SOCIALIZING MILITANTS

How States End Asymmetric Conflict with Non-state Opponents

Abstract

The twentieth and twenty-first centuries have seen states engaged in long-term conflicts with asymmetrically weaker non-state opponents. States aim to end these conflicts as quickly as possible by combining force and diplomacy to socialize these militants—meaning give them the characteristics of states—in order to make a credible bargain achievable. The militant's characteristics determine the state's optimal strategy. The state's actual strategy is distorted by its internal and external constraints. Through 41 interviews, primary and secondary source data, I analyze the United States' Russia's and Israel's asymmetric conflicts with militants and demonstrate that socialization logic most comprehensively explains their strategies throughout those conflicts.

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Table of Contents

Part I Introduction and Theory

Chapter 1: Introduction 1

Chapter 2: Theory 9

Part II Cases

Chapter 3: Israel Versus the Palestinian Liberation Organization: The Rational Oslo Mistake and Status Quo Management 47

Chapter 4: Short-Term Deterrence, Long-Term Denial, Pursuing Periods of Calm: Israel's Hamas Strategy 84

Chapter 5: The United States Versus the Taliban: Misperception and Missed Opportunity 141

Chapter 6: The United States Versus al-Qaeda: Knocking Out Central, Choking Out Affiliates 198

Chapter 7: Russia Versus Chechens: Low Constraints, Optimal Strategy, Resolved Conflict 256

Chapter 8: Socialization Logic Applied to Eight Brief Twentieth-Century Case Studies 306

Part III Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

Chapter 9: Implications and Avenues for Further Research 346

Bibliography 357

Appendix 389

Chapter 1: Introduction

Conflict is costly. As with interstate wars, states want to end conflict with non-state opponents. This can be achieved either through a negotiated settlement, through conceding if the demand is non-vital, or through victory. The state can also opt to manage the conflict for the long-term, but this is generally suboptimal to ending the conflict. Some non-state opponents have characteristics that make them impossible to bargain with for more than short-term ceasefires. Some can never be socialized into types that can be bargained with, but many can be. With these types, the state optimally aims to combine force and diplomacy to socialize them into a type with which it can reach a peace deal.

In times of conflict politicians and pundits often march out an oft-cited phrase in support of negotiations: "if you want to make peace, you don't talk to your friends. You talk to your enemies." This is only possible when the opponent is willing to make peace under acceptable terms and able to enforce abidance. Some opponents have an ideologically driven fundamental purpose that precludes renouncing violence under terms that a state could accept. Others have reasonable demands and are structured in a way that allows productive negotiations. In other cases, the non-state militant is not yet the type that can be bargained with, but can be socialized into this type through a state's correct application of force and diplomacy. I call this "socialization logic." I argue that optimally, states tailor their strategy to socialize their opponent, to make it possible to successfully negotiate peace. In practice the state's strategy is often distorted by its internal and external constraints.

Socialization logic explains the variation in strategy that a state employs against a non-state opponent over time. Empirical examples of fluctuations in a state's use of force and diplomatic initiatives abound, including: U.S. strategy against al-Qaeda and the Taliban, Israeli policy towards the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and Hamas, and Russia's conflict in Chechnya. I examine socialization logic against three general explanations for state strategy and alternative explanations for specific policies that denote a state shifting its strategy. The first general explanation examines changes in the state's relative power. The second looks at domestic politics. The third examines specific leaders' characteristics. Even when the aforementioned variables are held constant, state strategy has fluctuated against a non-state opponent over time. State strategy has also shifted in the direction opposite to what would be expected by the shift in

relative power, domestic politics or a specific leader's characteristics. Case specific arguments are not generalizable and often explain only some fluctuations within a single conflict. The empirical record suggests that most—but not all—examined strategic shifts are best explained by forward-looking state leaders seeking to use socialization logic to pursue a negotiated peace deal.

The optimal strategy that the state employs is both determined by the non-state militant's type and aims to shift its type. In reality, the state's strategy is often distorted by its constraints. The state's goal is to shift the non-state opponent to a more moderate type, one it believes it can credibly bargain with. If the state believes it is facing an archetypal terrorist group, it will see its optimal strategy as pursuing decisive victory—to end the group's ability to pose a threat—not to socialize it and bargain. At the other extreme, if the state believes its opponent already fits the criteria for achieving a successful bargain, ideally, it will pursue peace negotiations.

States with higher constraints are more likely to deviate from their ideal strategy when the optimal strategy warranted by their non-state opponent is hardline or requires unpopular concessions. This is likely to increase conflict duration when facing less "state-like" non-state opponents, all else held equal.

The vast majority of open hostilities states face today involve non-state actors (NSA). There is a rich body of theory regarding conditions that make war and peace more or less likely between states. Many instances of fluctuations in a state's strategy against an NSA suggests that with non-state opponents, states may be learning as they go. This is understandable considering that NSAs only recently eclipsed rival states as the most active threats.[1] Socialization logic provides a rubric for countering non-state opponents. This is vital for leaders who will likely continue contending with non-state militants for the foreseeable future.

Interstate bargaining concepts do not apply to all NSAs, but they can apply to some. Bargaining may never be feasible with the most extreme types of NSAs. Against these types, a state is forced to either ignore them and face the consequences, to manage the threat through perpetual denial and punishment, or to fight until the opponent is beaten into submission. Some NSAs already approximate states in the characteristics that make bargaining possible. In these cases, bargaining can be pursued at the outset. However, as in interstate conflict, violence might

[1] NSAs are the most active threats, not the most existential.

still be needed to reveal the bargaining space along the logic of Fearon's concept of private information. (Fearon 1995). For example, Russia needed (and failed) to demonstrate that it was capable of crushing the Chechen militants before it could deter them from resuming conflict, a necessary step towards securing a bargain. This was the case despite the Chechen militant's being the type that could be bargained with in 1994.

Most often, the non-state opponent is not, at the outset, the type that can be bargained with, but can, through the application of force and political incentives, be changed into a type to which bargaining logic applies. States vary their application of carrots and sticks as they seek to change their opponent to this type and continually assess their success, with the goal of eventually securing a bargained end to the conflict.[2]

A state's behavior signals its intentions to an opponent. (Jervis 1978, Kydd 2003, Copeland 2015). This applies to NSAs as well. Force can signal resolve to defeat the NSA, while diplomacy can signal willingness to negotiate. Diplomatic initiatives can also purposefully build the NSA's state-like attributes. Management strategies do not signal either the intention to defeat, or to bargain with the opponent. Therefore, they are not useful for revealing bargaining space and unlikely to end the conflict. Denial is indicative of a management strategy, one that states—too constrained to wield the force necessary in socialization logic—are likely to pursue.

Because hardline policies are difficult to garner political support for, the availability of management options makes a constrained state less likely to pursue hardline policies or painful concessions. Successful denial capabilities increase the allure of management. This increases incentives to develop denial technologies in a self-reinforcing feedback loop. Therefore, technologies that ostensibly give states more strategic options instead increase their constraints in pursuing strategies able to socialize a non-state opponent into an actor to which interstate bargaining concepts can be applied. As hardline strategies become less politically tenable, the

[2] An example of this dynamic can be seen in Israel's strategy towards PLO. First, Israel responded to PLO violence with force in the 1960s through the 1980s, driving its leadership from Jordan and then from Lebanon to exile in Tunisia. In the 1990s, Israel began to see the PLO as a type of NSA amenable to bargaining, largely due to Israel's strategy. In response to this new assessment, Israel shifted from its previous hardline strategy and sought to build the PLO's institutions and the trust necessary to negotiate peace. This diplomatic strategy signaled Israel's willingness to bargain and built PLO governance capacity. It culminated in the Oslo Accords and the Clinton Parameters. The PLO's resumption of violence in the Second Intifada convinced Israeli leadership that it was not the type which could be bargained with, leading Israel to resume hardline strategy, launching Operation Defensive Shield.

state's threat to use them is made less credible. Because management is politically easier to pursue than victory for a highly constrained state, focusing defense procurement on denial capabilities can signal a lack of resolve to defeat the opponent, making bargaining more difficult and increasing conflict duration.[3]

Rational leaders would like to pursue the strategies most likely to end the conflict. A state's strategy against a non-state opponent is explained primarily by its evolving perception of the non-state opponent's type, and secondarily by its perceived constraints.

Socialization logic is novel in four ways. First, it provides a novel typology of non-state militants based on how well interstate conflict bargaining concepts can be applied to them. Second, to-date, most research has focused on tactics that a state can use against non-state opponents, including decapitation, and population-versus enemy-centric counterinsurgency. (Galula 1964; Nagl, Amos and Petraeus 2007; Lyall 2009 and 2010; Zhukov 2010; Johnston 2012; Jordan 2014; Price 2014; Byman 2016). Socialization logic looks beyond tactics, to systematize a framework for understanding how leaders tailor strategy towards non-state opponents based on their characteristics. Third, there are studies that categorize NSAs by type, but—unlike socialization logic—they do not explore the possibility that the NSA's type is endogenous to the strategy that the state employs.[4] Nor do they provide a framework that can guide leaders in designing a strategy to end the conflict.[5] Finally, socialization logic synthesizes critical NSA attributes (ideology, leadership structure, and governance function) and the state's strategy (distorted by constraints) into in an interactive model.

Socialization logic applies to all regime types. The argument that only autocracies can successfully pursue hardline counterinsurgency is an oversimplification. (Lyall 2010). Historically, democracies have been just as capable as autocracies of pursuing hardline

[3] For example, the contrast between Israel's 2008/9 Operation Cast Lead against Hamas in Gaza, and Operation Protective Edge (2014), demonstrates how denial options can overdetermine management strategies. Israel was more hesitant to use decisive force in 2014, after integrating Iron Dome into its defensive arsenal. In 2008/9 Israel pursued a preformulated strategy of decisive force. In 2014 Israel pursued a denial strategy until the tunnel threat—not countered by Iron Dome—changed the calculus.

[4] Richardson (2006), and Jordan (2014) classify terrorists according to characteristics (ambition and public support for the former, bureaucratization and public support for the later), their research sheds light upon which groups are most difficult to fight, but not when they will be fought versus managed or bargained with.

[5] Richardson (2006) claims that the most difficult groups to fight are those with concrete political objectives that give them a local constituency. Jordan (2014) argues that a NSA's reaction to decapitation depends on its bureaucratization and popular support.

strategies.[6] Powerful autocracies have advantages when it comes to leveraging brutality and stifling domestic opposition and usually face lower internal constraints. However, they are still sensitive to these constraints. Democracies and autocracies alike aim to reduce constraints when their optimal strategy demands hardline force.[7]

Some NSAs can be bargained with, following the same logic that applies to states. Against a rival state, a state uses force to reveal bargaining space by exposing information about capabilities and resolve. This signals to the opponent what they must accept based on the costs they are willing to pay (Fearon 1995; Wagner 2000; Schultz 2001; Reiter 2003; Weeks 2009).[8] Womack's (2016) model of asymmetric bargaining applies to interstate conflict.[9] In asymmetry, capability disparities are largely known. Force signals resolve, the other piece of the puzzle.[10]

Reiter (2009) explains why a state might tenaciously pursue victory instead of negotiating terms if it fears that its opponent might renege. He argues that deterrence is necessary for believing an opponent's commitments and therefore necessary for concluding a bargain. An opponent's credibility does not stem from its prior actions so much as from whether or not it is deterred from those actions in the present and future.[11] Three key characteristics determine the

[6] It is a commonly accepted myth that democracies pursue softer-line population-centric counterinsurgency while autocracies pursue enemy-centric strategies. In reality, both strategies entail substantial use of force, showing that democracies are just as capable of hardline strategy. See Boot (2013) and Hazelton (2017).

[7] While autocracies are generally less internally constrained than democracies, they can be highly constrained, especially in times of crisis. They must maintain a level of domestic support and they vary in their ability to maintain order due to the strength of their military, economy, bureaucratic institutions repressive capabilities. Conversely, democracies can face low internal constraints when they have high public support and political unity. Both types of governments can manipulate their constraints to an extent. Finally, external constraints are a factor of a state's power, not its government.

[8] Cunningham (2017) applies Fearon's variables of asymmetric information, credible commitment problems and (to a lesser-extent) indivisible goods to symmetric civil war duration.

[9] Womack's concept of managed asymmetry is coded as a peaceful outcome and requires that an ideologically driven NSA be socialized into one driven by a pragmatic agenda.

[10] In asymmetry, uncertainty is not over capabilities but resolve. The weaker knows it cannot defeat the stronger, and the stronger knows that it could, with full resolve, subjugate them. However, there is an opposite asymmetry of resolve. The state cares less about destroying the weaker rival than the rival cares about surviving. The state is less willing to pay high costs for victory. This leads to managed asymmetry; the larger power respects the rival's autonomy while the smaller power respects the larger state's red lines. Womack's concept of "mature" asymmetry assumes no active hostilities. If the weaker party is an ideologically driven NSA, absent the threat to defeat the opponent, the state cannot prevent hostilities with material cost-benefit deterrence.

[11] Abrahms (2013) argues that states are unlikely to reach bargains with terrorist groups due to a "credibility paradox." States do not trust NSAs due to a history of extreme violence. This logic does not explain why bargains are sometimes achieved with groups with a long history of targeting civilians such as the IRA. Socialization logic highlights when bargaining is likely to succeed despite histories of extreme violence. Credibility depends on deterrence. Successful deterrence constrains even the most previously violent actors.

feasibility of bargaining with a NSA by determining if the state can deter its opponent and if its opponent can enforce the terms of the deal.

To negotiate peace, the state must believe it can come to acceptable terms with its opponent. This is possible with groups espousing pragmatic goals, not with those motivated by absolutist ideologies. The state must be able to threaten costs for defection and to reward compliance. This requires the opponent to function as a government to a certain degree. The state must believe that its non-state opponent is able to enforce the terms of a bargain and check potential defectors. This requires high governance function as well. Most importantly, the state must believe that it can deter its opponent from resuming conflict. States see this as impossible against an ideologically driven NSA that prioritizes pursuing the principles of its radical ideology over material wellbeing. The state can socialize some ideologically driven NSAs by demonstrating that it is willing and able to decisively defeat it. Assuming that even the most radical leaders want to survive (if only to fight another day) demonstrating the targetability of NSA leadership is crucial to applying bargaining logic.[12]

Theory in brief

I apply a variation of Reiter's interstate logic to state versus non-state conflict termination. States aim to end conflict, but the main barriers are problems of trust due to uncertainty of present and future intentions. Reiter argues that in interstate war, states solve these problems by obtaining the ability to threaten to impose costs that the opponent is unwilling to pay if it reneges on the deal. Once this is obtained, it can make peace without fear of the opponent's unknowable future intentions. This rests on the assumption that states are rational security maximizers. Against NSAs, states cannot automatically make this assumption. Therefore, to end these wars, states aim to socialize their non-state opponents into a type that pragmatically values survival as states are assumed to.

States must be confident in their ability to deter their non-state opponent. The NSA must also have the capacity to enforce compliance with the peace deal. State strategy aims to change

[12] For countering middle-range NSAs, demonstrating the ability to target leadership can make the group more moderate when it is used as a threat, not a tactic. The group should know decapitation is possible, to get the leaders to the bargaining table. Leadership should not be targeted simply for the sake of eliminating them because this can make bargaining more difficult if it splinters the group or brings about more extremist leaders. (Dear 2013). With groups considered impossible to bargain with, leadership targeting is part of a decisive victory strategy. With constrained states it is often used as a form of management by degrading an opponent's operational capabilities.

the opponent's characteristics into those most suitable to bargaining. This is done through the appropriate application of force and diplomacy.

Socialization logic categorizes NSAs based on three characteristics. This reveals four ideal-types of non-state militants. It looks at: 1. levels of ideological motivation, 2. governance function and 3. leadership targetability.

The level of ideological motivation refers to the extent to which the group is driven by the imperatives of an absolutist ideology versus the pragmatic aims that realists define as states' primary motive—security maximization to ensure survival as a sovereign political entity. Governance function refers to capacity and accountability; whether the group controls a monopoly on violence, bureaucratic capacity and faces credible competition. Leadership targetability refers to how easily the state can target its non-state opponent's leadership. This is a function of geography, intelligence, military capabilities and the NSA's structure.[13] These variables impact whether the NSA can be deterred and can prevent the resumption of violence.[14]

States view NSAs with low ideological motivation, high governance function and easily targeted leadership, as most suitable for bargaining. With these types, a state's optimal strategy is to pursue soft-line policies e.g., concessions, supporting and augmenting the NSA's governing capacity, and negotiation. At the other end of the spectrum are groups with high ideological motivation, minimal governance function and difficult to target leadership. States deem these archetypal terrorist organizations to be impossible to deter or bargain with, leaving the state with the optimal strategy of pursuing decisive victory to end the conflict.[15]

The majority of NSAs fall between these two extremes. It is against these opponents that a state's optimal strategy involves socialization logic's carrot and stick approach. Force is needed to socialize the opponent into a more moderate type by threatening its continued existence unless it moderates its ideology, and by threatening the lives of its leadership by demonstrating the ability to eliminate them. Diplomacy can build trust and increase governance function. Here, the

[13] Hierarchical groups are generally more vulnerable to decapitation.
[14] The capacity component of governance function is critical for how the state views the ability of the non-state opponent to uphold the terms of the bargain and suppress violence by spoilers aimed at derailing negotiations.
[15] In these cases, decisive victory can mean permanent and complete dominance, disarmament, and even annihilation. This strategy can be exceedingly materially and politically costly.

goal of force and diplomacy is to socialize the opponent into the type most amenable to bargaining and then negotiate peace.

States are more likely to deviate from their optimal strategy when its leadership perceives it to be too constrained to use enough force to convince the opponent to moderate by threatening its survival. Here, the state will likely manage the conflict through denial and punishment.

Socialization logic bridges theories of interstate conflict and what is often called the counterinsurgency or terrorism literature. This makes it difficult to situate but has the advantage of combining the well-established logic underlying the theories of the first with the current policy relevance of the second. It provides two essential contributions to theories of conflict termination between states and NSAs. The first is a typological framework for categorizing non-state opponents by their amenability to negotiation. Second, instead of looking at a snapshot of the actors, socialization logic is dynamic. It endogenizes the state's strategy and its opponent's type. Optimally, the state determines its strategy based on its assessment of the opponent's type with the goal of shifting its type. It then reassesses and modifies its strategy accordingly. It also brings in real-world constraints, which are largely—but not exclusively—exogenous.[16]

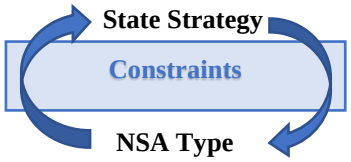

Figure 1: State strategy NSA type endogeneity

Asymmetric conflicts against NSAs are among the longest and seemingly most intractable that states face in modern times. Some of the most tragically unnecessary conflicts resulted from, or endured because, the state misjudged its opponent's type and therefore applied the wrong strategy. By providing and testing a framework for understanding how to resolve them, socialization logic has both theoretical and practical application.

[16] The empirical chapters demonstrate that states facing NSAs that require a hardline strategy try to lessen these exogenous constraints with varying success.

Chapter 2: Theory

This chapter lays out socialization logic. It links deterrence to bargaining and lays out the state's optimal strategy for each NSA type. I examine the rationale behind optimal strategy towards each NSA type. I then unpack the theoretical importance of the three attributes used to make these categorizations. I examine two types of constraints and how they can distort the state's actual strategy. I then discuss the strategies available to states and how these strategies can achieve or fail to achieve the desired socialization and how the level of alignment of the state's strategy towards a nonstate opponent impacts conflict duration. I then define the scope and design of this research and conclude by mapping out what competing explanations I will test in the empirical chapters that follow.

I: NSA types and the State's Strategic Approach

Socialization logic starts from a baseline assumption that war is costly, and states prefer to end conflicts on acceptable terms as quickly as possible. Protracted conflicts are costly for states in terms of blood, treasure, reputation, and civil liberties. They can create intergenerational harm for combatants and civilians alike—on all sides of the conflict. Therefore, like the Clausewitzian position on interstate war, state strategy towards non-state opponents aims at a political end.[17]

Socialization logic applies a novel framework to the bargaining model of conflict. It provides a new typology of non-state opponents designed around how well interstate bargaining concepts apply. This yields four ideal-type NSAs.[18] It then endogenizes the state's use of carrots and sticks to the opponent's type. The state applies sticks and carrots over time to shift the non-state opponent's type when possible and updates its strategy as the NSA's type changes.

Actors with low ideological motivation, high governance function, and easily targeted leadership, are viewed as most suitable for bargaining. I label these "type D." With these types, a

[17] Staniland (2012) argues that like interstate conflict, is also subject to Clausewitzian logic, "if war is part of policy, policy will determine its character." (Clausewitz 1873, 1984 translation, 606). States calibrate force "according to goals and strategies." (Staniland 2012, 247).

[18] Richardson (2006), and Jordan (2014) classify terrorists according to certain characteristics (ambition and public support for the former, bureaucratization and public support for the later. My typology yields four specific types. It is the first typology of its kind to classify militant groups based on characteristics that make interstate bargaining concepts more or less applicable to state conflict with them.

state's optimal strategy is soft-line policies such as concessions, aid and boosted political authority. At the other end of the spectrum are groups with high ideological motivation, minimal governance function and difficult to target leadership. I label these "type A." These archetypal terrorist organizations are deemed impossible to deter, leaving the state with the optimal strategy of pursuing decisive victory to end the conflict.[19]

Most non-state militants fall somewhere in the middle. Against them, a state's optimal strategy involves a carrot and stick approach. Military force is necessary to socialize the NSA into a more moderate type by threatening its survival unless it moderates its ideology, and by threatening the lives of their leadership by demonstrating the ability to eliminate them.[20] Concessions can build trust and increase governance function, increasing the ability to bargain and secure a peace treaty.[21]

Militants that are "state-like" on two of the three characteristics are nearly ready to bargain with and warrant a softer-line strategy; I label them "type C." Militants that are state-like on only one of three characteristics are more difficult and require more force to socialize into a type that can be bargained with. I label them "type B." A state's internal and external constraints can make hardline conventional strategies less practicable in the real world, overdetermining the employment of management strategies.[22]

A state's leaders recognize an ideal strategy of decisive victory over type A non-state opponents. They leverage decisive force and concessions to moderate middle range types B and C opponents, and they pursue concessions and negotiate with the most state-like type D opponents. The goal of force and concessions is to shift the opponent to type D.

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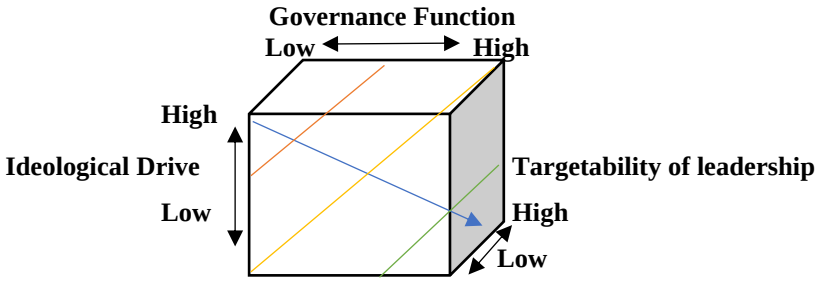
[19] In these cases, decisive victory can mean permanent and complete dominance, disarmament, and even annihilation. This strategy can be exceedingly materially and politically costly.

[20] The logic of using force in order to socialize an opponent into the type moderate enough to practically bargain with can be seen in Israel's strategic thought dating back to before it achieved statehood. In *The Iron Wall*, Jabotinsky claims that for Zionists to secure the success of their enterprise in the face of intransigent and determined Arab opponents, decisive force must convince them to drop their absolutist agenda. He states: A radical group will compromise "only when no single loophole is visible in the iron wall… Only then will those moderates approach us offering concessions; only then will they honestly bargain with us about practical issues." (Jabotinsky, 1923).

[21] For a more detailed chart of the governance function variable see Appendix table 1.

[22] Denial can be offensive, defensive or a combination of both. The state aims to manage conflict to a level deemed acceptable instead of pursuing a costlier policy of decisive victory. For further discussion see Inbar 2018, "Mowing the Grass in Gaza."

In figure 2, the blue arrow represents the optimal strategy a state would follow in the absence of constraints to shape an opponent into a type where bargaining is possible. This strategy entails the use of force at the higher levels along the arrow and the integration of concessions and political incentives as the opponent's type moves past the diagonal lines delineating types A, B, C and D, to the far, lower, righthand corner. Bargaining becomes more feasible as the NSA becomes closer to type D.



Two-Dimensional Representation (Ideal Types)

	Governance Function: Low		Governance Function: High	
	Low Leader Targetability	High Leader Targetability	Low Leader Targetability	High Leader Targetability
High Ideological Drive	Type A least "statelike"	Type B less statelike	Type B	Type C more statelike
Low Ideological Drive	Type B	Type C	Type C	Type D most statelike

Figure 2: NSA typology and optimal strategy

The preceding paragraph outlined an ideal type; the strategy a leader would like to pursue dependent upon the type of opponent faced. Therefore, looking at the variation in type of the opponent in terms of the three key characteristics mentioned, can explain some of the variation in state strategy over time. Sometimes a state's strategy changes even if the opponent's type does not. Explaining this variation necessitates departing from the strategic ideal and examining what leaders actually can do, instead of what they would optimally like to do.

For a theory to be useful for policymakers it must have real world application. In reality leaders are constrained. If a NSA is deemed to be the type that cannot be bargained with, while a state might need to use decisive force to end the conflict, internal and external constraints might preclude it from doing so.

Hardline policies are difficult to garner political support for domestically and can lead to international condemnation, isolation or even intervention. The leader of a large and powerful

state with minimal internal constraints e.g., Russia, will be most free to pursue the optimal strategy against all types of non-state opponents, even those necessitating the most hardline policies. Here we expect actual strategy to be closest to optimal strategy and therefore, all else held equal, the shortest duration of conflict. Leaders of more constrained states e.g., Israel may not be able to implement hardline strategies. Here we expect actual strategy to deviate the most from optimal strategy.

Deprived of the ability to use hardline strategy to end a conflict, leaders may be forced to pursue management instead. Denial capabilities provide a politically easier alternative to hardline policies, overdetermining management. Denial capabilities increase domestic constraints and, all else held equal, lengthen the duration of conflict.[23]

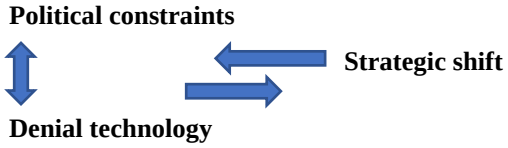


Figure 3: Technology and constraints

Democracies have greater internal constraints. Leaders need popular support. Mobilizing men and resources can be contentious and casualties can erode public support for military force. Democratic leaders may not have the popularity to create support for such a policy. They may be constrained by institutional checks and balances (Putnam 1988; Russett 1992).[24] They are less able to control the media to gain support, to minimize the appearance of costs in terms of blood and treasure, or to silence dissent. Autocracies are constrained as well (Weeks 2014), although to a lesser extent due to less institutional checks, and greater ability to control the media.[25]

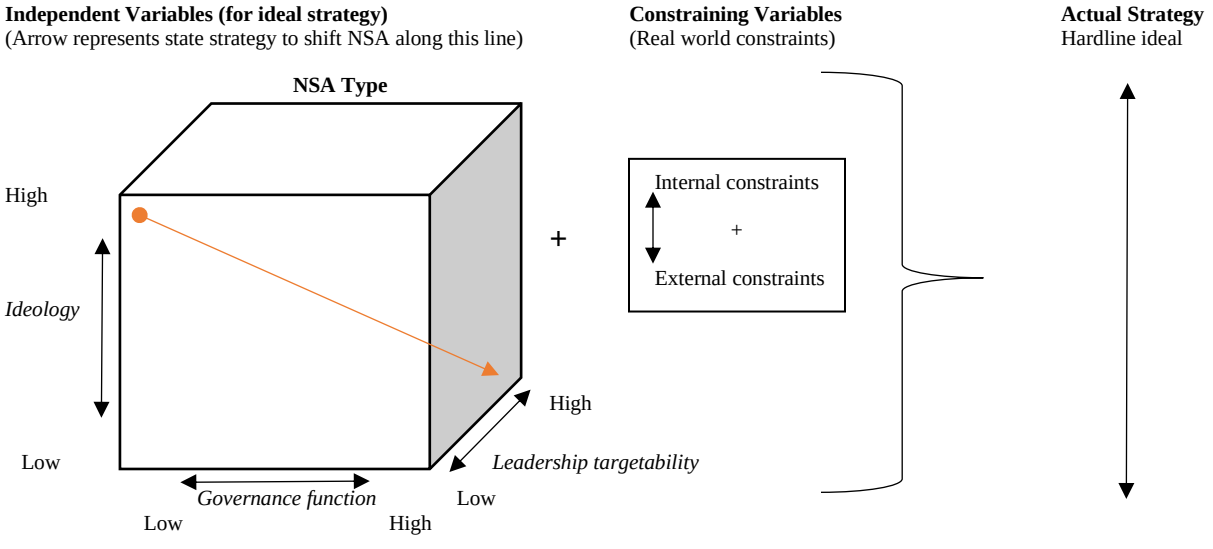
All else held equal, democracies are more constrained than autocracies, and domestically embattled leaders are more constrained in both regime types. In a democracy, this can be measured by approval ratings, united or divided government, or a parliamentary majority. Unpopular democratic leaders are the most internally constrained. Internal constraints are compounded for states of any regime type if they face economic, military, political or bureaucratic weakness.[26]

[23] It is harder to explain the necessity for casualties to citizens when relatively successful management options exist.
[24] Institutional logic for democratic peace theory, (see Rosato 2003 for a critique of this logic).
[25] Putin clearly recognized the necessity of limiting Russian casualties in the Second Chechen war (Meakins 2017).
[26] Constraints include factors that make force or concessions more difficult to carry out. Rugged or dense urban terrain, local hostility, lack of military capabilities, and strategic or cultural importance of territory that would

External constraints are important as well. A NSA's type might demand hardline strategy, but a small and potentially isolated state must consider international costs and the possibility for isolation, condemnation, the future ability to trade, threats to cut off economic aid and at the most extreme, military intervention. A smaller state might be dissuaded from pursuing a hardline strategy due to these threats. Israeli leaders have historically placed high emphasis on fears of international sanction when deciding how much force to use against Hamas or the PLO. Even the U.S. worries about its global reputation and is constrained from wantonly violating sovereignty, as shown its general reluctance to attack Taliban and al-Qaeda targets in Pakistan.

Small democratic powers with domestically embattled leadership are the most constrained, and the most likely to deviate from what would be the optimal strategy called for to end conflict with less statelike non-state opponents. Therefore, all else held equal, they are most likely to pursue management strategies and their conflicts with NSAs are likely to have the longest duration. At the opposite end of the spectrum, popular autocratic leaders of large and powerful states are the least constrained and thus their chosen strategy is least likely to deviate from the optimal strategy based on their opponent's type.

In figure 4, I combine the socialization logic for optimal strategy with real-world constraints. This yields a model that explains a state's actual shifts in strategy (or lack thereof).



otherwise be useful for concessions, are all factors that increase internal constraints. Military and economic weakness can be an internal and external constraint; internal by leading to greater casualties inability to control the domestic population and external due to vulnerability to foreign threats. All else held equal, a state's actual strategy will diverge least from its optimal strategy when its economic, political and military power advantages its ability to apply effective military force at a reasonable cost, and to take necessary diplomatic steps with lower risk involved.

**The Red circle represents the area where bargaining is impossible. Bargaining becomes more possible, and soft-line strategies more warranted as the NSA is shifted towards the lower, far right.*

Figure 4: Full diagram integrating ideal strategy and constraints

Figure 4 starts with the independent variables influencing the ideal strategy a state would pursue if the goal is to bring the conflict with a non-state opponent to an end. When the characteristics of a non-state opponent situate it higher along the red arrow, more force is needed. Those at the uppermost extreme, represented by the immediate area in the square surrounding the red circle, may very well be deemed impossible to bargain with. With these cases, unrelenting force is necessary to end the conflict, but a state may leverage this force in a sustainable way if massive force is politically and economically infeasible, especially if the enemy is decentralized and far flung. This can be done by enhancing denial while pursuing a slow sustained approach to victory, one that minimizes cost and shares burden. These different variants of a decisive victory strategy can be seen in the U.S. pursuit of a knockout blow through massive force against al-Qaeda central and a sustainable whole of government approach, building and leveraging partner capacity, to slowly strangle global al-Qaeda affiliates.

The closer to the near, upper left, the more force is needed to convince the opponent that it needs to bargain to survive. As the opponent becomes more convinced of this necessity, it is less ideologically motivated because it is moving closer to the rational state ideal of security maximization for the sake of survival, and farther from unconstrained pursuit of a violent ideology as its primary motivation for its actions.

Softer-line approaches becomes optimal as a non-state opponent becomes more statelike. Less force is needed to convince the opponent to bargain as the opponent comes to value security maximization over ideology. At this point, the state should engage in trust building and pursue efforts to enable the opponent to enforce a bargain. This is represented by the opponent type shifting down the red line towards the far, lower right-hand corner. Eventually, a bargain may be achieved. The specific type of force or concessions depends on context specific factors including relative power of the actors, the nature of the dispute and the external involvement. The general premise is not context specific: all else held equal, the more moderate the NSA is in regard to the

three key characteristics, the more likely it is that a bargain can be concluded. Therefore, a state's optimal strategy is to use sticks and carrots to shift the NSA in that direction.[27]

The preceding paragraph set forth an ideal strategy to explain a state's optimal strategy dependent upon the nature of the non-state opponent. This is a useful baseline for understanding which strategies should be pursued to end a conflict. Constraints are intervening variables. They explain which strategies a state will pursue, are pursuing and have pursued. Finally, states can mistakenly pursue a suboptimal strategy because they misread their opponent's type. Some of the most enduring conflicts and periods of unnecessary violence have resulted from this.[28]

Socialization logic suggests that conflict will be shorter when the state pursues its optimal strategy. This requires the state leadership to correctly perceive the NSA's type and to minimize its constraints when possible if its strategy necessitates either hardline force or contentious concessions. The state's goal is to use carrots and sticks not simply to coerce, but to socialize the opponent into the type that a state believes it can bargain with in good faith. My analytical objective is to demonstrate how states determine strategy towards non-state opponents and how this impacts conflict duration. My analytical framework provides a policy guide for leaders to customize strategy towards a non-state opponent that is best suited to ending the conflict.

II: Definitions and assumptions

First-and-foremost, states want to end conflict. This requires targeting the opponent's will to fight. Realists look at how power variables impact the likelihood for conflict. Fearon (1995) shows how incomplete information and fear of the opponent's future intentions explains how interstate wars begin despite being mutually costly. Reiter (2009) applies Fearon's principles to show why wars end when an actor finds a way to assuage those fears.[29] Credibly signaling the

[27] The strategy is ideal for ending the conflict as soon as possible. Ideal can mean keeping damage at an acceptable level at the least amount of cost. If defined this way, ideal strategy may be denial. I define ideal as the former to create a framework for ending conflict. I do not engage in normative arguments over which ideal is better.
[28] There was consensus among Israel's leadership between 1995-2000 that it could secure a peace deal with the PLO. The Second Intifada ended this view. In 1999 Putin thought that Chechen rebels must be wiped out. However, after enough force was applied, Russia was able to enhance Kadyrov's governance function and centralize Chechen leadership behind him, ultimately concluding a bargain. (Dunlop in Howard 2011, 51). The U.S. has fought the Taliban for nearly two-decades despite them having been potentially amenable to negotiations in December 2001.
[29] States seek to mitigate the fears of their opponents reneging in the future by creating conditions that secure its power superiority and makes the state confident in its ability to deter an opponent from reneging. (Reiter 2009).

ability to impose immense costs might not deter an opponent determined to pursue an ideological imperative even at the expense of material wellbeing.

As Reiter notes, to end a conflict a state must believe that it can deter its opponent from resuming violence in the future. For the state to undertake concessions in pursuit of a bargain, it must believe that its opponent will respond as a rational security maximizing state would to the threat of force. States aim to socialize NSAs to this end. Its optimal strategy uses varying combinations of force and diplomacy to socialize the NSA into a type it sees as trustworthy, willing and able to abide by the terms of a negotiated peace deal. This applies specifically to asymmetric conflict between a state and its weaker non-state opponent.

The following tables provide definitions and assumptions used to test socialization logic in the empirical chapters. It explains how I define critical variables including: 1. the independent variables, the state's perception of NSA type based on the three key characteristics. 2. The intervening variables, the state's perception of its constraints. 3. The dependent variable, the state's strategy.

Definitions

1. I define state strategy by the desired goal of the campaign, not the operational methods used.
2. I define the "optimal strategy" as the one able to end the conflict most quickly.
3. A decisive victory strategy aims to convince the opponent that it faces destruction as an organization. The state's actual goals can be annihilation, unconditional surrender, or convincing the NSA to accept terms for a permanent peace treaty.
4. Management strategies seek to mitigate costs without specifically aiming to end the conflict.
5. High ideological drive means prioritizing goals other than self-preservation. It does not mean religiosity specifically.
6. Pragmatic drive means a primary concern of sovereignty, security and wellbeing.
7. Leadership targetability looks at hierarchical structure and the state's ability to strike or capture leadership; i.e. all else equal a franchised NSA has less leadership targetability than a centralized hierarchical one and a group has more targetable leadership when a state can more easily find and deploy resources to kill or capture a group's leaders.
8. Governance function looks at the NSA's capacity to govern and control violence and its accountability—meaning vulnerability to rivals. High governance function is a sweet spot with high capacity and moderate accountability.
9. External constraints are international factors that increase the cost of a state utilizing hardline force. These can be political borders or vulnerability to isolation, sanction, or intervention.
10. Internal constraints are domestic factors that increase the cost for a state to utilize hardline force. These can be public opinion, divided government, media transparency, and norms.

Assumptions

1. States should prefer to end conflicts quickly. When they do not it is generally due to constraints.
2. Asymmetrically stronger states can have strategic initiative although they do not always decide to.
3. The state's strategy is determined by its leadership's perceptions (rather than an objective reality) of the level of threat, the NSA type and its constraints.

3a. Leaders do not always perceive these factors correctly.

4. The greater the threat the lower the salience of constraints. Even highly constrained states will use decisive force if they believe that they are existentially threatened; i.e. they will act despite constraints.
5. All but the most extremist groups ultimately value self-preservation but some sacrifice power and wellbeing to pursue ideological imperatives if they are not credibly threatened with defeat.
6. A state must see the NSA as pragmatically driven before it is willing to make concessions that weaken its relative power as part of peace negotiations.

6a. Therefore, the state leverages its strategy with the goal of making the NSA more pragmatically driven if it is not so already. If it is, then the state should aim to boost governance function so the NSA can uphold a peace treaty.

7. A pragmatically driven NSA may reasonably doubt a state's capability and resolve. The state must still use force successfully to credibly signal capability and resolve to contract the bargaining space to a spectrum of outcomes it deems acceptable.

Diagram 1: Assumption 6a

State strategy	**Mechanism**	**Goal**
Decisive victory →	reduce ideological drive	
Target leadership →	reduce ideological drive	**Bargain**
Increase governance function →	reduce ideological drive + increase NSA's ability to uphold deal	

Diagram 2: Assumption 7

State strategy	**Mechanism**	**Goal**
Military force + Concessions →	reveal capability, resolve, bargaining space →	**Bargain**

III: Deterring and Bargaining with Non-State Opponents

Real world conflict rarely ends due to one side's total defeat.[30] Rather, war is "part of the bargaining process that leads to a negotiated settlement and not as an alternative to it" (Wagner 2000, 469). Optimally, states fight with a clear end game in mind employing military strategy to

[30] Blainey posited that decisive victories in major power wars have led to longer periods of peace because they illustrated the victor's preponderance of power and clear resolve. (Blainey 1973). Clausewitz argued that "because negotiated settlements of war are possible, absolute wars rarely occur." Clausewitz and Blainey agree that "when negotiated settlements are possible, war leads to agreement because it reveals information" (Wagner 2000, 472).

secure a desired peace. (Ikle 2005). While the 'war as policy' and 'a form of bargaining' model is generally applied to relatively symmetric interstate war, I argue that states use force as part of the bargaining process when countering asymmetrically weaker non-state opponents as well. However, the logic behind the use of force differs from the interstate context in key ways depending on the type of NSA faced.

