess the capabilities to shoot down the drone, then drone usage can prove quite consequential and strategic.³³ In other words, as Horowitz et al. (2016) describe, armed drones play a significant role in lowering barriers for using force in counterterrorism, especially “where capture is unpalatable and adversaries are armed and dangerous.”³⁴ However, they highlight that this does not mean that the use of lethal drones is “necessarily in the attacking state’s national interest.”³⁵ In terms of the drone strike that killed Soleimani, a senior Trump administration official told NBC News that “there had been a number of options presented to the president over the course of time.”³⁶ This would reasonably suggest that all other options had been exhausted except for death by drone strike; however, that information was not made available to the American or international public in the DoD’s January statement.³⁷ Additionally, according to the U.N. Security Council, the use of force is permissible as an act of self-defense against an impending, imminent attack; however, the death of Soleimani was authorized seven months prior to the strike—a long window of response time for an imminent attack.³⁸ Put another way, U.N. human rights investigator Agnes Callamard (2020) released a report as the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary, or arbitrary executions finding “no evidence ha[d] been provided that General Soleimani specifically was planning an imminent attack against US interests, particularly in Iraq, for which immediate action was necessary and would have been justified.”³⁹

26 Ewers, Fish, Horowitz, Sander, and Scharre, p. 6.

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid., p. 7.

29 Jordan, “Attacking the Leader, Missing the Mark,” p. 36.

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid.

33 Horowitz, Kreps, and Fuhrmann, p. 25.

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid.

36 Carol E. Lee and Courtney Kube, “Trump authorized Soleimani’s killing 7 months ago, with conditions,” NBC News, January 13, 2020.

37 “Statement by the Department of Defense.”

38 John B. Bellinger, “Does the U.S. Strikes on Soleimani Break Legal Norms?” Council on Foreign Relations, January 6, 2020; Lee and Kube.

39 Agnes Callamard, “Report of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions,” United Nations Human Rights Council, June 2020, p. 15.

This directly contradicts the DoD's statement about the imminent threat posed by Soleimani.

The use of drones surely removes a layer of anxiety and blame from the shoulders of elected officials domestically because they are able to take military action in a way that prevents mass soldier casualties.⁴⁰ However, it is critical to acknowledge that the domestic appeasement comes at the expense of diplomatic pushback and outcry among bombed societies. U.S.-administered drone strikes can deepen “anti-American sentiment in the local population, potentially aiding terrorists’ recruiting efforts.”⁴¹ In the case of Soleimani specifically, the legal implications of this foreign policy decision and the high-profile status of Soleimani certainly inform the United States’ intentions to dominate the international environment with its drone program.

Leadership Decapitation as a Counterterrorism Strategy

It is well acknowledged that successful drone proliferation on the part of the United States can yield generally positive political fuel for elected officials to posit as progress toward the nation’s counterterrorism and security goals while preserving the lives of American soldiers. Thus, in an effort to weaken and dismantle terrorist organizations, the United States has employed leadership decapitation as its preeminent counterterrorism strategy to effect change. Jenna Jordan (2014), one of the leading scholars contesting the effectiveness of leadership decapitation, defines leadership decapitation as the “killing or capturing of the leaders of terrorist organizations.”⁴² In addition to this, Jordan (2014) focuses on one group in particular—al-Qa`ida—and “why targeting [its] leadership is not an effective counterterrorism strategy, and indeed, is likely counterproductive.”⁴³ Through her analysis of leadership decapitation, she considers how “leadership targeting” can lead to the “creation of a martyrdom effect, a surge in recruitment, the occurrence of retaliatory attacks, an increase in group resolve in strength, and a rise in the frequency and intensity of attacks.”⁴⁴ This is a result of the overwhelming emphasis placed by counterterrorism strategists on individual leaders (who display qualities of charismatic leadership, which will be discussed in a later section) and fail to consider the broader situation of the terrorist organization, such as its organizational and social context—factors beyond just its one leader.⁴⁵ Cohen (2020) explains that this heightened focus on individual leaders has created a narrative for the U.S. counterterrorism strategy that focuses on the personalization of war, which has allowed recent U.S. presidents to enjoy domestic success and leverage by offering a misleading sense of strategic victory upon the deaths of top officials in terrorist organizations.⁴⁶

While the temporary socio-political advantages of drones may garner domestic support and stability, the removal of a single figure does little to disintegrate whole organizations with vast networks, which one could reasonably posit is the United States’ intended primary long-term international goal. President George W. Bush oversaw the capture of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and the death of al-Qa`ida in Iraq leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi; however, Hussein’s capture did not bring an end to the Iraqi insurgency nor did al-Zarqawi’s end dismantle al-Qa`ida in Iraq.⁴⁷ Under President Barack Obama, the killing of Usama bin Ladin did not “doom al-Qaeda or the Islamic State, [or] the overarching problem of Islamic jihadist terrorism.”⁴⁸ Similar analysis can be drawn from President Trump’s announcement of the death of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, leader of the Islamic State.⁴⁹ When far-reaching, deeply rooted issues of national security are consolidated and presented a singular threat, which can be dispelled upon a direct drone strike, it is easier for U.S. officials to offer a sense of strategic and tactical superiority. Over the long term, however, it is more consequential to consider the impact of targeted drone strikes on the motives and

40 Horowitz, Kreps, and Fuhrmann, p. 14.

41 Ibid., p. 25.

42 Jordan, “Attacking the Leader, Missing the Mark,” p. 7.

43 Ibid., p. 8.

44 Ibid., p. 11.

45 Ibid., p. 9.

46 Raphael S. Cohen, “The Politics of Man-Hunting and the Illusion of Victory,” War on the Rocks, January 2020.

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid.

49 “Bakr al-Baghdadi: IS leader ‘dead after US raid’ in Syria,” BBC, October 28, 2019.

structures of whole organizations like the Baathists (Hussein), al-Qa`ida (bin Ladin or al-Zarqawi), the Islamic State (al-Baghdadi), and now, the Quds Force (Soleimani). The 2000s presidents have each relied on the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF) to conduct these targeted strikes; however, the AUMF was passed in the very delicate and high-intensity backdrop of the 9/11 attacks on the United States. Nearly 20 years later, the AUMF was used to legitimize an attack on a military general leading a branch of the armed forces of a country that has been deemed a state sponsor of terror, but that the United States is not at war with; the diplomatic contexts are exceedingly unique and should be considered as such.⁵⁰

Assessing the Effectiveness of Leadership Decapitation

Several scholars have considered the effectiveness of leadership decapitation in dispelling the existence of that terrorist organization entirely. Lisa Langdon et al. (2004) find, through an examination of 19 guerrilla, terrorist, religious, and revolutionary groups from 1750 to 2004, that “the leadership of a group can generally change or be seriously challenged without threatening the group’s survival.”⁵¹ Price (2012) alternatively argues that leadership decapitation “significantly increases the mortality rate of terrorist groups”; his conclusion is based on an original database of 207 terrorist groups from 1970 to 2008.⁵² Firstly, his analysis suggests that “terrorist groups are susceptible to decapitation because they have unique organizational characteristics (they are violent, clandestine, and values-based organizations) that amplify the importance of leaders and make leadership succession difficult.”⁵³ Johnston (2012) considers the clandestine nature of “militant leadership” in his analysis of 118 decapitation attempts from a sample of 90 counterinsurgency campaigns to illustrate “that factors commonly associated with counterinsurgency success generally fail to predict the success or failure of government actions to remove militant leaders.”⁵⁴ His empirical study argues for the effectiveness of “removing militant leaders” (or leadership decapitation) because it increases the “chances of war termination”, “increases the probability of government victory”, “reduces the intensity of militant violence”, and “reduces the frequency of insurgent attacks.”⁵⁵ Johnston concludes his findings by noting that “decapitation is more likely to help states achieve their objectives as an operational component within an integrated campaign strategy than as a stand-alone strategy against insurgent and terrorist organizations.”⁵⁶

Alternatively, Jordan (2014) argues that leadership decapitation is ineffective and counterproductive as a meaningful and long-lasting method for countering terrorist organizations’ growth and persistence.⁵⁷ In focusing on the role of charismatic leaders and individual leadership, analysis of the effectiveness of decapitation overlooks two critical variables—the bureaucracy and communal support maintained by that organization, which will have a bearing on the mortality of the terrorist group following the decapitation of its primary leader(s).⁵⁸ The greater the level of bureaucracy and communal support enjoyed by a terrorist organization, the less substantial the impact of an individual leader and their subsequent removal will be through a drone strike.⁵⁹ In her analysis of the effectiveness of targeting al-Qa`ida’s leadership, Jordan applies a theory of organizational resilience to explain how al-Qa`ida’s bureaucratization and communal support have allowed them to withstand the threats imposed by U.S. drones strikes and leadership targeting.⁶⁰ To further elucidate Jordan’s point about the counterproductive effects of leadership

50 Ibid.; Rebecca Kheel, “Trump administration outlines legal justification for Soleimani strike,” Hill, February 14, 2020.

51 L. Langdon, A. J. Sarapu, and M. Wells, “Targeting the Leadership of Terrorist and Insurgent Movements: Historical Lessons for Contemporary Policy Makers,” *Journal of Public and International Affairs Princeton* (2004): p. 75.

52 Price, p. 11.

53 Ibid., p. 43.

54 Patrick B. Johnston, “Does Decapitation Work? Assessing the Effectiveness of Leadership Targeting in Counterinsurgency Campaigns,” *International Security* 36:4 (2012): p. 50.

55 Ibid., p. 50.

56 Ibid., p. 50.

57 Jordan, “Attacking the Leader, Missing the Mark,” p. 9.

58 Ibid., p. 20.

59 Ibid., p. 38.

60 Jenna Jordan, “When Heads Roll: Assessing the Effectiveness of Leadership Decapitation,” *Security Studies* 4 (2009): p. 723.

decapitation, international policymakers may turn to Abrahms and Potter’s (2015) case study of the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, a “Palestinian group that turned to terrorism during the Second Intifada.”⁶¹ In their piece, they illustrate how “militant groups become significantly less discriminate in their targeting choices” after “their leaderships are degraded through decapitation.”⁶² Upon the removal of a central figure of authority and leadership, “subordinates are given a freer hand in conducting operations, thereby ceding autonomy to members with strong incentives to harm civilians.”⁶³ These findings further support Jordan’s (2014) proposition that leadership decapitation is often counterproductive and leads to unintended consequences—in the case of the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, that unintended consequence took the form of less discriminate targeting due to greater autonomy after the loss of a singular voice of authority and leadership.

Literature assessing the effectiveness of leadership decapitation is both extensive and colored by competing theories and explanations examining its impact on the mortality and continued operations of terrorist groups. In Table 1: “Comparing Theories of Leadership Decapitation,” I highlight the authors and scholars whose work on leadership targeting and decapitation is incorporated into my own research. I aim to clearly highlight the factors they consider when evaluating the effectiveness of leadership decapitation and its impact on the terrorist group’s ability to survive without its leader. While my research and analysis primarily employ Jordan’s organizational variables and social context, Table 1 shows how the scholars collectively consider the wider fabric, institutional operability, and chance of succession within the organization to inform their analysis of the effectiveness of leadership decapitation. I include a broader spectrum of analysis to highlight the differing considerations of leadership decapitation’s effectiveness in dismantling terrorist organizations because each terrorist organization is unique; however, by applying concepts of organizational structure, communal support, and chance of succession, we can predict the likely outcome of the Quds Force following the death of Soleimani.

Table 1: Comparing Theories of Leadership Decapitation

Author	Jordan (2009) <i>When Heads Roll</i>	Jordan (2014) <i>Attacking the Leader</i>	Freeman (2010) <i>The Headless Horseman</i>	Price (2012) <i>Targeting Top Terrorists</i>	Langdon et al. (2004) <i>Targeting the Leadership of Terrorist and Insurgent Movements</i>	Cronin (2008) <i>Ending Terrorism</i>
Question/ Consideration	Conditions of dismantled terrorist organizations after leadership decapitation (719)	Effectiveness of leadership decapitation + organizational decline (21)	“what makes a leader important?” (2)	“what does it mean [when] terrorist groups experience leadership decapitation?” (9)	“what happens to militant movements after the arrest of a leader?” (59)	“how terrorist campaigns have ended” (28)
Dependent Variable	Decisiveness and organizational degradation (731-732)	Rate of organizational decline	Value of individual leaders (12)	Terrorist group mortality (26)	Outcomes after leadership crisis	“Decline or demise of a group” (28)

61 M. Abrahms and P. Potter, “Explaining Terrorism: Leadership Deficits and Militant Group Tactics,” *International Organization* 69:2 (2015): p. 313.

62 Ibid., p. 313.

63 Ibid., p. 328.

Independent Variable	Organizational age, type, and size (734)	Bureaucracy and popular support (11)	Inspirational or operational role (12)	Organizational characteristics of the terrorist group (43)	Common group	Group organization and orientation toward leader (29)
Measurement	Correlation between susceptibility to decapitation and organizational characteristics (731)	Level of bureaucratization and communal support (11)	The role of the leader: operational and/or inspirational (32)	Susceptibility to decapitation due to unique organizational characteristics (43)	Levels of discipline, obedience, and institutional strength (72-73)	(Non) hierarchical structure of group (31)

Moving forward, I will examine the targeted killing of Soleimani via U.S. drone strike under the U.S. counterterrorism strategy of leadership decapitation. Future research and discussion about leadership decapitation should more explicitly consider the impact of different tools and methods for executing targeted assassinations, including a discussion of whether or not drone strikes are more effective than other methods, such as the use of land mines or combatants directly shooting at the target.

What Makes Leaders Worth Targeting?

The leading justification used to pursue leadership decapitation is grounded in theories of charismatic leadership, which places the success of an organization in the qualities and characteristics of the organization’s leader.⁶⁴ Scholar Freeman (2010) offers a way to assess when leadership targeting will be the most effective; it is contingent upon the importance of the leader and whether they serve in an operational or inspirational role or both.⁶⁵ These qualities serve two purposes: they confer the leader’s legitimacy and create an understanding that the leader is irreplaceable.⁶⁶ By applying the theory of leadership, Freeman (2010) details the metric “Inspiration,” offered by the leader, which is subdivided into charisma, ideology, and changes over time, and a metric on “Operational Guidance,” which is subdivided into strategy, tactics, organizational issues, and changes over time.⁶⁷ The following sections directly contextualize Soleimani in terms of the metrics offered by Freeman (2010) to effectively scale Soleimani’s attributes and role.

Soleimani’s Inspirational Role: An Inspirational, Charismatic Leader, but What Else?

It is arguable that the U.S. DoD operated under the justifications outlined by inspirational and charismatic leadership to pursue the attack on Soleimani. Under this theory, it is clear how Soleimani’s inspirational and charismatic role allowed him to further Iran’s goals to serve as a regional hegemon. Pollack (2020) argues that “Soleimani’s improvisations created a doctrine that did not exist previously and was probably never envisioned beforehand.”⁶⁸ Additionally, Soleimani has been described as “an incredibly effective operator, known for his charisma and ability to build, mature, and sustain relationships.”⁶⁹ Soleimani cultivated an “image of a down-to-earth leader who sat

64 Jordan, “Attacking the Leader, Missing the Mark,” pp. 1-32.

65 Freeman, pp. 1-34.

66 Ibid., p. 9.

67 Ibid., pp. 4-11.

68 Kenneth M. Pollack, “The Evolution of the Revolution: The Changing Nature of Iran’s Axis of Resistance,” American Enterprise Institute, March 2020, p. 7.

69 Ariane M. Tabatabai, “After Soleimani: What’s Next for Iran’s Quds Force?” *CTC Sentinel* 13:1 (2020): pp. 28-33.

on the floor with his men and cried with them when a brother-in-arms died.⁷⁰ Ali Alfoneh, a senior fellow at the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington, writes how “it is difficult to expect Qaani, the bureaucrat, to emulate his predecessor’s charismatic leadership.”⁷¹ While Qaani’s role as Soleimani’s successor will be considered in a later section, it is important to note the continued use of charismatic leadership as a defining characteristic of Soleimani, specifically. Additionally, Michael Knights, a fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, writes about Soleimani’s “charismatic and photogenic” qualities, which allowed him to gain the support of Afghan fighters, Arabs, Pakistanis, and those on “online social networks.”⁷² Soleimani spoke Arabic and carefully nurtured relationships “with senior stakeholders across Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, and other theatres of conflict.”⁷³ His personality aided his operational role and made him the “visible totem of IRGC power,” which is no small role to occupy.⁷⁴

Soleimani’s Operational Role

Soleimani spearheaded Iran’s Axis of Resistance, a formerly disparate group of states, semi-states, and non-state actors that were transformed “from largely covert terrorist collusion, funding, intelligence sharing, rhetorical support, and tacit diplomacy to increasingly overt force deployments, joint military operations, economic assistance, deterrence, and alliance solidarity,” under the leadership of Soleimani.⁷⁵ He was tasked with leading “Iran’s whole-of-government approach to regional interventionism.”⁷⁶ Over time, he molded the efforts of the IRGC and the conventional army, Artesh, in several joint operations across the region to advance Iranian security interests.⁷⁷ With such a distinguished role, it is logical that Soleimani was identified as the primary target to hone in on because of his influential part in furthering Iran’s involvement across the region with proxy groups. Knights describes Soleimani’s role as an “operational firefighter” because he consistently arrived at contentious, controversial scenes such as protests to serve as a “bridge between the IRGC and disgruntled rural populations.”⁷⁸

While Soleimani was undoubtedly a charismatic leader with exceptional leadership abilities who furthered the Iranian agenda, it is important to view his role in the context of the Quds Force’s ability to survive without him.

Applying Jordan’s Theory of Organizational Resilience

Now that Soleimani’s qualities as a leader have been contextualized using the theory of leadership offered by Freeman (2010)—in terms of his inspirational and operational role—it is crucial to consider the organizational variables and social context of the Quds Force.⁷⁹ Organizational variables may include the degree to which the organization has bureaucratized and could exist after the death of its leader.⁸⁰ Social context hinges upon the group’s support in its community or locality.⁸¹ A more accurate assessment of a group’s longevity may result when scholars remove their narrow focus on the leader and broaden their views to capture the wider operations of the organization. Moving forward, this study will look at Jordan’s application of the theory of organizational resilience. With this theory, observers can see how the Quds Force will be able to resume and perhaps even grow its operations without Soleimani’s leadership. Included in the appendix is a table that Jordan (2014) created to explain her refutation of the excessive importance placed only on charismatic leadership.⁸² It is certainly a component to consider, but there

70 Ibid.

71 “Esmail Qaani: The new man leading Iran’s elite Quds Force,” BBC, January 7, 2020.

72 Michael Knights, “Does Soleimani’s Death Matter? Findings from a 2019 Workshop,” Washington Institute, January 3, 2020.

73 Ibid.

74 Ibid.

75 Pollack, p. 1.

76 Knights.

77 Ibid.

78 Ibid.

79 Ibid.

80 Jordan, “Attacking the Leader, Missing the Mark,” pp. 1-32.

81 Ibid.

82 Ibid., p. 21.

are other variables at play—beyond just Soleimani’s charismatic leadership—that inform the effectiveness of this leadership decapitation, such as the organizational and social status of the Quds Force. This will inform whether or not the dismantling of the Quds Force limits Iran’s ability to flex power across the region or to partner with U.S. adversaries. The chart explains the connection between the level of bureaucratization and communal support, and how the two in conjunction dictate the life expectancy of a group after its leader has been removed. It is well acknowledged that the IRGC-Quds Force is highly institutionalized.⁸³ The Quds Force, as described by Tabatabai (2020), is “far from the one-man show that one may assume existed based on Soleimani’s stature.”⁸⁴ Soleimani oversaw the Quds Force’s evolution into a “fully fledged bureaucratic organization, with different departments, each overseeing various portfolios,” likely an operation that will continue to exist and thrive after his passing.⁸⁵

The support of the local population in the terrorist’s home country is vital. Jordan (2014) explains how popular support (working in conjunction with bureaucratization) determines the stability of a terrorist organization following an attack on leadership. The citizens of a terrorist group’s territory or community are able to “raise money, provide critical resources, ensure [the group’s] ability to operate as a covert organization, encourage more violent behavior, and maintain political and ideological relevance.”⁸⁶ First, it is important to note that the citizens of Iran are not going to those lengths to support the IRGC-Quds Force; the Quds Force is one of the four organizations within the IRGC, and serves as the external-facing arm of the IRGC.⁸⁷ The Quds Force has secured communal support through its economic might as it maintains control of one-third of the Iranian economy.⁸⁸ After being tasked with reconstruction after the Iran-Iraq War, the IRGC expanded into banking, shipping, manufacturing, and consumer imports.⁸⁹ Historically, the IRGC-Quds Force has committed to public works projects. For example, in April 2019, massive floods ruined much of the rural terrain in western Iran, so many IRGC-Quds Force members took it upon themselves to offer relief and support to the locals in that area.⁹⁰ Beyond this localized support, much of the Quds Force’s economic power is maintained through “weapons acquisition, covert operations abroad, and Iran’s [controversial] nuclear program.”⁹¹ When it is about the optics, the IRGC-Quds Force understands how to play to its base and has amassed considerable power since its inception during the unrest of the 1979 Iranian revolution.⁹²

Reactions to Soleimani’s death are mixed. Soleimani was a figure considered to be the second most powerful individual in Iran.⁹³ With that, the Quds Force is not a conventional terrorist organization mostly due to its direct affiliation with its state government and overt activity from which it receives considerable support. For this reason, I argue that Jordan’s (2014) analysis of communal support can also take the form of governmental support because of the unconventional nature of this terrorist organization. This is especially relevant because Soleimani did not even report directly to the IRGC commander-in-chief; instead, Soleimani reported directly to the Supreme Leader.⁹⁴ For the Iranian government’s response, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei instituted three days of national mourning, along with an announcement that “severe revenge awaits the criminals’ who killed Soleimani,” a sentiment that was echoed by President Hassan Rouhani, Speaker of Parliament Ali Larijani, and Defense Minister Amir Hatami.⁹⁵ Alternatively, Alinejad (2020) of *The Washington Post* suggests that the public’s outpouring to mourn

83 “Iran’s Revolutionary Guards,” CFR, May 2019.

