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- Authors should prepare an abstract of their work of no more than 250 words.

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Dear Reader,

It is with great pride that I present the fourth digitally published edition of the Towson Journal of International Affairs. The Towson Journal of International Affairs (TJIA) was founded in 1967 as the world’s first academic journal to publish undergraduate research in the field of international relations. While the TJIA publishes mostly undergraduate research, we also feature articles by graduate students, faculty, and scholars from around the country.

This issue begins with an article by Dana Tandilashvili, which examines Russia’s annexation of Crimea through the lens of realism and constructivism. The author argues that although the citizens living in Crimea share a similar identity with Russia, it is actually realist theory that best explains Russia’s actions in Ukraine. In the following article, Paul Kearney discusses the effectiveness of the Counter Terrorism Committee (CTC) in combatting terrorism. The author concludes that because United Nations Security Council Members wield the most power, the CTC is ineffective because Security Council members will often place their political interests ahead of the goal of fighting terrorism. The concluding two articles provide a better understanding of the rise of ISIS and ways in which their rise can be stopped. Will Pegram contends that three factors prevent the United States from successfully stopping ISIS: the lack of multilateral support for intervention, a polarized Congress, and war weariness following the Iraq War. Finally, a research note by Wes Cooper provides an outline of the rise of ISIS. The author notes that the rise of ISIS can be attributed to disenfranchisement and political instability in Iraq and Syria. This issue provides provoking and insightful information that examines international issues from different and lesser understood angles.

Sincerely,

Charles Lyons
Editor-in-Chief
Classical Realist and Norm-Based Constructivist Analysis of Russia’s Invasion of Ukraine and Annexation of Crimea
Dana Tandilashvili
1-14

Assessment of the Counter-Terrorism Committee: Analysis of the effectiveness of the CTC and the International Regime on Terrorism
Paul Kearny
15-33

The U.S.’s Reliance On Local Forces: The Key In Defeating the Islamic State
Will Pegram
34-46

The Unanticipated Threat of ISIS: Rise, Growth, and Stability
Wes Cooper
47-54
Classical Realist and Norm-Based Constructivist Analysis of Russia’s Invasion of Ukraine and Annexation of Crimea

Dana Tandilashvili

Abstract: Classical realism, the dominant theoretical tradition through the Cold War, emphasizes the struggle for power among all nations. The realist approach states that Russia invaded Ukraine and annexed Crimea for Russia's own self-interest in gaining more power. In response, many countries view Russia as not trying to work with other nations and wanting to gain power for themselves at all costs. In contrast, norm-based constructivism holds that shared ideas, expectations, and beliefs about appropriate behavior are what give the world structure and stability and that the actions that nations take in the international community, are in response to the situation that they are in. The constructivist thought is that Russia’s occupation of Crimea is seen by many other nations as illegal and in violation of international norms and rules but, nonetheless, it is in response to Russia’s shared interest and identity with Crimea and the Russian people living there. Researching the phenomenon through these two viewpoints has shown that the theory of classical realism provides an accurate explanation of the reasons behind Russia’s decision to invade Ukraine and annex Crimea; the theory of classical realism also explains the international response Russia faced due to their actions in the region.

Introduction

Russia’s annexation of Crimea and invasion of eastern Ukraine dominated the news in 2014 and incited divisive debates across nations regarding the annexation. Through the theoretical approaches of classical realism and norm-based constructivism, Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and annexation of Crimea and the corresponding reaction from the international community can be explored and analyzed. Classical realism and norm-based constructivism do not agree with the reasons behind Russia’s presence in the surrounding nations. While norm-based constructivism focuses on social relations that arise among nations based on common norms, classical realism holds that all nations are self-interested and put themselves above any shared interests with other nations. As both theories give reasons for Russia’s actions and insight into the reactions of surrounding nations, the classical realist approach that Russia is working in its own self-interest in order to gain influence over the region fits well with Russia’s actions in surrounding nations.

Realism

Throughout Russia’s history, there have been many examples of Russia acting according to the characteristics of realist thought. Realism holds that the international system is constructed as a set of independent, autonomous actors with competing interests that interact in an anarchy.
The realist syllogism is that interest equals survival and survival is assured when an actor has relative power over other states. Therefore, the interest of all actors is to have relative power. Realism sees the international community as a self-help system, in which each actor can only rely on themselves and their own power to ensure their survival. In the realist theory, classical realism and neorealism differ in their reasoning behind why actors seek power. Classical realism holds that the desire for power is human nature, while neorealism states that the international system is anarchic and therefore, forces actors to seek power. Classical realists such as Hans Morgenthau, Richard Lebow, and Reinhold Niebuhr view states as akin to all human beings, in that states all have an innate desire to dominate others, which many times leads them to fight wars with one another. Neorealists such as Kenneth Waltz believe that the ultimate end goal of nations is survival and that the structure of the international system forces states to pursue power since they have no other choice if they want to survive. In contrast, classical realists hold that having power over an opponent is an end in itself.

**Morgenthau’s Realism**

In a “Realist Theory of International Relations,” Hans Morgenthau writes that the realist view of international relations is that power and survival come above morality and all other interests. He states that political realism is aware of the moral significance of political action, but, nonetheless, there is tension between morality and the requirements of successful political action. Realism holds that, although morality is important to a degree, morality does not come first when making decisions. National security is the most essential factor for decision-making and Morgenthau argues that it is the political morality of states to seek national security. His main point is that interest is defined in terms of power, a key point in classical realist theory. Human nature has not changed since the classical philosophies of China, India, and Greece. Therefore, as seeking power was the main interest for actors back then, it is the same today because it is human nature to seek power and aim to dominate others.

**Classical Realism**

Classical realists such as Richard Lebow see classical realism as a contemporary theory in international relations. In “Classical Realism” in International Relations Theory: Discipline and Diversity, Lebow states that classical realism is concerned with questions of order, justice, and change at the domestic, regional, and international levels. It stresses the similarities, instead of the differences, between domestic and international politics and emphasizes the importance of ethics and community in promoting stability. This approach recognizes that communal bonds are fragile and easily undermined by the pursuit of advantage and power by individuals and states. Thus, although nations may be considered friends, each nation thinks and acts in terms of their

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own interest. The international arena remains a self-help system where states look for opportunities to take advantage of others and survival depends on a state’s material capabilities.

Critics of the Realist View

In “The Realist Critique and the Limits of Realism,” Edward Hallett Carr writes that politics are made up of two elements, utopia and reality, which are separate and mutually exclusive. There is no greater barrier to clear political thinking than failure to distinguish between ideals, which are utopia, and institutions, which are reality. For Carr, ideas, purpose and interest form a group that is held together by reason that acts as the focus of the actions that states take. Carr states that the problem with Realism is that it excludes four things, which are essential ingredients of all effective political thinking: a finite goal, an emotional appeal, a right of moral judgement and a ground for action. Realism can offer nothing but a struggle for power which makes any kind of international society impossible. With classical realism, there is no room for emotional appeal because it is an innate desire to seek power and the most important thing is to survive. The only way to do so is to gain power - thus, not taking into consideration emotional appeal and moral judgement in relation to the actions taken towards another country.

Constructivism

Whereas realism focuses on states using material factors such as power in order to get ahead, constructivist approaches emphasize the impact of ideas in international relations. Constructivism emerged in the 1980s with an interest in the relationship between immaterial ideas and the physical world, stating that normative structures shape identity, which agents then base their interests and actions on. Constructivists focus on sociality, emphasizing the social dimensions of international relations: norms, rules, and language. In contrast to realist thinking, constructivists argue that actors do not all have one goal in mind- seeking power and doing anything to achieve it. Instead, they make choices that bring historically, culturally, and politically distinct realities into being. Therefore, international relations is a social construction, one that does not exist independently of human meaning or action. Additionally, whether the system of international relations is cooperative is a function of the historical identities of the actors involved in international relations.

Although the theory of constructivism emphasizes how ideas and identities are created and how these ideas and identities shape the way states understand and respond to the certain situation(s) in which they exist, the three types of constructivist theories differ in the methods that they use. Rule-based constructivism is based on the linguistics and definitions of rules and how these rules develop systems that guide and constrain the actions of agents. Therefore, we see

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6 Ibid.
constructivism at play when we research why certain people broke rules or followed them and what that means for the international community. Social Constructivism shows the effects of social variables on the formation of agents and structures in an attempt to explain and predict future international behavior. Norm-based constructivism traces the development of international norms and shows how social systems and structure are norm-based systems that account for the constitution and behavior of agents. Moreover, the ontology of norm-based constructivism is that social relations are embedded in social norms and norms are created when a sufficient number of agents accept and adhere to the norm, or rule of behavior.

Analysis of Norm-Based Constructivism

In “International Norm Dynamics and Political Change,” Margaret Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink define norms as a standard of appropriate behavior for actors with a given identity. The two different types of categories of norms are regulative norms, which order and constrain behavior, and constitutive norms, which create new actors, interests, or categories of action. Finnemore and Sikkink propose that rules become norms when a large number of agents accept and adhere to them. Norms are important in the international arena because they regularize behavior and often limit the range of choices that actors can take. Shared ideas, expectations, and beliefs about appropriate behavior are what give the world structure and order.

Finnemore and Sikkink introduce the Norm Life Cycle, which explains that norm influence can be understood in a three step process: norm emergence, norm cascade- broad norm acceptance, and internalization. Norm emergence is persuasion by the norm entrepreneurs to attempt to convince as many states as possible to embrace the certain new norm that has been developed. The second stage is when norm leaders attempt to socialize other states to become norm followers, allowing the norm to spread through the rest of the population. Lastly, norm internalizing occurs and the norm becomes widely accepted and internalized by actors. After this cycle, the norm will take on its function of regularizing behavior of actors and therefore bringing stability and order.

In the chapter “Constructivism”, K.M. Fierke writes that to construct something is to bring into being an object that would not exist otherwise. This is seen in international relations with alliances and international institutions that take specific cultural, historical, and political forms that are a product of human interaction. Unlike traditional theories of international relations, such as realism, constructivism focuses on the change at the international level, instead of the sameness of states. Furthermore, Fierke writes that the constructivist approach focuses on exploring how identities, actions, and human suffering are constructed through interactions among nations. Thus, the questions that arise are how actors engage with one another, how they define themselves and others, and how this shapes the boundaries of the world within which they act. While a realist would highlight the competitive nature of states because of the system of anarchy, a constructivist would emphasize on how, in a particular context, actors came to define their relationship in negative terms and they would see more potential for transforming the relationship into a better one.

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10 Ibid, 900.
Critics of the Constructivist View

Although agreeing that anarchy exists, Alexander Wendt, a proponent of social constructivism, believes that the social structure of anarchy does not necessarily affect the relationship between friends and foes. In contrast, John Mearsheimer, an offensive realist asserts that in anarchy, states can never be certain that others will not attack them, whether or not they are friends, because every state is self-interested. He claims that alliances are fleeting and never dependable in a self-help system and that the system of anarchy does not allow for regularized behavior. While Constructivists state that international institutions have made great progress in parts of the world, Mearsheimer argues that international institutions have not significantly impacted politics around the world because they are used by states simply to promote their own interests, specifically of security, and institutions are created to push the agenda of the powerful states. In addition, norm-based constructivism does not directly address the agent structure problem because it assumes that the agent comes first. The structure of a social system is created by the norms that are formed when a critical mass of agents accept and adhere to the norm. Thus, the agent does not create the structure, the norms create it when they are adhered to by a large number of agents. Russia’s Intervention in Crimea and Ukraine

The theories of classical realism and norm-based constructivism have different characteristics that provide explanations of international phenomena. The conflict that these theories can both be analyzed to explain is Russia’s intervention in Crimea and Ukraine. Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in 2014 was brought on because of a disagreement between the two countries over Crimea. Located south of the Kherson region in Ukraine and west of the Russian region of Kuba, Crimea is a peninsula on the northern coast of the Black Sea. A history of the area shows that Crimea has had relations with Russia for centuries. After the Russian Revolution in 1917, Crimea became a republic within the USSR. In 1954, it was transferred to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and became an autonomous republic within the newly independent Ukraine in 1991. The right to control Crimea has been one of the factors adding to the ongoing tension between Russia and Ukraine. After Russia’s annexation of Crimea, the tension grew into a full-scale conflict between the two States, leading to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

The Conflict on Ukrainian Soil

In late 2013, Ukrainian President Yanukovich declined to sign a trade and cooperation agreement with the European Union. This decision resulted in massive and violent demonstrations in Kiev and other parts of Ukraine. As a result, in February of 2014, President Viktor Yanukovich was removed from office and an interim government was put in place, which was not recognized by Russia. Shortly after, troops started appearing in Crimea and seized control over key military and governmental buildings as well as other strategic facilities. A classical realist would use this example of Russia’s actions towards Ukraine as Russia taking the

opportunity to intervene and push through with its influence, seeing the instability in Ukraine.

In March 2014, the Crimean status referendum asked the people of Crimea whether they wanted to join Russia or if they wanted to keep their status as part of Ukraine. The Supreme Council of Crimea stated that the referendum was in response to their stance that the new interim government in Kiev was illegitimate and that a large number of people in Ukraine were against President Viktor Yanukovych.\(^{16}\) Russia supported this referendum and the opinion of the Ukrainians who wanted to join Russia. Following the referendum, the Supreme Council of Crimea and Sevastopol City Council declared independence of Crimea from Ukraine and requested to join Russia. On March 18, the Russian, Crimean, and Sevastopolitan leadership signed the Treaty on the Adoption of the Republic of Crimea to Russia, making Crimea an official part of Russia. On March 24, Russian troops seized most of Ukraine’s bases in Crimea and Ukrainian troops were transported from their base in Perevalne, Crimea. Russian President, Vladimir Putin, justified his events in Crimea as Russia’s moral duty to take care of Russian communities outside of territorial Russia and to respect Crimea’s desire to rejoin the motherland. As Russia sees it, Kiev has violated an agreement, according to which Russia accepted an independent Ukraine, provided it did not go along with anti-Russian policy and did not rally with the West.\(^{17}\) Russia was clearly not happy when it heard of Ukraine’s plans to sign a free trade agreement with the European Union, which would allow for Ukraine’s slow integration into Europe’s economic and military spaces.

