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- Submissions must use footnotes in accordance with the Chicago Manual of Style.

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- Authors should prepare an abstract of their work of no more than 200 words.

Papers will be evaluated using both substantive and stylistic criteria. Too many problems with the written presentation of a work may disqualify it even if the argument or subject is compelling.

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Dear Readers,

We proudly present to you part two of the very special 50th volume of the Towson University Journal of International Affairs. The previous issue was dedicated to the man who created the Journal fifty years ago, Dr. Eric A. Belgrad, who also initiated the scholarly journey of the Journal. Accordingly, it contained commemorative pieces in honor of Dr. Belgrad, pieces written by Dr. Belgrad for the Towson University Journal of International Affairs, and some of the Journal’s “Greatest Hits” over the years. This issue returns to our traditional presentation of fresh and original scholarship.

The goal of the Towson University Journal of International Affairs is to contribute exceptional scholarship pertaining to international affairs and to provide an opportunity to scholars ranging from undergraduate students to senior scholars to engage in the scholarly discourse of the field. Being part of a student-run journal, the editors of the Journal and our faculty advisor, Dr. Paul T. McCartney, are deeply invested in the process of selecting articles for publication. After continuous discussions with the authors and a long process of multiple reviews and revisions, we present articles that reflect sophistication, originality, and earnestness in argument and writing. Because articles that are published in the Towson University Journal of International Affairs most often relate to the field of international relations, they frequently have important suggestions for policy-makers. In this manner, articles featured in this journal have notable relevance for many different sectors of the population. Such relevance and originality of scholarship are particularly reflective of the articles published in this issue.

In the first article, author Mackenzie E. Rice critiques the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina as well as the Dayton Peace Accords, which ultimately led to the ongoing ethnic tensions that have persisted in the country for years. Rice presents a well-reasoned argument emphasizing how policy-makers imposed a system of consociational democracy on Bosnia-Herzegovina without regard for the many factors entailed in a civil society. In this sense, this article can apply to many other current and potential future situations as well. For example, many countries in Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and Africa suffer from multiethnic conflicts like that in Bosnia-Herzegovina, which may result from superficially imposed systems of government or government structures that do not appeal to a majority of the population. This highlights a critical problem of state-building faced by many post-colonial and post-imperial countries. Thus, the author accentuates that policy-makers should not disregard social and cultural factors while engaging in the process of state-building. In so doing, Rice contributes an original argument to the debate surrounding the effectiveness of the Dayton Peace Accords.

The second article, written by Usjid U. Hameed, offers a unique theoretical approach for understanding a region that is considered “the hotbed of crises,” the Middle East. The author specifically analyzes the rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran using the Foreign Policy Analysis approach. Delving deep into the traditional discussion of international relations theories, this is a
unique critique of existing scholarship on the rivalry, which often utilizes either realism or constructivism to understand the issues between the two countries. However, Hameed argues that such “either-or” approaches do not provide a complete understanding of the rivalry between the two regional powers or the issues in the region. Hameed also presents the very complex history behind the rivalry in an impressively comprehensive manner. This argument also provides a remarkably original perspective on the region of the Middle East, as Hameed emphasizes the agency of states within the region. The Saudi-Iran rivalry is profoundly shaping Middle Eastern politics, as countries are forming alliances and the two regional powers are balancing against the perceived threat posed by the other. Often times, we see Middle Eastern states as very weak and Middle Eastern wars as proxy wars of Great Powers. Hence, Hameed presents the region in new light and suggests that policy-makers use the Foreign Policy Analysis approach to fully understand the region and its many complexities.

Finally, the third article provides a comparative analysis of two countries that are not frequently discussed together in Western scholarship. Sarmad Ishfaq examines the differing counter-terrorism approaches of Sri Lanka and Pakistan and concludes that Pakistan has important lessons to learn from the mistakes of Sri Lanka’s counter-terrorism operation. Providing another crucial lesson for policy-makers, this article carries significant applicability for Pakistan in particular, a country which has been plagued by terrorism for over a decade now. The author skillfully evaluates the counter-terrorism policies of the two countries in a step-by-step manner, making intriguing connections between seemingly unrelated factors, such as terrorism and the government’s control of the media. Thus, Ishfaq presents a unique analysis of counter-terrorism strategies, which although is specifically targeted towards Pakistan, can also be applied to other countries currently struggling against terrorism.

The articles presented in this issue of the Journal demonstrate the ability of sophisticated scholarly analysis to thoroughly explain complex issues in international relations. Each of these articles offers a unique analytical approach to understanding a diverse range of issues, including effective state-building, regional rivalries, and counter-terrorism. This is a reflection of the flexibility of the field of international relations, which continues to gain importance in an increasingly globalized and international world. This reality means that high-quality scholarship is a necessary tool in the quest to understand the complexities of the world that we are living in. Therefore, we, the members of the Towson University Journal of International Affairs, sincerely hope that you, the reader, find these pieces of scholarship both timely and informative.

Sincerely,
Tim Bynion and Amna Rana
Editors in Chief
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Building a State From a Broken Nation: The Case of Bosnia-Herzegovina

Mackenzie E. Rice

Abstract: Following the dissolution of Yugoslavia, the newly formed state of Bosnia-Herzegovina became embroiled in a brutal civil war between the state’s Serbian, Croatian, and Bosniak Muslim groups. To resolve the conflict, international representatives constructed the Dayton Peace Accords, a constitutional document that implemented Arend Lijphart’s model of consociational democracy in Bosnia-Herzegovina in an effort to create power-sharing structures of government. However, the implementation of consociational democracy in Bosnia-Herzegovina was short sighted, as the international actors failed to recognize the importance of several pre-requisites necessary to create a political environment conducive to Lijphart’s consociationalism. Furthermore, the Dayton Peace Accords facilitated the geographical segregation of ethnic factions within the state. As a result, Bosnia-Herzegovina has fallen into political and economic stagnation, and is almost entirely devoid of a collective identity or civil society, making the formal division of the state along ethnic lines the only viable option for the state’s future success and development.

Introduction

In 1995, the Dayton Peace Accords were signed in Bosnia-Herzegovina to put an end to the devastating civil war that had plagued the country since its independence. The Bosnian Civil War was fought between the country’s three dominant ethnic and religious factions: Bosniak Muslims, Serbian Orthodox Christians, and Roman Catholic Croatians. The conflict quickly devolved into systemic practices of ethnic cleansing, which ultimately prompted the international community to intervene and implement a democratic system of government that would facilitate a lasting peace and union between the three distinct ethnic populations in Bosnia-Herzegovina. To achieve these goals, the Dayton Peace Accords divided the state into two nearly ethnically homogenous regions, the Republika Srpska and the Bosnian Federation, and united them under a system of government resembling Arend Lijphart’s model of consociational democracy, which is intended to promote stable democracy in ethnically fragmented societies.1

Unfortunately, the social and political climate in Bosnia-Herzegovina was far from prepared to transition effectively to the new power-sharing form of democratic government installed by the international community. Ultimately, the failure of consociational democracy in Bosnia-Herzegovina can be attributed to a lack of overarching state loyalties and absence of cooperation amongst political elites, factors which Lijphart outlines as essential for the functioning of consociationalism and undeniably crucial components for successful state building. As a result of the state’s stark geographic segregation and the immiscible nature of competing ethnic political factions, Bosnia-Herzegovina has fallen into political and economic stagnation, leaving a formal partition of the state as the population’s only realistic prospect for future development and prosperity.

Implementing Lijphart’s Consociationalism

Following the conclusion of the civil war, Bosnia-Herzegovina was in desperate need of a government system that would ensure the representation of Serbians, Bosniak Muslims, and Croatians in the political landscape. To accomplish this, the state’s constitution, the Dayton Peace Accords, was designed to reflect the ideals of consociational democracy; a model developed by renowned political scientist Arend Lijphart. A consociational system of democracy is defined by Lijphart as “government by elite cartel designed to turn a democracy with a fragmented political culture into a stable democracy.”\(^2\) The institutional structures that typically set consociational democracies apart from other forms of democratic government include: a deeply segmented society, regional autonomy, a government formed by a coalition of political elites, proportional representation in government, and most notably, the existence of a “mutual minority veto”, which affords each group broad power to block legislation they deem is “threatening.”\(^3\) While researching and developing the model of consociationalism, Lijphart determined several factors that were favorable to creating a successful consociational democracy in a divided society. The most significant factors that Lijphart identified were the existence of an external threat, a tradition of elite accommodation, geographical concentration of factions of equal size, and most importantly, overarching and crosscutting loyalties to the state.\(^4\)

The presence of an external threat is important to a newly consociational state because it necessitates unity and promotes internal cooperation, thereby creating connections between subcultures.\(^5\) Similarly, a tradition of elite cooperation is essential in order to maintain the cohesion of groups within the state and to reduce the amount of obstructionism through the use of the legislative veto power that elites hold in consociational systems. Geographical concentration aids the functionality of consociationalism, because it ensures that political parties representing specific segments of society receive electoral support from their respective populations.\(^6\) Above all, overarching loyalties to the state are most important because there must be consensus that remaining a single state would be better than separation in order for consociationalism to be successful. An essential component in creating this state loyalty is the cultivation of a civil society that facilitates individual interaction across group divisions. Global studies scholar B.I. Zelenko defines civil society succinctly as “involving relations among people as market participants, owners, partners, competitors, neighbors, members of public associations and movements, churches, friendly associations, and clans,” that are apparent across “horizontal social connections.”\(^7\) The existence of civil society within a state greatly contributes to Lijphart’s ideals of consociational democracy by providing a foundation for crosscutting relationships that would lead to overarching cooperation and state loyalties for the purpose of working towards common social and political goals.

Despite its many pre-conditions, consociational democracy has demonstrated relative success in countries such as Switzerland, Austria, and temporarily, Lebanon.\(^8\) Each of these cases demonstrates how linguistic, religious, or ethnic divisions can be overcome in states where political elites place a value on cohesion and have a history of collaboration in order to

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\(^2\) Lijphart, "Consociational Democracy," 216.


\(^4\) Ibid., 522.


\(^8\) Lijphart, "Consociational Democracy," 216.
achieve political goals. However, turning to the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina, a review and analysis of the state’s history of ethnic violence reveals that the application of Lijphart’s consociational model through the Dayton Peace Accords overlooked these requirements in the interest of expediting peace and avoiding geographic separation. This decision has unfortunately had enduring consequences for both the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the functionality of the state’s government.

**History of Ethnicity and Conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina**

In order to assess the rigid ethnic divisions in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the barriers that they pose to consociationalism, it is necessary to understand the role of ethnicity in the dissolution of Yugoslavia. The former Yugoslavia was not always the ethnically fractured, violent and mobilized region that it became during the mid-1990s. Under the communist rule of President Tito following the conclusion of World War II, Yugoslavia experienced a widespread national effort to construct a cohesive “Yugoslav” identity. This ideology of a unified identity surprisingly took strongest hold in the regions of Bosnia, Croatia, and Vojvodina, where ethnic heterogeneity was greatest, and amassed great popularity between 1961 and 1981 as an increasing number of people began to self-identify as “Yugoslavian.” However, this trend changed drastically when the Communist Party struggled to maintain its grip in Yugoslavian politics after the death of its infamous leader, President Tito in 1980. After the death of President Tito, secessionist movements were mobilized along ethnic nationalist lines, which eroded any institutions of Yugoslavian identity. The political contention between these groups ultimately led to the fall of the Communist party, the dissolution of Yugoslavia, and violent, prolonged ethnic conflicts that plagued several newly independent states, including Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Bosnia-Herzegovina declared independence on October 15th of 1991, however the referendum on independence from Yugoslavia did not take place until March 1992. Almost instantly after declaring independence, civil war erupted in Bosnia-Herzegovina between the Serbians who opposed the formation of the new state, wanting to remain a part of a Serbian dominated Yugoslavia, and pro-independence Bosniak Muslims. Violent conflict also broke out between Bosniak and Croatian factions within Bosnia-Herzegovina, as the Croatians aspired to separate from the new state of Bosnia-Herzegovina and accede to the newly independent state of Croatia, while Bosniak Muslims tried to keep the factions within Bosnia-Herzegovina together.

The civil war in Bosnia-Herzegovina was characterized by war crimes and acts of ethnic cleansing that took place in key cities and municipalities within the state. The use of ethnic cleansing as a method of warfare in Bosnia-Herzegovina was first employed by the Serbian armed forces, which would capture considerable amounts of territory and proceed to execute, detain and forcibly displace Bosniaks and Croatians from their homes. At one point during the civil war, Serbian armed forces were estimated to control approximately

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11 Ibid.
13 Ibid., 25-30.
14 Ibid., 30.
16 Ibid., 54.
70% of the territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Such atrocities however, were not exclusively committed by the Serbians, and at the end of the civil war, all three ethnic groups had used concentration camps and methods of ethnic cleansing to maintain the integrity of ethnically homogenous regions in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Bosnian Civil War resulted in an estimated 100,000 deaths and created Europe’s worst refugee crisis since World War II, producing approximately 1.3 million refugees and an additional 1 million internally displaced persons.

While international peacekeeping efforts were deployed by the United Nations in Bosnia-Herzegovina during the civil war, these forces were unable to protect civilians and resolve conflict amidst the violent and chaotic ethnic war. The turning point of the civil war in Bosnia-Herzegovina was the Srebrenica massacre, which saw the murder of approximately 8,000 Bosniak Muslims by the Serbian army. At the time of the Srebrenica massacre, the city was a designated “safe zone” by the United Nations, an area that was reinforced by peacekeeping troops and used to provide humanitarian aid and protection to thousands of Bosniak Muslims during the war, however the Serbian army did not give credence to this designation. The genocide in Srebrenica triggered leaders in the United States and Europe to call a conference and meet with representatives of the Bosniak Muslim, Serbian, and Croatian groups in Bosnia-Herzegovina to negotiate a peace agreement that would end the devastating ethnic conflict. The result of this conference was the Dayton Peace Accords.

The Dayton Peace Accords and Consociationalism

Ultimately, the brutal civil war was ended with the intervention of international representatives and the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords in 1995, which effectively ended the prolonged ethnic violence in Bosnia-Herzegovina and split the state into two semi-autonomous regions, The Rebuplika Srpska and The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Geographically, the regions were created primarily according to the ethnicity of their constituents, with the Republika Srpska containing a population comprised almost entirely of Serbians and The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina containing a population dominated by Bosniak Muslims and Croatians. The regional governments of these areas were given significant amounts of autonomy by the Dayton Peace Accords, such as control over taxation, education policy, and many elements of foreign policy.

The main objective of the Dayton Peace Accords was to stop the violent conflict between the three ethnic factions in Bosnia-Herzegovina and promote an enduring peace. To achieve these goals, the international actors sought to establish a functioning democracy in Bosnia-Herzegovina that would fairly accommodate its distinct ethnic groups by granting proportional representation in government. Thus, representatives from the United States,
France, Germany, Russia, and the United Kingdom installed a form of government derivative from the ideals of consociational democracy envisioned by political scientist Arend Lijphart. The Dayton Peace Accords were successful in ending the brutal ethnic conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina by creating a government apparatus that depended on the principle of power sharing.\textsuperscript{27} However, the relationships between ethnic factions in Bosnia-Herzegovina had suffered irreparable damage during the civil war, and the state did not have several essential foundations that a successful consociational system requires.\textsuperscript{28}

The element of Lijphart’s consociational democracy that made it appear most applicable to the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina was its design to maximize the amount of power sharing between diverse groups within a state.\textsuperscript{29} The Constitution of Bosnia-Herzegovina embedded this feature of consociational democracy in Annex Four of the Dayton Peace Accords by creating a three-member presidency, comprised of one national leader from each ethnic group. Furthermore, each leader was designated veto power, which they may use to block any policies that they deem are threatening to the interests of their group.\textsuperscript{30} A unique feature of Bosnia-Herzegovina’s consociational democracy is extreme levels of decentralization between national and regional governments, where regional governments organized along ethnic lines have the ability to make relatively autonomous decisions about a broad range of domestic and foreign policy objectives.\textsuperscript{31} This power-sharing structure of government and decentralization of power ensures that no single ethnic group will ever amass enough power to single-handedly control the distribution of political goods and resources. In Lijphart’s model of consociationalism, these systems and institutions are intended to encourage moderation and compromise between diverse groups within the government.