84 Tabatabai.

85 Ibid.

86 Jordan, “Attacking the Leader, Missing the Mark,” p. 16.

87 H. Rastgoo, “How Will the Quds Force Change in the Post-Soleimani Era?” IranWire, February 20, 2020.

88 “Iran’s Revolutionary Guards.”

89 Ibid.

90 Ibid.

91 Ibid.

92 Ibid.

93 Tabatabai.

94 Rastgoo.

95 Mehdi Khalaji, “Iran’s Supreme Leader Responds to the Soleimani Assassination,” Washington Institute, January 2020.

the death of Soleimani should be taken lightly.⁹⁶ For example, the large turnout of civilians at mourning gatherings can be accredited to forced attendance requirements, the closure of shops and schools, and free transport to such events.⁹⁷ In reality, the Iranian public frequently protested against the injustices and violence wrought by Soleimani, but in this case, the state's support of the organization carries significant weight.⁹⁸ Additionally, on January 17, 2020, the Iranian parliament agreed to provide an extra 200 million euros to the Quds Force, which "indicates the extent to which the regime is committed to this force in the post-Soleimani era."⁹⁹ A high level of bureaucracy and a high level of communal support (part from the economy, part from the local population, and part from the government) puts the Quds Forces in box I, where they are predicted to survive and retaliate.

Succession

As previously noted, the ways in which Soleimani built the Quds Force into a well-equipped, far-reaching institution will likely ensure its continued presence into the future, without Soleimani as the leader. Today, the Quds Force has the ability "to train, advise, assist, mobilize, and deploy forces in different theatres, not just [in] support [of] local militias as it once did."¹⁰⁰ Soleimani's successor, Brigadier General Esmail Qaani, will be "supported by an entire bureaucracy, which is likely to minimize any disturbance caused by leadership decapitation."¹⁰¹ Qaani was chosen hours after the death of Soleimani was confirmed likely because "he was well-positioned to oversee this period of transition and limit departure from Soleimani's *modus operandi*."¹⁰² Alfoneh's 2012 biography of Qaani explores the differences between Soleimani and Qaani's speaking styles, a difference that does not immediately present an advantage for Qaani—who often "hides behind official rhetoric."¹⁰³ While it is unfortunate for the Quds Force that Qaani has maintained a low profile up until now and does not speak Arabic well, "the Quds Force's mission and activities [are] such a crucial priority for the Iranian leader and regime that General Qaani . . . will possibly not have huge obstacles blocking his way."¹⁰⁴ Many harp on the belief that the grandeur of Soleimani does not fall upon Qaani; however, he will likely mold to a similar caliber and style. With sentiments such as these, it is important to heed the words of Alfoneh, who notes that "Qaani's war-era record does not display the same degree of distinction as Soleimani's," thus doubling down on the belief that Qaani will manage "the organization's day-to-day administrative affairs."¹⁰⁵ This is to ensure the proceedings and workings of the Quds Force do not come to a halt, despite a brief dip in morale upon losing its general. However, that may be all that the Quds Force needs in order to survive—a general to maintain the operations.

As Qaani will likely fulfill the operational needs of the Quds Force, this still leaves the Quds Force unified under the direction of a singular figure. Additionally, Alfoneh separately shares that "under Qaani's leadership, there is likely to be greater continuity than change in the Quds Force" because of Qaani's role as deputy commander since the late 1990s/early 2000s and the Islamic Republic's support of the force.¹⁰⁶ As illustrated earlier, the Quds Force is both a highly institutionalized and bureaucratic organization and enjoys high levels of communal support—which flows down from the Iranian government. As Jahanbani argues, "the overall efficacy of the IRGC-QF over time has

96 Masih Alinejad, "Don't believe Iranian propaganda about the mourning for Soleimani," *Washington Post*, January 7, 2020.

97 Ibid.

98 Ibid.; Farangis Najibullah Bitakhtari, "'I'm Not Mourning!' Mixed Reactions Among Iranians to Soleimani's Death," Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, January 3, 2020.

99 Rastgoo.

100 Tabatabai.

101 Ibid.

102 Ibid.

103 Ali Alfoneh, "Esmail Qaani: The Next Revolutionary Guards Quds Force Commander?" AEI, January 2012.

104 Rastgoo.

105 Erin Cunningham, "Iran's new Quds Force commander brings continuity to the post held by his slain predecessor," *Washington Post*, January 4, 2020.

106 Ibid.

never been entirely contingent on one individual.”¹⁰⁷ This is, in part, a result of the bureaucratization that occurred under Soleimani as there was an understanding that he could be targeted at any moment because of his central and public-facing role in Iranian military and political affairs.¹⁰⁸ Ultimately, as Jahanbani underscores, with his “two decades of experience overseeing the IRGC-QF’s operations in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Central Asia more broadly,” Qaani has the operational knowledge to likely maintain the Quds Force’s functional capacity, despite the differences in leadership style between the two generals.¹⁰⁹

Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Iran

As one of the early epicenters of the COVID-19 pandemic, Iranian domestic and international affairs were under immense stress in the months shortly after the death of Soleimani.¹¹⁰ It is important to present the impact of COVID-19 on this situation because its unexpected uprooting of domestic and international affairs may inform the Iranian government’s response to the death of Soleimani and subsequent decisions made regarding the funding of the Quds Force. In addition to the heavy impact of COVID-19, U.S. sanctions, and President Trump’s “maximum pressure” campaign have exacerbated economic fallout in Iran.¹¹¹ Finances are tight for the Iranian government, as pressure to offer expanded social welfare programs mounts as a result of high unemployment and a competitive and scarce labor market.¹¹² Furthermore, U.S. sanctions and efforts to pressure the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to reject Iran’s request for an emergency loan only deepens the financial peril facing the Iranian government.

This overarching economic situation directly impacts the Iranian government’s ability to fund militia organizations associated with the Quds Force. Most recently, Soleimani’s successor, Qaani, arrived in Baghdad, Iraq, bearing silver rings instead of “the usual cash handout.”¹¹³ Iraqi officials told AP News that Soleimani “slipped in and out of Iraq regularly to plan, mediate, and give out cash assistance.”¹¹⁴ While Qaani has not offered the same cash handout, it is reasonable to assume that Iran and Iraq are in conversation and mutual understanding about the severity of the economic crisis in Iran. Once the pandemic subsides, there may or may not be a return of assistance. Additionally, Qaani told the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) of Iraq that they would have to rely on Iraqi state funding until Iran’s economic crisis is sorted out.¹¹⁵ This is worth noting because Soleimani worked meticulously as “a chief architect of Iran’s proxy groups across the region” and a strain on or disintegration of that work may occur under Qaani if the economic situation in Iran does not improve.¹¹⁶ Iran’s economy certainly does not aid the succession efforts of Qaani as he gains his ground in this new role; however, with a new presidential administration in the United States, there is hope that U.S. sanctions on Iran will diminish, which may open up the possibility for Iran to receive loans and funding through the IMF.¹¹⁷

Implications

Despite the Quds Force’s inception being grounded in the militaristic protection of the state, the reality is that it “often served as a second diplomatic corps for Iran ... from a strategic and operational standpoint.”¹¹⁸ A significant

107 Nakissa Jahanbani, “Beyond Soleimani: Implications for Iran’s Proxy Network in Iraq and Syria,” Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, January 10, 2020.

108 Dina Esfandiary, “Will Soleimani’s death change Iran’s relationship with the Revolutionary Guard?” *Washington Post*, January 9, 2020.

109 Nakissa Jahanbani, “Reviewing Iran’s Proxies by Region: A Look Toward the Middle East, South Asia, and Africa,” *CTC Sentinel* 13:5 (2020): pp. 39-49.

110 Mohseni-Cheraghloou.

111 Ibid.

112 Ibid.

113 Qassim Abdul-Zahra and Samya Kullab, “Trouble Iran struggles to maintain sway over Iraq militias,” AP News, June 11, 2020.

114 Ibid.

115 Ibid.

116 Ibid.

117 Thomas Friedman, “Biden Made Sure ‘Trump Is Not Going to Be President for Four More Years,’” *New York Times*, December 2, 2020.

118 Rastgoo.

portion of Iran's defense doctrine is rooted in support of proxy groups and their influence in regional states such as Lebanon, Iraq, Yemen, and Afghanistan, which means "it [makes] sense for the [Quds Force] to also operate on a political track as well as its military one."¹¹⁹ In the aftermath of Soleimani's death, it is critical to consider the impact on the Quds Force. As a highly institutionalized apparatus, will the death of its lead general effectively appease U.S. security concerns over Iran's ability to destabilize the Middle East? My analysis suggests that the Quds Force is going to remain a deeply entrenched and formidable militaristic and political entity in the state with regional security implications. What will likely occur is an escalation of contention and conflict with Iraq and the Persian Gulf region as a means to reproach the United States. Two years into the future (Jordan assesses the activities of a terrorist organization two years after the death of its leader), the international community may see the rise of a (or a few) new visionaries similar to Soleimani. A similar situation resulted in Iraq following the removal of Saddam Hussein, which led to a power vacuum filled by proxies and theocrats.¹²⁰

Conclusion

The effectiveness of leadership decapitation as a counterterrorism strategy is complex, but scholars and policymakers can better understand and analyze the tool through specific case studies of groups that have been the subjects of leadership decapitation. There are ample crimes and atrocities tied to Soleimani's name, but President Trump and the Department of Defense's decision to execute a drone strike is a consequential diplomatic and militaristic decision. By first considering why Soleimani was such a high-level target under the theory of leadership offered by Freeman (2010) and charismatic leadership more broadly, it is understandable why the DoD designated him as a threat.¹²¹ While Soleimani as a singular player is gone, the future of the Quds Force and its covert, violent operations is still uncertain. As Jordan's (2014) theory of organizational resilience suggests, the Quds Force as an organization enjoys high levels of bureaucratization, thanks in large part to Soleimani, and communal support, which I reason takes three forms: economic power, expansive governmental support, and some public support from disaster relief initiatives. The Iranian government and the Supreme Leader's support of the Quds Force ensures the state will likely seek to preserve its operational and organizational structure.

Future research and analysis should continue to analyze the role of leadership decapitation via drone strike, and even other tools, using Jordan's (2014) theory of organizational resilience for different case studies. Researchers, scholars, and policymakers should certainly follow-up on the activity, operations, and status (operating, dismantled, out of commission, etc.) of the Quds Force, ideally two years after the death of Soleimani, as Jordan suggests.¹²² Furthermore, the leadership style and methods employed by Qaani, Soleimani's successor, should be reviewed, as such analysis may suggest the replacement or lack thereof of Soleimani. Additionally, researchers should track the activities of proxy groups that received the support of the Quds Force to consider the implications of a Soleimani-less Quds Force and how that changes the instability wrought on the region by proxy groups.¹²³

While the theory of organizational resilience offers a sound approach to evaluating the near- and long-term effectiveness of leadership decapitation, as always, Soleimani's case could prove differently. Soleimani was undoubtedly a strong-willed, influential, and powerful public official.¹²⁴ He played a critical role in solidifying and strengthening the Axis of Resistance, and his removal could certainly dissipate the immense power of the Quds Force and also set back Iranian regional aspirations for the near and long term.¹²⁵ However, broadly speaking, it is important to understand that the challenges, security threats, and instability caused by terrorist groups runs far deeper than a single individual, despite their charismatic qualities and leadership abilities.¹²⁶ Ultimately, it is

119 Ibid.

120 Rich Barlow, "Soleimani Killing Dispensed Justice. It still Wasn't Smart," WBUR, January 7, 2020.

121 Freeman, p. 1.

122 Jenna Jordan, "When Heads Roll: Assessing the Effectiveness of Leadership Decapitation," *Security Studies* 4 (2009): p. 731.

123 Pollack, pp. 1-17.

124 Tabatabai.

125 Pollack, pp. 1-17.

126 Cohen.

important for policymakers to reflect on what the United States’ security motives indicate: the dismantling of unstable and violent organizations or symbolic strategic victories, with the short-term ability to disrupt, yet limited ability to permanently uproot and destroy.

Appendix

Figure 1: Jordan (2014) Table: “Organizational Resilience to Leadership Decapitation”

		bureaucracy	
		high	low
high	communal support	I survive (retaliate)	III survive (harder to regroup)
low		II survive (easier to regroup)	IV collapse

Source: Jenna Jordan, “Attacking the Leader, Missing the Mark: Why Terrorist Groups Survive Decapitation Strikes,” *International Security* 38:4 (2014): p. 21.

An Apathetic Public: How Dubik's Legitimacy Principle Applies to a Disengaged Citizenry

Reed Bauer

In his book Just War Reconsidered: Strategy, Ethics and Theory, LTG(R) James M. Dubik lays out the standards a country must meet for a war to be considered "legitimate." Primary among these standards is that a nation must have the support of its populace if it is to begin, and continue, fighting a war. However, Dubik's book does not address the case of when a public is "apathetic," "ignorant," or "misled" as to the state of a war. Using case studies from the United States' engagement in various international conflicts, this article discusses Dubik's Principle of Legitimacy and how it is challenged by the three publics above. Taking an acute focus on "apathetic" publics, this article argues that in these cases, the government has a moral obligation to provide relevant, timely information and to incentivize citizenry to engage with the war (that is, to understand its origins and consequences) or else withdraw from it entirely. Practical steps toward encouraging citizen engagement include making winning the war the government's primary priority, increasing communication about the status of the war, and as a last resort, moving toward a conscription army. If the public does not become engaged, then it is the duty of a government to end the war as quickly as possible.

The question of a war's legitimacy is crucial to the waging of a "just" war. The Principle of War Legitimacy states that a nation should have the support of its populace if it is to begin, and continue, a war.¹ Intuitively, this makes sense. In open, free, and democratic societies, war should, above all else, reflect the will of the people. If a political system is representative of the people, and war is simply politics by other means,² then it follows that the legitimacy of war rests with those who are fighting it: the people.

But what if war is neither supported nor opposed by the public? What if, as the case of the War on Terror arguably shows, the public is apathetic toward war? In these cases, the government of a nation that is apathetic toward war has a moral obligation to incentivize the public to become "engaged" with the war. For the purposes of this article, "engagement" is a term to indicate a national public's understanding of the existence, benefits, and drawbacks of a given conflict. Indeed, war does not have legitimacy only when there is a lack of widespread opposition to it: instead, to be considered truly legitimate, war needs positive affirmation and support. Only when absolutely necessary and fully supported by a civilian population should war be waged; otherwise, it would violate the qualified version of Dubik's Legitimacy Principle. Thus, when citizens become disengaged from war, the government has a moral obligation to re-engage the public or else cease operations. Governments can incentivize citizen engagement with government officials prioritizing the war, ensuring consistency in public communication on the status of the war, and as a last result, undertaking conscription. The case studies examined in this article are the United States' war in Afghanistan, the U.S. war in Vietnam, and the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan. These cases fall somewhere within a spectrum of two different scenarios, between "willing" apathy and misguided apathy, or ignorance.

1 James M. Dubik, "Chapter 7, Fighting Versus Waging War: Rethinking Jus In Bello After Afghanistan and Iraq," in *Just War Reconsidered: Strategy, Ethics, and Theory* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2018).

2 "Online Library of Liberty," Clausewitz: War as Politics by other Means - Online Library of Liberty, accessed May 8, 2020.

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Understanding Just War Theories

There are two main schools of thought regarding Just War Theory: the traditionalist camp and the revisionist school.³ This paper focuses primarily on critiques of the traditionalist camp, whose seminal work is Michael Walzer's *Just and Unjust Wars*. In this book, Walzer explores the tension between *jus in bello* (justice in war) and *jus ad bellum* (the justice of war). *Jus in bello* relates to the ways in which states fight, whereas *jus ad bellum* refers to the way in which states may initiate war. To meet the criteria of *jus ad bellum*, states must have a proper authority, proper motives, a just cause, and a reasonable chance of success. Walzer also states that war must be used as a last resort, and that it must be proportional, or that the negative outcomes inevitably resulting from war must be less than the outcome of not going to war. For *jus in bello*, Walzer lays out two principles: discrimination and proportionality. The principle of discrimination states that enemy civilians are protected from violence. Thus, any attack against an enemy must be discriminate, attacking only enemy combatants and not civilians. The principle of proportionality states that the damage caused from an attack must be proportional to the desired objective. Thus, one party should not use an inordinate amount of force to achieve a relatively small objective.

Dubik expands upon the framework that Walzer lays out, claiming that there is a gap in Walzer's definition of *jus in bello*. In his book, *Just War Reconsidered*, Dubik argues that strategic political and military leaders should be held accountable for their decisions.⁴ He also establishes that wars must also be waged, not just fought. The "waging of war" concerns "war aims, deciding upon strategies and policies, planning and executing campaigns, and other strategic level activities."⁵ Walzer posits five principles to guide military and civilian leaders with war-waging responsibilities:

- The Principle of Continuous Dialogue, or the necessity for civilian-military discussion to determine strategy;
- The Principle of Final Decision Authority, in which the control of the military is placed firmly in civilian hands;
- The Principle of Managerial Competency, or the necessity to use bureaucracy to ensure the structure of government works toward war aims;
- The Principle of War Legitimacy, which states that justified wars can lose legitimacy; and
- The Principle of Resignation, which recognizes that military resignation is justifiable under certain circumstances.

It is the fourth point that this paper will explore.

Dubik: Definitions and Challenges of Gauging Legitimacy of War

First, we must define the term "legitimacy" and the way it will be used throughout this paper. As Dubik defines it, The Principle of War Legitimacy, point number four above, and the maintenance of legitimacy, is "a function of maintaining support of the population as one conducts a war which, in turn, rests upon the righteousness of the war and progress toward probable success."⁶ However, Dubik's argument must also be qualified in a few ways. The first is that while legitimacy is not a binary option, there must be sufficient legitimacy to engage in war. Wars can have partial legitimacy, or lose legitimacy over time; however, to be considered "sufficiently legitimate," wars must have support from a majority of the population. Secondly, to achieve sufficient legitimacy, approval must also cross

3 The revisionist school rests on four key tenets. First is the greater emphasis on human rights instead of state sovereignty. They assert that it is often the state that threatens individual liberty and oppresses minority groups in the pursuit of cultural unity. Second is the immorality of current international law, serving pragmatism over the ethical treatment of humanity. In comparison to Walzer's work, the revisionists argue that states do *not* have a right to self-defense, thus undermining many of the principles Walzer discusses regarding *jus ad bellum*. Third is that it is impossible for an unjust war to be fought justly, effectively erasing the distinction between *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello* altogether. Lastly, revisionists question civilian immunity. If civilians are actively participating in the military-industrial complex, then they should be open to targeting. Many scholars have argued against these conclusions, deeming them radical and impossible in practicality. However, the revisionist school is worth including as a counterpoint to Walzer's theories. See Seth Lazar, "Just War Theory: Revisionists Versus Traditionalists," *Annual Review of Political Science* 20:1 (2017): pp. 37-54.

4 Dubik, *Just War Reconsidered: Strategy, Ethics, and Theory*.

5 Ibid., "Chapter 7: Fighting Versus Waging War."

6 Ibid., "Chapter 7: Fighting Versus Waging War."

social, racial, and class divisions. If a war only has support among a certain political faction, ethnic group, or socio-economic class, then the war cannot be said to have the legitimacy of the entire country. Widespread and diverse support is crucial to the maintenance of legitimacy, as war is a national affair, affecting all of society.

One of the difficulties arising from the Principle of Legitimacy is delineating an effective way to measure public feelings toward a war. Dubik points to public opinion polls as a way to measure public perceptions of legitimacy of war, a solution that, it is argued here, is unsatisfactory. Governments rarely look to opinion polls to define national policy. A second and equally unsatisfying option for measuring public attitude toward a war is the presence of civil unrest. Yet attempting to “measure” civil unrest also proves troublesome. Take the Vietnam War, for example. President Nixon’s approval ratings on the handling of the war were higher than his disapproval ratings throughout the conflict, with the former dipping below the latter only twice over a four-year period. Yet civil unrest during the period was rampant. Anti-war protests were common, especially among students, as was draft dodging. For every person protesting against a war, however, there could be two people at home who support it. Thus, politicians still claim legitimacy for their pursuit of war through elections. Nixon famously claimed the support of the “silent majority” of Americans who supported the war in Vietnam and was elected to two terms. Thus, the ultimate gauge for measuring public support of a war rests in free and fair elections, which give legitimacy to those waging the war on their behalf.