Following the split of Crimea from Ukraine, pro-Russian demonstrations took place in the Donbass region of Ukraine which escalated into an armed conflict between the separatist forces and the government of Ukraine. The conflict grew with Russian military vehicles crossing the border into the city of Donetsk in Eastern Ukraine. There had been reports from the Ukrainian military that intensive movement and equipment from Russia was sent to the separatist controlled parts of eastern Ukraine. Russia’s actions in the eastern part of Ukraine gave Ukraine no other choice but to arm itself against the Russian military in its state. Ukraine’s historical conflicts between Europe and Russia have left the country divided culturally and politically, resulting in a major identity crisis. While western Ukraine is occupied by those speaking Ukrainian and aligning themselves more with the Ukrainian government and towards Europe, eastern Ukraine is dominated by those who share a cultural heritage with Russia.

**Reactions of Surrounding Nations, the International Community, and NATO**

Besides a few states, such as Armenia, Kazakhstan, and Russia, countries have condemned the Crimean referendum as a breach of Ukrainian sovereignty. The Mejlis of the Crimean Tartar People, the representative body of the Tartars living in Crimea, announced that they will not take part in the referendum and find it illegitimate. The chairman of the Crimean Tatar Mejlis also charged Russia with continually promoting conflict in Crimea to keep Ukraine from pursuing a policy independent of Russia and towards Western influence.\(^{18}\) The position of the international community, including the European Union and the United States, is that any referendum held by the local government of Crimea without the authority of Ukraine is

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unconstitutional and illegitimate. Thus, the United National General Assembly resolution was adopted that declared the referendum invalid and affirmed Ukraine’s territorial integrity.\textsuperscript{19} In addition, all member states of the European Union deemed the separation of Crimea from Ukraine to be unacceptable under international law and they saw the referendum as manipulated by Russia and contrary to international and Ukrainian law. NATO claimed that the referendum was illegal according to the Ukrainian constitution, which states that questions of altering the territory of Ukraine are resolved exclusively by an all-Ukrainian referendum. On March 16, the Foreign Ministry in Georgia released a statement expressing that it does not recognize the referendum because it occurred amid pressure from Russian armed forces and was in defiance of the universally recognized norms and principles of international law, with complete disregard for the Ukrainian national laws.

Classical Realist Analysis of the Conflict in Crimea and Ukraine

Norm-based constructivist and classical realist theory can be used to analyze the crisis between Russia and Ukraine, each theory giving different reasoning behind why the conflict started, and the implications that it has brought to the nations involved and the international community. Russia’s annexation of Crimea would be seen by realists as an assertion of power by Russia and an attempt to increase power in pursuit of self-interest. Classical realism affirms that states have an innate desire to dominate others and Russia is following that school of thought, because they are allowing themselves to get into a conflict with Ukraine for the purpose of bringing Crimea under their wing and increasing their territorial power in the region. It could be argued that Russia’s actions align with the view of realist theorist, John Mearsheimer, that great powers seek to expand their military and economic capabilities when the overall benefits outweigh the costs.\textsuperscript{20} The costs that Russia is facing are dampening its international reputation because many states are against Russia’s actions, but Russia is gaining more territorial power and expanding its power in the region nonetheless. Although Russia may continue to suffer economically from the withdrawal of foreign investment and reduced access to the European energy market, these costs must not outweigh the benefits that Russia gets from having Crimea as a member of its nation. In addition, Crimea is of considerable value for the Russians because of its strategic location. Sevastopol, the peninsula’s main city, has a port that gives the Russian fleet direct access to the Black Sea, allowing the Russian fleet to maintain its presence in Eurasia.\textsuperscript{21}

A moral standard of realism is that a state’s primary interest is survival of itself as an institution of and for its people. Survival requires power over those other states that may pose a threat. Therefore, the ultimate moral obligation of the state is to maintain power relative to those that would threaten the state’s existence and its citizens.\textsuperscript{22} Russia has seen the United States as a threat and is greatly against Ukraine having relations with the West. Russia’s growing insecurity could play a role in why Russia is working to increasing its power over surrounding nations. A realist would claim that Russia’s annexation of Crimea is to further Russia’s interests as a strong

\textsuperscript{19}Ibid., 1265.
power in the international community and to deter others, such as the United States from thinking they can go against Russia. The realist theory would also state that President Putin believes that Western interests are to contain Russia’s influence internationally and use their own power to increase their influence in the world. Putin did not want to take the chance of losing Ukraine to the US and all the strategic benefits that come from having Crimea under its wing. Therefore, Russia chose to take charge in Crimea, preserving Russia’s interests in Ukraine and attempting to keep power in the region. Therefore the realist notion that states pursue security at all costs may be an explanation as to why Russia is pursuing power outside of its own country.

Classical realist theory would also argue that Russia’s invasion of Ukraine shows their blatant disregard for Ukraine and its people. President Putin realizes that Russia holds greater power in comparison to Ukraine and therefore acts upon his power without restriction. Realist theorist, Niccolo Machiavelli states that international relations are not concerned by issues of morality. It may hold relative importance between nations of equal power but in terms of superior Russian power over the inferior power of Ukraine, moral objections are irrelevant and this is proven by Russia choices and disregard for Ukraine’s Concerns. The loss of control in Ukraine after the ousting of Yanukovich gave Russia the opportunity to invade a weak Ukraine and exert its influence in the region, and taking out the protests by sending tanks into the country. As realists would state, nations can only maintain their independence and power if they are strong enough to deter a foe from invading. Russia, acting in its own state interest, took the opportunity to invade Ukraine because they knew they were stronger and possessed more power than Ukraine.

Norm-Based Constructivist Analysis of the Crisis

In contrast to the realist thought that power is the most important in relations among nations, constructivist theory focuses more on the cultural and historical relations that Russia has with Ukraine. Constructivism’s claim that a state’s identity and subsequent actions and interests are shaped by social norms, may be used to explain the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Putin has used the sense of Russian identity in Crimea to justify Russia’s annexation of the peninsula. For centuries, Crimea Province was part of the Russian Republic until it was transferred to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic by Nikita Khrushchev in 1954. From a constructivist viewpoint, emotional associations to the territorial identity of a state influence how people understand policy choices. Putin argues that Crimea’s cultural links to Russia are stronger than they are to Ukraine and associated his actions in Crimea with emotional attachment and ideas of identity. Therefore, the idea of a strong Russian identity in Crimea may be used to help explain Russia’s interest in reclaiming it. Constructivists would look at Russia’s actions as identifying with the people living in Crimea and acting according to the historical identities that the people have with one another. President Putin has stated that the steps that were taken by the leadership of Crimea were based on the norms of international law and aimed to ensure the interests of the population of its people. Russia is stating that they have committed no wrongdoing because their act to allow Crimea to be a part of Russia was a proposal from another independent nation.

addition, with more than a million Russian-speaking citizens residing in Crimea, Putin focused on the nationalistic and social feelings within Crimea to legitimize his claim. Putin said his action were protecting the Russian population from the insurgency that was arising in Ukraine. Constructivism affirms that a norm is when a sufficient number of agents accept and adhere to that norm. Therefore, Russia’s argument is that Russia is taking into account the expression of the will of the people in Crimea in the referendum of March 2014, adhering to international norms and rules. Russia believes it conforms to international law, using its inalienable right to recognize a state and conclude an international treaty with the mutual agreement of the two parties involved. Furthermore, according to the federal constitutional law of Russia, admission of a foreign state into the Russian Federation shall be affected by mutual agreement of Russia and the interested state, valid in this instance. Russia has used the properties of norm-based constructivism to hold that their claim to Crimea is within the boundaries of international rules.

States such as Georgia, the United States, and Ukraine appeal to the fact that Russia’s annexation of Crimea and invasion of Ukraine are against international rules and norms. Not only are other states against the actions that Russia is pursuing in the region, but they do not accept Russia’s supposed reasons for doing so. Russia is acting in a way that is regarded by most of the world as wrong and illegal, thus against the norms of behavior that all nations should abide by in order to promote stability in the world. Constructivism states that the international system is constructed by the rules and norms of those that participate in it. Therefore, whether the system is cooperative or conflictive is a function of the historical identities of the participant. Russia, one of the great powers, is fueling the growth of a conflictive system by going against the practices that would keep peace and security in the world. The nation is showing a negative example to others by its annexation of Crimea and forceful entry into Ukraine. Moreover, Russia did not attempt to employ any diplomatic approaches with Ukrainian officials before resorting to occupation, which sets a negative precedent of illegitimate intervention, and adds to the instability in the international community.

Classical Realist Versus Constructivist Analysis

Classical realism and norm-based constructivism each have characteristics that fit well with the Russian-Ukrainian crisis. Realism states that power is the key force driving decisions, while constructivism states that Russia’s actions are influenced by its relationship with Ukraine and their identification with the Russian people in Ukraine. Classical realism states that, like any state, Russia wants power and took the opportunity to expand its influence in Crimea and Ukraine. Although this may be the case with Russia, there may be more to why Russia wished to expand its influence in Crimea and Ukraine than just the mere fact that Russia wants more power. A part of the reason that Russia wants to gain so much power is to deter the United States from expanding its power across the region, consequently believing that it (the United States) could go against Russia in the future. The international

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system adds to Russia’s desire for power with the fact that, in order to survive, power is essential. Thus, classical realism does not expand on the fact that although Russia may have an innate desire for power, which is seen throughout Russia’s past actions, Russia is prompted also its desire to have more relative power than other nations in order to survive.

Although norm-based constructivism gives other reasons for Russia’s actions besides the main point of seeking power, its explanation of Russian actions based on identity are not convincing considering Russia’s past history. Russia’s invasion of Georgia in 2008 can also be said to have been in response to the threat that the people in South Ossetia were facing from Georgia, when in reality there was no severe threat against the people and no threat that was not there before. Why did Russia decide to take severe actions against Ukraine now and annex Crimea, and, why did Russia not take these actions earlier? One possible answer is perhaps Russia did so because it found an opening where Ukraine was weak because of the regime changes and took the opportunity to take control. Moscow identifies with ethnic Russians and Russian speakers in Ukraine and Crimea for support for coercive action in Ukraine, but these communities were under no real threat. Russia’s reasons of identity with the people in Ukraine and Crimea do not offer significant value for the extreme behavior that Russia took against Ukraine and its people.

The aforementioned theories can both be used to explain the reaction that other states have had to Russia’s actions on the international front. It is evident that many states oppose Russia’s intervention and consider Russia’s annexation of Crimea and later invasion of Ukraine as illegal and against international norms and rules of behavior. Both theories are similar in the sense that they would argue that the actions that Russia has taken are seen by the international community as wrong. Specifically, established Western societal and political norms can help to explain the West’s opposition of Russia’s annexation of Crimea and their subsequent actions directed towards pressuring Russia to withdraw their influence in Ukraine. The US imposed sanctions on Russia that have increased gas prices in Russia’s cities, in turn dampening Russia’s economy. Although this is the case, no other direct measures have been taken to punish Russia for their actions. The United States, while strongly against Russia’s position in Ukraine, did not take any severe measures against Russia. Classical realist theorists would argue that this is because it is in the best interest of the United States to not get any more involved than they already are. Americans have no desire nor reason to go to war with Russia over Crimea. Washington did not provide the aid and trade that Ukraine need and the European Union did not have the means to offer Ukraine economic help. Although the United States says they support Ukraine and politically they do, the US is not taking the necessary measures to send full support to Ukraine. According to realism, the international system is constructed as a set of independent and autonomous actors with competing interests, interacting in an anarchic system. Thus, each nation focuses on their own interests, whether or not they have friends who would gain greatly from their support.

Despite the condemnation of Russia for its actions in Ukraine by most of the international community, Russia was not deterred, because such condemnation did not stop Russia’s course of action. The conflict in Ukraine is similar to the war between Russia and Georgia that took place.

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in 2008, when Russia invaded the small nation of Georgia, a former satellite of the Soviet Union. Five years later, Russia threatened the territorial integrity of Ukraine, also a former Soviet Union nation, annexing Crimea and supporting separatists in the Eastern part of the country. Although the West and NATO, along with many other countries condemned Russia because of its role in surrounding nations, they did not deter Russia nonetheless. As classical realism would hold, all nations are self-interested and although it would extremely beneficial to Ukraine, the US is not motivated to get involved any more than they already have. Similarly, NATO’s posture with regard to Russian behavior during the 2008 War was not strong enough to deter Russia from again challenging another smaller and weaker surrounding nation. The Ukrainian crisis showed that, since Russia was not deterred in 2008, Russia continued thinking in its own interest and continued to spread their influence in other nations. Since in 2008, and then again in 2013, Russia was not stopped from invading other territories, no one can really be certain what course of action Russia will take next. A classical realist perspective would suggest that Russia will continue seeking further influence in surrounding nations. However, who is next in Russia’s future sphere of influence? This question could bring grave implications for the future of the international community as a whole, if Russia does continue to act according to classical realist thought.