While the representatives that constructed the Dayton Peace Accords were well intentioned in their application of Lijphart’s consociational democracy to the state of Bosnia-Herzegovina to encourage cooperation and multiethnic collaboration, these outcomes were not achieved. By reflecting on the history of ethnic conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the factors that Lijphart identified as pre-requisites for a successful consociational system, such as the existence of an external threat, a tradition of elite accommodation, overarching loyalties to the state, and geographical concentration of ethnic groups, it is clear that many of these pre-conditions were absent in the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina.\textsuperscript{32} First, during the state-building period in the aftermath of the civil war, Bosnia-Herzegovina faced no external threats that acted as a binding force on diverse ethnic factions. Rather, its history proved that the most credible threat facing the state originated internally, from the separatist movements of Serbian and Croatian groups. Second, there was no tradition of elite accommodation and cooperation in Bosnia-Herzegovina, largely due to the fact that the state had never truly operated autonomously prior to the civil war.\textsuperscript{33} In addition, the civil war in Bosnia-Herzegovina was the result of secessionist movements, further highlighting the lack of potential for cooperation between political elites, defined by Lijphart as a “self-conscious union of the oppositions”.\textsuperscript{34} Third, the most salient prerequisite for success is the existence of committed, overarching loyalties to the state; however, the history of mass violence and conflict between Bosniaks, Serbians, and Croatians has led to an extreme prioritization of

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 107.
\textsuperscript{28} McMahon and Western, “The Death of Dayton: How to Stop Bosnia From Falling Apart,” 69.
\textsuperscript{29} Lijphart, “Consociational Democracy,” 211.
\textsuperscript{31} McMahon and Western, “The Death of Dayton: How to Stop Bosnia From Falling Apart,” 73.
\textsuperscript{32} Andeweg, 2000, “Consociational Democracy,” 522.
\textsuperscript{33} Lucarelli, Europe and the Breakup of Yugoslavia, 30-38.
\textsuperscript{34} Lijphart, ”Consociational Democracy,” 212.
ethnic identity over national identity within Bosnia-Herzegovina. Ultimately, the history of separationist sentiments among ethnic factions of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the absence of civil society created conditions within the state that were hostile to the adoption of consociationalism.

The government installed by the Dayton Peace Accords failed to recognize the extreme lack of civil society and state loyalty in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the degree to which these factors would undermine the success of a consociational democracy. However, one of Lijphart’s pre-requisites for a functioning consociational state, the geographic concentration of ethnic factions, was created by the Dayton Peace Accords through the division of the state into the semi-autonomous regions of Republika Srpska and the Bosnian Federation. However, this division, while typically viewed as conducive to consociationalism, was one of the most detrimental features of the Dayton Peace Accords, as it prioritized keeping the state of Bosnia-Herzegovina together at the expense of political functionality. By dividing the state into Republika Srpska and the Bosnian Federation, the framers of the Dayton Peace Accords essentially facilitated de facto ethnic segregation, while forcing multiple secessionist groups to operate under one national government. This geographical division and ethnic separation is the root of the social, cultural, economic, and political issues that have crippled post-war Bosnia-Herzegovina, and are the cause of the country’s prolonged economic strife and political stagnation. Although the 2013 national census estimated the ethnic composition of Bosnia-Herzegovina to be approximately 50 percent Bosniak, 31 percent Serbian, and 15 percent Croatian, the ethnic composition of the state’s two main geographical entities is strikingly different. Approximately 92 percent of all Serbians reside within in the Republika Srpska, while the Bosnian Federation is home to 91 and 88 percent of the nation’s Croatians and Bosniaks, respectively. Thus, although the Dayton Peace Accords aimed at creating a unified state, they also served to reinforce the ethical segregation that resulted from practices of ethnic cleansing during the civil war.

Current Interethnic Relationships and Governance in Bosnia-Herzegovina

Today, Bosnia-Herzegovina remains deeply ethnically divided, as citizens prioritize their nationality and ethnicity over their citizenship to the state in the formation of their identity. This level of ethnic division is discernable by the geographical segregation of the state and social relationships between ethnic communities, and is a major factor in the state’s political events. Unfortunately, the economy, political culture, and civil society in Bosnia-Herzegovina has suffered immensely due to the disunity between the Bosniak Muslim, Serbian, and Croatian populations within the state. The stalemate that these relationships have caused in the national government has prevented the state from advancing economically, impeded the state’s application for membership to the European Union, and spurred domestic policies that fail to promote civil society and counteract the development of a unified identity under the state.

One glaring example of policy that prevents the cultivation of civil society across ethnic cleavages in Bosnia-Herzegovina is the failure of any of the state’s political leaders to

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37 Bradley, Refugee Repatriation: Justice, Responsibility and Redress,125.
reform the structural segregation of students in elementary schools that is residual from the Communist era of former Yugoslavia. These policies include the “two schools under one roof” system, which requires that students be separated along ethnic lines to study subjects that relate to nationality, such as language, history, literature, and geography. In addition, the regional autonomy that the Bosnian Federation and the Republika Srpska possess over education systems has exacerbated the already divisive nature of the education system in Bosnia-Herzegovina, by creating divergent and biased school curriculums that promote enemy images and stereotypes of out-group ethnicities among the younger generation. Scholars argue that the separation of students to study subjects that deal with national affairs encourages suspicion and prejudice rather than fostering peace, causing ongoing tensions and distrust between ethnic communities in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Continuing to uphold these practices in the education system prevents any meaningful progress from being made in terms of integration between ethnic factions in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the cultivation of a multiethnic civil society.

At the national government level, the lack of cooperation between Bosniak Muslim, Serbian, and Croatian representatives and the inability of the government to form cohesive monetary and fiscal policies has led to the crippling of Bosnia-Herzegovina’s economy, as was particularly evident during the Global Financial Crisis. In 2009, unemployment in Bosnia-Herzegovina climbed to 27%, while approximately one-quarter of the population lived in poverty. Bosnia-Herzegovina’s economy also suffers from a lack of international investment, as investors are often driven away as they are fearful to get involved in a country with such a grossly mismanaged public sector. Furthermore, public employment and contracts in Bosnia-Herzegovina are typically filled in order to meet ethnic quotas, driving deep networks of political patronage that stifle innovation and give rise to chauvinistic ethnic entrepreneurs. The state of the country’s failing economy and the government’s inability to take action to help the citizens that were suffering financially were the causes of the riots that took place in Sarajevo in 2014, during which civilians set fire to several government buildings. Although economic distress can often provide a unifying sentiment across diverse groups, the political leaders take precautions to prevent these connections from developing, so that they may maintain their positions of influence within the corrupt government. Politicians in Bosnia-Herzegovina often use jingoistic rhetoric to conflagrate ethnic tensions and fears prior to elections in an effort to drown out economic concerns and maintain the divisive political status quo.

Furthermore, barriers to ethnic integration in Bosnia-Herzegovina are also reflected in the state’s efforts to accommodate the return, repatriation and redress of refugees and other vulnerable populations who were displaced by the civil war. Dr. Megan Bradley, a prominent scholar in the field of forced migration, has studied extensively the provisions and shortcomings of Bosnia-Herzegovina’s policies for the return of refugees. Bradley notes that

39 Ibid., 25.
40 Ibid.
42 Ibid., 66.
43 McMahon and Western, “The Death of Dayton: How to Stop Bosnia From Falling Apart,” 70.
45 McMahon and Western, “The Death of Dayton: How to Stop Bosnia From Falling Apart,” 73.
one of the largest challenges to refugee repatriation in postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina is that 70% of the displaced Bosnian refugees faced circumstances in which they were forced to return to regions that had been ethnically cleansed during the war, with the result that they would now live as an extreme minority.48 To facilitate the return of refugees to Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Dayton Peace Accords installed comprehensive provisions for property restitution for returning refugees, hoping that a large-scale return of displaced persons to their pre-war homes would help to diversify ethnically homogenous locales and moderate ethnic nationalism. In addition, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia serves as a formal channel for providing redress to refugees from the civil war.49 However, the returning refugees, particularly in the Republika Srpska, are often subject to acts of violence perpetrated by the Serbian majority that are silently or, in some cases, explicitly sponsored by law enforcement officials. Moreover, refugees have faced institutionalized bureaucratic and socioeconomic discrimination, living as minority populations in regions characterized by a history of ethnic nationalism.50 Bradley argues that despite the intentions of the international community and the Dayton Peace Accords to facilitate the repatriation and redress of refugees in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the policies have had limited success.51 The pervasive social rifts between ethnic groups in the state have prevented the successful reintegration of refugees and displaced persons, signaling yet another instance of Bosnia-Herzegovina’s inability to form channels for societal cohesion and cooperation across ethnic divisions.

Finally, as European Union membership has expanded to the east, the European Commission has been working with Bosnia-Herzegovina as a potential candidate for future membership.52 However, the ethnic nationalist values of leaders in Bosnia-Herzegovina have negatively impacted the state’s candidacy for accession to the European Union. One of the first steps in gaining consideration for membership to the European Union is meeting a Stabilization and Association Agreement. However, the European Commission required that Bosnia-Herzegovina make several structural reforms before proceeding with the agreement, including a more centralized national government with control over a unified police force.53 Serbian President Milorad Dodik consistently used his veto power, allocated to him by the Dayton Peace Accords, to block these reforms, claiming that they would jeopardize the Serbians’ right to regional autonomy within the Republika Srpska.54 Although the reform requirements from the European Union were eventually reduced and agreed on by all parties, it was not without considerable amounts of steadfast obstructionism in the defense of ethnic nationalism from the Serbian leaders of the Republika Srpska. Bosnia-Herzegovina’s progression towards European Union membership has thus been limited due to the country’s ethnically polarized nationalist agendas pushed by Bosniak Muslim, Serbian and Croatian leaders, which have raised concerns about the viability of the state’s potential for future accession.

**Pervasive Nature of Secessionism**

In the two decades that have passed since the conclusion of the civil war, interethnic relationships remain tense and civil society weak. In fact, a large portion of the population of Bosnia-Herzegovina continues to express a preference for secession or separation. One

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49 Ibid.
50 Ibid., 130.
51 Ibid., 131.
52 McMahon and Western, “The Death of Dayton: How to Stop Bosnia From Falling Apart,” 78.
53 Ibid.
54 Ibid.
particular study published by the *Journal of Ethnic and Racial Studies* found that of 2,000 subjects surveyed across ethnic divisions in Bosnia-Herzegovina, 50% felt as though inter-group relationships would improve if the country separated along ethnic lines.\(^{55}\) This sentiment was most strongly expressed by Croatian and Serbian respondents, but it also received moderate support from Bosniak Muslims.\(^{56}\)

Within the Republika Srpska region of Bosnia-Herzegovina, these separatist sentiments have come to the forefront of regional political discourse and rhetoric by the Serbian charismatic leader and suspected ethnic entrepreneur, President Milorad Dodik.\(^{57}\) One of Dodik’s primary political objectives during his time in office has been to encourage the Republika Srpska to hold its own referendums on the territory’s government in order to demonstrate the weakness of the central government of Bosnia-Herzegovina and potentially pave the way for a referendum on secession from the state.\(^{58}\) Unfortunately, the disunity amongst Bosniak Muslims, Serbians, and Croatians has taken what was intended to be a peaceful power-sharing method of government to the brink of political paralysis and has bolstered isolationism and secessionism within the state.

**Attempts at Reform**

The attempts at reform to overcome the paralysis that consociationalism has imposed on Bosnia-Herzegovina have been minimal. Nearly every proposed resolution or amendment has failed. In addition, almost all have been pursued exclusively by agencies other than the government of Bosnia-Herzegovina, signaling the unwillingness of government actors and political officials to come together to create meaningful reform. Arguably the most prominent figure that has tried to manage the nation’s political challenges is the High Representative. The High Representative is a position filled by an international political official that oversees civilian issues and ensures the correct implementation of the Dayton Peace Accords and consociationalism in Bosnia.\(^{59}\) Among other powers and responsibilities, the High Representative, in conjunction with his office, is permitted to impose political decisions on the state when the government seems incapable of coming to an agreement. In 2007, the High Representative at the time, Miroslav Lajčák, used this power to impose some of the few successful changes to the political landscape in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The most significant change that he made was in relation to the parliament’s decision-making process. Lajčák imposed a new rule that changed the number of representatives required to be present in order for the government to take decisions.\(^{60}\) This minimized the use of chronic absenteeism used by Ministers to block parliamentary decisions. However, this decision does little to address the inherent flaws of consociational democracy in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Imposing legislation and amendments to procedural issues, such as attendance and vote counts, does not fix the underlying culture of disunity and distrust between ethnic factions in Bosnia-Herzegovina that prevents the development of overarching loyalty to the state, a essential pre-requisite for successful consociationalism.


\(^{56}\) Ibid., 601.

\(^{57}\) Gerard Toal, 2013, “Republika Srpska will have a referendum”: the rhetorical politics of Milorad Dodik,” *Nationalities Papers* 41, no. 1: 166.

\(^{58}\) Ibid.


One unsuccessful attempt to confront the issues facing Bosnia-Herzegovina’s government was the failure of the parliament to adopt the recommendations that were provided in the ruling of the controversial Sejdic-Finci case in December 2009. This case dealt with the institutionalized discrimination against any ethnic group that was not Serbian, Muslim or Croatian. In this case, two men named Dervo Sejdic and Jakob Finci applied to the European Court of Human Rights with complaints that the Constitution of Bosnia-Herzegovina, which was set forth by the Dayton Peace Accords, was discriminatory. The Constitution states that positions in The House of Peoples of Parliamentary Assembly as well as campaigns for the Presidency are open only to people of Muslim, Serbian or Croatian ethnicity. However, Mr. Sejdic and Mr. Finci are of Roma and Jewish ethnicity respectively. This meant that despite the fact that the two men have prominent roles in the community, an active public life, and grounds to run for office, they are unable to because of their ethnic identity. In this case, the Court ruled that the Constitution did exhibit discrimination towards minority ethnicities in this context, and awarded compensation to both applicants. After this judgment, the European Commission and much of the international community urged Bosnia-Herzegovina to pursue the necessary constitutional amendments that would be needed to end this discrimination, however the government has not made any such reforms. Although this example does not necessarily exemplify the conflict between Muslims, Serbs, and Croatians, it illustrates the incapability of Bosnia’s government to make necessary positive changes to government institutions and structure. Furthermore, the Sejdic-Finci case demonstrates the rigid ethnic boundaries imposed by the Dayton Peace Accords and the overwhelming apathy amongst government officials to break down these institutionalized divisions.

Finally, one of the most significant failed attempts to tackle the glaring parliamentary inefficiency that has resulted from the implementation of consociationalism in Bosnia-Herzegovina was the effort to amend the constitution in 2005 and 2006, through the so called April Amendments. These proposed reforms were the result of long deliberations between the Bosnian government and the international community. The main objective of the constitutional changes was to rectify some of the issues that the Dayton Peace Accords brought to the country. The representatives that constructed the Accords enshrined the consociational principle of power-sharing ethnic groups in government in order to guard against the exploitation of any single ethnic group by another. As a result, the Dayton Peace Accords placed a high value on local and regional governance and the consociational ideal of regional autonomy. However, these government structures led to an essentially superficial national government, with insufficient power to form cohesive policies in the areas of defense, taxation, education, and law enforcement. With no unified body presiding over these issues, they were largely under the control of the local governments, which resulted in an

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63 Ibid.
increasingly fragmented political landscape due to the concentration of ethnic groups within specific locales. However, the negotiations to resolve these faults, and shift more responsibility and authority to the national government failed in April 2006, when proposed amendments did not meet the requirement of a two-thirds majority in the House of Representatives in order to be passed. Not only did the parties representing the Croatian, Muslim, and Serbian communities disagree about the proposed amendments, but they also caused considerable tension within the ethnic parties themselves. Since the failure of the April Amendments in 2006, the international community has strongly recommended that the political leaders of Bosnia-Herzegovina engage in internal structural and constitutional reform. However, domestic discussions on the matter have ceased to exist.

Conclusion: Moving Forward

The current political environment in Bosnia-Herzegovina is unsustainable and unhealthy. The state’s consociational democracy, in conjunction with the immiscible relationships between the Bosniak Muslims, Serbians and Croatians in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the state have led to political stalemate, economic stagnation, social stratification, and geographical segregation. Today, Bosnia-Herzegovina exists in a delicate balance of shared political power at the national level, combined with complex regional power distributions and ethnic divisions that are reinforced by the state’s constitutional document, the Dayton Peace Accords. The political culture in Bosnia-Herzegovina continues to be fueled by ethnic nationalism, with high levels of disunity and obstructionism in government, making it a hostile environment to the ideals of consociational democracy, which requires overarching loyalties to the state. As ethnic divisions continue to stunt the domestic, international, and economic growth of Bosnia-Herzegovina, it is becoming increasingly evident that the political structure must undergo significant reform in order to accommodate for the level of ingrained ethnic polarization in the state.