Strategy bridges military power to political ends. (Gray 1999). Socialization logic argues that states pursue a strategy designed to permanently end conflict with a non-state opponent either through total military victory, but when possible, through a bargain. The state bases its strategy towards its non-state opponent on the NSA's key characteristics because they all impact whether or not it can be deterred. The ability to deter the opponent is necessary for providing the credibility needed to conclude a bargain.[31]

A state uses a combination of carrots and sticks to socialize its non-state opponent. It uses force to signal its capability and reveal its resolve to defeat the opponent. It employs concessions together with force to change its opponent's type into one that can be bargained with.

Even if the state successfully uses force to shift its opponent into a type that can be deterred, it cannot secure a bargain until the NSA can credibly commit to abide by its terms. Decisive force and decapitation can signal to it that its survival is threatened.[32] Boosting leadership targetability makes this more credible. Finally, by boosting a NSA's governance function, a state can make its opponent better able to enforce adherence and more deterrable.[33]

The bargaining model views war not as the breakdown of diplomacy, but its continuation—as Clausewitz says—"by other means." (Reiter 2003). Elaborating on Fearon's (1995) rational explanations for the outbreak of war, Reiter (2009) argues that interstate war is prolonged due to asymmetric information about the opponent's capabilities and resolve, and fears over the credibility of opponent's commitments to abide by the terms of a settlement.[34]

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[31] Reiter (2009) argues that deterrence is necessary for believing an opponent's commitments to ending a conflict and therefore necessary for concluding a bargain.

[32] Former IDF Deputy Chief of General Staff, General Naveh, argues that deterrence against NSAs differs from that against states. Deterring NSAs that lack obligations towards the local population is possible only if the state shows a willingness to target its leaders, commanders, strategic assets, and social support. (Bouchnik-Chen 2018).

[33] One mechanism by which an NSA's low governance function makes a state less willing to bargain is the fear that the NSA cannot commit its fighters to refraining from violence in the event of a negotiated settlement.

[34] See Fearon (1995) for an elaborate discussion of why states only go to war due to asymmetric information and credible commitment problems.

Credibility of commitments and uncertainty over the state's resolve appear to be the primary mechanisms for prolonged state-versus-NSA conflict. Asymmetry largely eliminates the problem of unknown capabilities. However, the opponent might still be unsure of the state's resolve, especially when challenging a stronger state's non-vital interests.[35]

In an asymmetric context, after prolonged conflict, both sides understand the other side's capabilities, but tactics can be expected to change.[36] Both sides adapt tactics to gain an advantage and mitigate that of their opponent. There remains an unknown element regarding resolve to escalate. Signaling the resolve to use force is more important than the actual balance of capabilities in true asymmetry.[37] A powerful state might have the firepower to annihilate an opponent in a single barrage, but the opponent might be unsure of how much force the state would be willing to use in actual conflict.

The credible threat of force may fail to deter an actor with a primary drive other than security maximization. If the actor cannot be deterred it cannot credibly commit to peace. Instead, the actual application of force and diplomacy can shift the opponent into a type that can be deterred and therefore, can credibly commit to peace. This is a prerequisite for being able to begin good-faith negotiations. If the state views this outcome as impossible, its optimal strategy is to use force to defeat the opponent, eliminating the threat and ending the conflict.

While an impenetrable defense might deter states from attacking if they expect the retaliation to cost them more than what they could hope to achieve, it is not enough to socialize an ideologically driven non-state opponent.[38] Denying an opponent its ability to obtain its

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[35] Even clear superiority "provides no guarantee that the antagonist will be dissuaded if the defender appears likely to back down." (Russett 1963, 107).

[36] Fearon argues that "after a few years of war, fighters on both sides of an insurgency typically develop accurate understandings of the other side's capabilities, tactics, and resolve." (Fearon 2004, 290).

[37] Asymmetry suggests by definition that the stronger side can defeat its weaker opponent if so resolved. This is not always the case as revealed in the case of Russia's First Chechen War where the decrepit Russian Army was unable to defeat the non-state Chechen fighters.

[38] Jabotinsky stated that a radical group will compromise "only when no single loophole is visible in the iron wall. It is only then that the radical groups, whose slogan is 'never ever,' lose their charm and influence passes over to moderate groups. Only then will those moderates approach us [pre-statehood Israel] offering concessions; only then will they honestly bargain with us about practical issues." (Jabotinsky, 1923). He was correct about rational security maximizing state opponents (Egypt and Jordan that offered peace and Syria, that refrained from conflict). This logic does not apply to groups that prioritize pursuing a struggle mandated by an absolutist ideology. For example, Hamas knows that it cannot break down Israel's "Iron Wall" nor overcome its Iron Dome, yet it persistently seeks to eliminate Israel because that is its core raison d'être. Abandoning it would leave it purposeless.

objectives does not threaten its existence to the extent that they are willing to abandon their driving purpose. Socialization logic suggests that states can use force to threaten the survival of the group, thus threatening something it potentially considers more vital than its core ideological mission. With groups driven by an absolutist ideology, this is the first step to being able to achieve a bargain. If a state believes that its non-state opponent's type mitigates the deterrent effect that asymmetric capabilities would otherwise create in an interstate context, it will fear that any agreement to abide by the terms of a bargain cannot be considered credible, and therefore it cannot reach a bargain.[39]

Wirtz (2012) argues that deterrence should be strongest when asymmetry in capabilities is clear. With rational, security maximizing actors, the asymmetrically weaker opponent would never attack the vital interests of a more powerful state. This is not the case with some asymmetrically weaker non-state opponents. Womack's (2016) notion of managed asymmetry concerns rational, security maximizing actors that are currently at peace. It is the peace that is managed, through mutual respect and understanding of each other's "red-lines," but ultimately this is a form of deterrence.[40] This requires functioning deterrence vis-à-vis the weaker actor and deterrence of the stronger actor through a recognition of the futility of the prospect of dominating the smaller state. What is key here is that fundamentally, functioning deterrence is necessary for successfully managed asymmetry, but this is not possible against certain types of NSAs.

Socialization logic fills key gaps. It explains enduring conflict in clear asymmetry and why Womack's notion of managed asymmetry does not apply to relations between a state and an ideologically driven non-state opponent.

In both the interstate bargaining theory of war and socialization logic, states want to end the conflict and view the optimal military strategy as that which provides the best means to that end. A state's optimal military and diplomatic strategy is therefore defined as "how it can best leverage force and other forms of diplomacy to achieve a permanent end to the conflict."

[39] Powell (2006) argues that large, rapid shifts in relative power create commitment problems that can lead to war. This should not apply to clearly asymmetric cases where shifts are miniscule compared to the existing disparity.
[40] Womack (2016) argues that in successfully managed asymmetric relations, the weaker pays deference to the desires of the stronger, and the stronger acknowledges that it cannot subdue the weaker due to facing an unpayable cost stemming from an asymmetry of resolve. The weaker values its sovereignty more than the stronger values negating the weaker state's sovereignty. I argue that this logic is fundamentally deterrence in both cases. The stronger is deterred from attempting to conquer the weaker, and the weaker is deterred from provoking the stronger.

(Wagnar 2000, 483). By using force, a state reveals information about its resolve to use more force. This reveals a key nuance in defining a state's decisive victory strategy. Until the NSA is socialized into the type amenable to bargaining, the type of military campaign that can socialize a highly ideologically driven NSA looks identical to the type intended to annihilate it. This is required to signal the resolve necessary to make it abandon its ideological agenda in favor of survival. Military operations that only aim to degrade or manage the threat are unlikely to work towards ending the conflict and are therefore suboptimal.

IV: Optimal Strategies and Suboptimal Management

Dependent on whether or not the NSA is a type that can be deterred or socialized into a type that can be deterred, the state's optimal strategy for achieving peace varies. The state can: a. pursue decisive victory over the opponent with the goal of completely crushing them, b. use force to threaten more force (Schelling 1966), threatening their survival in order to socialize them into the type of opponent that can be deterred and bargained with, c. use varying ratios of force and concessions to obtain a bargain, and d. look to conclude a successful peace deal.

While a state's optimal strategy aims to conclusively end the conflict either through total victory or reaching a bargain acceptable to both parties, actual strategy may deviate from this ideal strategy due to internal and external constraints. This is why states often end up pursuing management strategies designed to mitigate the threat to an acceptable level but not to permanently end the conflict.

Since war is costly, a state will try to bargain with a non-state opponent if it believes it can successfully achieve a credible settlement. If not, the state will use force to socialize the NSA to become a type that can be deterred. This is accomplished by threatening to use of enough force to destroy the non-state opponent if need be, by pursuing a military campaign geared towards decisively defeating the opponent. If the NSA is perceived to be a type A archetypal terrorist group, the type that can never be deterred—and therefore never be bargained with—the state's only choice to end (not manage) the conflict is to annihilate the NSA as a military threat. Therefore, optimally, a decisive victory strategy to socialize an ideological driven but non-archetypal terrorist NSA will use force in a way that is indistinguishable to its opponent from

how the state pursues the annihilation of an archetypal terrorist type A NSA. A further advantage is that a bargain reached after a state pursues decisive victory will likely be more durable.[41]

Highly constrained states facing an ideologically driven NSA might not be able to credibly signal a decisive victory strategy. In this case they will likely pursue a management strategy using denial and punishment to create short-term deterrence, degrade their opponent's capabilities and augment their own defenses. A state may decide to live with persistent managed conflict if the short-term cost of management is lower than the short-term cost of ending the conflict.[42] In this environment, management is rational in the short-term, in light of immediate cost-benefit calculations but in the longer term, indefinite management can be a costly prospect in terms of both material and reputational costs.

As is the case with a state opponent, a non-state opponent must be deterred to credibly bargain and end the conflict. Three crucial attributes determine whether or not a NSA can be deterred and bargained with. These are: the group's motivation, its leadership targetability, and its governance function.[43]

- **Type D, "Statelike" NSAs**

Actors with low ideological motivation, high governance function, and easily targeted leadership, are most similar to "rational security maximizing" states. States see them as most amenable to bargaining.[44] I label these NSAs "type D." Against them, a state's optimal strategy is to attempt to negotiate through soft-line policies including concessions, aid and boosting their capacity and legitimacy. This dynamic can be represented in game-theoretical terms as a stag-hunt, where the trust necessary for cooperation exists, or can be readily created. Cooperation is possible and securing it through a successful bargain is optimal.[45]

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[41] Blainey ties decisive victory to prolonged peace due to the resulting lack of ambiguity over military capabilities and political resolve. (Blainey 1973). This dynamic should apply to deterrable NSAs as well, with a bargain reached following a decisive victory strategy being more robust than a bargain reached without this strategy.
[42] High internal and external constraints raise the political and often the economic cost for states of using hardline strategies. A more complete discussion of the nature of these constraints will be provided later on in this chapter.
[43] The theoretical importance of these three attributes will be explained in greater depth later on in this chapter.
[44] Dale Copeland (Spring 2018) discussed state "type" as following two key characteristics: Security or non-security maximizing motives, and rationality. This yields four ideal-types, with rational security maximizers being the most predictable and irrational non-security maximizers as the least. I apply this logic to NSAs. A state is most likely to trust the credibility of a bargain with actors that have rational security maximization motives than with other types.
[45] A state conceding territory to a non-state opponent is a form of successful bargain. The state survives, as does the non-state opponent, and the conflict ends. The state's choice to withdraw depends on how important the point of contention is to its interests. If the cost to secure these interests are higher than the benefits, the state will choose to concede and end the conflict. These costs depend on whether or not the territory is a vital or a vested interest. The

- **Type A, "Archetypal Terrorist" NSAs**

At the other end of the spectrum are groups with high ideological motivation to pursue absolutist objectives, minimal governance function, and difficult to target leadership. I label these NSAs, "type A." States often call them "terrorist organizations." States see them as impossible to deter or bargain with.

Type A opponents often leave the state with no other option to end the conflict than to pursue total victory. The state can also choose the suboptimal strategy of long-term denial-based management. This dynamic resembles a chicken game; however, the state is driving a Mack truck, and the non-state opponent is a Miata driver high on PCP. The Mack driver can swerve (grant a concession) but this interaction can be expected to be repeated indefinitely. The type A NSA will continuously demand concessions with no intention of making peace, or it will demand concessions that it knows are unacceptable. In this case the Mack truck driver knows that nothing short of crashing and paying some cost can end this bitter game. Concessions only postpone the inevitable crash while adding cost, making appeasement ultimately the costlier option. Still, crashing is a difficult choice.

The Mack truck driver can also fortify the vehicle to absorb continuous ramming (defensive denial), it can try to shoot out the opposing driver's engine block and tires, slowing it down and minimizing the damage from a crash (offensive denial), or pay the costs of crashing and end the chicken game once and for all. With the denial options the costs continue, and the unpleasant and costly situation is repeated indefinitely.[46] The state might choose denial-based

state will face high internal constraints to fighting if the populace does not consider the interest worth fighting for. The anti-colonial wars fit this dynamic, with France and Great Britain abandoning territories instead of continuously bringing their full power to bear against a non-state opponent. Russia eventually withdrew from Afghanistan for this reason as well, as did the U.S. from Vietnam. This is only a viable strategy if the NSA can be appeased by a withdrawal. If concessions in the form of a withdrawal does not address ideological imperatives then it is not an available strategy for reaching a bargain, although it might still be deemed less costly than maintaining the territory. This pertains to groups that are more ideologically than nationalistically driven.

[46] For a discussion on the efficacy of denial strategies in containing insurgencies see Toft (2012.) Toft defines denial as blocking the geographical spread of fighters. He finds that it is most effective at containing insurgent violence. I define two types of denial, defensive and offensive. They are both denial because they aim to physically stop the opponent from an action instead of convincing them not to pursue an action through the threat of force, often by punishment after an initial act. Horowitz (2001) lays out three types of denial: direct (theater), strategic interdiction (destroying the ability of a target to acquire strategic components of its military), and operational interdiction. These are both forms of offensive denial that are used by states against NSAs as well as states. Defensive denial defends the state without harming the opponent. Examples include barriers, warning systems and aerial defense systems.

management if it faces high constraints, but the optimal long-term option is to crash, meaning to pursue a strategy aimed at decisively defeating the non-state opponent.

- **Types B and C, Middle Range NSAs**

Most non-state opponents fall somewhere towards the middle of the spectrum. Against these opponents a state's optimal strategy is to apply a carrot and stick approach. The stick of military force is necessary to socialize the opponent into a more moderate type by threatening their continued existence unless they moderate their ideology or at least subordinate their ideological imperatives to support rational political ends.[47] A state can demonstrate the ability to destroy an opponent by precisely targeting and eliminating its leadership. Once the opponent's drive is pragmatic, a state can undertake concessions to build trust and increase the NSA's governing capacity.

Actors that are "state-like" on two out of the three characteristics are more easily bargained with and warrant a softer-line strategy to socialize them into a type where a bargain can be concluded. I label these NSAs, "type C."

Actors that are state-like on only one out of the three characteristics are more difficult, and require more use of force, to socialize into the type amenable to bargaining. I label these NSAs, "type B." With these types of opponents, the game resembles the aforementioned chicken game between the Mack truck and the Miata. However, this time the Miata driver is sober and if the truck driver stays the course and can convince the Miata driver that he will not swerve, the Miata driver will swerve, knowing that it stands to lose far more from crashing than the Mack truck does. The Miata driver will eventually learn that chicken games are not to its advantage, eventually becoming a stag hunt actor with which cooperation is possible. At this point a bargain can be reached. To show the resolve necessary to socialize the opponent, the state must be prepared to actually carry out a decisive victory strategy and credibly show that this is the case by embarking upon it. Otherwise, softer-line strategies could convince the non-state opponent that if it stays the course, the state will concede.

[47] Zubok discusses putting either ideology or pragmatism first in Soviet foreign policy as the "revolutionary-imperial paradigm." Soviet leaders had to weigh the ideological drive to spread world Communism against the drive to maximize security when these two goals conflicted. (Zubok 2007).

In general, unless the state is facing a type A or D NSA, the state's optimal strategy is to use a decisive victory strategy and then diplomacy to socialize an opponent into a type that can be deterred and then bargained with. The state then shifts its strategy accordingly. Therefore, the state's strategy is endogenous to the NSA's type.

Clearly policymakers do not always pursue the most rational end to a specific goal. "Policymakers sometimes have good reasons not to choose the policy option that best meets the criterion of analytic rationality." (George and Bennet 2005, 285). Constraints, be they internal domestic constraints or external international ones, can make it difficult and undesirable in the short-term for state leaders to pursue strategies best suited to end conflict in the long-term.

With type A NSAs, the state is faced with three actual strategic options: a. it can decisively defeat the opponent until it no longer poses a threat, b. it can "mow the lawn," managing the threat through offensive and defensive denial and punishment to create short-term deterrence and degrade the opponent's capabilities, or c. it can ignore the threat.[48]

The state's internal and external constraints, as well as the level of threat posed and relative cost in terms of political capital as well as blood and treasure, to defeat, deter, or deny, impact which strategy the state chooses to pursue. Since in the long-term, states prefer to end conflicts and decisive victory is the only way to do this with a type A opponent, absent constraints, a state would pursue a decisive victory strategy. The lower the state's constraints, the more likely it is to pursue this strategy. Higher constraints increase the likelihood that a state will pursue management strategies. For example, the U.S. is only moderately constrained as a large and powerful state with a public that generally supports the Global War on Terror (GWOT). As socialization logic predicts, U.S. strategy towards the type A al-Qaeda has not deviated from decisive victory since September 11, 2001.[49]

[48] "Mowing the grass" is a term for Israeli strategy towards Hamas. Israeli intensive use of force after long periods of restraint is "designed primarily to debilitate the enemy capability" (Inbar and Shamir, Jerusalem Post 2014).
[49] The U.S. also pursues decisive victory against ISIS, another type A NSA. In a January 9, 2018 tweet and Facebook post, Army Command Sergeant Major John Wayne Troxell stated "ISIS needs to understand that the Joint Force is on orders to annihilate them. So, they have two options should they decide to come up against the United States, our allies and partners: surrender or die!' Troxell wrote on Facebook. 'If they surrender, we will safeguard them to their detainee facility cell, provide them chow, a cot and due process. If they choose not to surrender, then we will kill them with extreme prejudice, whether that be through security force assistance, by dropping bombs on them, shooting them in the face, or beating them to death with our entrenching tools.'" (Tritten 2018). This is a rather extreme demonstration of how the United States, a country with very low external constraints, high strategic capabilities, and a domestic mandate to "knock the hell out of ISIS" (Trump Victory Speech 2/9/2016) is pursuing a decisive victory strategy against ISIS, a type A archetypal terrorist group, and is uninterested in pursuing a bargain, arguably due to the impossibility to reach a credible bargain with this type of NSA. ISIS and al-Qaeda have never

With the other three types of non-state opponents, the state can use concessions and increase the non-state opponent's governance function, although this should follow the moderation of the NSA's drive towards more pragmatism. The more moderate the opponent, the more optimal a soft-line policy becomes. In these cases, it becomes suboptimal policy for the state to expend blood, treasure, and political capital to crush an opponent that can be bargained with. This does not mean that force is not warranted. In cases where a NSA's ideology keeps it from being willing to make a bargain acceptable to the state, force may be warranted to threaten decisive victory to socialize it into a pragmatically driven actor. Tit-for-tat responses and denial do not signal resolve to decisively defeat an opponent and are therefore unlikely to socialize it. "The opening of peace negotiations usually must await a common perception of the trend of military events" (Pillar 1983, 199). Absent a credible threat to the NSA's survival, groups with strongly held, absolutist ideological imperatives might prefer continued conflict to any bargain. With these types of opponents, force must signal a trend towards decisive defeat. In essence, socialization logic sees using decisive force as the best way to threaten decisive force in the future. This takes the position of Clausewitz over Schelling. The credibility of the threat is conveyed through force, not through "language and dialogue." (Garard 2016).[50]

War continues unless both sides think a settlement will make them better off. (Wittman 1979).[51] Ideologically driven groups might view peace as making them worse off if it requires sacrificing their ideologically driven agenda. Force that credibly threatens survival is more likely to socialize groups that possess reasonable political aspirations as well as an ideological agenda. A state can encourage and strengthen these aspirations through the promise of concessions and political enfranchisement while the state signals high capability and resolve to defeat the non-state opponent so long as it remains ideologically driven.

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been invited to bargain, though their operatives, when defeated often prefer not to die. The Taliban, a non-archetypal NSA has been invited to the bargaining table, albeit without positive results.

[50] As Clausewitz notes, "if the enemy is to be reduced to submission by an act of War, he must either be positively disarmed or placed in such a position that he is threatened with it." (Clausewitz 2004 translation, 6). "Like Schelling, Clausewitz relies on expecting the opponent to think in a certain way about the future and his (possible and probable) future actions." (Garard 2016).

[51] Ideological imperatives that depend on the continuation of violence towards an absolutist end make the group less likely to view the termination of violence as making them better off. Only the promise of total defeat has the potential to make peace a better option than continued warfare for these types of opponents.

With more moderate NSA types, the state's "constraints environment" impacts the likelihood that the state will pursue the optimal strategy towards ending the conflict. A state may be too constrained to use the force necessary to threaten the survival of an ideologically driven non-state opponent, thus rendering it incapable of shifting the group towards a moderate type. A state may also be constrained by the ideological leanings of its own government or population from being able to grant, or credibly promise concessions necessary to reach a bargain with the non-state opponent. In these cases, the state may be left pursuing the suboptimal strategy of perpetual management even though the non-state opponent is a type that can be socialized into a type that can be bargained with.[52] Finally, a state with low constraints may opt to pursue the costlier strategy of crushing the opponent even if that opponent is the type with which an acceptable bargain can be reached at lower cost.[53] This was partially the case with Russia's 1994 decision to capture Grozny and destroy the nationalist motivated Chechen separatists.

V: The Theoretical Importance of the Three NSA Attributes

- **Ideological Versus 'RSM' Motivation**

On the more pragmatic end, some groups espouse territorial, traditional, reformist, or separatist motivations. On the more ideologically driven side, groups pursue absolutist; religious, social, revolutionary, messianic, and annihilationist goals.

A militant group may be motivated primarily by absolutist ideology. At the most extreme, these ideological imperatives constitute the group's sole reason for existence. A group might have primarily realist, survival maximizing imperatives, as is usually the case with nationalistically motivated groups. NSAs fall anywhere on the spectrum, from those with fully rational security maximizing goals, to those driven by absolutist ideological imperatives. The degree to which absolutist ideology versus pragmatism drives the group is the most important attribute determining whether it can be bargained with.

Standard crisis bargaining models do not take uncertainty over preferences into account. (Bils and Spaniel 2017). They assume that the challenger wants change and the target prefers the

[52] Israel is a prime example of a highly constrained state. It arguably views itself as too externally constrained to pursue a strategy of decisively defeating Hamas without facing intolerable international repercussions. It is doubtful that the United States would tolerate an armed and actively hostile opponent existing on its borders the way that Israel contends with its declared and active enemies Hamas and Hezbollah. U.S. policy has consistently sought to deny territorial control to that type opponent, even thousands of miles away.

[53] "Crushing the enemy" can be attractive for diversionary war reasons, the allure of the potential to win without compromise, premature cognitive closure and a lack of imagination or a combination of these or other reasons.

status quo, with uncertainty existing over the cost of fighting, and the probability of victory. (Fearon 1995). It is useful to break that down into uncertainty over capabilities and resolve as well as uncertainty over the potential for compromise. In asymmetry, real uncertainty exists only over resolve. Disparity in capabilities is largely clear, although an actor can miscalculate.[54] Uncertainty over preferences matters for the bargaining space as well. Some groups hold preferences that cannot be appeased through a bargain.[55] These are sometimes characterized as indivisible goods (Fearon 1995).[56]

The strategy behind the state's optimal use of force in these situations must be designed to convince the opponent that it will not survive if it does not cease pursuit of its absolutist ideological agenda. In this way, decisive force that threatens the NSA's survival can potentially socialize the non-state opponent into moderating its indivisible ideological imperatives.

While concessions can take the form of side payments that can make negotiation over an indivisible good possible (Fearon 1995), there is no way to completely appease the most ideologically driven groups' absolutist ideological imperatives through any side-payments that the state could offer.[57]

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[54] Certainly, even in asymmetric conflict, one side can an overestimate the amount of damage it can cause to the attacker, and thus overestimate its ability to increase costs to a point that breaks the resolve of the attacker to pay. Examples include Saddam Hussein's underestimation in the first Gulf War of his ability to impose costs on the US invading force. (Stein 1992). Hamas spokesman Abu Zuhri's July 2014 warning to Israel in advance of their ground invasion into Gaza, that "Gaza will be a graveyard for the IDF" (TOI 2014) follows a pattern of Hamas overestimating its capabilities, with similar statements made in advance of Operation Cast Lead, an operation in which Hamas failed to impose costs on the very effective Israeli operation. (Kershner and El-Khoudary, 2009).

[55] Bils and Spaniel argue: "with uncertainty over ideal points and sufficiently divergent preferences… proposers cannot appease all possible opponents… This occurs when the set of policies that a moderate type prefers to war does not overlap the set of policies a more extreme type prefers to war. Consequently, any offer entails some chance of fighting. Such a dilemma does not appear in the standard model." (Bils and Spaniel 2017, 648).

[56] Some NSAs are ideologically motivated to pursue through violence ends that will never be acceptable to the state. For the NSA, abandoning the pursuit of those ends is out of the question. These ideologically driven imperatives are theoretically most similar to Fearon's (1995) "indivisible goods," although Goddard (2006) argues that seemingly indivisible positions can potentially prove divisible when an actor clearly perceives a losing position.

[57] Russia appears to have been able to resolve conflict with Chechen separatists by offering de-facto autonomy and vast monetary payouts; but Israel is unlikely to resolve conflict with Hamas by offering it a side payment that would appease its stated desire to "kill the Jew behind every rock and every tree," (Hamas Charter 1988, article 7), allow it to "raise the banner of Allah over every inch of Palestine" (Article 6), or satisfy the position that "Israel will exist and will continue to exist until Islam will obliterate it, just as it obliterated others before it." (Preamble). Neither can the U.S. offer a side payment that satisfies the demands of al-Qaeda to "establish an Islamic state, and defend it, and for every generation to hand over the banner to the one after it until the Hour of Resurrection." (Zawahiri letter to Zarqawi 2005, 3). This includes al-Qaeda's goal of obliterating the United States and its supported regimes (Cronin 2011) which is seen by them as a goal that "will not be achieved except through jihad." (Zawahiri, 4). Clearly, side payments do not automatically mitigate the impediment that absolutist ideology poses to a peaceful bargain.

I define a highly ideologically motivated group as one driven to pursue absolutist goals separate from securing sovereignty and maximizing security. These goals include total religious, social, or economic domination, or at the most extreme, the annihilation of a particular group. This applies to both religious and secular ideologies, while religious ideologies are demonstrably more difficult to moderate. The ideological imperative to pursue absolutist goals is often antithetical to the goal of maximizing security in order to ensure survival.

As long as absolutist goals motivate the group, long-term deterrence is impossible. Deterrence works by threatening material costs in the event of aggression beyond what the opponent would be willing to pay in pursuit of its objective. Most actors value their survival above any possible objective. If the opponent places the imperative to pursue an objective above their very survival, even the most credible threat will not deter them. This is more likely with groups with difficult to target leadership and minimal of any governance function. With these actors the state has no reason to see any promise to commit to a bargain as credible. With these archetypal terrorist groups, the state's optimal strategy is to pursue total victory.

Deterrence theory proceeds from the belief that decision makers on both sides are rational. (Jervis 1982, 73). All structural realists agree that states aim to maximize security and that rationally acting states would not attempt aggression that is likely to result in failure and diminished security.[58] A security maximizing asymmetrically weaker actor will not attack the vital interests of a stronger actor unless there is confusion over whether those interests are truly vital leading to confusion over resolve.[59] This is clear in the interstate arena. The opponent's perception of a state's capability and resolve is a necessary condition for deterrence. In the interstate context, they are both independently necessary and jointly sufficient.

[58] Both offensive and defensive realists consider states to fit the description of rational security maximizers. (Mearsheimer 2001; Jervis 1977; Glaser 2006; Van Evera 1998). They agree that states want to maximize security but disagree over how this is done. Offensive realists believe that this is done through maximizing relative power, while defensive realists believe that pursuing opportunities to maximize relative power might harm security.
[59] It is rare for states to attack asymmetrically stronger opponents. Argentina attacked the Falklands, but it calculated that Great Britain would not see this as an attack on its vital interests. Argentina miscalculated—underestimating Great Britain's response. The same is the case with Saddam Hussein's attack on the U.S. backed Kuwait, or his refusal to comply with US demands for inspections (Stein 1992), and with Nasser's decision to attack a nuclear capable Israel in 1973, thinking that the Sinai was not a vital interest. These rare cases that involved miscalculations are the exceptions that prove the rule.

Some groups might rationally attack a more powerful state thinking that the state is too constrained to use all of the military power at its disposal to destroy that group. This is more likely if the NSA perceives the state as facing high internal constraints. For example, 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheik Mohammad was caught by surprise by "cowboy Bush's" swift and ferocious response to 9/11. (McDermott 2013).

Doubt over resolve due to perceptions of the target's constraints in some cases explains the initiation of aggression, but not its continuation. The most comprehensive explanation for the phenomenon of why asymmetrically weaker actors would initiate aggression and continue to attack the vital interests of a stronger actor is that they are not deterred because their ideological agenda is more important to them than security maximization and survival.

A non-state opponent's level of ideological motivation is clearly an important attribute impacting state strategy to end the conflict. Therefore, it is important to clearly unpack what constitutes an ideological agenda that is incompatible with a security maximizing agenda.

Socialization logic does not address the issue of rationality. If rationality is the pursuit of optimal means to one's goals, even the most ideologically driven groups are "rational actors," their goals just differ substantially from the rationally held goals of most nation-states. Rationality can also be ascribed to what Levi calls "non-egotistic considerations," (Levi 1997, 25). Therefore, when facing actors that are clearly pursuing well defined goals, even if those goals appear suicidal, messianic and absurd to secular westerners, it is more useful to examine the motivation and goals of a group, than to engage in debates over whether it is "rational." For example, jihadist groups, an important subset of ideologically driven NSAs, consider western ideology to be evil. They believe they cannot cease fighting the west until it completely embraces Islam or subjugation to Islam. Salafi-jihadi doctrine exemplifies absolutist ideology.[60]

Generally, ideologies become less salient when those espousing them perform poorly or are defeated. Owen provides the examples of Great Britain's liberties and the United States'

[60] Salafi-jahadi doctrine is applies to all non-Muslims. "Three interrelated doctrines come into sharp focus. 1) total disavowal from, and enmity for, 'the infidel.' that is, constant spiritual or metaphysical hostility against the non-Muslim (in Arabic known as al-wala' w'al bara, or 'loyalty and enmity' this naturally manifests itself as 2) jihad, that is, physical hostility against and—whenever and wherever possible—attempts to subjugate the non-Muslim); finally, successful jihads lead to 3) dhimmitude, the degrading position of conquered non-Muslims who refuse to forfeit their religious freedom by converting to the victor's creed" (Ibrahim 2017).

economic freedoms versus the twentieth-century failed experiments with Communism and Fascism. (Owen 2015).[61] The Soviet Union's ideology evolved over time to the point where avowedly Communist Gorbachev sought economic and political reforms that once would have been inconceivable. These examples and China's evolution away from Maoism demonstrates how poor material performance can discredit even the most staunchly held ideologies. However, ideologies that do not promise material wellbeing are not discredited by the lack of material success. This is where religious ideologies differ from secular ones.

Radical jihadi Islamism differs from Communism, which was decisively defeated after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Jihadi movements do not primarily promise economic, military, or political success. Instead, they promise benefits in the afterlife. Religious ideologies like Salafi-jihadi Islamism are not delegitimized by poverty or military defeat.[62]

A state must carefully look for signs that a non-state opponent's signaled moderation is genuine and not a short-term tactical move necessitated by imminent defeat. A state that is mistaken might seek to bargain with a group that will not adhere to the negotiated bargain. This can be dangerous if the state undertakes concessions that weaken its security position, as was the case in Israel's Oslo process with the PLO.

Some ideologically motivated groups can moderate, archetypal groups cannot. Some highly ideological groups fundamentally exist to pursue pragmatic goals like self-determination. These groups may be convinced to moderate through combining the stick of threatening decisive defeat with the carrot of boosted legitimacy and helping the group build governance function. The latter can further encourage the group to prioritize its pragmatic agenda. Israel's Oslo processes with the PLO exemplifies this logic. Israel, supported by the U.S., promised to boost the PLO's governance function and thus its pragmatist agenda if it demonstrated that it

[61] After the Soviet Union collapsed, Communism lost its allure as an ideology for both states and non-state groups previously motivated by its precepts." (Hamid, Felbab-Brown and Trinkunas 2018.)
[62] State leaders might view religiously motivated groups as more intransigent. The U.S. Army's *Joint Concept for Human Aspects of Military Operations* states that "religious beliefs can influence political will and motivate actors to struggle and fight—often with greater zeal than a secular ideology." (Joint Staff 2016, 7).

moderated its ideological drive. Interestingly, Hamas recently updated their charter to be more politically palatable and compete for global political clout with its rival Fatah. (Fisher 2017).[63]

It is difficult to discern when signaling moderation is only a short-term tactic to buy time, or signifies socialization, as a potential precursor to a bargained end to the conflict.[64] The PLO's strategy immediately preceding and during the Oslo process was the former, but the Israeli government misinterpreted Arafat's public statements and actions as an actual change in type.[65] Hamas has proposed the idea of a Hudna with Israel multiple times as a long-term cease-fire, but not a peace agreement. (Yousuf 2006, Jacob 2015). Its efforts to avoid war with Israel between its initiation of conflict in 2008 and 2014, alongside its continued firing of rockets into Israel, demonstrate Israel's ability to impose only short-term, but ultimately failed deterrence vis-à-vis Hamas. In 2006 Osama bin Laden proposed a *Hudna* to the United States. (Fahim 2006). Whether a state perceives a NSA's moderation as a genuine change in type or a short-term tactic to avoid military loss, is discernable by examining the state's actions and documentary evidence.

Reiter argues that believing the credibility of an opponent's commitments is difficult when dealing with fanatical actors. His logic is similar to Abrahms' (2013) terrorist credibility paradox. A history of violence makes a state wary of believing a non-state opponent's signaled moderation. This increases the attractiveness for states to pursue a denial strategy that makes credible commitment unnecessary by eliminating the adversary's ability to strike without changing its intentions. Finally, states might worry about the future intentions of currently staunch allies to support a state's strategic struggle against a non-state opponent. This is in addition to the ever-present worry over their opponents' future intentions.[66]

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[63] Wagemakers provides some examples that show that "it is certainly not impossible for radical ideologues to renounce some of their earlier views and take a new, more moderate approach. The Egyptian Jihad Organization, for example, apologized two years ago for its attacks on civilians, and the Egyptian al-Jama`a al-Islamiyya even revised its entire ideology in the 1990s along more moderate lines." (Wagemakers 2008).

[64] With Islamist groups, this feigned moderation would be a manifestation of the concepts of *Taqqiyah*, the ability or obligation to lie for self-preservation, (Ibrahim 2010) and *Hudna*, a tactical cease-fire that means the cessation of hostilities, which does not necessarily imply the end of conflict," according to "Rashid Khalidi, the director of Colombia University's Middle East Institute." (Fahim 2006).

[65] For a more in-depth discussion of Arafat's motives, and ideological justification to hardliners for negotiating with the Israelis, see Dr. Mordechai Kedar "I believe Arafat," (2002).

[66] For example, Israel might be dissuaded from making concessions detrimental to its security if it worries that it will not be able to rely on U.S. support to make up for strategic territorial loss. This is a central debate in Israel's security establishment over withdrawal from the Jordan valley. "Israel emphatically objects to withdrawing its troops from this strategic valley on its eastern border." (Debka 2014).

States can also undertake counterproductive strategies if they apply military force against non-state opponents that are wrongfully perceived to be ideologically driven. Pelletiere (1995) argues that ideologically driven elements within NSAs that are not themselves ideologically driven, are adept at exploiting wrongheaded policies aimed at countering them, "it appears to be a favorite tactic for advancing their cause." (1).[67]

Finally, foreign support can be an important factor in motivating the NSA.[68] Financial, political, and military support—given for specific ideological goals—strengthens the indivisibility of the NSA's ideological goals by tying their pursuit to receiving crucial support.

- **Leadership Targetability and Command Structure**

Some non-state opponents have leadership that is difficult to target. This can be due to various reasons, including terrain, poor intelligence, and local support. A state is better able to shift its non-state opponent to a type that can be bargained with if it can enhance its ability to target a group's leadership. This can be done militarily by increasing capabilities and diplomatically, by working with governments where the NSA is operating. States can also boost the profile of the NSA's leadership vis-à-vis rivals to obtain a partner that can negotiate on behalf of the group. These concessions boost an NSA's leadership targetability and governance function. A state is more likely to believe it can negotiate successfully with a unitary group. [69]

The operational effectiveness of decapitation is debated. Socialization logic sees decapitation as either a component of a decisive victory strategy to socialize an NSA by threatening it with defeat, or as part of a management strategy.[70] If used as part of a decisive victory strategy, it can help bring the conflict to an end. Assuming that all but the most radical leaders are willing to somewhat sacrifice or redefine ideological goals if it is the difference

[67] Pelletiere cites the younger generation's takeover of a group's agenda as an explanation for increased radicalization. He cites the example of AIG in Algeria as a group that started as a reformist party (FIS) rising out of the 1988 riots. Under government repression, the FIS went underground and formed the AIS which then split into the Armed Islamic Group (AIG), a far more radical group. The FIS retained no control over the AIG, which went on to commit atrocities on a large scale, leading to civil war. Military pressure split the FIS and resulted in the more fundamentalist AIG. The FIS was a type "D" NSA, it was a political party in fact, with pragmatic goals, findable and targetable leadership (the leaders were imprisoned by the state), and governance function. The optimal strategy would have been to bargain, not use force. In this case force prolonged the conflict.

[68] This can come from a state, wealthy benefactors, a diaspora community, or any combination of these.

[69] In some cases, states successfully negotiate with an NSA while splinter groups hesitate to fall in line. This was the case with British negotiations with Michael Collins in the 1920s. After peace was negotiated, the IRA eventually largely subdued its radical breakaways, even after the assassination of Collins himself by one of the radical splinters.

[70] As part of a management strategy, decapitation can be used for short-term deterrence through punishment, offensive denial through degrading the NSA's capabilities, or both.

between survival and destruction, demonstrating the targetability of their leadership is crucial to applying bargaining logic to NSAs.[71]

A state would rather use targeted violence.[72] It can better socialize the opponent by signaling its ability to defeat it when it can target its leadership. Targeted force is more likely to threaten the non-state opponent without alienating the population, and without aggravating domestic constituencies and the international community, including important allies.[73] A state's use of targeted force poses a double threat of reducing the opponent's ability to impose control and increasing popular discontent.[74]

- **Governance Function**

A state can better deter a non-state opponent that has higher levels of governance function. A state is also more likely to negotiate with a group that can commit to ensuring that its members abide by the terms of the bargain. To this end, a state can pursue policies that increase the non-state opponent's governance function.[75]

Governance function is composed of two variables, capacity and accountability (defined as facing potential rivals for power).[76] High governing capacity gives the NSA the authority necessary to secure and commit to a bargain. Accountability to a population and potential rivals for power give it something to lose if the state is compelled to use force against it.