Although both theories go in depth in explaining the international phenomena, the classical realist theory gives a more accurate analysis of Russia’s behavior and goals. The realist approach focuses on the balance of power that can be seen between the West and Russia. The theory argues that in order for the Russian state to survive, it must invade neighboring states to maximize its influence. Russia saw a chance to intervene when there was political instability and took it. Ukraine’s decision to consider joining the European Union gave rise to the idea that Ukraine would like to align itself with the West. For this reason, the annexation of Crimea can be best explained by the realist view because, although Russia can use the reasons of attempting to save the Russian people from instability in Ukraine because of shared identities with the Russians living in Crimea, it is clear that Russia benefitted from its support of Crimea’s position against Ukraine. Russia felt threatened and focused on its own survival, gaining as much power as they could. Even if such a scenario was not the case, Russia, seeing a chance to invade Ukraine, a weaker and less powerful state, would have taken that chance to invade just like it has done so in the past with Georgia. This tells us that it is human nature to seek power, Russia wants to get as much power as it can in order to expand its area of influence because it is better for its country and people to do so.

As realist theory holds, Russia did not take into account the suffering that its invasion would bring the Ukrainian nation and its people; instead, morality was ignored and power and the attempt at domination was seen as most important. Although norm-based constructivism can be used to demonstrate why the international community is against Russia’s actions (because it is against international norms and rules), there is more to it to consider. The world sees that Russia wants to gain influence because the state has done so in the past, for example with Georgia. Therefore, it is clear that Russia’s main interest is power and influence over others. The fact that states recognize that Russia wants to seek power and is not simply attempting to help the people in Crimea is evident in the reaction that other states had to Russia’s behavior in the region.

As realists state that actors focus on their own gains, Russia may see the gains from its position with Crimea as another reason to continue its international agenda. The naval port of Sevastopol is essential to Russia’s naval power because it is the main method of expanding

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Russia’s global military power through the Mediterranean and beyond. Ukrainian military experts have argued that the structure, size and armaments of the Russian forces in the Crimean peninsula indicate Russian long-term planning with the southern regions of mainland Ukraine in mind, and that if Putin had doubted the Russian ability to gain control over Ukrainian settlements then there would have been no annexation of Crimea in the first place. Therefore, one can see that Russia knew it would gain more influence and power from their annexation of Crimea, and took the opportunity to receive all of the benefits.

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Bibliography


Assessment of the Counter-Terrorism Committee: Analysis of the effectiveness of the CTC and the International Regime on Terrorism

Paul Kearney

Abstract: This piece analyses the CTC from a structural point of view. It attempts to show that the CTC is bound by the state-IGO dynamic, and is thus bound its makeup of the Security Council members. The analysis further examines whether the CTC has been, or can be in the future, an effective tool in the fight against terrorism, based on its structural design. The paper also analyses the dynamic between counter-terrorism and human rights, and what the CTC has done and what it can do to ensure the protection of human rights in assessing counter-terrorism operations. The paper comes to the conclusion that, because the CTC is bound by the member states of the Security Council, political posturing will more often than not supersede efforts to curb terrorism. In fact, some of the members of the CTC are the worst violators of human rights, such as the U.S., Russia, and China, when it comes to counter-terrorism operations.

Counter-Terrorism Committee

Introduction

Terrorism has plagued mankind since its inception, and has long been a tool used by the weak against the strong. However, it was not until the terrorist attacks against the United States (US) on September 11th, 2001 that terrorism itself was brought to the forefront of the international stage. As a direct result of the attacks against the US, the United Nations (UN) created the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) through Resolution 1373. The CTC attempts created “to bolster the ability of United Nations Member States to prevent terrorist acts both within their borders and across regions.”¹ In essence, the Counter-Terrorism Committee was designed to act as a means to facilitate cooperation between UN member states through a standardization of counter-terrorism strategies. Such standardization is found in Resolution 1373, which requires all UN member states to implement the following practices:

- Criminalize the financing of terrorism, freeze without delay any funds related to persons involved in acts of terrorism, deny all forms of financial support for terrorist groups, suppress the provision of safe haven, sustenance or support for terrorists, share information with other governments on any groups practicing or planning terrorist acts, cooperate with other governments in the investigation, detection, arrest, extradition and prosecution of those involved in such acts, and criminalize active and passive assistance for terrorism in domestic law and bring violators to justice.²

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²Counter-Terrorism Committee “Home.”
In order to achieve this goal, the CTC uses country visits, technical assistance, country reports, “best practices,” and special meetings to help UN member states achieve the implementation of the resolution, as stated above. Country visits are requested by the CTC and used to monitor and gather data on the progress of implementation efforts as well as to assess the possible needs of member states. Technical assistance helps states gain access to available technology and finances to combat terrorism. Country reports are intensive and thorough analyses of member states’ counter-terrorism efforts; the CTC has chosen not to make these reports public following 2006. “Best practices” encourage states to apply the best known practices, standards, and codes that have been provided through cooperation between states and facilitated by the CTC. Special meetings operate as a means to develop closer ties between member states and relevant international, regional, and sub-regional organizations to further cooperation and eliminate duplication.3

However, as is all too common in the international community, cooperation is difficult and often times, states do not follow international norms. Although the Counter-Terrorism Committee has created a more centralized and proactive international counter-terrorism strategy, the CTC has not succeeded in its attempts to form a more cohesive international regime on terrorism, or in its efforts to improve counter-terrorism activities among UN member states. This dilemma for the CTC is a product of a phenomenon known as the principal-agent problem.4

The principal-agent problem pertains to when a principal (an organization) and an agent (an individual) cannot reach a state of good cooperation known as “optimal contracting.”5 This problem can manifest in three ways: risk sharing, moral hazard, and adverse selection. The first, risk sharing, occurs when both parties agree to risk sharing the information between them. The risk, in this case, is that the principal will have leverage over the agent, while the agent has information on the principal and can, potentially, share the information with an outside source. The second, moral hazard, is also known as hidden action. This instance is when the agent hides its actions from the principal. In such a situation, the principal will always get the second best result. The third case, adverse selection, is when the agents themselves are hidden to the principal.5

With the principal-agent problem in mind, the moral hazard state best suits the relationship between International Governmental Organizations (IGOs) and individual state actors. The agent, or each state in this case, can hide its actions from the principal, the Counter-Terrorism Committee. Hidden actions will be further explored, but the essence of the moral hazard is that states are the main actors that drive IGOs. Such a dynamic is evident by exploring the counter-terrorism strategies of the United States, Russia, and China and the response, or lack thereof, of the CTC. As a result of the principal-agent problem, the Counter-Terrorism Committee cannot fully accomplish its stated goals. Systemic changes are necessary to create a cohesive international regime on terrorism, and the Counter-Terrorism Committee in its current form can only do as much as states are willing to allow it to do.

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3Counter-Terrorism Committee “Home.”
4“Contract Theory in Continuous Time Models” Jakša Cvitanić, Jianfeng Zhang. 1
5Ibid.
Organization

The analysis is broken down into three sections. First, there will be a discussion of the international regime on terrorism before September 11th, in order to gain historical context. The context serves as a basis for comparison between the regime before and after September 11th. Second, an examination of terrorism and its meaning is necessary to provide a foundation. The discussion focuses on the relationship between terrorism and human rights, and the dangers of counter-terrorism. Third is the creation and structure of the Counter-Terrorism Committee and what it can and cannot do, so as to examine how the principal-agent problem affects the workings of the CTC. Finally, the analysis moves to the case studies of the US, Russia, and China for two purposes. First, these states are arguably the most powerful members of the UN, as all three sit permanently on the Security Council (and by extension the CTC itself). Second, these states have also been notorious violators of human rights in their counter-terrorism efforts despite the Counter-Terrorism Committee’s attempt to safeguard human rights, further serving to enhance the principal-agent problem.

What is “Terrorism?”

To begin the analysis, a discussion of terrorism itself is necessary since there is no official definition of terrorism. Paul Hoffman, then the chair of the International Executive Committee of Amnesty International, perfectly captures the dilemma; “one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter,” a theme that will be explored throughout the analysis. However, in order to have something by which to gauge violent acts, the UN General Assembly has operated under the following definition of terrorism since 1994:

Criminal acts intended or calculated to provoke a state of terror in the general public, a group of persons or particular persons for political purposes are in any circumstance unjustifiable, whatever the considerations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or any other nature that may be invoked to justify them.

Another useful definition of terrorism for the purposes of this paper is provided by Amos Guiora in his book Fundamentals of Counterterrorism, where he states that terrorism is the killing, injuring, or targeting of innocent civilians by those seeking to advance a political or social cause.

However, the problem with defining terrorism is that many states view terrorism from different perspectives. For example, many western governments have not recognized Chechen terror groups in Russia as terror groups. Steven Pifer, then the deputy assistant secretary of state for European and Eurasian affairs, stated that the US did not “…share the Russian Government assessment that equates the separatist movement with terrorism. While we condemn all terrorist attacks…we do not believe that Russia can address the conflict in Chechnya simply as a counter-terrorist operation.” Also, the US State Department has not officially recognized any Chechen terror groups in Russia as terror groups.

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separatist groups as terrorist groups. In response, Russian president Vladimir Putin invited Hamas and Hezbollah, groups recognized as terrorist organizations by the West, to the Kremlin in Moscow, demonstrating that Russia does not share the West’s assessment of the two groups. The example above illustrates the issue in identifying and defining terrorism. The UN definition is broad so as to create consensus among UN member states. Therefore, how does one determine the difference between an act intended “...to provoke a state of terror in the general public” from an act intended to fight against an oppressive government?

One reason that defining terrorism is difficult is that such definitions appear to be purely political. For example, Virginia Held argues that governments usually define “terrorism” as a tool used by those who wish to change policies or political systems. Held’s government definition appears in sync with the UN definition above, and indeed she notes that international law tends to agree. However, Held notes that such a definition is faulty; she explains that the military government of Argentina causing thousands of opponents to “disappear” to create fear and disunity among political opposition is an example of state terrorism. The example provided above of the West and Russia disagreeing on recognition of terror organizations also suggests that terrorism is defined for political purposes.

Held also notes that Guiora’s definition, by nature, does not classify the attacks against the US marine barracks in Lebanon in 1983 nor the attack on the USS Cole in 2000 as terrorism as these attacks were against armed forces. Yet these two attacks are routine examples of terrorism. Furthermore, Held explains that if the targeting of innocent civilians is the only defining characteristic of terrorism, then the bombings of Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and other bombings targeting mainly civilian populations should be considered terrorism. Held’s argument is where the UN definition of terrorism becomes useful, as it is easy to interpret “a group of persons or particular persons,” as armed forces. The only issue with the UN definition in Held’s argument is the phrase “criminal acts.” Examples provided above show moments of state terrorism, but since states are sovereign entities, in what way could those acts be construed as criminal? This instance demonstrates where the Counter-Terrorism Committee needs to be willing to create new enforcement mechanisms for harsher penalties on delinquent states, in accordance with international law and the regime of terrorism, to engage and properly punish governments that commit acts of state terrorism.

**Terrorism, Counter-Terrorism, and Human Rights**

Terrorism is a natural antagonist to human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. It is the duty of states to protect its citizens from these acts of terrorism that infringe upon human rights. Specifically, states have an obligation to protect citizens within their jurisdiction and their rights to life and security. As an example of the threat terrorism poses to human rights, the Center for Strategic and International Studies published data regarding violence in Chechnya. According to the data, there were 1,100 incidents of violence and over 900 deaths in 2009.

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11Hughes, “The Chechnya Conflict: Freedom Fighters or Terrorists?” 299
13Held, “Terrorism and War,” 64
Although counter-terrorism is designed to prevent terrorism and protect the public from terrorist attacks (and by extension protect human rights), these efforts can in fact exacerbate terrorism and create bigger violations of human rights. As Held notes, governments justify counter-terror strategies as having “moral clarity,” or the moral high ground; governments tend to take a hard line view when combating terrorism. That hard line view can lead to a disregard for collateral damage. For example, Held notes that Reagan’s War on Terror in Latin America in the 1980s killed over 200,000 civilians and displaced millions but is not considered terrorism because they did not specifically target civilians. The US also faces heavy criticism for its drone program, with a strike on December 13th, 2013 in Yemen killing 13 unconfirmed militants in what appeared to be a wedding convoy. A recent attack on a Doctors Without Borders’ hospital in 2015 that killed 30 staff members, which will be further analyzed in a later section.

Counter-terrorism and human rights violations will be expanded upon in the case studies of the US, Russia, and China, but it is necessary to discuss them in connection with terrorism and human rights. Paul Hoffman argued that the course of the “war on terror” threatens to undermine the international human rights norms built since World War II. Hoffman argues that the way in which the war is waged threatens human security and the rights listed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. He actually argues that such destruction through counter-terror efforts poses a greater threat to human rights than any terrorist bombings, and that a failure to uphold universal human rights also undermines international cooperation.

In order to solidify the international response to the September 11th attacks, one of the main objectives of the Counter-Terrorism Committee was to establish a legal framework by which counter-terror operations could be conducted while respecting human rights. However, as seen by the US’ treatment of prisoners in Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay, and the treatment of the Uyghurs by the Chinese government as terrorists, the more powerful countries have taken great liberties with human rights in counter-terror operations. Russia as well has skirted such rules; FSB agents have been seen carrying out counter-terror operations in Riazan that were very similar to the apartment bombings in September, 1999 which were blamed on Chechen terror groups, causing the Second Chechen War.