Instead, rather than looking at public opinion polls or the presence of civil unrest, the best way to measure citizen approval of a war is through elections. Indeed, the executive branch bases its legitimacy upon national elections, and the legislative branch elections at the state or district levels. In an ideal democracy, politicians run on platforms and then implement the policies they advocated for during the campaign. Even if public opinion polls show unfavorability toward a policy, politicians can still claim the will of the people through their mere election, and thus maintain the political and legal right to implement the legislation. Elections provide a public referendum on a candidate’s policies and platforms on different issues. If a candidate runs on an anti-war platform and wins, this is a recognition that the public does not support the war. Conversely, if a candidate runs on a platform of continuing the war, it is an endorsement of their policy.

Exploring the Dilemma of the “Disengaged” Citizen

While elections are the best way to gauge citizen approval to meet the Principle of War Legitimacy, challenges to this metric arise when wars cease to be salient electoral issues. This was arguably the case for the war in Afghanistan during the 2016 and 2020 presidential elections. In these situations, elections fail to provide an adequate measure of public attitude toward the war precisely because citizens are unaware of or disengaged from wars themselves.

In the context of this paper, by “disengaged citizenry” or “disengaged populace” the author is referring to a populace that does not place the issue of a current war as high in priority in an election. A disengaged citizenry is also unaware of the benefits and drawbacks of a war. In contrast, by an “engaged citizenry,” the author is referring to a public that does place the war in high priority. This can be measured in numerous ways, such as air-time given to it by major news stations, questions on the topic during a debate, or polls conducted on top issues in an election. An engaged populace is one in which the public is knowledgeable about the benefits and disadvantages of a war.

An example of disengaged citizens can be seen most clearly in relation to the U.S. war in Afghanistan. In the past three presidential elections, each elected president ran on the platform of ending the war in Afghanistan, but the war continues. While the reason for this is partially the myriad complexities involved in ending the war, an equally compelling reason is the lack of political pressure from U.S. citizens toward ending the war. Indeed, according to a May 2020 Rasmussen poll, nearly one-fifth of likely American voters were unaware that the United States was currently at war.⁷ Media coverage of the war has slowed dwindled, and Google searches of “Afghanistan” have steadily declined over the past decade.⁸ Even President Donald Trump seemed unaware of the war during the

7 “Do Voters Know We’re Still At War With Afghanistan?” Rasmussen Reports, accessed May 8, 2020.

8 P.W. Singer and Emerson Brooking, “Why Americans Aren’t Paying Attention to the Afghan War,” *Time*, October 4, 2018.

coronavirus crisis, declaring himself a “wartime president,” despite already being one.⁹ The public has disengaged themselves from the war in Afghanistan, and it has resulted in the prolonged sustainment of the conflict.¹⁰

Some argue that, to the contrary, citizen silence regarding opposition to their country’s participation in war might well indicate tacit acceptance. These detractors point to numerous other policies regarding life and death, such as healthcare, police reform, and the death penalty, which may not be politically salient. However, there are two key distinctions that separate war from other policies. The first is the active use of force on a large scale. War involves the active use of killing in a way that healthcare, policing, and the death penalty do not. While policing may involve killing, it certainly should not be its intention. War also differs from the death penalty debate by involving killing outside of the legal system. Enemy combatants most often do not receive a trial before being killed. Secondly, war intimately involves the citizenry of another nation in a way other policies do not. They do not have a say in whether the opposing country continues the conflict. Thus, the public cannot give tacit or apathetic consent toward a war. They must continue to give affirmative consent, as it is not only the lives of their citizenry, but the lives of people in other nations as well.

The government of a nation apathetic toward war has a moral obligation to incentivize its public to be engaged with the war. The issue of war, with so many lives at stake, is too important to be ignored. Even if casualties are low, there are still deaths occurring, both civilian and military. There is still an economic cost to be paid, and there is still conflict, even if it does not affect the home front. Only in a society desensitized to violence would a “minimal” amount of continued and sustained deaths be considered an unimportant issue. Moreover, war requires time, energy, and resources, all of which could be devoted to other causes. Indeed, a core argument of this article is that war does not have legitimacy only when there is a lack of widespread opposition to it; instead, to be considered truly legitimate, it needs positive affirmation and support. Only when absolutely necessary and fully supported by a civilian population should war be waged; otherwise, it would violate the qualified version of the Legitimacy Principle. Thus, when citizens become disengaged from war—failing to understand its contours, impacts on their lives, or even mere existence—the government has a moral obligation to re-engage the public or else quickly cease operations.

Reasons for Disengaged Citizens

In order to find a solution, we must find the cause of why societies become disengaged from war in the first place. The reasons for this are many. They may include: long-term sustainment of the war with little to no progress toward peace, ambiguity toward the definition of mission success, and general irrelevance toward regular civilian life on the domestic front. The war in Afghanistan meets all three of these criteria. It has certainly been a long-term war, with the war beginning in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks and continuing almost 20 years to the present day. In that time, the definition of “mission success” has varied drastically. Originally, it was to prevent a safe zone for terrorists to launch another terrorist attack against the United States. It then transformed into nation-building, with the United States trying to build a functioning and strong democracy within Afghanistan. In recent years, it seems as if the original goal has transformed to focusing on Afghan security.¹¹ Yet over the 20-year course of the war, it seems as if little to no progress has been made.

Moreover, over the past decade, the war has been largely irrelevant in the life of the American populace, mainly for two reasons. The first reason is that the invasion of Iraq overshadowed the war in Afghanistan: to the extent that the American public engaged in understanding U.S. war efforts at all, their attention was arguably more focused on Iraq than Afghanistan. Unlike Afghanistan, the United States’ invasion into Iraq was met with large domestic and international controversy. Few doubted the justification for launching the war in Afghanistan. At its outset, the war was met with large bipartisan and international support from allies across the globe. However, the war in Iraq was more contentious. While still passing in Congress with a large consensus (77-23 in the Senate and 233-196 in

9 Caitlin Oprysko and Susannah Luthi, “Trump Labels Himself ‘a Wartime President’ Combating Coronavirus,” Politico, March 18, 2020.

10 Tanisha M. Fazal and Sarah Kreps, “The United States’ Perpetual War in Afghanistan,” *Foreign Affairs*, January 30, 2019.

11 David Lake, “The Practice and Theory of US Statebuilding,” *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 4:3 (2010): pp. 257-284.

the House¹²), it was much more divided than the war in Afghanistan, which passed with a 98-0 vote in the Senate and a 420-1 vote in the House.¹³ Additionally, the United States had few allies in support of the Iraq invasion. As the war in Iraq continued, the United States faced more political pressure to end the war. In 2008, “Iraq” was listed as the number-two issue among voters, whereas Afghanistan was not listed at all.¹⁴ Additionally, the rise of ISIS in 2014 and the subsequent terrorist attacks across Europe in 2015-2016 resulted in increased public attention on the battle against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. All of this worked to divert public attention away from the war in Afghanistan.

The second reason for the lack of citizen political pressure against the war in Afghanistan has been the minimal impact that the war has had on the daily lives of the American populace. Unlike the Vietnam War, which faced large resistance from the public due to conscription, the war in Afghanistan has fallen upon the shoulders of an all-volunteer force. Only 0.4% of the country currently serves on active duty, and only an additional 0.8% of the population is a veteran of the recent U.S. wars.¹⁵ Comparatively, almost 10% of the American population fought in the war in Vietnam, and the threat of conscription hung above the rest of the populace.¹⁶ During the Vietnam War, Americans knew active duty military members. Today, the civilian-military gap is larger than ever. For a small portion of the American public—the U.S. military and their families—the war in Afghanistan remains hugely important, but for the remaining 98%, it is largely irrelevant. Fewer and fewer Americans have a close family member who is in the military compared with previous generations.¹⁷ This has contributed to a large misunderstanding of the costs and burdens placed on veterans of those wars. “Research shows that 84 percent of post-9/11 veterans say the public doesn’t understand the problems faced by those in the military or their families. Civilians agree—71 percent acknowledge a civilian military divide.”¹⁸ In short, the civilian-military divide has allowed for the longest war in American history to be fought by only a small portion of the public and ignored by the remainder.

Solutions to Disengaged Citizens

Having delineated the challenges of Dubik’s Principle of Legitimacy when applied to a disengaged citizenry, and articulated the sources for why that disengagement toward war arises, our attention now turns to just how to “re-engage” citizens disengaged from the U.S. conduct of war. It is here argued that the U.S. government can achieve this by multiple means, each of which has varying appeal. These solutions are not incompatible, but instead can work in tandem with each other or represent an escalation of methods if previous ones are not sufficient.

The first solution is increased focus on the war. War should be the number-one priority of any government involved in waging it. It costs lives, resources, and treasure, and thus all levels of government should recognize the gravity of war and help to bring it to a quick and efficient end. National intelligence agencies should focus on gathering useful wartime intelligence, militaries should effectively wage the war, and diplomats should be focused on gaining allies and discussing peaceful solutions to end the war. Everything that a country does in war time should be framed around the assumption that war is the number-one issue. A counter-argument presented to this point is that it could be impractical or dangerous for a country to focus all of its resources on a given war. However, if a war is truly legitimate and just, then it would necessitate the prioritization of the war. Any way in which it might be dangerous for the state would outweigh the detriment of losing the conflict. In line with this prioritization, governments should also not embark on multiple wars, as it divides resources and public attention. Only under unique circumstances, such as an impending attack, should a nation consider waging another war, and even then, it should disengage from the other war if an imminent threat is not present. However, one legitimate counterpoint is that nations may

12 “Roll Call Vote 107th Congress - 1st Session,” U.S. Senate: U.S. Senate Roll Call Votes 107th Congress - 1st Session, September 14, 2001.

13 “Roll Call Vote 107th Congress – 2nd Session,” U.S. Senate: U.S. Senate Roll Call Votes 107th Congress – 2nd Session, October 12, 2002.

14 “Issues and the 2008 Election,” Pew Research Center - U.S. Politics & Policy, August 21, 2008.

15 Mona Chalabi, “What Percentage Of Americans Have Served In The Military?” FiveThirtyEight, March 19, 2015.

16 “US Veterans & Military Families,” Watson Institute of International & Public Affairs, Brown University, accessed May 8, 2020.

17 Anita Creamer, “Americans Less Likely to Have Served in Military or Have Close Relatives in Armed Forces,” *Sacramento Bee*, May 26, 2014.

18 Amy Williams, “The Civ-Mil Divide: What’s a Civilian Like Me Doing in a Veteran Leadership Program Like This,” Bush Center, August 22, 2019.

not be able to choose when to prioritize only one war. In some cases, nations must fight multiple wars in order to survive. During these situations, governments should still prioritize the act of war-making, even if both are just.

A second solution to “re-engage citizens,” in tandem with the first, is that the government should have clear, timely, and abundant information regarding the status of the war: government communication to citizens about the status of the war should be excellent. Leaders should conduct daily briefings to be sure that citizens are fully aware of the war’s situation, relaying transparent information to the public that does not compromise mission success. Casualty numbers and “mission updates” could be provided through government web pages. While “mission updates” must adhere to operational security, they could show the status of the conflict as well as progress toward the success of the overall mission.

Lastly, the final method a government could have to “re-engage” its public is through mandatory service or conscription. This option would close the civilian military gap by creating a shared standard for serving across a nation’s youth. Ideally, it would encompass the entirety of a nation: service would be mandatory for everyone, regardless of race, ethnicity, or class. Mandatory service has benefits that extend beyond simply war legitimacy. It would help foster unity within in a country, bringing people together of diverse backgrounds much like the all-volunteer military does now, but on a nationwide scale. However, while this would close the civilian-military gap, it also has strong drawbacks. Many people consider conscription to be an infringement upon individual liberties, violating religious or pacifist beliefs. The system also has the potential to be manipulated by wealthy elites for their benefit, as is often the case with other institutions throughout the world. As well, conscription would only be successful in a war that is viewed as legitimate. It would not be morally right for a country to begin conscription part way through a war if the public is apathetic toward it. Likewise, countries that have mandatory service such as Israel, Taiwan, and South Korea do so because of an immediate and pressing threat proximate to them.¹⁹ Conscription and mandatory service are certainly two of the most drastic measures a country could take to fight a war, but ones that would certainly engage the public in a national dialogue.

Other Challenges of the Legitimacy Principle in Autocratic and Democratic Societies: “Ignorant” and “Misled” Publics

While the above section offered solutions for how governments should work to “re-engage” disengaged publics, there are other ways in which legitimate war should be questioned. Below, two of these challenges—“ignorant” publics and “misled” publics—are described.

The Existence of “Ignorant” Publics

Of note, all of these measures of engagement of citizens described above apply solely to democratic societies. In each of these, the government is open, transparent, and accountable in a way that autocratic governments are not. In contrast, autocracies lack the incentives necessary to be held accountable by the people, oftentimes only wanting to maintain a hold on power. Thus, in many ways it would actually be counterintuitive for a dictatorship to give open and reliable information about the status of a war. If a war was being waged poorly, or seemed unlikely to have any success, a dictatorship would not want to make the public aware of it. Without a free press or reliable governmental information, there would be no way for the public to know about the status of a war. Conversely, in a democratic society, a robust and free press serves to keep government officials honest through rigorous fact-checking and holding public figures accountable. In situations where an autocratic society withholds information about a war from the public, this might be said to constitute an “ignorant” public, which, by virtue of this ignorance, cannot be said to give legitimacy to war.

Thus, in contemporary conditions, wars in autocratic regimes without public access to information can, under no circumstances, be seen as legitimate. If a society is unable to get reliable and accurate information on a war, then they are unable to give their full and knowing consent. For example, take the Soviet Union’s war in Afghanistan. According to some reports, many Soviet citizens did not know about the war in Afghanistan, and those that did

19 “Mandatory Service Around the Globe,” National Commission on Service, Medium, December 6, 2018.

know were severely misled.²⁰ In cases such as these, because the public does not have full information about the war, it is not legitimate. This case is similar but distinct from that of an apathetic public. The public may be apathetic or may even seem supportive of a war, but because they do not have access to all of the information necessary to make an informed decision, they cannot bestow legitimacy upon the war. They are not aware of the casualty rate, how close the mission is to success, or even if a war is being waged. Additionally, any governmental actions that infringe upon individual liberties in this autocratic society cannot be seen as just because the public has not consented. Programs like mandatory service and conscription can only be seen as morally right in democratic societies. If a society is opposed to these programs, its members can elect politicians who would end them and, subsequently, the war for which they were being used. When the public lacks the ability to remove leaders, then there is not a case for legitimacy to be made.

One example of this can be considered what this author terms the “1984 effect.” In George Orwell’s dystopian novel, the citizens of the fictional country of Oceania are all feverishly patriotic and supportive of the regime’s war, despite knowing nearly nothing about the status of the war and seemingly forgetting the history of who they are fighting.²¹ While an exaggerated example, no one would believe that the fictitious citizens of Oceania are legitimately consenting to the war they are fighting: they do not know anything about it other than what the government tells them. Similarly, autocratic governments lack the same legitimacy for war as the fictional government in *1984*. Despite how passionately the citizens of Nazi Germany may have supported the invasion of the USSR, because they had not been given a fair means of gathering information from an autocratic government, the war could not have legitimacy.

The Existence of “Misled Publics”

In contrast to “apathetic” and “ignorant” publics, described above, an analogous though distinct situation can also arise in democracies, resulting in “misled” publics. A “misled” public emerges when a nation’s government misleads or blatantly lies to the public, thus failing to provide them with the necessary information to grant legitimacy upon a war. While democratic societies have a free press with which to uncover these lies, if the press cannot and will not reveal these lies and the public does not have all the requisite evidence to make an informed decision, then the war is not legitimate. A prime example of this is the Vietnam War. In 1971, at the height of the Vietnam War, *The New York Times* published a leaked report known as the Pentagon Papers.²² These papers revealed that the U.S. government had misled the American public about the origin and waging of the war. It revealed that the Kennedy administration had overthrown South Vietnamese President Ngo Din Diem, and that the carpet-bombing strategy had not been effective in defeating the North Vietnamese.²³ Because the U.S. government was purposefully misleading the American public, it makes any form of “legitimacy” given invalid. Part of the difficulty in the practical application of this principle is that the government holds all of the power. If only the government knows that it has been misleading the public, then it can claim legitimacy, despite this not actually being the case. No one knew prior to the Pentagon Papers that the U.S. government had been lying to its own citizens. In both democratic and autocratic societies, governments rarely admit their mistakes. Instead, it takes politicians with political will and a dedicated free press to reveal when the government has been misleading the public.

So too can the notion of “misled” publics be applied to covert military action within democratic societies. If members of democratic societies are unaware of the extent and level to which the government is using force in foreign nations, then they are again unable to “legitimize” this covert action. While there are certainly some differences between covert military action and traditional war, the same principle of legitimacy can be applied due to the similarities between the two. The U.S. Congress defines covert action “as an activity or activities of the United States Government to influence political, economic, or military conditions abroad, where it is intended

20 Ronald R. Pope, “Afghanistan and the Influence of Public Opinion on Soviet Foreign Policy,” *Asian Affairs* 8:6 (1981): pp. 346-352.

21 George Orwell, *1984* (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2008).

22 Niraj Chokshi, “Behind the Race to Publish the Top-Secret Pentagon Papers,” *New York Times*, December 20, 2017.

23 Ibid.

that the role of the United States will not be apparent.”²⁴ The main difference between covert military action and traditional warfare is that the instigating nation’s activities are anonymous. However, if covert action is intended to have the same outcome as traditional war, whether it be just or unjust, it still involves the use of violence and thus, the legitimacy principle still applies. The public should be aware of and consent to any covert military action that may occur, much in the way that it would for traditional warfare. While less lives may be endangered than in traditional warfare, covert military action is still an extension of foreign policy through violence, and thus cannot be legitimate without the public’s informed consent.

In sum, this section has offered overviews of two additional genres of publics—the “ignorant” public in autocratic societies and the “misled” public in democratic societies—that, in addition to the “apathetic” public, create challenges for the Principle of War Legitimacy.

Conclusion

Drawing on Dubik’s Principle of War Legitimacy, when a national public is apathetic or unaware of its own waging of a war, said war cannot be legitimate. In order for a war to be sufficiently legitimate, it must receive affirmative public support, not merely lack opposition. The only justifiable way to measure this support is through elections. Elections serve as the ultimate “public opinion” poll that proves whether or not the populace is fully supportive of a war. In order to prevent the public from becoming disengaged with a war, the government must work to actively engage its citizenry. It can do this by prioritizing the war, having clear and consistent communication, and, as a last resort, undertaking conscription. The question of legitimacy is one that derives itself from the will of the people. When war is supported by the public, then it maintains its legitimacy. When a war is not legitimate—whether due to “apathetic,” “ignorant,” or “misled” publics—the morally just action to be taken by the government is to end the war as quickly as possible.

24 Michael E. DeVine, “Covert Action and Clandestine Activities of the Intelligence Community: Selected Definitions in Brief,” *Covert Action and Clandestine Activities of the Intelligence Community: Selected Definitions in Brief* § (n.d.).

Shifting Geostrategic Interests as Determinants of Foreign Aid: Has the Era of Threats from Great Power Competition Eclipsed the Era of Threats from Violent Non-State Actors?

Jonah Isaac

Foreign assistance is intended to reflect a state's geostrategic interests; thus, it is reasonable to assume that donor states target aid to countries in which their interests are most threatened. In practice, do countries offering foreign aid direct it to places in which their geostrategic interests are most threatened? To investigate this question, this article explores the extent to which the United States' foreign aid flows are in line with its national security doctrines related to mitigating the ascendance of China (Era of Threats from Great Power Competition) on one hand, and international terrorism (Era of Threats from Violent Non-State Actors) on the other. Using a time-series, cross-sectional design that utilizes data regarding U.S. foreign assistance disbursements to Africa, casualties from African terrorist attacks, and Chinese investment in Africa, this article shows that U.S. interests do not align in these two realms: although competition with China and threats of international terrorism are both noted as U.S. geostrategic priorities, neither Chinese investment nor deaths by terrorism are correlated with increased U.S. foreign aid flows. These findings suggest that contrary to intuition, foreign aid allocation does not appear to reflect the United States' prioritization of its geostrategic interests.

On June 17, 2019, Boko Haram launched an attack in Borno, Nigeria, killing 30 Nigerians.¹ Two months later, Chinese investment in the Nigerian state-owned oil company reached \$16 billion.² While these two developments are not immediately related, they both represent the contemporary geopolitical epoch in which great power competition, especially the threat of China, has emerged while the threat of violent non-state actors remains salient. In the contemporary state of affairs and given the reality of limited resources, the United States is now allocating resources for both geostrategic interests related to combating violent non-state actors, especially counterterrorism, and geostrategic interests related to the threats from great power competition, despite claiming great power competition is the larger threat.³ To address these geostrategic interests, the United States often utilizes foreign assistance, which is money and equipment transferred to a recipient country. For example, the United States provided Nigeria with more than \$645 million in foreign assistance disbursements in 2017 alone.⁴

Against this backdrop, this article explores the extent to which geostrategic interests related to violent non-state actors or to the threat of China motivate the United States' foreign assistance disbursements. This research builds upon Morgenthau's seminal argument that geopolitical objectives motivate foreign aid allocation.⁵ In the case of

1 Dionne Searcey, "Boko Haram Is Back with Better Drones," *New York Times*, September 13, 2019.

2 Chika Oduah, "China Invests \$16 Billion in Nigeria's Oil Sector," *Voice of America*, August 28, 2019.

3 Uri Friedman, "The New Concept Everyone in Washington Is Talking About," *Atlantic*, August 6, 2019; "National Defense Strategy," U.S. Department of Defense, 2018.