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[71] Taking out radical leaders only makes the group more moderate if the replacement leaders are less radical, this is generally not the case (Dear 2013). Removing leadership might make bargaining more difficult if it splinters the group and there is no one that can speak for it and hold it to a bargain. For countering middle range NSAs, leadership targetability is not a goal in and of itself, it is only useful for making the group more of a moderate type when it is used as a threat, not a tactic. The group should know decapitation is possible to get the leaders to the bargaining table. Leadership should not be targeted simply for the sake of eliminating them. With groups that are considered impossible to bargain with, leadership targeting is part of the use of force to subdue the group militarily. In this case, taking out leaders is advisable for disrupting coordination potential, intimidation, and attrition.

[72] Kalyvas (2006) argues that indiscriminate violence is often used to deter civilian populations from supporting insurgencies, or to encourage collaboration. He argues that targeted violence is more effective. Lyall finds that indiscriminate violence can erode popular support for a rebel group. "If local populations come to blame insurgents, not the incumbent, for the state's repressive acts, then an insurgency may be forced to curb, if not abandon, its current tactics and strategy to avoid provoking further counter-mobilization." (Lyall 2009).

[73] For Che Guevara in Bolivia, Foco Theory failed because peasants tired of insurgents provoking state ire.

[74] Targeted force has the downside of the inevitable collateral damage that can be exploited to strengthen support for the NSA. A state that has excellent intelligence and precision capabilities faces lower strategic constraints on its use of targeted force, making the tactic more effective.

[75] Shkolnik (2017 Working Paper) finds that "militant groups often have to consolidate rivals to dominate a constituency before taking on the regime." While this might suggest that a state would always be wise to reduce the strength of a non-state opponent to the point where they are no longer the dominant force in the territory they control, the state's optimal goal is not to reduce the threat but to permanently end the conflict.

[76] I define capacity as the ability to enforce a monopoly on violence.

Both force and concessions are more effective against a non-state opponent with high capacity and moderate accountability. With these types, force is a better tool for deterrence due to the state's ability to weaken it relative to its rivals, and concessions are more readily given due to the state's ability to take actions to increase the NSA's political legitimacy.

The effect of accountability is not monotonic. The moderating effect of governing accountability occurs when the group is not all-powerful, thus invulnerable to threats from rivals if weakened, but also not too vulnerable to hardline spoilers.[77] Socialization logic classifies NSAs possessing this goldilocks level of accountability as having "high governance function." Against these types, a state is better able to use both carrots and sticks.[78]

NSAs with high governance function have both high capacity and significant but not hegemonic control over their populations. Groups that have low governing capacity are all categorized as having low governance function due to the state's perception of these groups' as unable to enforce a bargain. NSAs that have high capacity and either high or low levels of accountability are categorized as having moderate levels of governance function.[79]

Table 1. Governance Function

	High accountability	**Moderate accountability**	**Low accountability**
High capacity	Moderate governance function, risk of spoilers	**High governance function (goldilocks zone, most able to bargain with)**	Moderate governance function: Hegemonic NSA[80]
Low capacity	Low governance function, unable to enforce a bargain	Low governance function, unable to enforce a bargain	Low governance function, unable to enforce a bargain

VI: The State's Constraints

States do not always have the political freedom to pursue their optimal strategy. States face two major types of constraints. Internal constraints on a state's military and political

[77] Hardline rivals can constrain the NSA's ability to negotiate. This is illustrated by the Rejectionist Front's (PFLP and the PFLP-GC) impact on Arafat's willingness to explicitly state willingness to compromise with Israel. In the 1970s, hardliners made Arafat need to appear hardline both to them and to Israel, making a bargain less likely.
[78] Hegemonic groups have high capacity and low accountability. They not as easily deterred because a state's use of force does not degrade their capabilities to the point where they fear losing power to a rival. Because deterrence entails threatening costs, it is boosted if military losses can threaten to undermine an NSA's ability to maintain control. Against a NSA with high accountability a state gains deterrence power because the threat of force threatens to weaken it relative to rivals. It also gives the state the ability to offer to increase its power in exchange for compliance and moderation. Therefore, an accountable NSA gives the state more options for force and concessions.
[79] In the 1970s the PLO had moderate governance function. It had high capacity but also extreme accountability in terms of vulnerability to spoilers, making it unable to articulate a clear willingness to negotiate. From 2014-2016 ISIS exemplified a hegemonic NSA. It could enforce a bargain but could not be compelled to moderate through the threat of losing power to rivals. In this case, the U.S. clearly decided to end the conflict through annihilation.
[80] The hegemonic NSA has the capacity necessary to enforce the terms of a bargain on its followers but is difficult to deter through the threat of weakening it relative to its rivals because it faces no potential competitor for power.

strategies include domestic institutional checks and balances, media openness, and popular support. External constraints include vulnerability to international economic sanction, withdrawal of military, financial, and diplomatic support, or even direct military intervention.

Democracies usually have higher internal constraints. Leaders need popular and political support.[81] Mobilizing people and resources can be contentious. Democratic leaders may not have the popularity to create support for such a policy. They may be constrained by institutional checks and balances (Putnam 1988; Russett 1992).[82] They are less able to control the media to promote support, to minimize the appearance of costs in terms of blood and treasure, or to silence dissent.[83] Autocracies are constrained as well (Weeks 2014), although to a lesser extent due to less institutional checks and the leader's greater ability to control the media.[84]

Democracies are less able to control the press than autocracies. This makes it harder to hide destruction, civilian casualties and human rights violations from international scrutiny. These miseries of war are all but guaranteed to result from decisive use of force aimed to crush an opponent or convince it to moderate, even if the state takes utmost care to minimize collateral damage. Domestic constituencies have a low tolerance for troop casualties, as well as for the infliction of casualties on other populations. This is especially likely to be the case if the citizens do not perceive the NSA to pose a vital threat. Democracies typically lack the political will to employ repression for a prolonged period. (Paul et. al 2013). Non-state opponents know this and devise strategy accordingly. The Vietnam War provides a quintessential example of this. If a NSA believes that a state is likely to be forced by popular anger to withdraw, the state is less able to socialize it by threatening its survival.[85]

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[81] Popular opinion can cause a state to withdraw from non-essential interests even when military defeat is not threatened, and full military power has not been utilized. The best known example of this is the U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam. Britain's decision not to continue its war against the continental rebellion falls under this logic as well. U.S. independence was won as much in Whitehall as it was on the American battlefields. (Boot 2013).
[82] This is follows the institutional logic for the democratic peace theory, (see Rosato 2003 for a critique of this logic)
[83] A free press can serve as a powerful constraint. "The importance of managing the press can be brought into relief by comparison of the situation of the British counterinsurgency operation in Aden and South Arabia, which was going on concurrently… Here, journalists were far more exposed to the front-line troops. Mismanagement of this contributed to the British government announcing its intentions to withdraw." (Simpson 2012, 174). Media access is a major internal constraint. Russia in 1999 understood this better than in 1994 and worked to rectify it.
[84] Putin clearly recognized the necessity of limiting Russian casualties in the Second Chechen war (Meakins 2017).
[85] The first time U.S. media covered a foreign war with photo and film was the Vietnam War. The broadcast death tolls changed public opinion rapidly against the war. Media portrayal of the downing of the Blackhawk Helicopter influenced U.S. withdrawal from Somalia and decisions not to intervene in the Rwandan genocide.

Democracies are generally more constrained than autocracies and domestically embattled leaders are more constrained in both regime types. This is measured by approval ratings, electoral mandate, control of Congress or parliamentary majority, control over the media and the ability to enforce domestic compliance.

A small and vulnerable state has to consider vulnerability to external sanction when weighing the use of force against a NSA. It may be dissuaded from pursuing the optimal hardline strategy due to these threats. Israeli leaders constantly weigh the potential for international sanction when deciding upon using force against Hamas, Hezbollah, or the PLO. Even the U.S. worries about its global reputation and does not want to appear overly aggressive.

All else held equal, small democratic powers that have domestically embattled leadership and adverse strategic environments are the most constrained from pursuing hardline strategies or making controversial concessions when warranted.[86] The more constrained a state is, the more likely it is to pursue management capabilities and management strategies. Management strategies reduce the intensity of hostilities. Wittman (1979) notes that this may reduce the probability of a successful peace settlement. When states are constrained to the point where they pursue management strategies, their conflicts with non-state opponents are likely to endure.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, popular autocratic leaders of large and powerful states are the least constrained and thus their chosen strategy is least likely to deviate from the optimal strategy based on their opponent's type. A state's actual strategy will diverge least from its optimal strategy when it has a favorable strategic environment that advantages its ability to apply effective military force at a reasonable cost and to take necessary diplomatic steps with lower risk involved. States also act to reduce their constraints when possible, such as Putin's consolidation of political power, increased military and economic power and control over media access before and during the Second Chechen War.

Strategic factors that make military force, or diplomatic concessions more difficult to carry out include: rugged terrain, embeddedness in a civilian population, the lack of local support, or local hostility, the lack of important military capabilities, and the cultural or strategic importance of territory that would otherwise be useful for concessions to secure a bargain. They

[86] For example, domestic opinion and political institutional arrangements now constrain Israel from considering dividing Jerusalem, a sticking point and potential Fearonesque 'indivisible issue' for a bargain with the PLO.

increase the cost of force and their opposite increase the utility of force and lower its cost.[87] Adverse strategic factors exacerbate a state's internal and external constraints. In general, the less costly it is for a state to employ force or concessions towards its desired goal, the less constrained the state is in its use of force.

Table 2: Constraints: *The more of these factors a state faces, the greater its constraints.*

Internal Constraints	External Constraints	Strategic factors
- Free press - Inability to restrict media access - Constitutional checks - High casualty aversion - Economic recession - Divided government - Reelection concerns - High denial capabilities[88]	- Economic vulnerability - Potential for diplomatic isolation - Potential for external peacekeeping intervention - Potential for external military intervention - The opponent has powerful state supporters.	- Difficulty of terrain (human and physical) - Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities - Military training - Military equipping - Availability of local forces and collaborators.

- **Denial Technology as a Domestic Constraint**

Powell (2006) argues that "states may prefer fighting if the long-term cost of continually procuring the forces needed to perpetually deter an attack on the status quo is higher than the expected cost of trying to eliminate the threat" (172). Conversely, states prefer peace above all else, but prefer deterrence if it sees its maintenance as less costly than fighting to remove the threat. Denial can protect the home front if deterrence is prone to failure. If a combination of short-term deterrence and effective denial is less costly than eliminating the threat, a state might choose this management approach.

Because hardline policies are difficult to garner political support for, a leader that has the ability to manage the conflict to an acceptable level is less likely to pursue hardline policies. This is especially true for states that face substantial constraints. Successful denial technologies increase the use of denial as a strategy. This increases the demand to develop denial technologies, in a self-reinforcing feedback loop. Therefore, technologies that theoretically give states more strategic options, in practice increase its constraints on pursuing hardline strategies. As hardline strategies become less politically feasible, leaders are less able to use force to change

[87] The availability of trustworthy and capable local actors that can fight on the state's behalf, lowers the state's constraints. These local forces enhance the state's ability to more effectively apply force. (Lyall 2010). Internal constraints are lowered because these local actors remove the politically costly need to send large numbers of citizens into harm's way, allowing a state to pursue the much more politically palatable strategy of arming, training and advising and utilizing local forces. External constraints are lowered diminishing the potential for international opprobrium if the conflict is seen as indigenized. It also frees the state's military to deter interstate aggression.
[88] See Table III (p. 39).

a non-state opponent into the type to which bargaining would apply. Furthermore, because denial is the easier option politically, the development of denial technologies can signal a lack of resolve to defeat the opponent, thus making socializing the opponent and bargaining more difficult. This can increase the duration of conflict. The contrast between Israel's 2008/9 Operation Cast Lead against Hamas in Gaza, and Operation Protective Edge (2014), demonstrates how denial options can make hardline conventional strategies less politically practicable, and can overdetermine the employment of management strategies.[89]

Denial can be either defensive or offensive but is usually a mix of both. Unlike deterrence, which convinces the opponent not to attack by increasing the costs posed by retaliation, denial does not target the opponent's motivation, rather its ability to do harm. Defensive denial blocks the opponent's attacks, while offensive denial strikes the opponent's military capabilities, disrupting and degrading its ability to launch attacks. Offensive denial can impose costs by killing key leaders and destroying military infrastructure, while defensive denial does not. Furthermore, perfect defensive denial, in the form of hermetically sealing a state off from threats, does not exist, allowing the opponent to still disrupt life and score symbolic victories through maintaining the struggle.[90]

A determined opponent, highly ideologically committed to conflict, cannot be socialized into a moderate group simply through deterrence. It is socialized when its survival is actually threatened. Denial based management strategies are not designed to threaten the opponent's survival.[91] Punishment can create deterrence against some types of NSAs, but against those that are highly ideologically driven, the deterrence is likely to be short-term. Eventually the NSA will need to resume the pursuit of its ideological agenda to maintain relevance. In these cases, only force that threatens the group's survival is likely to get it to moderate its ideology. This is due to the calculus of deterrence. An actor will be deterred if it expects to lose more than it expects to

[89] Israel was far more hesitant and less decisive in its use of force in 2014, after the integration or Iron Dome into its defensive arsenal. In 2008/9 Israel pursued a preformulated strategy of decisive force. In 2014 Israel pursued a denial strategy until the tunnel threat, which is not countered by Iron Dome, changed the calculus.

[90] Mearsheimer argues that perfect denial is impossible because a determined adversary will always find a way to get around even those defenses perceived to be the tightest. (Mearsheimer, 1983).

[91] A combination of offensive and defensive denial technologies can increase a state's short-term deterrence by decreasing the cost of launching a decisive victory strategy through minimizing the threat posed by the non-state opponent's retaliation. Offensive denial technologies, like drones and precision munitions can be used as part of a decisive victory military strategy as well. But a management strategy is unlikely to socialize a highly driven opponent to prioritize pragmatism over ideology because it does not signal intent to defeat the opponent.

gain. Denial can reduce what the opponent stands to gain while punishment increases what it stands to lose. If the group is willing to lose a great deal and counts continued fighting as a great gain, long-term deterrence might be impossible to achieve.

Table 3:[92]

Management strategies		**Short-term deterrence**	**Victory or socialization of NSA**
Defensive Denial	**Offensive Denial**	**Punishment**	**Decisive Victory**
-Land barriers -Naval barriers -Intelligence allowing for the interception of threats -Shelters -Emergency planning -Early warning systems - Air and Missile Defense	-Targeting operational leaders and planners -Targeting weapons experts -Targeting weapons facilities (storage and manufacture) -Targeting offensive capabilities -Intelligence allowing for the targeting of threats -Precision weapons systems	-Targeting infrastructure -Economic blockade -Restriction of movement -Retaliatory strikes	-Military campaign geared towards defeating the NSA and removing its ability to fight on -Large-scale maneuver warfare -Clear and hold -Search and destroy -Targeting leaders in a sustained campaign in order to deter or compel. -Whole of government effort to subdue an NSA.

Denial decreases the vitality of the threat posed by the non-state opponent. States are less willing to undertake politically costly strategies if the leaders and the population do not see the threat posed by the opponent is as vital.

- **Vital versus Vested Interests**

A state is more constrained when the opponent threatens vested instead of vital interests. Both a state's leadership and its citizenry are more likely to support what may be a costly strategy to achieve a final end to conflict with a non-state opponent if that opponent poses a substantial threat. If it does not, the temptation would be to attempt to manage the threat. I do not mean "substantial" to be the existential threat posed by a symmetric, state rival. Asymmetrically weaker NSAs do not pose a threat to the survival of the state but can pose a threat to the citizens' way of life, prosperity and liberty.[93] When NSA violence is more recent, sustained, or results in high casualties, a state is more likely to perceive the threat to be vital. Far away groups that are rarely able to successfully launch high profile attacks, are less likely to be seen as vital threats.

VII: State Strategies and Likely Outcomes

[92] Offensive denial and punishment strategies often overlap and it can be hard to distinguish which is the primary purpose of the military action.

[93] This can be seen in Hamas's ability to temporarily shut down Israel's only international airport, and severely impact Israel's economy during its 2014 conflict with Israel, despite Israel's successful denial system. Al-Qaeda's 2001 attack on the U.S. had repercussions in terms of lives, security, civil liberties, and spending, still felt today. Chechen militants disrupted life to a substantial degree in Russia through bombings, raids, and hostage taking.

In this section I summarize and chart the logic behind the state strategies and likely outcomes derived from them. While a state's optimal strategy is to bring the conflict to an end, even the best adapted strategies may not achieve this quickly.

According to the RAND study (2013) *Paths to Victory,* even the states deemed best slated to succeed fought for an average of six years. A less constrained state is better able to pursue and maintain optimal strategy and successfully reach a bargain with a non-state opponent. This entails adapting the strategy to the changing nature of the non-state opponent and the resolve to not abandon a strategy for lack of immediate results. More constrained states are more likely to pursue management strategies. Therefore, all things being equal, conflicts are likely to be longer when the state is highly constrained and the non-state opponent less statelike.

With type A archetypal terrorists, conflict generally ends with the opponent's defeat. Therefore, a highly constrained state might pursue a management strategy indefinitely. A less constrained state will pursue decisive victory. With centralized, hierarchical groups, this can be accomplished with a concerted military campaign. With dispersed groups, the state may be better able to slowly crush it through a long campaign employing all elements of national power.[94]

With type B NSAs, the state can use carrots and sticks to socialize the opponent into the type that can be bargained with. The emphasis would be on force with those that possess high ideological drive. A highly constrained state might not be able to employ the force necessary to moderate this type of opponent and opt to pursue management. A less constrained state would be able to employ the force and concessions necessary to either militarily defeat it or to socialize it to eventually reach an end to the conflict.

With type C NSAs, the opponent is on the more moderate side, but the state still might not consider it trustworthy to abide by a negotiated settlement, especially if it is highly ideologically driven. A highly constrained state might still be able to moderate this type of opponent through concessions, especially if it has a more pragmatic drive. A less constrained state would optimally employ a strategy that is relatively high on concessions and low on the use of force to moderate the opponent and reach a bargain.

[94] These two types of decisive victory strategies are shown in the chapter 6 comparison of U.S. strategy towards al-Qaeda central versus affiliates.

With type D NSAs, interstate bargaining logic fully applies. A state is more likely to reach a bargain when it is able to make concessions. Therefore, a highly constrained state might still achieve a bargained end to conflict with this type of opponent, but a less constrained state is more likely to negotiate an end to conflict in a shorter timeframe.

Chart 1: Generalized expectations of socialization logic

NSA Type	State Constraints	Optimal State Strategy	Expected Actual State Strategy	Expected Outcomes
A	High	Decisive victory	Perpetual management	Longer conflict
A	Low	Decisive victory	Decisive victory	Eventual state victory, duration depends on dispersion.
B	High	More hardline and less concessions	Management, minimal concessions. Short-term deterrence	Longer conflict
B	Low	More hardline and less concessions	More hardline, less concessions	Shorter conflict, either victory over or, socialization of NSA and eventual bargain
C	High	Less hardline and more concessions	Management, moderate concessions.	Moderately long conflict
C	Low	Less hardline and more concessions	Less hardline, more concessions	Shorter conflict, socialization of NSA and an eventual bargain
D	High	Concessions and bargain	Management, moderate concessions	Shorter conflict, potential bargain.
D	Low	Concessions and bargain	Concessions and bargain	Shorter conflict, bargain.

VIII: Scope, Methods, and Case Selection

This study is not about counterinsurgency (COIN) or counterterrorism (CT). These may be components of the state's strategy depending on the non-state opponent's type and the state's constraints. They can be part of a decisive victory strategy, a management strategy or as a prelude to negotiations, defined by the ultimate goal to which they are applied.

The dynamics of my framework apply to the modern era, where global interconnectivity impacts the strategies of both states and their non-state opponents. Some opponents are terrorists like al-Qaeda. Some, like the Taliban between 1996-2001 and Hamas post-2007—are de-facto governments. Some, like the Chechens, are a blend of separatists and jihadists.

Socialization logic applies to conflict between an asymmetrically stronger state and an asymmetrically weaker non-state opponent. It does not apply to states facing a non-state opponent that rivals their power and can defeat them militarily, such as in a civil war. I focus primarily on the strategic decisions of states where they have a range of strategies to select

from.[95] Therefore, I look at asymmetric conflicts where the state's survival is not threatened and it has the ability in its choice of strategy to pursue a decisive end to the conflict, to offer diplomatic concessions, and to attempt to manage the hostilities at an acceptable level.

Socialization logic straddles several areas of study. It is a subset of the crisis bargaining framework.[96] It utilizes Realist assumptions of deterrence through perceived power and resolve and assumes that pragmatic actors seek security maximization. It is dynamic, endogenizing state strategy to NSA type. State strategy is both derived from, and intended to, influence its opponent's characteristics.

I test the explanatory power of socialization logic by determining how a state's leadership perceived a non-state opponent according to the three key variables, to what extent the leaders were cognizant of these factors and to what extent their perception of these variables influenced their strategy. I collect evidence from leadership statements gleaned from interviews with 41 policymakers, military leaders and subject matter experts, along with open source data and secondary source histories. An appendix provides a detailed breakdown of the interviews for each chapter. After determining how the leaders viewed their opponents and what their desired strategies were, I examine the history of the conflicts to determine what strategies the states actually pursued and when and how constraints impacted this calculus. I compare these findings with the most common existing explanations for the specific state policy shifts in each case.

Using a longitudinal design, I examine each case through a stand-alone within-case analysis. I use process tracing to examine how a state counters a non-state opponent over time. First, I reveal the decision-making process behind state leaders' choice of strategy towards a specific non-state opponent. I then examine the endogenous interplay between state strategy and NSA type making up the cycle of conflict and negotiation or leading to perpetual management.

I also compare between cases by approximating a most-similar case design that holds the state constant and isolates the independent variable, NSA type. This allows the isolation of the

[95] To quote Secretary of Defense James Mattis, "the enemy gets a vote." (Fisher 2010). This certainly applies to conflict with asymmetrically weaker actors as well and the opponent certainly has its own strategy. However, in asymmetric conflicts, the initiative is clearly the stronger party's to take, whereas in symmetric conflict, the stronger party first needs to secure its survival before it can even begin to design a strategy for ending the conflict.
[96] Middle-range theories examine a subset of more general theories. These types of theories are "particularly relevant for the development of policy-relevant theoretical findings" "of strategies and problems repeatedly encountered in different contexts in the conduct of foreign policy." (George and Bennet 2005, 64).

distorting variables of the state's constraints environment as well. Finally, I compare between cases to show how each of these variables impacted outcomes of the conflict.

To test alternative explanations, I measure a state's relative power, including its threats, military capabilities, vulnerabilities and the international context.[97] Domestic politics considerations are measured by popular support for the government, unity of the government and public opinion regarding the state's strategy and leadership rhetoric. The ideology of the state's government is measured as the hawkishness or dovishness of the governing coalition, party, or leader. This can be discerned from public platforms and public statements. Interview data and open-source biographical material also provide evidence to a leader's characteristics that might explain their choice of strategy. If these factors are constant or change in a way that should make the state's pursued strategy less likely, they fail to explain the change in state strategy. If the opponent's type does not change, but state strategy does, holding the controls constant can show whether the state shifted strategy due to changes in its constraints or rival explanations.

I select cases involving three states that each differ in their constraints. Israel has generally had high internal and external constraints, the U.S. has generally had high internal but low external constraints, and Russia has generally had low internal and low external constraints, although each country has had some fluctuation over time. This selection allows testing socialization logic for three unique states.

As should be expected in the real world, these cases do not vary or match in ways that allow perfect isolation or comparison. They do provide a broad representation of each type of a state's constraints environment as well as variation in NSA type.[98] My case studies examine

[97] The international context is a function of the level of international scrutiny on a state at a given time as well as regional and global upheavals and interstate threats. This can be discerned through the statements of leaders, UN and other public statements, conflicts that distract global attention, explicit or perceived threats to trade or aid, and the level of expected support from critical allies.

[98] Although each of the core cases involve NSAs that are Islamist to some extent, I do not argue that there is anything inherent in Islamist or religious ideology that changes the role of high ideological drive. I focus on cases relevant to the current environment. Left-wing non-state militants were prevalent during the Cold War, but their salience has since diminished, whereas the salience of radical Islamist ideology has only increased. In chapter eight I use short case studies to show how socialization logic can apply to other conflicts, including those with non-Islamist actors like the Shining Path, the IRA, the PKK and the Haganah.

NSAs that at some point in their histories of conflict have taken the form of each of the four ideal types. Chapter eight surveys non-state opponents spanning the spectrum of each ideal type.

The variables I examine are readily visible and provide policymakers strategies to influence outcomes. The three variables that comprise the NSA's type, and the state's constraints, can all be witnessed and assessed qualitatively.

Throughout this study, discussions of international law, norms, and rules of war, focus entirely on how these factors influence politics and how that impacts strategic choices. As such, these factors are analyzed as a function of a state's constraints.

- **Alternative arguments in empirical chapters**

Throughout my empirical analysis, I examine whether the socialization framework best explains the observed variation in state strategy and outcomes compared to rival explanations. One general rival explanation suggest that a state's strategy is driven by systemic factors which include the international balance of power and international pressure. A second argues that domestic politics explains state strategy. A third explains state strategy by looking at the characteristics and drives of individual state leaders.

Because I am analyzing conflicts where the state is asymmetrically stronger than its non-state rivals, broad changes in the relative balance of power between the state and its opponent generally did not occur, except in Russia's conflict with Chechen militants, where by 1999 Russia's military was far better able to threaten to impose costs on the Chechens than it was in 1994. However, changes in a state's military capabilities did impact, but were also endogenous to strategy. Israel's creation of a joint war room to rapidly target terrorists enhanced its ability to threaten Hamas leadership under high constraints. Its defensive anti-ballistic missile shield and comprehensive barriers enabled management. The U.S. military's leaps in drone technology enabled continuous targeting of al-Qaeda affiliates at relatively low cost. In all five cases, changes in internal and external contexts primarily impacted strategy by changing the state's perception of its constraints environment.

Regarding a specific leader's characteristics, especially in Israel's case, leadership characteristics match poorly to its chosen strategy. For example, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's notorious hawkishness has been offered to explain Israel's hardline military operation

Defensive Shield but cannot explain why he promoted and carried out the Disengagement from Gaza, while socialization logic can explain both.

In the U.S conflict against the Taliban and the decision to invade Iraq, cognitive factors including cognitive and motivational biases and the revenge motive caused the state to mistake its opponent's type or draw incorrect linkages.[99] In both its conflict with the Taliban and al-Qaeda, democracy promoting ideology distorted U.S. strategy. These factors better explain some U.S. strategic decisions—like the decision to reject the Taliban's surrender in December 2001, the decision to enact de-Ba'athification in Iraq, and nation building in Afghanistan—which run counter to socialization logic. Domestic politics better explain President Obama's decision to withdraw from Iraq in 2011.[100]

While a popular position attributes Putin's strategy against the Chechens in 1999 to his attempt to consolidate political power, it is possible to explain Russia's strategy throughout its conflict with the Chechens without referencing leader specific characteristics. The realist argument suggests that Russia pursued decisive victory when it militarily could and did not when it could not. While these arguments are plausible, the evidence for Putin's domestic political motives is disputed and speculative and realism only explains Russia's use of force. Socialization logic explains Putin's carrot and stick strategy and how it was able to socialize the Chechen militants and achieve pacification.

A strength of socialization logic is that it can explain multiple shifts in state strategy over the duration of conflict within a unified framework. In each of these conflicts, various phases and shifts in strategy each have specific popular explanations that do not fit a common framework. I demonstrate how although a specific explanation might explain one shift, socialization logic explains nearly each seemingly unique change in policy, or in the case of U.S. against al-Qaeda the continuity of its decisive victory strategy. At the start of each chapter I describe and chart the critical shifts in state strategy, the NSA type, the state's constraints, socialization logic's

[99] Failure to weigh all the relevant evidence stemming from motivational biases influenced President George W. Bush's decision to invade Iraq, yet the goal of the invasion given this incomplete information is best explained by socialization logic. For further discussion of cognitive biases in international relations see: Jervis, Lebow and Stein. *Psychology and deterrence* (1985).

[100] In 2011, U.S. constraints were minimal and al-Qaeda in Iraq remained a type A NSA. Obama understood that withdrawing troops would harm the pursuit if decisive victory, yet acted against the advice of defense experts in order to fulfil a campaign promise.

explanation for the state's strategy shift and the main competing explanations for each of the states' critical strategic shifts.

Conclusion

In recent decades, asymmetrical conflict between a state and a weaker NSA is more common than interstate war. States face four ideal-types of non-state opponents. NSAs are classified based on how they vary on three key attributes, ideological versus security maximizing goals, targetable leadership, and governance function. A state's optimal outcome is to end conflict. Because war is costly, when possible, bargaining is preferable to military victory.

Optimal strategy follows NSA type. Type A opponents cannot be bargained with. Optimal state strategy towards them is to use force towards the goal of achieving decisive victory. Type D opponents are the most state-like and can be credibly bargained with. They require a strategy that uses concessions to reach an acceptable bargain. Types C and B opponents can be socialized through force and diplomacy into a type that a bargain can be reached with.

With a type A opponent, force is a means to total military victory. With types B and C, force is used to convince the opponent to moderate. In each case, socialization requires that the state's use of force is able to convince the opponent that its survival is threatened. Force used as part of a management strategy is not effective towards this end. Management—through denial, punishment and tit-for-tat escalation—is not an optimal strategy towards ending a conflict. Finally, force must be used wisely to successfully convince the opponent to moderate. The planning of successful operations relies upon good command and good soldiering. This necessitates excellent intelligence, troops that are well-trained and equipped, and good operational planning and tactics. Poorly conceived and carried out campaigns are unlikely to moderate the opponent. They are likely to have the opposite effect, weakening the state's deterrence and strengthening the opponent's resolve through victories over a much stronger state.

While the optimal strategy follows the non-state opponent's type, actual strategy is distorted by a state's constraints environment. This environment includes internal, external and strategic constraints. The more constrained a state is, the more likely its strategy is to deviate from what would be its optimal strategy. This is likely to increase conflict duration.

In chapter three I examine Israel as a highly constrained actor facing the PLO. In chapter four I look at Israel's conflict with Hamas. In chapter five I examine the moderately constrained

United States and its fluctuating strategy against the Taliban. In chapter six I look at U.S. strategy towards al Qaeda. In chapter seven I explore the moderate and then minimally constrained Russia and its strategy against Chechen rebels. In chapter eight I apply socialization logic to eight brief historical cases studies which examine asymmetric state conflict with NSAs spanning the spectrum of each of the four ideal-types: 1. Great Britain's conflict with Jewish insurgents in Mandatory Palestine; 2. Great Britain's conflict with Irish Militants in both the Irish War of Independence and the Troubles. 3. South Africa's conflict with the African National Congress. 4. The U.S. conflict against the Vietcong. 5. Algeria's conflict with the Armed Islamic Group. 6. Peru's conflict with the Shining Path. 7. One episode of Turkey's conflict against the Kurdistan Workers' Party. And 8. The G5 Sahel Force against al-Qaeda affiliates.

In my analysis of these cases I demonstrate the state's perception of its non-state opponent's type, the strategy leaders viewed as optimal for achieving peace and the distorting effects of constraints. I also demonstrate the endogenous interplay between state strategy and NSA type. I conclude by assessing the conflict's outcomes. I examine whether the state's strategy and the outcomes align with the predictions of socialization logic, and when this is not the case, provide an alternative explanation.

Chapter 3: Israel Versus the Palestinian Liberation Organization: The Rational Oslo Mistake and Status Quo Management

Israel's five-decades long ongoing conflict with the PLO provides a rich case study to explore the logic behind a state's shifts in strategy towards a non-state opponent. Israel first shifted its strategy dramatically toward the PLO away from decisive victory in the run up to the Oslo process. Israel undertook diplomatic actions to boost the PLO's governance function and concessions to entice them to negotiate. This followed a misperception of the PLO's type. The second shift occurred when Prime Minister Ariel Sharon initiated Operation Defensive Shield to threaten the PLO with decisive victory following the outbreak of the Second Intifada. Sharon's Disengagement plan marked a third shift towards managing the conflict. This management strategy persists to the present. Existing explanations are specific to the aforementioned policies. None explain each shift through a unified logic. Socialization logic does. The evidence demonstrates that Israel's strategy followed its perception of the PLO's type during each critical shift. Its shift towards concessions and negotiation during the Oslo years resulted from a rational misperception. Israel's high constraints rendered it unable to sustain a strategy capable of socializing the PLO into a rational security maximizing actor and negotiating peace. These factors continue to explain Israeli strategy today.

Overview

Israel has fought the PLO since its founding in 1964. Throughout over half a century, its leaders have tried to tailor strategy towards the PLO according to their view of its type, taking steps to socialize it into a type D NSA and make peace. Israeli leaders have often perceived their state as too constrained to pursue the optimal strategy, instead opting to manage the conflict.

As one of the world's longest continuous conflicts, Israel's conflict with the PLO has inspired substantial debate over its persistence and Israel's policies towards the PLO at critical periods. Israeli strategy has undergone dramatic shifts. The puzzle that guides this chapter is straightforward: What explains the variations in Israeli strategy towards the PLO?

I identify four specific phases of Israeli strategy: 1. The pursuit of decisive victory from 1964 until the Oslo Accords. 2. The pursuit of a peace deal from the start of the Oslo peace process in 1993 until 2002. 3. A return to hardline military force from Operation Defensive

Shield (2002) until the Disengagement (2005) and 4. A management strategy from the Disengagement in 2005 through the present.

Why did Israeli leaders choose to engage with the PLO as an implacable enemy up until 1993 and the start of the Oslo Peace process? What explains Israel's shift from hardline to soft line strategy between 1993-2002? Why did it return to hardline military force from 2002-2005? Finally, why has Israel pursued status-quo management from the 2005 enactment of the Disengagement Plan until the present? (Michael in Bar-Siman-Tov 2007).[101]

There are three main alternative explanations for Israel's shift towards negotiation known as the Oslo Process: 1. Domestic politics and public opinion drove Rabin to pursue peace with the PLO (Imbar and Goldberg 1990; Kelman 2007).[102] 2. Pressure from the U.S. President where the U.S. enjoyed unique prestige post victory in the Gulf War and the impending collapse of USSR drove Israel to seek peace with the Palestinians. (Brown 1998). 3. Israel—enjoying unprecedented strength—saw the Oslo process as an opportunity to impose its terms on a weakened opponent. (Smith 1996).[103] A cynical correlate claims that Israel designed the Oslo Accords to exploit the PLO's weakness to gain its cooperation in exchange for token concessions. (Chomsky 2017).[104]

None of these explanations are either individually necessary or jointly sufficient to explain Oslo. Socialization logic provides a more complete explanation for why Israeli strategy shifted when and as it did. Israeli leaders' mistaken perceptions of PLO moderation provided a necessary and sufficient condition for the Oslo process. Socialization logic also explains Israel's other major shifts in strategy towards the PLO and its current strategy.

Ariel Sharon's decision to launch Operation Defensive Shield is often explained by his personal hawkishness and the hawkishness of his Likud coalition (Hermann in Bar-Siman-Tov

[101] Dr. Kobi Michael argues that the Disengagement Plan, formed in 2003, was intended to manage the conflict with the Palestinians after cooperation with them was deemed impossible.
[102] Imbar and Goldberg (1990) argue that both domestic and systemic factors have shifted both major political blocs in Israel towards the dovish side of the security spectrum, favoring territorial compromise in exchange for peace. Kelman (2007) argues that the Oslo process developed due to attitude change about the necessity and possibility for peace through compromise between the Israelis and the Palestinians. These attitudes did not replace old attitudes but developed alongside them. (Kelman 2007, 291).
[103] Israeli leaders viewed Arafat as vulnerable and isolated in Tunisia after the expulsion of the wealthy Palestinian community in Kuwait following its support for Saddam Hussein's invasion.
[104] Arafat benefit by recuperating PLO power and Israel benefit from gaining a partner willing to control the population in the territories, ending the drain on its resources and reputation.

2007), a more hawkish citizenry (Bar-Tal and Sharvit in Bar-Siman-Tov 2007), and a more permissive international environment (Smith 2016).[105] While these arguments might explain Defensive Shield, they cannot explain Sharon's Disengagement plan that was planned in 2003 and put into practice in 2005. Furthermore, the same arguments could be made about Netanyahu in 1996 but he largely upheld the Oslo framework.

Sharon officially stated that his decision to withdraw from Gaza intended to "increase security of residents of Israel, relieve pressure on the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) and reduce friction between Israelis and Palestinians." (Morley 2005). Domestic public opinion also supported the withdrawal.[106] However, Sharon was considered a hawk and his political base staunchly opposed the withdrawal. Some have proposed that Sharon's withdrawal was meant to freeze international pressure towards engaging in the peace process entirely.[107]

I argue that in each of these instances (Oslo, Defensive Shield and the Disengagement), Israeli strategy shifted primarily due to its shifting perceptions of the PLO's type based upon three central variables; ideological drive, governance function and leadership targetability. Israeli leaders tailored their policy towards the PLO based on their perception of the PLO's type to pursue a strategy aimed at correctly combining carrots and sticks to socialize the PLO into a more moderate actor and eventual negotiate peace.

I explain Israel's choice of strategy, even when they had unintended or counterproductive outcomes. I examine evidence that shows Israeli leaders' perceptions, which were not always accurate. The following paragraphs outline why Israeli strategy towards the PLO fluctuated and why it took the shape it has today.

From the 1960s through the 1980s, Israel perceived the PLO as impossible to bargain with. This was largely due to its perception of the PLO as highly driven by an absolutist ideology. The PLO's strict adherence to its ideological imperative to destroy Israel was showcased to Israeli leaders through numerous PLO documents, statements, and the minutes of Palestinian National Conferences. Continuous raids, bombings and hijackings reinforced this

[105] George W. Bush was seen as more supportive of Sharon, with a better personal connection and support for hardline counterterrorism following the attacks of September 11, 2001.
[106] Polls showed around 60 percent of Israelis and nearly all Palestinians supported the withdrawal." (Morley 2005).
[107] To quote Sharon's Chief of Staff, Weinglass, as "the bottle of formaldehyde necessary so that there will be no political process with the Palestinians." (Smith 2016, Shavit 2004).

perception. In this phase, Israel sought to kill Arafat and defeat the PLO. Israeli actions drove Arafat and his cohorts from Jordan to Lebanon and then from Lebanon to exile in Tunisia.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s a series of events began to change Israeli leaders' perceptions of the PLO. The decline and then collapse of the Soviet Union reinforced the notion that violent, secular, revolutionary ideologies around the world would lose motivational salience with the demise of their superpower ideological backer. Regional developments led Israel to believe that the PLO was pushed into a corner as well. This led them to believe that the PLO was more willing to moderate.[108] Changes made in Palestinian National Councils (PNC) from the mid-1970s through the late 1980s, further influenced Israeli leaders' perceptions that the PLO was moderating.[109] By the early 1990s while many skeptics voiced their concerns, Israeli leaders, cognizant of the threat of international economic and diplomatic isolation, eagerly sought confirmation that they could negotiate peace with the PLO. The fall of the Soviet Union, Arafat's relative isolation following the Gulf War, Arafat's marginalization within the territories and public statements of moderation signaled that the PLO could be bargained with.[110] Without these factors, neither the domestic nor the international context alone would have persuaded Rabin to embark on the Oslo peace process.