The International Terrorism Regime

As stated above, terrorism is difficult to define because of differing perspectives. The international terrorism regime before September 11th further supports the vague nature of terrorism. The regime consisted of twelve treaties, mainly concerned with protecting the rights of citizens aboard air and sea craft. These treaties made it illegal for the hijacking of or violent acts aboard such vessels. It is interesting to note that not one of these twelve treaties made reference to “terrorism” specifically; rather, they referred to “unlawful acts.” Member states, for the most part, chose to deal with terrorism as national and local policies rather than involving

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16Held, “Terrorism and War,” 63
18Hoffman, “Human Rights and Terrorism,” 933
19OHCHR, Human Rights, Terrorism, and Counter-Terrorism, 19
20Hughes, “The Chechnya Conflict: Freedom Fighters or Terrorists?” 299
21Counter-Terrorism Committee “Laws”
the UN. In fact, the UN Charter has no mention of terrorism despite the centuries-long existence of terrorism in human history.\(^{22}\)

The main purpose of the twelve treaties was not to combat terrorism per se, but rather to protect citizens in situations without specific jurisdiction. As an example, one could imagine that a German plane is flying over the Atlantic Ocean. The plane is piloted by a Frenchman, and its passengers are comprised of Spanish, English, and Americans. Who would have jurisdiction should a criminal act occur aboard the plane? For that matter, how could one classify any criminal act? Under whose laws would the act be interpreted? The treaties were created specifically to condemn and make air and sea craft fall under standardized international norms and jurisdiction.\(^{23}\)

However, these treaties received low party rates among UN member states.\(^{24}\) Perhaps the reason for the relative lack of concern regarding terrorism is because the US is not nearly as affected by terrorism as is Europe. For example, incidents of terrorism in the US totaled 2,802 since 1970,\(^{25}\) whereas incidents of terrorism in Europe totaled 16,006 during the same time period.\(^{26}\) While the US saw violence relating to its civil rights movement, those violent acts pale in comparison to the number of incidents in Europe during the same time period. Europe dealt with roughly five major terrorist groups in five different countries: the IRA in the UK, the ETA in Spain, Algerian insurgents in France, the Red Faction Army in Germany, and the Red Brigades in Italy.\(^{27}\) In 1979, Europe saw a climax of just over 1,000 incidents of terrorism, while the US saw fewer than 80 incidents in the same year.\(^{28}\)

Then everything changed when the terrorists attacked on September 11\(^{th}\), 2001. On that day, the unthinkable happened. The US was attacked on its own soil, resulting in the deaths of thousands of innocent civilians and the creation of the Counter-Terrorism Committee. As it was created through a Security Council resolution, the CTC’s goals, as laid out in the introduction, became binding international law. The CTC also calls on UN member states to become party to the treaties of the old international regime. Since the creation of the CTC, four new treaties have joined the international regime; rather than focus on creating jurisdiction for air and sea craft travel, these new treaties have focused on nuclear and environmental terrorism. For the first time, such treaties used the term “terrorism” rather than “unlawful acts.”\(^{29}\)

The Counter-Terrorism Committee ushered in a new age of the international terrorism regime. Before its creation, only two of the thirteen old regime Security Council Resolutions dealt with terrorism in general terms. Since the creation of the CTC, eleven of twenty Security Council Resolutions have dealt with terrorism in general terms. Such data suggests that the attacks on September 11\(^{th}\) and the creation of the CTC have led to a more centralized,


\(^{23}\)Counter-Terrorism Committee “Laws”

\(^{24}\)Ibid.

\(^{25}\)START. “Global Terrorism Database, Incidents of Terrorism in the United States.” 2011 [http://www.start.umd.edu/start/data_collections/tops/](http://www.start.umd.edu/start/data_collections/tops/)

\(^{26}\)Ibid.


\(^{28}\)Ibid.

\(^{29}\)Counter-Terrorism Committee “Laws”
preventative counter-terrorism effort by the UN, as opposed to the more ad-hoc, reactionary counter-terrorism effort of the old regime.\textsuperscript{30}

**The Counter-Terrorism Committee - Function, Structure, and the Principal-Agent Problem**

The Counter-Terrorism Committee is a committee that functions as an arm of the Security Council. It was created by the UN Security Council to monitor the implementation of Resolution 1373, calling on states to implement the laws stated in the introduction.\textsuperscript{31} It is comprised of all 15 members of the Security Council, a design that will be explored further when discussing the principal-agent problem. It should be noted that although the Counter-Terrorism Committee and Security Council share their members, they are separate groups. The CTC is an individual organization within the UN which is solely focused on the improvement of counter-terrorism practices and the observance of human rights. The Security Council is the governing body of the UN and creates international law through binding Resolutions. It is very important to remember that although these two bodies share members, they operate on two very different levels within the hierarchy of the UN. Along with the laws stated in the introduction, the CTC follows the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, created in 2006. This strategy calls for states to tackle conditions that spread terrorism, prevent and combat terrorism, build and help other countries and the UN to develop means to combat terrorism, and ensure the respect of human rights and the rule of law.\textsuperscript{32}

As mentioned in the introduction, the Counter-Terrorism Committee serves three purposes. First, the CTC is meant to strengthen the counter-terror capacity of UN member states. Second, the CTC delivers technical assistance to member states trying to adopt the mandates set out by Resolution 1373 as well as further cooperation with international, regional, and sub regional organizations. Third, the CTC calls upon member states to report their implementation efforts to the CTC.\textsuperscript{33} To help the CTC achieve these purposes, in 2004 the Security Council passed Resolution 1535, establishing the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED).\textsuperscript{34}

The CTED functions as the executive arm of the Counter-Terrorism Committee. Its staff is comprised of legal experts who analyze state-submitted reports to the CTC by examining legislation, border and customs control, refugee and migration law, law enforcement mechanisms, and other domestic policies relating to the implementation of Resolution 1373. The CTED is split into two sections: an Assessment and Technical Assistance Office (ATAO) and an Administrative and Information Office (AIO). The ATAO is further split into three geographical subgroups, allowing experts to specialize in specific regions as well as to promote cooperation between regional and sub regional organizations and UN member states.\textsuperscript{35} The CTED, along with the CTC, publishes reports on the responses by UN member states to the implementation of Resolution 1624, a resolution that built on Resolution 1535 and emphasized the need for cooperation.

\textsuperscript{30}Kramer and Yetiv, “The UN Security Council’s Response to Terrorism,” 420.
\textsuperscript{31}Counter-Terrorism Committee “About Us”
\textsuperscript{32}Counter-Terrorism Committee, “UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.”
\textsuperscript{33}Kramer and Yetiv, “The UN Security Council’s Response to Terrorism,” 414
\textsuperscript{34}Counter-Terrorism Committee “About Us”
\textsuperscript{35}Ibid.
Much like the discussion regarding the vague nature of terrorism, the counter-terrorism goals and strategies disseminated by the UN have been vague in order to create widespread consensus. However, such vague language regarding both terrorism and counter-terrorism can lead to interpretations that suit political agendas. Again, “one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter” becomes relevant. As Held notes and as previously discussed, governments are capable of state terrorism, but justify such actions by claiming “moral high ground.” To revisit Russia and Chechnya, the Russian government views Chechens as terror groups, while Chechens view the Russian government as a terrorist organization due to oppression. Western governments support the notion that Chechen groups are rebels rather than terrorists, while Russia condemns western intervention and is friendly with western-recognized terrorist organizations.36

Hilde Haaland Kramer and Steve Yetiv argue that the Counter-Terrorism Committee has led to greater improvement by the UN in the fight against global terrorism.37 They note that the Security Council used sanctions against terrorism three times in the 1990s, but they also note that the US was the driving force behind such actions. The anecdote above brings the analysis to the principal-agent problem. As asserted earlier, states are the main actors on the international stage, and that IGOS can only do what states are willing to let them do. In accordance with the principal-agent problem, the agent has the information that allows it to act, while the principal can do nothing but follow the agent since it does not have all of the information necessary to act on its own.

As the Counter-Terrorism Committee is comprised of all fifteen members of the Security Council, it is subject to the individual political agendas of the fifteen member states, especially the permanent five: France, China, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The US has led the moral crusade against terrorism since the attacks on September 11th. Interestingly, the Security Council has not used sanctions against terror groups since September 11th and the US deployment in the “war on terror,”38 suggesting that the Security Council and the CTC are in fact subject to the interests of its individual and powerful members, again showing the principal-agent problem. The fact that the Security Council was unable to stop the US from unilaterally invading Iraq is further evidence to such an argument.

As previously mentioned, the Counter-Terrorism Committee has methods of helping member states implement Resolution 1373. It is the opinion of this paper that for an organization meant to further cooperation and facilitate cohesive counter-terrorism strategies, the decision by the CTC in 2006 to no longer publicly disclose country reports is baffling.39 For an organization that prides itself on cooperation and transparency, the lack of country reporting is staggering and further suggests the powerful states are guiding the policy direction of the CTC. The CTED also publishes country reports, but since Resolution 1624 was enacted in 2005, member states have either yet to publish a report, or have only published one report; most of those reports were published in 2006, with only Cuba, Serbia, Uruguay, and Yemen publishing at least one follow-up report.40 Such actions are excellent examples of the principal-agent problem. The agent is able to hide its actions from the principal, while the principal remains powerless without access to the agent’s information.

36 Hughes, “The Chechnya Conflict: Freedom Fighters or Terrorists?” 299
37 Kramer and Yetiv, “The UN Security Council’s Response to Terrorism.” 410
38 Kramer and Yetiv, “The UN Security Council’s Response to Terrorism.” 421
39 Counter-Terrorism Committee, “Country Reports”
In May 2013, the CTED proposed a revised method for assessing implementation efforts by UN member states. The revised method is comprised of two assessment tools: Overview of Implementation Assessment (OIA), and Detailed Implementation Survey (DIS). These two tools serve as a better way to assess implementation of Resolutions 1373 and 1624. The OIA is a general assessment of the efforts made by UN member states in their attempts to implement and make domestic law concurrent with the previously mentioned Resolutions. It highlights progress and shortfalls, while giving policy recommendations and assesses technical assistance needs. The DIS is a much more detailed document; it asks five specific, closed questions designed to demonstrate how UN member states intend to implement the Resolutions into domestic law. Once these reports are compiled, they are sent to the member states for their use.\(^41\)

The CTED will keep a running list of all member states, the dates on which the documents were sent to the member state, and the date on which a response from the member state was received. The CTED will also keep a list of non-reporting states, updating the list every six months. The Counter-Terrorism Committee then can invite the permanent representative of a non-reporting state to a meeting, prepare a reminder or follow-up letter, or defer the response deadline.\(^42\) Again, we see how relatively weak the CTC is regarding country reports and holding states accountable. What the CTC can do to punish states that do not follow the revised method is no different than a wag of the finger or a scolding. The Counter-Terrorism Committee by itself is powerless to bring those out of line with implementation strategies back into line. As previously discussed, the CTC relies heavily on the Security Council for its binding Resolutions, and powerful member states to guide its direction, often for political purposes. The CTC, as a standalone agency, cannot achieve its desired goals due to its lack of enforcement mechanisms and the vagueness that plagues the task of defining terrorism.

In sum, the principle-agent problem is ongoing. The Counter-Terrorism Committee does not have all of the information it needs, as the agents are not willing to share their information, as show in the above paragraph. Therefore, the CTC cannot properly enforce Resolutions 1373 and 1624, and are thus unable to act when infringements occur. As shown, many agents are unwilling to share their hidden information with the principal, and continue to hold the power to drive policy and actions as a result.

**Case Studies**

The following section will analyze the counter-terrorism strategies, and the human rights violations, of three powerful United Nations Security Council states (US, Russia, China) to gain a better understanding as to why the Counter-Terrorism Committee is largely ineffective in enforcement and why it is subject to the whims of powerful states. The US analysis will discuss the US policy in the Middle East, specifically discussing Abu Ghraib as well as the US’ extensive use of torture and drone strikes. Russian analysis will discuss Russia’s strategy against Chechnya and how it uses state terrorism to combat Chechen terrorism, exacerbating the problems in the North Caucasus. Finally, Chinese analysis will examine the Chinese government’s fight against Uyghur terrorists, most notably against the East Turkestan Islamic Movement and how China has purposefully targeted the Uyghur population for terror-related activities, to suppress their Islamic practices, and to safeguard economic interests.


\(^{42}\)CTED “Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee.”
Case Study - The United States

As previously stated, one of the CTC’s goals regarding counter-terrorism and human rights is to hold respect for the rule of law and protect human rights. However, as Paul Hoffman argues, the US has done exactly the opposite. Hoffman notes that the “war on terrorism” refuses to accept that any form of law applies to the way in which such a “war” wages. Hoffman explains that there are no internationally recognized “human rights free zones,” and that, despite the US’ assertion, there is no loophole or gap between human rights law and humanitarian law that would allow the US to conduct such a brutal war.43

To further his point, Hoffman explains that the US classification of the war on terrorism as a “war” allows it to circumvent standard international human rights laws. For example, the US and Yemen in 2002 conducted an operation where the US used an unmanned drone to kill six men classified as “enemy combatants.” Under a non-war circumstance, international law would require the US and Yemen to capture these men and hold them for trial under applicable criminal charges. However, because the US is at “war,” it can classify targets as “enemy combatants” and therefore justify its actions on a moral basis, claiming that it is protecting its citizens from enemies that would destroy them.44

Hoffman also notes the human rights black hole that is the prison in Guantanamo Bay. The US holds over 600 alleged “terrorists,” and, as discussed above, the US classification of war allows the US to treat their captives under the laws of war. However, Hoffman notes that these prisoners are denied the hearings required under Article 5 of the Third Geneva Convention that would determine their status as prisoners of war. Not only are prisoners denied international rights to trial, they are also subject to torture; reports from released detainees suggests that prisoners are subjected to sleep deprivation, humiliation, and other tactics of physical and mental fatigue designed to coerce information. Hoffman notes that such practices are illegal under international human rights norms.45

To further the case against the US, in December of 2012 the Senate Committee on Intelligence submitted a sweeping, 6,300 page study of the CIA’s post 9/11 counter-terrorism methods. However, years after its publication, it is still not available to the public. According to the Senators who viewed the report, it was highly critical of the CIA’s counter-terrorism policies and condemned the CIA’s use of torture and rendition. The report argues against the commonly held belief that the CIA’s torture program led to accurate information in the fight against terrorism. Senator Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) explained that the report showed that the CIA routinely provided inaccurate information regarding its interrogation program to the White House, the Justice Department, and Congress. Senator Wyden’s explanation is confirmed by former CIA general counsel Stephen Preston, who noted that the CIA’s briefings to Committees included inaccurate information related to the interrogation program.46

As the above case study shows, the US has consistently defied international human rights norms and laws, justifying its actions as morally right against terrorists. Held’s assertion of governments claiming moral high ground and ignoring collateral damage is supported by the case study. The study also shows that despite the Counter-Terrorism Committee’s efforts in maintaining respect for rule of law and protection of human rights, the US, arguably the

43Hoffman, “Human Rights and Terrorism,” 939
44Hoffman, “Human Rights and Terrorism,” 940
45Ibid., 941.
champion of morality and human rights, is one of the most egregious violators of human rights regarding counter-terrorism. It imprisons those it can without trials concurrent with Article 5 of the Third Geneva Convention, and it kills those it cannot imprison through drone strikes that have a tendency to cause collateral damage, as seen by the strike against the wedding convoy. The condemnation of terrorists and their label as “enemy combatants” gives the US its justification for its illegal counter-terrorism strategies, and the US’ status as a world power gives it safety from the UN, the Security Council, and the CTC.