However, the previous attempts to reform the political institutions and structure in Bosnia-Herzegovina have been largely unsuccessful, and have not addressed the underlying issues of distrust and disunity between Serbian, Muslim, and Croatian political elites that ultimately have prevented the development of cross-cutting state loyalties and resulted in the failure of consociationalism. While the High Representative in Bosnia-Herzegovina may have the power to impose changes to procedural government operations, they are powerless in addressing the inherent cultural issues that underlie government structures in Bosnia-Herzegovina, as meaningful changes to this effect must come from the people and government officials themselves. However, the history of ethnic violence and genocide between Serbians, Croatians, and Muslims in Bosnia makes it realistically impossible for these three groups to ever come together to work towards creating a functioning power-sharing government, like the one intended by the Dayton Peace Accords. Ultimately, the history between these three groups and the lack of trust, interaction, and cooperation between them has prevented the formation of overarching state loyalties and resulted in the failure of consociationalism within the state of Bosnia-Herzegovina since its implementation two decades ago.

If the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina are to achieve social and economic development in the future, the state must be partitioned along the division implemented by the Dayton Peace Accords, and divided into two sovereign entities. The current rule of a single power-

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sharing government over two semi-autonomous regions is ineffective, due to the high degree of ethnic homogeneity in the two regions that resulted from ethnic cleansing during the civil war. Dividing the Republika Srpska and the Bosnian Federation into two separate states will appease the nationalist secessionist sentiments proclaimed by the Serbian dominated Republika Srpska and will allow the Bosnian Federation to have a much more realistic chance for democratic governance. Although the Bosnian Federation is home to significant populations of both Bosniaks and Croatians, the region would be much more likely to be successful at forming a cohesive democratic government than the state of Bosnia-Herzegovina, due to the political history that these groups have shared while living under the Dayton Peace Accords. The electoral processes outlined in Article IV of the Constitution of Bosnia-Herzegovina allow for only Serbian representatives to be elected from the Republika Srpska, however require a balance of both Bosniak and Croatian representatives from the Bosnian Federation.69 As a result, the Croatian and Bosniak ethnic groups in the Bosnian Federation have developed a history of elite cooperation; one of Lijphart’s prerequisites for functioning democracy in ethnically divided states.70 This norm of political cooperation in The Bosnian Federation is a foundation for political and social relationships that could transcend ethnic cleavages and lead to form a cohesive government if the region were to be partitioned from the Republika Srpska.

In conclusion, the Dayton Peace Accords imposed a structurally ineffective form of consociational democracy in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Although the Dayton Peace Accords implemented the geographical divide in the state as a means to maintain peace, it has in fact legitimized the regions of ethnic homogeneity that are the result of ethnic cleansing during the civil war. In addition, because the Dayton Peace Accords allowed for the Republika Srpska and the Bosnian Federation to hold some autonomous power, ethnic nationalism and secessionist politics have been normalized and legitimized within the state. While there have been multiple proposals for government reform, the adversarial nature of ethnic politics in Bosnia-Herzegovina is so pervasive that each attempt has failed to resolve any of the societal and institutional issues that reinforce ethnic immiscibility in society and government. As a result, Bosnia-Herzegovina has reached a point of total stagnation, with the only option for future development being a radical restructuring of the state into two sovereign entities. Bosnia-Herzegovina serves as a costly example that civil society and prospects for social and cultural cohesion should not be undervalued in peace agreements and the development of democratic societies.

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The Saudi-Iranian Rivalry:  
A Foreign Policy Analysis Approach

Usjid U. Hameed*

Abstract: For decades, scholars and policy makers have debated whether the Saudi-Iranian rivalry is primarily motivated by realist concerns for power, security, and relative gains or constructivist concerns surrounding issues of identity and ideology. This article utilizes the Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) approach, an agency-based approach in which concerns regarding relative power and ideology are weighted with attention given to domestic decision-making factors to argue that the rivalry is motivated by issues of power and identity as well as domestic concerns. The author first examines regional history with a focus on the Sunni-Shia Schism and the Iranian Revolution to illustrate the origins of Iran’s anti-elitist identity. Next, the FPA approach is employed to discuss diplomacy with a focus on Saudi and Iranian relations with Israel and the Iran Nuclear Deal to show how Saudi Arabia is consistently motivated by power and relative gains while Iran is consistently motivated by power, identity, and domestic concerns. Finally, FPA is used to explore the proxy conflict in Iraq to show how Saudi Arabia’s motivations for power and Iran’s motivations for power and its anti-elitist identity are exhibited in neighboring states. With FPA, scholars and policy makers will gain a better understanding of the Saudi-Iranian rivalry and will thus be better positioned to manage it to work towards a more secure and stable Middle East.

Introduction

The Middle East is in disarray. The two major powers in the region, Saudi Arabia and Iran, fan the flames of regional conflict. Their nearly forty years long rivalry shows no sign of abating. In the face of increasing numbers of civil wars, failed states, and numerous terrorist groups plaguing the region, the solution for bringing about regional stability remains unclear. Should the struggle between Saudi Arabia and Iran escalate, it may provoke increased great power involvement potentially sparking a global conflict.

After almost four decades of unrest, it is surprising and unfortunate that policy makers and scholars cannot arrive at a consensus regarding the best way to manage the region’s troubles, and they have long debated whether the rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran is a result of geopolitics or ideas. In the vernacular of international relations (IR) theory, the debate is whether the rivalry is primarily motivated by realist concerns for power, security, and relative gains or constructivist concerns surrounding identity and ideology.1

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However, the region of the Middle East and the relationships within it are too complicated to be addressed through the prism of only one theory. The traditional ‘either-or’ approach employed by the bulk of policy makers and scholars inhibits appreciation of the nuanced motivations behind Saudi and Iranian policies. Although power and identity offer insights into the conflict, they provide an incomplete understanding of the relationship between Saudi Arabia and Iran. Equally problematic, these traditional approaches fail to factor in domestic political concerns on the part of both states. Thus, an unconventional perspective, the foreign policy analysis (FPA) approach is required to analyze the rivalry.

This article employs FPA to examine the Saudi-Iranian relationship in order to prove that the rivalry is motivated by issues of power, identity, and domestic politics. First, an examination of the regional history illustrates that the origins of Iran’s anti-elitist identity stem from the Sunni-Shia schism and the Iranian Revolution. Next, the article analyzes Saudi and Iranian relations with Israel and the Iran Nuclear Deal using the FPA approach to show how Saudi Arabia is consistently motivated by power and relative gains while Iran is consistently motivated by power, identity, and domestic concerns. Finally, the proxy conflict in Iraq exemplifies how Saudi Arabia’s motivations for power and Iran’s motivations for power as well as its anti-elitist identity impact neighboring states.

Terminology

Before analyzing relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia, it is necessary to establish first the theoretical underpinnings of this essay and define the central concepts that will be employed to explain the observed behavior of these states. In particular, a concise overview of realism, constructivism, and foreign policy analysis shall be provided, with only enough detail provided in each summary to guide the reader through the subsequent analysis.

Realism

As the oldest of the theories being applied in this article, realism offers a natural starting point. Its assumptions are best encapsulated by John J. Mearsheimer. According to Mearsheimer, classical realists believe that human beings are genetically disposed to grasping for power. Since states are populated with people of these same atavistic appetites, it follows that leader and subject individually or en masse fall prey to these predatory instincts.

Necessity is another core concept of realism. The relationships between states are structured by anarchy. States cannot be reliably recognized as friend or foe on sight, and tragically, reveal themselves as foes only when it is too late to defend against them. Neighboring states cannot know any other state’s intentions, and so each raises arms and walls against the other, just in case. With unknowable intentions, but known shows of force and strength, each state falls into a race for power. If a state loses a contest, it is destroyed. Anarchy demands prudence. This insight frees the theorist from having to consider peculiarities of individual states. Culture and government do not influence their behaviors. Inner workings and complications are immaterial. Every state remains surrounded by other states, and no matter their character, they must compete. They are “black-boxes,” impenetrable and irreducible, but uniform in output.

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3 Ibid. p. 78
4 Ibid.
Structural realism works on five assumptions: firstly, as stated before, states are the actors in an anarchic system. Great powers are the specific focus as actors. Secondly, every state worthy of consideration can do some injury to its competitors. States are dangerous. Thirdly, states have no guarantees of the competitors’ behavior. Diplomats lie, regimes change. A state that seeks to shift the balance of power in secret is indistinguishable from the state that legitimately seeks to maintain the balance. These states are respectively referred to as revisionist and status quo. Fourthly, there is no goal that interferes with a state’s primary goal, which is survival. Survival is the preservation of borders and the maintenance of self-rule. States naturally pursue other projects, but they cannot reach completion after the expiration of the state. Lastly, states are rational actors. They can make mistakes, and incremental rational acts can still lead to catastrophe, but altogether the actions taken are secondary to the overarching pursuit of power.5

This combination of certainties and uncertainties makes for a stew of fear. Without order, armed states are free to plunder wherever and whenever they are able and expect no less of their competitors. The system pressures states to seek revisionist strategies whenever possible.6 This compulsory perpetual cycle leads to security dilemma. It rests upon two other patterns of seemingly irrational behavior illustrated by the prisoner’s dilemma and the Red Queen effect. An environment of mutual distrust demands that actors forgo the possible benefits of collaboration because the risks of betrayal are too great (utter destruction). The only move is to keep the opponent from power. But these moves demand countermoves by the opponent and countermoves go back and forth because every gain in power must be matched.7

Constructivism

Constructivists undertake their explanation of state behavior from a radically different perspective. According to constructivists, while all events occur within the current political structure that exists, it is not only the structure but also ideas that urge these events to happen in the first place. While power is a tool, it is ideas that determine how those tools are used.8 Constructivists emphasize the role of social constructs and identities in shaping great power politics by establishing the perspective and goals of states that guide their decision-making. These identities can be characterized by norms and rules that specify what behavior is appropriate.9 In contrast to structuralists like Mearsheimer, who posit that states always act rationally to maximize their own power, constructivists argue that decisions are not made in a vacuum and the unpredictability of politics necessitates principles to help states understand what the rational course of action is.10 States are not alike, as realists argue. Indeed they differ in fundamental ways, with their own ideas and histories that influence how they respond to various situations.

Constructivists do not contest that nations pursue their national interests; however, they conceptualize national interests much differently than realists. For constructivists, the identities of states are inherent to how they define their interests. Constructivism revives the elements of circumstance, interpretation, and social relationships in understanding this pursuit (and definition) of self-interest. Material interests are tied to the identity of the state, which cannot be

5 Ibid. p. 79-80
6 Ibid.
7 Ibid. p. 80-81
detached from interactions with the world. Norms, culture, and identity construct the reality that gives meaning to human interactions and experiences, constituting the perspective in which actions are interpreted and consequently how they are responded to. To simplify the distinction between constructivism and realism, in conclusion, we can note that the former locates the primary explanation of state behavior in that particular state’s identity, whereas for realists, all states are similarly motivated by the pursuit of power and security.

**Foreign Policy Analysis**

Although examination of power and identity offer insights into state behavior, they do not provide a nuanced explanation for the relationship between Saudi Arabia and Iran needed to address regional stability. Equally problematic, these traditional approaches fail to factor in domestic political concerns on the part of both states. Thus, an unconventional perspective, the foreign policy analysis (FPA) approach, is required to analyze the rivalry.

FPA is an agency-based theory in which concerns regarding relative power and ideology are weighted, but with attention given to domestic decision-making factors as well. FPA provides an avenue in which to analyze state behavior without the potentially distorting constraints of realism and constructivism. At its core, FPA offers an “actor-specific focus based upon the argument that all that occurs between nations and across nations is grounded in human decision-makers acting singly or in groups”. Along with external factors, it considers domestic political concerns and changes in the broader political climate as significant factors in decision making.

This article employs FPA, in addition to realism and constructivism, to examine the Saudi-Iranian relationship in order to demonstrate that the rivalry is motivated by variables described in each of the theories: power, identity, and domestic politics. Of the three theories, FPA will be accorded predominant explanatory significance, because through FPA, policymakers can understand this relationship more holistically.

**History**

**The Sunni-Shia Schism**

Although conflict between the Sunni and Shia began over 1,000 years before the modern states of Saudi Arabia or Iran came into existence, the Sunni-Shia Schism is critical to understanding the Saudi-Iranian rivalry. The Schism is significant because it begets the narrative used by Iran to oppose what it considers elitist Western, and subsequent Saudi influence, and thus champion the rights of oppressed Muslims. Iran will go on to utilize this narrative to amass political legitimacy. The Schism’s ideological importance lies in the narrative and not the theological doctrine that stems from the event. Sunni-Shia doctrinal differences prove largely insignificant in the rivalry, given Iran’s stringent support for Sunni groups such as Hamas and Shia offshoots such as the Alawites, which share little doctrinally with the Twelver branch followed by the Iranians. The narrative that surrounds the Schism lays the groundwork for the Iranian Revolution over a thousand years later and must be understood to fully comprehend Iran’s self-view and identity.

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11 Fierke, “Constructivism,” p. 182.
13 Ibid.
Following the Prophet Muhammad’s death in 632 A.D., two main groups debated as to who should lead the Islamic faith and Empire. Those who wanted Abu-Bakr, the prophet's father-in-law, to lead became known as Sunni. Those who wanted Ali, the prophet’s cousin and son-in-law, to lead became known as Shia. Supporters of Abu-Bakr were victorious as he became the first leader, or Caliph, in 632 A.D. In the minds of the Shia, Abu Bakr’s ascendance to the Caliphate over Ali was the first instance of Sunnis disrespecting the Prophet — as they believed political succession should have occurred based on bloodline, which would have made Ali first in line to succeed the Prophet Muhammad.

The Schism between Sunni and Shia grew more intense when Ali’s son Husayn, the Prophet Muhammad’s grandson, led a rebellion against the Caliphate in 680 A.D. The Caliph at the time was Yazid, who had only ascended to the Caliphate because of his father, the previous Caliph and rival of Ali, Muawiyah, designating control to him. Yazid’s rise to the Caliphate, in the mind of Husayn was improprietous and illegitimate, as the previous Caliphs had been chosen by elite members of the Muslim community. The uprising ended in failure at the Battle of Karbala with Husayn, along with his family and supporters, being killed. Shia Muslims look at this battle as the “moment when the sanctity of the prophet was violated” — thus making Husayn a martyr. For Shia Muslims and Iranians, the Battle of Karbala is an informing example of elitist powers, in this case the Sunnis, disrespecting and oppressing weaker factions.

Today, the narrative from the Schism and the Battle of Karbala remain key aspects of the Iranian identity. Furthermore, the narrative justifies Iran’s support for Hezbollah, informs caricatures of Saudi Arabia as an elitist Western puppet, and catalyzes Iranian involvement in the region’s many proxy wars as Iran plays the role of the less powerful actor standing up to a more powerful entity. Yet, socially constructed ideas, such as identity, are not enough to completely explain the rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia or the behaviors through which the rivalry is played out.

The Iranian Revolution

Issues of power and identity are both invaluable when discussing Saudi-Iranian relations. However, when utilized in isolation each provides an incomplete understanding of the conflict. Saudi Arabia and Iran are not both motivated by concerns for power nor are they both motivated by ideas. If concerns for power and relative gains drove both states, Iran would be more cooperative with the West to usurp Saudi Arabia’s place as the West’s premier regional power broker. If Iran were to be more cooperative, Saudi Arabia could be more isolated from its primary patron, the U.S., providing Iran with an advantage politically and militarily vis-à-vis Saudi Arabia. Although the Nuclear Deal was a rapprochement with the West, Iran still largely pursues an agenda that directly collides with the objectives of the U.S. at the cost of Iran’s relative power in the region. Iran’s rebirth following the 1979 Revolution spawned a narrative which emphasized that it must oppose Western influence in the region and function as the champion of the Muslim world. This narrative became a central part of the Iranian identity.