4 "United States Agency for International Development Foreign Aid Explorer," USAID Foreign Aid Explorer, 2019.

5 Hans Morgenthau, "A Political Theory of Foreign Aid," *American Political Science Review* 56:2 (1962): pp. 301-309.

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the United States, countering violent non-state actors (what this article calls “The Era of Threats from Violent Non-State Actors”) and the threat of China (what this article calls “The Era of Threats from Great Power Competition”) are among the foremost geopolitical objectives that would theoretically motivate foreign aid disbursements. Given a limited foreign aid budget and a shifting priority of the threat of China over violent non-state actors, this article originally asked whether geostrategic interests related to violent non-state actors or to the threat of China more significantly fuel foreign assistance disbursements. This inquiry revolved around whether the United States prioritizes geostrategic interests related to violent non-state actors despite claiming that the rise of China is the most pressing threat to U.S. security. However, empirical evidence shows that neither geostrategic interest solicits aid in a statistically significant manner. As such, the inquiry of paper shifted to whether U.S. foreign aid disbursements from 2001 through 2017 were in line with its stated geostrategic objectives.

To answer this question, I explore the effect of terrorism and Chinese investment on U.S. foreign assistance to states in Africa. Terrorism, more specifically the number of casualties from terrorism, is an ideal indicator of the extent to which the threat of violent non-state actors is salient in a given country-year. I select Chinese investment, measured in USD, to demonstrate the extent of Chinese activity in a given country-year because it is one of the foremost vehicles of Chinese involvement abroad. African countries are ideal case recipients for studying U.S. foreign aid disbursements because the United States has been involved in foreign aid programs across Africa for many years and because many African countries have experienced high levels of terrorism and Chinese investment.

I hypothesize that terrorist attacks are a more powerful explanatory variable of U.S. foreign aid disbursements than Chinese investment. This theory draws upon the following causal mechanism: The United States, operating as a rational actor with limited resources, must disburse foreign aid in a way that matches its geostrategic objectives. During the scope of this research, from 2001 through 2017, the United States deemed terrorism its greatest security threat. As such, the United States would likely have disbursed its foreign aid resources in a manner that prioritized African countries that suffer from terrorism. Yet in 2018, the Trump administration’s National Defense Strategy explicitly announced a new focus on threats from great powers.⁶

This research uses various datasets. For data regarding kinetic terrorist attacks, this article uses the University of Maryland’s START Global Terrorism Database (GTD). In measuring Chinese investment in Africa, it uses AidData’s Geocoded Global Chinese Official Finance, Version 1.1.1. Additionally, it uses data from AEI’s China Global Investment Tracker. For data on the United States’ foreign assistance, this article uses data from the United States’ Agency for International Development’s Foreign Aid Explorer. In this research, foreign aid includes bilateral and voluntary multilateral foreign aid disbursements measured in U.S. dollars.

Analysis of empirical evidence reveals that neither terrorism nor Chinese investment is a statistically significant predictor of U.S. foreign aid to Africa in both continental and disaggregated models. This evidence suggests that foreign aid disbursements are not in line with the stated geostrategic objectives of countering the threat of non-state actors and the threat of China.

This paper proceeds as follows. In Section 1, I explore the global paradigm shift from a focus on violent non-state actors to the threat of great powers, namely China. I review the relevant academic literature related to foreign assistance in Section 2. In Section 3, I elaborate on my hypothesis and the causal mechanisms assumed to be underpinning U.S. aid disbursement. Section 4 addresses my research design. I interpret my results in Section 5. The final section explores the implications of my findings.

The Era of Threats from Violent Non-State Actors and the Era of Threats from Great Power Competition

This paper draws upon existing research to delineate two key geopolitical epochs as they relate to sources of threats to U.S. geostrategic interests: the Era of Threats from Violent Non-State Actors and the Era of Threats from Great

6 “National Defense Strategy,” 2018.

Power Competition.⁷ To understand the nature of foreign assistance as it relates to the epoch that I dub the Era of Threats from Violent Non-State Actors, I use Bermeo's delineation of geopolitical epochs, before and after September 2001.⁸ She notes that after 9/11, geostrategic interests revolved around "problems such as conflict, mass migration, climate change."⁹ Post-Cold War and post-9/11 geostrategic interests also included "civil war, transnational crime, terrorism, infectious diseases, and the proliferation of small arms."¹⁰ These geostrategic interests, while more pronounced after 9/11, emerged after the Soviet collapse. With the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union came the emergence of violent non-state actors as formidable threats to international security.¹¹ In 1994, Kennan declared that "there are no great-power rivalries that threaten immediately the peace of the world."¹² Richard Haass then corroborated Kennan's logic in 2008 by saying that great power competition no longer drove international relations.¹³ The post-Cold War and post-9/11 era reveal a firm U.S. commitment to addressing violent non-state-actors given the lack of any other near-peer competitors at the time. Building upon these ideological contributions, I refer to the post-Cold War era, and especially the post-9/11 era, as the Era of Threats from Violent Non-State Actors.

Rhetoric emphasizing the Era of Threats from Great Power Competition has begun to eclipse that related to the Era of Threats from Violent Non-State Actors, although geostrategic interests during this era, especially terrorism, remain salient.¹⁴ This conceptual and ideological paradigm shift, defined as the rise of The Era of Threats from Great Power Competition, features the ascendance of China and resurgence of Russia.¹⁵ Key leaders in the U.S. defense community and official defense doctrine argue that the threat of China is now the most significant national security threat. For example, former Secretary of Defense James Mattis explicitly stated in a speech that "great power competition—not terrorism—is now the primary focus of U.S. national security."¹⁶ While the threat of China has no clear or official start date, the U.S. National Military Strategy of 2015 was among the first U.S. government publications to articulate its threat.¹⁷ More explicitly, the 2018 National Defense Strategy declared that "Inter-state strategic competition, not terrorism, is now the primary concern in U.S. national security."¹⁸

Foreign Assistance

Foreign assistance is the exchange of goods, resources, and money between a donor or group of donors and a recipient state. Foreign assistance includes Official Development Assistance and non-Official Development Assistance, bilateral and voluntary multilateral aid, as well as economic and military aid.

I consider Official Development Assistance and non-Official Development Assistance in my research because both aid flows represent large financial disbursements. The two terms differ insofar as Official Development Assistance denotes foreign assistance exclusively to states that the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development has designated as eligible.¹⁹ This designation is based on a state's per capita income, and ODA does not include military aid.²⁰ Non-Official Development Assistance includes Official Aid (OA) and Other Official Flows (OOF),

7 Elke Krahnmann, "From State to Non-State Actors: The Emergence of Security Governance," *New Threats and New Actors in International Security* (2005): pp. 3-19; Sarah Blodgett Bermeo, "Aid Allocation and Targeted Development in an Increasingly Connected World," *International Organization* 71:4 (2017): pp. 735-766; Friedman.

8 Bermeo.

9 Ibid.

10 Krahnmann.

11 Alina Polyakova, "Are U.S. and Russia in a New Cold War?" Brookings, January 20, 2019; Krahnmann.

12 George F. Kennan, "The Failure in Our Success," *New York Times*, March 14, 1994.

13 "United States-China Relations in the Era of Globalization," Committee on Foreign Relations, 2008.

14 Friedman.

15 "National Defense Strategy," 2018.

16 Friedman.

17 "The National Military Strategy of the United States of America," Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2015.

18 "National Defense Strategy," 2018, p. 1.

19 "United States Agency for International Development Foreign Aid Explorer," USAID Foreign Aid Explorer, 2019.

20 "Official Development Assistance (ODA)," Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 2020.

which are both forms of foreign aid that do not fit the criteria of ODA. OA specifically includes foreign aid to states whose per capita income is above the threshold outlined in the ODA standards.²¹ OOF comprises foreign aid flows that are for “commercial purposes,” lack certain grant requirements, and include private sector subsidies.²²

My research includes bilateral and voluntary multilateral aid because both flows reflect the donor country’s political objectives. Bilateral aid is assistance from one state directly to the government of another state.²³ Milner and Tingley suggest that bilateral aid reflects the donor nation’s political objectives.²⁴ Dietrich adds that bilateral aid also often is sent to non-state actors in instances in which a potential recipient government lacks stability.²⁵ Multilateral aid draws upon the contributions of multiple states to enable an intergovernmental organization to execute a particular project.²⁶ Findley, Milner, and Nielson argue that multilateral aid is “seen as less political.”²⁷ However, I offer that “voluntary” multilateral foreign assistance also suggests the donor nation’s political objectives because the nature of the foreign assistance is, by definition, voluntary. This notion, however, includes the caveat that other motivators, such as international pressure, can undermine the extent to which voluntary multilateral aid represents the donor’s geopolitical interests.

This paper considers economic and military aid because both flows are pertinent to U.S. geostrategic interests of countering terrorism (the primary objective in *The Era of Threats from Violent Non-State Actors*) and Chinese investment (one of the primary objectives in *The Era of Threats from Great Power Competition*). Economic aid is a type of foreign policy tool that can address geostrategic interests related to violent non-state actors and the threat of China. USAID defines economic assistance as foreign assistance in support of a “humanitarian objective” and “sociopolitical stability.”²⁸ The desire to promote sociopolitical stability echoes the U.S. 2006 National Security Strategy’s argument that diplomatic relationships that promote stability will prevent terrorism.²⁹ Foreign economic assistance addresses fears related to China’s rise because China’s development programs have promoted corruption.³⁰ Strategies that counter violent non-state actor threats and the threat of China also utilize military aid, which promotes the capabilities of the recipient’s armed forces.³¹ Military aid supports the counterterrorism objective because it empowers local forces that can fight on their own behalf.³² Foreign military assistance also promotes an alternative to Chinese military partnerships with African nations, partnerships that have deepened in recent years.³³

Some researchers have argued that the economic needs of recipient countries—not the mere geostrategic pursuits of donors themselves—are the greatest motivators for foreign assistance.³⁴ While this may have validity, this finding might not hold true for the Era of Threats from Violent Non-State Actors and for the Era of Threats from Great Power Competition. With a focus on the Global War on Terror, Fleck and Kilby find evidence that foreign aid on

21 Steven Radelet, “A Primer on Foreign Aid - Working Paper 92,” Center For Global Development, July 24, 2006.

22 “Other Official Flows (OOF),” Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD),” 2020.

23 George C. Abbott, “Economic Aid as a Unilateral Transfer of Resources,” *Journal of Political Economy* 78:6 (1970): pp. 1,213-1,227.

24 Helen V. Milner and Dustin Tingley, “The Choice for Multilateralism: Foreign Aid and American Foreign Policy,” *Review of International Organizations* 8:3 (2012): pp. 313-341.

25 Simone Dietrich, “Bypass or Engage? Explaining Donor Delivery Tactics in Foreign Aid Allocation,” *International Studies Quarterly* 57:4 (2013): pp. 698-712.

26 Abbott.

27 Michael G. Findley, Helen V. Milner, and Daniel L. Nielson, “The Choice among Aid Donors: The Effects of Multilateral vs. Bilateral Aid on Recipient Behavioral Support,” *Review of International Organizations* 12:2 (2017): p. 308.

28 “United States Agency for International Development Foreign Aid Explorer.”

29 Carmel Davis, “AFRICOM’s Relationship to Oil, Terrorism and China,” *Orbis* 53:1 (2009): p. 122.

30 Andreas Freytag, Paolo Savona, and John J. Kirton, *Securing the Global Economy: G8 Global Governance for a Post-Crisis World* (London: Taylor and Francis, 2016).

31 “United States Agency for International Development Foreign Aid Explorer.”

32 James Jay Carafano and Nile Gardiner, “US Military Assistance for Africa: A Better Solution,” *Backgrounder* (2003): pp. 1-9.

33 Lina Benabdallah, “China-Africa Military Ties Have Deepened. Here Are 4 Things to Know,” *Washington Post*, July 6, 2018.

34 Alberto Alesina and David Dollar, “Who Gives Foreign Aid to Whom and Why?” *Journal of Economic Growth* 5:1 (2000): pp. 33-63.

the basis of economic need “has been falling steadily for core aid recipients during the War on Terror.”³⁵ Additionally, a former USAID administrator declared in 2006 that “pure” development based on economic need would not continue.³⁶ In other words, economic needs of a recipient nation were not necessarily the driving force of foreign assistance disbursements during the Era of Threats from Violent Non-State Actors.

Instead, a plethora of research convincingly shows that political and strategic interests of donors—rather than needs of recipients—drive foreign assistance patterns.³⁷ For example, Kapfer, Nielsen, and Nielson suggest that access to natural resources drives foreign assistance.³⁸ Kono and Montinola argue that recipient government stability is another pertinent donor objective.³⁹ According to Alesina and Dollar, donors provide aid in support of democratizing countries and shaping “good” institutions.⁴⁰ Bailey, Strezhnev, and Voeten submit that favorable U.N. voting records solicit foreign aid.⁴¹

A large group of researchers find that preventing non-state actor violence is one of the main geostrategic interests promoting foreign aid flows. According to Bezerra and Braithwaite, foreign aid flow favors “areas with recent political violence [more] than ... areas without political violence.”⁴² In another finding, a donor is more likely to select a recipient of foreign assistance based on the prevalence of political violence in that state.⁴³ Boutton and Carter find that U.S. foreign assistance disbursements focus on countries that “directly threaten its own security.”⁴⁴ Broadly, these researchers find that foreign assistance during the Era of Threats from Violent Non-State Actors had political objectives and targeted regions that experienced non-state actor violence.

Although the literature related to foreign assistance disbursements is developed, much of it articulates that a particular geostrategic interest drives foreign aid and not which geostrategic interests drive foreign aid more than others. Alesina and Dollar point out a similar criticism in their seminal work: “There is virtually no solid evidence on the relative importance of different variables.”⁴⁵ I seek to fill the gap in the literature related to the relative importance of geostrategic interests. Specifically, my research compares the findings of Bezerra and Braithwaite with those of Kilama. Bezerra and Braithwaite find that foreign aid flows favor areas that suffer political violence.⁴⁶ Conversely, Kilama finds that the amount of U.S. foreign aid to African states has a positive relationship with the amount of Chinese investment in a given state.⁴⁷ The findings of Bezerra and Braithwaite and Kilama represent an interesting dichotomy and beg the question of which of these two interests, terrorism or Chinese investment,

35 Robert K. Fleck and Christopher Kilby, “Changing Aid Regimes? U.S. Foreign Aid from the Cold War to the War on Terror,” *Journal of Development Economics* 91:2 (2010): p. 185.

36 Giles Mohan and Emma Mawdsley, “The War on Terror, American Hegemony and International Development,” *Review of International Political Economy* 14:3 (2007): p. 439.

37 Alesina and Dollar; Axel Dreher, Jan-Egbert Sturm, and James Raymond Vreeland, “Development Aid and International Politics: Does Membership on the UN Security Council Influence World Bank Decisions?” *Journal of Development Economics* 88:1 (2009): pp. 1-18; Clair Apodaca, “Foreign Aid as Foreign Policy Tool,” *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*, 2017.

38 Steve Kapfer, Rich Nielsen, and Daniel Nielson, “If You Build It, Will They Come? Foreign Aid’s Effects on Foreign Direct Investment,” MPESA National Conference, April 2007.

39 Daniel Yuichi Kono and Gabriella R. Montinola, “Does Foreign Aid Support Autocrats, Democrats, or Both?” *Journal of Politics* 71:2 (2009): pp. 704-718.

40 Alesina and Dollar.

41 Michael A. Bailey, Anton Strezhnev, and Erik Voeten, “Estimating Dynamic State Preferences from United Nations Voting Data,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 61:2 (2017): pp. 430-456.

42 Paul Bezerra and Alex Braithwaite, “Locating Foreign Aid Commitments in Response to Political Violence,” *Public Choice* 170:1-2 (2016): pp. 177-180.

43 Eliana Balla and Gina Yannitell Reinhardt, “Giving and Receiving Foreign Aid: Does Conflict Count?” *World Development* 36:12 (2008): pp. 2,566-2,585.

44 Andrew Boutton and David B. Carter, “Fair-Weather Allies? Terrorism and the Allocation of US Foreign Aid,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 58:7 (2013): pp. 1,144-1,173.

45 Alesina and Dollar, p. 35.

46 Bezerra and Braithwaite, p. 333.

47 Eric Gabin Kilama, “Evidences on Donors Competition in Africa: Traditional Donors versus China,” *Journal of International Development* 28:4 (2015): pp. 528-551.

more significantly solicit U.S. foreign assistance to Africa. Given these contributions, my research answers which of the two geostrategic interests, terrorism or Chinese investment, has more relative influence on foreign aid flows.

Theory

I hypothesize that foreign assistance between 2001 and 2017 addressed geostrategic interests related to the Era of Threats from Violent Non-State Actors more so than geostrategic interests related to the Era of Threats from Great Power Competition. This is because terrorism was the predominant geopolitical concern of the Bush and Obama administrations and because many near-peer competitors did not present a threat, in the eyes of many defense experts, until Obama's second term.

H1: Geostrategic interests related to violent non-state actors, such as terrorism, fuel foreign assistance more than geostrategic interests related to great power competition, such as Chinese investment.

This theory relies upon the key assumption that the U.S. government is a rational actor that contends with limited resources. As such, the United States takes into account its many geopolitical objectives and logically expends its foreign aid resources in a manner that addresses its greatest priorities. This assumption is in dialogue with the seminal finding of Morgenthau, who provided evidence that political and foreign affairs objectives motivate foreign aid disbursements.⁴⁸

Under the Bush and Obama administrations, terrorism was the highest security priority. Soon after the 9/11 attacks, President George W. Bush initiated military operations in Afghanistan as a part of the Global War on Terror. President Barack Obama then maintained many of Bush's military endeavors, even raising the number of troops deployed across the Middle East. The advent of ISIS further demonstrated the extent to which President Obama prioritized the threat of violent non-state actors in his security efforts.

The U.S. focus on the threat of terrorism also extended beyond the Central Command Area of Responsibility and into Africa. In his first term, President Bush launched the East Africa Counterterrorism Initiative, a \$100M program to support partner-forces fighting Islamic extremism.⁴⁹ In 2004, a representative from the U.S. State Department's Office of Counterterrorism testified before Congress that conditions ideal for terrorist recruitment across Africa warranted massive U.S. development programs.⁵⁰ In 2007, President Bush institutionalized the significance of Africa to the United States as well as reinforced the U.S. commitment to the counterterrorism mission in Africa with the creation of the Africa Command.⁵¹ Obama continued Bush's counterterrorism efforts in Africa, calling for aggressive action against al-Qa`ida franchise organizations across the continent.⁵²

With U.S. defense and diplomacy officials fixated on the threat of terrorism, the threat of China only gradually entered the purview of many policymakers as China ascended to near-peer status. In 2000, China introduced its Go Global strategy, in which China encouraged its corporations to invest specifically in developing states.⁵³ Ten years later, China had become Africa's largest trading partner, revealing deepening geopolitical ties between the continent and China.⁵⁴ Most significantly, China embarked on the Belt and Road Initiative in 2013, a massive development program designed to place China at the center of international commerce.⁵⁵

In security terms, President Xi has led the largest military development in all of modern Chinese history.⁵⁶ In 2017,

48 Morgenthau.

49 Karl Wycoff, "United States Department of State," 2004.

50 Ibid.

51 Brett Schaefer, "Creating an Africa Command: Bush Administration Makes the Right Call," Heritage Foundation, 2006.

52 Barack Obama, "Barack Obama's State of the Union Address," *Guardian*, January 28, 2014.

53 Michaela Pedersen-Macnab, "Timeline of China's Foreign Direct Investment Policy Evolution (With Attention to Canada's Investment Policies)," University of Alberta, October 30, 2020.

54 Ibid.

55 Ibid.

56 Ben Wescott, "China's Military Is Going from Strength to Strength under Xi Jinping," CNN, March 5, 2019.

China's navy established its first-ever foreign military base in the African coastal state of Djibouti, fewer than 10 miles away from the U.S. base Camp Lemonnier.⁵⁷ China has also reignited international controversy related to the South China Sea, having claimed more territory in the disputed region than ever before.⁵⁸

Despite these many developments, U.S. policymakers did not begin to emphasize the threat of China until Obama's second term.⁵⁹ For example, Obama wrote in his 2006 book, *The Audacity of Hope*, that "competition between the great powers ... no longer exists."⁶⁰ By 2015, publications from the Obama administration attempted to reconcile the increasingly apparent reality of the threat of China while recognizing the persistent threat of violent non-state actors. That year, Deputy Defense Secretary Robert Work declared that the most "stressing" and "significant" security issue had become great power competition but that "the Department [of Defense] is not forgetting one bit about the threat of violent extremism."⁶¹ Additionally, the U.S. National Military Strategy of 2015 opened with this statement: "We now face multiple, simultaneous security challenges from traditional state actors and transregional networks of sub-state groups."⁶² By 2017, the U.S. National Security Strategy featured an emphasis of the threat of great power competition across the document.⁶³

Research Design

I select the United States as the case donor to test my hypothesis because it is involved in disbursing foreign aid to African states, counterterrorism missions, and great power competition. It goes without saying that the United States has been the hallmark actor in Pax Americana. Therefore, the threat of China represents a strategic challenge with special significance for the United States. That the United States also still conducts counterterrorism missions in Africa places it in watershed circumstance. Have U.S. foreign aid disbursements changed to reflect a prioritization of the threat of China over counterterrorism?