Drone and airborne strikes have been a much contested issue for the United States. As mentioned earlier, there was a deadly bombing on a Doctors Without Borders hospital in Afghanistan. On September 29th, 2015, the United States carried out a counter-terrorism operation in Kundaz city, attempting to take the city from the Taliban. Fighting occurred for five days and nights. On October 3rd, Afghani forces requested air support in the fight. That air support ended with the bombing of the Doctors Without Borders hospital, leaving 30 staff members dead. As a result of the bombing, the military ordered an investigation into the misfire. General John F. Campbell, in a press briefing at the Pentagon, released the details of the investigation: “The report determined that the strike on the trauma center in Kundez city, Afghanistan, was the direct result of human error compounded by systems and procedural failures.”

What were these human errors, made possible by systems and procedural failures? The crew of the AC-130 that took off on October 3rd left an hour early in response to an emergency “troops in contact situation.” However, such an early take off did not allow for sufficient time to compile a list of no-strike buildings, which included the hospital. General Campbell even confirmed that they had received the coordinates of the hospital on September 29th when the fighting first broke out, yet the hospital remained off of a non-existent “no strike list.”

After taking off, the crew lost electronic systems, preventing transmissions of video footage, as well as email functions. The crew also believed it was targeted by a missile, causing the plane to fly eight miles out of its orbit, disrupting the GPS censors. When the crew tried to input the coordinates for a believed Taliban stronghold, the GPS located an empty field 300 miles away. However, the GPS eventually was able to realign the proper target after the aircraft regained its orbit, but the crew neglected to double-check their target, instead focusing on the largest building, based on physical descriptions of the target building. That building was, of course, the Doctors Without Borders hospital. The time that the hospital was under fire is disputed. The military claims it was only half an hour, but the Doctors Without Borders call logs show a message nearly an hour after the strikes began, insisting that the firing be stopped.

The ease with which human error and technical difficulties resulted in the bombing of a hospital, that throws much doubt on the entire US drone program. The program has led to thousands of casualties in Pakistan and Afghanistan; since 2004, a total of 423 drone strikes have led to an average estimate of 3,248 deaths in total, with civilian casualties averaging 694. This
data demonstrates that there is a 21% civilian casualty rate. As the errors of the Doctors Without Borders bombing shows, how can we be sure that such errors are not continuing to occur?

The United States must be held accountable for its actions with torture and its drone strike program. The Counter-Terrorism Committee, as well as the Security Council, must take steps to ensure that the US completes its country reports so that there is greater transparency regarding counter-terrorism. Such transparency can lead to greater cooperation among member states, sharing of best practices (a goal of the CTC), and more efficient methods for combating terrorism in Afghanistan and the Pakistani border. However, such steps will be difficult to take, as any Counter-Terrorism Committee Resolution can be vetoed by the United States. The CTC should provide incentives for the US to open up its drone strike and counter-terrorism practices, such as passing Resolutions that empower NATO and other US allies in their fight against terrorism in the Middle East. Such a gesture would hopefully allow the United States to share more of its counter-terrorism practices with the CTC, and with the other member states on the Security Council.

Case Study - Russia

To combat the growing tide of nationalist Chechen terrorism, Russia has led a counter-terrorism operation based on two principles: the denial of political grievances and the illegitimacy of the Chechen separatist movement. In 2000, the Russian government installed a pro-Russian government based in Grozny. The government was meant to suppress the Chechen separatists and to quell the uprisings. However, despite attempting the strategy for over a decade, the pro-Russian government in Grozny has not been successful with its autocratic rule and separatist violence persists in the region, as discussed above. Ramzan Kadyrov, the longtime President of the Chechen government, has been a controversial figure in Chechnya, mainly due to his brutal repression tactics and his counterterrorism tactics; here, counterterror is used literally as he has combated terrorism with terrorism.52

Aurelie Campana and Kathia Legare argue that Russia had no clear counterterrorism policy regarding Chechnya at the onset of the Second Chechen War in 1999. They explain that the two-pronged solution was the result of competition among the Kremlin, the FSB, and the military trying to analyze and to interpret the conflict through differing perspectives. Ultimately, the Kremlin took the lead by offering the solution as a combination of the views given by the other main Federal agencies in the Russian government. However, both authors contend that the continuing disagreement regarding interpretation of the conflict led to policies that have no clear goal or objective and that were nowhere near as effective as they should have been.53

Campana and Legare found their argument on the idea of framing, that the Russian government would use acts of “terrorism” as justification for the oppression of Chechnya and the surrounding regions. As previously discussed, some of the terrorist attacks in the North Caucasus have not been claimed by Chechen groups but have been pushed to them by the Russian government. Such framing allows the Russian government to justify its actions in using repressive state action (the topic of the previous discussion board) to counter-terrorize Chechen groups and citizens; indeed, there was little public objection to the initiation of the Second

53 Campana and Legare “Russia’s Counterterrorism Operation,” 47-51
Chechen War in 1999. Framing, as the authors point out, is central to policy-making, agenda-setting and problem-solving processes; they note that one can see why some policies win favor based on the nature of power struggles between security professionals.\textsuperscript{54}

One of the key features of the Russian counterterrorism policy was the centralization of power in the President of the Federation, Vladimir Putin. Putin’s administration substantially influenced the discourse of counter-terror dialogue on Chechnya, and shaped the official position due to the consolidation of power. Putin’s strategy, first as prime minister and again as President, was a stress on the “no-war” thesis, in other words, that Chechnya was a counter-terrorism operation, not a war. Putin wove framing techniques into his vocabulary, routinely referring to Chechen separatists as terrorists and criminals to drive home the dangers posed to Russia and to gain support for his tough policies. Policy was also shaped by the FSB, which viewed the situation in Chechnya as an international breeding ground for radical Islamic terrorism. The FSB holds the real power in counter-terror operations, and garnered support for their policy by playing at the fears of those old enough to remember the Soviet failure in Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{55}

One of the main tactics used in the Russian counterterrorism strategy was the criminalization of the pro-separatist leadership and the separatist Chechen state in general. The policy was designed to undermine the legitimacy of Chechen separatist leaders by alleging connections to criminal syndicates. Russian officials would also accuse Chechen separatist leaders of putting themselves before the Chechen people in an attempt to turn the Chechen groups and ideals on their leaders. The policy backfired somewhat, as the criminalization and attempts to delegitimize Chechen leaders led to Chechen fighters refusal to sit at the peace table for negotiation. In the policy of criminalization, we again see how differing views and differing interpretations created very ambiguous policies and personifications that bolstered the resolve of Chechen separatists, as they viewed such aggressive policy as proof that their plight was real and that their resistance was justified.\textsuperscript{56}

As previously mentioned, Russia has now moved to a regime-building operation in an attempt to create order through a regime based in Grozny. The Russian government installed Akhmad Kadyrov because of his popularity among the Chechen public. Kadyrov was “democratically elected” in 2003 as President of the Chechen Republic, with Kadyrov acting as an extension of Kremlin authority. Kadyrov’s assassination in 2004 and the subsequent ascension of his son, Ramzan, to the Presidency signal continuing Chechen distaste for Russian rule, while also signaling continuing Russian dominance over Chechnya and the North Caucasus region in general. However, as pointed out by the authors, the pro-Kremlin regime and the subsequent attempts to boost its legitimacy by Moscow have led to a sort of informal culture of violence in Chechnya, violence directed against the Russian state. As shown at the beginning of this piece, violence increased in 2009 from 2008, showing continuing dissatisfaction with Russian rule and the violent nature of the forming national Chechen identity bolstered by the Kadyrov regime’s tactics of fear and suppression.\textsuperscript{57}

Currently, the Russians have moved to preventing Chechen extremists from joining the Islamic State. The Islamic State has a large following in Russia, with over 2,500 civilians joining the force. In their campaign in the North Caucasus, Russia is focusing on the

\textsuperscript{54}Ibid., 47-57.
\textsuperscript{55} Campana and Legare “Russia’s Counterterrorism Operation,” 47-57.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., 51-57.
\textsuperscript{57} Campana and Legare “Russia’s Counterterrorism Operation,” 51-57
displacement of terrorist elements that may affect radical drain to Syria. They killed the leader of the proclaimed Caucasus Emirate Doku Umarov in March 2014, and both of his successors in 2015. However, such a strategy has been counter-productive, as the killings have only fractured the Caucasus Emirate, with some groups pledging support to the Islamic State.58

The brutal Russian counterterror strategy has been extremely ineffective and counterproductive. The pro-Russian Kadyrov regime has created a stronger sense of national Chechen identity. Chechen terrorist groups have nationalistic motives; therefore, any sort of counterterror strategy that involves the suppression of national Chechen identity will only further enrage Chechen rebel groups, in turn causing them to resist harder and to continue with their acts of terrorism.

The above case study is another example of Held’s description of governments taking the moral high ground and using any means necessary to combat terrorism. The Russian government has egregiously violated human rights in its war with Chechen terror groups. As previously stated, Russian special agents have been caught setting up explosives similar to those set off in September, 1999. These operations have been used to justify further brutal oppression of the Chechen people and an escalation of the conflict between Russian and Chechen forces. Russia’s status as a permanent member of the Security Council again allows these violations to continue without tangible punishments.

The two Chechen wars show that traditional military confrontation does not work against guerilla tactics, and even if Russia managed to subdue the region for a period of time, it would struggle to maintain total control. Total Chechen independence would see Russia lose a key port on the Caspian Sea, but Russia cannot ignore the atrocities that the Chechens have committed. For now, a stalemate should be observed and both sides should sit at the table and negotiate for the time being. Exchange ideas, concerns, and possible solutions. Observe what would surely be a very tense peace agreement for a few years, and then just respond to how that peace is observed. Should the Chechens decide to re-initiate hostilities, then Russia should re-occupy Chechnya; however, it would be a mistake for Russia to initiate a Third Chechen War. Russia would be wise to observe the Chechens and react to Chechen activities.

The sanctions that have been put on Russia regarding the Ukrainian crisis have drastically affected its economy for the worse; Putin himself is quoted as saying, “Concerning our possibilities on the international financial markets, the sanctions are severely harming Russia.” Successful sanctions show that Russia can be affected domestically, which means that sanctions are a powerful weapon against them. Should Russia continue to commit violent oppression of the Chechens, then the Counter-Terrorism Committee should call on its members to levy further sanctions against Russia in an attempt to change its policy towards the Chechens.