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15 Ibid.
17 Ibid.
18 Ibid.
Similarly, if concerns surrounding issues of identity and ideology drove both states, Saudi Arabia would be a more stringent supporter of Sunni militias which are opposed to Israel and would maintain a more hostile relationship with the U.S. Doing so would provide legitimacy to Saudi Arabia’s claim as the leader of the Muslim world, given America’s unpopularity in parts of the Islamic world. However, this is not the case. Saudi Arabia takes a more security-focused approach regarding its relationship with the West and Israel. Saudi Arabia’s concern for security in the face of Iranian aggression leads it to maintain a secretive, but well-known, relationship with Israel. This relationship detracts from Saudi Arabia’s narrative of Islamic legitimacy as many everyday Arabs, the so-called Arab Street, view pro-Israeli policy as detrimental towards the cause of Muslims. Nevertheless, Saudi Arabia feels that the benefits of allying with Israel to oppose Iran outweigh the costs; a behavior best explained from a security-focused perspective. The development and importance of these behaviors of Iran and Saudi Arabia can be illustrated through an examination of the 1979 Iranian Revolution.

The Iranian Revolution in 1979 proved a watershed incident not only for Saudi-Iranian relations, but also for how the modern Middle East functions. The 1979 Iranian Revolution led to Iran undergoing a rebirth and becoming the prime geopolitical and religious rival of Saudi Arabia in the Middle East. Iran’s narrative to oppose Western influence in the region and fight for the rights of oppressed Muslims stems in large part from the 1953 coup conducted by the Central Intelligence Agency (C.I.A.), as it left a deep scar in the minds of Iranians. Iran wishes to determine the destiny of its own state as well as the Gulf region without interference from the West or Saudi Arabia. FPA’s perspective is required to understand the Revolution as issues of power, identity, and domestic politics each played a role in the uprising’s materialization.

Prior to 1979, Saudi-Iranian relations were generally cordial. as no opportunity existed for hostility. The C.I.A. organized a coup in 1953 to overthrow Mohammad Mosaddeq, the Iranian Prime Minister who wished to nationalize the British petroleum interests in the country, and installed a Pro-Western ruler, Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, in his place. The coup prevented any rivalry with Saudi Arabia from forming given that Iran’s government was both secular and in check by America.

Enter Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, a religious Shia scholar who was an outspoken critic of the Shah’s secular reforms. Khomeini was the leading figure in crafting the narrative used by Iranian leaders today, which stresses opposing the West and standing up for the rights of Muslims. Khomeini was exiled in 1964 due to his critical opinions of the U.S.-installed Shah. Nevertheless, he continued to gain popularity as his supporters spread his anti-Western, pro-Islamic message across Iran. Along with calling for an end to Iran’s secularization, Khomeini also criticized the Iranian government for its ties to America and Israel, two states which heavily meddled in the region’s affairs in the view of many Iranians. In addition, he called for an end to the concessions granted to the U.S., which gave American military personnel diplomatic immunity. The anti-elitist message by Khomeini, which criticized the Shah’s policies for only benefitting the Iranian elite and Americans, was reminiscent to the reformist message by Ali and Shia leaders in Islam’s early years.

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19 Mabon, Saudi Arabia and Iran.
21 Ibid.
Domestic factors were vital in the Revolution’s success as Khomeini’s populist rhetoric resonated with large numbers of poor and unemployed Iranians who were disillusioned with the Shah’s secular and failed economic policies. In January 1979, the Shah was overthrown. Following the Shah’s removal, Khomeini returned from exile on February 1st to crowds of rejoicing supporters and by April declared himself as the leader of Iran. Khomeini’s capacity to play on regional power and ideological concerns by using the narrative outlined above coupled with his drawing attention to domestic troubles in Iran once more indicates the utility provided by FPA in understanding not only the Saudi-Iranian rivalry, but Iran’s rebirth following the Revolution which allowed the rivalry to materialize.

After the formation of Iran as an Islamic Republic, Iran’s exhibition of its anti-elitist identity and its motivation for power are most immediately seen with its conflict with Saudi Arabia to be leader of the Muslim world and its conflict with Iraq for geopolitical supremacy. Iran’s claim to leadership through Islamic legitimacy led to an inherent clash with Saudi Arabia; previously the only state in the region which declared legitimacy through Islam, as it is home to Islam’s two holiest cities, Mecca and Medina. Iran pushed its narrative as the champion of the Muslim world by rhetorically attacking and discrediting the Islamic legitimacy of Saudi Arabia by citing its close ties with elitist Western powers. This attempt to undermine Saudi Arabia’s legitimacy and to speak directly to the Muslim world sought to shift the balance of power in the region in Iran’s favor by driving a wedge between Arabs and Riyadh. Iranian leaders wished to cause massive domestic unrest to vex and disrupt the ruling regime of Saudi Arabia to leave Iran as the unopposed hegemon of the Middle East and leader of Islam. This was most clearly seen when Iran utilized the grievances of the minority Shia population in Saudi Arabia, which was heavily discriminated against, to encourage further unrest among the oppressed population. As a result, there were widespread riots in the Kingdom’s Eastern province, an area containing large numbers of Shia, in the 1970s and 1980s. Saudi officials responded forcefully, and in 1979 used 20,000 members of the National Guard to end the public Ashura celebration, one that had not taken place since 1913, to quell support for the Iranian revolution.

Hezbollah’s founding in Lebanon in the 1980s also demonstrated Iran’s desire to gain influence in the region following the Revolution. Regarding geopolitics, Hezbollah provides an avenue for Iran to project its power across the region to the Levant to pursue its strategic interests in Syria by supporting the Assad regime, and in Lebanon by opposing Israel. Regarding Iranian identity, Hezbollah’s military wing’s vexation of Israel and the West provide Iran legitimacy in its ideological narrative of opposing Israeli and Western influence and championing the rights of Muslims. The organization’s manifesto reads, “our primary assumption in our fight against Israel states that the Zionist entity is aggressive from its inception, and built on lands wrested from their owners, at the expense of the rights of the Muslim people”. In addition, Hezbollah’s active social service wing further reinforces Iran’s

24 Mabon, Saudi Arabia and Iran, 51.
25 Ibid., 53.
26 Ibid.
27 Ibid., 54.
28 Ibid., 52.
motivation to stand up for the oppressed, as the Shia group provides a great deal of services to Muslims in Lebanon. For example, “Hezbollah operates three hospitals, 12 health centers, 20 infirmaries, 20 dental clinics [and]…. provides low-income students with scholarships, financial assistance and books, buying in bulk and selling at reduced prices; it also operates lending libraries for students.”

Saudi Arabia’s top concern remains security following the Iranian Revolution. Saudi Arabian officials began strengthening geopolitical ties with the U.S. in the early 1980s to balance against Iran, a trend that has continued in recent decades, detracting from Saudi Arabia’s claim of functioning as the champion of the Muslim world. Due to its increasing ties with the U.S., Saudi Arabia became more secure and its relationship with Iran became more aggravated, given Iranian opposition to Western intervention and influence in the Middle East.

Diplomacy

Relations with Israel

An examination of Saudi Arabia and Iran’s respective relationships with Israel provide significant insight as to how both states act in regard to their respective motivations. FPA is the ideal theoretical perspective to use when discussing Saudi and Iranian relations with Israel because both the issues of power and identity are at play. As previously stated, Saudi Arabia’s concerns for security and relative gains lead it to maintain a covert partnership with Israel to balance against a rising Iran. Iran, in contrast, maintains a hostile relationship with Israel for reasons of power and identity given its goal for regional superiority, and its self-view as the liberator of the Muslim world.

While Saudi Arabia maintains no formal diplomatic ties with Israel because it does not recognize Israel’s legitimacy, a closer examination reveals that Saudi Arabia and Israel are closer than they publicly appear. Saudi Arabia’s decision to covertly cooperate with Israel reveals its acknowledgement that overt cooperation would damage its reputation as the leader of Islam given Israel’s unfavorable reputation in the Muslim world. The Saudi-Israeli covert partnership began developing when concerns over a nuclear Iran emerged. In 2009, “Saudi Arabia allegedly tested its air defenses to evaluate Israel’s ability to use Saudi territory for a military strike on Iran’s nuclear facilities. During a June 2015 Council of Foreign Relations event in Washington, representatives of Israel and Saudi Arabia revealed covert diplomatic meetings between the two countries over Iran’s nuclear ambitions.”

Moreover, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), a regional security organization involving Saudi Arabia and various other Gulf states, and Israel also share intelligence, which suggests deeper ties than both sides publicly acknowledge.

Iran has maintained its hostile relationship with Israel since 1979, remaining consistent with its ideological stance against imperialist influence in the Middle East. Iran views Israel’s existence as illegitimate as it disrespects the rights of the Palestinian people and is a Western satellite. Iran frequently paints itself as the liberator of the Palestinians against the oppressive Israeli government. For example, Supreme Leader Khamenei in 2014 said, “This barbaric,


32 Ibid.
wolflike & infanticidal regime of Israel which spares no crime has no cure but to be
annihilated.”33 Hossein Salami, the deputy head of the Revolutionary Guard said, "We will chase
you [Israelis] house to house and will take revenge for every drop of blood of our martyrs in
Palestine, and this is the beginning point of Islamic nations awakening for your defeat.”34

Iran attempts to weaken Saudi Arabia’s claim as the region’s leader by implying Saudi
complicity in Western intervention in the region’s affairs and the oppression of Muslims. For
example, following a joint statement by Saudi Arabia and Israel condemning Iran for regional
instability, the Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman said, “It’s unfortunate that this occupying
regime [of Israel] is counting on the coordination and collaboration of an Islamic country [Saudi
Arabia] to further its perpetual anti-Iranian policies.”35 This Iranian official is implying that
Saudi Arabia’s cooperation with Israel indicates Saudi Arabia’s passivity in the illegitimate
Israeli domination of Palestine. Hence, Iran is communicating that Saudi Arabia is not
committed to advocating for the Muslim world.

Iran’s support for Sunni militant groups opposed to Israel illustrate that Iran is more
motivated by its identity as the liberator of the Muslim world than its identity as a Shia state. For
example, Iran has been a prime supporter for Sunni Palestinian militant groups such as Hamas
and Islamic Jihad, which have frequently combated Israel. In 2007, the Jewish Policy Center
reported that Iran pledged over $250 million in aid to Hamas.36 Religious doctrinal differences
within Islam are largely insignificant for Iran in its aim to combat Israel. This is evidenced by a
statement made by Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, assistant to the Chairman of the Iranian
parliament, in February 2017 when he remarked “‘The Palestinian issue can be a common
denominator for efforts by the Arab and Islamic world to assemble a unified strategy against the
Zionist entity and against terror [or Israel].”37 The phrase “common denominator” is telling as it
implies that non-common denominators exist in the Islamic world, namely sectarianism. By
focusing on advocating for Palestine, an issue of agreement, Iran upholds its values as the
liberator of the Islamic world, even if it means cooperating with Sunni groups.

The Iran Nuclear Deal

The Iran Nuclear Deal, signed in July 2015 between Iran and the P5+1, the five members
of the U.N. Security Council and Germany, has fueled the flames of the Saudi-Iranian rivalry,
despite being hailed as an international achievement.38 The agreement vowed to stop production
of a nuclear bomb in exchange for the removal of Western-imposed economic sanctions which
were put in place to force Iran to halt its uranium enrichment program. Iran has benefitted
diplomatically, militarily, and economically from the deal, and has improved relations with the
U.S. Saudi Arabia views the lifting of Iranian sanctions and Iran’s closer relations with the U.S.

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34 Ibid.
35 Judah Ari Gross. "Iran says Saudi Arabia, Israel working to damage country." The Times of Israel. February 20,
country/.
to its detriment. Saudi officials feel that a more economically prosperous Iran will lead to better funded, Iran-backed, Shia militias, and a to less secure Saudi Arabia. Saudi officials are also highly skeptical of Iran’s commitment to the Deal and its promise to cease development of a nuclear weapon. Thus, it has chosen to escalate the rivalry in hopes of baiting Iranian officials into acting aggressively so that Iran may once again be isolated from the international community.

The Deal is best explained using FPA. Iran’s decision to engage with the West, its longtime enemy, was motivated by issues of security, identity, and domestic politics. The Deal secured a non-nuclear Saudi Arabia, which ensures Tehran’s security and geopolitical positioning vis-a-vis Riyadh. Although Iran will not have a nuclear weapon for the foreseeable future, the West will keep Saudi Arabia from obtaining one as well to maintain regional stability. Should the Saudis develop a nuclear weapon, Iran may once more be put on the path of developing its own nuclear weapon to balance against its rival. The guarantee of a non-nuclear Saudi Arabia is vital to both Iranian and regional security.

In addition, Iran secured funding for its non-state armed groups battling throughout the Middle East from the lifting of sanctions, which also reinforces its geopolitical stature and reach. Funding Hezbollah in the Levant and its Shia militias in Iraq allow for Iran to more easily exert its influence and fill power vacuums in the region. Increased access to funding allows Iran to pursue its objective of increased geopolitical influence in the Middle East, and its objective to use said influence to combat Western and Saudi interference in the region to champion the rights of Muslims.

Domestically, the Iranian economy will recover allowing it to become a competitive oil producer. For example, “Iran is expected to boost production by 400,000 [barrels per day] to reach 4.15 million [barrels per day] production in 2022.” Iran’s economy, given its new freedom, is looking to capitalize and maximize exports. The rehabilitated Iranian economy will ensure domestic stability by easing the financial strain on the Iranian people which existed under sanctions. Iranian unemployment was over 10 percent in late 2015 when the deal was signed. The lifting of the sanctions will allow Iran to access $100 billion worth of overseas assets. While the Iranian economy is still suffering with an inflation rate of 10.6 percent and an Iranian youth employment rate of 30 percent, Iran will most likely continue to abide by the agreements set forth in the deal to facilitate the lifting of sanctions and rehabilitate its economy.

Contrarily, Saudi Arabia was motivated primarily by security concerns. Saudi officials viewed U.S. engagement with Iran as naïve, as they were highly skeptical of Iran’s promise to cease development of a nuclear weapon. In response to fear of a nuclear-powered Iran, Saudi Arabia forged a covert relationship with Israel in the name of security, as stated above. Both states share intelligence and have conducted joint military exercises with the goal of striking

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42 Ibid.
Iranian nuclear facilities. Consequently, Saudi Arabia’s image as the champion of the Muslim world was harmed by its choice to engage in a strategic, security-focused partnership with Israel. The U.S.’s decision to engage with Iran, despite Saudi distrust of the Deal, signaled to Saudi officials that America is willing to distance itself from Saudi Arabia in certain circumstances. Such a move is uncharacteristic of the U.S., as it has consistently supported Saudi Arabia since the 1930s, when Saudi officials encouraged U.S. firms to develop the country’s oil. Saudi Arabia derives much of its power, especially regarding security, from its alliance with the U.S.

With the reform-minded President Hassan Rouhani at the helm of Iranian politics, and his acceptance of the Deal, U.S. tensions with Iran have declined, which worries Saudi Arabia. Saudi officials are deeply skeptical regarding Iran’s promises to abide by the deal and fear for their security if Iran covertly develops a nuclear weapon. To quell Saudi Arabia’s paranoia regarding a rising Iran and reaffirm America’s commitment to its Sunni allies, the Obama administration administered a weapons sale worth $115 billion to Saudi Arabia in September 2016. The deal signaled to Saudi Arabia and to the globe that the U.S. would not tilt towards Iran following the Deal.

Following the Deal, Saudi Arabia has attempted to bait Iran into operating from its habitual, anti-Western, standpoint, so that Iran may once more be isolated from the West. Saudi Arabia has acted in an aggressive, sectarian fashion, effectively taking on the role of the combative ideologue, a role traditionally held by Iran. For example, the execution of the Shia cleric Nimr al-Nimr in early 2016, and the escalation of the war in Yemen, while being branded to suppress internal dissent and combat Iranian influence respectively, should also be viewed as means to tempt Iran to once again to respond in a hostile manner to paint it as the aggressor. Despite the specific degree of Iranian support for the Houthis, a Zaydi Shia movement in Yemen, being debated, Saudi Arabia feels strongly that Iran is providing significant weaponry to the Houthi insurgents. In response, Iran, for the large part, has refused to be baited into escalating tensions further and has abided by the agreements set forth in the Deal. Iran has also unsuccessfully attempted to paint Saudi Arabia as a reckless, ideological actor, to drive a wedge between Riyadh and Washington.

This attempt to delineate the differences between the more ‘rational’ Iran and more ‘fanatic’ Saudi Arabia was most clearly evidenced in a New York Times article penned by Mohammad Javad Zarif, Iran’s foreign minister, titled “Saudi Arabia’s Reckless Extremism.” Zarif cites what he views as provocative and unjust actions perpetrated by Saudi Arabia, including the targeting of Iranian diplomats, to create further unrest in the Middle East. He writes “Iran has no desire to escalate tension in the region.” Iran is attempting to build rapport with

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48 Ibid.
the West to maintain the economic and subsequent military gains made from the Deal in its quest for regional domination. In the same vein, those gains will be utilized to further its narrative as the champion of the Muslim world, which is central to Iranian identity.