I select African countries as the case recipients because many of these governments are both experiencing an increase in terrorist attacks and Chinese investment.⁶⁴ That few other countries beyond those in Africa experience nearly as many casualties from terrorism in tandem with high levels of Chinese investment makes African countries an ideal case recipient. African countries are also an ideal object of study because the United States considers Africa to be a key continent with regard to international relations, security, the threat of China, and the persistent threat of violent non-state actors. To this end, the United States has engaged in extensive foreign aid programs across Africa for all of the years in this research scope.⁶⁵

I limit the scope of foreign assistance to data from 2001 through 2017, establishing a one-year lag time between my dependent and independent variables. This time span includes the following critical events: China's Go Global initiative; the establishment of the United States' Africa Command (AFRICOM) in 2007; the Bush and Obama presidencies; and the spread of Islamic State-affiliated franchises across Africa. It is important that the scope of my research contains the above events as they might serve as watershed moments in which geostrategic prioritization and foreign aid disbursements shifted.

57 Nick Turse, "U.S. Generals Worry About Rising Russian and Chinese Influence in Africa, Documents Show," *Intercept*, August 13, 2019.

58 David Shear, "Statement of David Shear Assistant Secretary of Defense for Asian and Pacific Security Affairs Before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations," May 13, 2015.

59 Friedman.

60 Barack Obama, *The Audacity of Hope* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2006).

61 Robert Work, "Remarks by Defense Deputy Secretary Robert Work at the CNAS Inaugural National Security Forum," Center for a New American Security, 2015.

62 "The National Military Strategy of the United States of America," 2015.

63 "National Security Strategy," U.S. Department of Defense, 2017.

64 "National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism: Global Terrorism Database," University of Maryland, 2019; David L. Altheide, "Terrorism and the Politics of Fear," *Cultures of Fear* (2006): pp. 54-69; Austin M. Strange, Axel Dreher, Andreas Fuchs, Radley Parks, and Michael J. Tierney, "AidData's Chinese Official Finance to Africa Dataset, Version 1.1.1.," *William and Mary AidData* 61:5 (2017); "GDP (current US\$)," World Bank, 2017.

65 "United States Agency for International Development Foreign Aid Explorer."

To better examine the effects of some of the above historical developments, this paper produced two disaggregated models. The first disaggregated model compared foreign aid disbursements before and after the establishment of AFRICOM in 2007 because its establishment represented an increase in the securitization of U.S.-Africa relations. Therefore, I had expected terrorism to be a statistically significant predictor of foreign aid flows before 2007 and very much statistically significant after AFRICOM's establishment. I additionally produced a disaggregated model comparing the foreign aid disbursements of the Bush and Obama presidencies because their national security strategies were substantially different; President Bush focused his security policies on addressing terrorism, whereas President Obama's security strategies included an increased recognition of the threat of China. Therefore, I had expected terrorism to be a statistically significant predictor of foreign aid across both presidential administrations and Chinese investment to be a statistically significant predictor of foreign aid only under Obama's administration.

Drawing upon the precedent of Usama bin Ladin's 1998 Embassy Bombings, this paper utilizes a one-year lag time between the occurrence of a geostrategic event and the U.S. foreign assistance that ensues. A lag time is important for this research because there is delay between the events related to the dependent variables and the implementation of foreign aid programs. Although USAID disbursed \$50 million USD aid to Kenya and Tanzania in the five years following the bombings, merely months after the attacks U.S. policymakers began to allocate foreign assistance.⁶⁶

I use data from multiple reputable sources to test my hypothesis. For metrics regarding U.S. foreign assistance after 2001, I consult the USAID's Foreign Aid Explorer (FAE), which is a particularly reliable source for data on U.S. foreign assistance disbursements because the U.S. government produces it. As such, the units of analysis for this project are African country-year.

For geostrategic interests related to the Era of Threats from Violent Non-State Actors, I utilize data from the University of Maryland's National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism.⁶⁷ Specifically, I analyze the numbers of casualties per terrorist attack to represent the extent to which terrorism exists within an African country. The number of casualties is the sum of the number of persons killed and wounded in a particular attack. I selected casualties of terrorism rather than the number of terrorist attacks because the number of casualties better demonstrates the severity of terrorism within a country. For example, a country experiencing a high number of unsuccessful terrorist attacks with few victims does not have as great a threat of terrorism as a country that suffers fewer but highly devastating and lethal attacks.

For geostrategic interests related to the Era of Threats from Great Power Competition, I use AidData's Geocoded Global Chinese Official Finance, Version 1.1.1 and consider the sum of Chinese investments across all economic sectors for a given country-year. My research includes both data that AidData has characterized as ODA-like and OOF-like. I also use AEI's China Global Investment Tracker because AidData's dataset only captures data from 2000 through 2014. With regard to AEI's dataset, I include all categories of investment.

This research utilizes the above data in a time-series, cross-sectional design with linear regression and with country-year fixed effects. Such a design is ideal because this project encompasses multiple independent variables across multiple years and a continuous dependent variable: foreign assistance disbursements. I measure foreign aid in terms of the U.S. dollar, adjust the data for inflation, and perform a logarithmic transformation to ensure a consistent distribution of foreign assistance disbursements.

The many factors that determine foreign assistance distributions make it essential to account for multiple control variables.⁶⁸ First, states consider the economic need of receiving states when they disburse aid. Therefore, I control for a state's economic needs by making constant a state's GDP using the World Bank's GDP dataset.⁶⁹ To this end, I also control for a state's population.⁷⁰ Donors also disburse aid to serve their own economic and political interests,

66 Saade Abdallah, Rebekah Heinzen, and Gilbert Burnham, "Immediate and Long-Term Assistance Following the Bombing of the US Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania," *Disasters* 31:4 (2007): pp. 417-434.

67 University of Maryland, 2019.

68 Alesina and Dollar.

69 "GDP Dataset (Current US\$)," World Bank, 2017.

70 "Population, Total Dataset," World Bank, 2018b.

so I control for natural resource availability with WDI's natural resource rent dataset.⁷¹ Based on Bermeo's paper, I control for a state's U.N. voting pattern using historical voting records and its favorability for the United States and China.⁷² It is important to include controls for U.N. voting because the United States disburses aid to countries that vote in line with U.S. interests. Additionally, it is possible that the United States disburses aid to countries that vote in line with Chinese interests so as to provide them with a favorable incentive to adjust their voting habits. Donor states often consider the quality of governance in a receiving state, so I control for democracy scores with the Polity IV dataset.⁷³ Similarly, I control for a state's corruption levels using the WDI dataset on a state's estimated corruption.⁷⁴

Empirical Results

My empirical analysis suggests that neither casualties of terrorism nor Chinese investment are statistically significant predictors of U.S. foreign aid across my continental pan-Africa model as well as in disaggregated models, discussed below. As depicted in Table 1, my linear regression analysis of terrorism and Chinese investment in Africa, as well as my control variables, returned results that neither aforementioned geostrategic interest explains U.S. foreign aid to Africa in a statistically significant way.

Table 1: Continental Model of All African Countries from 2001-2017

	<i>Dependent variable:</i> U.S. Foreign Aid (Logged)
Casualties of Terrorism	-0.00005 (0.0002)
Chinese Investment (Logged)	0.007 (0.007)
Population (Logged)	1.331*** (0.066)
GDP	-0.248*** (0.063)
Natural Resource Rent	-0.010** (0.005)
Polity 2 Score	0.079*** (0.014)
U.S.-favorable U.N. Voting	-0.746*** (0.209)
China-favorable U.N. Voting	-0.663** (0.280)
Observations	487
R ²	0.623
Adjusted R ²	0.604
F Statistic	95.602*** (df = 8; 463)

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

71 "Total Natural Resource Rents (% of GDP)," World Bank, 2018c.

72 Bermeo; Bailey, Strezhnev, and Voeten.

73 Monty G. Marshall and Ted Robert Gurr, "Polity IV Project," Polity IV Project: Home Page, 2013.

74 "Control of Corruption," World Bank, 2018a.

Given this finding, I produced disaggregated models of U.S. foreign aid to Africa, including U.S. foreign aid to Africa pre- and post-AFRICOM's establishment in 2007, and U.S. foreign aid to Africa delineated along the lines of Bush's and Obama's presidencies. None of these disaggregated models revealed any empirical, statistically significant relationship between terrorism and Chinese investment on U.S. foreign aid. Table 2 corresponds to pre-AFRICOM and post-AFRICOM findings; Table 3 corresponds to Bush's administration and Obama's administration.

Table 2: Pre-AFRICOM (1) and Post-AFRICOM (2)

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>	
	U.S. Foreign Aid (Logged)	
	(1)	(2)
Casualties of Terrorism	0.0003 (0.003)	-0.0001 (0.0002)
Chinese Investment (Logged)	-0.005 (0.012)	0.014 (0.008)
Population (Logged)	1.234*** (0.116)	1.359*** (0.082)
GDP	-0.224* (0.115)	-0.249*** (0.075)
Natural Resource Rent	0.002 (0.010)	-0.015** (0.006)
Polity 2 Score	0.057** (0.025)	0.094*** (0.017)
U.S.-favorable U.N. Voting	-1.127** (0.447)	-0.580** (0.241)
China-favorable U.N. Voting	-0.734 (0.617)	-0.639** (0.319)
Observations	161	326
R ²	0.598	0.648
Adjusted R ²	0.565	0.628
F Statistic	27.482*** (df = 8; 148)	70.728*** (df = 8; 307)

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 3: Bush Administration (1) and Obama Administration (2)

	<i>Dependent variable:</i> U.S. Foreign Aid (Logged)	
	(1)	(2)
Casualties of Terrorism	0.0002 (0.001)	-0.0001 (0.0002)
Chinese Investment (Logged)	0.003 (0.010)	0.010 (0.009)
Population (Logged)	1.320*** (0.095)	1.320*** (0.094)
GDP	-0.267*** (0.092)	-0.216** (0.088)
Natural Resource Rent	-0.005 (0.008)	-0.017** (0.007)
Polity 2 Score	0.067*** (0.020)	0.097*** (0.019)
U.S.-favorable U.N. Voting	-0.966*** (0.320)	-0.509* (0.280)
China-favorable U.N. Voting	-0.664 (0.446)	-0.649* (0.359)
Observations	241	243
R ²	0.610	0.648
Adjusted R ²	0.586	0.625
F Statistic	44.148*** (df = 8; 226)	52.283*** (df = 8; 227)

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

I believe that my results can be interpreted causally. As my models demonstrate empirically, a variety of the control variables that I selected were very statistically significant predictors of U.S. foreign aid to Africa, although terrorism and Chinese investment were not statistically significant. These findings reinforce Morgenthau's seminal contribution that political motivations propel foreign aid flows; however, my findings reveal that terrorism and Chinese investment are not among the geostrategic interests that empirically motivate foreign aid. In this sense, my causal mechanism of political representatives prioritizing counterterrorism over the threat of China might hold true in terms of political rhetoric and stated strategy, although not in empirical models of foreign aid flows.

Across the continental pan-Africa model as well as in disaggregated models, neither casualties from terrorism nor Chinese investment were statistically significant predictors of U.S. foreign aid, yet many of the control variables were. Factors like good governance, corruption, and U.N. voting record did, in fact, motivate U.S. foreign aid disbursements to African countries. While these factors are not explicit national security objectives, these variables are fundamental values in U.S. foreign policy. For one, the United States generally advocates for support to institutions and governments with respect for human rights and corruption-free leadership. Additionally, the United States has a long history of creating and maintaining alliances with other states, a pattern reflected in foreign aid disbursements on the basis of U.S.-favorable ideology at multinational institutions like the United Nations.

Population and natural resource rent were also potent motivators of U.S. foreign aid, which reveals a pragmatic element to aid disbursement decisions. Here, it appears that in foreign aid disbursements, the United States wanted to maximize a return on investment of sorts in how many people aid programs could reach per dollar spent. Aid disbursements motivated by natural resource rent were also pragmatic in that U.S. policymakers understand that

foreign aid can create economic opportunities in the energy sector.

I do not believe that my results have external validity to the foreign assistance patterns of other key donors. This is because the United States is in a unique geopolitical position in the Era of Threats from Great Power Competition. For example, France and Great Britain are both major players in the counterterrorism operations globally, yet these countries both do not consider China to be a major geopolitical threat to the extent that the United States does.

Conclusion

My research aimed to answer a question of the relative influence of violent non-state actors and the threat of China on U.S. foreign aid flows. Despite my initial hypothesis that between 2001-2017, casualties of terrorism more so than Chinese investment would motivate U.S. foreign aid disbursements to African states, my data demonstrated that neither of these geostrategic interests were statistically significant motivators of foreign aid. In this research, the empirical results did not match my hypothesis that terrorism would fuel foreign aid more so than instances of great power competition. Yet the critical assumptions of my theory, that the United States is a rational actor that must contend with limited resources and that political and international objectives motivate foreign aid, held true. It appears that the United States did carefully select recipients for its foreign aid programs based on geopolitical objectives, but that the motivators of foreign aid disbursements are more nebulous values than tangible security threats. For example, good governance, based on democracy and a lack of corruption, as well as geopolitically favorable ideology, based on U.N. voting records, are enduring American ideals in foreign policy. Therefore, foreign aid disbursements did reflect the United States' championing of good governance and alliances but did not reflect its stated security objectives.

I expect that my contributions will encourage policymakers to allocate foreign assistance resources to better match stated national security strategies. If the present pattern continues, in which nebulous values motivate foreign aid more so than tangible indicators of security and geostrategic objectives, foreign aid might not be efficacious. In this vein, policymakers may be interested in considering terrorism and Chinese investment data during future aid disbursements, given their stated security objectives. My paper will also contribute to the academic literature insofar as it fills the gap related to the relative importance of geostrategic interests that fuel foreign assistance. Moving forward, I hope to see whether my findings have external validity beyond Africa; Pakistan and Indonesia are powerful examples of states with high casualties from terrorism as well as Chinese investment.

Additionally, I plan to re-examine my findings when there is data available for foreign aid to Africa in response to COVID-19. The COVID-19 pandemic makes for circumstances especially worthy of research because the pandemic has obfuscated the delineation between the Era of Threats from Violent Non-State Actors and the Era of Threats from Great Power Competition; in this vein, COVID-19 is a geostrategic interest clearly in line with other non-state actor threats, yet it has also become a domain in which the United States and China are engaging Africa with newfound vigor. It is very possible that this pandemic is the watershed period in which ordinary citizens begin to pay more attention to the threat of China and the power of foreign aid to shape political narratives. If these changes take hold, perhaps the threat of China will more significantly motivate foreign aid than the threat of violent non-state actors.

Appendix**Table 4: Does Terrorism or Chinese Investment More Significantly Solicit Foreign Aid?**

	Dependent Variable: U.S. Foreign Aid (Logged)			
	cl. se		cl.se	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Casualties of Terrorism	0.001*** (0.0003)	0.001*** (0.0004)	-0.00005 (0.0002)	-0.00005 (0.0001)
Chinese Investment (Logged)	0.058*** (0.010)	0.058*** (0.009)	0.007 (0.007)	0.007 (0.006)
Population			1.331*** (0.066)	1.331*** (0.044)
GDP			-0.248*** (0.063)	-0.248*** (0.030)
Natural Resource Rent			-0.010** (0.005)	-0.010*** (0.004)
Polity 2 Score			0.079*** (0.014)	0.079*** (0.009)
U.S.-favorable U.N. Voting			-0.746*** (0.209)	-0.746*** (0.146)
China-favorable U.N. Voting			-0.663** (0.280)	-0.663*** (0.165)
Observations	553	553	487	487
R ²	0.087	0.087	0.623	0.623
Adjusted R ²	0.056	0.056	0.604	0.604

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 4: Does Terrorism or Chinese Investment More Significantly Solicit Foreign Aid?

Variable	Description	Source
Foreign Aid	This variable corresponds to US foreign assistance disbursements from USAID's Foreign Aid Explorer. Per the codebook, the variable corresponds to "any tangible or intangible item provided... to a foreign country or international organization... including but not limited to any training, service, or technical advice, any item of real, personal, or mixed property, any agricultural commodity, [and dollars]". Given the reliability of the FAE Database, I replaced any NAs with 0s in cleaning my data. The few NAs in the dataset included Libya from 2001-2003, South Sudan in 2001, 2002, 2004, and 2005, and Equatorial Guinea in 2001.	USAID (2019)
Chinese Investment	This variable represents all Official Development Assistance (ODA) and Other Official Flows (OOF) from 2000-2014, the extent of the data available. I fill in the gap from 2015-2017 with data from AEI's Global Chinese Investment Tracker and include all Chinese investment, including construction.	Strange et al. (2017), American Enterprise Institute and The Heritage Foundation (2019)
Terrorism	This variable corresponds to casualties of terrorism as documented in the University of Maryland's Global Terrorism Database. It is the sum of the number of persons killed and wounded in a given attack per country-year.	University of Maryland (2019)
GDP	This variable is "monetary value of all finished goods and services made within a country during a specific period"	USAID Foreign Aid Explorer (2019)
Population	This variable captures the number of persons in a given country-year.	The World Bank (2017)
Natural Resource Rent	This variable represents that percent of a GDP for a given nation's natural resource rent.	The World Bank (2018c)
Corruption	This variable is the estimated extent of corruption in a given country-year.	The World Bank (2018a)
Polity 2 Score	This variable represents the degree to which a given country is democratic.	Marshall and Gurr (2013)
U.N. Voting	This variable represents the extent to which a given country voted at the U.N. in a manner that is favorable to either the United States or China.	Bailey, Strezhnev and Voeten (2017)

Table 5: Summary Statistics

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Pctl(25)	Pctl(75)	Max
Country ISO ₃ N Code	913	457.769	250.246	12	231	694	894
Year	913	2,009.095	4.891	2,001	2,005	2,013	2,017
U.S. Foreign Aid (Logged)	911	18.375	2.262	10.677	17.133	19.944	22.878
Population	890	16.820	1.587	12.305	15.552	17.894	20.067
GDP	874	23.853	1.636	19.146	22.682	24.811	28.066
Natural Resource Rent	869	13.063	12.806	0.001	3.960	17.646	68.778
Casualties of Terrorism	913	94.273	377.639	0	0	13	5,758
Chinese Investment (Logged)	557	14.527	9.036	0.000	0.000	20.832	28.927
Polity 2 Score	856	1.883	5.190	-9.000	-3.000	6.000	10.000
U.S.-favorable U.N. Voting	863	-3.321	0.354	-4.713	-3.489	-3.112	-2.013
China-favorable U.N. Voting	863	-0.303	0.240	-1.624	-0.418	-0.121	-0.001

Innocent Blood: The Struggle of Small Neutrals to Preserve Their Neutrality in Wartime

Adam Bollt

Why strong states may choose paths toward war is widely studied, but less powerful states have far less agency over their fates when it comes to involvement in conflicts. The truth is, war between major powers threatens with great devastation and sorrow even those countries who have no direct stake in the conflict. Yet, although small neutral states are often dragged into wars between powerful countries, not all are. What factors pull these “small neutrals” into wars sometimes and allow them to avoid wars at other times? By mining existing scholarship concerning small states and the spread of wars, this article delineates eight unique factors situated across three levels of analysis assumed to determine the ability of small neutrals to avoid getting dragged into larger states’ wars. However, seeing a gap in the literature, this article argues that a ninth phenomenon should be added to this list: how individuals within large states are critical to the fates of the small neutrals. The perspective of one individual in a large state may lead to war for a small state, whereas the perspective of another may lead to peace. Through a case study, this article demonstrates how large states’ leaders each uniquely understand the interaction of all of the variables confronting them, a fact that spared neutral Belgium in 1870 from a Franco-German war and doomed it to another in 1914.

When powerful nations march to war against each other, small ones watch uneasily. Sometimes, small countries without interest in fighting—what this article refers to as “small neutrals”—are lucky enough to emerge from wider conflagrations unscathed. This, however, is not always the case. Scholars have discovered sources of when and why one or the other outcome occurs, but none have given a comprehensive account of the forces at work when a small country tries to avoid a larger war. This omission of the fate of a whole class of states derives from a general tendency for most scholars to study war with respect to the powerful actors, largely overlooking the weak. Small states may not be as essential to the understanding of conflict as large ones, but one cannot fully appreciate the whole while neglecting certain constituent parts.

This article aims to explore that variance in the outcomes of war or peace for a small neutral state during wars between powerful states—namely, how the quality of leadership in the powerful states affects those small states. This article proposes that existing literature suggests eight phenomena spread across three levels of analysis help to explain why small states do and do not get pulled into larger states’ wars; however, this article argues that a ninth phenomenon, the role of individuals within large states, should be added. Every point in time and place is a unique synthesis of innumerable interlocking historical dynamics, so there can be no list of principles that could consistently predict if or how a small state could avoid war in a given situation. However, if one develops a lexicon, and if one identifies the broad factors that collectively determine war or peace under these conditions—if one builds a rough theory—the scholar and the statesman may at least have some guidance when confronting specifics.

This following section reflects on what scholars have said germane to the topic of this article. The next section lays out the design of the cases and establishes definitions, while the third examines the cases in detail. The fourth and final section considers the meaning of the findings.