Case Study – China

Communist China has a long history of human rights violations, coming most notably in the form of Tienamann Square in 1989. However, for the purposes of this paper, the analysis will focus on their violations of human rights during counter-terrorism efforts. The biggest terrorist threat that the Chinese fight is the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM), made up of ethnic

Uyghurs. As Christopher Cunningham argues, the Chinese government has exaggerated the threat posed by the ETIM to justify the oppression of the Uyghurs for political, economic, and strategic interest.\textsuperscript{60} The Uyghur have long resisted Chinese attempts at assimilation, and view the Chinese government as one that is oppressive and restrictive of its religion and culture. Ethnic leaders claim that the Chinese government has secretly detained and executed thousands of Uyghurs.\textsuperscript{61}

The conflict between the Chinese government and the ETIM is similar to the Russian-Chechen conflict, albeit less bloody. The Uyghurs are a Muslim, Turkic-speaking group of people residing in Central Asia, with the majority living in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in western China. Communist China has a history of suppressing the Islamic practices of this group, which has led to feelings of resentment by the Uyghurs towards the Chinese government, similar to the Chechen-Russian dynamic. Following a somewhat easing of tensions after the death of Mao Tse Tung, the Chinese felt that increase economic and political liberalization of the region would lead to separatist motives. Increases in ethnic violence in the region in the early 1990s exacerbated these fears, so in 1996 the Chinese government enacted “Strike Hard,” campaigns that were officially designated to fight crime by accelerating arrests and trials. These campaigns were aimed at all criminals throughout China, but in Xinjiang they specifically targeted the Uyghur separatists.\textsuperscript{62}

After the September 11 attacks, the Chinese immediately reframed their rhetoric against the Uyghur and the ETIM, claiming they were radical jihadists and pushing for US and western support. China also wanted greater military power given to the then-Shanghai Five, most likely to help combat the growing tide of radical Islamic terrorism. However, Cunningham argues that the escalation by the Chinese against the Uyghur separatists and the ETIM is not related to terrorism, but rather to economic and strategic interests. The Xinjiang region borders Mongolia, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Indian-controlled Kashmir. It is also rich in natural resources, such as oil and natural gas reserves. Cunningham also notes that eighty percent of China’s reserves in gold, jade, and other precious metals are in the Xinjiang region.\textsuperscript{63}

China recently passed a “landmark law” to battle terrorism domestically and internationally. China’s first anti-terrorism law went into effect on January 1st, and it will require that tech companies hand over encryption keys on demand to security agencies. The law also allows the People’s Liberation Army to be involved in counter-terrorism operations overseas, provided that approval is given by the Central Military Commission and other participating countries. President Obama has expressed concerns over the reach of the law, as its critics claims that it will threaten freedom of expression and intellectual property rights. The law comes as tensions with the Xinjiang region rising; there are “heightened concerns” of violence in the region and reports of radical Uyghurs flocking to Syria to fight for the Islamic State.\textsuperscript{64}

As mentioned above, violence in the Xinjiang and East Turkestan regions has been high, regions with high numbers of Uyghurs. From 2013-2014, approximately 700 people died in

\textsuperscript{60}Christopher P. Cunningham. “Counterterrorism in Xinjiang: the ETIM, China, and the Uyghurs.” \textit{International Journal On World Peace} 29 (2012): 7
\textsuperscript{61}Cunningham. “Counterterrorism in Xinjiang,” 18-9
\textsuperscript{62}Cunningham. “Counterterrorism in Xinjiang,” 12.
\textsuperscript{63}Ibid., 15-6.
political clashes. The Uyghur Human Rights Project states that the number of deaths in 2014 doubled that of 2013. Approximately 125 incidents occurred in the East Turkestan area, a Uyghur-dominated region; Uyghur’s were three times as likely to die from the violence as traditional Chinese Han minorities, suggesting a bias towards the Islamic minority. There is a reported excessive use of police force. The report notes that “in a troubling number of incidents, police killed all alleged ‘perpetrators,’” which further suggests that China is leading a state policy of oppression against the Uyghurs.

The above case study details an interesting point regarding Chinese counter-terrorism. Cunningham’s argument suggests that the Chinese are more concerned with the political and economic interests and ramifications of counter-terrorism strategies than with the protection of human rights and its citizens. However, as detailed by the Uyghur Human Rights Project, oppression and violence against the Uyghurs is on the rise, and does not appear to be stopping soon with the new anti-terrorism law. In fact, one could argue that violence and oppression against the Uyghurs will increase as more of their people join forces with the Islamic State.

Held’s argument is again seen, as China uses moral justification by condemning the separatists as terrorists and justifying their oppression of the ethnic group. China’s powerful economic status and its permanent membership on the Security Council again make it difficult to create tangible punishments against it regarding human rights violations.

As stated, President Obama has given his reservations about the new anti-terrorism law to Chinese President Xi Jinping. However, the new law could be used to the US’ advantage to perhaps relax some of the freedom of expression and intellectual property rights concerns. If the United States can allow the Chinese military to join in counter-terrorism exercises, it could possibly allow for a growth in relations. However, it would be very difficult to get the Chinese to loosen restrictions on freedom of expression in general, let alone over terrorism concerns. Here, the United States and the Counter-Terrorism Committee have to bide their time by allowing the Chinese to be involved in these international operations in order to gain trust and faith.

**Conclusion**

As this paper has demonstrated, the Counter-Terrorism Committee has centralized the fight against international terrorism within the UN, but it cannot bring about tangible results due to the power and subsequent violations of its member states. As the case studies of the US, Russia, and China show, the CTC has no real enforcement or punishment capabilities. The principal-agent problem explored in this paper is too much of a factor against the Counter-Terrorism Committee. The agents are hiding their actions and policies from the principal, and seem unwilling to share with the principal any time soon. This means that the principal cannot properly enforce its goals and ideals. Since the members of the CTC are seated on the Security Council, and because the CTC relies on the Security Council for binding Resolutions, sanctions, and punishments, the organization cannot succeed in full implementation of Resolutions 1373 and 1624. The broad and vague nature of terrorism and counter-terrorism allows states, especially powerful ones, to justify actions that skirt human rights violations without consequences. Until there are systemic

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66Ibid.
changes in the international realm, the CTC is subject to the whims of UN member states and cannot completely eradicate the vile form of warfare that is terrorism.
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The U.S.’s Reliance On Local Forces: The Key In Defeating the Islamic State

Will Pegram

Abstract: With the rise of the Islamic State (ISIS), the U.S. has been unable to achieve a complete victory for three main reasons. First, the Obama administration has made it clear that any form of intervention hinges on multilateral support. President Obama, also, was elected on ending the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, which makes the involvement of the U.S. in the Syrian conflict unlikely. The second obstacle is the partisan divide in Congress. The partisan battle within Congress makes passing legislation difficult and nearly impossible for any legislation involving ISIS. Last, American war weariness currently exists and further hinders a complete victory. The American public grew very tired of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and therefore has fostered some hesitancy regarding intervention against ISIS. To overcome these hindrances, the U.S. should rely on and continue to provide support to local forces. Iraqi and Kurdish forces have demonstrated that they can be victorious. Though it may take time, this policy provides the best outcome.

Introduction

What is known today as the Islamic State has several names. The Islamic State (IS), the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) all refer to the same organization. The main goals of the group are to create a caliphate, kill all infidels, and institute worldwide Sharia law.1 ISIS has conquered large swaths of land and valuable resources from the Iraqi and Syrian governments and is in fundamental opposition to U.S. interests in the region. However, the U.S., in its current political situation, cannot achieve a complete victory. Three obstacles stand in the U.S.’s way. First, President Obama relies on widespread international approval for military intervention and his limited options of drone strikes and airstrikes have restricted success and posed significant risk. Second, intense partisanship and inactivity plague congressional politics. Last, after two wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, America is hampered by war weariness. To overcome these barriers, the U.S. should continue airstrikes and continue with U.S. advisors embedded with Iraqi forces. This policy outcome will not only advance U.S. interests in the region, but also overcome political barriers.

Background

ISIS has its roots in the insurgency against the American occupation of Iraq. Abu Musab al-Zarqawi was given permission by Osama bin Laden to start an Iraqi based branch of al-Qaeda. Al-Zarqawi then created the group’s infamous reputation for its brutality. Videotaped beheadings did not start two years ago under Baghdadi, as that horrific practice began under Al-Zarqawi. Since then, the terrorist group has used a doomsday propaganda strategy to attract foreign recruits and legitimize its actions towards its aforementioned end goal.2 ISIS’s grand strategy is

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to create a caliphate, a Muslim state governed by strict Sharia law. In some views, this objective has been accomplished. Whenever a city is conquered, the victors demonstrate some governance by reestablishing “municipal buildings and core infrastructure such as water and electricity.”\(^3\)

The end goal and tactics differ from other Islamic extremist groups, such as al-Qaeda. Audrey Cronin compares al-Qaeda’s end goal to ISIS’s:

> Isis, in contrast, seeks to control territory and create a “pure” Sunni Islamist state governed by a brutal interpretation of sharia; to immediately obliterate the political borders of the Middle East that were created by Western powers in the twentieth century; and to position itself as the sole political, religious, and military authority over all of the world’s Muslims.\(^4\)

For the most part, the group has refrained from terrorist attacks in the West that would imitate 9/11. The comparison to 9/11 is important because attacks on a large and lethal scale have rallied the American people. The Paris attack and smaller attacks have garnered sympathy from the American public, but such attacks have yet to garner support for a committed response.\(^5\) ISIS’s high level of military sophistication has been instrumental in the feats the group has had.

ISIS has enjoyed great success by capitalizing on a weak, corrupt Iraqi central government and a stagnant civil war in Syria. For the last few years, the Syrian Civil War was at a standstill. There are many different factions within the Syrian Civil War that have different goals and have different foreign support.\(^6\) Recently, Russia, under Vladimir Putin, has not only declared their support for the Assad regime but, instead of combatting the terrorist group, he has targeted Syrian rebels and various U.S. backed Syrian groups.\(^7\) The insertion of Russian support is important because there are differing views within the U.S. government on how to counter Russian aggression. Until now, no side has gained the advantage. With Russian support, Assad has gained the upper hand in the conflict. However, ISIS too has had success, such as capturing long previously disputed cities such as the city of Raqqa and Mosul, Iraq’s second largest city.\(^8\)

In current attempts to intervene against the Islamic State, ISIS has proved to be a competent opponent. The group is not a band of disorganized fighters. These militants have gained experience fighting both the U.S. and the Iraqi Security Forces since the coalition invasion in 2003.\(^9\) Therefore, ISIS should not be underestimated as a loose band of militants when discussing how to combat the terrorist group militarily. ABC quotes a special operations official describing ISIS as “incredible fighters.” In addition, the limited intervention has allowed the group to adapt and evolve to these attempts, such as altering their routes to avoid airstrikes

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and drone strikes. Hence, a military defeat of ISIS is already a challenge, but a complete victory would be even more difficult.

**What Victory Looks Like**

“Complete victory against ISIS” is more than just a military victory. A defeat of ISIS decreases their stranglehold over their captured area, and decreases their membership and recruitment numbers. Eventually a complete defeat will allow for a peaceful democratic solution in Iraq, and the recognition of an independent Kurdistan. If the U.S. continues to rely on airstrikes, bombing the enemy into submission will not lead to a complete defeat. As Audrey Conin describes, ISIS’s “fighters and leaders cluster in urban areas, where they are well integrated into civilian populations and usually surrounded by buildings, making drone strikes and raids much harder to carry out.” Those bombings and raids would lead to more collateral damage and with more collateral damage comes an increase in the number of potential combatants. In order to have a complete win, the U.S. first needs to win militarily against these “incredible fighters”.

A complete victory over ISIS will also decrease the number of marginalized Muslims from across the world flocking to the supposed caliphate. A complete victory eliminates its claims as a legitimate state and decimates its influence worldwide. The successful intervention, therefore, establishes a stable region. The founding of a U.S. or coalition desired government would just reiterate the same mistakes that led to ISIS’s success. A.S. Hashim gives this idea credence and adds that the suppression of the Sunni population led to the foundation of the terrorist group. As well as military factors, political reasons play the largest role in scoring a complete victory. For example, the deciding factor of the 2008 Presidential election has an influence on President Obama’s resolve in intervention.

**The First Roadblock to Victory**

The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan had a profound impact on the 2008 presidential election. President George W. Bush was incredibly unpopular. The war in Iraq lost what support it initially had by 2008. Hence, both Sen. McCain and soon-to-be President Obama attempted to distance themselves from the president characterized as a war monger. Then-Senator Barack Obama campaigned on an end and withdrawal from both Iraq and Afghanistan, which set the tone of a peaceful and less internationally assertive administration. To show this point, President Obama wrote an op-ed piece in 2008, saying, “That is why, on my first day in office, I would give the military a new mission: ending this war [in Iraq].” To further demonstrate the lack of support for the war in Iraq, 60% of respondents in a 2008 Gallup poll indicated that the U.S.

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13A.S. Hashim, "The Islamic State: From al-Qaeda Affiliate to Caliphate,” 70.
made a mistake in sending troops into Iraq. Then in 2011, 75% of respondents to a Gallup poll approved of President Obama’s decision to withdraw almost all troops from Iraq. These polls reflect the American public’s desire for a peaceful president, rather than a belligerent one.

Ending the war in Iraq demonstrates a less war prone Obama administration. As a replacement, the Obama administration has approved a dramatic increase in drone strikes, serving as the administration’s alternative to putting boots on the ground. President Obama championed an end to the war in Iraq to reflect the 60% of Gallup respondents who believed Iraq was a mistake. Therefore, in combating ISIS, the Obama administration is less likely to start an all-out ground war. President Obama demonstrates this trend in the 2015 “National Security Strategy” document. It says, “It [America’s leadership role] serves as a compass for how this Administration, in partnership with the Congress, will lead the world through a shifting security landscape toward a more durable peace and a new prosperity.” Currently, the U.S. conducts airstrikes and drone strikes. However, President Obama has asked Congress to approve an Authorization of the Use of Military Force (AUMF). Air strikes and drones strikes have limitations and vary in effectiveness. The AUMF does request military force, but it states that the resolution “does not authorize the use of the United States Armed Forces in enduring offensive ground combat operations.” Moreover, Cronin writes that airstrikes help contain ISIS and cut off new supplies to ISIS, but Meek quotes another official who states that ISIS made “tactical withdrawals” in response to Obama’s airstrikes. These withdrawals, Meek describes, are attempts to dodge the airstrikes. An effective campaign using ground troops takes time and just an air war does not seem to produce the best results. While the U.S. appears to try some military options, President Obama is hesitant to commit to an extensive effort to defeat ISIS.

President Obama relies on drone strikes and airstrikes to support regional allies to combat ISIS and to serve as an alternative to sending ground troops. To show this trend, Trevor McCrisken states President Obama has overseen 302 drone strikes in his counterterrorism strategy and with the U.S.’s intervention in Libya. The 302 strikes are a drastic increase from the 48 President Bush oversaw in the entirety of his presidency. Other than utilizing drone strikes, the Obama administration depends on providing limited support local allies in combating ISIS. In the 2015 National Security Strategy document, President Obama offers, “Working with the Congress, we will train and equip local partners and provide operational support to gain ground against terrorist groups.” Later, the National Security Strategy states that the U.S. “will continue to support Iraq as it seeks to free itself from sectarian conflict and the scourge of extremists.” In attempting to defeat ISIS, President Obama is unlikely to deploy ground troops for an extended period of time because of his reluctance to start another enduring war, such as happened in Iraq. A key aspect in defeating ISIS is the military aspect, which cannot solely be accomplished by

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16Ibid.