The Iraqi Proxy Conflict

Iraq has played a key role in the Saudi-Iranian rivalry since the Iranian Revolution. The country has a 65% Shia majority and a 35% Sunni minority. From 1979-2003, the country was under the strict control of Sunni Saddam Hussein. With Iraq directly bordering the new Islamic Republic of Iran in the late 1970s, Hussein worried that the Ayatollah Khomeini would spark Shia uprisings in his country like those seen in Saudi Arabia. In 1980, less than a year after the Iranian Revolution, Iraq's desire for the oil-rich Iranian border region of Khuzestan and its calculation that the new Iranian regime would put up little resistance led both states to war.

Iraq is a critical battleground for both Saudi Arabia and Iran given its extended border with both countries and the ever-present power vacuum following the 2003 Iraq War. FPA is the ideal theoretical perspective to utilize when discussing the proxy conflict in Iraq because issues of security and identity are both significant for Iran while the singular issue of security is most significant for Saudi Arabia.

Regarding issues of security for Iran, Iraq functions as a key factor in Iran’s ability to project its political and military power across the Levant and buttress Iranian security. Iraq provides a path into Syria which then allows Iran to send weaponry and supplies into Lebanon, thus making Iraq an important actor regarding Iran’s ability to provide support for Hezbollah and the Assad regime in Syria. In addition, Iran currently supports roughly 100,000 Shia fighters in Iraq known collectively as the Popular Mobilization Units (PMUs), which are fighting ISIS. The PMUs are made up of roughly 40 militias. Iran wishes to entrench these fighters in Iraq to ensure that it maintains a favorable balance of power in the region following the expulsion of ISIS as well as ensure that Iraq does not pose a threat as it did under Saddam Hussein. These fighters will most likely serve as a detriment to U.S. objectives in a post ISIS-Iraq given Iran’s influence over the PMUs. Any policy crafted by the U.S. will need to take these militias into account.

The presence of these militias in Iraq may allow Iran to buttress its security and greatly increase its political influence in Iraq should the PMUs establish a political infrastructure. The rise of the PMUs mimic that of Hezbollah in Lebanon in the 1980s, and leaders are hinting at their desire to transition the PMUs’ military structure into a political party in Iraq. The PMUs are also looked at as noble forces fighting against ISIS similar to how Hezbollah is looked at in its fight against Israel. One Iraqi commander remarked that the PMUs experience “huge popularity” in Iraq. The Iranian-backed fighters have reportedly “contributed to most of the fighting to secure the area around Fallujah.”

Regarding issues of identity for Iran, it employs its anti-Western narrative to combat future American and Saudi influence in Iraq by buttressing the presence of the PMUs. The

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preservation of Iranian influence in Iraq allows Iranian officials to support the Assad regime and Hezbollah, both of which operate in opposition to Western objectives. In addition, Iran acts upon its self-view as the champion of the Muslim world by backing the PMUs, which skillfully utilize propaganda to further their image as liberators for all Muslims by releasing photos and videos showing PMU fighters rescuing Sunnis, Shia, and even Christians from ISIS.

Saudi Arabia is motivated by security concerns, as it recognizes the advantages Iran enjoys from its military influence in Iraq and thus wishes to contain Iranian influence for its security. Moreover, Saudi Arabia, as stated previously, is opposed to the Assad regime and Hezbollah as they support Iran’s geopolitical prowess. Saudi Arabia is also concerned that the large presence of PMUs in Iraq will function as a detriment to Saudi security and regional stability in the future.

Saudi Arabia’s concerns for security and relative gains are illustrated with the creation of the GCC, a regional institution involving Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and UAE, created following the start of the Iran-Iraq War in 1981. The purpose of the GCC was to ensure economic and defensive cooperation against aggressive non-members, which underlies Saudi Arabia’s concern for its security. The organization maintains a security clause similar to that of NATO’s article 5, which states that an attack against one member is attack against all and thus will elicit a unified military response.53 Today, the GCC functions as a key security organization for Saudi Arabia to balance against Iran.

Saudi Arabia’s primary concern for its security can also be seen with its decision to strengthen ties with the U.S. following Hussein’s decision to invade Kuwait, a GCC member and Saudi ally, in the 1990s. Following Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait, the U.S. intervened after being given permission by Saudi Arabia by expelling Iraqi forces from Kuwait. The Americans then established bases in Saudi Arabia to more effectively protect its allies against future Iraqi aggression.54 Thus, the balance of power shifted in Saudi Arabia’s favor and its rivalry with Iran became more strained given Iranian opposition to Western interference in the region. The increased U.S. presence served as fodder for Iran to paint Saudi Arabia as a puppet of the West.

The reactions by Saudi Arabia and Iran to increased U.S. influence in the region illustrate each states’ theoretical motivations and concerns. Saudi Arabia’s reluctant acceptance of U.S. troops indicate that concerns for security were its top priority regardless of the U.S.’s negative image. Iran’s opposition to U.S. forces illustrates its own concerns for its geopolitical posture and security as well as its adherence to the anti-elitist narrative set forth in 1979 which opposes Western influence in the region.

The 2003 Iraq War led to an intensification of the rivalry regarding both security and sectarianism. Prior to Hussein's toppling by the U.S. in 2003, Iraq and Iran were the region’s two main powers. With the U.S. occupying Iraq, political space was created for the now much more powerful, U.S.-backed Saudi Arabia to fill and challenge Iran. The 2003 war galvanized sectarian tensions in Iraq by causing a breakdown of the previously existing social structures of coexistence between Sunnis and Shia and creating a power vacuum for sectarian factions to fill. Al-Qaeda’s targeting of Shia places of worship and Shia political parties’ encouragement of ethnic cleansing and revenge against Sunni populations escalated sectarian strife to create

massive instability resulting in a Sunni vs. Shia civil war which polarized the Iraqi population. Saudi Arabia and Iran sent funds and foreign fighters into Iraq to assist members of their respective ideologies with the goal of ensuring their victory and exerting influence in Iraq. Both states wished to fill the newly created power vacuum with a political entity which would further their interests and ensure that the other did not gain a new satellite government in Iraq. Iran proved to be more successful given Iraq’s majority Shia population and its close ties to Shia groups in Iraq.

In 2011, U.S. troops began to withdraw, leaving the Iran-supported Iraqi President Nouri al-Maliki, a Shia Muslim, in charge. Maliki quickly became paranoid, attempted to centralize power, and began targeting his Sunni political rivals. His discriminatory and violent policies undermined the inclusive government that had been crafted by the U.S. Maliki’s government held no legitimacy for Iraqi-Sunnis, as it consistently violated their rights. As a result, the disillusioned Iraqi population did not resist ISIS’s takeover of Mosul, Iraq’s second largest city. ISIS’s entry into the country led to the current disarray which exists in Iraq and the ensuing competition between Iran and Saudi Arabia to once more exert influence within the unstable state. As the ISIS presence draws down in Iraq with American support, the PMUs’ long-term impact in the country remains to be seen.

Conclusion

Human decision making ultimately drives a state’s actions. Because human motivations are not mono-causal, a variety of factors must be explored to discover the reasoning behind state behavior. Given FPA’s multi-faceted approach, it is the best method to analyze the Saudi-Iranian rivalry. A single theoretical approach when applied to a conflict does not give appropriate attention to an individual state’s history or system of government and thus assumes common motivations on the part of all involved actors. Realism stresses relative gains and the desire for security, which leads to an under examination of ideology and identity. Constructivism stresses socially constructed ideas, which leads to an under examination of rational state behavior in the name of security, power, and relative gains. Neither approach gives appropriate attention to domestic concerns of a state which are especially significant in states’ decision-making. Simply put, a single theory approach applied to an entire conflict hinders policy makers in their aim to produce policy which is conducive to peace, because all involved actors may not be motivated by the same factors or have the same constraints. The result is an ineffective policy which addresses one state’s concern but not the other’s.

FPA compliments conventional political science theory as it allows policy makers to examine the conflict and involved actors from a nuanced perspective. This approach provides significant utility when examining the Saudi-Iranian rivalry as both states have different motivations. Saudi Arabia is consistently most concerned with security and relative gains. Saudi Arabia’s closer ties with the West illustrates its aim to preserve and benefit from its geopolitical position vis-à-vis Iran, to the detriment of its claim of Islamic legitimacy. Conversely, Iran

57 Ibid.
58 Ibid.
operates from a varied approach being motivated by relative gains and security when necessary but also operating in accordance with its identity to oppose the West and stand for the rights of Muslims while considering domestic political factors.

The West’s acknowledgment of varied Iranian behavior allowed for the success of the Iran Nuclear Deal. To address Iranian domestic concerns, the West lifted its sanctions. To address Saudi security concerns following the Deal, the Obama administration signed a weapons deal worth over $100 billion with Saudi Arabia, thus satiating both parties.59

FPA is a method of looking at each aspect of the Saudi-Iranian rivalry in isolation or in concert to determine what motivates both states and why. Only after understanding the context of different aspects of the Saudi-Iranian rivalry can policy makers begin to cool or at least manage tensions in the region. The Middle East has experienced instability for decades. Policy makers have a moral obligation to reduce the tensions between Saudi Arabia and Iran. Terror groups, recognizing the power vacuums caused by instability, have taken advantage of the situation to expand their gains. Massive unrest in the Middle East must be better managed as its impacts have been and will continue to be felt globally. No “one perfect” solution exists to calm the region; however, by utilizing the FPA approach, policy makers can begin to formulate nuanced solutions which will address the multiple, shifting, dynamics in the Saudi-Iranian rivalry.

59 Bayoumy, "Obama administration arms sales."
Bibliography


A Case of Tigers and Talibans: The Applicability of the Sri Lankan Counterinsurgency Model in Pakistan’s Insurgent War

Sarmad Ishfaq

Abstract: The aim of the paper is to ascertain whether it is practical for Pakistan to apply the Sri Lankan COIN (Counterinsurgency) Model against its primary insurgent group – Tehreek e Taliban Pakistan (TTP). Initially, the paper highlights the characteristics adopted in the Sri Lankan Model that was used successfully against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) or Tamil Tigers. The paper then critically analyses whether Pakistan should reproduce the Sri Lankan Model by taking into consideration both countries’, and especially Pakistan’s, local, regional and global environment; kind of insurgency threat; and the politics and capability of the armed forces. After analysis it becomes evident that due to differences and intricacies in both countries’ scenarios, environments and insurgencies, it is simplistic to state that Pakistan should completely copy the Sri Lankan modus operandi. However, the paper does suggest that there are some caveats and takeaways that need to be appreciated and applied from the Sri Lankan experience. It is concluded that Pakistan continue its successful Zarb e Azb Operation, learn the relevant lessons from the Sri Lankan example, and create a “Pakistani Model” that takes the country’s own needs and environment into account.

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Introduction

Does Pakistan need to replicate the Sri Lankan counterinsurgency model used successfully against the Tamil Tigers in its own war against Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan?

The paper puts forward the preceding question and subsequently argues that Pakistan does not need to fully adopt the Sri Lankan counterinsurgency model used to defeat the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) or the Tamil Tigers in its own fight against the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). Concurrently, however, there are certain characteristics and lessons from the model that can and should be utilized by Pakistan. This only becomes evident after a thorough analysis has been conducted - one that highlights not only the major facets of the Sri Lankan Model but also the environment in which it was applied. The paper then compares the applicability of the Model in Pakistan’s distinctive environment and insurgent war point-by-point. After this analysis, it becomes evident that Pakistan is doing well with regards to certain aspects of the Model but can learn from other aspects that it might have shortcomings in. The main takeaway though is that a complete replication of the model cannot be applied or sustained due to nuances and intricacies in both countries’ insurgencies, and environments. It must be mentioned, since Pakistan’s current situation and war is being analyzed in the paper and Sri Lanka is only considered as a model for potential application in Pakistan, more time and detail is given to the Pakistani section.

The Sri Lankan Model and experience is captivating due to its distinct nature from Western COIN mainly because of a preference of military might over ‘hearts and minds’ (details later). It is further captivating because compared to Iraq and Afghanistan, where no grand victory can be claimed, Sri Lanka won using military strength and ended the LTTE insurgency in 2009. Most importantly, the Sri Lankan case is one of the few cases in history that resolved an insurgency by military means. The Sri Lankan Model refers to the main features adopted by the government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) and its armed forces in their final campaign, Eelam War IV (2006-2009), against the LTTE which led to the latter’s demise militarily. The phrase “Sri Lanka Model” is not the author's own innovation but was used by Sri Lanka’s then government and is sometimes called the “Rajapaksa Model” – referring to President Mahinda Rajapaksa and his strategy to defeat the LTTE. The official Sri Lankan Model (or Rajapaksa Model) has several characteristics, however, when this paper uses the term “Sri Lanka Model” (or some iteration thereof) it is discussing a “model” whose characteristics have been derived from not only the Rajapaksa Model itself but also from scholars in academia – hence this paper’s “Sri Lanka Model” is different than the official version. There are 7 facets identified in the paper’s Sri Lankan Model and the paper discusses their specificities in the contextual period of Eelam War IV (see ‘The Sri Lankan Model’ for details). They include the following:

1) Political Will  
2) Adapting Armed Forces to the Threat  
3) Regulate Media  
4) Engage Internationally  

5) No Negotiations or Ceasefires
6) Ignore International Pressure That May distract From the End Goal
7) Indiscriminate Violence

Background of the Insurgencies

Sri Lanka

The Sri Lankan conflict with the LTTE is one with a storied past. The roots of the conflict existed during and after British (colonial) departure from the tear shaped Island. The Tamil insurgency goes all the way back to ethnic tensions between the Sinhalese majority and the Tamil minority which climaxed following independence from the British in 1948. During colonial reign, the British executed their infamous divide-and-rule policy in a multi-ethnic sphere. The minority Tamils enjoyed British partiality while simultaneously the Sinhalese suffered. The British promoted and trusted Tamils in the civil service, universities and other key positions in Ceylon (pre-independence name of the Island). This disenfranchised the majority Sinhalese who post-British departure, made the reverse true and self-promoted themselves to previously Tamil positions. The Sinhalese government initialized “nationalist and exclusionary” policies that marginalized the Tamils. The societal crevices between both ethnicities were deepening as time moved forward. Policies such as the ‘Sinhala Only Official Languages Act’ which made Sinhala the national language of Sri Lanka, the 1972 Constitution that granted Buddhism (religion of most Sinhalese) special status, and other policies that slashed Tamil representation in universities and civil services set the backdrop for a future climatic clash.

During the 1970s, due to these exclusionist policies, many Tamil separatist groups began to surface. Velupillai Prabhakaran (VP), then a Tamil teenager, took control of a group called the Tamil New Tigers in 1972. The LTTE was subsequently formed in 1976 when VP renamed the group. The aim was to create a Tamil homeland in the north and east of the Sri Lankan island. The organization thus had a national-secessionist/ethno-national motivation rather than a religious one and it was the dream of a separate homeland – Tamil Eelam – that motivated the Tamil insurgency to its bitter end. Although, there were many different Tamil separatist groups before the LTTE, they were all either absorbed or destroyed by VP. By the late 1980’s the LTTE had eradicated the competitor groups and became the dominant vehicle for Tamil desires.

The Sri Lankan civil war began in 1983 and drove the country into mass chaos and panic. Thousands of noncombatants and combatants alike died in the war – some in riots while others in the various insurgent-counterinsurgent battles. The Sri Lankan Army (SLA) was engaged in four grueling wars with the LTTE spanning almost three decades. The LTTE enjoyed a notorious reputation. It had been labeled as one of the deadliest terrorist or insurgent groups in the world.