Rabin's policy was rational but mistaken.[111] By 1993, Israel attempted to build the trust necessary for a successful negotiated conclusion of conflict. Israel and the PLO's mutual recognition and talks signaled goodwill. Israel withdrew military forces and granted concessions, culminating in the Oslo Accords. The strategy also increased Arafat's political legitimacy,

[108] These developments included PLO isolation after supporting Saddam Hussein in the Gulf War and the grassroots leadership of the First Intifada that further marginalized Arafat.
[109] This started with the PLO's acceptance (in theory) of peace through territorial compromise in the twelfth PNC in 1974 and eventually leading to a public renunciation of violence in Arafat's 1988 United Nations speech and moderation of demands in the nineteenth PNC in 1988.
[110] This calculation was bolstered by Arafat's own rhetoric. His statements suggested moderation; including changing the nineteenth PNC in 1988, for the first time explicitly accepting UN resolutions 181 and 242 and accepting partition. (Lohr 1988). In 1993 this was bolstered by the exchange of mutual letters of recognition between Arafat and Prime Minister Rabin. (IMFA.gov 1993). This past mistake which had such disastrous consequences in the eyes of many Israelis and Israeli leaders is unlikely to be made again as readily as the first time.
[111] The commonly held perception that the Oslo Process was a miscalculation, makes Israeli leaders less likely to see the PLO as having moderated following the failure of the Oslo Process. Israel's perception of the continued salience of the PLO's founding ideology explains Israeli hesitance to make concessions that might hurt its security.

created institutions that increased the PLO's governance function and made Arafat more targetable by allowing him to set up headquarters in Ramallah.

The Oslo process did not collapse in 2001 over domestic public opinion.[112] It ended as Israel shifted its strategy away from concessions towards hardline military action as Israeli leaders—due to new revelations during the Second Intifada—began to doubt that the PLO had truly moderated from its previous absolutist drive.

The breakdown of the Camp David talks (2000), the Second Intifada (2000-2005), the renewed PLO insistence on the "Right of Return" during the Taba Talks (2001) and the Karine A Affair (2002), demonstrated to Israeli leadership that they had miscalculated. Intelligence that revealed Arafat's support for the Second Intifada convinced leaders (and the public) that the PLO had not shifted in type and that the peace process had followed a misperception that the PLO could be bargained with. Revised views of the PLO's type, along with lower internal constraints following a massive suicide bombing campaign and lower external constraints following the terrorist attacks on the U.S. on September 11, 2001, led Israel to shift its strategy to decisive victory. On March 29, 2002, following a massive suicide bombing attack against civilians celebrating Passover, Sharon launched Operation Defensive Shield.

Operation Defensive Shield (2002) showed Sharon's reluctant recognition of Israel's inability to negotiate with PLO. Growing U.S. and international pressure following Operation Defensive Shield and the construction of the Security Barrier convinced Sharon that Israel was too constrained to pursue decisive victory to its conclusion.[113] These constraints led to the Disengagement in 2004 as a strategy intended to maximize Israel's ability to manage the conflict through denial as an alternative to the optimal, yet untenable, policy of pursuing the PA's demise.[114] The Disengagement Plan also included Israeli and U.S. support for training PA forces to help manage the conflict.

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[112] Hermann and Yuchtman-Yaar found that, "the aggregated attitudes toward the Oslo process have been remarkably stable during most of this period." (Hermann and Yuchtman-Yaar 2002).
[113] On October 21, 2003, "The General Assembly overwhelmingly approved a resolution demanding Israel tear down the barrier it is building in the West Bank. (Semple 2003). Human Rights Watch called for an investigation into possible war crimes following the outset of Operation Defensive Shield. (HRW 2002)
[114] Decisive victory would be optimal to secure peace but constraints made management more tenable.

Israel has not been able to pursue a strategy capable of making the PA moderate its ideology. However, increased governance function and leadership targetability leads Israel to see the PA as potentially a type D, but pessimistically as a type C NSA with state-like characteristics but also an absolutist ideological drive. Israeli leaders tend towards the pessimistic, wary that they were burned once before when they mistook the PLO for more moderate than it actually was during the Oslo and Camp David process.[115]

Because the PLO has yet to unambiguously demonstrate that it is no longer driven by absolutist ideological imperatives, Israel is unlikely to make concessions that could weaken its security and bargaining power in exchange for what will likely be continued intransigence. The PA's emphatic rejection of President Trump's "Deal of the Century"—a deal with ample carrots that will likely be the last chance for a Palestinian State—further cements this perception. While decisive victory might force the PLO to moderate its ideology and choose pragmatism, Israel's constraints preclude this.[116] Israel's military preponderance has deterred the PLO from large-scale violence but has not led the PLO to moderate as socialization logic demands.[117]

With Israeli leadership hesitantly perceiving the Trump administration as permissive and reduced Arab focus on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, Israel might feel less constrained and there are signs (such as a 2019 bill to annex the Jordan Valley) that it may implement more hardline policies regarding borders and the status of Jerusalem. This suggests that as constraints lessen, Israel's strategy moves closer to the optimal strategy warranted by the PLO's type, namely political decisive victory through increased settlement and annexation.

Shifts in Strategy

- **1993**: Israel shifted from decisive victory to negotiations.

[115] In 2002, Krauthammer argued that Rabin decided to embark on the Oslo process due to three international factors that strengthened Israel and weakened the PLO. 1. The collapse of the USSR 2. U.S. victory in the Gulf War. 3. The PLO's weakened position in the Arab world. Krauthammer argues that "Rabin thought he was cleverly exploiting the weakness of the PLO by reviving it, he imagined, just enough so it could make peace with him. Krauthammer called this "one of the great miscalculations in diplomatic history," stating, "I believe Oslo will stand as perhaps the most catastrophic, self-inflicted wound by any state in modern history." (Krauthammer 2018).

[116] Strategies aimed at demonstrating decisive victory over the PLO can be either military or political. Expanded settlement and annexation are examples of a political strategy that can create facts on the ground that would make the PLO's political agenda appear increasingly distant, thus signaling the Israel's pursuit of decisive victory.

[117] Both the PLO and Hamas ideologies demand continued violence. The PLO is more pragmatically driven but both are driven by absolutist ideology to a degree. Hamas—the more ideologically driven group—is less able to refrain from violent confrontation in the long-term, but for both groups, cessation in hostilities is only a cease-fire. A peace treaty is not possible without Israel making impossible concessions. The main difference is in scale. Hamas demands even more absolutist goals and is held by a cease-fire for an even shorter period of time.

- **2002**: Israel shifted from negotiations to decisive victory and then management.
- **2005**: Increased management, potential for decisive political victory.

Strategy Shift	PLO Type	Israel's Constraints	Socialization Logic	Competing Arguments[118]
1993 Negotiations	Actual: C Perceived: D	High	Israel perceived the PLO to have been socialized to be pragmatically driven and ready to bargain in good faith.	1. Domestic politics and public opinion. (Imbar and Goldberg 1990; Kelman 2007). 2. International pressure (Brown 1998). 3. Oslo to impose terms. (Smith 1996). 4. Oslo to exploit PLO weakness, token concessions (Chomsky 2017).
2002 Decisive victory, then management	C	Low	Failure at Camp David, evidence of Arafat controlling Second Intifada, convinced Israel that PA too ideologically driven. Lower internal constraints due to terrorism. Lower external constraints post 9/11.	1. Sharon's hawkishness (Hermann in Bar-Siman-Tov 2007) 2. Hawkish citizenry (Bar-Tal and Sharvit in Bar-Siman-Tov 2007) 3. More permissive international environment (Smith 2016).
2005 Management and potential victory	C	High	Israel is too constrained to threaten decisive victory to socialize PA, worries PA highly ideological. Potential political victory, hedging.	1. Increasingly hawkish and pro-settlement citizenry. 2. PA unwilling to negotiate without preconditions. 3. Divided Palestinian rule.

I examine the PLO, Fatah and the PA interchangeably, as the same actor faced by Israel over the course of the conflict.[119] I refer to Israel's conflict with the PLO pre-Oslo and then the PA as the PLO's chief governing institution post-Oslo.[120] Therefore, when I refer to the PLO, PA, or Fatah it is as the dominant Palestinian NSA fighting Israel from 1964 until the present.

I chronologically examine evidence of Israeli leaders' perceptions of the PLO's ideological drive, its governance function and the targetability of its leadership. I also compare Israeli leaders' perceived constraints. I look at statements and policies to determine what policymakers' stated goals were, if strategy is distorted by constraints, if strategy impacted the PLO's type, and if leaders undertook that strategy purposefully to that end. I interviewed 22 Israeli leaders, experts, participants and protagonists in the Israel-PLO conflict and peace

[118] These are not always different from my logic.

[119] The PLO was founded by the Arab League in Cairo in 1964 as an organization representing the Palestinian people. When I refer to Fatah it is as the dominant faction in the PLO from 1969 until the present. During this time period, Fatah controlled PLO decision making although it did need to consider the positions of rivals. As a specific opponent, I examine Israel's strategy towards the PLO and then the PA. The PA was formed as part of the 1993-1995 Oslo Accords in order to specifically represent the Palestinians in the territories. After the Oslo Accords, the PA came to replace the PLO as the prime Palestinian political institution. In 2002, Arafat controlled Fatah, the PLO and the PA. (Al-Ahram 2003). In 2006 Hamas formed a PA government. Mahmud Abbas called a state of emergency and appointed Salam Fayyad as Prime Minister of the PA. The two entities officially split in 2007 after Hamas took military control of the Gaza Strip. Hamas emerged in 1987 as a rival to the PLO.

[120] Mahmud Abbas took over after Arafat's death in 2004, and after the Palestinian Civil War in 2007 Abbas's Fatah continued leading the PA and governing in the West Bank but lost control of Gaza.

process. As with most historical analysis, multiple arguments can explain Israel's strategy. Explanations need not be exclusive. However, socialization logic consistently explains Israel's strategy over the course of the conflict while rival hypotheses at best explain specific policies.

DECISIVE VICTORY: 1964 UNTIL OSLO (1993)

The PLO was founded in 1964 as a secular nationalist movement determined to destroy Israel and replace it with a unified sovereign Palestinian state.[121] In the PLO's early years, Israeli leaders looked to the organization's official statements as well as its actions to form an understanding of the ideology and centrality of pursuit of this maximalist ideology.

To understand the PLO, Israeli leaders examined the founding doctrine of al-Fatah. This group, led by Yasir Arafat came to dominate the PLO and then post Oslo, the PA, both ideologically and politically. Demonstrative of high ideological drive, al-Fatah was founded in 1958 with the express intention of bringing about Arab unity by liberating Palestine (meaning eliminating Israel) through military action. It was founded as a "socialist, revolutionary guerrilla group with the intent to destroy Israel." (Glazov 2008).[122] By 1965 Fatah was launching attacks against Israel from Syrian, Egyptian, and Jordanian territory.

Under Arafat, Fatah took over the PLO in 1969 and incorporated its doctrine of armed struggle into the PLO which amended its charter in 1968.[123] The PLO's ideological evolution is shown in frequent changes of its platform over a total of 19 pre-Oslo PNC meetings.

Fatah's founding logic was heavily inspired by the philosophy of Franz Fanon which was heavily influenced by the Algerian revolution (1954-1962). He argued that "violence was the only way to purge oneself of the stigma of defeat and dependence." (Smith 2016, 271). This logic first officially appeared in a 1965 memo titled *Communique NO. 1 From Headquarters of Asifa Forces (Fatah).* In the memo it is stated explicitly that "armed revolution is our only path to Palestine and freedom" and that "we are determined to resort to armed conflict whatever the

[121] Pre-1967, liberation was seen as a precursor for Arab unity. Following the 1967 Six-Day War the PLO became a Palestinian national movement intent on securing its own sovereignty with the fall of pan-Arabism. (IMFA 1964).
[122] "Fatah's original name was Harakat al-Tahrir al-Filastiniya (Palestinian Liberation Movement), with an acronym that should have read 'HATAF.' However, the group reversed the letters to give it a Quranic meaning; FATAH means 'conquest' or 'victory.' This illustrates the absolutist nature of the PLO's founding philosophy. It was also the start of the PLO tradition of adopting Islamist words and symbols when convenient. (Glazov 2008).
[123] The PLO Charter's previous iteration had renounced claims to the West Bank and Gaza when these territories were under Jordanian and Egyptian control respectively. When they came under Israeli control in 1967 they were once again demanded by the PLO. (Reut-Institute 2006).

obstacles." (Magnus 1969, 192).[124] The 1968 Palestinian National Charter explicitly stated that armed struggle is "the overall strategy, not merely a tactical phase." (Laqueur and Rubin 1984).

Israeli leaders immediately rejected the idea of negotiating with the PLO, opting to counter it militarily. In the 1968 Battle of Karameh, Israel tried and failed to kill or capture Arafat. This greatly boosted Fatah's prestige and the recruiting power of Arafat's organization. This incident demonstrated Israel's decisive victory strategy that socialization logic would suggest given Israel's perception of the PLO's type. Its failure shows the difficulty Israel had in targeting PLO leadership at this time.

In 1970 PFLP terrorism inspired a harsh Jordanian crackdown resulting in their expulsion from Jordan.[125] Keeping with a decisive victory strategy, Israel supported Jordan's military operation that came to be known as Black September.[126] The Jordanian crackdown forced the PLO to relocate to Lebanon in 1971. (Smith 2016, 313-314).

In 1972, the Fatah cell Black September massacred Israeli Olympic athletes at the Munich Olympics. Israel began raids into Lebanon, eventually culminating in the 1982 invasion and 18-year occupation of Southern Lebanon. In 1973 in an immediate response to the Munich Massacre, Israel embarked on an assassination campaign dubbed Operation Wrath of God. Israel assassinated three Fatah leaders in their Beirut apartment, demonstrating that it sought to boost its ability to target PLO leadership. Israel pursued decisive victory but was constrained from operating in a foreign country. However, in a few years Israel invaded and occupied a portion of Lebanon as part of its decisive victory strategy towards the PLO.

Israel's strategy appears to have precipitated some PLO moderation. Important change in official PLO demands began in 1974 in the twelfth Palestinian National Council (PNC). Responding to the wishes of Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza, the PLO defied the

[124] Written while the West Bank and Gaza were still under Jordanian and Egyptian control, this was not an entreaty for violence to force Israeli territorial concessions. Instead it was the straightforward espousal of an absolutist ideological imperative to engage in violence towards a maximalist agenda unreachable through compromise
[125] PLO factions PFLP and DFLP wanted to oust Hussein out of fear of a Jordanian accord with Israel that would remove the legitimacy of their cause of fighting Israel. Arafat did not actively oppose escalation of terrorism against Jordan even though he did not share the PFLP and DFLP's desire to overthrow King Hussein.
[126] PFLP terrorists held westerners hostage at hotel resorts in order to force concessions from King Hussein. They later hijacked four planes and blew them up after releasing the hostages. This was the final straw for King Hussein who ordered a decisive, large scale crackdown that came to be known as "Black September." Israel cooperated with Jordan, flying air sorties over advancing Syrian tank columns in defense of Jordan's crackdown on the PLO, a crackdown that Syria invaded Jordan in order to oppose. (Agence France-Presse 2001).

hardliners in their organization and endorsed the idea of a mini state instead of the previous call for the armed conquest of all of Israel.[127] (Muslih in Maoz and Sela 1997, 40).[128]

Israeli UN Ambassador Yosef Tekoah's response to Arafat's 1974 General Assembly speech demonstrated Israel's continued perception of the PLO as "a murder organization which aims at the destruction of a State Member of the UN." Here he reiterated Israel's refusal to "consort with" the PLO, stating: "Israel will continue to take action against their organization and their bases until a definitive end is put to their atrocities… Israel will not permit the establishment of PLO authority in any part of Palestine." (Fraser 1980, 131).

In Arafat's iconic U.N. "olive branch and holster" speech on November 13, 1974, Arafat showed the first sign of PLO moderation, offering Jews minority status in a democratic state. (Hoffman 1974).[129] The PLO still called for the end of Jewish sovereignty. Assuming that states prioritize political survival, the Palestinian position of 1974 was still absolutist. (Smith 2016, 339).[130] In 1974, the U.N. granted the PLO observer status. This laid the framework for Israel to increase its governance function later on in the Oslo Process.[131]

Israel was still far from considering the PLO to have moderated. Continued terrorism negated any perceptions of PLO moderation that might have resulted from changes in the PNCs.[132] In 1976 Israel responded with force to a series of high-profile PLO attacks, refusing to negotiate even in critical hostage situations.[133]

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[127] In early documents, the PLO referred to Israel as "the Zionist entity" to show that Israel was illegitimate.

[128] In the Twelfth PNC, the PLO accepted in theory a resolution based on U.N. resolution 242, beginning the "phased strategy."

[129] This shows moderation from the position in the PLO charter of 1968 that called for only those Jews in Palestine from "the beginning of the Zionist invasion," referring to the Balfour Declaration of 1917, to be allowed to remain.

[130] This is a core Realist assumption. See Waltz (1979) and Mearsheimer (2001).

[131] In the 1974 Arab Summit, Arab leaders issued the Rabat declaration which recognized the PLO as the legitimate voice of the Palestinians and endorsed the idea of Palestinian territorial sovereignty. Following this, the United Nations General Assembly granted the PLO observer status.

[132] The most brutal examples of continued terrorism at this time were the 1974 PFLP attack on Kriyat Shemona and DFLP attack on Maalot in which 24 schoolchildren were held hostage and killed. (Cite).

[133] In 1976 Israel supported the Maronite blockade on the Palestinian refugee camp Tal al-Zaatar. This was a hardline policy of decisively defeating Palestinian militias that had fled to Lebanon. The ability to work with local militias decreased Israel's constraints, requiring less Israeli troops than a completely Israeli led operation. Israel also perceived lower external constraints due to a supportive U.S. administration. Also in 1976, Israel's raid on Entebbe, Israeli leaders refused to negotiate with PLO (PFLP-EO [External Operations]) hijackers. The terrorists demanded the release of prisoners. Israel responded with force. Operation Thunderbolt demonstrated Israel's resolution not to negotiate with the PLO, and showcased its long-range capabilities to the entire world. (Ynetnews 2016).

The PLO's thirteenth PNC in 1977 had a critical change that demonstrated to Israel its possible shift towards putting pragmatism over ideology. For the first time it did not explicitly reference the "total liberation of Palestine." In the fifteenth PNC the PLO first articulated its possible acceptance of territorial compromise, vaguely stated as a Palestinian state within "the territories from which Israel withdraws." (Journal of Palestine Studies 1977, 178-190).

The PLO's thirteenth-fifteenth PNCs show the beginning of the PLO's preference for diplomacy over military force. (Muslih in Maoz and Sela 1997). However, the PLO was careful to appease hardliners by not explicitly rejecting conquest of all of Israel, instead opting to endorse the "phased plan" which suggested to hardliners that any territorial concessions would only be a starting point for the conquest of all of Israel.[134] Israeli hardliners often voice suspicion of any territorial concessions in light of the PLO's mixed messages. (Karsh 2016).[135] The twelfth through eighteenth PNC's (1974-1988) represent what Muslih calls the period of PLO "creative ambiguity" (Muslih in Maoz and Sela 1997, 40).

From the late 1970s until 1982, Israel responded with decisive force to continued PLO terrorism from Lebanon.[136] In the international context, Israeli leaders considered their external

[134] The PLO's "Phased Plan" maintained that the organization would govern all parts of Palestine that would become liberated, with the aim of continuing the armed struggle against Israel. (Reut 2006).

[135] For example, Ephraim Karsh cites a speech from September, 13, 1993, following Arafat's historic shaking hands with Yitzhak Rabin on the White House lawn in which "he addressed the Palestinians in a pre-recorded Arabic-language message broadcast by Jordanian television, even as he shook Yitzhak Rabin's hand on the White House lawn. He informed the Palestinians that the Israeli-Palestinian declaration of principles (DOP) was merely the implementation of the PLO's "phased strategy." "O my beloved ones," he explained, "Do not forget that our Palestine National Council accepted the decision in 1974. It called for the establishment of a national authority on any part of Palestinian land that is liberated or from which the Israelis withdrew. This is the fruit of your struggle, your sacrifices, and your jihad … This is the moment of return, the moment of gaining a foothold on the first liberated Palestinian land … Long live Palestine, liberated and Arab." (Karsh 2004). Although numerous PLO statements strongly intimated a continued desire to achieve maximalist ideological aims, after the start of the Oslo process these types of statements were often dismissed as necessary appeasement of hardliners. The Rabin administration convinced itself that the PLO's public acceptance of partition and diplomacy represented significant shifts towards moderating their ideology or at least subjugating it in favor of pragmatic goals. (Karsh 2004).

[136] In 1978, Israel initiated a limited invasion of Lebanon from March until June to attack the PLO after eight Fatah terrorists including Dalal Mughrabi infiltrated by sea from Lebanon and hijacked in Israeli bus leading to the death of 34 Israelis. (NYT Archives, 1978). In 1981 an Israeli attack on PLO groups, Fatah and DFLP headquarters in Beirut killed nearly 200. The PLO retaliated with a rocket bombardment of Israel's north that shut down routine for several days. The United States brokered a short-lived cease-fire through US envoy Philip Habib. Many in Israel's security community viewed this ceasefire as dangerous because it allowed the PLO to rearm and consolidate, reinforcing its position. Israeli mistrust increased when Arafat refused to call off or condemn PLO attacks against Israel from Jordan claiming that the ceasefire only applied to Lebanon. Following the ceasefire, Prime Minister Begin became more convinced that the PLO should be defeated. (Smith 2016).

constraints to remain moderate to high. They rose as Europe increasingly condemned and pressured Israel but fell as Israel concluded a 1978 peace treaty with Egypt.[137]

The continuity of Israel's decisive victory strategy cannot be explained by its leadership or domestic politics, which shifted considerably throughout this period. By the time Israel's Prime Minister Menachem Begin—from the right-wing Likud party— invaded Lebanon, launching "Operation Peace for Galilee," he had been in power for five years. Israel's strategy towards the PLO did not shift as he took over from his more dovish predecessors the Labor party's Yitzchak Rabin and Labor's Golda Meir before that.

Following the assassination attempt of Israeli ambassador in London, Shlomo Argov, Israel invaded Lebanon in 1982 and took control up to and into Beirut to root out Palestinian militias in a widespread military operation. Israel also blamed the PLO for the 1982 assassination of Israeli diplomat Yacov Barsimantov. (Associated Press, 1982). Israel used Argov's assassination as the pretext to invade Lebanon and destroy the PLO.[138] Defense Minister Ariel Sharon developed and promoted the strategy to destroy the PLO entirely in Lebanon. The most infamous result of Sharon's strategy was the Sabra and Shatilla Massacre.[139]

Israel's decisive victory strategy appeared to have succeeded in getting the PLO to moderate, although it is unclear if Israel's leaders purposefully sought this outcome at the time or simply welcomed it later. It did demonstrate to Israeli leaders that decisive force could potentially socialize the PLO. Major changes in the PNC followed Israel's invasion of Lebanon, "the ravishing assault that ironically brought in its wake several peace proposals for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict." (Muslih in Maoz and Sela 1997, 43).

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[137] In 1980 the European Economic Community issued the Venice Declaration calling for the recognition of the Palestinian's right to self-determination. This declaration called for the dismantlement and withdrawal from Israeli settlements in the West Bank. (Hallaba 1984). This demonstrated to Israeli leadership increasing external pressure on Israel to end its military occupation of the territories in the West Bank. This did not change Israel's hardline military strategy towards the PLO, nor did it increase Israel's willingness to negotiate with it.

[138] The actual culprits were the Iraqi sponsored Abu-Nidal group. (Osnos 1983).

[139] Although a massacre was not intended by the IDF, the orders were highly controversial and received widespread domestic and international condemnation because it was clear to the IDF that the Phalange militants were poised to perpetrate atrocities against the Palestinian civilians, partly in revenge for the assassination of their leader president-elect Bashir Gemayel. (Associated Press 1982). 35 years later "a Lebanese supporter of the Syrian regime was convicted in absentia on Friday over a 1982 bombing that killed 23 people including Lebanese president-elect Bashir Gemayel." (Associated Foreign Press 2017). The Israeli led Kahan commission found Israeli officials including Defense Minister Sharon indirectly responsible for the Sabra and Shatila Massacre. (Kahan Commission Report 1983).

Israel was still not ready to grant concessions. Its 1984 elections yielded a joint government. Shimon Peres's Labor party controlled the Prime Minister's office for the first 18-months. Shamir (Likud) became prime minister in October 1986. Labor favored a settlement with Jordan over the West Bank.[140] Likud desired its annexation. Neither desired Palestinian sovereignty. (Smith 2016). At this time, the PLO still publicly sought Israel's destruction. A series of terrorist attacks convinced Israeli leaders that this was not merely talk.[141]

In 1987 Gazan and West Bank Palestinians launched the First Intifada to protest Israel's occupation. Although originally spontaneous, it was coopted by the PLO.[142] Local actors desired limited political gains as opposed to the PLO's maximalist agenda.[143] This encouraged PLO leadership to consider compromise "once the resistance in the territories demanded it." (Smith 2016, 407). The ideological PLO's weakened position vis-à-vis more moderate local Palestinian activists showed the effectiveness of the Israeli policy of exiling the PLO to Tunisia. The PLO's exile led them to be viewed as out of touch by local activists. They had to moderate to remain relevant to the local Palestinian population. This links hardline Israeli policy to the PLO's subsequent moderation. The PLO's moderation in the aftermath of the First Intifada is a significant reason why Israel became willing to start negotiations in 1992.

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[140] In the 1985 temporary Hussein-Arafat Accord, Arafat and King Hussein of Jordan issued a joint statement that Israel would abandon the West Bank and Arafat would establish a Palestinian state that "would exist in confederation with Jordan, with Jordan having final authority." Jordanian officials claimed that this bargain meant that the PLO was tacitly accepting a withdrawal from the 1968 charter that called for the establishment of a Palestinian state in what was at that point Israeli territory. This implied that the PLO now accepted Israel's existence and would make a public statement of this if a settlement was reached.

[141] Arafat did not openly accept Israel's existence and UN Resolution 242 for fear of losing his position on PLO councils. (Smith 2016, 397). Furthermore, PLO terrorism continued. In 1985, Force 17, an elite PLO unit, admitted when captured, to killing three Israelis in Cyprus. Their admission tied the murders to direct PLO orders even though Arafat and other PLO spokesmen denounced the killings. (Rogg 1985). On October 1, 1985, Israel launched Operation Wooden Leg in retaliation. Prime Minister Peres ordered the bombing of PLO headquarters in Tunisia in an attempt to kill Yasir Arafat. (IAF.org). President Reagan called the response "understandable but unfortunate." (Smith 2016, 398). Israel perceived relatively low external constraints under President Reagan and continued its decisive victory strategy, pursuing Arafat's demise in far-away Tunisia. On October 10, 1985, in what was dubbed the Achille Lauro incident, PLO terrorists hijacked a cruise ship and killed a disabled American Jew. Arafat called on the hijackers to surrender to no avail. The attack demonstrated to Israel's leaders that, at worst Arafat still supported violence, and at best he was unable to control terrorist elements in his organization, showing low governance function. Either way, Israel did not see the PLO as a potential peace partner.

[142] The proximate cause was the death of four Palestinians hit by an Israeli tank-transport truck.

[143] The PLO supporting Communique NO. 1 of the Intifada issued by the United National Leadership on January 8, 1988, called for a general strike and avoided direct calls to violence that were clearly issued in Hamas's declaration of the same day. Lip-service was still payed to "loyalty to the pure blood of our martyrs," but clear calls to murder Jews was missing from the PLO declaration while this was central to the Hamas charter. (Lukacs 1992, 390).

1988 was an important year for Israel's path towards seeing the PLO as a potential peace partner. King Hussein officially renounced Jordan's claims to the West Bank, surrendering it to the PLO. (Kifner 1988). Following this, the nineteenth PNC program saw the Palestinian Declaration of Independence explicitly endorse support for UN resolution 181, accepting the legitimacy of an Israeli state based on UN resolutions 242 and 338. It also rejected "the threat or use of force" (UN General Assembly 1988). In response the U.S. began dialog with the PLO through its embassy in Tunis. (Smith 2016).

At first, Israel pursued a hardline response to the first Intifada. Defense Minister Rabin ordered Israeli troops to "break their bones" in response to Palestinian rioting. (NYT 1990).[144] In 1988 Israel ordered the assassination of Khalil al-Wazir (Abu Jihad) a cofounder of Fatah and the number two PLO leader based in Tunisia who had directed the Intifada. (BBC 2012).

Israel changed its view of PLO absolutism coincident with the decline and then collapse of its ideological secular nationalist backer, the Soviet Union.[145] This lent credibility to the perception—deliberately fostered by Arafat post-1988—that the PLO had moderated.[146]

In June 1992 Rabin's Labor party replaced Likud's dominance from 1977. Rabin was sworn in as Prime Minister, pledging peace talks. (Haberman 1992).[147] By December 1992, Rabin pushed a bill through Knesset permitting official contacts with the PLO. Critically, for the first time since its founding, Israel began to see the PLO as a potential peace partner.[148]

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[144] Rabin came to be seen as dovish as Prime Minister in the 1990s but was hawkish as Defense Minister, enacting the "Iron Fist" policy to counter Palestinian unrest in the mid-1980s. Rabin was known for commanding Israel troops to "break their bones" in response to Arab violence at the outset of the First Intifada. (NYT Archives 1990).

[145] By the early 1990s Israel was becoming more open to bargaining with the Palestinians eventually electing Labor with a mandate to begin reaching out to the PLO in 1992.

[146] Israel did feel increased external pressure but did not feel compelled to change strategies against the PLO. By 1990, the U.S. had been engaging the PLO to try to start negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israelis. In June 1990, George H. W. Bush suspended talks with the PLO after Arafat refused to explicitly condemn or move against the perpetrators of a failed speedboat raid on Israel. (Friedman 1990). The Fall of the Soviet Union led to mass immigration of Soviet Jews to Israel. They tended to be hawkish and eventually changed Israel's political landscape. However, Israel's need for U.S. aid to absorb this population influx gave President George H. W. Bush more leverage, increasing Israel's already high external constraints. The U.S. did not give Israel a blank check to defeat the PLO either through direct military action or through hardline policies such as settlement building.

[147] Rabin faced substantial obstacles from his still politically salient opponents to the right.

[148] Rabin did not support Palestinian statehood at this time. He "emphatically opposed the idea of a Palestinian state, meaning the arrangement with Jordan over the West Bank would be mandatory." (Smith 2016, 420). In October of 1992, an Israeli-Jordanian formal peace treaty was drafted. From December 1992 until August 1993, Knesset member Yossi Beilin "delegated two Israeli history professors, Ron Pundak and Yair Hirschfeld to pursue initiatives

At the signing of the Oslo Accords, the PLO was at its weakest.[149] Arafat solidified control after the Oslo agreements and internal rivals were hesitant to criticize him.[150] Signing the Oslo Accords revived Arafat's fortunes, boosting it from the nearest it had been to total defeat to an organization with international legitimacy, aid, and promised international and Israeli support for the creation of political institutions, a police force, and territorial concessions.

Israel's dramatic abandonment of nearly three-decades of strategy towards the PLO is puzzling in-and-of itself. What makes this shift more puzzling is that Israel shifted strategies right as its decisive victory appeared to be on the horizon.

One explanation was Rabin's assent to power on a campaign promise to "come to terms quickly with the Palestinians." Arafat's incentives were the steady loss of power over the Palestinian cause to rising Islamist rivals in the West Bank and Gaza.[151] Further pushing Arafat into a corner was the stoppage of funds from the Saudis and the expulsion of the wealthy diaspora Palestinian community from Kuwait in the aftermath of their support for Saddam Hussein during the first Gulf War.

This explanation fits with socialization logic. Israel perceived PLO accountability to rivals as indicative of increased governance function and as a point of leverage. As part of the Oslo process, Israel would offer to boost Arafat vis-à-vis his rivals in exchange for moderation. Indeed, Oslo did revive Arafat's political prospects, but once revived Arafat reneged on his end

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with a PLO representative, Ahmad Quari." (Smith 435). These talks were unofficial. They were not sanctioned by, and kept secret from, the Israeli government. They were conducted in Oslo, Norway. Israel eventually elevated the secret talks to an official level by sending Deputy Foreign Minister Uri Savir to Oslo. (US State Department Archives). On September 9, 1993, Israel and the PLO exchanged letters of recognition between PM Rabin and Chairman Arafat. In an historic moment, on September 13, 1993, the first Oslo Accord was signed. "Israel and the PLO exchanged statements of mutual recognition and a Declaration of Principles of Interim Self-Rule for the Palestinians in ceremony at the White House." (Smith 2016, 395).

[149] Following the signing of the first Oslo Accords, the PLO closed its offices at its headquarters in Tunis due to a lack of funds. (Smith 2016, 418). This lack of funds was due in large part to the cancellation of contribution by GCC states in retribution for Arafat's support of Saddam Hussein. The PLO also lost substantial revenue from remittances from the wealthy Palestinian community in Kuwait that was in large part expelled after the Gulf War for real and alleged support of Saddam Hussein. Conversely, the PLO's rivals including Hamas and PIJ began seeing increased contributions from Iran as well as others linked with the Islamic resurgence. The closure of PLO offices in Tunis signified to PLO leaders, "the final symbolic nail in the coffin of the PLO." (Helm 1994).

[150] Palestinian academics or lawyers who openly challenged PA policies or corruption were often "jailed for months without charges." Israel saw Arafat as uniquely able to sign agreements unify the PA at this time. (Smith 2016, 460).

[151] Professor Hirschfield, an Israeli academic who engaged in secret talks in Oslo Norway that gave rise to the Oslo Process stated that "it was very clear that the PLO felt it had to make moves now, that Hamas was getting stronger in the territories." (Haberman 1993).

of the deal. Israeli leaders—including Rabin—feared this outcome but viewed it as a risk worth taking. (Karsh 2018).

Israel decided to deal with Arafat unofficially in 1992 and officially in 1993, following sustained dialogue that demonstrated PLO moderation. U.S. pressure and Israeli vulnerability to external constraints were accelerating and facilitating factors.[152] Israel's perception of changes in the PLO's type provided the propelling cause for Israel's shift in strategy.

CONCESSIONS AND BARGAINING: OSLO (1993) UNTIL DEFENSIVE SHIELD (2002)

The years between the first signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993 until the collapse of peace talks and Israel's launching of Operation Defensive Shield in 2002 were the most hopeful for a peace treaty in the history of Israel's conflict with the PLO. While not all subsequent Israeli governments were happy with Rabin's decision to rehabilitate and legitimize the PLO, or support territorial concessions, even Netanyahu's right-wing government bargained with the PLO within the Oslo framework. Despite Palestinian violence and Israeli slow walking during the Netanyahu administration, by the time Ehud Barak became Prime Minister on July 6, 1999, Israel had offered substantial concessions, culminating with Barak's unprecedented offer at Camp David.

Israel did not alter its view of the PLO as a moderate partner until after the collapse of the Camp David talks in 2000. Israeli leaders perceived significantly reduced constraints following mounting civilian casualties to Palestinian terrorism, evidence of Arafat's involvement in the violence, and the September 11, 2001 attacks on Israel's key external backer.

Despite Prime Minister Netanyahu's skepticism of the PLO as a moderate actor, he did not abandon negotiations. Indeed, Israel only shifted its strategy after the Second Intifada, which

[152] Another explanation for Israel's shift towards negotiating with the PLO was increased United States initiative to solve the crisis. U.S. diplomatic efforts led to the Madrid Conference of 1991. This took place under the context of unprecedented U.S. prestige and power in the region, extremely high popularity and thus leverage for President George H. W. Bush, and Israel's economic vulnerability. Former U.S. ambassador to Israel and advisor to Secretary of State James Baker, William Brown, credits the former Secretary of State as: "the driving force behind the effort." The author also cites Secretary Baker as telling the Israelis in regards to the PLO, "you will have to make substantive and symbolic concessions." (ADST 2015). The aforementioned factors suggest that Israel faced high external constraints on hardline policy towards the PLO and substantial external pressure to engage in bargaining with the Palestinians, but this was not the deciding factor in Israel's change of strategy towards the PLO. The U.S. initiative still refrained from asking the Israelis to deal with Arafat.

was launched while the dovish Ehud Barak was Prime Minister. Israel shifted its strategy to decisive victory after both a change in its perception of the PLO's type and lowered constraints.

The years immediately following the 1993 Oslo I Accords appeared promising. On October 26, 1994, Israel and Jordan signed an historic peace treaty. Even after a wave of Hamas and PIJ suicide bombings in 1994-1995 shook Israel's belief in Arafat's ability to control and prevent terrorism, it held talks with Arafat's aids to create the Interim Agreement called for in the 1993 Declaration of Principles. In 1995 Netanyahu ran against the idea of territorial concessions but neither terrorism, nor Israeli challenges from the right, derailed the Oslo Process. Prime Minister Rabin and Yasir Arafat signed the Oslo II Interim agreement in a ceremony on the White House lawn on September 24, 1995. This agreement included Israel's largest concessions to date, bolstering the PLO's governance function and offering significant portions of territorial sovereignty.[153]

On November 4, 1995, right-wing extremist Yigal Amir assassinated Rabin. This atrocity did not spoil the peace process.[154] Peres succeeded Rabin and quickly implemented the terms of the Interim Agreement.[155]

Between February and March 1996, suicide bombers killed dozens of Israelis.[156] In May 1996 Benjamin Netanyahu defeated election Peres by under one percent of the vote and formed a shaky coalition.[157] This slim victory meant that Netanyahu faced high internal constraints. Although Netanyahu ended a four-year freeze, new settlement building was still "highly restricted." (NYT 1996). The Hebron Accords of 1997 and the Wye Memorandum of 1998

[153] The Interim Agreement was approved in the Knesset by a narrow margin (61-59). (Smith 2016, 451). It gave the PA full civil and security control in area A, area B would eventually shift to full PA civil control and internal security, but Israeli forces were responsible for external security. Parts of Area C would be transferred to PA control while parts would remain under Israeli rule, this would be decided in future negotiations. Several hundred Palestinian prisoners would be released as part of the Interim Agreement as well. (ECF Database).
[154] Yigal Amir was a hardliner who opposed Rabin's peace talks with the PLO and branded him "a traitor). His action was seen by some as influenced by a nasty smear campaign against Rabin's peace process. (Greenburg1995).
[155] Israeli forces withdrew from "the six major population centers in Area A" and "over 400 villages of Area B" by the end of 1995." (Smith 2016, 453). In 1996 "the Israeli civil administration's rule over the Palestinian population of Areas A and B of the West Bank came to an end." This followed Rabin's assassination. (HaCohen 2018).
[156] Arafat demonstrated moderation by arresting over 2000 militants following this wave of attacks. (PBS 1996).
[157] Netanyahu's weak coalition was formed with five parties that included internal divisions between the religious party Shas, and Yisrael Ba'aliya, a party representing former Soviet immigrants. (Israel Knesset Archive).

demonstrated Netanyahu's commitment to bargaining with the PLO despite his stated skepticism.[158]

In a 1998 BBC interview, Netanyahu decried the PLO's failure to uphold their promise of curbing terrorism. He also stated his intention to continue the Oslo process despite reservations and personal opposition. Netanyahu said: "If the Palestinians fulfill their obligations, we will fulfill ours, and I have put forward a proposal how to do that." (IMFA 1998).

The wave of terrorist attacks in 1996 furthered Netanyahu's belief that the Oslo Accords were deeply flawed. He cited unprecedented concessions to the PLO:

> Israel made these enormous concessions, placed Arafat there, gave him 40,000 guns to fight terrorism, gave him territory, gave him money, gave him a small army, gave him unprecedented international recognition, access to the White House...