A Review of Existing Work on Small State Participation in Large State Wars

From an inspection of scholarship relevant to this topic, one can delineate eight distinct factors situated at three levels of analysis that influence whether a small neutral state can escape a wider war. What scholars have developed

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from the systemic level of analysis—looking at the interplay among multiple states—can be classified into the variables of a small state’s geostrategic location, how wars are fought, and a small state’s policy toward alliances. At the dyadic level—looking at the relationship between two states—existing work cites small state prestige and economic ties. Finally, the monadic level—looking at the internal processes of a single state—can be considered as consisting of the three factors of military capability; the opinion, resolve, and unity of the public; and the skill of the small state’s leaders. Each factor has significant impact on the others.

Systemic Level

Geostrategic Location

The physical and political landscape of a small state’s region is key to its ability to stay out of wars because it shapes both the perceived value for large states of attacking the small state and the small state’s means to attempt to forestall such an event. Indeed, according to Efraim Karsh, “geo-strategic location is, perhaps, the prime constraint on a state’s survival.” For example, a state that is not near any powerful neighbor has better odds of surviving.¹ Its importance is particularly true for weak states because, more than strong ones, a weak state’s prosperity is in the hands of “regional and global processes and foreign actions,”² and what those processes and actions are will largely depend on when and where a small state finds itself. Therefore, geostrategic location greatly affects economic ties and military capability, which will be addressed in turn later. If external factors cause a small nation to struggle economically, it will find itself in a hopelessly weak situation at the onset of war. However, even a small state blessed with the geostrategic-given opportunity to flourish in peacetime and therefore to more likely avoid war during wartime might become a wartime target, again depending on geostrategic location. As Stacy Bergstrom Haldi writes, “initial combatants ... [attack neutrals when] they need the neutral territories or assets in that territory to support their primary conflict against the other initial combatant.”³

If prized, a small state can conduct a policy of appeasement toward the would-be invader, but again only in certain geostrategic locations. There must be one dominant state. Sweden made this work even when, after April 1940 until near the end of World War II, Nazi Germany was the only relevant power in the region. The Swedes granted the Nazis transit rights and iron ore, eliminating short-term incentives for an invasion.⁴ So long as others continued the war⁵ and it had one clear hegemon, Sweden could accord all the favors necessary to dissuade invasion, even with such a predatory state. Where a rough balance exists between multiple great powers, however, the small state is in a much more dangerous situation because appeasement is much less feasible; the Scandinavian countries faced such a scenario in April 1940, ending in the invasion of Norway and Denmark.⁶ Karsh calls a small state caught between multiple great powers a “buffer state.” The buffer state becomes a point of tension, for each strong neighbor always has an incentive to seize it to deny it from the rival.⁷

How Wars Are Fought

Another variable that impacts the ability of small neutrals is how wars are fought, for small neutrals in different places and times may have more or less difficulty compared to large states fulfilling the requirements specific to that place and time for preparing to wage war effectively. This variable therefore primarily affects another variable: military capability. An increased level of technology being used in a war means less relative power for small states⁸ and therefore less of a say about whether to stay out of a war, and the same goes for increased “totality” of war. Maartje

1 Efraim Karsh, *Neutrality and Small States* (New York: Routledge, 2011 (originally published in 1988)), p. 81.

2 Baldur Thorhallson, “Studying Small States: A Review,” *Small States and Territories* 1:1 (2018): p. 22.

3 Stacy Bergstrom Haldi, *Why Wars Widen: A Theory of Predation and Balancing* (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2003), p. 8.

4 Karsh, p. 100.

5 Michael Palo, *Neutrality as a Policy Choice for Small/Weak Democracies: Learning from the Belgian Experience* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill Publishers, 2019), p. 124.

6 Karsh, pp. 99-103.

7 Ibid., pp. 82-83.

8 Robert Keohane, “Lilliputians’ Dilemmas: Small States in International Politics,” *International Organization* 23:2 (1969): p. 298.

Abbenhuis demonstrates this through the severe decline over the course of World War I of the Dutch military's armament compared to that of both belligerent sides. The Netherlands was too weak industrially to produce and too weak financially to purchase enough of the latest war materiel.⁹ The Dutch army therefore became less of a deterrent, leaving the Netherlands with a lower capability to avoid war.

The effect of the "totality" of war is addressed by Haldi, who suggests that great powers widened wars more often in the 1700s than later periods, when and because the political costs of going to war were lower.¹⁰ Haldi defines political costs as the cost of losing a war,¹¹ so the more decisive nature of and increased state mobilization required in Napoleonic era warfare signaled a decrease in the number of wars, especially predatory wars, that great powers initiated.¹²

The natural extension of this finding to small states, when combined with the effect of technology, is that large states should comport themselves with ever more impunity toward small states. If one accepts Haldi's viewpoint, what holds states back from aggression is the costs of losing; as technology increases, the gap between the weak and the powerful increases, making small states more unable to deter expected increased aggression from the powerful. Thus, how wars are fought affects the variable of military capability relative to powerful states, and different time periods will present different chances for a weak state to fend off war.

Policy Toward Alliances

The policy of a small state toward alliances determines whether the state will enter a war necessarily or will have at least a chance of staying out of the war, because if a state chooses to make an alliance during wartime, it will have failed at keeping out of the war. For this reason, one must have a grasp of what incentivizes them to take or not take such a step. Many scholars believe that the inherent vulnerability of small states should compel them to survive through the pursuit of alliances,¹³ but this article is concerned with those who decide instead to stay neutral. In the most difficult position, as a buffer state, the options for alliances are limited. As Michael Palo explains regarding Belgium in 1870, Belgium could "balance" or "bandwagon," but either only at great risk. Often, including during that war, mainstream expectations of a war's victor prove incorrect, and the small state's fate would be tied to the side it chose.¹⁴ However, if the small state does not commit to a side, if invaded nevertheless, it will be no more reliant on the success of its resultant new powerful ally than if it had chosen one; if it is not invaded, it has just avoided war. Therefore, neutrality is a solution for buffer states.

Dyadic Level

Prestige

The prestige of a small neutral state in the eyes of a larger neighbor is critical, because for the powerful countries to decide that respecting a small country's neutrality is in their best interest, they must believe both in the small country's evenhandedness and in its value in its neutral status. Large states therefore judge every action of small states, meaning that small states' abilities to convince larger states of their honest commitment to neutrality remain an important factor in their abilities to dodge unwanted wars. For example, involvement in international organizations might help small states create their desired images "as neutral, trustworthy, honest, compliant, and useful brokers and contributors,"¹⁵ but involvement in regional organizations can have the opposite effect, as with Austria in the eyes of the USSR, when the former was considering entering the European Economic Community.¹⁶

9 Maartje Abbenhuis, *The Art of Staying Neutral: The Netherlands in the First World War, 1914-1918* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), pp. 197-198.

10 Haldi, pp. 2-4.

11 Ibid., p. 13.

12 Ibid., pp. 5, 8.

13 Thorhallsen, p. 20.

14 Palo, p. 28.

15 Thorhallsen, p. 21.

16 Karsh, pp. 121-122, 126-127.

The fact that Sweden, Switzerland, and Spain forfeited much of their credibility as neutral states to accede to Nazi demands in World War II¹⁷ does not speak against the validity of prestige as a factor; none did so while a buffer state. The buffer state is most likely to try to enhance its prestige precisely because it does not have the surer methods of ensuring peace for itself that a state near only one great power has.

Economic Ties

How a small state constructs economic ties with other countries helps dictate whether it can stay out of a war because it may give one party some power over the other. When there is only one major power nearby, a small state can use its economic assets to help escape direct involvement in a war, as in the World War II Swedish case shown earlier. However, Sweden could only hand over its iron ore to the Nazis, thereby successfully appeasing them, when the British were no longer near.¹⁸ Nevertheless, in certain situations, even buffer states' economic ties can influence their chances at avoiding war, if more precariously. As Abbenhuis shows, owing to the status of the Netherlands as a neutral in World War I, Dutch ports provided Germany a key lifeline into the North Atlantic trade network through an otherwise efficacious British blockade.¹⁹ The Netherlands was a bottleneck through which much trade that Germany depended upon came; Britain would have blockaded it, too, and cut off the bottleneck had Germany taken those ports for itself. However, there was a cost to Dutch power over Germany. The Allies were seizing Dutch ships by March 1918.²⁰

Monadic Level

Military Capability

The military capability of a small neutral state in comparison to that of large states is important because the relationship of force determines how much the small neutral can make its invasion undesirable. Thus, the job of a small neutral state's military is to communicate to a belligerent that it would suffer costs for violating neutrality disproportionate to any likely gains.²¹ For example, the Germans' original Schlieffen Plan included an invasion of the Netherlands, but the Dutch army comprised 200,000 soldiers, a fact that in the end prompted that part of the Schlieffen Plan to be canceled.²² In the lead-up to World War I, the Dutch military overcame the challenge posed by the Netherlands' geostrategic location, which was tempting to possible invaders.²³ The Netherlands did not have to deter the entire German army, only enough to make the expected cost too high for the expected benefit.

Public

The public is also a major consideration in leading to war or peace for small neutrals because how the public acts or is prepared to act can either improve or impair the favorability for the small neutral of the status of many of the other factors. Moreover, "the public" need not necessarily mean the majority. For example, many ordinary Dutch people hurt the credibility of their country's neutrality by smuggling goods illegally during World War I.²⁴ In order to prevent the activity from going too far, the military was used to limit the freedoms of speech, movement, and assembly, inflicting real harm on its capability for deterrence.²⁵ Without the military focused on defense, the military capability of the Netherlands decreased. The Netherlands became more vulnerable to violations of neutrality, as demonstrated above with the Allied seizure of Dutch ships near the end of the war.

17 Ibid., pp. 43-44.

18 Ibid., p. 100.

19 Abbenhuis, p. 32.

20 Ibid., p. 261.

21 Karsh, pp. 33, 64.

22 Abbenhuis, pp. 31-32.

23 Ibid., p. 25.

24 Ibid., p. 266.

25 Ibid., p. 175.

Small State Leadership

How a small neutral state's government handles these variables is in itself a factor in whether the country becomes embroiled in a wider war because, as seen within discussion of the other variables, although a small state cannot completely determine any of the other variables, it can influence most; it could help or harm its chances of remaining out of the war by how adroitly it uses what influence it has to advance its wish to remain neutral. Because the other variables determining war and peace are dependent on specific details and the complex interaction thereof, the small neutral's interpretation of the situation can vary. Because the small neutral can affect the other factors, that variance matters. As Karsh concludes about the neutrals of World War II, "those states that read the map of environmental constraints and limitations well, and skillfully relied on the component, or combination of components, best suited to the circumstances, succeeded in maintaining their neutrality, while the less adept states were dragged into the war against their will."²⁶

Pushing Forward the Literature on "Small Neutral" Scholarship: A Ninth Variable: Judgment Skills of Large State Leadership

Put together, existing scholarship on this subject has pointed toward eight independent variables that affect a dependent variable, the variability between war and peace in the above-mentioned circumstances. However, just as most scholars seem to consider events exclusively from large states' perspectives, the smattering of small state scholars seem to do so only from that of small states. For small state scholars, this may make some sense if the goal is to develop prescriptive policy measures. If the small state can incentivize the large state, the small state should be able to manipulate the large state's behavior. However, this article intends to formulate a description of the forces that threaten to drag small states into larger wars, whether the small states can do anything about those forces or not; according to Aviv Shoham, administrators do not make completely rational decisions, but bounded rational decisions. There are too many variables and uncertainties in the international environment for someone to take everything into account.²⁷ Although he speaks about firms, the same logic applies to international politics. Different actors will act differently given the same set of circumstances, thereby reducing predictability.

Recognizing this, some scholars have begun grappling with the ways in which different leaders in powerful states might bring about different international outcomes. Elizabeth Saunders does so by considering their causal beliefs about threat.²⁸ This article does so by considering the accuracy with which they perceive their situation. The skill of the decision-makers in large states at assessing their situation with regard to small states will affect the small states' chances of avoiding war. After all, the actions of the weak can increase or decrease the odds of the strong deciding to destroy it, but ultimately, the decision does rest with the strong. The individuals in power in the powerful state and the aggregation of each of their skills at situational appraisal determines the weak state's fate. For example, an invasion of a neutral that is clearly beneficial for a large state in the short term would not occur with a statesman who foresees high costs further down the road. A less skilled one, even one understanding immediate costs and benefits, just not the later consequences, would drag the neutral into the war even though that would eventually harm their own nation. Of course, the situation could be reversed, in which case it would be the more skilled statesman who would violate the neutrality of the small state. The point is that in any case, decision-makers in powerful states with different skills make different decisions, which can determine if a weak state remains out of a war or not.

Therefore, whereas, as shown at the end of this article's literature review, Karsh claims that war or peace for a small neutral state depends on the skill of its government in assessing what the situation calls for, this article argues that the same is true for potential violators of those neutrals, the large states. This article proposes a ninth independent variable based on what is missing in the other eight—namely, the judgmental skill of the leadership in the large countries.

26 Karsh, p. 33.

27 Aviv Shoham, "Bounded Rationality, Planning, Standardization of International Strategy, and Export Performance: A Structural Model Explanation," *Journal of International Marketing* 7:2 (1999): pp. 30-31.

28 Elizabeth Saunders, "Transformative Choices: Leaders and the Origins of Intervention Strategy," *International Security* 34:2 (2009): pp. 119-161.

Summary of Variables

	Systemic Level of Analysis	Dyadic Level of Analysis	Monadic Level of Analysis
Small State Has Some Degree of Control	-policy toward alliances	-prestige -economic ties	-military capability -the public -small state’s leadership skill
Small State Has No Control	-geostrategic location -how wars are fought		-large state’s leadership skill

Working Definitions

Neutrality

Neutrality can mean simply not choosing a side in a conflict, but in this article, it refers to a deliberate policy to “not permit its territory to be used for war purposes.”²⁹ As shown in the literature review, however, the most successful neutrals in practice know when to compromise their own impartiality. There are different levels of transgression.

Small/Weak and Large/Powerful/Strong

Some scholars of civil conflict construe the adjectives “weak” and “strong” as useful descriptors of the clout that a government has within its own borders.³⁰ However, I use those terms in the sense of being “weak” or “strong” externally. In this article, they are predominantly synonymous with “small” and “large,” respectively. There is great dispute among small state scholars over the use of “small,”³¹ but Karsh’s emphasis on smallness, which he says is simply limited power, limited means,³² is best. It allows that a tiny state would act “smaller,” more characteristically “small,” than a state with slightly-below-average power, which would act “smaller” than an average-strength state, and so on.

Judgmental/Leadership Skill

More “skilled” leaders’ estimations of the short- and long-term costs and benefits of a given action for their nation will be nearer to the real-world costs and benefits than those of less “skilled” ones. However, the scholar, too, does not have complete information, so this attribute is not without subjectivity.

Case Studies

The variables’ dependence on particulars creates a problem with a theoretical approach to studying this topic. One can only properly evaluate it when dealing with details. Therefore, this article will investigate it by examining actual events in two specific cases.

In 1870, a German coalition fought France, and in 1914, a united Germany fought France again but this time sent its armies through neutral Belgium. In both years, a treaty should have obligated both sides to honor Belgium’s neutrality, and any potential violator of the treaty would have had to consider seriously whether the geographical military advantage of cutting through Belgium would outweigh having to contend with the additional enemy of Belgium, more territory to occupy, and international condemnation, if not intervention, particularly by Britain. Indeed, at first sight, nothing much seems to have changed but the outcomes. Therein, however, lies the key to these kinds of spillovers. The fact that so many variables were held constant between these two cases means that the

29 Palo, p. 5.

30 Ann Hironaka, *Neverending Wars: The International Community, Weak States, and the Perpetuation of Civil War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), p. 2.

31 Thorhallen, pp. 18-20.

32 Karsh, p. 4.

scholar has a better prospect to tease out which factors likely determined war or peace; the critical components are more isolated and easier to discern. Obviously, not all of the relevant factors remain identical, but one can minimize the effect of confounding variables by choosing cases in which their effect is less pronounced. Moreover, Belgium's status as a buffer state between the two major powers of France and Germany both times offers the worst-case scenario for a weak state. It twice faced the greatest test a small state can, succeeding once, failing the second time. This article's hypothesis would predict that an alteration in the quality of leadership of the belligerents would help explain the change in outcome for Belgium. By analyzing the decisions of the leadership of the belligerents in 1870 and 1914, the role of the quality of their leadership will be ascertained.

Case Study #1: Large State Leadership Concerning Belgium in 1870

French Leadership

Historians disagree whether Emperor Napoleon III expressly stated an interest for Belgium,³³ but given that Belgium lay within the "natural borders of France" in the minds of the Frenchmen of the day³⁴ and Napoleon's disdain for neutrality evinced by his public desire to annex neutral Luxembourg,³⁵ Napoleon doubtless would have invaded Belgium if he deemed it convenient. Indeed, although attacking through Belgium would have been risky,³⁶ an invasion route through the neutral states neighboring France could have also been highly lucrative.³⁷

Certainly, even well into the war, the British feared that "the French wolf" would strike "the Belgian lamb."³⁸ On July 31, 1870, British Foreign Secretary Lord Granville wrote to King Leopold II of Belgium that a renewal of the 1839 treaty guaranteeing Belgian neutrality had been sent to France and Prussia,³⁹ part of a British policy telling the belligerents outright that it would support the opposing side if one side disregarded the 1839 treaty.⁴⁰ This aligned with Britain's general aim dating to the 16th century to keep the Low Countries free from the other major powers.⁴¹ However, the date suggests that Britain only issued its official position two weeks after the beginning of the war, which a risk-acceptant France could have rendered too late by an immediate invasion. Britain aside though, Belgium's army amounted to 100,000 (unconcentrated) soldiers on article (of which 83,350 would be successfully mobilized),⁴² not insignificant considering Napoleon had 100,000 at the decisive Battle of Sedan.⁴³

However, despite the incentives for Napoleon to not invade Belgium unless willing to assume massive risk, these appear not to be the most important reasons he did not invade Belgium. Unlike his uncle, this Napoleon was well known for a lack of military prowess.⁴⁴ He did not have an alternate strategy. He did not really choose *any* strategy.⁴⁵ He saw that he was at war with Prussia, so he moved toward the border with Prussia. In short, Napoleon could not plan to invade Belgium because he did not have a plan.

33 Alan Strauss-Schom, *The Shadow Emperor: A Biography of Napoleon III* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2018), p. 365; Geoffrey Wawro, *The Franco-Prussian War: The German Conquest of France in 1870-1871* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 21.

34 Peter Sahlins, "Natural Frontiers Revisited: France's Boundaries since the Seventeenth Century," *American Historical Review* 95:5 (1990): p. 1,423.

35 Strauss-Schom, p. 364.

36 Barthélemy-Edmond Palat, *La Stratégie de Moltke en 1870* (Paris: Berger-Levrault, 1907), p. 30.

37 Wawro, p. 66.

38 "House of Commons Debate August 10, 1870," Vol. 203 cc1776-1792.

39 Robert Demoulin, "Documents inédits sur la crise internationale de 1870," *Bulletin de la Commission royale d'Histoire* 122:1 (1957): pp. 160-161.

40 "House of Commons Debate August 10, 1870."

41 Robert Massie, *Dreadnought: Britain, Germany, and the Coming of the Great War* (New York: Random House, 1991), p. 893.

42 Christophe Béchét, "Les Perceurs de Sedan," *Journal of Belgian History* 46:2 (2016): pp. 73, 86.

43 Wawro, p. 228.

44 Strauss-Schom, p. 247.

45 Wawro, p. 72.

Prussian-German Leadership

Although in theory only a simple minister serving at the pleasure of the Prussian king, “[Otto von] Bismarck commanded those around him by the sheer power of his personality,”⁴⁶ which allowed the master diplomat to dominate his king and Europe for more than a quarter century.⁴⁷ Since, as Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow write, “where you stand is where you sit,”⁴⁸ meaning that one’s office often corresponds with what one deems most meaningful, Bismarck tended to regard diplomatic considerations such as likely British reactions highly. Consequently, when the army’s Chief of Staff Helmuth von Moltke was planning his invasion of France, Moltke noted that “the neutrality of Belgium, Holland, and Switzerland limits the theater of war to the space between Luxembourg and Basel.”⁴⁹ He had accepted certain parameters out of political necessity and planned accordingly. This was not that large a leap, though. Moltke’s ultimate goal, the encirclement of the French, was possible with the deployment of his armies along only a fraction of the length of the border between the German states and France.⁵⁰ Another incentive to leave Belgium alone was that, as a bonus to the Germans (as well as the French) for respecting its neutrality, Belgium provided them with the standard perks, such as caring for both sides’ wounded.⁵¹

Thus, the leadership of both sides had decided not to trespass on neutral territory. Nevertheless, neutral territory was violated. The worst case occurred after the Battle of Sedan, when at least 5,000 defeated French soldiers fled across the nearby Belgian border largely unhindered by Belgian soldiers and customs officials, returning to France to fight another day.⁵² Despite previous and subsequent threats,⁵³ the incident ended before Bismarck could have acted, so he accepted the sunk cost and did not invade.

From that point on in the war, the Germans held the preponderance of might in the field, so Belgium was temporarily no longer a buffer state. It successfully remained out of the war for the duration.