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4 Jon Lunn et al., War and peace in Sri Lanka. (United Kingdom: Parliament, House of Commons Library, June 2009)
5 Lionel Beehner et al., The Taming of the Tigers: An MWI Contemporary Battlefield Assessment of the Counterinsurgency in Sri Lanka (Modern War Institute at West Point, 2017)
The group’s suicide unit, the Black Tigers, carried out more suicide attacks than any other insurgent or terrorist group from their inception until their demise (1983-2009). The group became masters of using suicide terrorism – ironically better than the Islamist groups it is attributed to. Their support came not only from the Tamil population of Sri Lanka but the millions of people in the Tamil diaspora around the world (such as Canada). The LTTE’s active membership fluctuated between 7,000-15,000 throughout the lifetime of the organization. It is estimated that their annual revenue was an astonishing $200 million. Initially, the LTTE enjoyed Indian support and financing but eventually due to India’s IPKF (Indian Peace Keeping Force) goal of keeping the peace between the Sinhalese and Tamils, and the subsequent assassination of former Prime Minister Rajiv Ghandi by the LTTE, India withdrew its support. The Tigers were infamous for using child and women soldiers and were perhaps the only insurgent group in history to have a navy and a rudimentary air force. They were also known to use hybrid combating techniques that included a combination of guerilla tactics, terrorism, and conventional warfare. They amassed such support that they became the de facto government in LTTE controlled areas, providing governance structures such as police, banks and hospitals for the public. This formidable foe was finally crushed militarily by the Sri Lankans after a 26-year-old civil war in Eelam War IV.

Pakistan

The Pakistani case compared to the Sri Lankan example carries a few similarities but also some major differences. Pakistan’s current insurgency problem has an extensive history and has been exacerbated by events such as the Saudi-Iran proxy wars (post-Iranian revolution), the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and the 9/11 attacks. But not everything can be blamed on exogenous factors, as the country in the past has been partial towards some militant groups. For example, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and America assisted seven significant Mujahedeen (Muslims who partake in Jihad or Holy War) groups to fight off the Soviet invasion in 1979-1989. Although, this assistance can be cited as necessary during that time, the subsequent handling of these groups post-Soviet withdrawal is questionable by all three states.

One of the primary reasons for regional instability and militancy has been the unresolved Kashmir dispute between Pakistan and India which in some ways had encouraged Pakistan to use non-state elements in support of the Kashmiris oppressed by Indian forces. Despite the clampdown on such elements in recent years by Pakistan, some of them continue regardless. Such groups could attack India with or without the author station or complicity of state authorities in Pakistan. The unsettled Kashmir dispute dilutes Pakistan’s political will to fight

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8 Ibid.
9 Beehner et al., “The Taming of the Tigers”.
10 Ibid.
11 Hashim, "When Counterinsurgency Wins."
12 Lalwani, “Size Still Matters”
such groups. Zia Ul Haq, Pakistan’s then military dictator, supported these groups in Afghanistan against the Soviet invasion and also in India\(^\text{15}\) to free Kashmir.

But this patronage strategy would soon backfire. After 9/11 President Musharraf faced a stark choice when America presented essentially two options: help the U.S. or risk war with it.\(^\text{16}\) Choosing to side with the Americans or else face a potential war with them, the country chose to fight previously supported groups and in turn faced massive blowback. According to scholars, Pakistan has been fighting a predominantly U.S. war which has led to negative spillovers and repercussions for its own internal security.\(^\text{17}\) Due to this sudden pro-War-on-Terror policy change, many of these groups became anti-state (around 2004) and joined together to form the TTP insurgency in 2007 led by Baitullah Mehsud.\(^\text{18}\) Currently, it is being led by Mullah Fazlullah who has been hiding in Afghanistan. In other words, the TTP is an umbrella organization consisting of various insurgent groups motivated by Islamic extremism. Although there are many different forms of terrorism and numerous insurgent groups in Pakistan, this paper focuses mainly on the dominant insurgent group, the TTP.

Most of the insurgent engagements with the TTP have been fought in the North-West region of Pakistan known as the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) which borders Afghanistan, while some battles and a major operation, Rah-e-Rast, was conducted in Swat (Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province) to clear TTP and affiliated militants.

Although, the TTP and its associate groups are primarily made up of ethnic Pashtuns, the Punjabi Taliban (a significant but now defunct group) was mostly Punjabi in ethnicity. The Punjabi Taliban was also an umbrella organization that was primarily present in Southern Punjab.\(^\text{19}\) They along with the TTP and Al-Qaeda had considerable links with each other and were known to work together from time to time. The Punjabi Taliban was sometimes directly and at times indirectly connected to the TTP. Furthermore the TTP and Al-Qaeda were known to contract out attacks to the Punjabi Taliban.\(^\text{20}\) The affiliation of different umbrella groups with each other has made the insurgent threat even more nefarious to handle although the Punjabi Taliban is now non-operational. However, it must be noted that although the TTP has connections with Al-Qaeda, it is separate from the Taliban (Afghani Taliban) vis-a-vis their history, objectives and targets although both mostly consist of Pashtuns. The Afghan Taliban aims to drive out the coalition and Western forces from Afghanistan but refrains from engaging with Pakistani forces or its populace. The TTP however, mainly operates in Pakistan and frequently attacks innocent Pakistanis, state institutions, and security forces.

Most of these insurgent groups are different than the LTTE, in that they are religiously motivated and endeavor to install their brand of Sharia (religious law) in the country. Unlike the LTTE, the TTP and its partner groups do not possess their own navy or air force, but nevertheless are well armed, can potentially recruit many insurgents due to high population, are


\(^{16}\) Tankel, "Beyond FATA: Exploring the Punjabi Militant Threat to Pakistan."


\(^{19}\) Javaid and Khan, “Complex Regional Dynamics,” 562-564.

adequately funded and are proficient in the use of suicide terrorism. The TTP have even been involved in international attacks – most notably the attempted Time Square car bombing (which was thwarted). According to the South Asia Terrorism Portal, a total of 28,152 civilians and security personnel have been killed in terrorist violence from January 2003 to December 25th, 2016 in Pakistan.\textsuperscript{21}

Nevertheless, Pakistan’s current situation vis-à-vis terrorism has improved drastically since 9/11 and the new age of terrorism. Since the inception of the TTP, the areas of Swat in Pakistan have been cleared of all insurgents thanks to Operation Rah E Rast in 2009 while the situation in North and South Waziristan (considered the hub of terrorist bases) have been mostly cleared due to Operation Rah E Nijat (2009) and the recent Operation Zarb E Azb (2015-). This is not to say that the war has concluded but only to highlight that much of the insurgent threat has been neutralized through the large strides made by the armed forces, intelligence, paramilitary, police, rehabilitation organizations and NGO’s of the country. The country has made innumerable sacrifices of man and material both.

The Sri Lankan Model

The paper has derived a list that best describes the major facets in the Sri Lankan model using various sources and authors (Hashim\textsuperscript{22}, Babar\textsuperscript{23}, Layton\textsuperscript{24} and Shashikumar\textsuperscript{25}, Beehner et al.,\textsuperscript{26} Rajapaksa\textsuperscript{27}). Before debating the 7 characteristics, it is important to discuss how the Sri Lankan Model is distinct from modern day Western/American COIN (counterinsurgency) methods. GoSL relied on the brute use of military might while Americans and the West prefer a population-centric approach which is aimed at winning over ‘hearts and minds’.\textsuperscript{28} America’s COIN in Iraq and Afghanistan has consisted of avoiding as many civilian casualties in areas where civilians and insurgents are indistinguishable.\textsuperscript{29} The Sri Lankans, conversely, executed a concerted COIN strategy which used indiscriminate force to overwhelm the LTTE completely.\textsuperscript{30} This egregious use of force ended the LTTE insurgency but concurrently led to thousands of civilian deaths in the process. The humanitarian American COIN approach is based on Western ideals that can be cited in the Geneva Convention and Just War principles. This COIN is rooted in the beliefs that an insurgency cannot be overcome without winning the population’s support and that military might alone will lead to hollow victories that are essentially counter-productive in the long run. In contrast, the Sri Lankan Model rests on ‘strong and dynamic’ military

\textsuperscript{22} Hashim, "When Counterinsurgency Wins."  
\textsuperscript{24} Layton, “How Sri Lanka Won the War.”  
\textsuperscript{26} Beehner et al., The Taming of the Tigers.  
\textsuperscript{27} Then President of Sri Lanka, Mahinda Rajapaksa, and Defense Secretary Gotoboya Rajapaksa (brother of the President)  
\textsuperscript{29} Beehner et al., The Taming of the Tigers.  
\textsuperscript{30} Ibid
operations under a determined political leadership.\textsuperscript{31} The model’s partialness to operational freedom implied that humanitarian contemplations took a backseat to military action.\textsuperscript{32} The use of indiscriminate bombing by the Sri Lankan Armed Forces was a critical albeit controversial part of their COIN plan.\textsuperscript{33} In summary, the American COIN promotes a population-centric approach while the Sri Lankan COIN endorses an enemy-centric approach; both run counter to each other.

The following is an explanation of the major features of the Sri Lankan Model:

\textit{Political Will}

Although, the Sri Lankan Model highlights the importance of the armed forces, without political backing this has scant meaning. Rather than surrounding itself in ambiguity as it did in the past, the Rajapaksa government came out with a clear objective to eliminate the insurgency. Mahinda Rajapaksa’s government took control in 2005 and was elected on an uncompromising nationalist platform – it was supported by the fundamentalist Buddhist clergy and extreme Sinhalese parties in Sri Lanka.\textsuperscript{34} Rajapaksa also drew support from the Sinhalese public, his constituency, via his promise to eradicate the LTTE at any cost. With their (Sinhalese) support, there was no concern of being heavy handed against Tamil insurgents and civilians alike (as they were not his political base). Under Rajapaksa’s capable leadership, the GoSL implemented economic, military, political and intelligence efforts through the Sri Lankan Model.\textsuperscript{35} He surrounded himself with a passionate team that shared his distaste for the LTTE – this included his brother and Defense Secretary, Gotabhaya Rajapaksa, and General Fonseka – the army chief. The brothers assured General Fonseka that the army had the complete support of the GoSL and to not worry about any political blowback. According to Shashikumar, President Rajapaksa backed the army to win the war and he assured them that he would handle any local and or international political pressures.\textsuperscript{36} General Fonseka himself cites that it was the first time the military enjoyed this extent of political support and that it was the political leadership and military commitment that led the country to victory. Hashim notes that Gotabhaya Rajapaksa stated that destroying the LTTE was the main goal and the civil and military leadership were working close together.\textsuperscript{37}

\textit{Adapt Your Armed Forces to the Threat}

The defeat of the LTTE was a military one but to ensure this end, the Sri Lankan government needed to train, fund and reinvigorate its armed forces – this includes the SLA, air force and navy. According to interviews of senior SLA officials the army increased its numbers from 10,000 (before the war began) to 200,000 by the war's end in 2009.\textsuperscript{38} There were several major changes made in the armed forces that led to the LTTE’s defeat; a more flexible and innovative army, a budget increase to proliferate troop numbers, training soldiers in jungle and

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{31} Azat Sajjad Khan, “Sri Lankan Counterinsurgency Operations during Eelam War IV: Comparative Analysis of Gulala and Rajapaksa Models to Determine Future Applicability”, (Masters Thesis, School of Advanced Military Studies, 2013)
\item \textsuperscript{32} Ibid
\item \textsuperscript{33} Beehner et al., The Taming of the Tigers
\item \textsuperscript{34} Beehner, \textit{The Taming of the Tigers}
\item \textsuperscript{35} Khan, “Sri Lankan Counterinsurgency Operations”
\item \textsuperscript{36} Shashikumar, “Lessons from the Sri Lanka War”
\item \textsuperscript{37} Hashim, “When Counterinsurgency Wins.”
\item \textsuperscript{38} Beehner et al., The Taming of the Tigers.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
medical warfare to create a counter-guerilla force and many others. More specifically, the SLA gave impetus to small-units that were skilled in various operations – for instance bunker busting, night operations and room clearing. Furthermore, the Sri Lankan army adopted the SIOT (Special Infantry Operations Team) concept – these soldiers were trained in jungle warfare and medical training amongst other operations. The SLA entrusted the 8-man SIOT’s to conduct long missions and gave commanders on ground accented authority – their use was extensive and caught the LTTE heavily off guard.

The Sri Lankan navy and air force also had an important role to play. Eelam War IV saw the simultaneous use of SLA, navy and air force – ground troops were supported by close air support and the navy was used to block LTTE access to arms and ammunition stockpiles. The Sri Lankan navy also used large counter-horde fast action boats to defeat LTTE’s own hordes of boats. Moreover, the number of naval personnel soared by 50% after 2000, while patrol and coastal combat forces increased by an overwhelming 233%. The air force on the other hand, not only provided ground support for troops, but found their role accentuated when the LTTE began state building endeavors (formation of banks, schools, hospitals) which made them easy targets for aerial bombardment. In the end, it was a joint and coordinated effort by the army, air force and navy in defeating the insurgency.

Regulate Media

Rajapaksa’s government saw the media as a damaging force to the war, and controlled independent media from entering the battlefield, the logic being that the media could bring about unwanted attention (especially international) that would increase pressure to stop the war effort. This in turn would be exploited by the LTTE, as it had done in the past. The Rajapaksa government created the Media Centre for National Security and Defense website to propagate the government’s own narrative. There was a single version of the war that the media could report – that of the Sri Lankan government. Furthermore, the messaging by the official website of the Tamils, Tamilnet, could not be independently confirmed due to constricted access to the war-zone. During the LTTE’s last stand in the northern Vanni region of the island, there was

39 Hashim, “When Counterinsurgency Wins.”
40 Beehner et al., The Taming of the Tigers.
42 Beehner et al., The Taming of the Tigers.
44 Lalwani, “Size Still Matters”
46 Lalwani, “Size Still Matters”
47 Beehner et al., The Taming of the Tigers.
48 Hashim, “When Counterinsurgency Wins.”
49 Hashim, “When Counterinsurgency Wins.”
50 Shashikumar, “Lessons from the Sri Lanka War”
51 Khan, “Sri Lankan Counterinsurgency Operations”
essentially a blackout for both the international media and monitors alike—an event that is also the time when many civilians had been killed due to indiscriminate violence by security forces.

**Engage Internationally**

The assistance from international actors, mainly states, that culminated in Sri Lanka achieving her objectives cannot be overstated. Sri Lanka was auspicious in the sense that it had the support of a powerful China and other major regional actors such as Pakistan and India. The Chinese provided both military and economic aid—$1 billion in 2005—annually to support the Sri Lankan government's war effort, and in return acquired key contracts with respect to seaports and other economic ventures. According to interviews, during the time of Eelam IV, Sri Lankan operations and weapons were being funded by Beijing. The Sri Lankans also received lines of credit for arms purchases and oil from Iran, Pakistan, Libya and Russia. Pakistan also aided Sri Lanka by providing twenty-two of their primary Al-Khaled battle tanks.

The official Sri Lankan Model (or Rajapaksa Model) itself mentions the phrase “Keep your neighbor in the loop.” Paralleling this phrase in the paper, and with a dynamic foreign policy, the GoSL established cordial relations with India, which once used to train and fund the LTTE. India aided the Sri Lankan Navy by providing critical naval intelligence vis-à-vis the movements of the LTTE navy vessels that would sustain the LTTE insurgency. Relying on foreign navies and intelligence, the Sri Lankan Navy intercepted the LTTE maritime arm supplies.

**No Negotiations or Ceasefires**

The message was clear from the GoSL. There will be no negotiations or ceasefires because in the previous encounters the LTTE had used them to regroup, rearm, and consolidate themselves for future fights. This is not to say that the Sri Lankans were not guilty themselves of using periods of non-fighting to regroup and redo their own strategies, but since ceasefires and negotiations never led to lasting peace, there seemed little point in following old ways. Ceasefires actually protracted violence by allowing both sides to rearm themselves, and more importantly, prevented a weaker LTTE from being annihilated in previous wars. Negotiations can only work when both sides are willing to compromise with each other, but it was apparent early on that the GoSL found the dream of Tamil Eelam as an unacceptable reality. Eelam War IV was not to be ceased until a decisive and final blow was struck to the LTTE. In the past, negotiations and ceasefires were not only used by the LTTE to regroup themselves, but also to propagate acts of terror and chaos. For example, the LTTE assassinated the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister and attempted to kill the commander of the army during a ceasefire. The international

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52 Beehner et al., The Taming of the Tigers.
54 Beehner et al., The Taming of the Tigers.
56 Khan, “Sri Lankan Counterinsurgency Operations”
57 Lalwani, “Size Still Matters”
58 Khan, “Sri Lankan Counterinsurgency Operations”
59 Beehner et al., The Taming of the Tigers.
60 Beehner et al., The Taming of the Tigers.
pressure to start negotiations and ceasefires were blatantly ignored, as they were seen as counterproductive by the Rajapaksa government.\textsuperscript{61}

\textit{Ignore International Pressure that May Distract from the End Goal}

The official Sri Lankan Model (Rajapaksa Model) phrases this characteristic very crudely as “go to hell.” The premise of this is to ignore intentional pressure and criticism, as in the past they had led to a cessation of fighting and reinvigorated the LTTE, which ironically led to more casualties in the future. Rajapaksa’s government thought the previous governments had caved into the demands of the international community and allowed the LTTE to regroup,\textsuperscript{62} hence, this government was resolute in not repeating past mistakes. The “go to hell” facet of the Rajapaksa Model was quite integral, as it resulted in the success of the GoSL.\textsuperscript{63} This strategy was almost uncompromisable, as even the British and French foreign ministers were ignored when they suggested that the government negotiate with the LTTE during Eelam IV.\textsuperscript{64} In February 2009, during Eelam War IV, human rights organizations, later followed by America, the United Kingdom, Japan and others raised concerns over civilian casualties and called for a temporary cessation of the conflict to allow humanitarian access to the battlefield,\textsuperscript{65} but the GoSL ignored these calls all the way up until April 2009 as it knew it was close to annihilating the insurgency.