Weapons supplied to Arafat during the Oslo II accords were used against Israeli security forces during the Joseph's Tomb riots in September 1996.[159] Netanyahu threatened to topple the PLO if it did not immediately end the violence. Netanyahu argued that this threat worked in the short-term. He remained highly skeptical of Arafat's moderation.[160]

Netanyahu felt substantial external pressure to make concessions to the PLO despite his skepticism.[161] According to Netanyahu, "the mindset at the time… was that Israel had to give and give and give fast." (PBS 2002).

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[158] Netanyahu was elected Prime Minister in a campaign that promised increased security after a wave of terrorist attacks and right-wing attacks on the Rabin peace process and on a platform of opposing the implementation of the Oslo Accords. Despite a perceived political mandate to renounce and backtrack on the Oslo Process, Netanyahu continued to uphold their implementation.

[159] The 1996 Hasmonean tunnel incident further signaled to Israeli leaders that the Oslo Process might have been a mistake when Palestinian polices forces, armed as part of the Oslo II agreement, opened fire on Israeli troops. An International Institute for Counterterrorism report from 1999 shows that this incident led Israel's defense community to fear popular large-scale armed force. (ICT 1999).

[160] In a 1996 meeting in the Oval office with King Hussein of Jordan and president Clinton, Netanyahu cited hardline rhetoric in the PLO controlled media as a key reason for his skepticism. Recalling the meeting, Netanyahu stated: "I'm not a man of suicidal peace that would ... sign any peace agreement, any piece of paper, in order to say that we made peace, [while] ... Arafat will continue the terror and continue telling his people that the goal is to destroy Israel. In fact, one of the things that I asked for in the reciprocity was to stop the incitement, the incitement in the officially controlled Palestinian press, controlled by Arafat, in addition to many other things…"

[161] In the Frontline interview, Netanyahu revealed his perception of Arafat in a statement regarding King Hussein's open condemnation of a Jordanian terrorist's massacre of Israeli schoolgirls. Netanyahu's expressed his strong appreciation of Hussein while indirectly, but unmistakably chiding Arafat's duplicity. Purposefully drawing contrast with Arafat, he stated "He didn't say different things in Jordan in Arabic, and different things here in English or on CNN. He spoke peace to his people and to our people and to the rest of the world."

Following a spate of attacks in 1997, Netanyahu momentarily pursued a hardline policy against the PLO through military threats and targeting their finances.[162] Netanyahu's statements show the logic of trying to socialize the PLO to moderate by demonstrating the capability and resolve to defeat it if need be. He stated:

> My main response vis-a-vis terrorism was directed at the regime… "To stop the terror Arafat would have to know that his regime would be in danger of collapse. And one time, he knew it militarily, and the other time he knew it financially. He got the message. So, from that point on, we practically had no terrorism to speak of.

Netanyahu claimed that the PLO "knew that terror would be a boomerang for them, that we would go after the survival of their government…"

Netanyahu decried high external constraints posed by the Clinton administration.[163] He believed that without pressure, Arafat could not be socialized into moderating. Regarding Clinton's impact, he claimed, "What this policy did was to habituate Arafat [to the fact] that there are no rules, there are no limits." (PBS 2002). The PLO saw Israel's threat to defeat it as not credible because it clearly saw that Israel faced high constraints. Therefore, Israel was unable to threaten to defeat it if it did not moderate as socialization logic requires. While it is impossible to demonstrate a counterfactual, socialization logic suggests that had Israel been able to credibly threaten the PLO with defeat, the PLO might have been convinced to continue on its track towards moderation, saving the Oslo process.

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[162] In the PBS interview Netanyahu stated: "I think at that time the Palestinians did not have alternative funding sources readily available. So immediately I cut off all the funding that went through Israel. We collect VAT taxes for Palestinians workers and I simply said, "Cut it off completely." ... There were one or two other bombings that came with this in Jerusalem. Within a very short time, I was told by the Americans that Arafat's regime is about to collapse. I said, "Well, that's his problem. That's not my problem." [They] said, "But you're supposed under Oslo to give him the VAT money." I said, "Well, he's supposed under Oslo not to allow terrorists to attack us." And they said, "What do you want?" with great impatience. Here again, I was an obstacle to peace. I wasn't an obstacle to peace; I was an obstacle to terror, which is the true obstacle to peace. And I said, "He has to jail such-and-such people, he has to do A, B, C, and D." And indeed he started doing it. Within about six weeks he had reined in Hamas and Islamic Jihad. And by that time we agreed to give him the rest of the money. From that point on, for nearly two years, we had practically no terror. ...(PBS Frontline 2002 *Shattered Dreams of Peace*).

[163] Netanyahu recalled: "I think the Clinton administration was under the impression at the time that Arafat was really a partner; that the problem was on the Israeli side, and specifically I was the Israeli side. And I think they were very easy on Arafat. They didn't hold him responsible for anything. They never forced him to do anything, to stop the propaganda which I always mentioned to them, to jail the terrorists, to collect the illegal weapons, to reduce the police to the agreed size, and so on and so on." Netanyahu also demonstrated the desire to shift the opponent's ideology when he exhorted the PA to "teach the idea of peace to its people and not the idea that peace is merely a stepping stone in war to push the Jews into the sea." (PBS 2002).

Instead, Netanyahu's 1997 Hebron redeployment agreement was seen as an achievement for Arafat because it signaled Likud's acceptance of territorial concessions.[164] The continuation of the peace process under the hawkish Likud government provides compelling evidence that the ideological composition of the government did not determine Israel's strategy towards the PLO although continued terrorism led to the cessation of further scheduled Israeli withdrawals.[165]

Due to Netanyahu's insistence, the 1998 Wye memorandum called for the PLO charter to remove its absolutist ideology.[166] Netanyahu said, "this was a good precedent to have in order to habituate the Palestinians that they would have to shed the main instruments calling for our destruction in their ideology and in their national documents." (PBS 2002).

Likud openly rebuked Netanyahu for the Wye memorandum, forcing him to rely on Labor support. This concession ultimately cost Netanyahu politically when his cabinet collapsed in 1999 and Barak was elected. The suggests that Netanyahu did not grant concessions and negotiate due to domestic political demand. Regarding why Israel pursued the Oslo process in the first place, Netanyahu insisted that it was due to a misperception of the PLO's type, stating:

> The foundation of Oslo was that Arafat had given up the idea of destroying Israel and had given up the tool of terror. … These are the reasons why Oslo collapsed –because the premises that there had been a real change of heart in Arafat ... was false. (PBS 2002).

In the July 1999-July 2000 Camp David peace talks, Barak offered a series of increasingly unprecedented concessions.[167] Arafat rejected these offers. (Smith 2016, 487-490). Barak declared that he "unmasked Arafat and the Palestinians." (Smith 2016, 491).[168] Clinton

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[164] Netanyahu originally proposed redeployment of nine percent of the West Bank. This was rejected by Arafat as not going far enough. (Smith 2016, 458). An agreement was later signed that split Hebron into Palestinian and Jewish zones among other redeployment promises. This agreement was signed on January 17, 1997. (IMFA 1997).

[165] In a particularly heinous attack, Hamas carried out the March 1997 Apropo Coffee House suicide bombing on the Jewish holiday of Purim. This attack was condemned by Arafat. (CNN 1997). Netanyahu blamed Arafat for not upholding security, prompting Netanyahu to suspend Israeli withdrawals from the West Bank and to expand the Jewish presence in East Jerusalem. Two more suicide bombings, in July and September, killed 25 and wounded at least 330 Israelis. (Smith 2016, 459).

[166] Israeli leaders contend that changes to the PNC that Arafat promised in 1993 were never made. (Langfan 2012).

[167] Barak originally offered Arafat 66 percent of the West Bank, with an additional 14 percent to be handed over to the PA over the span of two decades. Barak offered Palestinians the right of return to the future Palestinian state and a limited number to Israel as well. Arafat rejected this. Barak next offered 89.5 percent of the West Bank. Arafat also rejected this. Barak then offered over 90 percent of the West Bank as well as major concessions in Jerusalem, including Palestinian control of the Muslim and Christian neighborhoods in the Old City and joint Palestinian and Moroccan control over the Haram-al-Sharif which is the location of Judaism's holiest site, the Temple Mount.

[168] In 2000, Both Barak and Arafat accepted Clinton's proposal with some reservations. The proposal would see Palestinian control in 96% of the West Bank and comparable land swaps in return for Israeli sovereignty over the major settlement blocs. Nothing came of these negotiations. (IMFA 2000). The Second Intifada began in September.

blamed Arafat's intransigence for failure at Camp David talks but suggested that strengthening the PA's governance would make Arafat more likely to bargain.[169]

Barak continued to be willing to make concessions despite surges in violence since 1995.[170] He considered PLO leadership to be rational and security maximizing.[171] However, he did note the absence of a public, popular Palestinian peace camp.[172]

In May 2000 as violence spiraled towards a Second Intifada, Israeli leaders began to change their perceptions. PLO Intransigence and violence convinced Israeli leadership that they were mistaken regarding its type.[173] This was only the start of doubt among Barak and his supporters. They still hoped to secure a bargain and offered unprecedented concessions including the division of Jerusalem at Camp David in July 2000.[174] Following Arafat's rejection, Barak said, "I was much less optimistic after Camp David."

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[169] "American officials were quick to conclude that Arafat had probably not intended to reach a final agreement at Camp David but had wanted instead to show his people that he had stood firm against American and Israeli pressures. Perhaps after strengthening his fragile political base, they suggested, he would be ready to resume negotiations in a more constructive mood." (Quandt 2002, 33).

[170] Barak told Egypt's Mubarak in regards to the peace process with the PLO: "I am ready. I do understand that it won't be easy, but I am determined to leave no stone unturned in the way to peace. I understand that it won't work without some kind of compromise from both sides." (PBS 2002).

[171] "We had to make one concession along the way, namely to make it clear ... that if we cannot achieve a framework agreement, the issue of the third further redeployment was still there." The concessions were aimed at achieving a peace deal with an opponent that was clearly deemed to be the type that could be bargained with. If this was not the case, Barak would not have been willing to make territorial concessions. Regarding the Palestinian negotiators, Barak stated "they are intelligent. They are capable people. They are exactly like you and me, and they represent the Palestinian case. They don't represent the Israeli case. So, it's not about who will do it." This suggests that Barak and his team viewed the Palestinians as themselves, as rational security maximizers instead of fanatics." (PBS 2002).

[172] Barak stated: In Israel "there is a peace camp that can convene 200,000 people in central square of this city, on very short notice, and there is a major movement among academics, politicians, thinkers, and public leaders for peace, even at a painful price. On the Palestinian side, you can find them individually here and there, but there is no public movement. There is a real need to begin preparation on the ground." (PBS 2002).

[173] Barak recounted: "the day that I came to the Knesset -- in a Knesset where I don't have a majority to the peace process -- I came there to convince the Knesset to permit me to do this. It ended up that for the first time, Palestinian policemen and Palestinian security units used the rifles that were given by Peres and Rabin as a part of the Oslo agreement to shoot at Israeli soldiers and security people. ... I told Clinton, 'Arafat just stabbed the Israeli peace camp in the back.' This was the focal point of the dispute for many years. ... The right wing in Israel always argued 'Are you crazy? Are you giving these terrorists guns? Rifles? They will use it against us at a very crucial moment.' And we [the left] said, 'Oh no, how can you ask them to dominate their own streets? How can you ask them to arrest Hamas? How can you ask them to put an end to terror just with clubs? They need these weapons.' Arafat was fully aware of it. ... He never used [the weapons] to dismantle Islamic Jihad and Hamas. ... He broke the very defining element of the signed agreement for which he already got a Nobel Peace Prize. This is something that I told the president: Without becoming convinced that he will not repeat it, he will not get these villages." (PBS 2002).

[174] Displaying continued optimism seven years since Oslo, Barak stated "the problem with Arafat was that he never was ready to take President Clinton's ideas as a basis for negotiations. It was telling, frustrating, but we entered it hoping for the best, but ready to face whatever kind of consequences." Certainly, Barak had his reservations. He told

Foreign Minister Shlomo Ben-Ami discussed the contents of the diary he kept during Camp David as Ehud Barak's representative to the peace talks. The first thing he stated was that "it turns out that the Palestinian partner is not what we thought he was." The logic of boosting the PLO's governance function to socialize them into an actor with which peace could be reached, is visible in his reflections:

> In 1993 a quasi-state of the Palestinians was established, in terms of orderly international relations. In retrospect, this turned out to be a mistaken assumption, it turned out that for [Palestinian leader Yasser] Arafat it was a huge camouflage net behind which he fomented, and continues to foment, political pressure and terrorism in different dosages in order to undermine the very idea of two states for two nations.

Ben-Ami claimed that Arafat never genuinely negotiated to reach a peace treaty. This was evident even to the American team.[175]

Barak's decision to propose the division of Jerusalem during the Camp David Summit did no stem from domestic politics. It was always unpopular among the Israeli electorate. Experts expected it to exacerbated Barak's already substantial coalition problems.[176]

After Arafat's rejection of this groundbreaking proposal, even the optimistic Barak questioned the peace process. Ben-Ami recalled: "Barak started to feel that he didn't have a partner. That he was going farther than any other Israeli prime minister and risking himself politically and losing his government." (Shavit 2001).

The breakdown of Camp David and the start of the Second Intifada finally extinguished Israeli hopes that the PLO was ready to bargain. Barak saw the launch of the Second Intifada as premeditated. Discussing Sharon's controversial visit to the Temple Mount, Barack recalled:

> We have evidence of intelligence we shared with some of the leading intelligence communities in the world. ... But this event on the Temple Mount, especially the second

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Clinton, "look, if I don't know what Arafat has in mind, whether everything we've just seen until now is just tactics and at the moment of truth, he will be ready to make a tough decision... I am not sure." (PBS 2002)

[175] Ben-Ami related, "even Bob Malley, whom everyone now likes to quote, told me at some stage that the Palestinians simply want to humiliate us. `They want to humiliate you' were his words." This was referencing an article by Hussein Agha and Robert Malley - a member of the U.S. peace team and a special assistant to President Clinton – 'Camp David: The Tragedy of Errors,' The New York Review of Books, August 9, 2001." (Shavit 2001).

[176] In an interview in 2000 for the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Meridor described the unpopularity of dividing Jerusalem. "The sanctity of unified Jewish sovereignty over the city should be taken as a consensual position among Israelis historically, emotionally, politically from almost all the way to the right, to almost all the way to the left side of the political spectrum, maybe with a fringe objection of 5 percent. So, speaking realistically and looking also to Barak's coalition problems, it really remains out of the question for any Israeli prime minister to put the Jerusalem issue on the negotiating table." (Meridor 2000).

> day, fell into his hands as a ripe kind of fruit, becoming a very kind of natural excuse for him. Namely, he somehow felt that he cannot have a better excuse. …This is not a popular uprising. It's a deliberate terror campaign in order to intimidate Israel and to change the image of the conflict after his diplomatic defeat at Camp David.

William Quandt was on the U.S. diplomatic team that participated in the Camp David talks. He argues that during the Clinton brokered negotiations, Barak, like Netanyahu before him, and Sharon after him, was willing to negotiate with Arafat despite domestic political instability.[177] "Arafat maintained that the time was not right for reaching a full agreement. Barak, by contrast, was eager, even though his coalition government was crumbling around him." (Quandt 2002, 30). This casts doubt on the argument that Israeli strategy towards the PLO followed domestic political considerations.

Although the Taba Summit proceeded in 2001, by this time Barak perceived Arafat to be too ideologically driven to negotiate with in good faith. He stated: "There was no way to make an agreement... So, it was clear to me that there was no sense in trying to negotiate; I did not even allow our people to establish a delegation that sits together with a Palestinian delegation." (PBS 2002). It was at Taba that the PLO began to tie the right of return to a final peace deal.[178] This contentious demand was not part of negotiations from 1993 until this point.[179] According to historian Ephraim Karsh, "the reintroduction of this issue, at a moment when Israel had effectively agreed to withdraw to its pre-1967 lines, shook the Israeli peace camp to the core. All of a sudden, it seemed that the Arab states and the Palestinians really meant what they had been saying for so long—namely, that peace was not a matter of adjusting borders and territory but was rather a euphemism for eliminating the Jewish state altogether." (Karsh 2001).

The combination of this renewed demand and the launch of the Second Intifada, had a profound impact on how Israeli leaders perceived the PLO, strengthening the hawks and leading

[177] Instability stemmed from parliamentary coalitions that threatened to break over talks with the PLO.
[178] They declared "no peace would be possible unless Israel guaranteed the right of the Arab refugees of the 1948-49 war, and their descendants, to return to territory that is now part of the state of Israel, and to be compensated financially for lost property and for decades of privation and suffering." This de-facto meant the end of Israel as a Jewish state." (Karsh 2001).
[179] Emergency discussions were convened at Taba to salvage the Camp David peace. During the Taba Discussions in January 2001, Barak presented a map offering the Palestinians 95 percent of the West Bank and Jerusalem as a capital for both Israel and the Palestinian state. This offer was made after George W. Bush became president. Bush was seen as more sympathetic to Israel than Clinton and Israel's offer at Taba was made absent U.S. pressure.

many in the peace camp to question whether the PLO had truly moderated and could be bargained with. Explicit statements by PA leaders further suggested high ideological drive.[180]

> Arafat was reluctant to issue a call for an end to the fighting… many Israelis had reached the conclusion that he was deliberately instigating the crowds as part of a broader strategy to rally Arab and international support. Clinton was reluctant to point the finger so directly at Arafat, but many in his entourage reported that they were beginning to wonder what Arafat was doing and whether he was still someone they could work with. (Quandt 2002, 35).

After the failure at Taba—as the Second Intifada escalated—Ariel Sharon became Prime Minister in 2001 with a mandate to use military force to end the violence. Sharon's election brought to power leadership that saw the PLO as an implacable foe.[181]

Furthering Israel's perception of Arafat's absolutist and violent ideological mission, on January 4, 2002, Israel seized the arms-laden vessel the Karine A.[182] This directly implicated the PA in planning and directing a large-scale terrorist campaign. This incident cast doubt on already dubious claims that the Second Intifada arose spontaneously and without PA involvement.

After the Karine A incident, the Bush administration tolerated Sharon's policy of hardline reprisals, security sweeps, and the erection of a defensive barrier in starting in 2002. Following the Passover Massacre at the Park Hotel in Netanya on March 29, Ariel Sharon initiated Operation Defensive Shield and the invasion of Jenin.

Defensive Shield was a hardline crackdown on PLO terrorism. "Israel's troops re-entered Palestinian cities and refugee camps, hunting down terrorists and often leaving massive destruction in their wake. Three months later, in mid-June 2002, two more suicide bombings

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[180] In March 2001, Minister for Jerusalem affairs in Yasir Arafat's Palestinian Authority, Faysal al-Husseini, stated regarding the peace talks, "tactically we may win or lose… but our eyes will continue to aspire to the strategic goal, namely, to Palestine from the [Jordan] river to the [Mediterranean] sea"—that is, to a Palestine in place of an Israel. "Whatever we get now," he continued, "cannot make us forget this supreme truth." (Karsh 2003, 167). Some of these types of statements continue until today and are not by themselves unequivocal proof of absolutist demands, yet they do not improve Israeli leaders' perceptions of the ultimate goals of the PLO and whether concessions will in fact create peace instead of simply worsening Israel's ability to maintain security.

[181] Israeli leadership's perceptions were unambiguously changed by events leading up to and during the Second Intifada starting in 2000. Israel's internal constraints were lowered due to years of violence increasing public support for hardline action. External constraints were lowered due to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and the United States led War on Terror creating a favorable international environment for hardline counterterrorism.

[182] The Karine A was "carrying weapons intended for the Palestinian Authority." It "was captured in the Red Sea by Israel's Navy and Air Force. The boat's cargo included 50 tons of advanced weaponry including Katyusha rockets, rifles, mortar shells, mines and a variety of anti-tank missiles. Senior figures in the Palestinian Authority were involved in the smuggling." (IMFA 2002).

struck Israel. Sharon announced Israel would immediately begin a policy of taking back land in the West Bank, and holding it, until the terror attacks stopped." (PBS 2002).

Former Chief of Staff Shaul Mofaz argued that, as intended, Operation Defensive Shield succeeded in increasing Israel's deterrence and boosting Israel's denial capabilities. Following the operation, he claimed: "Israeli intelligence is now in a position to prevent as much as 90 percent of all terror attacks."

Mofaz cited Israel's focus on the PA's governance structure and its ideological drive as factors critical to Israel's perceptions of whether or not negotiations can succeed, stating: "The rehabilitation of the PA is therefore a precondition to progress… Structural changes will be significant only if this more fundamental, ideological change occurs as well." Mofaz evaluated Israel's operation according to the logic that hardline strategy is aimed at making negotiations more feasible by shifting the opponent's type.[183] He acknowledged that this was not achieved in Operation Defensive Shield. (Mofaz 2002).[184]

Arafat's actions after the Oslo Accords, after the Interim Agreement (Oslo II), during the Second Intifada, and his rejection of the Clinton Parameters and Ehud Barak's extensive compromise overtures in terms of territorial concessions, convinced Israeli leaders that they had been mistaken throughout the Oslo peace process. Arafat had not moderated. Instead, after Sharon carried out the severe, hardline operation Defensive Shield that saw Israeli invasions of

[183] Mofaz stated: "Unfortunately, even Operation Defensive Shield failed to convince Arafat to stop supporting violence and turn instead to the negotiation table. Whether the long-term consequences of the operation will convince the PA that change and negotiation are the best ways to move forward remains to be seen." (Mofaz 2002).
[184] Interestingly, although Mofaz saw Arafat as the driving force behind the terrorism of the Second Intifada, the Israeli cabinet decided against his recommendation to exile Arafat when the IDF had him surrounded in his compound in Ramallah. (Bennet 2002). The United States did not support Israel's exiling of Arafat. Secretary of State Colin Powell strongly opposed the move. (Buncombe 2002). Israeli intelligence chiefs also opposed exiling Arafat. Director of Military Intelligence Major General Aharon Ze'evi stated that "all the heads of the intelligence services seriously oppose exiling Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat." "Ze'evi said there is no doubt Arafat is responsible for the wave of terror in the last few days, during which suicide bombers carried out five terror attacks… But he said exiling Arafat would only unite the moderate and radical Palestinian factions, and that discussing such a move could lead to an increase in terror attacks." Referencing Israel's sensitivity to external pressure, "Ze'evi recommended Israel not get involved at the moment with the issue of exiling Arafat, which would only serve to turn the world spotlight on the Palestinian leader." Ze'evi also alluded to the PA's governing capacity which was not as strong as Israeli leaders hoped it would be in its ability to control violence and repress terrorism as planned during the Oslo process. He argued that "Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas is having a difficult time fighting terror because Arafat - as well as Hamas and the Islamic Jihad - is simultaneously trying to make him fail." (Haaretz Staff 2003).

Palestinian cities and the isolation of Arafat in his compound surrounded by Israeli armor, the PLO was made containable but still was not ideologically moderate nor did it have high governance function. Israel was too constrained to use enough force or political pressure to successfully socialize the PLO into a Type D NSA. This left Israel with the option of managing the conflict by increasing its denial capabilities and its deterrence.[185]

OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE DENIAL: DEFENSIVE SHIELD (2002) UNTIL THE DISENGAGEMENT (2005)

Ariel Sharon is regarded as one of Israel's most hawkish prime ministers. It is particularly interesting that he was the one who conceded the most territory to Palestinian leadership since the start of the conflict.[186] He made these concessions despite Israel's most permissive constraints environment until this point. Sharon's major concessions in 2005 defy alternative explanations. Domestic politics, external pressure and Sharon's personal leadership characteristics can be ruled out as the propelling cause behind Sharon's major territorial concession known as the Disengagement.

Israel faced the lowest external constraints in its history. The U.S. War on Terror after the September 11 attacks meant Israel's most important backer was less likely to pressure it to make concessions. Indeed, Netanyahu compared the need to defeat the PLO to the U.S. effort to defeat the Taliban regime to defeat al-Qaeda.[187] Israel's leadership saw the 9/11 attacks against the U.S. as reducing external constraints out of shared purpose. He purposefully linked Israel's counterterrorism efforts with the U.S. War on Terror.[188] President George W. Bush admired Sharon and criticized former President Clinton's pressure on Israel, accusing him of "trying to make Israel conform to American 'plans and timetables' for peace." Bush frequently voiced his

[185] It was not until Sharon carried out the hardline operation Defensive Shield that saw Israeli invasions of Palestinian cities and the isolation of Arafat in his compound surrounded by Israeli armor, that the PLO came to be recognized by Sharon as moderate enough to cooperate in terms of security although not moderate enough to be considered the type with which a peace treaty could be reached.

[186] Michael Oren described Sharon as a "rigorous foe of forfeiting land, even in return for peace." (Oren 2002, 315).

[187] Netanyahu noted a "sea change" in public opinion in Israel after the Second Intifada, as well as a "sea change" in American public opinion after September 11, 2001. He compared Israel's new perception of the PLO as an implacable and absolutist foe as comparable to the US position on Al-Qaeda. He stated: "The only way that you stop terrorism is by going after the regime. If you don't stop the regime, you don't stop terrorism. This is why the Americans, [in order] to stop Al Qaeda, they dismantled the regime of the Taliban. ... That remains true of our ability to stop Palestinian terror." This statement demonstrates the perception of Israeli leadership as following the logic of needing to pursue decisive victory when faced with an opponent that is perceived to be impossible to bargain with. (PBS 2002).

[188] Following the same logic, Putin linked efforts to defeat Chechen militants with the War on Terror post 9/11.

strong support for Israel, even stating that his "support for Israel is not conditional on the outcome of the peace process." (Michell 2000). Finally, unlike Netanyahu in 1997, Sharon's party led a stable coalition, was elected on a hawkish platform and enjoyed a strong political position. Indeed, his decision to disengage from Gaza caused the breakup of his government, leading him to break with Likud and create his own party Kadima. (knesset.gov.il). It also nearly caused a civil war, outraging hundreds of thousands of right-wing Israelis that made up his base. Many of the IDF's best units and a significant portion of the officer corps were from the "settler" population that Sharon's forced withdrawal so outraged. Interestingly, Sharon—a long-time staunch supporter of settling the territories captured in 1967—ordered their forced evacuation. Indeed, Sharon himself founded some of the Gaza settlements that he ordered evacuated.[189]

As the Intifada raged, Sharon's government blamed Arafat for the violence. This was supported by both the Karine A affair and the active participation in the suicide bombing campaigns by PLO groups; the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, Tanzim (both affiliates of Fatah) and the PFLP. (JCPA 2002, HaLevi 2013).[190]

Following the Passover Massacre in 2002, Sharon launched Operation Defensive Shield. This marked a shift in strategy away from reprisals and the erection of ad-hoc checkpoints and barriers towards the erection of a comprehensive barrier system and the launch of clear and hold operations aimed at destroying PLO networks and killing or capturing their leadership. (IMFA 2002). Sharon isolated Arafat and pursued a decisive victory strategy against the PLO.

By 2004, the violence from the Intifada had begun to subside and Sharon believed that decisive use of force had been enough to deter the PLO from resuming violence if given self-governance in Gaza. Sharon calculated that the Disengagement could be a major step towards peace with the PLO in the future, but pragmatically, it was a management policy to alleviate Israel's problem of ruling over a hostile population.[191]

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[189] Sharon's son and others called his father the "father of the settlements." In 2011 he wrote, "My father's other role in Prime Minister Menachem Begin's government was as chairman of the Ministerial Committee on Settlements. In this role he put Likud policy and his own beliefs into practice. He founded many dozens of settlements in Judea, Samaria, the Gaza Strip, Galilee, the Golan Heights, the Negev, and in the Arava." (Sharon 2011).

[190] According to the testimony of Mahmoud al-Zahar, a Hamas official, Arafat armed Hamas and signed off on their terrorist missions against Israel After the 2000 Camp David talks broke down. (TOI 2014).

[191] This was a reasonable analysis, demonstrated by the relative quiet kept by the PA since then. Sharon's critics argue that because of Israel's withdrawal, Hamas seized power in Gaza within two years of the Disengagement.

While alternative explanations fail to explain Sharon's Disengagement Plan, socialization logic succeeds. Sharon did not enact the Disengagement Plan as a concession. By 2004, Sharon did not attribute the reduction in violence to the PLO being socialized into a type D NSA. Rather, he saw it as due to increasingly successful denial, largely a result of intelligence gathered, Palestinian military capabilities destroyed, and terrorist mobility reduced due to Operation Defensive Shield and the erection of the Security Barrier.[192]

The positioning and intelligence gleaned from Operation Defensive Shield boosted Israel's offensive denial capabilities. The physical separation resulting the construction of the Security Barrier boosted Israel's defensive denial capabilities. Sharon intended he Disengagement Plan to be a means to further boost Israel's ability to management the conflict by boosting denial through separation.

While Operation Defensive Shield resembled a decisive victory strategy and the Disengagement resembled a major concession, in reality, both became components of a management strategy.[193] While Israel faced relatively low constraints in the years following 9/11, it was still a highly constrained state. This kept it from continuing Operation Defensive Shield until the PLO was faced with annihilation, precluding Israel from using force to socialize the PLO and causing Sharon to opt for management.

In his 2004 letter to George W. Bush, Sharon explicitly stated that denial was the best option for ensuring short-term stabilization.[194] He also acknowledged that it was not a strategy aimed towards achieving peace.[195]

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[192] IMFA data on intercepted versus successful suicide bombing attacks shows that until September 2003, the number of attempted suicide bombing attacks rose while the number of successful ones dropped dramatically. Furthermore, "from that area where construction of the anti-terrorist fence has not yet begun, namely the southern part (Judea) of the West Bank, no decrease in the number of terrorist attacks has been noted." (IMFA 2003).
[193] While Operation Defensive Shield started out as a decisive victory strategy, Sharon realized that Israel was too constrained to completely defeat the PLO, thus, it became a means to better denial towards the PLO.
[194] Sharon wrote: "The Disengagement Plan is designed to improve security for Israel and stabilize our political and economic situation. It will enable us to deploy our forces more effectively until such time that conditions in the Palestinian Authority allow for the full implementation of the Roadmap to resume." (IMFA 2004).
[195] The peace strategy which would have been pursued had Sharon deemed it possible, was the Bush Roadmap of 2002. It "sets forth the correct sequence and principles for the attainment of peace. Its full implementation represents the sole means to make genuine progress." (Exchange of Letters Between Bush and Sharon, 2004).

Sharon's consideration of the necessity to keep good faith with the U.S. is demonstrated by his insistence that the Disengagement be in line with U.S. preferences. (The White House 2002). Sharon wrote that his plan:

> Is not inconsistent with the roadmap. According to this plan, the State of Israel intends to relocate military installations and all Israeli villages and towns in the Gaza Strip, as well as other military installations and a small number of villages in Samaria. In this context, we also plan to accelerate construction of the Security Fence, whose completion is essential in order to ensure the security of the citizens of Israel. The fence is a security rather than political barrier, temporary rather than permanent, and therefore will not prejudice any final status issues including final borders.

In 2004, Netanyahu, a hawkish opponent of the Disengagement Plan, gave a statement supporting the position that Israeli leaders saw this plan as bolstering Israel's denial capabilities, not as a concession towards an unlikely peace deal.[196]

Although deemed impossible at the time, Sharon did see peace as the optimal long-term goal, stating: "we view the achievement of a settlement between Israel and the Palestinians as our central focus and are committed to realizing this objective." (IMFA 2004).

On November 11, 2004, Arafat died. Mahmud Abbas succeeded him as the PLO chairman and the head of the PA. On January 9, 2005, Abbas was elected PA president by a solid margin; "he immediately called for a resumption of peace talks and cease-fire talks with Israel." (JPS 2009, 142). Sharon viewed Abbas as reasonable and weak enough to trust for cooperation on a management strategy, but still too ideologically driven to pursue peace with. Sharon saw as a foe who was at worst determined to perpetrate violence, at best unwilling to act against it.[197] Sharon's former Chief of Staff, Weinglass recalled that "The Disengagement was done in full

[196] Netanyahu stated that he, "decided to support the initiative because the three preconditions he listed have been met: Israel, after the disengagement, will continue to control crossing terminals; the United States has issued a declaration opposing the right of Palestinian refugee return to Israel; and settlement blocs will be incorporated within the route planned for the separation fence." (Mualem 2004).

[197] In 2004, as Sharon was politically and militarily preparing for the Disengagement Plan, "Arafat was increasingly losing control of security inside Gaza as divisions within Fatah grew and intra-Palestinian violence spiked in what was widely seen as an orchestrated attempt (likely engineered by Gaza strongman Muhammad Dahlan, Arafat's rival and former Gaza security chief) to capitalize on the disarray to usurp Arafat's authority." (JPS 2009, 141). Israel's policy under Sharon reflected his acknowledgement that Arafat was not only too ideologically driven to bargain with, but that he was steadily losing the capacity, especially in Gaza, necessary to enforce a peace deal.

coordination with the Palestinians. All the moves were executed in total coordination with Abu Mazen." (Lazaroff 2015).[198]

Following the end of the Second Intifada, Sharon implemented a strategy of containment and of boosting the PA's governance function. The strategy of containment was influenced by Israel's constraints.[199] Boosting the PA's government capacity helped management. [200] It also held potential to help socialize the PA into a more moderate type.[201]

2005 - PRESENT: MANAGEMENT AND POTENTIAL POLITICAL VICTORY

Disengagement was extremely internally contentious as images of Israeli soldiers forcibly removing anguished Jews from their homes sparked a massive movement in support of Gush Katif.[202] In 2005, Netanyahu resigned in protest. Even the 2015 center-left opposition leader Isaac Herzog—who supported the withdrawal at the time—finds it troubling now. (Baker 2015). Most Israeli leaders now believe that withdrawing from the West Bank without a comprehensive

[198] February 8, 2005 marked the end of Second Intifada. PA President Mahmoud Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon announced a cease-fire and shook hands in Sharm el-Sheik Egypt. From August 17-22, 2005, Israel forcibly removed Israeli communities from Gaza as part of the Disengagement plan. On September 11, 2005 the Israeli cabinet declared a formal end to Israeli military rule in Gaza. On September 21, "the Israeli Interior Minister approved an order declaring Gaza "foreign territory." (JPS 2009, 145).

[199] In the 2004 exchange of letters between Sharon and Bush, Sharon stated explicitly that he does not view the PLO a potential partner. He wrote: "The Palestinian Authority under its current leadership has taken no action to meet its responsibilities under the Roadmap. Terror has not ceased, reform of the Palestinian security services has not been undertaken, and real institutional reforms have not taken place." Sharon then claimed that his disengagement policy was not a concession aimed at achieving a bargain but rather it resembles a strategy to make denial and management more feasible in what is expected to be a conflict with no end in sight. He stated "having reached the conclusion that, for the time being, there exists no Palestinian partner with whom to advance peacefully toward a settlement and since the current impasse is unhelpful to the achievement of our shared goals, I have decided to initiate a process of gradual disengagement with the hope of reducing friction between Israelis and Palestinians." (IMFA 2004).

[200] As the PA began to appear to be losing ground to Hamas in Gaza, Israel allowed Jordan and Egypt to transfer 3,000 M-16 rifles and 3 million rounds of ammunition to Abbas's expanded presidential guard, overseen by U.S. security envoy Dayton" in order to help Abbas counterbalance the Executive Support Force (ESF) that conducted policing in Gaza under Hamas control. See (JPS 2009, 148).

[201] Sharon thought that the PA could be worked with in order to contain Hamas and other violent elements, and that Israel's new advantageous security position following Operation Defensive Shield meant that the PA could be managed and would likely not return to violence, even if it was not yet ideologically ready to bargain.

[202] Supporters of the settlements in Gaza, the largest of which was called Gush Katif, used orange as their symbol and held demonstrations throughout Israel.

peace agreement would be a mistake.[203] This suggests that Israeli leaders are more suspicious. The West Bank is also more vital to Israel's security.[204]

Sharon's Likud party split when Netanyahu challenged Sharon for leadership after the implementation of the Disengagement Plan. Sharon formed Kadima on November 21, 2005. On January 4, 2006 Sharon suffered a stroke and went into a coma. He died in 2014.

On January 25, 2006 Palestinian elections were held. Hamas won, taking 72 of 132 seats to Fatah's 45. (JPS 2009, 146). Abbas declared a state of emergency with international and Israeli support. In June 2007, Hamas launched a surprise coup in Gaza, wresting control of the territory from the PA. (Shanzer 2012). From this point on, Israel dealt with the PA in the West Bank and Hamas in Gaza.

In 2009, the Obama administration pressured Netanyahu to initiate a settlement freeze. While Prime Minister Netanyahu upheld this domestically unpopular freeze for 10 months, Abbas did not negotiate. Instead, he requested an extension of the freeze. The Netanyahu government saw this as stalling and demonstrating Abbas's lack of desire to actually negotiate. After the ten-month freeze expired Israel renewed settlement growth.

The Obama administration continued to push for talks. In July 2013, Secretary of State John Kerry embarked on a nine-month attempt to "achieve final-status agreement on all the core issues" In a demonstration of U.S. influence on Israeli security policy, the right-wing Netanyahu government complied with the exceedingly unpopular policy of releasing high-profile Palestinian

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203 Maj. Gen. (res.) Gershon Hacohen argues that the events that have unfolded in the Gaza arena since the disengagement proved to Israeli leaders that the strategic reasoning behind the Disengagement was flawed. In a Prospective paper for the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies he wrote: The situation that has developed in the Gaza Strip since the 2005 disengagement debunks three fundamental assumptions that have become axiomatic in Israeli security discourse over the past two decades: that total separation between Israelis and Palestinians will inevitably enhance security and stability; that the IDF will comfortably win any future confrontation in the evacuated territories; and that Israeli military activity in the previously held territories will enjoy massive international legitimacy and support. (Hacohen 2018). Senior research fellow at the Institute for National Security Studies, Shmuel Even claimed: "The gap between the aspirations and the results is wide… (It) created a new reality that contributed to the Hamas takeover of the Gaza Strip, a steep rise in weapons smuggling, the strengthening of terrorism, and the ensuing cycle of escalation… It appears that most of the security events in the south over the past decade were the result of the disengagement." Shmuel Even, "The Decision that Changed History': Ten Years since the Disengagement from the Gaza Strip," *Strategic Assessment*, July 2015.

204 The West Bank is comprised of highland overlooking Israel's major population centers, capital and only international airport. The Jordan Valley has been deemed a vital security asset necessitating Israeli military control for at least a certain length of time following any sort of Israeli withdrawal.

prisoners, totaling 104 in four rounds. The U.S. demands were intended to promote peace talks. Instead, the PA sent overtures to reconcile with Hamas, a group that Israel considers ideologically driven and highly determined to destroy Israel.[205] Israel cancelled the prisoner exchange after three rounds of prisoners were released due to the PA's attempted reconciliation with Hamas and its pursuit of recognition in several U.N. bodies. Israel's prisoner release was tied to the Palestinians avoiding unilateral moves. (Al Jazeera 2014). The Kerry led talks collapsed after the PA and Hamas signed a pact promising unification.[206]

Abbas's double-speak regarding terrorism and incitement to terror is still a major issue for Israel. Netanyahu brought up its cessation as a precondition to talks on many occasions. (AFP 2015). However, the Obama administration never threatened the PA with a reduction in support as incitement and payment to terrorists continued. Despite this, the Obama administration continued to pressure Israel and eventually left Israel vulnerable to a hostile U.N. resolution as a strong signal of its disapproval of Israeli policy.[207]

Israel perceived comparatively high external constraints under the Obama administration. These constraints not only made Israel's use of force less likely, it also made a political hardline strategy of increased settlement building less likely. Pursuit of victory was deemed impossible and the PA was still perceived as too ideologically absolutist to conclude a successful bargain with. This reinforced Israel's short-term incentives for the management of the status-quo.[208]

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[205] The 104 prisoners that were to be released from Israeli prison as part of the Kerry peace initiative included terrorists convicted of murder. Collectively they were responsible "for the deaths of 55 civilians, 15 soldiers, one female tourist and dozens of Palestinians suspected of collaborating with Israel." (Hass and Cohen 2013).