Case Study #2: Large State Leadership Concerning Belgium in 1914*French Leadership*

According to Plan XVII, the French were to attack Germany along the common border,⁵⁴ though this time not through lack of reflection about attacking Belgium, something Chief of Staff Joseph Joffre deemed would have been of “the greatest interest” “if only military considerations count.”⁵⁵ Therefore, one deduces, the Belgian armed forces were not sufficient to deter France from attacking. Indeed, the size of the army that Belgium could field had only grown to 117,000 by 1914.⁵⁶ However, “Hard experience with two Bonapartist empires had made republican France wary of placing too much authority over strategy in the hands of the military,”⁵⁷ so although communication between civilian and military leadership was often lacking,⁵⁸ Joffre adapted when President Raymond Poincaré forbade him from planning a first strike on Belgium because of political risks with Britain.⁵⁹ Poincaré judged correctly. Within the British cabinet in 1914, “most were willing to consider it [intervention on the side of France]

46 Jonathan Steinberg, *Bismarck: A Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 3.

47 Ibid., p. 197.

48 Jack Levy and William Thompson, *Causes of War* (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing, 2010), p. 164.

49 Palat, p. 45.

50 Wawro, pp. 80-81.

51 Bêchet, p. 73.

52 Ibid., p. 84.

53 Wawro, p. 211; Bêchet, p. 90.

54 Samuel Williamson, “Joffre Reshapes French Strategy 1911-1913,” in Paul Kennedy ed., *The War Plans of the Great Powers 1880-1914* (Winchester, MA: George Allen & Union Publishers, 1979), pp. 147-148.

55 Ibid., p. 137.

56 John Simkin, “Armies 1914,” Spartacus Educational, updated January 2020.

57 G.J. Meyer, *A World Undone: The Story of the Great War* (New York: Random House, 2006), p. 109.

58 Williamson, p. 136.

59 Ibid., pp. 138-139.

only if Belgian neutrality were threatened [by Germany.]”⁶⁰

Still, France’s calculus could have changed. Intelligence revealed the Germans would invade Belgium in a war⁶¹ and hinted they may do so on a massive scale.⁶² Yet, Joffre had ruled out using his reserves on the frontlines, so he could not fathom that the Germans might, which would allow them enough soldiers to both defend their border and initiate a large-scale invasion of Belgium.⁶³ Joffre’s predecessor, Victor Michel, had foreseen German plans and even contemplated a French offensive into northern Belgium as a preemptive riposte, but he was ousted.⁶⁴ Since Joffre’s assessment, not Michel’s, was followed, France did not invade Belgium.

German Leadership

After “Bismarck’s strong hand and towering intellect” left the scene in Germany, the system of government he had established no longer worked properly.⁶⁵ With a new, incompetent Kaiser,⁶⁶ and without the republican emphasis on civilian leadership of France or the iron will of Bismarck, Bismarck’s successors failed to handle Moltke’s successors. The politicians knew well before the war of the prospective invasion of neutral Belgium as enshrined in the Schlieffen Plan,⁶⁷ but they did not demand revisions as Poincaré had with Joffre. By 1914, British Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey observed that “there are forces other than [Chancellor Theobald von] Bethmann-Hollweg in the seat of authority in Germany.”⁶⁸

In the army, whereas Moltke the Elder had incorporated political factors into his calculations and constructed plans to match Bismarck’s policies,⁶⁹ Alfred von Schlieffen saw in the Battle of Cannae, says John Keegan, “the pure essence of generalship, untainted by politics, logistics, technology, or the psychology of combat.”⁷⁰ He deliberately did not consider variables he should have, and he thought that he was better for it. In reaction to Germany’s new footing that France’s new border fortifications and rapprochement with Russia heralded in, Moltke had abandoned hope of a quick victory in a future war,⁷¹ but Schlieffen adjudged a two-front war an unacceptable outcome and began to accept enormous risks to eliminate it.

Schlieffen reckoned on one front at a time if he defeated France in six weeks, swinging his army east in time to meet the slow-moving Russians.⁷² With the east wide open to the Russians though, no delay was permissible. To accommodate his timetable and the space required by the 1914 army “six times larger” than 1870,⁷³ he would invade Belgium and bypass the French fortifications.⁷⁴ As for possible British intervention, Schlieffen’s successor, Moltke the Younger, proclaimed “the more English the better” because then they would be swept away with the supposedly inevitable defeat of the French.⁷⁵

Moltke the Younger could have renounced the Schlieffen Plan, which Schlieffen himself acknowledged was risky.⁷⁶

60 Massie, p. 897.

61 Williamson, p. 134.

62 Ibid., pp. 144-145.

63 Barbara Tuchman, *The Guns of August: The Outbreak of World War I* (New York: Presidio Press, 2004 (originally published in 1962)), p. 43.

64 John Keegan, *The First World War* (New York: Vintage Books, 2000), p. 38.

65 Meyer, p. 110.

66 Keegan, p. 47.

67 L.C.F. Turner, “The Significance of the Schlieffen Plan,” in *The War Plans of the Great Powers 1880-1914*, p. 207.

68 Massie, p. 894.

69 Turner, p. 200.

70 Keegan, pp. 31-32.

71 Turner, p. 200.

72 Tuchman, p. 23.

73 Ibid., p. 24.

74 Turner, p. 201.

75 Massie, p. 896.

76 Meyer, p. 111.

Moltke the Younger even believed secretly that any war would be long,⁷⁷ yet still he accepted this plan dependent on a short war. Furthermore, until 1913, Germany had other plans, but Moltke actually scrapped them!⁷⁸ Now, the violation of Belgian neutrality was a certainty, the only plan.

Synthesis

As shown in the two case studies above, between 1870 and 1914, four variables' changes were significant to the change in outcome of war or peace for Belgium. Belgium's geostrategic location worsened because of France's new fortifications and alliance with Russia; how wars were fought worsened for Belgium because of the space needed for the new scale of armies; Belgium's relative military capability worsened because the size of German armies against France increased six times while Belgium's did by less than one and a half. Thus, no matter the leaders in 1914 Germany, Belgium would have been a more tempting target than in 1870.

Nevertheless, the results of the study also seem to validate this article's hypothesis. In 1870, under Napoleon, impulsively, France forwent serious plans; in 1870, under Bismarck and Moltke the Elder, the Germans considered their war already winnable enough on French soil; in 1914, under politicians like Poincaré, France hoped for British support; in 1914, the weakness of German politicians like Bethmann-Hollweg and narrow minds of generals like Schlieffen and Moltke the Younger dragged neutral Belgium into World War I. In each situation, the most measured decision for the large states appears to have been to not interfere with Belgium, so Belgium's government did about as well as it could. In one case, though, to Belgium's great misfortune, the relevant people of a powerful neighbor misjudged.

Conclusion

Small neutral states are sometimes thrust into wars they do not want to fight, and sometimes they manage to avoid the wars. Scholars have made steps toward discovering the reasons for the variance in war and peace, but have not achieved a satisfactory explanation. This article endeavors to tie together the strands into a cohesive description of the forces at work.

After specifying eight distinct such forces through an examination of the literature, the article goes on to describe the cases and definitions used. The existence of a ninth force is posited. Then, the cases are investigated.

As shown in the two case studies above, leadership ability in the large states, the ninth force, matters. It takes its place next to the other eight. Many moving parts working simultaneously in conjunction and against one another settle the question of war or peace for a small neutral state. The statuses of and interactions among the factors of geostrategic location, how wars are fought in the given time period and region, policy toward alliances, prestige, economic ties, military capability, the public, and the situational assessment skills of both the small and large states all come together to determine whether or not a small neutral state is dragged into a war between warring major powers.

New questions now arise. How much does the judgmental skill of large-state leaders with regard to potential actions toward small states compare with that of those same people toward whom they presumably usually focus, other large states? How can judgmental skill be better measured in the first place? Which factors will tend to play the largest roles for peace or war? Much remains to be investigated about the fates of small neutral states during wider wars.

77 Ibid., p. 107.

78 Ibid., p. 113.

States, Canals, and Conflict: How Artificial Structures Influence Political Violence

Grace Brooks

What is the impact of artificial structural factors (ASF) on political violence within a state? How do ASFs, specifically in the form of canals in Panama and Egypt, influence levels of political violence? This question is especially important to study given that some ASFs can be a critical part of global commerce or interlinkages. More importantly, when one structure dominates a significant portion of a state's economy, there needs to be considerable exploration of how it can affect state behavior. Through a comparative historical analysis of Panama and Egypt, this study explores how a state's decisions to negotiate with regards to their artificial structures either exacerbates or mitigates political violence. In my analysis, I show how Panama and Egypt's divergent decisions on whether to negotiate peacefully or not on behalf of their canals—a significant artificial structure—influenced levels of political violence within the two states. Panama chose to negotiate and experienced reduced levels of political violence, while Egypt acted unilaterally and did continued to experience political violence. Ultimately, I find that traditional indicators of political violence—ethnicity, colonial legacy, and non-artificial structures—do not sufficiently explain violence levels within a state. While their ASFs are not the only cause, political violence in states like Panama and Egypt cannot be fully understood without exploring how their canals influence state behavior. This research paves the way for future research that identifies the specific types of artificial structures that warrant particular attention and shape state behavior and political violence.

As global trade continues to sustain international markets, few pause to consider how the goods they want arrive at their destinations. Despite advancements in technology, “90 percent of everything still travels as it did almost 500 years ago: by ship.”¹ The importance of the shipping industry on the global economy should be obvious to those who study domestic and international relations, yet it often remains overlooked. One reason for this oversight could be that the stability of global shipping routes is often taken for granted. However, this stability is not guaranteed and often depends on state governments whose behavior and decisions can fluctuate. Within global shipping, an area of extreme importance is the influence of global maritime chokepoints. These chokepoints funnel much of the world shipping through a narrow stretch of water, and without their presence would cause a massive hindrance to the global economy. These chokepoints, some of which are formal canals, serve as the geographical shortcuts that make global trade possible. Two chokepoints of exceptional significance on the global economy, but subject to domestic instability, are the Suez and Panama Canals.

The Suez and Panama Canals serve as important influences on their hemisphere's economy. The Panama Canal sees roughly \$270 billion worth of cargo each year, from over 80 countries.² The Suez Canal reduces a 4,300-mile journey to a 120-mile trip from the continents of Europe to Asia and Africa.³ Together, these canals wield a strong influence over the operation and maintenance of the global economy. The suspension or closure of either canal would cause a major breakdown in shipping and slow the global economy. Despite the relative peace seen in both states today, there exists little guarantee that it will continue. What makes Panama and Egypt unique compared to other maritime chokepoints is that they alone control their respective canals. Those seeking to understand the risks to the global economy must consider the domestic stability of both states and the potential for a lapse of peace in protecting the canals.

1 Natasha Geiling, “How the Shipping Industry Is the Secret Force Driving the World Economy,” Smithsonian Institution, October 15, 2013.

2 “Panama Canal Expansion-Key to Global Trade,” ifc.org, June 2016.

3 “The Importance of the Worlds Canals to Global Trade,” Velta International, n.d.

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This paper explores how the presence of global maritime chokepoints influences political violence within Panama and Egypt. It begins by comparing theories on political violence. Next, an explanation of methodology solidifies how this research defines political violence and the plan to test both case studies. I then present the history of the canals for both Panama and Egypt and demonstrate through the case studies the importance of negotiation, and how the decision of whether to negotiate matters in understanding levels of political violence. Next, potential alternative explanations offer competing reasons for political violence observed. The final section discusses the implications of this study's findings, and the questions to be considered moving forward. The conclusion reemphasizes the importance of understanding how artificial structures impact both the domestic governments of Panama and Egypt.

Theories on Political Violence

Vittorio Bufacchi's research best frames how to think about political violence. His typology of violence includes violence as force and violence as violation. Violence as force describes acts usually causing physical injury.⁴ Violence as violation involves the infringement or transgression of rights.⁵ For this research, political violence is only considered as causing physical injury and death. There is also the question of scale. Per some quantitative metrics that differentiate between occurrences of political violence and larger-scale conflicts, political violence occurs when there is actual injury or death caused to an individual, but it does not exceed 1,000 battle deaths within a year.⁶ This metric distinguishes between political violence (less than 1,000 deaths) and civil war (more than 1,000 deaths). In seeking to explain why political violence occurs, three schools of thought emerge: ethnic fractionalization, variation in colonial legacies, and structural factors all serve as competing explanations for why political violence might happen within a state. Each of these schools outlines a specific logic underlying political violence.

Ethnicity

Seeking to shed light on the causes of political violence, some scholars argue that ethnic diversity within a state exacerbates political violence. They define ethnicity as a group's sense of having a similar national, racial, religious, or cultural origin. Donald Horowitz identifies this phenomenon and demonstrates that after gaining independence, tension existed within states regarding to access to power and control.⁷ States began to answer questions of control based on their ethnic makeup, which sparked violence within their territory. For Horowitz, "ethnic conflict strains the bonds that sustain civility and is often at the root of violence."⁸ In refining how ethnic identities interact with the state, Walker Connor outlined the idea of ethnonationalism and its comparison to traditional nationalism. He argues that there is no difference between ethnonationalism and nationalism.⁹ For him, nationalism refers to demonstrated loyalty toward the state.¹⁰ Both authors conclude that ethnic fractionalization within states contributes to political violence in some way.

Colonial Legacies

Differences in how colonial empires decided to rule impacted the inclusiveness of differing ethnic groups, either leading to conflict or peace.¹¹ Scholars find that differences in colonial rule did impact political violence after independence.¹² In similar research, Jack Paine tested how colonial rule altered the composition of ethnic groups

4 Vittorio Bufacchi, "Two Concepts of Violence," *Political Studies Review* 3 (2005): p. 195.

5 Ibid., p. 196.

6 "The Correlates of War Project," <https://correlatesofwar.org/>.

7 Donald Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press: 1985), p. 4.

8 Ibid., p. 12.

9 Walker Connor, *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press: 1994), p. xi.

10 Ibid., p. 41.

11 Julian Wucherpfennig, Philipp Hunziker, and Lars-Erik Cederman, "Who Inherits the State? Colonial Rule and Postcolonial Conflict," *American Journal of Political Science* 60:4 (2016): p. 882.

12 Ibid., p. 895.

within the territory.¹³ He explores how ethnic groups allowed to form precolonial states under indirect colonial rulers were more likely to experience violence later.¹⁴ While neither author denies the importance of ethnic groups, they argue that it does not completely explain political violence within a state.¹⁵ Ethnic fractionalization is almost constant, so it could not explain the variation in political violence. Instead, they found how the ruling practices of the state during their colonization influenced their levels of political violence.

Structural Factors

Structural factors, or the physical composition and characteristics of a state, can explain why political violence occurs in some places rather than others. The main argument for this comes from James Fearon and David Laitin, who explore the question of insurgency and civil war within a state. They argue that conditions favoring insurgency are more important than other factors like ethnicity and religious tensions.¹⁶ Structural factors such as terrain and geography explain the limits of state capacity, which influences the possibility of political violence by other actors. However, structural factors are not limited to terrain, as Fearon and Laitin argued. Sometimes, certain distinct geographic or infrastructural conditions are enough to explain the variation in political violence.

Negotiation

The literature on negotiations often focuses on intra-state conflict but emphasizes the importance of a state choosing to negotiate. Success in matters of state functioning “hinges on the quality and content of negotiated agreement.”¹⁷ For others, negotiations matter because they perpetuate the decision of peace rather than violence. Choosing to negotiate “promotes moderate and cooperative behavior among contending groups by fostering a positive-sum perception of political interaction.”¹⁸ Scholars agree that the most successful way to ensure peace is if “parties agree to create multifaceted power-sharing arrangements.”¹⁹ This literature holds relevance to the cases of Panama and Egypt for two reasons. First, it shows that states have agency to choose whether to negotiate. Second, it indicates that the choice to negotiate will lead to more peaceful conditions within that state.

Existing Gaps

While enough evidence exists to prove that ethnicity and colonial legacies help explain political violence, they miss certain factors innate to states, which might make them more susceptible to violence. Fearon and Laitin’s consideration of geography as a potential for increased political violence created a new way to understand why some states experience variation in this regard. However, their argument only examines existing and non-changing aspects of structure, like geography and terrain. This misses the possibility of artificial structures; physical conditions within a state that do not exist organically, and how they can influence political violence. While the mere presence of a canal does not explain the variation in political violence, the phenomenon cannot be understood in both Panama and Egypt without its consideration. The decisions made by each state regarding how to seize control of their artificial structure had enormous impacts on the political climate at the time and into today. The decision to seize with violence, as made by Egypt, versus the decision to negotiate, as made by Panama, placed each state on an ever-continuing path toward or away from political violence.

Methodology

To test the influence of artificial structures on political violence, I conduct a paired comparison between Panama

13 Jack Paine, “Ethnic Violence in Africa: Destructive Legacies of Pre-Colonial States,” *International Organization* 73:3 (2019): p. 646.

14 *Ibid.*, pp. 646-647.

15 James Fearon and David Laitin, “Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War,” *American Political Science Review* 97:1 (2003): p. 75.

16 *Ibid.*, p. 75.

17 Chester Crocker and Fen Osler Hampson, “Making Peace Settlements Work,” *Foreign Policy* 104 (1996): p. 55.

18 Caroline Hartzell and Matthew Hoddie, “Institutionalizing Peace: Power Sharing and Post-Civil War Conflict Management,” *American Journal of Political Science* 47:2 (2003): p. 318.

19 *Ibid.*, p. 330.

and Egypt. The overarching hypothesis is: if a state does not negotiate peacefully to regain control of their artificial structural factor, then they are more likely to experience political violence. The independent variable (IV) is the state's decision to either engage peacefully in gaining control of their canal or not. The dependent variable (DV) is how much political violence they have experienced since gaining control of their canal. The precursor for both cases is the presence of their canal. From there, how they chose to interact with it influences levels of political violence. There is also an assessment of alternative explanations for political violence through ethnic division and strategic location.

Both states have canals, but what differs is how they acquired them. Each state's agency in choosing how they opted to control their artificial structure—the independent variable—placed them on a path either toward peace or toward violence. What makes Panama and Egypt different from other global maritime chokepoints is their agency over the canals within their state. Other chokepoints such as the Strait of Hormuz or Malaccan Straits are considered international waters where specific states have no agency.²⁰ Egypt and Panama have the unique opportunity to exercise their agency over both the seizure and maintenance of their canals. This decision has the potential to influence subsequent political violence like other factors present in both Panama and Egypt.

To measure political violence as the dependent variable, this research uses the number of battle deaths provided by the Uppsala Conflict Data Program.²¹ UCDP defines a direct death as “a death relating to either combat between warring parties or violence used against civilians.”²² Any death will be considered political violence, but anything over 1,000 battle deaths in a 12-month period is categorized as civil war, beyond political violence. Additionally, the timespan exhausts the available data provided by UCDP, stretching from 1989-2018.²³ The goal of observing data this broadly is that it helps establish trends of political violence over time. There is mention of political violence experienced in both states from before 1989 (protests and coup in Panama, Suez Crisis in Egypt), but those are individual instances and receive individual attention. This research does not measure political violence as anything less than a death, as there is limited access to that data.

Other Variables

While many differences exist between Panama and Egypt, only certain factors compete with artificial structures in contributing to political violence. Both colonial legacies and ethnicity need to be addressed, as they can contribute to current political violence. For colonial legacies, Egypt was ruled predominantly by the British Empire. There was some French involvement, but it was focused on building the Suez Canal.²⁴ Panama came under the influence and control of the United States, who not only built the canal, but helped form the state structure.²⁵ The difference in colonial legacies matters but is not as salient as the respective state's agency to choose how they took control of their canal. What is more helpful is to consider how the colonial holder influenced Egypt or Panama in their decisions to seize the canal but is not considered in this research.

Comparing Panama and Egypt

Understanding how artificial structural factors influenced political violence in both Panama and Egypt, requires a thorough historical analysis of each case. For each state, there will be a brief explanation of the conditions surrounding the construction of their canal. Next is an exploration of the tensions surrounding each one as they began to resist their colonial powers. Finally, the specific steps each state took in gaining control of their canal serves as the stepping-stone from which political violence can be explained. Combined, these aspects draw out the story

20 Ellen Wald, “3 Reasons Iran Can't Put A Toll On The Strait Of Hormuz,” *Forbes*, July 8, 2019; Felipe Umana, “Threats in the Straits of Malacca,” *Fund for Peace*, August 23, 2012.

21 “Uppsala Conflict Data Program,” UCDP, <https://ucdp.uu.se/exploratory>.

22 “Uppsala Conflict Data Program Codebook,” UCDP Codebook Version 5.0 2016, p. 10.

23 *Ibid.*

24 Halford Hoskins, “The Suez Canal as an International Waterway,” *American Journal of International Law* 37:3 (1943): p. 373.

25 Norman Padelford, “The Panama Canal and the Suez Crisis,” *Proceedings of the American Society of International Law and Its Annual Meeting* 51 (1957): p. 12.

of why each state chose to negotiate and helps explain the implications of this moving forward.

Panama

From the discovery of the territory now constituting Panama, colonial powers dreamed of purposing the natural isthmus in service of international trade. The first attempt at canal construction was by the French engineer whose most recent success was completing the Suez Canal. Between 1881-1889, the French government spent \$287 million and saw the deaths of over 20,000 men without completing the canal.²⁶ After this catastrophe, the next power confident enough to take on the task was the United States. With the signing of the Hay-Bunau-Varilla Treaty in 1903, the United States now had exclusive rights to build and control the canal zone.²⁷ With the completion of the canal in 1914, the United States secured its place in the world as a colonial power, with unquestioned dominion over a global maritime chokepoint.²⁸ However, the gratitude of Panamanians happy for their own state and new global relevance faded quickly, as the realization struck that they were now under the control of a foreign power.