\textit{Indiscriminate Violence}

By far the most controversial and morally egregious facet of the model, indiscriminate violence is nonetheless the one that dealt most damage to the group. The Rajapaksa government, however, is not the only one that committed to the “Indiscriminate Violence” doctrine. Past governments had done the same in previous wars and operations (mimicking their LTTE counterparts), but ironically, doing so only emboldened the insurgency rather than harming it. Due to past Sri Lankan governments using indiscriminate force, Tamils migrated to the north from the south of the Island – this demographic increase in Tamil ratios in the northern province led to more potential recruits for the LTTE.\textsuperscript{66} During Eelam War IV, massive civilian deaths were reported in the final stages when the LTTE was cornered in northern Vanni. Although it is difficult to pinpoint an accurate number of the non-combatant casualties during Eelam IV, there are some estimates available from international organizations. Human Rights Watch stated that 30 indiscriminate aerial and artillery attacks on hospitals and medical facilities took place since December 2008 in northern Vanni.\textsuperscript{67}In the final phase of Eelam IV, the United Nations (U.N.) estimates that 40,000 civilians died due to indiscriminate SLA shelling.\textsuperscript{68} Moreover, the U.N. estimates that 7,000 civilians were killed and over 13,000 were injured from January to May.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{61} Shashikumar, “Lessons from the Sri Lanka War”.
\item \textsuperscript{62} Hashim, “When Counterinsurgency Wins.”
\item \textsuperscript{63} Khan, “Sri Lankan Counterinsurgency Operations”
\item \textsuperscript{64} Shashikumar, “Lessons from the Sri Lanka War”
\item \textsuperscript{65} Beehner et al., The Taming of the Tigers.
\item \textsuperscript{68} Beehner et al., The Taming of the Tigers.
\end{itemize}
2009, while other estimates suggest 20,000 civilians were killed.\textsuperscript{69} Albeit morally and legally repugnant, the strategy maximized LTTE combatant deaths, including Prabhakaran’s, and ended the insurgency.

The LTTE itself should also carry the blame for civilian casualties, as they were infamous for using human shields and travelled in tight units with family members. Nonetheless, there is still a plethora of evidence that suggests deliberate targeting of civilians by GoSL.\textsuperscript{70} The GoSL has denied any and all wrongdoing or humanitarian abuse in the war.

The Sri Lankan Environment

The Model should not be looked as an isolated case, but instead should be appreciated with regards to its contextual and environmental settings – the model was operating not in a closed system, but was part of the regional and global environment. The Sri Lankan Model was a successful one which suited the environment in which it was applied.\textsuperscript{71} It was a dialectic process between both, and hence they should be studied together.

In other words, the Sri Lankan victory was a combination of internal and external factors, and not just the employment of innovative tactics or a grand model. Internal defections from the LTTE (mainly that of Colonel Karuna), the 2004 floods that devastated LTTE areas, the new anti-terror global mindset after 9/11, and poor choices made by Prabhakaran played huge roles in the LTTE’s defeat.\textsuperscript{72} Sri Lankans took glorious advantage of the post 9/11 anti-terror environment, and by proactive diplomacy convinced 32 countries that the LTTE was a terror outfit, thus drastically depreciating its funding and legitimacy from abroad.\textsuperscript{73} The 2004 floods in Sri Lanka struck a hefty blow to major LTTE areas, and killed many of their men and destroyed their equipment. It was concluded in a study (researching the Sri Lankan COIN model) that a non-expeditionary COIN that uses brute military force (like the Sri Lankan COIN) can be an effective strategy if one or more conditions are present (i.e. the presence of huge public support for a military resolution; the terrain being favorable for such type of a COIN (a peninsula or island); the ability to minimize the international community’s influence).\textsuperscript{74} The preceding reinforces the idea of how a country’s environment, international pressure, local support, and even the terrain of a country plays an integral and almost decisive role in the type of COIN a state can apply or get away with.

Lastly, the Sri Lankans had support from their regional neighbors. It would have been a different story if China and its billions of dollars were not available, if Pakistan and its expertise on COIN and equipment were absent, or if India had continued, like in the past, to provide safe haven and other support to the LTTE.

In summary, a Sri Lankan scholar stated it best when he said that the war was not won by Sri Lanka and Rajapaksa alone, but by the specific configuration of domestic, regional and global conditions that made it possible for the Tamil Tigers to lose the war\textsuperscript{75}.

\textsuperscript{70} Beehner et al., The Taming of the Tigers.
\textsuperscript{71} Khan, “Sri Lankan Counterinsurgency Operations”
\textsuperscript{72} Smith, ”Understanding Sri Lanka's Defeat of the Tamil Tigers”
\textsuperscript{73} Jalal, ”Think Like a Guerilla: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Sri Lanka.”
\textsuperscript{74} Beehner et al., The Taming of the Tigers.
\textsuperscript{75} Lalwani, “Size Still Matters”
The Model’s Applicability in Pakistan

This section entails a point-by-point analysis of the facets of the Sri Lankan Model with regards to its applicability in Pakistan – this is done in order to identify where Pakistan excels, lacks, and which part(s) of the Model it does not subscribe to. Since this is the main section of the paper, it will go into some historical detail as well.

Political Will

In a report titled “Pakistan's Delicate Civil-Military Balance,” it was highlighted that Pakistan has a past riddled with contentious civil-military relations that have resulted in recurring coups in the country. This contentious history between the civil government and military is characterized by the fact that there have been three successful military coups in the country. In 1979, army dictator, Zia Ul Haq, put to death the then Prime Minister, Zulfiqar Bhutto, while later democratically elected Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif sacked two army chiefs – Jehangir Karamat and Musharraf, the latter of whom subsequently toppled Sharif’s government in 1999. The Pakistani army has an important say in the country’s national security and foreign policy issues, but certain academics claim that it has more say than the government. Frederic Grare, an expert on Southern Asia, argues that the army is the major decision maker with respect to defense and foreign policy, according to most analysts.

While this might have been true in the past, recent trends show the army is shifting away from the political realm, or is at least not enjoying the same power it once had in political affairs. For example, Nawaz Sharif’s election in 2013 was the first successful handover between two democratically elected governments in the country’s history. While there is a significant improvement compared to past divisions between civil-military leaderships, the mutual trust between both is still far from flawless. The civilian government and military leadership must work together in their respective spaces and not meddle in each other’s affairs, or otherwise eradicating insurgents will be impossible. The Sri Lankan Model saw that the civil-military relationship was based on complete mutual trust.

Another factor that hinders the political will and process is that a few Pakistani religious-political parties sympathize with the Taliban and its affiliated groups. For example, the TTP has a support base with some Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) politicians. Most of Pakistan’s militant groups are members of the Deobandi sect, a revivalist movement within Sunni Islam, and the earlier discussed Punjabi terrorist groups that were connected to the Deobandi JUI, and to the network of madrassas (religious schools) tied with it. A political support base not only legitimizes the insurgents cause, but further sows disunity between political parties vis-a-vis the eradication of TTP and other groups.

That being said, credit must be given to both the military and civilian leadership of Raheel Sharif (military chief who retired in November 2016) and Nawaz Sharif (no relation)

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77 Grare, "Pakistan's foreign and security policies after the 2013 general election: the Judge, the Politician and the Military."
78 “Pakistan's Delicate Civil-Military Balance."
79 Fair, "Pakistan in 2011: Ten Years of the "War on Terror"
80 Tankel, "Beyond FATA: Exploring the Punjabi Militant Threat to Pakistan."
respectively for coming together in what is being hailed as the most successful counterinsurgent operation in the country’s history – ZARB E AZB. The need for the operation arose in 2014 when the TTP attacked the Karachi airport, killing 26 and injuring 18. This resulted in a convergence of opinions between the army, most mainstream political parties, and the government with regards to the destruction of the TTP. The attack on the airport was tragic, but what really enraged the country was the attack on Army Public School Peshawar in December 2014, which saw terrorists kill innocent children. This brought the nation together, giving even greater impetus to the operation. The main target of the Zarb E Azb operation has been the TTP in the North Waziristan agency, an agency in FATA, but other groups operating in the same locale have also been targeted. The operation has been extremely successful and has effectively broken the backbone of the terrorist network. According to a report by PICSS (Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Peace Studies), there has been a fifty percent reduction in deaths in February 2016 compared to January 2016.

Ironically, though unlike President Rajapaksa in Sri Lanka, Nawaz Sharif was not really seen as the hero of the continuing operation, but rather, it was Raheel Sharif. This emphasizes the schism that ordinary citizens still perceive between the military and civilian leaderships due to their uneasy past. This divide, both perceptions and realities, must be redressed so the military and government can continue working together, and should not be limited to solely COIN operations.

Lastly, the political will is deficient in terms of post-military operation activities. Whilst the Pakistan Armed Forces (PAF) have mostly been successful in clearing and holding areas that were previously in the control of the TTP, the civil administration has failed in terms of providing rehabilitation, economic opportunities, and infrastructural links to the local people. This mismatch in terms of capabilities between the PAF and government is a deterrent towards achieving full COIN victories in the long term.

**Adapt Armed Forces**

The PAF is the major strength of the country. The PAF, comprising of the army, air force, and navy, along with paramilitary organizations, are the 6th largest armed forces globally and are the largest in the Muslim world. They possess nuclear and second-strike capabilities and have been engaged in four major wars with their arch-rival India. Moreover, they continue to fight a non-conventional guerilla war with insurgents. This implies that the PAF are an active and experienced fighting force in both conventional and asymmetric warfare – not many other armed forces in the world can say the same.

With respect to insurgent operations, there have been some failures in the past, such as in South Waziristan Agency (FATA) in 2004, 2005 and 2008, as the army did not adapt its forces to the guerrilla threat, and suffered heavy loss of life. Eventually, however, it did find its stride – much like the Sri Lankans. Successful operations include Operation Sher Dil (2008-2009) in Bajaur Agency and Operation Rah E Rast (2009) in Swat Valley. Another success story was the South Waziristan operation Rah E Nijat (Path to Salvation) in 2009. Operation Rah E Nijat saw

the army using its forces on multiple axes, similar to the Sri Lankans, and grabbing the higher ground to control the valleys.\textsuperscript{83} Before and during Operation Rah E Nijat, the army learned from past lessons and melted the TTP resistance in the area, and the Pakistani public heavily supported this operation in South Waziristan.\textsuperscript{84} The operation used around 30,000 troops and successfully cleared TTP strongholds like Makeen, Kotkai, and Laddah, among many others.\textsuperscript{85}

There was much anticipation after Rah E Nijat concluded that another operation should start in the neighboring North Waziristan Agency. This came in 2014 in the highly successful Zarb E Azb, an operation not based solely on kinetic force, as it includes madrasa reforms and the mainstreaming of FATA, since it has lacked development and reforms. The destruction of TTP strongholds, the elimination of public support among FATA residents, and the removal of the bomb creation and munitions factories have been the highlights of this operation.\textsuperscript{86} Due to this major endeavor against the TTP and other outfits, terrorist assaults have declined in the country and terrorist infrastructure in the region has been neutralized.\textsuperscript{87} There has been a huge learning curve for the PAF compared to earlier operations, which now include strategic knowledge about the terrain and the use of precision weapons.\textsuperscript{88} Moreover, the Pakistan Army has adapted by learning how to fight in small groups, how to conduct surprise offensive actions, and has even begun using such measures as bird calls to signal approaching terrorists.\textsuperscript{89} The Institute for Economics & Peace highlighted some key findings from a study they conducted. Firstly, in 2015 Pakistan had a 38% decline in terrorist-related deaths compared to 2014. Secondly, Operation Zarb E Azb was responsible in part for the decline of terrorism, combined with the infighting within TTP. Thirdly, Pakistan had the third largest reduction in deaths from terrorism for 2015, thus experiencing the lowest number of deaths since 2008. And lastly, the country also experienced a 45% drop in terrorist activity compared to 2014.\textsuperscript{90}

The army faces quite a challenging and rugged terrain vis-à-vis FATA, where the porous mountainous border allows militants to hide and or to escape to Afghanistan. The Afghan forces, despite U.S. and NATO military support, are not on par with Pakistani forces, thus making the capture and killing of escaped militants even more difficult. This has soured Pak-Afghan relations, which make achievement of success even more taxing. Sustained peace is not


\textsuperscript{86} Javaid and Khan, "Complex Regional Dynamics: Pakistan's need for Political Paradigm Shift."

\textsuperscript{87} Javaid, "Operation Zarb-e-Azb: A Successful Initiative to Curtail Terrorism" \textit{South Asian Studies} 2015.


\textsuperscript{89} Tim Craig, “To Fight the Taliban, Pakistani military turns to unorthodox but simple tactics." \textit{Washington Post} 2015 https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/to-fight-the-taliban-pakistani-military-turns-to-unorthodox-but-simple-tactics/2015/04/15/eac5b088-e1ee-11e4-ae0f-f8c46aaa8c3a4_story.html?utm_term=ca8b8ebe603f

attainable without simultaneous and effective counterterrorism efforts on both sides of the border.

Nonetheless, the PAF have played their part in clearing and holding areas, but the socio-economic grievances of the people in FATA and other underdeveloped areas must also be addressed. This being the government’s job, it should be prioritized so the battles can be won in the long-term politically rather than just militarily. The general trend is that after the military succeeds in taking back areas under insurgent control, the local grievances remain unanswered by the government.

The air force has also played a pivotal role, and this too must be highlighted. I had the opportunity to interview a retired, three-star Lieutenant General of the Pakistan Army, who informed me that due to the air force’s role in ground support, many lives were saved in Operation Zarb E Azb and the operations in Swat. He added that the air force also took part in precision strikes when intelligence agencies had confirmed insurgent hideouts, stockpiles, or training facilities to them. Furthermore, he mentioned the pivotal role of reconnaissance conducted by the air force in rough, jagged, and mountainous terrains. It was a joint and heavily coordinated endeavor between both the army and air force. Pakistan’s Armed Forces, after a shaky start, have shown that they are more than capable of defeating insurgents.

Regulate Media

Pakistan’s private electronic independent media saw a boom during President Musharraf’s tenure. The proliferation of news channels has been astounding in the past ten years. Unfortunately, Pakistani media has a history of being quite sensationalist, and even immature, due to the greed of ratings and money. For example, during the Karachi Airport Operation in 2014, the media, instead of censoring certain sensitive information, provided terrorists with key intel through their live feed of the operation. The media has also provided space and time to terrorists in both print and electronic sources – this unregulated free coverage not only propagates their beliefs but also spreads the terror that they want to instill in the public.

Nonetheless, with regards to Operation Zarb E Azb, the media was regulated and reserved, and so its positive role must be commended. The media did not conduct irresponsible reporting and did not provide terrorist space to broadcast their views. This was achieved through government regulation and a coordinated effort with the media outlets – it was clear that the operation was for the country, and that all actors must play their part. The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the news disseminating body of the PAF, has been the primary and sole source of news regarding Zarb E Azb. From all the soldiers martyred and areas cleared, to the munitions factories destroyed and terrorists killed, everything was reported by ISPR through tweets or press conferences. This allowed for limited disparaging reports that could lessen public support. Furthermore, the military was smart in letting select groups of media outlets visit insurgent training sites and bomb factories because it led to greater public support for offensive

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91 Retired Lieutenant General in the Pakistan Army, in discussion with the author, October 2017.
93 Ibid
International media was also reporting the same story as the local media due to their preliminary source, ISPR, being the same. This handling of the narrative was extremely important for Sri Lanka, and has helped Pakistan immensely as well, but there are major differences between both approaches. Where the Sri Lankans completely blocked local and international media coverage, Pakistan only regulated it. Furthermore, when the Sri Lankan did report on Eelam War IV via state-run news, they had a propagandist motivation as they had used indiscriminate violence. This, however, was not the case when ISPR was dispelling news as PAF had nothing to hide since the COIN engagement was strictly following humanitarian laws. Although collateral damage and loss of life is unavoidable in conflicts, the PAF has handled these caveats exceptionally well.