18Ibid.

19Ibid.


airstrikes. Ground troops as a method of defeating ISIS are also doubtful because of the current administration’s reliance on multilateralism.

Unlike President George W. Bush, President Obama has advocated for a multilateral approach for intervention. The February 2015 National Security Strategy outlines just that when it claims, “Our closest partners and allies will remain the cornerstone of our international engagement. Yet, we will continuously expand the scope of cooperation to encompass other state partners.” From this document, President Obama exemplifies his administration's threshold for any intervention. Donnette Murray, author of "Military action but not as we know it," writes that multilateralism is an essential piece of what she calls the Obama Doctrine. The Obama Doctrine states that the U.S. will only intervene in internationally-accepted cases, such as in Libya. In this specific case, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1973 and granted the U.S. and the international community to intervene in Libya. Only then did the U.S. commit. Multilateral intervention in Syria, on the other hand, was vetoed by Russia and China and therefore did not lead to U.S. intervention as in Libya. The intervention in Libya and not in Syria demonstrates the Obama administration’s reliance on international legitimacy. This dependence illustrates the difference between President Obama and President George W. Bush. To further analyze this aspect, Peter Hays Gries would attribute the multilateral threshold to the partisan divide between liberals and conservatives.

Liberals, as Gries concludes, tend to favor multilateralism, whereas conservatives generally favor unilateralism. According to Gries, U.S. intervention led by a liberal against ISIS hinges on multilateral support. Hence, in combatting ISIS, a multilateral approach is time consuming and is not guaranteed to happen. In the wake of U.S.-Russian tension over Ukraine, it is unlikely that Russia will change its veto against combatting ISIS, which makes complicates any U.S. response. Additionally, Russia supports the Assad Regime in Syria. Roy Allison goes as far as saying “Russia is the power which has most prominently provided a diplomatic shield for the Syrian state and bolstered it with arms supplies.”

President Obama has one year left in the oval office. Therefore, applying Gries’ explanation of the liberal/conservative divide is applicable. If a liberal wins the 2016 presidential election, most of the above explanations still apply. If a conservative wins the Presidential election, Gries is not applicable, but the limitations of airstrikes and drone strikes do not change. Additionally, a conservative president will still have to battle with a very partisan Congress in order to combat the Islamic State.

Congress: Inactivity, Re-Election, and Partisanship

Today’s Congress is characterized by a deep divide between Democrats and Republicans. Partisanship in Congress has increased to such a climax that, when the House of Representatives

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24 Donette Murray, "Military action but not as we know it: Libya, Syria and the making of an Obama Doctrine," Contemporary Politics 19, no. 2 (June 2013): 146-166.
26 Donette Murray, "Military action but not as we know it: Libya, Syria and the making of an Obama Doctrine," Contemporary Politics 19, no. 2 (June 2013): 146-166.
attempted to repeal the Affordable Care Act 40 times, neither the president nor either house of Congress was willing to negotiate. The 113th Congress was the least productive congress in the totality of congressional history.29 The 114th Congress is likely to replicate the 113th Congress. Paul Waldman, of the Washington Post, writes that in the 114th Congress, since the Republicans have gained more seats in the House and have taken control of the Senate, the Obama administration and Congress are less likely to legislate.30 Hence, it is unlikely that the Democratic President will sign any bill involving ISIS passed by the Republican controlled Congress into law. Furthermore, Gries helps explain the reasoning behind this partisan divide.

Gries writes that conservatives and liberals hold completely opposite views on foreign policy. Liberals support “international engagement, multilateralism, and diplomacy, while conservatives are more likely to support isolationism, unilaterality, and the use of military force.”31 Therefore, liberals and conservatives are dichotomous opposites in regards to foreign policy, which would cause a tremendous level of difficulty in passing any foreign policy bill through a partisan Congress. Bills may pass through the House, but Republicans do not have enough votes to end a filibuster in the event that Democrats choose to start one in the Senate. Therefore, the deep partisan divides over foreign policy make combating ISIS a challenge. The intense partisanship leads to instances where Congress attempts to limit the President’s powers.

In response to President Johnson’s and President Nixon’s wide authority in the unpopular Vietnam War, Congress passed the War Powers Resolution.32 The War Powers Resolution states that the President can deploy troops for 60 days and then must withdraw the troops if Congress has not declared war or authorized an extension of the troop deployment.33 Congressional attempts to exert the War Powers Act are political maneuvers to limit executive powers in using military force. The debate around the War Powers Resolution jeopardizes the success of military intervention. Eric Jensen states that, in regard to Syria, President Obama considered military intervention but was stonewalled when he was told Congress would consider invoking the War Powers Resolution.34 In addition to the War Powers Resolution, congressional efforts to curb the ISIS are also hindered by ISIS’s tactics.

Whenever American soil is attacked, it is the modus operandi for both parties to put aside partisan politics. George C. Herring states that after 9/11, the Bush administration wished to invade not only Afghanistan, but also Iraq. Though Iraq did not attack the U.S., a partisan Congress offered “scattered opposition” to an unclear invasion.35 The example of Congressional support is further exemplified with the support for authorization of force against those responsible for 9/11. In the House, the vote for House Joint Resolution 64, which authorized the

use of force against those deemed responsible for 9/11, was cast as follows: 420 Congressmen voted “Yeas” and one Congresswoman voted “Nay.” Hence, Congress offers little opposition if the continental U.S. is attacked, but if the U.S. is not directly attacked, then Congress has a hard time approving authorization for military force. ISIS operates around this concept. There has not been a large scale attack in the U.S. In addition, the group has executed Americans, but in their conquered territory, not Kansas or Delaware. Even after the horrific attack in Paris, there has not been much of a change in anti-ISIS strategy. If there was an attack planned on U.S. soil, then the result may be different. Sympathizers are not the same actual members. For instance, in one of the most recent sympathizer attacks, the connection between ISIS and the sympathizers is not completely clear. As of now, Congressional authority for the use of force is difficult to obtain because of the terrorist group’s tactics and because of the lack of a central and agreed upon U.S. grand strategy.

The partisan politics within Congress hinder the creation of a cohesive and consistent U.S. grand strategy, which also hinders any attempt to combat the ISIS. Does the U.S. want to focus on aiding the spread of democracy in the Middle East, or, does the U.S. want to negate the spread of Iranian influence? Grand strategy is determined by national interests, which are ideologically driven. When Republicans and Democrats are dichotomously opposed in foreign affairs, establishing a consistent and cohesive grand strategy is nearly impossible. To make matters worse, Iranian aid to Iraqi security forces complicates the formation of a U.S. grand strategy. Gries explains that conservatives’ strong feelings towards Israel causes conservatives to want a tougher stance towards Iran. Liberals prefer a more lenient foreign policy when it involves Iran. The battle between these two parties over Iran complicates U.S. grand strategy in intervention and hinders aid to Iraqi forces.

The last and one of the most influential factors in congressional anti-ISIS efforts is reelection politics. The primary concern of Congress is to win reelection. Reelection politics, additionally, is partly the cause of the increase in Congressional partisanship. Senators and Congressmen do not want to risk not winning reelection by voting for sending ground troops. Gallup poll reveals that 60% of Americans favor military action against ISIS. However, only 40% of Americans approve of ground troops being used in attempts to defeat the group. Congress has little electoral benefits to gain by authorizing ground troops. If sending ground troops has poor results, then the members of Congress have to face electoral consequences for an already unpopular idea. Furthermore, Jeffery Grynavski identifies that, when Americans vote, they are more likely to vote by party than by individual candidate. Hence, parties will primarily remain cohesive in voting so that the party not associated with the unpopular war will win reelection. This point can be shown with the 2006 midterm elections. Before the 2006 elections,
Republicans controlled the White House and Congress. The 2006 midterm elections demonstrated the disapproval for the war in Iraq and attached that disapproval to the republicans up for reelection. \(^{42}\) Congressmen are aware of this trend and would be less likely to approve the use of ground troops because of the electoral risk that would entail.

**The Last Obstacle to Jump**

Over the last decade and a half, the U.S. has been engaged in numerous conflicts. Those conflicts have not been seen as outstanding successes. The War in Iraq and the War in Afghanistan are the two largest conflicts within that decade and a half. Combined, both wars produced 6,760 soldiers killed in action and 52,018 soldiers wounded in action. \(^{43}\) The costs of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan played a crucial part in the 2008 Presidential election. In 2008, 60% of respondents said that invading Iraq was a mistake. \(^{44}\) 51% of respondents in August 2008 said the war in Iraq was going moderately poor to extremely poor. \(^{45}\) In Afghanistan, 61% of Gallup poll respondents believed that the war in Afghanistan was going “Total Badly.” \(^{46}\) These polls demonstrate the fact the Americans saw the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq as failures, and that the American public is tired of war. This belief carried into the elections when the voters elected Barack Obama who campaigned on peace and steady withdrawals from both Iraq and Afghanistan. Sen. McCain voted for the authorization of force in Iraq and appeared to have endorsed extending the occupation. To explain why President Obama won, Jungyun Gill and James DeFronzo conclude that “the state level of Iraq War military fatalities had a significant positive effect on the vote for the antiwar candidate.” \(^{47}\) Simply put, casualties cost votes. When American war weariness impacts policy, politicians create bad wartime policies.

Public opinion has a direct effect on policy making. In wartime, U.S. public opinion drives the strategy, the war’s successes, and the eventual withdrawal in every conflict. Over time in any military intervention, the American public grows tired of causalities and will eventually vote in favor of anti-war candidates. American war weariness would politicize any intervention the U.S. would take against ISIS.

War weariness is not a new concept. The result of any rushed military intervention against ISIS is foretold by two previous instances. First, take the Vietnam War as an example. In 1969, 58% of people polled said that sending troops to Vietnam was a mistake. \(^{48}\) Consequently, President Nixon began his “Vietnamization” process. President Nixon knew that South Vietnamese Armed Forces had a lackluster performance record under Vietnamization, but Nixon still continued with the withdrawal process to appease the American public. \(^{39}\) The withdrawal from Iraq is a second example of public opinion driving poor political decisions. Rick Brennan

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\(^{44}\) “Fewer in U.S. Support Iraq Withdrawal Decision Now vs. 2011.” Gallup.


writes that, after years of U.S. forces training Iraqi forces, the Iraqis were not prepared to handle the secretarial violence. Specifically, “all this evidence led U.S. military planners in Iraq to one clear conclusion: if U.S. forces completely withdrew by the end of 2011, it would be very difficult for the Iraqis to maintain the fragile gains made since 2007.” The U.S. did completely withdraw at the end of 2011. These repeated incidents indicate that when public opinion is not overwhelmingly for military force, then public policy leads to rushed and most likely failed interventions.

How To Jump These Hurdles

The U.S. could effectively defeat ISIS. Airstrikes by the U.S. and other countries against ISIS have already begun to decrease enemy numbers and constrain the caliphate’s area of operations. Coalition airstrikes, led by the U.S., have put a huge dent into the Islamic State’s oil revenue. The airstrikes have even killed the infamous Jihadi John. Therefore, the current administration’s reliance on airstrikes is a two-fold benefit. First, they produce some results. Disrupting the oil chain that ISIS depends on for financing its caliphate is a nice accomplishment and certainly puts a strain on the state’s budget. Second, airstrikes help circumvent American war weariness. The option that produces the best results is to accompany the airstrikes with well-supplied and firmly backed local forces.

ISIS was quick to gain so much land. The Iraqi forces were also quick to be overrun. Today’s situation is quite different. Iraqi forces, with the help of U.S. military advisors, recaptured Ramadi. With the capture of Ramadi and advances into previously controlled parts of the Islamic State, Iraqi forces have shown that they are up to the task. High ranking Iraqi generals have been quoted in saying that all that is needed is continuing airstrikes and some Western troops to advise the Iraqi and Peshmerga forces in their fight against the Islamic State. Furthermore, these generals have said that the presence of a lot of Western troops would hurt the fight.

To further exasperate why no large U.S. deployment is needed, Dexter Filkins and David Kil details the inadequacy of U.S. occupations.

The U.S. counterinsurgency policy cannot work. David Kilcullen writes that for an effective counterinsurgency policy, higher causalities are a necessary, because troops have to be willing to be vulnerable and welcoming to the local populace. But, the American war weariness prevents that from working. Another aspect is that to prevent American casualties, American commanders tend to overuse extreme firepower. Dexter Filkins details this point in his book The Forever War. Colonel Sassaman was an American commander in charge of a 300 square mile territory around the Tigris River. While the book describes his leadership as effective, his counterinsurgency tactics were drastic and often at times caused more problems than the one he was attempting to fix. For example, one day after returning to his command post, insurgents sent

a mortar round into the site. In response, Sassaman ordered several large airstrikes to take out the insurgents.\textsuperscript{56} Even if the Obama administration and the partisan Congress can overcome their differences and American war weariness withers away, a U.S. military occupation should not be the answer. Continued airstrikes, military advisors, and an increase in U.S. support for Iraqi and Peshmerga forces could make the liberation of Ramadi the beginning of an end to the Islamic State.

The U.S. government is currently in multiple stalemates. The first is a battle between the Obama administration and a Republican-led Congress, which leads to President Obama aggressively using limited executive action and the second being a partisan battle members of Congress that causes little to no law making. The reliance on the Iraqi military and the Peshmerga forces sidesteps both of those political barriers, but also the war weariness that resides in the American public today. Additionally, continuing airstrikes and sending advisors, accompanied with support for the Peshmerga and Iraqi military is the optimum route to heed.