[206] Netanyahu announced that his government was "not going to negotiate with a government backed by Hamas unless Hamas changes its position and says it's willing to recognize Israel." (Booth and Eglash 2014). Although the PLO-Hamas reunification did not succeed, within two-months of the collapse of the latest round of peace talks, escalations that led to war broke out between Israel and Hamas, starting with the kidnapping and murder of three Jewish teenagers on June 12, 2014. (Rudoren and Kershner 2014).

[207] In 2016, a senior Israeli official accused "President Barack Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry pushed what was seen by many Israelis as a "shameful anti-settlement resolution at the UN Security Council." The resolution called for the immediate cessation of any Israeli building in the West Bank. "The official added that 'President Obama could declare his willingness to veto this resolution in an instant but instead is pushing it. This is an abandonment of Israel which breaks decades of US policy of protecting Israel at the UN and undermines the prospects of working with the next administration of advancing peace.'" (TOI Staff 2016).

208 Israel's settlement building in the absence of negotiations with the PA has been argued by the Victory Caucus to be necessary to pressure the PA to negotiate by convincing the group that time is not in its favor. (Zieve 2017). Abbas has been pursuing a strategy of avoiding negotiations without preconditions with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and stalling the peace process in favor of obtaining in international resolution. A hardline strategy is claimed by its proponents in both the United States Congress and the Israeli Knesset, to have the potential to

According to a senior Israeli official, under the Trump Administration, "the U.S. is no longer pressing the Israeli government to offer concessions or symbolic 'gestures' to the Palestinian Authority." Socialization logic sees Israel's increased flexibility to pursue a political decisive victory strategy as optimal, with the potential to convince the PA to moderate enough to agree to enter into negotiations with Israel without preconditions. The current U.S. administration is taking its cues in this regard from the current Israeli administration. Israel does not believe that the PA can be negotiated with yet. The senior official claimed that, "all the signals are that for the time being, there is no reason to talk about things like [concessions], so long as the Palestinians are not a party to the talks, and it doesn't even look like they are interested at all." (Keidar 2018).

In December 2017, President Trump officially recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital. This was a break with previous U.S administrations. On May 14, 2018, on the symbolically important 70th anniversary of Israel's independence according to the secular calendar the U.S. formally moved its embassy to Jerusalem.[209]

On March 23, 2018, Congress passed the Taylor Force Act, named for an American serviceman who was stabbed to death by a Palestinian terrorist in 2016. (Congress.gov 2017/18). This act barred the U.S. from giving aid to the PA unless it demonstrates a commitment to combat terrorism. The PA's continued payments to terrorists in Israeli prisons, a policy referred to as "pay for slay" is a violation of this act. On June 24, 2018, the U.S. froze aid to the PA "pending review." (Levy 2018). On August 24, 2018, Trump cut over 200 million dollars in aid to the PA. (Wilner 2018). On September 10, 2018, the Trump administration ordered the closure of the PLO mission in Washington DC. (Al-Omari 2018). On November 18, 2019, the Trump administration shifted the U.S. position, recognizing legality of Jewish settlements in the West Bank. (Jakes and Halbfinger 2019). Taken together, these developments have been perceived by Israeli leadership as drastically reducing international constraints. Following the U.S.

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convince the PA that the aforementioned strategy will result in failure to achieve its objectives and will lead to a future peace offer that leaves the Palestinians with less the longer they try to avoid negotiations in favor of leveraging international pressure on Israel. This is similar in logic to the use of military force to convince the non-state opponent to moderate or face military loss. This strategy threatens political defeat instead of military defeat.

[209] Israelis celebrate their Independence Day according to the Hebrew calendar which means that the date differs year by year but is generally in April/May. However, this is the date that the Palestinians mourn the "Nakba," the catastrophe that befell them as a result of Israel gaining its independence. The symbolism of the embassy move on this date was not lost on them.

announcement on settlements, Netanyahu approved a Knesset bill to annex the Jordan Valley, long deemed strategically vital territory. (Harkov and Lazaroff 2019).

Israel might also feel less constrained due to regional alignments, especially among Sunni Arab and GCC countries and their increasingly shared interests with Israel as well as their declining support for the Palestinian issue. Israel's government, believe this gives it "a freer hand in managing its conflict with the Palestinians, including even unilateral steps to resolve issues in Israel's favor." (Feldman and Wittes 2018).[210]

These developments signal to Israel that they might be able to pursue a political victory policy that threatens to continue to create facts on the ground in the West Bank, meaning that the Palestinians would stand to get even less out of a peace plan, if the PA does not moderate and begin a new negotiation process with Israel. This signals to the PA that time is not on their side and they stand to lose out from continuing to pursue the strategy they pursued under the Obama administration of stalling peace talks while pursuing increasing international recognition in order to force Israel's hand. Strong U.S. support for Israel signals to the PA that they will not succeed in this strategy because the U.S. will shelter it from international isolation, condemnations, and most importantly, resolutions, especially Security Council Resolutions were the U.S. has a permanent veto. The PA might still prefer to wait for a U.S. administration that is more favorable to them to take office, in which case, the status quo will likely remain.

Due to Israel's historical experience with false hopes of peace, Israeli leaders continue to doubt the PA.[211] The PA's unwillingness to engage in peace talks with Netanyahu without preconditions further reaffirms this perception among Israeli leadership. As recently as June 21, 2018, PA leadership has signaled its unwillingness to negotiate a change to the status-quo.[212] Under these conditions, Israel will likely continue status quo management which has been succeeded in maintaining relative calm for over a decade in the West Bank. Israel's leadership

[210] The authors do warn that while shared interests make the regional actors more acceptant of Israel pursuing a hardline strategy towards the Palestinians, the populations of these countries remain strongly against Israel and the leaders need to be careful to appease and not to inflame public sentiment.
[211] This includes numerous PLO statements dating back to Arafat's "phased strategy" and the desire to use conceded territory as a platform for further demands and further campaigns of violence during the Second Intifada.
[212] "Azzam al-Ahmad, a senior member of the Palestine Liberation Organization and a Palestinian Authority legislator claimed recently that the PA had successfully blocked a long-awaited Middle East peace deal floated by President Donald Trump's administration." (Halevi 2018).

fears that unilateral withdrawals would be dangerous for Israel's security, leading to another Gaza situation, this time in the immensely more strategically important West Bank.

A recent Institute for National Security Studies proposal called "new conceptual path toward a secure future for Israel," proposes that Israel take unilateral steps to increase its ability to manage the conflict. According to this framework, Israel "will work to complete the security barrier, which will mark the separation route and Israel's future territorial interests, and it will declare that it will freeze construction in isolated settlements located deep inside Palestinian territory east of the fence." Israel will also incorporate contiguous areas in the West Bank with high Jewish populations and "ask for formal U.S. recognition of the famous 2004 letter from George W. Bush to Ariel Sharon saying that the administration sees these areas as part of Israel." To complete the separation and denial approach, Israel will retain a military presence in areas it deems of vital strategic importance. These are mostly in the Jordan Valley. This framework suggests that Israel does not view peace negotiations as being possible with the PA, yet it proposes a management approach that sees a continued Israeli military presence in strategically important areas, instead of unilateral withdrawal similar to the 2004 Disengagement Plan. This suggests Israeli learning while keeping with the denial strategy. External constraints matter as well. Israel will seek international support for these moves in the hope of alleviating international pressure to "create a much more favorable diplomatic and political situation for Israel moving forward than exists now." (Keinon 2018).

I interviewed 22 experts, many of whom were heavily involved in the various peace processes and strategic decision making vis-à-vis the PLO. The following paragraphs describe how they viewed each Israeli administration's perceptions of the PLO/PA's ideological drive, governance function, leadership targetability and Israel's level of constraints.[213]

A strong majority of the experts interviewed believe that the Israeli administrations saw the PLO (and PA) as highly ideologically motivated to continue to fight Israel in a way that made them unable to make peace throughout the duration of the conflict except for a brief period around the Oslo Accords where for a number of reasons the Rabin and Peres administrations

[213] See the Appendix for a full and specific description and a numerical breakdown of their views.

truly believed that the PLO had moderated and was a pragmatically motivated actor with whom Peace could be made. Nearly all of the experts see the PA as ideologically driven today.

There was unanimity that Israeli leaders understood that they militarily could target PLO/PA leadership, although this was undesired after Oslo, except during Defensive Shield when Arafat was isolated, but there were no plans to assassinate him.

There was some disagreement over whether Israeli leaders perceived the PLO to have a capable and accountable government in the years immediately following the Oslo Accords. Most saw PLO governance function as low to moderate pre-Oslo and claimed Israeli administrations started to view Arafat as either able but unwilling to control violence from 1993-2000 or as unable to control it. Most viewed Arafat as directly behind the violence during the Second Intifada. There is debate over whether the administrations following the Disengagement view the PA government as weak, unpopular and corrupt to the point of being unable to govern without Israeli support, or as being moderately weak and unpopular, but still capable of governing.

All of the experts viewed Israeli administrations as perceiving at a baseline, very high internal and external constraints on the heavy use of force. There is some consensus over the perception of lower constraints following September 11, 2001 due to both the U.S. also being at war with jihadi terrorism and thus sympathizing with Israel's efforts, and domestic support for hardline force due to the drastic increase in high casualty terrorism in the Second Intifada. Even so, Sharon still perceived high constraints, just lower than the baseline. A number of the experts suggested that Israel might be less constrained with the Trump administration in office, however, they all maintain that this is still unknown and stress importance of hedging. A few believe external scrutiny is increasing with the proliferation of social media and with increased "Red-Green alliance" in Europe and the increase in the polarization of political views in the U.S.

CONCLUSION

Israel's perception of the PLO's type has been and continues to be the primary determinant of its strategy towards the PLO throughout the history of its conflict with this non-state militant group. Its perception is based on three characteristics—ideological drive, governance function and the targetability of its leadership—drove Israeli strategy during each phase of the conflict. Israel's strategy has been distorted away from the optimal strategy, that best suited to socialize the PLO and thus secure a peace treaty. As a small country, vulnerable to

international isolation, and as a democracy with a free and open media, mandatory conscription and a casualty averse population, Israel's internal and external constraints fluctuated but were considered high and exceedingly important by Israeli leaders across the political spectrum for most of the duration of this conflict.

Starting in 1988 and culminating in the exchange of letters between Rabin and Arafat, Rabin, led by fellow leadership began to see Arafat and the PLO as having moderated its ideology.[214] The next step was to boost its governance function, and Oslo did that. Moving Arafat back to the territories also increased Israel's ability to target Arafat, as it did when isolating Arafat in his compound in 2002.

Another confluence of factors convinced Sharon and his fellow leadership that they had been mistaken regarding the PLO's moderation. Israel then reversed policies towards decisive victory. While this policy would have been optimal to socialize the PLO into a moderate type, Israel's constraints made decisive victory appear exceedingly costly. Due to the distorting impact of Israel's constraints, Sharon opted to increase Israel's denial capabilities and pursue a management strategy by disengaging from the Palestinian population centers as much as strategically and politically possible.

Israel maintains its current strategy of managing the conflict since the Disengagement, with Israel and the PA cooperating to minimize violence and to keep Hamas down in the West Bank, while no tangible progress has been made and little has been attempted towards achieving a peace treaty with the PA. Due to Israel's significant constraints, this is unlikely to change because Israeli leaders do not think they can implement strategy capable of making the PA moderate enough to successfully bargain with. This might change as the Trump administration appears more willing to give Israel free reign regarding security and settlement policy, If the PA rejects his "deal of the century" Israel will likely perceive even lower constraints. This remains to be seen, and currently, Israel's government is hesitant to test its boundaries.

[214] Specifically, Rabin was led by Shimon Peres to pursue negotiations with the PLO. (See Karsh 2018)

Chapter 4: Short-Term Deterrence, Long-Term Denial, Pursuing Periods of Calm: Israel's Hamas Strategy

Israel's three-decades long ongoing conflict with Hamas provides opportunity to explore why a state shifts its strategy towards a highly ideologically driven non-state opponent that has taken on the trappings of governance. The accepted wisdom is that Hamas and the PLO are very different types of actors that warrant a different strategy. Hamas's religious fanatical drive to destroy Israel is similar in kind to the PLO's predominantly secular, revolutionary fanatical drive to destroy Israel in terms of ideological absolutism. Therefore—as socialization logic suggests—once Israeli leaders accepted their mistaken view of the PLO during the Oslo period, and their high constraints, Israel's strategy towards both actors has become status-quo management.

Israel's perception of Hamas as too ideologically driven to bargain with prevented it from pursuing negotiations, while high constraints kept it from credibly threatening decisive victory. As with the PLO, absent this threat, Israel was unable to socialize Hamas into a pragmatic actor. These factors persist and continue to explain Israel's management strategy today.

Existing explanations fail to explain each shift with a unified logic. Socialization logic does. It also explains why Israel—contrary to the conventional wisdom—pursues a similar strategy towards both the PA and Hamas. Israel's strategy towards Hamas followed its unchanging view of it as highly driven by an absolutist ideology. This perception along with Israel's view of its own constraints—not balance of power, technology, domestic politics, leader personalities or external stimuli—best explains why Israel has never sought to negotiate peace with Hamas, despite high economic, military, domestic and especially diplomatic costs.[215]

Overview

[215] Bennet argued in Time Magazine that the Iron Dome's missile interdiction success and a supportive U.S. administration under President Trump resulted in "an Israeli security outlook that borders on triumphalist. This has reduced pressure on Netanyahu to change the status quo or make accommodations to the Palestinians." (Bennet 2019). The author gets the causal pathway backward. Israel's status quo management strategy towards both the PLO and Hamas predates the fielding of Iron Dome and the Trump administration. The result—a shift to management—predates the alleged cause. Management is not a result of technology that aids management. Israel's decision to pursue management resulted from its perception of not having a partner to negotiate with due to the group's ideology and being too constrained to use decisive forced to change the ideology. This led Israel to decide to manage the conflict, leading it to develop Iron Dome and other defensive measures, which reinforced management. Israel decided to manage Hamas before Iron Dome was ever battle tested.

Israel's first major shift in its strategy towards Hamas followed the 1995 Beit Lid suicide bombings when it first perceived Hamas to be a significant threat and undertook hardline measures to degrade its capabilities and manage it. The second shift occurred when Israel launched Operation Defensive Shield in 2002 in pursuit of decisive victory. Sharon's Disengagement Plan was not geared towards Hamas, but unintentionally empowered it. Following Hamas' takeover of Gaza in 2007, Israel continued pursuing its ouster in Gaza and destruction in the West Bank. Finally, as Israel came to terms with the reality of Hamas' governance, it sought to use this to its advantage. Israel's 2008/9 campaign Operation Cast Lead marked a third and final shift to a management strategy; weakening Hamas militarily but not enough to render it unable to govern, while strengthening Israel's defenses and striving for ever-longer periods of calm through carrots and sticks.

From 1987 until 1995 Israeli leadership saw Hamas as a minor problem. Israel grew more concerned as it launched a campaign of suicide bombings in the early 1990s. Prime Minister Rabin originally held Arafat responsible for preventing Hamas violence. Indeed, he believed that PLO security forces would take on Hamas in a way that Israel was too constrained to. This position—based in socialization logic—failed due to Israel misperceiving the PLO's type.

Following the high-profile Beit Lid suicide bombing attack on January 22, 1995, Israel's dovish Prime Minister Shimon Peres—who succeeded Rabin after his assassination—began a comprehensive targeted assassination campaign to degrade Hamas capabilities. At first Israel had difficulty targeting Hamas due to its withdrawal from territories stipulated in the Oslo Accords. Israel increased its operational capabilities eventually becoming much more capable of targeting Hamas leadership as the Second Intifada began. By 2001, Israel perceived lower constraints due to; enhanced operational capabilities, a Military Advocate General opinion that loosened Israel's rules of engagement (ROEs) and the September 11, 2001 attacks on the U.S. These events—under a year apart—drastically reduced Israel's perceived internal and external constraints.

In 2002, Israel launched Operation Defensive Shield with the goal of decisively defeating the PLO and Hamas.[216] Israel pursued decisive victory against Hamas until it shifted its strategy to management in Operation Cast Lead in 2008. Israel's six-year long pursuit of decisive victory

[216] Israeli leadership increased its operational tempo in line with its perception of a more permissive attitude by the United States following the 9/11/2001 al-Qaeda terrorist attacks.

coincided with its lowest period of constraints. However, Israeli leaders saw themselves as still highly constrained despite some reduction. Therefore, Israel's decisive victory strategy did not resemble a scorched earth strategy like Russia's in Chechnya, nor a decisive and sustained military campaign like the U.S. versus al-Qaeda or the first years of Operation Enduring Freedom. Rather, assassinations were done with extreme care to minimize civilian harm and Israel allowed numerous truces to grant humanitarian windows.

Operation Defensive Shield yielded valuable intelligence, increasing Israel's ability to target Hamas leadership. As Sharon's Likud party debated withdrawing from Gaza, a Hamas suicide bombing prompted a renewed targeted assassination campaign, this time targeting Hamas' political and military leadership, aimed at socializing Hamas into a deterrable actor by threatening decisive defeat. This lost credibility when the Disengagement reduced Israel's ability to target Hamas in Gaza.[217]

The Hamas takeover of Gaza in 2007 was an unintended consequence of the Disengagement. Hamas quickly took military and political control of Gaza, evolving from a terrorist network into the de-facto government in the Gaza Strip. Following Hamas' coup, Israel continued pursuing victory until it realized that it could not overthrow Hamas at acceptable cost by backing PA forces.[218] Israel never seriously considered reoccupation, despite public threats.

After Hamas refused to renew a ceasefire in 2008, Israel responded to massed rocket fire from Gaza by launching Operation Cast Lead. This was the first time that Israel explicitly stated that its goal was not to defeat Hamas but to secure a cease-fire from a position of strength. From the conclusion of Operation Cast Lead to the present, Israel pursued a management strategy. Israel is better able to manage Hamas by ensuring that it has high governing capacity. Most of the experts that I interviewed, including former Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon, call this "an address." Israel currently aims to keep Hamas strong enough to control violence in response to Israeli carrots and sticks, but too weak to pose a growing military threat.

[217] Israel is increasingly less able to target Hamas leadership as Hamas builds better fortifications to shelter their leaders, including under hospitals, and utilizes better operational secrecy due to lessons learned from prior Israeli assassinations. Meanwhile, absent a ground presence, Israel has limited HUMINT and ISR capabilities in Gaza as opposed to in the West Bank where Israel is better able to track down and disrupt Hamas cells.
[218] After withdrawing from Gaza and Hamas's coup, Israel understood that it was too constrained to reoccupy Gaza. This would be necessary according to socialization logic, disarming Hamas and convincing it of its imminent defeat.

The main pillar of Israel's management strategy from 2009 onwards is defensive denial through the erection of a security barrier, an underground and underwater physical barrier, a high-tech, layered anti-ballistic missile defense system and advanced warning systems. Offensive denial includes targeted killing, raids, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) and intermittent large-scale operations including, Pillar of Defense and Protective Edge.[219] A second pillar is short-term tit-for-tat punishment in response to escalation from Gaza.

By the late 1990s and especially in the early 2000s, Israel greatly improved its ability to target Hamas leadership, shifting it from a type A to a type B NSA. Before 2007, Hamas governance function was low since it controlled no territory and did not enjoy international support or legitimacy.[220] Since 2007 Israel considered Hamas to be somewhere between types B and C, with high governance function and moderately targetable leadership. Given its high constraints—and Hamas's full recognition of these constraints—Israel cannot socialize it into a type D NSA with which it could negotiate. Israeli leadership acknowledges this, opting for management. As Israel produces increasingly effective denial capabilities, it unintentionally increases its internal constraints because successful management convinces leaders and the public that a costly large-scale military operation is unnecessary.[221]

I examine Israel's conflict with Hamas chronologically, tracing the processes by which Israeli strategy evolved. With primary and secondary source data and interviews with experts, defense personnel and decision makers, I demonstrate that Israel's perceptions of Hamas's type along with its high internal and external constraints, explain the major shifts in Israel's strategy better than competing explanations that examine changes in the balance of threat, domestic politics, the international arena and individual leader characteristics. My argument is not exclusionary. In certain instances, competing arguments compliment my position.[222]

Shifts in Strategy

[219] The large-scale operations were intended to impose short-term deterrence and degrade Hamas's military capabilities, comprising what has been called by experts and defense figures a "mowing the grass," approach.
[220] Hamas played the spoiler for most of the time while the PLO negotiated as part of the Oslo Process.
[221] Israeli leaders believe that the conflict Hamas can be managed, that the strategic trends towards this approach are in Israel's favor, and that this approach can be pursued indefinitely, buying ever longer periods of quiet, is increasing as Israeli management technology and projects increase in a self-reinforcing feedback loop. This strategy is likely to continue absent some unforeseen and drastic domestic, regional or international shifts.
[222] Israel's perceptions of increased threat provides the best explanation for Israel's 1995 shift in strategy. This is unique because it caused Israel to heed Hamas as a threat. Previously, Israel did not have a Hamas strategy.

- **1995**: Israel shifted from minimal attention to management through assassinations following the Beit Lid attack and hoped that PLO security forces would contain Hamas.
- **2002**: Israel pursued decisive victory against Hamas.
- **2009**: Increased denial and operations to weaken Hamas but keep it as an "address."

Strategy Shift	Hamas Type	Israel's Constraints	My Argument	Competing arguments[223]
1995 Denial/management	A	High	Israel perceived need to use force but was constrained by the ongoing Oslo process. PLO did not crack down on Hamas as expected.	1. Operational response to Hamas spoiler activities. 2. Dovish government under Peres. 3. Netanyahu government constrained by Oslo.
2002 Decisive Victory	A/B	Low	Type A/B opponent, lower constraints after Passover bombing, better targeting capabilities and 9/11.	1. Operational response. 2. 9/11 attacks lowered Israel's constraints. (congruent with socialization logic). 3. Hawkish leadership
2009 Denial/management	C/B	High	Israel's high constraints, successful denial, lower targeting ability, Hamas governance function as useful.	1. Increased external constraints. 2. Decreased ability to target Hamas leadership.

Baseline Israeli Perceptions of Hamas Type: *Extreme Ideological Drive*

Israeli leaders were quick to recognize Hamas as highly ideologically driven by an absolutist ideology. This is evident from their foundational documents. Islamism is fundamental to Hamas's mission. (Løvlie 2013). Hamas ideology blends Muslim Brotherhood Islamist ideology with WWII era antisemitism. It envisions a fight to the death to obliterate Israel and replace it with an Islamist entity. The prelude to the Hamas covenant of 1988 quotes Hassan al-Banna, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood and the spiritual foundation for their organization: "Israel will exist and will continue to exist until Islam will obliterate it, just as it obliterated others before it."[224]

Article six of the Hamas covenant states its absolutist ideology of Islamic rule: "The movement strives to raise the banner of Allah over every inch of Palestine, for under the wing of Islam followers of all religions can coexist in security and safety where their lives, possessions and rights are concerned." For Hamas, conflict with Israel is over religion, not sovereignty. Presumably if all Israelis converted to Islam there would be no need for conflict. This demand is obviously not one that Israel could ever concede to.

Article 12 reiterates and emphasizes that Hamas's core drive is not materialistic: "The nationalism of the Islamic Resistance Movement has all these elements as well as the more important elements that give it soul and life. It is connected to the source of spirit and the granter

[223] These are not always different from my logic, specifically regarding the role of internal and external constraints.
[224] Hassan al-Banna's ideology also informs global jihadist groups, e.g., al-Qaeda and ISIS. (Emerson 2019).

of life." This means that its ideology is not diminished in the eyes of its adherents by material loss, poverty, destruction, privation or even death. This type of ideology makes it much more difficult for a state to leverage carrots and sticks to create deterrence and incentivize negotiation (although among the population all but the most ideologically committed might stray from their commitment in the face of extreme hardship). Furthermore, a rival's legitimacy is not boosted by better socio-economic outcomes.[225] Hamas is willing to sacrifice material wellbeing to its ideological goals. Jeffrey Goldberg—writing for the Atlantic—remembered a 2002 interview with the now dead Hamas cofounder Abdel-Aziz Rantisi. Rantisi stated: "The Jews will lose because they crave life but a true Muslim loves death." (Goldberg 2014).[226]

Israeli officials consider it unlikely that poorer standards of living will lead Gazans to pressure Hamas to moderate its ideology. Despite over a decade of hardship, Hamas maintains tight control. (AP and TOI Staff 2017).[227] Hamas's ideology precludes negotiations. As it states in article 13:

> Initiatives, and so-called peaceful solutions and international conferences, are in contradiction to the principles of the Islamic Resistance Movement…. There is no solution for the Palestinian question except through Jihad. Initiatives, proposals and international conferences are all a waste of time and vain endeavors.

At their core, Hamas and global jihadist movements share an absolutist ideological commitment. Because of Hamas' geography and history, Hamas primarily focuses on Israel. Israel's perception of Hamas as driven by absolutist ideology has not changed throughout its conflict. On August 18, 2019, Hamas leader Haniyeh stated: "our faith will be silenced unless we defend Palestine with rockets." (Jerusalem Post Staff 2019). These constant statements reaffirm Israel's position that continued violence is central to Hamas' defining purpose. Indeed all 22 experts that I interviewed, including the most dovish, Yossi Beilin—architect of the Oslo Accords—claim Israel has, and continues to see Hamas, as driven by ideology over pragmatism.

BACKGROUND

[225] Israeli officials acknowledge that improving the material wellbeing in Gaza is desired to prevent a humanitarian crisis yet note that "Israel believes that it can make peace with a moderate Palestinian leadership that rejects terrorism." (IMFA 2007). Israeli leaders have been and continue to be skeptical that improved material wellbeing in Gaza can lead to Hamas moderation. Indeed, Israel has limited materials that could improve welfare in Gaza out of fear that they will be used by the extremist leadership to increase their military power. (IMFA 2010).
[226] Israel assassinated Rantisi in 2004.
[227] Polls show that support for Hamas, despite three short, devastating wars with Israel, is steady at around a third and that Hamas would win elections in the Gaza Strip if held in 2015. (PCPSR 2015).

Hamas grew out of the Muslim Brotherhood movement that arose in Egypt in the 1920s. It was legally registered in Israel in 1978 by Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, the movement's spiritual leader, as an Islamic association named Al-Mujamma Al Islami.[228] Yassin and his associates were sometimes supported by Israel which viewed them as "a convenient foil for the secular nationalist factions such as Fatah that Israel then perceived to be greater threats." (Higgins 2009).

Israel viewed the precursor to Hamas as eschewing violence in favor of a peaceful religious platform and social services. (Falk interview 2019).[229] Israeli policy allowed the growth of what appeared to be an alternative to Israeli or PLO governance over a hostile population.

In 1982, Yassin created what became Hamas's military arm. (Al-Bawaba 2004). In the early 1980's, the group began amassing arms for use against Israel. Israel discovered the group in 1984 and imprisoned Yassin. Israel released him a year later as part of a prisoner exchange with PFLP-GC leader Ahmed Jibril. In 1984, the IDF's conducted its first operation against this Hamas precursor, arresting Yassin and Salah Shehade, head of its military apparatus. (Al-Jazeera 2011).[230] In 1987, Yassin and Rantisi officially founded Hamas, explicitly calling for violence against Israel. (Laub 2014).

In 1988 Hamas published its charter which blended jihadist ideology with classic conspiratorial anti-Semitism and called for the destruction of Israel. By 1993 it was employing suicide bombings while its more secular rival was beginning what Israeli leadership generally perceived at the time to be a sincere peace process. Since then, even the most dovish elements in Israeli politics see Hamas as religiously driven to fanatically adhere to an absolutist ideology that is unshakable in its long-term pursuit of destroying and replacing Israel while being willing to enforce short-term strategic cease-fires (*hudnas*) to preserve its military power.

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[228] Al Mujamma al Islami was established in Gaza in the 1970s under the auspices of the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood, which had links to Muslim Brotherhood chapters in Egypt and Jordan and later developed links to branches elsewhere—most notably among Palestinian refugees and expatriates living in Kuwait. (Zanotti 2010, 40).

[229] Dr. Ophir Falk said Israel viewed this precursor to Hamas "like Shas," a Jewish political party that serves as a religious and social network.

[230] In 1986 Sheikh Salah Shehada formed a network of cells called "Al-Mujahidoon Al-Filistinion" (the Palestinian fighters). The network targeted Israeli soldiers and Palestinian "traitors." It operated until 1989. Their most noted operations were the kidnappings of two IDF soldiers: Ilan Sadoon and Avi Sasbortas. Following its official establishment on December 14, 1987, Hamas formed similar networks, such as "Abdullah Azzam Brigades" and "Majd," the latter focusing on targeting collaborators with Israel. (Al-Qassam website archive).

As of today, Hamas has no interest in renouncing violence towards Israel. It believes that the PA's cooperation with Israel makes them sell outs. Palestinian support for Hamas' hardline stance along with PA corruption and Hamas' better provision of social services, explains their democratic victory in 2006. Their election and sustained popularity despite poor standards of living, demonstrates the popular base for their absolutist ideology.

1987-1995: HAMAS GAINS ISRAEL'S ATTENTION

Hamas's military wing, the Izz a-Din al Qassam Brigades officially became known as the armed branch of Hamas in 1991. Its name conveys ideological purpose of militarily resistance.[231]

The Izz a-Din al Qassam Brigades is organized as "a network of specialized cells operating all over the Gaza Strip and West Bank. The cells operate independently of each other under the instructions of the Brigades leadership. This structure made it difficult for Israel to curb its activities or threaten its survival by targeting its leadership.

They describe themselves as "engaged in a relentless, long battle against the occupation army." They decried the PA crackdown on their organization from 1995-2000. (Al-Qassam website archive). This temporary and half-hearted crackdown resulted from Israel's strategy to boost the PA's governance capacity so that it could prevent Hamas from violating terms in the event of a negotiated settlement. The U.S., Israel, the E.U., and Canada consider Hamas to be a terrorist organization. (Zanotti 2010, 1).

In 1991 Hamas began to increase its regional ties, establishing a permanent mission in Tehran (Smith 2016, 419). In December 1992, Israel deported top Hamas leaders to southern Lebanon in response to several Hamas kidnappings and killings of Israeli soldiers. The U.S. joined human rights organizations in pressuring Israel to repatriate the leaders to the West Bank and Gaza. Israel's Supreme Court ruled in favor of the international position and against the recommendations of its security establishment. Israel conceded in late 1993, demonstrating the impact of internal and external constraint on Israel's actions. (Zanotti 2010, 40).[232]

[231] Izz al Din al Qassam was a Muslim Brotherhood preacher and religious teacher who preached Jihad and revolution against British rule and the Zionists in Palestine. He organized and led the first Palestinian guerilla group and was killed in 1935 triggering the Arab Revolt of 1936-39.

[232] This episode caused Israel great strategic harm because Hamas leaders formed operational ties with Hezbollah while in Lebanon. The acceptance of avowed enemies back into Israel's immediate vicinity demonstrates a level of constraints few countries face.

In 1993, Hamas rejected and condemned Arafat's negotiations with Israel. This stemmed from Hamas' absolutist ideology; what Hamas called the treasonous negation and selling-out of Palestinian rights to all the territory including that within Israel's pre-1967 boundaries, in exchange for the promise of self-determination in the territories captured by Israel in 1967.

Demonstrating Israel's perceived difficulty targeting Hamas leadership, former Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon, who commanded the Judea and Samaria Division in the mid-1990s, claimed that "in 1993, Hamas's fundraising leadership was based in Virginia."[233] Hamas raised a significant portion of its financing in the U.S..[234] In 1994, Israel approached the U.S. for help isolating Hamas financially.

1995-2002: BUILDING THE ARCHITECTURE FOR EFFECTIVE DENIAL

Israel began a policy of assassinating Hamas leaders and operatives in 1995. This was difficult due to its ceding sovereignty to the PLO in areas A and B in 1995 and withdrawing its military presence. The propelling cause for this shift was Hamas demonstrating its ability to vitally threaten Israel's security. Hamas achieved this through a concerted suicide bombing campaign, reaching an apex with the coordinated Beit Lid suicide bombing on January 22, 1995.[235] Three days later, President Clinton named Hamas a specially designated terrorist organization by executive order. (Treasury.gov 1995).[236] This minorly reduced external constraints on hardline actions against Hamas while internal constraints remained high. Several of the experts I interviewed pointed out that internal constraints always had a greater impact on Israel's policy than external ones, although the latter were always consequential.

Since its inception in 1987, Israel considered Hamas to be a type A NSA, driven to attack it. Socialization logic suggests that Israel would optimally seek to decisively defeat Hamas as early as 1987, or, if too constrained, to at least manage the threat. Therefore, Israel's specific

[233] Interview with General Ya'alon on October 2, 2018.
[234] Federal Bureau of Investigation investigations, Israeli investigations, and media reporting "revealed that Hamas had been recruiting and fundraising on U.S. soil since its inception." The Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development headquartered near Dallas, Texas, with offices in California, New Jersey, and Illinois was a Hamas financing hub. (Zanotti 2010, 41).
[235] Until 1995, Hamas attacked Israeli targets inside the territories. After a radical settler killed 29 Palestinians worshipers in Hebron, Hamas began attacking civilians in Israel, including its first use of suicide bombings.
[236] Executive Order 12947 of January 23, 1995, "Prohibiting Transactions with Terrorists Who Threaten to Disrupt the Middle East Peace Process," blocked the assets of and prohibited U.S. transactions with Hamas and other specially designated terrorist organizations deemed threats to the Middle East peace process, including the Israeli extremist groups Kach and Kahane Chai. (Zanotti 2010, 41).

change in strategy—from largely ignoring Hamas until 1995 to managing it through offensive denial after—is better explained by a change in how it perceived the level of threat, than by socialization logic. Israel did not directly pursue decisive victory despite perceiving Hamas to be type A for most of the Oslo period because Israeli leadership perceived high constraints. These stemmed from the ongoing Oslo process that did not break down until the collapse of Camp David and the launch of the Second Intifada in 2000. However, Israeli leadership did believe that through the Oslo process, it might be able to manage, if not defeat Hamas terrorism.

Several of the experts that I interviewed cited Rabin as expecting the newly created PLO security forces to crack down on Hamas and other terrorist factions in a way that Israel was too constrained to do. Rabin stated: "The PLO security forces will fight terrorism without having their hands tied by B'tselem and Bagatz."[237] This suggests not only that Israel sought to augment the PLO's governance function, but that it did so specifically to circumvent its own constraints to be better able to defeat Hamas. While arguments for Israel's creation of PLO governance span from Rabin's personal dovishness to foreign pressure, to Israeli realpolitik, the evidence suggests that through the Oslo process, Israeli leaders sought to socialize the PLO and defeat Hamas. Israel's misperception of the PLO's type explains why this strategy failed. Indeed, throughout the Oslo process, until its collapse, it was eminently clear that the PLO neither desired, nor was able, to defeat Hamas.[238]

As Israel awoke to the reality of the Hamas threat, it took measures to enhance its ability to target its leadership and operatives.[239] On January 6, 1996, Shimon Peres approved the assassination of Yahya Ayyash, 'The Engineer.' Peres is regarded as a dovish idealist and the mastermind behind the Oslo process. His initiation of targeted assassinations as a strategy fits with socialization logic's predictions regarding a constrained state managing an ideologically driven NSA like Hamas and confounds arguments that hawkish leaders are responsible for

[237] B'tselem is a left-wing organization that documents and reports on IDF activity, especially hardline counterterrorism. Bagatz is Israel's Supreme Court. It is generally pegged a being left-wing.
[238] Israel continued vigorously pursuing Hamas operatives and bolstered the PA, hoping that Arafat would crack down on Hamas. The U.S. bolstered Arafat's forces through CIA funding of tens of millions of dollars. (Loeb 1998). Before the Second Intifada, Israel and the PLO cooperated to weaken Hamas, cracking down on their sources of funding during the Oslo years. Cooperation was not comprehensive. By 1998, Israel's Foreign Ministry archive shows that it saw Hamas as more institutionalized because Arafat freed high-level Hamas prisoners. (Shaked 1997).
[239] Hamas leadership is hierarchical, with political and military leadership nominally distinct. Hierarchical leadership structures are generally more targetable. The targetability of Hamas leadership has varied from low to high over the course of this conflict.

Israel's hardline strategy. Israel harmed its operational effectiveness in order to avoid collateral damage, demonstrating the extent to which Israeli leaders understood their constraints.[240]

In a carrot and stick combination Israel targeted Hamas operatives while signaling the possibility that Hamas become a legitimate political party if they abandon violence. These potential attempts to socialize Hamas by boosting its governance function were half-hearted and short-lived.[241] This suggests that Israeli leaders knew they could not socialize Hamas to moderate its ideology, making it less likely to be able to socialize it into the type that could be bargained with by boosting its governance function as an NSA highly driven by an absolutist ideology.

Israel continued to manage the conflict by degrading Hamas capabilities through assassinations. Since 1996, Israel had been trying unsuccessfully to kill Mohammed Deif who took over Ayyash's role as the leader of Hamas military wing. In June 1996, the hawkish Likud government, led by Benjamin Netanyahu took power. Despite completely different leadership, Israel continued his dovish predecessor's hardline policies towards Hamas.

Israel was less externally constrained to target Hamas leaders after the U.S. State Department officially named it a foreign terrorist organization in October 1997. (Zanotti, 10). It was still internally constrained, especially due to poor operational capabilities. Netanyahu's failed attempt to assassinate Hamas political Leader Khaled Meshal demonstrated that Israel still lacked capability to target Hamas political leadership. (Cowell 1997). Instead, Israel continued targeting Hamas's operational leadership. While targeting political leadership follows a decisive victory strategy aimed at defeating or socializing the opponent. Targeting operatives follows a management strategy to degrade but not socialize the opponent. Operational leaders are replaceable, and the political leadership does not fear for its survival.[242]

As Hamas continued a series of high-profile attacks, Israel increased its ability to target Hamas leadership by restructuring their command and control (C2) infrastructure. In 1999 Israel

[240] Israel killed Ayyash by booby-trapping his cellular phone despite considering an overt strike far easier and possible to conduct earlier. (Shmemann 1996).
[241] Following Oslo II, Rabin permitted Hamas operatives to go to Sudan to discuss the possibility of becoming a political party within the framework of the forthcoming elections for the Palestinian Council. Hamas participated in Israeli-Palestinian talks in December 1995 for the first and only time in the conflict. (Rodan 1996, 173).
[242] On March 29, 1998, Israel successfully assassinated Yahya Ayyash's second in command, Mohi al -Dinh Sharif dubbed "Engineer Number 2." (Bergman 2018, 473). On September 11, 1998, Israel assassinated Adel Awadallah, the leader of Hamas's military wing in the West Bank and his brother Imad. (Bergman 2018, 478).

integrated its military and civilian defense agencies in its Central Command to form the Joint War Room (JWR), replicating this in the entire country by September 2000. This greatly boosted Israel's ability to target high profile Hamas terrorists. A Shin Bet officer claimed that JWR took planning and implementation of targeted assassinations from "months if not years to plan and implement one hit," to "four or five a day." (Bergman 2018, 504). These drastically enhanced targeting capabilities both increased Hamas leadership targetability and reduced Israel's internal constraints. By early 2000, Hamas reduced its activity to an all-time low, suggesting that Israel's assassination campaign was shifting from management to part of a decisive victory strategy, potentially able to socialize Hamas. (517).