Engage Internationally

A congressional report cites that Pakistan has received $25.91 billion in military and economic aid since 2001. Although military and developmental aid have been provided yearly by America, China, and other states, the author of this article that the plethora of actors, states, and sub-states, both allies and enemies, is so immensely engrossed in the conflict in Afghanistan and Pakistan, that it becomes exceedingly difficult to obtain long-term strategic objectives. The Sri Lankan and LTTE experience, by contrast, was extremely isolated compared to Pakistan. Although Pakistan has enjoyed a lot of aid, the direct involvement of actors (Saudi Arabia, Iran, America, NATO, Afghanistan, China and India), and their differing policies on how to take action has been counterproductive in tackling insurgency.

America has, no doubt, been Pakistan’s main ally in the war on terror, but there have been many instances which have led to deep distrust between both countries. For example, due to an incursion by NATO on Pakistani soil, which led to the martyrdom of 24 Pakistani soldiers and injury 14, Pakistan closed NATO’s supply routes, demanded an American apology, and told America to vacate Shamsi Air Base. Furthermore, the unilateral action undertaken by U.S. Navy Seals, which led to the death of Osama Bin Laden, produced even more strenuous relations between both countries. It hardly paints an idyllic picture when you and your key allies are not on the same page.

The Pakistanis also feared that the Americans would eventually leave Afghanistan like they did after fending off the Soviets and Pakistanis, and thus they would inherit a potentially chaotic situation – this has since become true, as most American troops have left Afghanistan. It also does not help that, since 9/11, most Pakistanis have had a negative view of America and its War on Terror. According to a study conducted, Pakistani informants were against the War on Terror and saw it having negative repercussions on Muslims and Pakistan. This view seems to


be justified, especially since the effects of the American war in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria has divided the Muslims in the Middle East and the Subcontinent.

The controversial use of drones must also be emphasized. America uses CIA and military drones to conduct strikes on insurgents in the country’s border areas, and it has been cited that the collateral damage in these drone strikes can lead to the further radicalization of people. Although short-term results might be achieved by drones through killing extremists, it still leads to an “exacerbation of deep-rooted societal issues” which can lead to increased militancy of people in the country.¹⁰⁰ The drone controversy is a contentious issue in Pakistan, as it receives almost exclusively negative feedback from Pakistani citizens – especially in FATA – and news outlets. The use of drones, however, has decreased substantially over the last few years.

The relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan has been one marked with vicissitudes – cooperative sometimes, uncooperative at others. Due to the mountainous, yet porous, Afghan-Pak border stretching to an estimated 2,430 kilometers, cross-border terrorist movement has been high. Due to this cross-border terrorism, the two countries have embarked on a mutual blame game with each other.¹⁰¹ Battling various sub-state insurgent groups with communication gaps and blame games will only lead to further complications than already exists. To make matters worse, India, the regional rival of Pakistan, has been trying to negate Pakistan’s influence vis-à-vis Afghanistan, and has invested a lot in Afghanistan’s development, much to the disarray of Pakistan. India, since the fall of the Taliban regime in Kabul, has adopted a proactive Afghan policy, which includes cultural, economic, social and political assistance.¹⁰² India thus sees a potential comrade in Afghanistan to counter Pakistan, and is spending money in various Afghan sectors to do so.¹⁰³

Not so shockingly, there is also growing evidence of Indian involvement in the Balochistan province of Pakistan. A video released by Dawn News shows that in 2016, Pakistan captured an Indian spy, Kulbushan Jadhav, who has confessed on video that he assisted anti-state Baloch groups on behalf of Indian spy agency, Research and Analysis Wing (RAW).¹⁰⁴ It is becoming apparent that India, and possibly other actors, are trying to malign and destabilize Pakistan while the country is battling insurgents and dealing with other domestic issues.

Lastly, the Saudi-Iran proxy war in Pakistan must also be emphasized. Iran and Saudi Arabia have been indirectly fighting in Pakistan since the Soviet invasion and Iranian revolution – both in 1979. Riyadh funds Sunni madrassas, while Tehran counters by funding Shia madrassas. An article by the Economist states that Pakistan is entrenched with madrassas either getting finances from the Saudis or the Iranians, and that the country believes foreign funding, even from allies, is causative of the militant dilemma.¹⁰⁵

The region of South Asia is fighting a war on terror where many international players are trying to do what is best for only them. Unfortunately, even allies are distrustful of each other. The Syrian Civil War and its myriad of actors and policies should act as a lesson for South Asia and other actors to not engage in similar behavior. International engagement in Pakistan is present in the midst of an insurgent war, but so far, seems to be counter-productive.

No negotiations or ceasefires

Negotiations have been conducted in the past with insurgents but have proven to be counterproductive for the government (which has also been the case with Sri Lanka). The military had some calamitous operations in 2004-2007, which led to three rounds of negotiations with the Taliban in 2004, 2005, 2006; this move actually brought the insurgency more legitimacy and strength. The three major negotiations or peace deals that have taken place with the insurgents include: The Shakai Peace Agreement (2004), Srarogha Peace Agreement (2005), and the highly infamous Swat Agreement (2008), which allowed insurgents to impose Sharia law in Swat valley. All of these negotiations failed due to the insurgents not keeping their end of the bargain and so military action had to be re-initiated.

A study, while reviewing these three major negotiations and other unwritten ones, concluded that all of them were signed from a position of government weakness and hence allowed the militants to attain noteworthy concessions which included money and legitimacy. As the LTTE used ceasefires and peace talks to regroup, so did the TTP and its affiliates. It must be added here that America has frowned upon the Pakistani initiative towards negotiations and there was little to no pressure from them on the Pakistani government to initiate them. Pakistan, instead, has found better success in negotiating from a stronger position such as in conclusion of Operation Sherdil (2009) in Bajaur Agency.

Presently, the government is in a position of power due to Operation Zarb E Azb, and is in no mood to start negotiations or initiate ceasefires anytime soon. It would be wise to follow the Sri Lankan route and keep fighting as there is no international pressure to stop and there exists huge public support for the operation itself. However, only necessary and discriminate force should be applied unlike the Sri-Lankan Model.

Ignore international pressure that may distract from the goal

Pakistan was born in 1947. Finding itself feeling the precarious pull of two superpowers during the Cold War, it had a decision to make. Although Pakistan wanted a non-aligned foreign policy, it became more reliant on the Americans. This policy of reliance has continued until the present day, albeit with some ups and downs in the progress. The reality is that, instead of facing similar pressure like the Sri Lankan’s faced i.e. to stop Eelam War IV due to their gun blazing COIN strategy, America, and the West have instead pressurized Pakistan to initiate counterinsurgent operations or to do better in the wake of failed operations. This is mainly because the Americans understand that Pakistan uses force as described by Western COIN and not indiscriminately like the Sri Lankan’s. Although, America and the West can exert considerable amount of pressure on Pakistan, Pakistan does not submit to America’s will on many occasions, thus leading to troubled relations from time to time.

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106 Lalwani, "The Pakistan Military’s Adaptation to Counterinsurgency in 2009."

Pakistan has come under immense pressure from Britain and America to play a greater role, especially after attacks in the West in which the terrorists were Pakistani born. Al Jazeera reported that Pakistan was under pressure to act against militants after the London Bombings, since it was revealed that three of the bombers were British-Pakistani and had recently visited Pakistan.\(^{108}\) It seems Pakistan has a ‘reverse pressure’ scenario compared to the Sri-Lankans where Pakistan is asked to take offensive initiative (or do better) rather than curtailing it. This is also due to the importance of defeating Al Qaeda, Taliban, and its affiliates for America and its allies. If this was not also America’s war, the pressure would be significantly less.

Previously discussed Operation Rah E Nijat in South Waziristan was commended by Pakistan’s western allies, who in the past had been very critical of the country’s military endeavors.\(^{109}\) The Pakistanis were urged by the Americans years before Operation Zarb E Azb to initiate an operation in the North Waziristan agency to clear out the TTP, Haqqani network, Uzbek and other fighter strongholds.\(^{110}\) Thus, if Pakistan continues with vast operations (when required) like Zarb E Azb, it bodes well for the country, as similar successful operations have received critical acclaim at home and abroad. Prominent nations that have a degree of influence on Pakistan such as China and America will almost always welcome operations against insurgency. The former because of its heavy investment in the country’s energy sector via the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor which is the star project of China’s massive Belt and Road Initiative,\(^{111}\) while the latter views it as a deterrent for a doomsday scenario that they themselves propagate, i.e. insurgents getting their hands on Pakistani nukes.

*Indiscriminate Violence*

The retired Army General\(^{112}\) that I interviewed informed me about the stance of the army and government on indiscriminate violence. He stated that there has been no COIN operation in the country which put civilians and insurgents in the same basket. The Pakistan Army, he said, has a COIN manual which focuses on “hearts and minds” rather than blunt force. He gave me an example of what the operational procedures in COIN endeavors are in the country: firstly, the army begins by cordoning off an insurgent-ridden area and then sends notice to the people in the villages and towns to clear out. After this, a screening process of the departing people takes place which is conducted by the army, village elders and the local government – they screen the people exiting the areas to make sure that no insurgents can escape under the guise of civilians. These people are then housed and taken care of in IDP (Internally Displaced People) camps until the battle is over. The army and air force then proceed to fight the insurgents only when all civilians have left. It can be a tedious process he says but one that is necessary.

Other than this, Pakistan simply cannot use indiscriminate violence and there are many factors for this. For example, if the country deliberately targets Pashtun (second largest ethnicity in the country) civilians and insurgents indiscriminately, it would lead to mass hysteria and immense public outcry from not only the millions of Pashtuns but from all Pakistani’s alike. It


\(^{109}\) Ali, "Military Victory in South Waziristan or Beginning of a Long War?"


\(^{111}\) Robin Mills et al., China’s Road to the Gulf: Opportunities for the GCC in the Belt and Road initiative (Dubai: Emerge Eighty-Five, October 2017)

\(^{112}\) Former Lieutenant General in the Pakistan Army, in discussion with the author, October 2017.
would also alienate the supporters of the army and government and would add impetus to anti-state rhetoric – this would in turn help anti-state actors such as India. Secondly, doing so will benefit the insurgents as fence-sitters and ex-state supporters will give their backing to the insurgents (and hence insurgent numbers will proliferate) or in the least not support the government. The Sri-Lankan government made the mistake of indiscriminate violence in earlier campaigns before Eelam IV and this move, at that time, increased LTTE’s legitimacy and numbers. Thirdly, the international outcry would also be immense (both from state and non-state actors). This is because the country, due to its pivotal role in the war on terror with America, is usually in the media’s spotlight. Hence, the Pakistani state and security administration does not and will not engage in any kind of indiscriminate violence – it has been free from this menacing blame by domestic and foreign actors and plans to keep the same true in the future. In the country’s view, the war is truly won by winning over hearts and minds.

Pakistan’s Environment

“No insurgency will pose the single kind of threat, environment, and condition to apply a universally approved solution to the problem”113 – a quote that resonates with the spirit of this paper. There are many differences (and some similarities) between both the Sri Lankan and Pakistani scenario/environment which might undermine Pakistan copying the Sri Lankan model in full. For example, the LTTE was motivated by ethno-nationalism, while the TTP and others are motivated by religion; where Sri Lanka faced one primary insurgent, Pakistan faces multiple groups under the TTP umbrella and moreover, the fact that the relationship between military and civilian leaderships is different in both countries. Furthermore, where the Sri Lankan Model was applied on an island (specifically on the northern and eastern portions) with a population of only 20 million people (and this was vital for their success), Pakistan’s endeavors have direct and indirect implications for over 180 million people. Moreover, Pakistan cannot get away with indiscriminate violence and an overwhelming brute force military strategy (not that the country wants to) for many reasons as earlier entailed in the “Indiscriminate Violence” subsection of Pakistan.

Although, the previous subsections have described Pakistan’s internal and external environments in detail, a summary is still presented here. Pakistan is in a strategic location where multiple actors, state and non-state, exist and the complex situation is characterized by self-interest, trust deficits, negative rhetoric, power politics, and huge communication gaps. The country is a battleground for the Saudi Arabia and Iran proxy war since over many decades – both countries support their own sect of Islam and in times enable sectarian extremist groups. Indian involvement has been rumored and proven by the confession of the recently caught spy who was conducting anti-state activities in Balochistan. Due to external involvement and funding of insurgents, it is extremely difficult to sever the sustenance of extremism. The country is currently in a situation where most U.S. troops have departed from Afghanistan and have left a potential time bomb situation in the hands of the Pakistanis. It is also in an environment where ISIS is trying to establish a foothold in the country, albeit with scant success so far. While the country has some key allies like China and America, and has received a lot of developmental aid – mainly the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor,114 – and military aid (for the procurement of F-

113 Khan, “Sri Lankan Counterinsurgency Operations”
114 Mills et al., China’s Road to the Gulf
16’s, attack helicopters, and other arms and equipment), many negatives still exist in its environment.

In the domestic sphere, issues include the economy, which is not living up to its full potential as unemployment and inflation is high. Furthermore, the country is deeply divided on ethnic and religious lines (Pakistan has several major ethnicities compared to Sri Lanka’s two) and there are several sectarian extremist groups present. Political corruption has been rampant for many years and political parties themselves have been relegated to being the voices of only a particular ethnicity (lack of a “Pakistani” party). Furthermore, a mismatch of capabilities is present between the government and the Armed Forces. Whilst the PAF have mostly been successful in clearing and holding areas that were previously in the control of the TTP, the government has been lacking with regards to administrative tasks such as rehabilitation, developing the local economy, and creating infrastructure like roads and railway lines. In other words, due to the government’s inefficient use of already limited resources, there has been little done to address local grievances after military operations.

With all of this being stated, it becomes increasingly reinforced how different Pakistan and Sri Lanka’s environments are. The General I interviewed gave his invaluable expertise regarding how integral the environment is in establishing a COIN model. He mentioned that every COIN battle is idiosyncratic and that even if an army faces the same insurgent in the same country in similar circumstances, a reassessing of the environment is a must in creating an effective COIN engagement plan. This means that no COIN model should be or is universal. There might be some facets that could be applied from one COIN model to another but there will invariably be numerous changes to it due to environmental considerations. This reifies the paper’s argument that a complete replication of the Sri Lankan Model would not work in Pakistan.

Conclusion

As there are many variances between the two countries and their insurgencies, it is important not to treat the Sri Lankan model as monolithic (this is not just limited to the Sri Lankan Model but extends to all others). In other words, Pakistan must not completely replicate the Sri Lankan Model in its war against the TTP. Although, in everyday rhetoric, it is simplistic to say that Pakistan should follow the Sri Lankan Model to defeat insurgents, this type of thinking excludes the distinct characteristics of each country and their local, regional and global environments. The Sri Lankan Model seems effective, but it will never have the same end effect in Pakistan which is a profoundly dissimilar country with a distinct insurgency threat. Furthermore, there is no possible way that Pakistan would ever pursue a policy of indiscriminate violence like the Sri Lankan’s did.

That being said, there are certain takeaways that the government and military of Pakistan should learn from the Sri Lankan Model. For example, Pakistan should develop a strong political will – the civil-military divide and also the political absence when the military clears insurgent territories must be addressed in the future. Pakistan also faces a complex web of actors in its war (United States, China, Afghanistan and NATO) and this can prove counterproductive. This is a little out of Pakistan’s control but it should nonetheless try to bridge gaps, so all allies are on the same page.

115 Retired Lieutenant General in the Pakistan Army, in discussion with the author, October 2017.
Concurrently, there are also facets that Pakistan is excelling at: The PAF have adapted to the threat well and have played its part excellently while the country has also done well to regulate the media and ignore negotiations and ceasefires with respect to the current operation.

There is no ‘one size fits all’ COIN model. Pakistan should learn from both the Sri Lankan Model and its own experience and create a suitable “Pakistan Model”. This Model in other words should focus on the country's own peculiar requirements, capabilities, and shortcomings while also keeping the local, regional, and global environment in mind. This has been done with regards to Operation Zarb-e-Azb and should be continued in all future engagements.

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