\textsuperscript{56}Dexter Filkins, \textit{The Forever War} (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008).
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The Unanticipated Threat of ISIS: Rise, Growth, and Stability

Wes Cooper

Abstract: The terrorist threat posed by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria/Sham (ISIS) was unanticipated by many. This paper argues that ISIS’ rise, growth and stability are largely a result of disenfranchisement in Iraq and Syria and financial stability. However, examination of the history and social conditions in Syria and Iraq demonstrate that the expansion of ISIS, or another organization similar to ISIS, was nearly inevitable. This paper provides an overview of ISIS’ rise by examining how the organization was able to initially gain support by capitalizing on disenfranchisement. This paper will also explain the growth and stability of ISIS by examining how the organization has been able to financially support itself.

Origins and Growth of ISIS

The main goal of the polyonomous terrorist group, known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Ash Sham, Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), Islamic State, and the Islamic State in the Levant (ISIL), is to establish a caliphate by gaining control of areas in Iraq and Syria. The organization controls various areas under Sharia law, which covers both religious life and non-religious life. These laws include separating boys and girls in school, requiring women to be covered in full veil or niqab, and banning music. ¹

ISIS controls several wilayats, or regions, in Iraq and Syria, including the southern, Diyala, Baghdad, Kirkuk, Salahuddin, Anbar, and Ninewa divisions in Iraq, and the Al Barakah, Al Kheir, Al Raqqah, Al Badiya, Halab, Idlib, Hama, Damascus, and Coast divisions in Syria. ISIS’ organizational structure very much resembles a state. The group has a leader and this leader has a cabinet of advisors and two deputies. ISIS also places governors in charge of different areas under its control. Overall, the organization’s organizational structure strongly resembles the structure of a state and shows ISIS’ ambitions to become a state. The following graphic further illustrates ISIS’ organizational structure.²

² Ibid.
Remnants of ISIS arose in October 2006 when the leader of Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) announced the creation of the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI), an affiliate of Al Qaeda, and established Abu Omar al-Baghdadi as its leader. Later, Abu Omar al-Baghdadi was killed in a US air strike and Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi took control of ISI. Bakr al-Baghdadi was formerly the general supervisor of the Sharia Committees for the Wilayats. With his eyes set on expanding ISI into Syria, Bakr al-Baghdadi proved to be more extreme, ambitious, and disloyal than his predecessor. Signals of Bakr al-Baghdadi’s disloyalty to Al Qaeda arose when he announced the absorption of an Al-Qaeda affiliate in Syria. In April 2013, Bakr al-Baghdadi declared that ISI absorbed the Syrian militant group Jabhat al Nusra li Ahl al Sham (al Nusra) and that this signaled the birth of a new group that spanned across Syria and Iraq. The group would be known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria/Sham (ISIS). This marked the creation of ISIS. On June 30, 2014, ISIS announced the creation of a Caliphate, an Islamic State. After the announcement, Bakr al-Baghdadi changed his name to Caliph Ibrahim and the name of ISIS was changed to the Islamic State.

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Systematic Disenfranchisement in Syria

Due to disenfranchisement among various groups of people in both Iraq and Syria, ISIS has been able to gain a stronghold in these two countries. ISIS’ ability to be successful in Syria is largely due to the Syrian civil war. The Syrian civil war started because many Syrians have been suffering from disenfranchisement. Much of Syria’s problems have risen from the corruption so prevalent in Syria. According to Transparency International, Syria has consistently had a low corruption perception index (CPI). Syria’s CPI when calculated on a scale of zero (very corrupt) to 10 (very clean) scored less than 3.5 between 2003 and 2011. Since 2012, when the CPI scale went from zero (very corrupt) to 100 (very clean), Syria has consistently scored below 30. Extreme corruption in Syria has led to business people’s investment costs rising 26-30% which has negatively affected the costs and standards of living among the Syrian population.

The living conditions of Syrians were exasperated when a drought in Syria forced farmers to look for work in the city. Many of these farmers were unable to make an adequate living in the city. In fact, it is estimated that two to three million of Syria’s ten million rural citizens were sent into extreme poverty. The poor standards of living in Syria caused by corruption combined with Syria’s drought made for a very frustrated and disenfranchised population. Later in 2011, Syrians protested the government’s failure to help them. These protests were met with violent military intervention. As a result, riots broke out throughout the country and the Syrian civil war began.

During 2011, when the civil war in Syria began, ISIS was part of al-Qaeda and was known as al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). AQI saw the unrest in Syria as an opportunity to grow their organization. This organization would be able to offer employment to people in dire need of a job and would give them an opportunity to fight against an oppressive regime. In 2013, AQI’s leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, declared that his organization was working in Syria and changed the name of AQI to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Bakr al-Baghdadi also claimed that al Nusra was merging with ISIL. However, al Nusra rejected the claim and appealed to al Qaeda Central for judgement. Al Qaeda Central rejected that al Nusra was part of ISIL. Al Qaeda Central ordered that Bakr al-Baghdadi limit his operations to Iraq while Golani, the leader of al Nusra, was in charge of al Qaeda operations in Syria. Bakr al-Baghdadi refused to accept al Qaeda Central Command’s decision which led to al Qaeda Central Command disavowing ISIS. After ISIS’ disavowement, Bakr al-Baghdadi began establishing his organization in Syria. During this time, ISIS attracted recruits from al Nusra and several other Syrian rebel groups.

Systematic Disenfranchisement in Iraq

Much of the support ISIS has gained in Iraq started from policies instituted by US diplomat Paul Bremer. After the US invasion of Iraq, Bremer gained authoritative control of

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Iraq. While controlling Iraq, he issued two decrees. The first was to outlaw Saddam Hussein’s Ba’ath party, which mostly consisted of Sunnis, from government positions. The second was to disband the Iraqi army and intelligence services. These decrees were devastating for Iraq. Many people in Iraq were Ba’athists only because it was a requirement for political office. The outlawing of Ba’athists led to the loss of jobs for 85,000 to 100,000 people. The decision to disband Iraq’s army and intelligence services led to around 700,000 Iraqi military personnel and police officers losing employment. Many of these people began to work for terrorist organizations to provide money for their families.\footnote{Evan Blackwell, “Why Support ISIS? The History of Sunni Disenfranchisement in Iraq,” NATO Association of Canada, September 5, 2015, accessed November 16, 2015, http://natocouncil.ca/why-support-isis-the-history-of-sunni-disenfranchisement-in-iraq/}

In order to combat the security problems in Iraq, the US military began to support the Sahwa. The Sahwa was a tribal movement in Iraq that formed in 2005. The movement was formalized in 2006 when the al-Anbar Salvation Council was created.\footnote{Myriam Benraad, "Iraq's Tribal "Sahwa": Its Rise and Fall," Iraq's Tribal "Sahwa": Its Rise and Fall, accessed April 07, 2016, http://www.mepc.org/journal/middle-east-policy-archives/iraqs-tribal-sahwa-its-rise-and-fall} The al-Anbar Salvation Council was an alliance of clans, led by Abd al-Sattar al-Rishawi, which provided help to the Iraqi government and US military.\footnote{Matthew Penny, "The Anbar Awakening in Context … and Why It Is so Hard to Replicate," English March April 2015 Military Review Penny, April 2015, accessed April 7, 2016, http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/MilitaryReview/Archives/English/MilitaryReview_20150430_art016.pdf.} The Sahwa movement first consisted of mostly Sunni Arab tribes that had been in conflict with Al Qaeda due to Al Qaeda’s extreme violence and the organization’s targeted killings of tribal leaders. The Sahwa later grew to include Sunni Arab fighters, some of whom were former insurgents. The US provided tribes that were part of the Sahwa with arms and financial resources to fight al Qaeda. In the process, these tribes and their leaders gained authority in several areas of Iraq. However, when the US began to withdraw from areas of Iraq, members of the Sahwa movement faced many retaliatory attacks from Al Qaeda. One retaliatory attack led to the death of Abd al-Sattar al-Rishawi. These retaliatory attacks combined with intimidations and threats convinced many Sahwa members to return to Al Qaeda’s ranks.\footnote{Benraad, "Iraq's Tribal "Sahwa".}

When the US left Iraq, Nouri al-Maliki became prime minister. Maliki drew on the provisions instituted by Bremer to reinforce his power. This led to the continual oppression of the Sunni population. For example, Maliki used Bremer’s policies to bar prominent Sunnis from political office. This resulted in riots breaking out in Iraq’s Sunni occupied areas. Maliki responded to these riots by further repressing the Sunni population. Maliki also used Shiite backed militias supported by Iran to stop riots, which further angered the Sunni population. These militias were accused of committing mass rape and sectarian reprisals against the Sunni population. As a result of the Sunnis’ history of being oppressed in Iraq, many Sunnis now support ISIS.\footnote{Blackwell, “Why Support ISIS? The History of Sunni Disenfranchisement in Iraq,” 10.}

**Financing Terror**

Successful financing practices and an abundance of funds are required to succeed in terror operations, and ISIS is not in short supply of either. ISIS must have enough money to pay
personnel, undertake operations,\textsuperscript{17} manage territory, and support the eight million people under its control. Without the money to cover these costs, ISIS would not be able to function as it currently does. The organization uses many different methods to raise funds. According to the US Department of Treasury's Undersecretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence, David Cohen, most of ISIS' revenue comes from local criminal and terrorist activities. In 2014, the US Department of Treasury estimated that ISIS received at least $20 million in ransoms alone. ISIS' revenue streams primarily consist of the sale of oil, extortion, the sale of stolen antiquities, and kidnappings.\textsuperscript{18}

Much of ISIS’ funds come from illegally controlling oil fields in Iraq and Syria. It was estimated that ISIS earned around $1 million per day from the sale of oil in 2014. According to Cohen, the Syrian government also made an arrangement with ISIS to purchase oil from fields and refineries that were previously under Syrian control.\textsuperscript{19} This large amount of money ISIS receives from selling oil is one of the many factors that has allowed ISIS to be self-sufficient.\textsuperscript{20}

ISIS also gains funds from the trafficking of artifacts. It is estimated that the organization receives US $200 million from the selling of artifacts.\textsuperscript{21} In addition to ISIS members selling these artifacts,\textsuperscript{22} ISIS also uses local residents to obtain artifacts from ancient sites. The organization does this by issuing permits to local citizens to search for artifacts in ancient sites. ISIS then charges a percentage of the money citizens receive from selling artifacts.\textsuperscript{23}

In regards to kidnapping, ISIS’ victims come from countries around the world, including France and the United States. These victims are often people, such as journalists, that travelled to ISIS controlled areas. France has actually paid $14 million in ransoms for kidnapped journalists. On the other hand, the United States has not paid ransoms. This has led to American hostages being beheaded while French hostages have been spared.\textsuperscript{24} The US government has explained that that they are not paying for hostages because of the premise that a no-concessions policy lowers the amount of kidnappings by removing the incentive to holding hostages.\textsuperscript{25} ISIS has also kidnapped women and children and forced them into sexual slavery. A report by Amnesty International explains that ISIS abducted many people from the Yezidi minority group. The Yezidi minority group makes up the majority of people in ISIS’ slave trade. After being


\textsuperscript{19} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{21} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{22} U.S. Department of Treasury, "Remarks of Under Secretary”.

\textsuperscript{23} Singer


\textsuperscript{25} U.S. Department of Treasury, "Remarks of Under Secretary”.

51
abducted, some of these people are sold to buyers while others are forcibly married and given as gifts.26

Conclusion

ISIS’ ability to capitalize on disenfranchisement and the organization’s lucrative revenue streams have led to the organization growing more powerful. For example, ISIS began in Iraq as an affiliate of Al-Qaeda. Due to disenfranchisement in Iraq, many people in Iraq began to support ISIS.27 When disenfranchisement in Syria led to civil war, ISIS capitalized on this disenfranchisement by expanding into Syria and gaining support from Syria’s disenfranchised population.28 While the organization was expanding and gaining territory, the organization was financing its activities by gaining funds from various revenue streams, including the sale of oil, extortion, the sale of stolen antiquities, and kidnappings.29

ISIS’ revenue streams have allowed the organization to finance its costs which include maintaining and administrating territory30 and paying recruits.31 Without financing these costs, the organization could not maintain its current structure. In theory, it can cost up to billions of dollars to maintain and administrate territory. Therefore, for ISIS to maintain and administrate territory, the organization must have a large amount of funds. Without these funds the organization would not be able to hold onto territory.32 Additionally, if ISIS stopped paying their personnel then the disenfranchised people that joined ISIS would not have much reason to continue to support ISIS. This is because the disenfranchised people that joined ISIS would once again be disenfranchised if they were not able to earn a living from ISIS. As a result, the amount of people supporting ISIS and employed by ISIS would likely decrease if ISIS stopped paying its personnel.

The disenfranchisement in Iraq and Syria and ISIS’ financing activities are significant problems that must be addressed. If ISIS receives less funds, then the organization would not be able to maintain its current costs, which could lead to ISIS becoming less powerful or dissolving. However, if the disenfranchisement in Iraq and Syria is not addressed when ISIS loses power, then another organization that is similar to ISIS may rise by taking advantage of the disenfranchised population in Iraq and Syria. Further research should explore these issues and investigate how to best address disenfranchisement in Iraq and Syria while effectively degrading ISIS’ financial strength. Overall, the disenfranchisement in Iraq and Syria and the potential funds available from local criminal and terrorist activities are a dangerous combination that could have led to the rise of any violent organization that saw the chance to take advantage of the situations in Iraq and Syria. Since ISIS decided to take advantage of the situations in Iraq and Syria, this organization gained the benefits, power and influence.

29 U.S. Department of Treasury, "Remarks of Under Secretary”.
30 Ibid.
31 Gómez, "A Financial Profile”.
32 U.S. Department of Treasury, "Remarks of Under Secretary”.

52
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