Because of Hamas's high ideological drive, the deterrence that Israel achieved through assassinations evaporated quickly absent a comprehensive decisive victory strategy. This accelerated as Hamas vied to remain relevant as the PLO increased its own terrorism during the Second Intifada.

The degeneration of the Oslo peace process into an orgy of violence boosted the political profile of Hamas and its absolutist agenda.[243] Hamas also accrued power through its social institutions which were used for indoctrination and militant recruitment.[244] By providing social services to the poor, Hamas gained a reputation for honesty and integrity, especially when compared to the corrupt PLO. All of these factors helped Hamas take power in Gaza in 2007.

As Israel faced increased violence, it sought to loosen its constraints. Israeli leaders understood that they would need to increase military actions. On January 18, 2001, military Advocate General Finkelstein issued a legal opinion on the request of IDF chief of staff Mofaz that created a new framework that defined counterterror operations during the Second Intifada as warfare and not law enforcement. This loosened the ROEs, reducing Israel's constraints and enhancing its ability to target Hamas leadership. (Bergman 2018, 510). Less than a year following this ruling which reduced Israel's internal constraints, the September 11, 2001 terror attacks on the U.S. greatly reduced its external constraints. This was not lost on Israel's

[243] By July 2001 Hamas "claimed 27 percent of polled support, which represented an 80 percent increase from 1996." By December 2002, "a Bir Zeit University poll revealed that 42 percent of Palestinians favored an Islamic state, a finding that was totally unprecedented." (Roy 2003, 18).
[244] By the year 2000 approximately 65 percent of all Gazan educational institutions below the secondary level were Islamic according to the Ministry of Education. (Roy 2003, 16).

leadership. According to Deputy Shin Bet Director Yuval Diskin, "The attacks on 9/11 gave our own war absolute international legitimacy… we were able to completely untie the ropes that bound us." (Bergman 2018, 515). By the end of 2001, Shin Bet director Avi Dichter called to increase the pool of potential Hamas targets to operational infrastructure.[245] Sharon gave him the go ahead, allegedly whispering, "go for it, kill them all." (Bergman 2018, 497, 499).

There was, and continues to be, strict oversight, including representatives of the International Law Department who sit in on planning when civilians could potentially be harmed in the operation. Terrorists understood and exploited Israel's strict ROEs. Israel had one clear rule according to Reisner, Chief of the International Law Department, Israel never signed off on a targeted assassination when children were likely to be killed. The hit on Hamas military leader Sheikh Salah Shehade was postponed several times for this reason. IDF chief of staff at the time, Moshe Ya'alon, recalled American incredulity at Israel's exceedingly high constraints, saying that the US.' criteria "was very different from the suspenders that we'd tied our own hands with." (Bergman 2018, 520, 521).

2002-2008: OPERATION DEFENSIVE SHIELD AND DECISIVE VICTORY

Following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States, and coincident with Operation Defensive Shield aimed at militarily crushing the Second Intifada, Israel honed its operational capabilities towards the PLO and Hamas.[246] Israel increasingly demonstrated the targetability of Hamas leadership as its policy of targeted assassination became more efficient under Sharon. Whereas prior to Defensive Shield Israel targeted only Hamas operatives to disrupt terrorist operations, Israel's new approach targeted senior leadership.[247] (David 2002).

[245] Following the Oslo II negotiations between Israel and the PLO in 1995, Israel withdrew its military from significant portions of the West Bank. This reduced its ability to conduct counterterrorism in these areas.
[246] During the Second Intifada, Hamas and the PA entered a period of heightened cooperation. Examples include the PA's release of jailed Islamic activists, and Hamas supporting Arafat during the siege of his compound by Israeli forces. Therefore, unique to this period, Israel simultaneously targeted both groups militarily.
[247] Up until 2002 most of those killed were mid-level, "important enough to disrupt a terrorist cell but not so important as to provoke retaliation." (David 2002, 118). Israeli leaders explicitly made no distinction between Hamas political and military leadership. In early 2003, Sharon sanctioned Operation Picking Anemones, an assassination campaign against Hamas leadership, advocated by Major General Zeevi-Farkash, chief of the IDF's Military Intelligence, to "build a clear-cut deterrent" and convince them that they would be targeted even if they called themselves political functionaries. The first target was Hamas strategist Ibrahim al-Makadmeh on March 8, 2003. On August 12 2003, Israel assassinated Ismail Abu Shanab, leader of the Hamas political arm. (al Jazeera 2003). U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan calling it an illegal "extrajudicial killing." (Bergman 2018, 543).

Following the Passover Massacre at the Park Hotel in Netanya on March 29, 2002, Sharon initiated Operation Defensive Shield, a long-planned hardline crackdown on both PLO and Hamas terrorism. After continued bombings, Sharon began taking military control of land in the West Bank that Israel has ceded to the PA in the 1990. It also started using more on-the-ground methods such as the Grass Widow. These operations were highly effective at killing Hamas, Fatah and PIJ terrorists.[248] (Bergman 2018, 539).

On July 22, 2002, Israel assassinated Shehade, killing his wife, daughter and 10 civilians including seven children in the process. Israeli protest and media scrutiny were greater than the international condemnation which was also severe. The civilian collateral damage led to numerous domestic protests, published letters of denunciation, and insurrection, including refusal to take part in operations against Palestinians, in active and reserve duty pilots and SIGINT operatives. (Bergman 2018, 526). This reminded Israel's military and political leaders' that they still faced high internal constraints.

Targeted killings were effective offensive denial. By the summer of 2002, the Shin Bet and its partners were able to prevent over 80 percent of planned terror attacks. However, this did not increase Israel's deterrence or elicit Hamas' moderation. As Israel increased its ability to thwart attacks, the number of attempted attacks increased as well. A senior Shin Bet official demonstrated the desire to create deterrence leading to moderation, stating "we felt like we had something like a year, perhaps a little more, to give them such a punch that would make the whole business not worth it from their point of view." (Bergman 2018, 539).

Israel killed Shehada despite having good intelligence that Hamas planned to curtail suicide bombing attacks inside Israel's pre-1967 borders and potentially propose a cease-fire. This suggests that Sharon's government preferred to militarily dismantle Hamas. In this period of loosened constraints, Sharon's government was pursuing decisive victory over Hamas and rejected short-term cessation of violence when it would interfere with the pursuit of victory. This fits with socialization logic. Israel sought to decisively defeat Hamas and did not negotiate with it, despite the threat that it posed domestically and the possibility for a short-term alleviation of that threat. Israel understood Hamas to not be a type that could be bargained with.

[248] Grass Widow operations consisted of an intelligence gathering and operational mission. A surveillance team commandeers a building in a target area and uses it as a platform for operations, usually targeted assassination.

Israel's perception of loosened constraints did not last long. On September 6, 2003 Israel called off what Dichter called an "'historic opportunity' to cause 'perhaps irreparable' damage to Hamas." The attack could have obliterated all of Hamas senior leadership in one blow as they were gathered at the home of Abu Ras.[249] Chief of staff Ya'alon acknowledged as much but advocated calling off the strike. He stated that Israel needed "internal and external legitimacy to carry on our fight" in a call with Sharon. Eventually, due to Dichter's insistence, the operation was modified to only target the top floor to minimize collateral damage. The meeting was not held on this floor and the operation failed. (Bergman 2018, 546). This illustrates the difficulty of pursuing decisive victory under high constraints.

On December 21 2003, thirteen soldiers from Israel's most elite unit, *Sayeret Matkal*, signed a letter refusing orders to carry out operations in the territories. This greatly worried Israel's leadership. It demonstrated a high level of internal constraints that made Israel less capable of threatening unrestrained force, the kind that could potentially be able to defeat Hamas as an organization. (Harel 2003).

By 2003 Israel faced its highest level of threat since 1973. It was surrounded by a unified Iranian funded array of state and non-state enemies, including Syria, Hezbollah and Hamas as well as Fatah and PIJ in the territories. Furthermore, the Second Intifada was at its peak, wreaking high civilian casualties and severe economic harm.[250] At this point, Sharon first proposed the Disengagement Plan to the Knesset. (Zanotti, 43). This is puzzling. Why would a hawkish leader voluntarily give up territory as it faced decreased relative power?

Sharon was backed by his Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz in arguing that the Disengagement would boost Israel's security by creating more defensible borders and would boost Israel's international legitimacy by demonstrating willingness to concede Palestinian self-rule.[251] Sharon did not expect that Hamas would take over Gaza and therefore did not consider withdrawing from Gaza as necessarily strategically dangerous.[252] Furthermore, Israel's previous

[249] Arwan Abu Ras is a radical Hamas member and professor at Islamic University. In 2017 he delivered a sermon in which he stated that "Hitler hated the Jews because they are a people of treachery and betrayal." (MEMRI 2017).
[250] The Second Intifada was the only conflict that coincided with a contraction of Israel's economy in its history. This demonstrates the existential threat that Israel faced.
[251] The Disengagement was mainly geared towards the PLO which was politically and de-facto in charge in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.
[252] The withdrawal of Israeli communities from Gaza and from four areas in the West Bank, created clearer "borders." Instead of having to protect individual communities surrounded by Palestinian populations. In line with

success in assassinating Gaza based Hamas leadership shifted the locus of Hamas's leadership to the political bureau in Damascus where it was less vulnerable.

The Disengagement unintentionally reduced Israel's ability to threaten Hamas with defeat. Many in Sharon's government opposed this move either on ideological grounds, security reasoning, or both. The opposition included then Finance Minister Benjamin Netanyahu who resigned from the Knesset in protest. (Wilson 2005).[253]

Operation Continuing Story and Preparations for the Disengagement Plan

As Israel prepared to withdraw from Gaza and portions of the West Bank, it ramped up its targeting of Hamas leadership. Sharon appointed Meir Dagan to head the Mossad in 2003. Israel's security establishment sought to socialize Hamas through the threat of decisive victory. Mofaz believed strongly in targeting leadership as a strategy intended to deter not deny, stating, "sporadic eliminations are worth nothing." Dagan agreed, arguing that to succeed strategically, targeted killings must constitute an ongoing threat. Dagan defined leadership as anyone belonging to the "supreme operative echelon." (Bergman 2018, 581).

On March 2 2004, the IDF announced plans to "eliminate as many terrorists as possible" before withdrawing from Gaza. Following a Hamas suicide bombing in Ashdod, Israel launched Operation Continuous Story targeting "top figures" in all terror organizations. (JPS 2009, 140).

On March 22 2004, Israel assassinated Hamas founder and leader Sheik Yassin along with two bodyguards in a precision missile strike.[254] Peres opposed the assassination. He later stated that he thought "it was precisely with him that we would be able to reach a peace agreement." (Bergman 2018, 553). There was a significant portion of Israel's leadership during the Oslo process that agreed with Peres that Israel could successfully negotiate peace with Arafat and the PLO. However, Peres was the lone voice among Israel's leadership that espoused the view that Yassin and Hamas were potential peace partners. (Interviews 2018/19).

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this reasoning, on May 13 2004, "Israel launched a major bulldozing operation in Rafah (Operation Rainbow) to widen its South Gaza buffer zone (the Philadelphi route)." On June 28, 2004 Israel "launched Operation Active Shield, which included massive bulldozing along Gaza's northern border with Israel." (JPS 2009 141).

[253] Today there is general consensus that the Disengagement harmed security. A 2012 video mocked the Knesset members who argued to the contrary, calling them "the wise men a Chelm," a classic Jewish series of stories about a fictional town comprised of fools. Israeli ministers arguing in favor of the disengagement argued that it was foolish to think that rocket fire would increase following Israel's withdrawal. (Gedalyahu 2012).

[254] Rantisi was killed when an Israeli helicopter fired two precision missiles at his sedan.

Killing Yassin set the precedent whereby Israel would readily approve assassinating Hamas political leadership. At this point, Israeli intelligence made Hamas leadership particularly targetable. (Bergman 2018, 556).[255] On April 17 2004, Sharon ordered the assassination of Hamas leader in Gaza Rantisi only a month after killing Yassin. Israel demonstrated the ability to track the location and movements of Hamas leaders and to target them at will. This was the apex of Israel's decisive victory strategy. The Israeli government approved the elimination of Hamas' entire leadership following Yassin's assassination. (Brown 2004).

The assassination of Rantisi was Israel's 168th since the start of the Second Intifada. (Bergman 2018, 556). Following the killing of Rantisi, Egypt's intelligence minister General Omar Suleiman came to Israel bearing a Hamas truce offer, a cessation of terrorism in exchange for a cessation of assassinations, demonstrating that Israel's strategy was creating at least short-term moderation. Mofaz did not see Hamas as having moderated. He claimed that "Hamas wants a truce so it can grow stronger." He proclaimed Israel's decisive victory strategy, telling Suleiman "we have to defeat them, not allow them to breathe." Sharon backed Mofaz. (557).[256]

Hamas moderation turned out, as expected, to be short-term. On August 31 2004, Hamas bus bombings in Beersheba killed 16 people and wounded 100. (IMFA 2004). On September 26 2004, Israel resumed targeting Hamas leaders, assassinating Hamas' Iran liaison Izz al-Din al-Sheikh Khalil in Syria. (Wedeman and Amin 2004).

Israel increased its decisive victory campaign, launching seven ground offensives between September 2004 and mid-January 2005. Israel also continued high value assassinations of Hamas leadership.[257] This use of force seemed effective at degrading and deterring Hamas

[255] IDF SIGINT Unit 8200 was proving itself especially capable of tracking terrorists. Killing Yassin had an unintended consequence, it further shifted Hamas's center of gravity to its more difficult to target leadership, namely Mashal who resided in Syria. It also helped Hamas increase its funding and power by removing Yassin who opposed working with the Shiite Iranians. Mashal had no qualms and created strong ties between Hamas and Iran. (Bergman 2018, 582). The decision to assassinate such a high profile religious and political leader was made and justified after evidence that Yassin issued an edict encouraging female suicide bombers. (Arnon 2004). This increased Israel's perception of the level of Hamas' ideological fanaticism.

[256] Mofaz appeared to backtrack on his support for a decisive victory strategy less than a year later when he supported Sharon's Disengagement Plan which took the pressure off Hamas by withdrawing Israel's military presence from the Gaza Strip. This shift in strategic thinking could have been due to him perceiving diminishing returns in Gaza following the relocation of Hamas leadership to Syria.

[257] Starting from August 9, "the IDF launched three major cabinet-approved operations against Gaza— an unnamed 4-day operation to widen the north Gaza buffer zone (9/8–11) and Operation Days of Penitence (10/1–15) and Operation King's Court (10/24–26), targeting Gaza's "terrorist infrastructure"— that left more than 100 Palestinians dead and hundreds of homes demolished or severely damaged. In the period of violence be-tween the operations, the

enough for them to agree to give up autonomy and be controlled by the PA.[258] This ended when Hamas took over control of Gaza from the PA the following year. By this time Israel and the PA started increasingly cooperating on security and the PA ceased active violence against Israel.[259]

On July 12 2005, the Hamas ally, Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), carried out a suicide bombing in Netanya ending the Sharm al-Shaykh truce. Israel then launched a campaign against PIJ and Hamas and massed troops. Israel threatened to launch Operation Summer's End to deal a decisive blow to Gaza's "terrorist infrastructure." On July 14, Abbas ordered PA security forces in Gaza to prevent attacks on Israelis. PA security forces clashed with Hamas. (JPS 2009, 143).[260] Along with attacks on terrorist infrastructure and leadership in Gaza, Israel began constructing two barriers along the Gaza border "to ensure security after disengagement." (144). By September 22 2005, Israel completed its withdrawal from Gaza.[261]

Disengagement 2005

Immediately after Israel completed its withdrawal, the writing was on the wall regarding future Hamas control. Hamas and other factions declared that they would not agree to PA demands to disarm and open displayed weapons at rallies. (JPS 2009, 144).

Following the highly contentious Disengagement, Israel's hawks appeared vindicated when on the following day Hamas fired volleys of Qassam rockets into Israel.[262] Israel responded with air strikes, killing three Hamas members. Israel then launched Operation First Rain, intended to "set the new 'rules of the game' following disengagement." Israel did not have an effective means of intercepting rockets fired from Gaza and did not have military assets on the

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IDF assassinated (10/21) Adnan al-Gul, a founding member of Hamas and second in command of the Izzeddin al-Qassam Brigades (IQB)." Hamas's military wing. (JPS 2009 141). In early 2005, Israel launched three operations back to back: "Operation Orange Iron (12/17–18) and Operation Violet Iron (12/22/04–1/2/05), both in the Khan Yunis area, and Operation Autumn Wind (1/2) in northern Gaza, all aimed at stopping rocket fire into Israel." (142).

[258] After Israel launched Operation Eastern Step in January 2005 to halt rocket fire from Gaza, Abbas went to Gaza to meet with the Palestinian factions. The factions, including Hamas, "announced a one-month unilateral cease-fire in Gaza while talks continued for a long-term Israeli-Palestinian cease-fire and internal Palestinian power sharing arrangements to govern prior to the legislative elections. They offered Israel a formal truce in exchange for ending assassinations." Israel met quiet with quiet and Egypt oversaw ceasefire talks. On January 28, 2005, Israel ordered a halt to IDF offensive operations in Gaza. On February 8, 2005, Abbas and Sharon concluded a formal ceasefire in Sharm al-Sheikh. By March 2005, PA and Israeli security forces in Gaza began conducting joint patrols.

[259] Cooperation has persisted for over a decade. A permanent peace treaty would be optimal.

[260] Hamas accused the PA of using PIJ's violence as a pretext to try to disarm Hamas. (JPS 2009, 143).

[261] The Disengagement removed IDF installations, forces and over 9,000 citizens from 25 settlements. (IMFA 2005).

[262] This demonstrated a significant increase in the balance of threat as rockets fired from Gaza reached Ashkelon for the first time, wounding five Israeli civilians and marking the first post-disengagement cross-border strikes.

ground capable of stopping launches. Airstrikes failed to deter Hamas from pursuing their ideologically driven agenda because airstrikes alone could not threaten to defeat them.

By late 2005, an intelligence assessment by Shin Bet Director Diskin noted increased Hamas governance function.[263] This was not an intended result of Israel's strategy. Diskin also lamented Israel's decreased ability to prevent Hamas from building its military power.[264]

Diskin predicted Hamas's electoral victory over the PA in the upcoming general Palestinian elections, warning that if the PA fails to regain its stature, "Abbas will face serious difficulties once elections roll around." Noting Hamas' robust electoral infrastructure, Diskin stated what became Israel's position, that diplomacy and negotiation with Hamas was impossible until they disarmed, showing that Israeli leadership did not view concessions or negotiation as possible with Hamas at this time.

Diskin acknowledged that Israel had a better ability to keep Hamas down in the West Bank due to the IDF's continued military presence. Diskin also admitted that absent military power, "the demand to disarm Hamas or prevent it from taking part in the elections is almost impossible." Diskin's statements demonstrate that the Disengagement was not meant as a concession, or to manage relations with Hamas. Rather, it was to reduce external constraints by demonstrating positive gestures to the Palestinians, Therefore, he advocated playing up this angle to build leeway to continue pursuing victory over Hamas. He stated, "we must not forget the risk we took upon ourselves and communicate this to the Americans as well." (Greenberg 2005).

Hamas' Road to Territorial Control in Gaza

From 2000 until 2004, Hamas strengthened its military infrastructure, demonstrating the inability of Israel to decisively defeat it during Operation Defensive Shield. (Hroub 2019). Hamas used Israel's withdrawal to solidify territorial control and develop a state-like military apparatus. In 2005 Hamas won municipal elections in Gaza with 64 percent of the vote. Hamas later won the Palestinian elections, winning 76 of the 132 seats in the chamber. (BBC 2006).

[263] Diskin stated that "the PA is barely functioning, both in the Gaza Strip and in the West Bank, while Hamas continues to strengthen." He stated that "Hamas has established itself as an equal power to the PA and refuses to bow to its commands." (Greenberg 2005).

[264] Diskin noted that "since the IDF left the Philadelphi route (the border area between Egypt and Gaza), and following the chaos in the region, large quantities of weapons have been smuggled from Egypt into the Strip." The Shin Bet estimated that "about 3,000 guns, a million and a half bullets, 150-200 RPG launchers, hundreds of kilograms of explosives and a large number of pistols were smuggled." (Greenberg 2005).

Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh was elected PA prime minister. Abbas responded by declaring a state of emergency, preventing Haniyeh from governing the PA. Haniyeh did take leadership of Hamas in Gaza and solidified power there.[265]

On January 4 2006, Sharon suffered a stroke that left him in a coma from which he would not recover. (Urquhart 2006). Ehud Olmert, a moderate, became acting prime minister until Netanyahu's right-wing Likud party was elected in March 2009. (Shabi 2009).

On January 29 2006, after Hamas won the PA elections, Israel suspended contacts with the PA "until all Palestinian militant groups were disarmed and Hamas had met three demands: (1) recognition of Israel, (2) renunciation of violence, and (3) adherence to previous agreements." These three demands were endorsed by the Quartet as "required of Hamas before the international community would open direct contact with the Hamas-led PA." (JPS 2009, 146). Israel's opposition to Hamas's incorporation into Palestinian politics specifically cites barring "ideologically extremist groups from political participation."[266]

Israel continued to view Hamas as highly driven by an absolutist ideology. In April 2006, IDF intelligence issued a report warning that any moderation in Hamas's position was duplicitous and meant for international consumption. The report stated:

> There are glaring inconsistencies in the messages Hamas sends to the Arab and Western media on the issues of terrorism, Israel, and negotiations. Hamas's media strategy is to adapt its various messages to the relevant target audience: to Western media, Hamas attempts to put across a "soft" image; before the Arab media, including the Palestinian media, Hamas presents a defiant and uncompromising image (including on issues such as terrorism, the peace process, and recognition of Israel). Palestinian Prime Minister Ismail Haniya in particular presents contradictory messages in his appearances before the various media outlets. (IMFA 2006).[267]

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[265] After Hamas' parliamentary victory, it sought to strengthen its grip on the Gaza Strip by establishing its own security force ("The Executive Force"), which answered only to the Hamas-controlled Interior Ministry. The Executive Force and the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades were the main forces that took over the Gaza Strip during the Hamas-led coup and the subsequent purge of Fatah rivals. (IDF Website)

[266] In Annex II, Article III(2), the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement "disqualified from Palestinian elections 'any candidates, parties or coalitions ... [that] commit or advocate racism or pursue the implementation of their aims by unlawful or nondemocratic means.'" (Herzog 2006).

[267] The report notes the following examples of juxtaposition of Hamas statements on various topics.
Jihad: Extreme statement (Arabic): "Resistance is an option that the Palestinian people has adhered to in order to restore its national rights, the right of return, self-determination and the establishment of a Palestinian State." (Khaled Mashal, statement of the secretary-general of the Damascus factions, March 28, 2006). Moderate statements in the Western media: "Hamas never thinks about violence…Hamas in effect aspires towards peace and calm based

Israeli leadership did not believe Hamas statements that conveyed moderation to Western media due to their extremist statements in Arabic. More importantly, Hamas actions continued to clearly demonstrate a commitment to unrelenting violence.[268]

An Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs memo noted Israel's desired goal of a negotiated peace treaty with the Palestinians. The document directly stated that "peace can only be achieved through negotiations to bridge gaps and resolve all outstanding issues." The document also noted Israel's perception of Hamas as too ideologically driven to negotiate with. The document states:

> Extremist Palestinian elements such as Hamas, are unwilling to recognize Israel's very right to exist, and continue to violently act against Israel, against the moderate Palestinian leadership and against the peace process. As such, they have no place at the negotiating table. (IMFA 2007).

At this time, international experts wondered if Hamas would moderate as it gained governance function.[269] Israeli leaders, including former Brigadier General Michael Herzog were

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upon justice and equality…anything which is offered to the Palestinian Authority on a political level will be considered and discussed…. Hamas will look into a mechanism for conducting negotiations." (Ismail Haniya, CBS, March 17, 2006). Recognition of Israel: Extreme statements (in Arabic): "No to negotiations with Israel, no to recognition of Israel and no to surrender of Palestinian rights" (Khaled Mashal, Al-Rai Al-Aaam, March 26, 2006). "One of the basic principles of the new government is not to surrender to international threats and to refuse to recognize Israel" (Ismail Haniya, Alsharoq newspaper, March 1, 2006). "I dream of hanging up a large map of the world on my wall at home in Gaza, on which Israel does not appear". (Mahmoud al-Zahar, March 3, "Moderate" Statements in the Western Media: "We will respect the agreements which will ensure the establishment of a Palestinian state on the '67 lines, as well as the release of prisoners… if Israel withdraws to the '67 lines, we will formulate peace in stages." (Ismail Haniya, Jerusalem Post, February 25). Negotiations with Israel: Extreme Statements (in Arabic): "I will not meet with the leadership of the occupation, and we have those who will represent us in the visits of the prisoners" (Wasfi Kabha, the Minister for Prisoner Affairs, March 28, 2006). "The Palestinian security framework is not amenable to political negotiations, this is certainly not on my agenda" (Said Siam, Minister of the Interior, Press Conference in Gaza, April 2, 2006)." "Moderate" Statements in the Western Media: "In regard to matters of day-to-day living, there are professional elements, and we will not carry out a coup on such matters…" (Said Siam, Reuters, March 23, 2006). Terrorist Attacks: Extreme Statements (Arabic): "Our resistance to occupation in Palestine continues, and will not cease under any circumstances…. the al-Qassem Brigades will continue the march for the total liberation of the soil of their beloved homeland of Palestine, from the sea to the river." (Ahmad al-Jaabari, Hamas website, April 5, 2006). Moderate Statements in the Western Media: "Changes in Hamas are taking place in a gradual and measured manner. Hamas adapts political pragmatism in regard to the state and the ceasefire." (Aazi Hamad, Adviser to Ismail Haniya, March 28, 2006). (IMFA 2006).

[268] Hamas's electoral platform in 2006 suggested the possibility that it would "accept a two-state solution based on the 1967 borders." Despite some diluting of absolutist language in its 1988 charter in 2006, Israel continued to perceive Hamas as a fundamentalist group with absolutist ideological goals that included the imperative to seek Israel's destruction through violence.

[269] In Foreign Affairs in March 2006, Michael Herzog, the son of former Israeli President Chaim Herzog, then a military fellow at The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, noted that, "a number of optimistic observers" argue, that concern over Hamas entering strongly into the Palestinian political arena is overblown. They argued that responsibilities that come with democratic politics, that will "tame Hamas" because upon assuming political leadership, "Hamas will have to answer to a more diverse array of constituencies and either deliver practical results

skeptical, wondering whether Hamas "will simply use political participation as another vehicle for pursuing its alarming core objectives."

Hamas leadership did not inspire optimism. Mahmoud al-Zahar, the group's leading figure told an Israeli newspaper in October 2005, "some Israelis think that when we talk of the West Bank and Gaza it means we have given up our historic war… this is not the case." Regarding democracy, he stated, "we will join the Legislative Council with our weapons in our hands," adding, "in the Islamist Palestinian state, every citizen will be required to act in accordance with the codes of Islamic religious law." (Herzog 2006). In line with socialization logic, Herzog suggested that for democratic participation to lead a radical group like Hamas to moderate, it must feel vulnerability to force. He claimed, absent this, "a party inclined toward radicalism will be able to capture the state apparatus and bend it to its will." Israel's withdrawal from Gaza reduced the credibility of this threat. Israel's inability to credibly signal its resolve to decisively defeat Hamas is the most critical dynamic of this conflict. Its persistence shapes Israel's management strategy until today.

Hamas did not actually moderate its Charter in 2006. [270] According to Herf, "far from moderating its core ideology, Hamas' seizure of power in 2007 gave it the opportunity to make policy based on its guiding goal—namely, the destruction the state of Israel." Herf pointed out how disproportionate international media focus on Israel often ignores or whitewashes the intentions of Hamas. Herf stated, "even though the Covenant is the declaration of intent of a group now governing millions of people, it goes unnoticed by reporters, editors, and pundits who race to comment on Hamas' war with Israel." According to all of the experts that I interviewed; most Israeli leaders believe that the international media ignores Hamas extremism. This is part of Israel's perception of high external constraints.

On June 19 2006, Israel announced a new policy of attacking Hamas targets for each rocket launched from Gaza, regardless of which group was responsible. (JPS 2009, 148). This

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or risk being marginalized for failing to do so." The U.S. government also expressed optimism. "Washington accepted Abbas' assertion that political participation will either transform Hamas or marginalize it." (Herzog 2006).

[270] Hamas cofounder Zahar said in 2006 that it "will not change a single word in its covenant." In 2010 he said, "our ultimate plan is [to have] Palestine in its entirety. I say this loud and clear so that nobody will accuse me of employing political tactics. We will not recognize the Israeli enemy." (Goldberg 2014).

was the start of Israel's eventual shift to a management strategy in 2008, where Israel used Hamas's control in Gaza, to manage it by leveraging carrots and sticks and eventually denial.

Israel has undertaken limited ground incursions into Gaza. However, every expert that I interviewed noted that Israel is a small country where the military is seen as a family and soldiers are viewed as the nation's children. This is a significant internal constraint on military operations that risk soldiers' lives and makes Israel extremely strategically vulnerable to kidnapping.[271]

Hamas's kidnapping of IDF Corporal Gilad Shalit resulted in Israel releasing thousands of hardened Hamas terrorists. In its aftermath, Israel began boosting its offensive and defensive denial capabilities. Israel's Defense Minister Amir Peretz pushed for the creation of Iron Dome.[272] This reinforced Israel path towards management.[273] Iron Dome was aimed at countering the threat posed by Hamas in Gaza.[274]

Despite engaging in a sustained campaign following the kidnapping of Gilad Shalit—including Operation Summer Rains and Autumn Winds—Israel halted operations on November 25, 2006 after Abbas secured a promise that "Hamas would observe a six-month cease-fire if Israel reciprocated and took serious steps toward creation of a viable Palestinian state." His offers were to Abbas, Israel did not seek negotiations with Hamas.[275] The Israeli government

[271] Israel has granted strategically damaging concessions in exchange for a kidnapped soldier or citizen's release. This is the case even if the kidnapped individual was killed. Israel released top level Hezbollah terrorists for the return of a citizen's body, including the 2008 release of Samir Kuntar, who was freed as part of an exchange that returned the bodies of two soldiers to Israel. Kuntar was killed in an Israel airstrike in 2015. (Barnard 2015).
[272] Originally intended to protect strategic assets, Iron Dome first became operational and demonstrated battlefield success in 2012. In 2014 it proved to be a highly effective defensive denial technology. (Ginsburg et. al. 2012).
[273] Peretz claims he "was told in no uncertain terms that defensive systems were incompatible with the offensive spirit of the IDF." Both Halutz, and the director general of the Defense Ministry, Ashkenazi, argued that "the rocket fire from Gaza was a tactical weapon, capable of harming morale and inflicting statistical wounds, but not a strategic threat to the state." (Ginsburg et. al. 2012). Poor performance in the Second Lebanon War led Israel's defense establishment to consider what Peretz had been arguing, that a weapon which harms morale is a strategic threat. Peretz noted the political leeway that defensive systems grant, claiming of his brainchild Iron Dome, "It allows people to make decisions without panic." However, following the 2006 war, in a meeting with the prime minister, Peretz said, Halutz and Ashkenazi "remained opposed to developing a missile-based defense system against rockets." Only in February 2007 could Peretz authorize Iron Dome's development. (Ginsburg et. al. 2012).
[274] Immediately after the conclusion of the 2006 Lebanon War, Israeli leaders revised their view of Hezbollah's strategic threat to that on-par with a rival state, necessitating large-scale war if deterrence failed. (Zisser 2006).
[275] Olmert stated in a major policy speech that "if the Palestinians maintained the six-month cease-fire in Gaza, formed an acceptable national unity government based on the Quartet requirements, and released Shalit, Israel would be willing to resume contacts with Abbas, release value-added taxes owed the PA, reduce restrictions on Palestinian movement and access, and consider further withdrawal from West Bank settlements." (JPS 2009, 150).

under Olmert at this time favored a negotiated settlement but viewed this as "not feasible for now," "given Hamas's ideological views." (Shikaki Working Paper 2007, 16).

Instead of increasing moderation, Israel's Disengagement increased radicalism and cemented Hamas' political power:

> Many Palestinians gave credit to Hamas for ending the occupation of Gaza by force, leading to a surge in its popularity just before the January elections. In turn, Palestinian violence and the electoral victory of Hamas—a victory that was unintentionally helped by the Israeli turn to unilateralism—helped consolidate the Israeli perception that there was no Palestinian interlocutor. (Shikaki 2007, 11).

Under Olmert, IDF top brass, including Chief of Staff Dan Halutz, initially supported decisive victory by leveraging the power of Hamas's rivals in Gaza. (Harel 2006). "Following Hamas's military takeover of Gaza in 2007, Israel increased its pressure on Hamas." Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni briefed the Knesset that "Israel's aim was, 'weakening Hamas to the point that it would be ousted by the Palestinians.'" Israel faced another major constraint on defeating Hamas, the unpreparedness of its ground forces. Since the end of Operation Defensive Shield, Israel had neglected to prepare its ground forces for large-scale maneuver combat.[276] Its losses to Hezbollah in 2006 led Halutz to resign and Israel to reevaluate its strategic thinking. His replacement, Ashkenazi reprioritized maneuver training in what he dubbed a "back to the basics" approach. His reforms are credited with Israel's good performance in Operation Cast Lead.

Hamas Takes Control of Gaza

Following Hamas's electoral victories, the PA and international community blocked the translation of those victories into actual rule.[277] In response, Hamas initiated violence against PA institutions and personnel in 2006-2007 in what escalated into the Palestinian civil war.[278]

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[276] These were the lessons drawn from the Winograd Commission. Israel prioritized policing due to its experience in the later years of what the Bar Ilan University based defense analyst Eado Hecht refers to as the 'Ebb and Flow' War, which includes the Al-Aqsa Intifada and its aftermath, spanning from 2000 to 2006. Israel assumed that small scale policing actions were the future of ground operations.

[277] The international community supported Fatah and worked to isolate Hamas. Immediately following Hamas' seizure of power in Gaza, the Middle East Quartet recognized the Ramallah-based PA government, a position it reiterated a month later when it met in Lisbon. The U.S. and EU had suspended direct financial and economic aid to the PA after the formation of Hamas-led government in March 2006. They lifted their financial and diplomatic ban on the PA and resumed direct assistance following the Hamas coup in Gaza. (Samhouri 2007, 3).

[278] Following Hamas' electoral victory, on June 14, 2007 "Abbas declared a state of emergency, fired Haniyeh as PM, and dissolved the national unity government. Near midnight, Hamas seized Abbas's Gaza City compound, the only remaining Gaza institution still in Fatah's hands." "Up to 146 Palestinians were killed and 640 injured during the 5-day offensive" (JPS 2009, 155).

Israel took steps to isolate Hamas in Gaza as well. These included: the gradual release of an estimated $650 million in Palestinian tax money to the PA government, the closure of Gaza's three main border crossings and the suspension of imports en-route to Gaza through Israeli ports. These international and Israeli measures are commonly referred to as the "West Bank First" strategy. The goal was to use diplomatic and economic pressure to isolate Hamas, lead to markedly better living conditions in the West Bank as compared to Gaza, and through this, to turn the Gazan population against Hamas rule. (Samhouri 2007, 4). This strategy failed. Hamas ideology puts resistance of Israel above physical wellbeing and this position continues to have extremely high support among the Gazan population.[279] For those Palestinians in Gaza who do not share Hamas leadership's ideological zeal, Hamas maintains a highly capable repression apparatus, and Israel has yet to degrade Hamas capabilities to the extent that opposition forces can overthrow it. Israeli military operations have at times threatened to achieve this, boosting the feasibility of creating short-term deterrence towards Hamas.

By July 2007, Hamas had secured control of Gaza by force. This was a nadir for Israel's relative power in the region. It was surrounded by states and non-state militants with organized military power, large budgets and a growing arsenal of rockets that could reach any target in Israel. Furthermore, the IDF had just suffered a humiliating outcome in its war with Hezbollah and the kidnapping of Gilad Shalit. (Bergman 2018). It quickly became clear that Hamas would not be ousted by the PA. It became increasingly clear to Israeli policymakers that defeating Hamas by isolating it and supporting the PA was not going to succeed.[280]

The Road to Cast Lead

Israel's 2005 Disengagement inadvertently created facts-on-the-ground that precluded its ability to reimpose military rule after Hamas took over control in 2007.[281] Before its withdrawal,

[279] A 2014 poll taken on August 14, following the unprecedented level of devastation of Israel's Operation Protective Edge, shows 88.9 percent support among the population in Gaza for the firing of rockets into Israel. (Kukali 2014). Even under the worst physical conditions, support for militancy against Israel is high.

[280] After increased cooperation between Israel and the PA following President Bush's articulation of the "West Bank first" strategy, Israel increased offensive operations in Gaza, conducting major ground operations throughout July 2007 to degrade Hamas' capabilities. (JPS 2009, 156). Israeli policy supported the concept of working with the PA to overthrow Hamas in Gaza. On September 19, 2007, Olmert's security cabinet declared Gaza a "hostile territory" (IMFA 2007). Israel maintained a strategy of limited, but near daily, ground incursions and high value assassinations throughout 2007, with increasing calls by for large scale ground incursion to overthrow Hamas.

[281] Retired General Gershon Hacohen argues that "what happened with Gaza is that Israel built a wall to defend itself from Hamas. But instead of protecting Israel, it protected Hamas. It allowed Hamas to build a military organization because the fence protected them from [the] IDF." (Hacohen 2019).

it conducted military operations on the discretion of field commanders. Following the withdrawal, operations required cabinet approval. This salient new internal constraint decreased IDF operations in Gaza dramatically. If Israel was to defeat Hamas militarily, this would necessitate more than small-scale operations and support for ineffectual PA forces. Reoccupation and sustained operations to systematically destroy Hamas and threaten its continued military and political existence would have been optimal to socialize Hamas moderation, disarming it and threatening imminent defeat. High constraints made this politically impracticable.

On November 15 2007, Abbas first publicly called for Hamas's ouster from Gaza. As Hamas's entered its fifth month with no prospect of unity talks, it began long-term planning for rule of Gaza.[282] Despite Abbas's calls for overthrowing Hamas, there was no serious consideration of a joint military effort to this end, mostly because Fatah severely lacked the capabilities to solidify control in Gaza. Meanwhile, U.S. pressure led Israel to ease pressure on Hamas by convincing it to open commercial crossings into Gaza.

On December 20 2007, Olmert rejected a cease-fire proposal from Hamas stating that "Israel would not deal with Hamas until it met the three preconditions established earlier." Israeli pressure had prompted a short-term cease-fire but no changes in Hamas' ideological drive. In 2008 Hamas escalated in rocket fire, launching over 150 rockets into Israel between January 15 and 17, the largest concentration to date. Israel increased airstrikes prompting Hamas to clamp down on rocket fire, bringing it to near zero by January 19. (JPS 2009, 159).

Defense Minister Ehud Barak stated Israel's position not to negotiate with Hamas due to its ideological drive. He said, "we have nothing to say to Hamas. We speak to them when we interrogate them in our prisons. But this is a fundamentalist group that says openly that it has received a divine mandate to destroy Israel." (Long 2009).

Israel also saw Hamas as unwilling to accept any form of long-term peace agreement under its ideology. "Hamas has always rebuffed the principle of signing a peace treaty with Israel. Yet the movement seems to be increasingly promoting a ceasefire." Zuhur and Hroub claimed that "Hamas has a pragmatic understanding of its situation and is perfectly aware that it

[282] Hamas revived central authority and reorganized forces "to better provide internal security." (JPS 2009, 159).

does not possess the military capacity to defeat Israel." (Long 2009). While this may be the case, it does not mean that Hamas has incentives to seek peace.[283]

Following continued escalation, Israel sought to reduce its external constraints in preparation for a decisive victory campaign. Olmert ordered government bureaus to secure international "legitimacy of, and freedom of action in, continuing to strike at Hamas." (JPS 2009, 161). In June 2008 Olmert warned of an impending Israeli assault aimed at toppling Hamas.