Tensions between the United States and Panama did not truly arise until after WWII, when Panama began to see former colonial holdings of Europe gain independence. Many within the country “opposed U.S. control of the Panama Canal and Canal Zone and demanded Panamanian authority.”²⁹ Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, riots broke out in opposition to the United States’ control of the canal.³⁰ One riot in 1964 saw the deaths of 23 Panamanians and three Americans.³¹ A coup in 1968 led by General Omar Torrijos Herrera did not see the canal turned over to Panamanian hands, but increased the need for a response from the U.S. government.³² Torrijos clearly stated his stance on U.S. control of the canal, once saying “what nation of the world can withstand the humiliation of a foreign flag piercing its own heart?”³³ Despite his staunch opposition to foreign control of the canal, Torrijos still chose to engage in a peaceful negotiation process with the United States.

With the election of President Jimmy Carter, the United States and Panama began to engage in negotiations for control of the canal. The signing of the Panama Canal Treaty in 1977 saw a shift in control of the canal.³⁴ This treaty was the result of negotiations between Panama’s military leader and Carter, but still resulted in changing control of the canal. The specifics of the treaty saw that the United States remained in the country until 1999, but officially relinquished control upon signature of the treaties.³⁵ A gradual transfer of operations from the United States to Panama lasted until 1999, but aside from the invasion in 1989, remained relatively peaceful.³⁶ Despite the military intervention in 1989, Panama has remained a peaceful state. Since 1990, they have had five elections and see low levels of political violence.³⁷ There is no doubt that the Panamanian government exercised their agency and resisted the urge to use violence in achieving their goals. While Panama stands out as an example of choosing the path of peacefulness, the same cannot be said of Egypt.

26 “French Panama Canal Failure (1881-1889),” University of Kansas Medical Center, March 5, 2020.

27 “Convention for the Construction of a Ship Canal (Hay-Bunau-Varilla Treaty), November 18, 1903,” Avalon Project, 2008.

28 Orlando Perez, “Panama: Political Culture and the Struggle to Build Democracy,” in Harvey F. Kline and Christine J. Wade eds., *Latin American Politics and Development: Ninth Edition* (New York: Routledge, 2018): p. 435.

29 Jennifer Detmer, “The Republic of Panama: Past, Present, and Future Regarding the Panama Canal,” *Ethics of Development in a Global Environment*, Stanford, August 23, 1999.

30 Ibid.

31 James Lindsay, “TWE Remembers: The Fight over the Panama Canal Treaties,” Council on Foreign Relations, March 16, 2011.

32 Perez, p. 436.

33 Robert Groggin, *Natural Enemies: The United States and the Soviet Union in the Cold War, 1917-1991* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2001): p. 297.

34 “Panama Canal Treaty of 1977,” U.S. Department of State, n.d.

35 Detmer.

36 Perez, p. 438.

37 Ibid.

Egypt

Due to Egypt's natural location and potential for the construction of a canal, it was of global interest to see this vision to fruition. Building a canal would connect the Mediterranean Sea and Indian Ocean and become "the natural gateway between East and West."³⁸ The French were ambitious enough to take on this task and began construction in 1859.³⁹ After completion of construction, the canal opened for operation on November 17, 1869.⁴⁰ The question of who owned the canal began immediately and was mostly between the French, who built the canal, and the British, who maintained influence over Egypt. In September 1877, Britain formalized its control over Egypt with an agreement that "envisaged Great Britain as the protector of Egyptian territorial interests."⁴¹ Despite this, tensions still ran high over who truly controlled the canal. It was not until 11 years later that more formal declarations of control came to exist.

In 1888, a formal treaty signed by several global powers at the time gave the Suez Canal a formal international status.⁴² The treaty stated that "The Canal was declared to be open to all vessels, whether merchant or war ships, in time of war as in time of peace."⁴³ However, the international status of the Suez Canal did not last for long. In 1914, Britain formally declared Egypt as a protectorate.⁴⁴ The outbreak of World War I caused the treaty of 1888 to fall apart; the canal was now "essentially a British waterway and an Allied line of communications, the Canal Convention was given rather more than lip service."⁴⁵ With the end of WWI, Britain relinquished control of Egypt as a protectorate in 1922.⁴⁶ This by no means meant Britain gave up control of the canal. Instead, the declaration made clear that despite Egyptian independence, "pending the conclusion of agreements on such reserved points, the status quo was to remain intact."⁴⁷ The relationship between Britain and Egypt continued to deteriorate until the Egyptian government hit a breaking point in the 1950s.

In 1952, a coup ousted the leaders of the previous regime and Gamal Abdel Nasser came to power.⁴⁸ The subsequent changes to Egyptian politics led to increased tensions with the British over who controlled the canal. At the time, the Suez was still under the protection of Britain and was technically still international waters. As Egypt began to have conflicts with other regional powers, such as Israel, their need for capital grew.⁴⁹ Taking control of the canal became a viable solution in the minds of the Egyptian government. It saw that "taking control of the canal would provide Egypt with a substantial income, \$91 million gross and \$32 million net in 1955 and, at the same time, it would remove 'the last vestige of Egypt's subordination to the West.'"⁵⁰ In July 1956, Nasser and his government considered posing Britain and the West with an ultimatum for loans Egypt badly needed, but this would not be his ultimate decision.⁵¹ Instead, on July 26, 1956, Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal. During his proclamation of nationalization, he "broadcast a passionate speech denouncing the West and asserting his government's right to the canal."⁵² This decision sparked the "Suez Crisis," where Western powers (United States, Britain, and France) decided

38 Hugh Schonfield, *The Suez Canal in Peace and War: 1869-1969* (Coral Gables, FL: University of Miami Press: 1969), p. 1.

39 "Canal History," Suez Canal Authority.

40 Hoskins, p. 373.

41 Ibid., p. 375.

42 Ibid., p. 376.

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid., p. 379.

45 Ibid.

46 Ibid., p. 380.

47 Ibid., p. 380.

48 Fouad Ajami, "The Sorrows of Egypt," *Foreign Affairs* 74:5 (1995): p. 72.

49 Michael Shupe et al., "Nationalization of the Suez Canal: A Hypergame Analysis," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 24:3 (1980): p. 480.

50 Ibid., p. 481.

51 Ibid., p. 482.

52 Ibid., p. 482.

whether or not to use force and regain control of the canal.⁵³ During the crisis, casualties did occur, but they are not classified as being caused by political violence, as they were inflicted by foreign powers and not the Egyptian government. After Nasser's decision, the Suez remained under Egypt's control, causing a growing concern by the West for the canal's security and ability to remain open.

Today, the Suez and Panama Canals serve as major chokepoints for global commerce. Both are also under the complete control of their respective state for operation and security. The control of each canal by its state means that significant portions of the global economy are subject to the stability of each state. With such vital interests at stake, it is important to understand how the decision made by each state regarding the control of its canal set it on a path toward or away from stability.

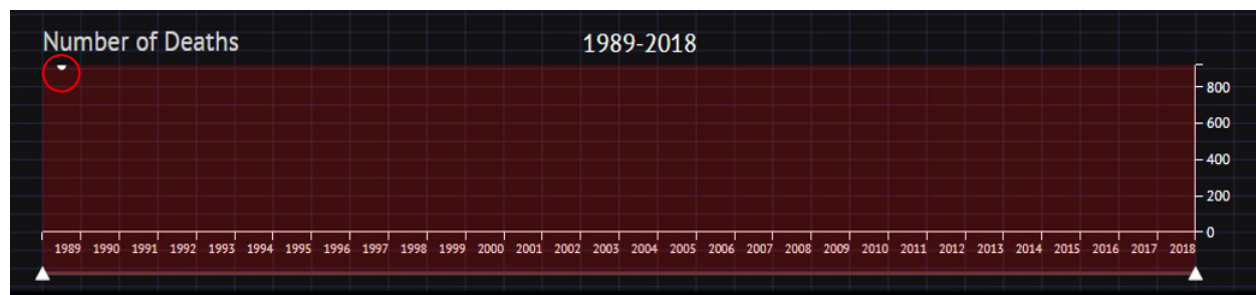
Analysis

The case studies portrayed above provide a brief narrative on how Panama and Egypt came to make their pivotal decisions. Despite mild protests and outcries from the community, Panama chose to negotiate with the United States for peaceful control of their canal. However, the same narrative did not play out in Egypt. While the seizure of the Suez Canal did not involve direct violence, the Egyptian government acted unilaterally and refused to negotiate with other countries involved. To understand how each state's decision influenced the levels of political violence seen today and in recent history, two things need exploration. First, there must be a brief description of each state as is today and how much political violence they have experienced in recent history. Next, there will be an explanation of why each state's decision mattered for further political violence. Together, the states' decision in how to act regarding their canal is of massive importance to the international community, as a preponderance of shipping rests on the stability of both Panama and Egypt.

The Modern Setting and Political Violence

To begin on a positive note, the current setting in Panama reflects that of a flourishing and peaceful modern state. Panamanians enjoy a score of 84/100 by Freedom House, making them a "Free" state as a liberal democracy.⁵⁴ Despite some issues with corruption and jury biases, Panama experiences no political violence resulting in deaths.⁵⁵ There were some violent protests in the decades leading up to negotiation and a coup in 1968, but none of these had casualties. For the coup in 1968, the fighting took place in upper-level leadership and did not cause any notable violence in the population.⁵⁶ According to the Uppsala Conflict Data Program, Panama has experienced only one flare-up of political violence, in 1989, totaling 920 deaths. (See Figure 1.)⁵⁷ The cause of political violence then was a coup attempt against Manuel Noriega, which was ultimately unsuccessful. The only other conflict of note was the U.S. invasion in 1989, which ousted Noriega as the leader of Panama. Since 1990, Panama has experienced no reported political violence, making it an exceptionally stable state in the eyes of the international community.

Figure 1: Number of Deaths in Panama from 1989-2018



53 "The Suez Crisis, 1956," U.S. Department of State, n.d.

54 "Panama," Freedom House, June 22, 2018.

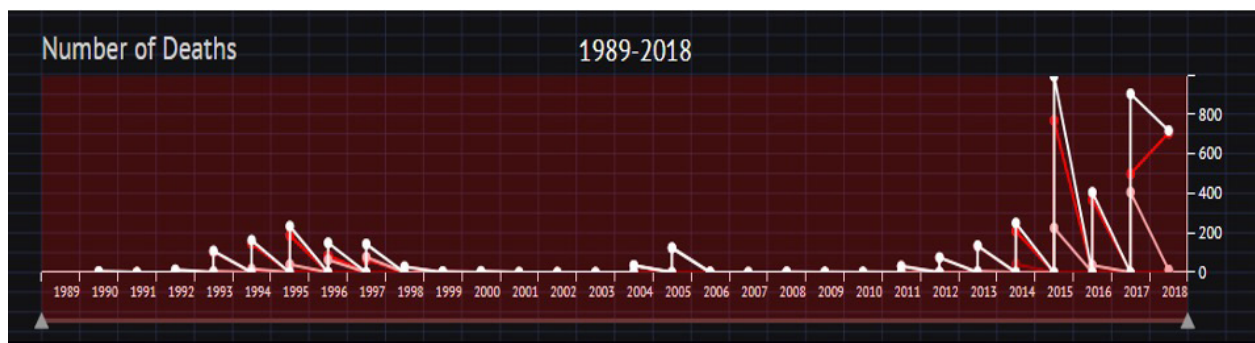
55 Giovanna Ferullo, "Panama's Judicial System Shows Signs of Incapacity in Anti-corruption Fight," Panama Today, October 28, 2017.

56 Sandra W. Meditz and Dennis M. Hanratty, "Panama: A Country Study," Library of Congress, 1987, p. 43.

57 "Uppsala Conflict Data Program: Panama," UCDP, <https://ucdp.uu.se/country/95>.

While Panama serves as an example of a peaceful state, the same cannot be said for Egypt. It currently has a 22/100 score from Freedom House, making it a “Not Free” country based on measures of political rights and civil liberties.⁵⁸ Under the specific question of “Is there protection from the illegitimate use of physical force and freedom from war and insurgencies?” Egypt scored a 0/4.⁵⁹ The lack of freedom is reflected in the persistence of political violence across its history. Since 1989, Egypt has seen 4,518 deaths as a result of either state or non-state violence. (See Figure 2.)⁶⁰ There has been a recent uptick in violence since the beginning of the Arab Spring in 2011, which sought to oust the government leadership at the time. In 2015 alone, Egypt experienced more deaths, 991, than Panama has seen in Uppsala’s recorded history. There exists in Egypt a clear and persistent trend of political violence. This should give the international community cause for extreme concern, as the domestic instability of the Egyptian state affects the functioning of the global economy.

Figure 2: Number of Deaths in Egypt from 1989-2018



Negotiation as a Critical Juncture

Beginning with Panama, its decision to negotiate peacefully with the United States set it on a path toward reduced levels of political violence. In the build-up to the negotiations with President Carter, Panama witnessed some protests, which included violent behavior.⁶¹ Moreover, they witnessed a military coup in 1968, further signs of possible instability.⁶² Both of these factors indicate that the Panamanian government might not negotiate over control of the canal. However, its decision to engage in negotiations with the United States set it on a path of continued peace. It had several precursors for political violence, but the state still exercised agency in deciding to engage peacefully. Of more importance is its decision to act in such a manner on a structure of extreme importance to it. While some scholars look toward ethnicity or colonial powers to explain political violence, the canal maintains such a strong economic influence over the Panamanian government that it should be considered with equal weight. The decisions made by the Panamanian government to negotiate over a structure of significant economic importance to it set it on a path of continued peace and overall reduced the potential for political violence.

As important as the Panama Canal is to Panama, the Suez Canal holds similar significance to Egypt. The decisions both make regarding their canal should be considered indicative of their overall tendencies in how they choose to govern. In Egypt’s case, the decision was not violent, but it was completely lacking in willingness to negotiate. Egypt’s decision to nationalize the canal without negotiating set it on a path toward an unwillingness to negotiate. This unwillingness to negotiate, even with the agency to do so, sets states on a path toward taking a similar stance in other areas of their regime, including the decision to engage in political violence. The Suez Canal was scheduled to fall under Egyptian control in 1968, indicating that the conditions were set for the government to respect the

58 “Egypt,” Freedom House, March 15, 2019.

59 Ibid.

60 “Uppsala Conflict Data Program: Egypt,” UCDP, <https://ucdp.uu.se/country/651>.

61 Lindsay.

62 Perez, p. 436.

decision of a previous negotiation.⁶³ Despite this, Nasser unilaterally decided to nationalize the canal in 1956, 12 years earlier than the negotiated date. This decision demonstrated a general unwillingness to engage in peaceful and productive negotiations. It also set Egypt on a path of continued conflict and increased political violence.

The significance of the canals on both Panama and Egypt cannot be overstated. While many notice decisions about how governments negotiate regarding ethnicity or other fractions in society, decisions regarding their canals are just as powerful, as each one holds enormous economic sway within the state. Examining how each state treated decisions regarding a major economic structure helps explain the modern trends of political violence experienced within both societies.

Alternate Explanations

The most obvious difference between Panama and Egypt is their location in the world. While Panama enjoys few military powers nearby (save the United States), Egypt is relatively close to several of the world's major military powers (Britain, France, Israel, etc.). This difference in strategic location—their proximity to military powers—could be a cause for political violence. Both states received (or took) control of their canal during the Cold War. Panama enjoyed a safe buffer between the major military powers of the day, while Egypt was under constant watch by both sides of the conflict. Under this consideration, it is very likely that the Egyptian government felt pressure to take any action necessary to keep the Suez operational. This pressure, or the lack thereof, has the potential to influence political violence in both states.

Regarding ethnicity, Panama and Egypt are strikingly similar. Both states have dominant majorities who identify as one ethnicity. Egypt has 99% of its population identifying as an Egyptian.⁶⁴ Panama has a predominately self-identified mestizo and mulatto breakdown, constituting 81% of its population.⁶⁵ A challenge to the use of only ethnicity as a control could be that religion is the true cause of political violence, but even in this regard, Panama and Egypt remain similar. Egypt has 90% of their population identifying as Muslim. Within this, there is a majority Sunni composition.⁶⁶ In Panama, 85% identify as Roman Catholic, while only 15% identify as Protestant.⁶⁷ The similar breakdown in ethnicity and religion in Panama and Egypt demonstrates that while these factors may explain some political violence, it does not hold weight in this situation. An additional argument is that these religions have different histories and tendencies toward or away from violence. While there are different characteristics of their separate ethnicities and religions, the main aspect of control is not the nature of each religion, but that different rates of political violence exist with similar levels of fractionalization.

Implications and Future Research

The case studies of Panama and Egypt highlight an important factor in understanding the puzzle of why political violence occurs within a state. While they may be unique in having canals, there are still broader implications to be considered. First, states maintain agency over the decision to negotiate and their responses should be noted when considering political violence. Second, these case studies highlight the importance of taking into consideration critical artificial structures and their relationship to political violence. This is especially important where such structures play an important role in the domestic economy of each state. This is clearly not the only factor influencing political violence, but in states where an artificial structure dominates so much of the economy, it must be considered. These two implications leave us with certain questions moving forward. A key question is what other artificial structures may be of similar importance for states. While the canals influence the Panamanian and Egyptian economies, there is a need to explore how different artificial structures could exert a similar influence on political violence.

The first implication is that states do have agency in their decisions. More than that, their decision whether to

63 Shupe et al., p. 481.

64 "The World Factbook: Egypt," Central Intelligence Agency, February 1, 2018.

65 "The World Factbook: Panama," Central Intelligence Agency.

66 "The World Factbook: Egypt," Central Intelligence Agency.

67 "The World Factbook: Panama."

negotiate over something of massive importance indicates a disposition toward or away from violence. This is not to say that every decision a state makes can be aggregated toward political violence, but certain ones hold that potential. A willingness to negotiate on decisions regarding civil wars or internal conflict can predispose a state toward political violence. However, this logic should be extended to decisions made regarding structures of extreme economic importance. The decisions made by both Panamanian and Egyptian leaders set them on a path toward or away from political violence. The reason these decisions matter so much is that the canals hold such a large place within the state. Therefore, how they treat negotiations regarding artificial structures of extreme economic importance can indicate how they will treat other decisions moving forward.

While Fearon and Laitin first introduced the idea that structural factors could indicate levels of political violence, they only spoke of natural dispositions.⁶⁸ Like the presence of mountainous terrain in their study, artificial structures have a relationship with political violence. In both Panama and Egypt, their canals are so integral to their state and economy, it must be considered when trying to understand any behavior. In Egypt specifically, the Suez Canal represents about 30-35% of its overall economy.⁶⁹ Something of that much importance to the economy of a state demands consequential decisions by the government. The artificial structure of a canal is limited to a certain number of states, but it points toward a larger trend. It is not so much that the canal *causes* political violence. But in states such as Panama and Egypt, political violence cannot hope to be understood without considering their influence.

As these cases build on the arguments of Fearon and Laitin, there are some questions moving past this research. First, while the artificial structure of a canal in Egypt and Panama is of obvious importance, how should research moving forward identify what is a relevant factor? The canals maintain unquestioned significance over the economics of both Egypt and Panama, but what other artificial structures could pose the same relevance? The second question comes in how much weight these artificial structures should hold. While Fearon and Laitin identified the presence of structural factors to be a predictor of political violence, how much weight do artificial factors hold? The answer to the second question will likely come with an answer to the first one. Once scholarship can determine what a relevant artificial structure looks like, identifying how much significance it holds in determining state violence will become easier.

Conclusion

The importance of maritime chokepoints on the global economy cannot be overstated. Just the disruption of one could “easily throw the global food supply and the energy market into disarray ... and put millions of people at risk.”⁷⁰ In a recent report, both the Panama and Suez Canals were listed as critical to the global energy market.⁷¹ As both the Panama and Suez Canals hold such importance to the global economy, an understanding of their states’ domestic politics is critical for continued economic security. Moreover, understanding the relationship between these structures and state behavior helps explain why some experience political violence and others do not.

Within each state, the canals play a consequential role in state decisions. Studying states’ decisions about whether to negotiate in taking control of their respective canal helps explain political violence witnessed thereafter. These artificial structures play such a large role in the economy and security of their states, they must be observed as having an impact on state behavior. In the case of Panama, its decision to negotiate peacefully put it on a path toward reduced levels of political violence and stability within its state. Egypt did not fare as well. Nasser’s decision to unilaterally seize the canal without negotiating with Britain set Egypt on a path toward increased levels of political violence. These canals have a strong influence on the global economy, but an even stronger influence on the actions of the state.

The Suez and Panama Canals pose an interesting puzzle to the world. They are both extremely important to

68 Fearon and Laitin.

69 Shasi Bushra and Ehab Farouk, “Egypt Sees Suez Canal Zone Making up 30-35 Pct of Economy—Minister,” Reuters, March 5, 2015.

70 “Maritime Chokepoints: The Backbone of International Trade,” Ship Technology, October 3, 2017.

71 Leija Villar and Mason Hamilton, “Maritime Chokepoints Are Critical to Global Energy Security,” U.S. Energy Information Administration, August 1, 2017.

the functioning of the global economy but are even more important to the stability of their respective states. Additionally, the fact that both canals are under the exclusive control of their governments should make the international community extremely aware of the domestic conditions within each state. As noted earlier, should even one of these canals shut down due to instability, the fallout would be felt around the world. Because of this, understanding how the canals contribute to or detract from political violence is of extreme importance. In both cases, the decision over how to seize control of its respective canal set each state on a certain path and shaped subsequent levels of political violence.



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