With the help of Egyptian mediation efforts, Hamas and Israel agreed to a six-month cease-fire beginning on June 19. "Israel would begin to ease the siege on Gaza after Hamas demonstrated its ability to hold all factions in Gaza to the truce." (JPS 2009, 162).[284] The truce was tested by Israel's demolition of cross-border tunnels that it feared Hamas planned to use to carry out kidnappings.[285] On December 14, Barak gave the cabinet a detailed briefing on plans for a major offensive against Gaza and secured unanimous approval to proceed. (JPS 2009, 168). Cognizant of its high external constraints, Israel also launched "an international public relations campaign" that included "briefings to foreign diplomats, phone calls and meetings with foreign leaders to enlist support for a military offensive against Gaza." (JPS 2009, 168).[286] On December 18, Hamas officials in Gaza declared that they would not renew the cease-fire. With the truce officially over, Gazan militants fired dozens of rockets and mortars into Israel.

OPERATION CAST LEAD: A SHIFT TO MANAGEMENT

Israel launched Operation Cast Lead on December 27. It ended on January 18, 2009. It was a major and long-planned operation that for the first time was explicitly stated to not be aimed at overthrowing Hamas rule. Rather, it was aimed at increasing Israel's bargaining

[283] In most asymmetric conflicts, the smaller side has strong resolve to continue fighting. Even the clear acknowledgement of inability to defeat Israel is unlikely to deter Hamas from violence absent Israel demonstrating to Hamas that continued violence would threaten its survival.
[284] From Hamas's perspective, part of the Egyptian brokered ceasefire was the stipulation that Israel end its closure of Gaza's border crossings and end the naval blockade. Israeli officials claim that Hamas's violations and refusal to recognize Israel or renounce violence necessitated a defensive blockade to prevent armament (IMEU 2012).
[285] On November 4, 2008 Israel launched a raid into Gaza to demolish a tunnel that it claimed crossed over into its territory. Hamas saw this as a violation of the cease-fire and fired mortars into Israel. Israel responded with airstrikes that killed five Hamas members and then demolished the house that was covering the tunnel entrance. This escalation began the deterioration of the cease-fire. Hamas resumed large scale rocket fire, launching 35 rockets on November 5, and with other factions, for which Hamas was held responsible by Israel, launching around 10 a day over the next couple of weeks. (JPS 2009, 166). As sustained rocket fire continued, "On November 10, Defense Minister Barak was reportedly given the final blueprint for Operation Cast Lead for his approval." (JPS 2009, 167).
[286] To secure international support, "acting Foreign Minister Livni held teleconferences with UN Secretary General Ban, Secretary of State Rice, and the Foreign Ministers of Britain, France, Germany, and Russia; and she dispatched diplomats to international capitals to lobby for support for Israel in the face of rocket attacks." (JPS 2009, 168).

position vis-à-vis Hamas by demonstrating capabilities and resolve and by severely degrading Hamas's capabilities. Israel's Foreign Ministry stated the goals of the operation: "To strike a direct and hard blow against the Hamas while increasing the deterrent strength of the IDF, in order to bring about an improved and more stable security situation for residents of Southern Israel over the long term." (IMFA 2009).

Israel's shift to management was carried out by the centrist Olmert and persisted under Netanyahu's right-wing government, which took power within months of Cast Lead's conclusion. Olmert was serving as a caretaker prime minister and was pending a criminal trial. Therefore, Olmert did not have any sort of an electoral mandate. Netanyahu could easily have reversed Olmert's strategy reversal. Therefore, domestic politics does not explain this shift. However, Israeli leaders did fear the likelihood for increased external constraints. The dovish Obama administration was set to take office in January 2009.

Increased constraints made a decisive victory strategy less practicable. Therefore, Israel's shift to management can be explained both by socialization logic and international pressure. However, Israeli leaders view President Trump as perhaps the most permissive U.S. president towards Israel. Despite this, Netanyahu has not deviated from management throughout the three years that Trump has been in office. This is likely due to Israel's internal constraints remaining high and growing through increasingly successful denial. Socialization logic provides a more comprehensive explanation of Israel's management strategy. It does not just explain why Israel does not pursue hardline action, it also explains the enduring nature of this conflict, by looking at Hamas's type and Israel's inability to pursue the optimal strategy to socialize it, explaining why Israel does not pursue concessions or negotiation either.

Operation Cast Lead was launched to achieve deterrence and denial, not decisive victory. Israel deployed large ground forces in Gaza but did not attempt to reoccupy the Gaza or topple the Hamas government. (Aran 2012, 852). "In a cabinet communiqué justifying the end of the operation the government reiterated the aim of 'creating deterrence against further terrorist attacks' as a central objective of the operation." Furthermore, it stated "the strikes have . . .

created significant Israeli deterrence, the impact of which will become apparent after the Hamas leadership has surfaced and seen the extent of the damage done to its assets." (Aran 2012 853).[287]

Former commander of the Golani Brigade, Colonel Gabi Siboni claimed that Cast Lead aimed in large part to decay the launch capabilities of Hamas. During the period between 2002-2008, that spanned the governments of Sharon and Olmert, Israel was able to carry out high value assassinations with impunity. During the operation, Israel killed Hamas leaders throughout the three-week campaign. (Interview 2016).

Israel planned and coordinated Cast Lead with remarkable cohesion. Cabinet members kept operational secrecy and Israel utilized extensive intelligence to target Hamas infrastructure efficiently. Cast Lead took place before Israel had any working Iron Dome batteries. With no way to shoot down incoming rockets, Israel was more decisive in its application of force in 2008/9 when compared to Operation Protective Edge in 2014. Israel's shift to a management strategy in 2008 coincided with a drastically increased level of, with Gazan missile fire for the first time hitting as far north as the city of Ashdod, some 32 miles from the Gaza Strip. Increased threat cannot account for Israel's shift towards a more dovish strategy.[288]

Domestic context

The Israeli public could not ignore the daily rocket attacks. It demanded action. Olmert was not running for reelection, but he did not want to leave office regarded as the leader who abandoned southern Israel to daily bombardment. At this time, Israelis' only option under rocket attack was to run to bomb shelters when the domestic service sounded a warning siren.

International context

The most important feature of the international context, due to Israel's close political ties with the U.S., was that George W. Bush was about to end his second term in office. President Barack Obama was elected President just prior to the launching of Operation Cast Lead and was inaugurated on January 20, 2009, two days after Israel announced a unilateral ceasefire and withdrawal from Gaza, ending the operation. Some speculate that Israel's timing during a U.S. presidential transition was intended to minimize international pressure, giving Israel more time

[287] Among Israeli political and military leadership, "there was a conviction that Hezbollah and Hamas could be deterred by infliction of punishment, destruction of assets and civilian infrastructures, and pressure on the civilian population through military activity. This conviction was articulated in the Dahiya doctrine." (Aran 2012, 852).
[288] By the time Operation Cast Lead was launched, approximately 15% of Israel's population was within the range of fire (Globalsecurity.org).

to degrade the capabilities of its adversaries in Gaza and reinstate effective deterrence, anticipating that it would be further constrained in the future. (Chossudovsky 2009).

Israel launched Cast Lead with a well-planned surprise attack on Hamas training facilities, command centers and police stations. This strike—lasting three minutes and forty seconds—killed a third of all the militants killed throughout the operation. (Paz, Pollack 2014). After two weeks of intense fighting, with the ground invasion and aerial surveillance creating more targets for precision air force strikes, Israel announced a unilateral ceasefire and withdrawal on January 18, 2009. This withdrawal followed intense international pressure including UN security resolution 1860 passed on January 8, 2009. (Migdalovitz 2010). Hamas later announced its own ceasefire which held despite numerous violations until 2012.

Hamas remained in power after Cast Lead despite suffering heavy loses. Many Hamas military leaders were killed and over 1,300 Palestinians—the majority, militants—lost their lives. Israel lost nine soldiers and four civilians (Btselem 2011). Israel's unilateral end to the conflict as its operational success was increasing demonstrates its management strategy. Military leadership cited the ability to defeat Hamas, but political leadership was unwilling to pay what was estimated to be a high cost for a casualty averse and internationally vulnerable country.[289]

Israel had high precision but limited its own element of surprise through humanitarian efforts.[290] This purposeful negation of advantage demonstrates the high policy impact of Israel's perception of constraints.

Unfavorable international inquiries and U.N. reports including the Goldstone Commission demonstrated to Israel's leadership that Israel remained exceedingly vulnerable to

[289] Operation Cast Lead was planned to involve three stages, a heavy aerial assault, a swift and decisive ground invasion to degrade rocket launch capacities and destroy weapons factories, tunnels, and weapons caches. A third stage, which was not implemented, would have involved reconquering the Gaza Strip and ousting Hamas. Israeli military leadership estimated that this would have been costly. (Farquhar 2010). Rocket launch capabilities were drastically reduced but not fully thwarted by the final days of the conflict (CRS 2009). Israeli established complete intelligence domination, enabling Israel to compile a "mosaic of Hamas targets" (Farquhar 2010). Hamas's military wing was approximated to be around 15,000 strong, although PIJ and other factions fought in their neighborhoods as well. Israeli infantry troops were slightly more than a division but the use of combined air, naval, UAV, armor artillery and infantry, connected through high tech computerized technology was a major innovation from the Second Lebanon War (Farquhar 2010). Hamas and other factions suffered heavy losses and demoralization, with desertion among Hamas fighters estimated to be as high as 90% in some areas. (Spyer, 2009).

[290] These included leafletting neighborhoods threatened by imminent attack, telephone calls to residents, and the implementation of a period of humanitarian ceasefire during each day of the ground operation following the first few to bring in food and medical goods. (IMFA 2009).

international isolation and condemnation in the aftermath of Cast Lead.[291] However, the security dynamics demonstrated that "mowing the grass" offensive denial operations could diminish Hamas's capability to attack Israel as well as deter it in the short term. Following Operation Cast Lead terrorist attacks and the mortar fire and rocket fire decreased to an unprecedented low that lasted until 2012. (Aran 2012, 853). However, Hamas violation of the ceasefire began less than a month after Cast Lead ended, showing the incapability of Hamas to deviate from its drive to attack Israel despite suffering severe losses.[292]

There has been near monthly—and often weekly—attacks on Israel from Gaza, from the end of Operation Cast Lead until the end of Operation Protective Edge in the Summer of 2014. There was a brief three-month lull following the end of Operation Pillar of Defense on November 21, 2012, until February 26, 2013. (IMFA 2016). Hamas's actions show a lack of fear of Israel defeating it as an organization despite Israel's demonstrated military capabilities and episodic strong responses. Since Cast Lead, Hamas escalations led Israel to launch a major aerial operation in 2012, a major ground operation in 2014, and significant aerial punishment in November 2018. These developments demonstrate Israel's management strategy and highlight the ephemeral nature of its deterrence towards Hamas. High external constraints reduce Israel's deterrence because Hamas understands that Israel is highly constrained by its understanding of the international view of its Gaza policy.[293]

Post Cast Lead Management

Cast Lead was the start of Israel's management strategy towards Hamas that continues until the present. This strategy has three pillars: short-term deterrence, increasing defensive and offensive denial, and economic punishment for violence and rewards for compliance. Defense Minister Ya'alon said that "quiet would be met with quiet" but he added "if provocations

[291] The Goldstone Report in 2009 was highly critical of Israel. It suggesting wide-spread human rights abuses and accused Israel of targeting civilians. It was ratified by the UNGA and the UNHRC in 2009. It "generated controversy because of what many U.S. officials and analysts have deemed its disproportionate and hyperbolic condemnation of Israeli strategy and actions during the conflict." (Zanotti 2010, 37). Judge Goldstone later apologized for what he called unfounded claims of Israel's purposeful targeting of civilians. (Zanotti 2010, 37). He retracted the report claiming, "if I had known then what I know now, the Goldstone report would have been a very different document… civilians were not intentionally targeted as a matter of policy." (Washington Post 2011).

[292] "Attacks by Hamas plummeted following Operation Cast Lead… After March 2009, no month of that year saw more than 25 rocket and mortar attacks — a far cry from the violence of 2008. There were only four shootings in 2009…. 2010 has seen a comparatively low number of rockets flying from Gaza — few, if any, of which were launched by Hamas itself." (Byman 2010).

[293] Israel's "foreign policy towards Hamas following Cast Lead lacked international legitimacy. In fact, the huge human toll it exacted prompted fierce criticism from allies" (Aran 2012 853).

continue, we will know how to pound whoever needs to be pounded." (Lappin 2014). Periodically, Israel engages in larger operations—including targeted assassinations and limited incursion—to reestablish deterrence and degrade Hamas's offensive capabilities. This is sometimes referred to as "mowing the lawn." Although Israel "seeks to deter Hamas, its policy is predicated on the assumption that any deterrence successes will not endure." (Byman 2014).

A comparison of Operation Cast Lead with operations following the integration of Iron Dome shows that Israel tolerated an increased level of threat to what was tolerated before Iron Dome was part of its defensive arsenal. Israel is more inclined to "let the weeds grow" due to its increased defensive denial capabilities. Therefore, increased denial capabilities constitute an unintentional internal constraint. Israeli leaders are not pressured to defeat Hamas due to their ability to manage the threats from Gaza to an increasingly successful degree. Therefore, decisive victory is deemed too costly considering the decreased threat.[294]

Israel's management strategy has proven more sustainable than previously thought.[295] This conforms to the predictions of socialization logic whereby Israel is unable to utilize enough force to get Hamas to shift its ideological drive or defeat it, but considers negotiations futile and concessions dangerous, locking it into a management approach. Management has become demonstrably more viable, despite spikes in violence. A major drawback is the increased danger posed if violence does erupt. This is demonstrated by the highly destructive conflict in 2014, a conflict which greatly surpassed the 2008/9 Gaza conflict in destruction and casualties. The years since Operation Protective Edge have proven to be the quietest in Israel's history, and certainly since Hamas took over Gaza in 2007. This reinforced Israel's perception that spikes in violence are blips in a general trend of ever more successful management of a tense but stable status quo.

It is important to note that Israel has important security reasons to seek victory over Hamas despite increasingly successful management. Israelis fear the potential long-term threat

[294] This can be seen in Israel's notably limited response to Hamas's bombardment of Southern Israel in mid-November 2018, the largest concentrated barrage of rockets launched by Hamas since Operation Protective Edge in 2014. (Liebermann, Carey, Dahman, and Mackintosh 2018). Further demonstrating this strategy, the bombardment followed a botched, risky Israeli undercover operation aimed at increasing Israel's denial capabilities. Undercover operations of these types are seldom highlighted but take place routinely. "Israel is [regularly] doing low-key operations to maintain our intelligence awareness," said Israel Ziv, a former Israeli commander in Gaza. "This is something that usually never gets to the public." (Srivastava 2018).

[295] Professor Daniel Byman wrote in 2010 about the unsustainability of Israel's management strategy towards Hamas. (Byman 2010).

Hamas could pose as its rocket capabilities expand, if it gains a foothold in the West Bank, or if it finds another way to target civilians.[296] Israel also fears the role Hamas could play in a regional war against it.[297]

Byman noted that "some prominent Israelis, such as Efraim Halevy, the former director of Mossad, and Giora Eiland, a former head of Israel's National Security Council, have called for negotiating with Hamas and "other Israelis, who fear that the group will never abandon its goal of destroying Israel, think the Israeli military should retake Gaza before Hamas gets any stronger." Although some leaders propose a decisive victory strategy and others propose negotiation, as socialization logic predicts, Israel has pursued neither. Byman suggested boosting Hamas' government capacity and proposed that the international community support "a more aggressive military response by Israel if Hamas does not change." (Byman 2010). The international community is unlikely to do this.

Israel's perceived heightened external constraints after its raid on the Turkish sponsored a flotilla, the Mavi Marmara—aimed at breaking Israel's blockade of Gaza—sparked a crisis.[298] Turkey led a campaign to direct international attention to Israel's closure of the Gaza border. "This led the Obama Administration to persuade Israel to loosen restrictions on the importation of non-dual-use items and to greater relaxations by Egypt of the Rafah border crossing." (Zanotti 2010, 37). The incident and resulting U.S. pressure demonstrated to Israeli leadership the extent to which their options towards Hamas were constrained.

In 2011, Mubarak was ousted in Egypt. Muslim Brotherhood member Mohammad Morsi was elected. He was sympathetic to Hamas, an offshoot of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. Morsi would not be overthrown by the more cooperative Sisi until 2013. Muslim Brotherhood

[296] In total, suicide bombing attacks by Palestinian militants killed approximately 700 Israelis (mostly civilians within Israel proper), with Hamas directly responsible for more than 400 of these. (CRS 2010).
[297] Israel fears that Hamas capabilities boost the threat posed by state enemies, most importantly Iran, at worst actively aiding them in the case of war, potentially threatening to open a second or third front, and at best distracting Israel; from focusing on these more existential threats, consuming Israel's defense budget, expending Israel's diplomatic capital and providing a vantagepoint to collect intelligence on Israel's military capabilities, including anti-ballistic missile and anti-drone defense.
[298] The IDF cited the international legality of its naval blockade of Gaza. After warning the Mavi Marmara to turn around, the IDF landed a boarding party. Despite video evidence that the crew of the Mavi Marmara was armed and attacked the boarding party with a variety of weapons, this incident in drew international opprobrium and greatly harmed Israel's relations with Turkey, an important partner that until then had good relations with Israel and high levels of mutual trade and tourism.

rule in Egypt increased Israel's perception of high external constraints. Egypt's geopolitical importance to Israel made it more difficult to launch a large-scale operation against Hamas.

On October 11, 2011, Israel agreed to release thousands of Palestinian prisoners in exchange for the release of the captive IDF soldier Gilad Shalit. This strengthened Hamas's operational capabilities, further demonstrating the ostensibly hawkish Netanyahu's desire to manage the conflict, not pursue victory.[299]

In 2012, despite a significant increase in Hamas attacks, including unprecedented attacks on Tel Aviv and even as far north as Haifa, Israel attacked Hamas in Gaza in Operation Pillar of Defense but never launched ground forces.[300]

Pillar of Defense: Increased Defensive Denial:

Operation Pillar of Defense was the first operational test of Iron Dome.[301] Its unexpectedly high success marked the start of the solidification of a feedback loop that continues to reinforce the defensive denial component of Israel's management strategy. It serves as an alternate to, and therefore a domestic constraint on, decisive victory, reinforcing management.

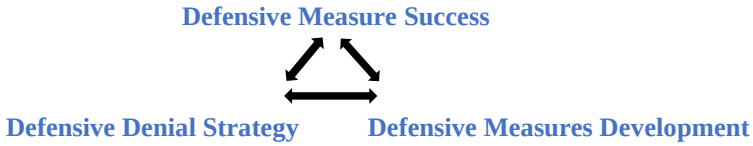

Figure 1: Denial, development, strategy self-reinforcing loop

Following substantial escalation, Israel launched Operation Pillar of Defense on November 14 2012, to reimpose deterrence and degrade Hamas's capabilities. Deterrence and

[299] Opposition leader Tzipi Livni argued that the price Israel paid for the release of Gilad Shalit strengthened Hamas. "Her criticism, expressed on Sunday, came as Ahmed Jabari, the commander of Hamas's military wing, said the organization would make further moves to kidnap Israeli soldiers to use as bargaining chips for the release of Palestinian prisoners." Jabari recognized the strategic advantage to be gained through kidnapping due to Israel's domestic sensitivities. He is quoted as stating "we will continue to abduct Israeli soldiers and officers as long as there are Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails." (Sherwood 2011).

[300] In the immediate run-up to Operation Pillar of Defense, by late October 2012, the threat level from Hamas had become intolerable following direct hits that forced Israel to close schools in southern Israel. From October 30 to November 6 more rockets were launched and an IED placed along the border fence injured three soldiers. On November 10 Hamas militants launched an anti-tank missile at an IDF jeep. By November 13, Gazan militants fired 121 rockets into Israeli territory, as well as several mortars. (IMFA 2016).

[301] Pillar of Defense was Iron Dome's first test under a significant volume of fire.[301] Throughout the operation, Gaza based terrorists fired 1,506 rockets at Israel. Of these, 152 failed to launch, 875 fell in unpopulated areas, and 421 were successfully shot down by Iron Dome, which achieved a success rate of 85 percent. (Brom 2012, 41).

denial are two of the three pillars of Israel's management approach, the third being concessions.[302]

The operation began with the assassination of Ahmed Jabari, the head of Hamas military wing in the Gaza Strip, as well as specific Hamas military assets. That day, "in subsequent air strikes, the IDF seriously damaged Hamas' long-range missile capabilities and underground weapons storage facilities." (IMFA 2012). Israel's success in the first few days of the operation demonstrated the effectiveness of its network of informers. Hamas executed those whom they said had guided Israeli strikes. (Meo 2012).

Israeli leadership saw killing a Jabari as a risk worth taking and the best way to reinstate deterrence and manage the conflict. Its pinpoint accuracy demonstrated Israel's ability to work within the framework of high constraints, minimizing civilian collateral damage. Jabari's assassination was Israel's first targeted killing since Operation Cast Lead in 2009. (Meo 2012).

Israel called up 30,000 reserves immediately and boosted that number to 56,000, signaling a potentially decisive campaign. (Sommer 2012). According to IDF Spokesman Yoav Mordechai, IDF Chief of General Staff Benny Gantz "authorized the army's regular units to prepare for a ground operation." The Netanyahu led Likud Government did not ultimately green light a ground operation into Gaza during this conflict. (Freedman and Ben Zion 2012). Israel's Foreign Ministry website officially described the aim of the operation in management terms:

> The aim of Operation Pillar of Defense is to remove a strategic threat to Israeli citizens. To accomplish this, the IDF will act to protect the lives of Israeli citizens, including by reducing the capabilities of Hamas' long and short-range rocket forces. Additionally, Israel is acting to impair Hamas' command and control system. (IMFA 2012).

In a press conference former deputy chief of General Staff Dan Harel stated, "we're trying to take away [Hamas'] launching capability. It will be difficult, but we're doing our best… Israel does not wish to launch a ground operation, Harel said, but is willing to do so to stop the rocket fire." (Freedman and Ben Zion 2012).

[302] According to Dr. Brom, "the primary reason behind the Israeli government's decision to embark on the operation was its assessment that the state of deterrence it had achieved through Operation Cast Lead had eroded." Secondly, "the backdrop to these developments was the growing potential threat from Gaza resulting from the accumulation of a large arsenal of long-range rockets capable of striking the center of Israel." (INSS 2012, 7).

Including Jabari, Israel eliminated seven senior Hamas leaders and destroyed significant capabilities.[303] Despite the damage, quiet from Gaza lasted only three months. However, there was a significant reduction in the volume of attacks. Captain Vaknin, IDF Operations Officer for the Gaza region, expressed his pessimistic long-term outlook for peace:

> The calm is for two main reasons: firstly, Hamas suffered a severe blow during the operation. On the other hand, Hamas leaders know that as long as they avoid attacking Israeli civilians, Israel will not attack them. This gives them time to rearm and prepare for the next wave of violence. (IMFA 2013).

On November 20, 2012, a day before a ceasefire brokered with Egyptian mediation, went into effect, an Israeli diplomatic source commented on the ceasefire draft saying: "there will be no signed agreement between Israel and Hamas, but solely an understanding between the two sides based on the principal of 'quiet in exchange for quiet.'" Throughout the conflict, Hamas demonstrated the ability to hit Israel's populated center, including the Tel-Aviv region, signaling a significant increase in the level of threat posed to Israel's vital interests, economy, and population. Hamas' inventory of rockets increased.[304] However, Israel did not adopt a harder line strategy despite the clearly increasing level of threat.

Before Pillar of Defense, the Iron Dome system did not influence Israeli strategy because it was yet to be tested. The director of the INSS Middle East Military Balance project Yiftah Shapir, noted how this changed because of the operation. Iron Dome's success led to the strategic prioritization of defensive denial and reduced the will for the type of high intensity operations with potential to defeat Hamas:

> By the end of the operation's second day, the system was already regarded as a dazzling success, and by the conclusion of the operation, the public had come to believe that Iron Dome was the "queen of battle." The feeling among the public, the media, and officials was that the system saved lives, saved the country an enormous amount of money by preventing physical damage, and first and foremost, provided the political and military

[303] High profile eliminations included: Hab's Hassan Us Msamch, senior operative in Hamas' police; Ahmed Abu Jalal, Commander of the military wing in Al-Muazi; Khaled Shayer, senior operative in the anti-tank operations; Osama Kadi, senior operative in the smuggling operations in the southern Gaza Strip; Muhammad Kalb, senior operative in the aerial defense operations; and Ramz Harb, Islamic Jihad senior operative in propaganda in Gaza city. According to Israel's Foreign Ministry: Over the course of Operation Pillar of Defense, the IDF targeted over 1,500 terror sites including 19 senior command centers, operational control centers and Hamas' senior-rank headquarters, 30 senior operatives, damaging Hamas' command and control, hundreds of underground rocket launchers, 140 smuggling tunnels, 66 terror tunnels, dozens of Hamas operation rooms and bases, 26 weapon manufacturing and storage facilities and dozens of long-range rocket launchers and launch sites. (IMFA 2012).

[304] "On the eve of Operation Pillar of Defense, it was estimated at some 15,000." (Brom 2012, 41) "Iran provided long-range Fajr 5 rockets and other weapons, trained terrorists and transferred millions of dollars." (IMFA 2012).

> echelons with the freedom of action to make decisions without the pressure of ongoing injuries to the civilian population.

Shapir claims that the success of Iron Dome was "the main factor that obviated the necessity to initiate an IDF ground operation in Gaza." He also notes that as a result of its success, "a ministerial committee approved a budget of NIS 750 million to expand acquisition of the Iron Dome system, with the declared intention of acquiring 13 batteries." (Brom 2012, 42).

Shapir's analysis hints at why Israel's deterrence towards Hamas eroded so thoroughly by 2014 and how Hamas was able to rebuild to such a degree that its capabilities vastly surpassed those prior to operation Pillar of Defense. Israeli leadership was made more likely to tolerate increased threat and less likely to act decisively due to Iron Dome providing a suitable alternative to the politically costly use of force. Thus, Iron Dome had the effect of boosting Israel's internal constraints, leading to limited action as shown by claims by Israeli leadership that it was the main factor that kept it from needing to launch a ground operation against Hamas in 2012. This constraining impact manifest even though Iron Dome was ostensibly partly implemented into Israel's strategic force structure to provide a "greater degree of freedom to the political leadership," and provide the IDF with "time to prepare for offensive operations." (Rubin 2012). Shapir stated: "If in the past Israel based its security on its offensive ability, today its power and potency are increasingly devoted to defense." (Brom 2012, 45).[305]

Israel's actions in Operation Pillar of Defense were admittedly "limited." Israel ended operations despite no reduction in Hamas's rate of rocket fire or reduction of its range, which both remained the same, unprecedentedly high, up until the ceasefire went into effect. Israel's restraint was partially due to its keen awareness of the need to maintain international support. According to its Foreign Ministry's official website:

> Israel cooperated closely with world leaders on the aims and methods of the operation. Israel succeeded in consolidating a large international coalition against the terror groups operating out of Gaza and there was widespread understanding of Israel's self-defensive actions. Statements of support came from US President Obama, as well as from the European Union's High Representative for Foreign Affairs, the EU Foreign Affairs Council, Canada, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Australia, the US Senate and

[305] Shapir cited a shift in new recruits asking to be part of Iron Dome units from previously highly demanded pilot training, paratroopers, and reconnaissance units as evidence for a fundamental shift in Israel's security concept from offense to defense.

the US House of Representatives. The UN Secretary-General and President of the Security Council made positive statements that condemned the rocket fire from Gaza.

Israeli leaders understood that Hamas was working to recuperate their capabilities and largely succeeding.[306] Israel's message to Hamas in the aftermath of Pillar of Defense was not powerful enough to elicit a change in Hamas ideology necessary for long-term deterrence and eventual peace. This is because despite the damage done, Israel was still unable to credibly threaten Hamas with its defeat if hostilities resumed. According to Avner Golov:

Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman's statement that Israel must refrain from a large-scale operation in the Gaza Strip until after the elections indicated that while Israel is willing to take limited action, it is not prepared to act on its more severe threats and commence a full-scale operation to topple the Hamas government before the Israeli elections. Thus, the Israeli message is that Israel is resolved to retaliate against Hamas for its provocations, more than Hamas had assumed before the operation, but is not determined to pursue a comprehensive threat against the Hamas government and exact an overly high cost for its provocative policy. (Brom 2012, 27).

On July 3, 2013 the Egyptian military ousted Morsi in a coup. (El-Shobaki 2013). General Abdel Fattah el-Sisi took control over Egypt. (Kirkpatrick 2013). Sisi charged Hamas with collaborating with extremists, including ISIS in Sinai. Sisi's coup in Egypt decreased the external constraints on Israel, making it easier for Israel to decide to launch a large-scale operation against Hamas. In contrast to 2012, in 2014 Israel's Operation Protective Edge included a limited ground incursion into Gaza. The Egyptian lifeline provided to Hamas ended with Morsi's ouster. The new regime imposed a draconian blockade "compounding the air, sea, and land siege already imposed by Israel." (Hroub 2019). Egypt's blockade continues today.[307]

Prelude to Operation Protective Edge: Hardline Management

[306] According to the Operations Officer for the Gaza region at the time: Hamas is constantly preparing. They have significantly enhanced their intelligence capabilities, both in terms of hardware and techniques. They record everything and try to guess each of our next steps. We cannot underestimate the enemy. This is not a group of protesters at a demonstration. This is a terrorist organization with a significant military arsenal supplied by Iran." Hamas uses tunnels to smuggle weapons into Gaza. Only last month, the IDF discovered a 1.7-mile-long tunnel connecting the Strip to Israel. These types of tunnels are used to carry out attacks on Israeli communities along the border, and kidnap soldiers, as in the case of Gilad Shalit. "Underneath Gaza, there is an extensive network of interconnected tunnels – it's an entire underground world," said Cpt. Vaknin. (IMFA 2013).

[307] In Gaza Hamas was squeezed by Sisi who cracked down on its smuggling tunnel network making it harder to obtain, smuggled goods, weapons, gain tax revenues and pay its operatives (Goodman 2015).

Despite Sisi's blockade, by 2014 Hamas had accumulated vastly greater military capabilities.[308] It also built a network of tunnels used for maneuver and cover inside Gaza and offensive tunnels into Israeli territory to carry out killing and kidnapping raids. The IDF and Shin Bet were minimally aware of the tunnel threat, having uncovered three entrances throughout the previous year. As Hamas increased its armaments, in 2014 the EU removed Hamas from its list of terrorist organizations. (BBC 2014). This increased Israel's perception of high external constraints.

In June 2014, Hamas kidnapped three Israeli teenagers. This led Israel to launch Operation Brother's Keeper, a joint military and police effort to locate the missing teenagers in the West Bank. Hamas responded with barrages of rockets from Gaza and attempted infiltrations. This escalation spiraled into Operation Protective Edge.[309]

According to IDF Colonel (Res.) Dr. Bouchnik-Chen, Israel's goals in Operation Protective Edge were to degrade Hamas capabilities and restore deterrence, not to secure peace or overthrow Hamas rule. (INSS 2014). Israeli leadership "claimed that the IDF had managed to establish effective deterrence." (Bouchnik-Chen 2018).

Operation Protective Edge lasted for 51 days, from July 8, 2014 until August 26, 2014. Hamas was able to strike deep into Israel, with rockets landing as far North as Haifa, over 95

[308] Offensive capabilities included over 10,000 rockets, some capable of hitting as far as Haifa and many M-75 rockets capable of hitting Israel's major cities Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv and Israel's only international airport. Hamas and other factions also fired numerous short-range mortars. In terms of defensive capabilities, "Hamas deployed six "brigades" of between 2,500 and 3,500 men for defense of the Gaza Strip." (White 2014). In March 2014, Israel interdicted the Klos-C, a ship loaded with Iranian armaments, including missiles that would have greatly extended Hamas's targeting range, as well as ammunition and mortars that would have boosted its ability to counter an Israeli incursion and mount offensive raids into Israel. (Jerusalem Post 2014).

[309] On June 12, 2014, Hamas Operatives kidnapped and killed three Israeli teenagers, Eyal Yifrah, Gilad Shaar and Naftali Frenkel in the West Bank. The kidnappers were brothers who were accused to be operating under Hamas orders. "Saleh Arouri, a senior leader of Hamas, boasted at a conference in Turkey that the group's military wing was behind the 'heroic action'" (Booth, Eglash 2014). In a joint operation conducted by the Shin Bet, police forces and the IDF, backed by aerial UAV surveillance, security forces entered the West Bank and conducted an extensive operation called Operation Brother's Keeper in order first to find the Missing and later learned to be killed teenagers and capture the perpetrators. Israeli forces were met with stiff resistance and uncovered numerous Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad cells. (Zitun 2014). This is important to the domestic context, during which Israel refused to release a fourth batch of Palestinian prisoners from jail due to the public backlash from releasing three batches of prisoners convicted of murdering Israelis with no negotiating results from the Palestinian Authority (BBC 2014). The arrests on terror charges of previously released prisoners demonstrated to the Israeli public the negative consequences of releasing convicted terrorists. The roundup of Hamas operatives further pressured Hamas in Gaza, leading to an increase in rocket attacks towards the end of June and Israeli responses including strikes on Hamas facilities in Gaza (Zilber, 2014). On July 2, a reprisal murder was committed by Israeli extremists who captured and burned Palestinian teen Abu Khader alive. Israeli police and Shin Bet arrested the Israeli Suspects on July 6.

miles from Gaza. Hamas's rocket capabilities in terms of payload, rate of fire, camouflage of launch sites, and distance, was greatly improved since both Pillar of Defense and Cast Lead. Israel also faced increased threat on its other borders.[310]

Although Protective Edge officially started on July 8, 2014, the prelude was dominated by U.S. led peace talks between Netanyahu's Likud government and the PA. "On May 14 2014, in a move that caught both Israel and the U.S. by surprise, Israel's negotiating partner, the PA, announced the formation of a national reconciliation government with Hamas." (Goodman 2015, 9).[311] As President Obama pressured Israel to release convicted terrorists to jump start peace talks with the now Hamas linked PA, Israel's policy towards Hamas throughout early June was restrained. Some sporadic rocket fire from Gaza was intercepted by Iron Dome. (Yashar 2014). From July 1 through July 6 Hamas fired 180 rockets into Israel. On July 6 Israel called for resuming its 2012 truce with Hamas.

On July 6, seven fighters from Hamas fighters entered a tunnel leading into Israel and were killed by Israeli bombardments aimed at cutting off the tunnel's unknown entrance. (Harel and Kohen 2014). Hamas responded by launching a heavy bombardment of Israel. On July 8, Israel announced the start of Operation Protective Edge, billing the operation as aimed at stopping the rocket attacks. (IDC Database 2014). Israel carried out an intense aerial campaign but originally sought to avoid a ground invasion which was estimated to entail the certainty of significant casualties, significant being relative to Israel's high casualty aversion.

The tunnel threat was largely unknown and the decision to launch a land invasion was due to a surprise discovery and not long-term planning like in Operation Cast Lead. The impetus came on July 17 when The IDF thwarted a major subterranean infiltration on the Gaza border. The Israeli government cited the length and complexity of this tunnel, reaching far into Israeli territory, as the reason it launched a ground incursion. In the following weeks, the IDF revealed a complex tunnel network reaching into Israeli territory. (Kirshner 2014). Defense Minister Ya'alon and Prime Minister Netanyahu originally opposed sending in troops, but pressure from

[310] On Israel's northern border al-Qaedaaffiliate Jabhat al Nusra and other Jihadist groups were in control of the Syrian controlled Golan heights and were battling Assad.
[311] This unity government alleviated much of the repression of Hamas organizations in the West Bank which had been clandestine since the Hamas coup in Gaza 2007.

right wing Beit haYehudi Economy Minister Naftali Bennett led to the ground incursion. Bennet had been pushing for a ground operation a week prior to Protective Edge. (Harel 2014).

Domestic Context

In 2014, Netanyahu led the Likud-Beitenu Party, which was a merger of two parties, Likud and further to the right, Yisrael Beitenu led by Liberman. The governing coalition was fragile and tested by the U.S. brokered peace talks leading up to the conflict. Bennet, the leader of the right-wing religious party Beit haYehudi had even threatened to leave the governing coalition, which would collapse the coalition and spur a vote of no-confidence (Ravid 2014). The government did fall soon after the operation.[312] Although the government did not fall due to Operation Protective Edge, the tensions were severe and impacted the conduct of the operation in stark juxtaposition to Knesset unity during Cast Lead.

Bennet wanted to use the kidnapping and murder as an excuse to launch a surprise preemptive strike against a dangerous tunnel threat, although the extent of the danger was not known until the actual ground operation was launched. Tension between Bennett on one side and Netanyahu/Ya'alon on the other continued throughout the war. Bennett blasted their threat tolerance and fear of risk. Ya'alon considered Bennett to be too risk tolerant (Harel 2014). Bennet relentlessly pushed the tunnel issue in cabinet meetings. Ya'alon supported management, claiming, "the tunnel threat is one we can live with, it need not be defined as a target, at least not in this round of fighting." (Ronen 2014).

Domestic support for Protective Edge was high. This continued even after dozens of Israeli casualties. Usually Israel's public's threat tolerance is low. 92% public support for the war by its conclusion demonstrates that "the sense that there is no choice is an important condition in preserving national fortitude in an intractable, protracted conflict." (Inbar 2015). The perception of an existential threat reduces internal constraints.

International Context

U.S. support has been crucial to Israel for much of its recent history. Israel perceived the Obama administration to be less supportive of Israel's operations as prior administrations had

[312] Demonstrating the government's vulnerability, the Knesset did eventually fall when Netanyahu fired Justice Minister Tzipi Livni and Finance Minister Yair Lapid on December 2 of that year, months after the end of Operation Protective Edge, leading to new elections which Netanyahu went on to win for the Likud party by itself, thus allowing it to form a stronger coalition (Eglash and Booth 2014).

been. This perception followed a U.S. ban on flights to Israel and the decision to reexamine weapons transfers as well as constant pressure on Israel to accept Qatari and Turkish truce proposals. (Entous 2014).[313]

Globally, the EU, UN and U.S. were preoccupied with ISIS and the crisis in Ukraine.[314] Inbar notes that "great powers such as China, India, and Russia showed understanding toward Israel's situation." Furthermore, "despite international criticism of the supposed use of disproportionate force, generated by images of destruction from Gaza, Israel was able to operate militarily for fifty days" (Inbar 2015).[315] Like the backlash to Cast Lead, there were major populist demonstrations against Israel, especially in Europe.

The regional situation in 2014 was very different from that of 2008/9. On the northern front, instead of a cold peace with a stable Syria, the Syrian civil war was ongoing and Syrian rebels, along with the al-Qaeda affiliated Nusra front were pushing towards taking control of the Syrian controlled portion of the Golan heights (Cowell 2014). The Lebanese front was generally quiet, a sign of continued deterrence towards Hezbollah from the Second Lebanon War as well as Hezbollah's deep embroilment in the Syrian Civil War. In contrast to the stable and calm Sinai Peninsula under Mubarak's rule in 2008/9, In the spring of 2014, along Israel's long border with the Egyptian Sinai Desert, groups such as Ansar Bayt al Maqdis (now the Islamic State in Sinai) posed a threat to Israel and carried out sporadic rocket fire against Israel.[316] The rise of ISIS in Iraq and Syria, the Houthi rebellion in Yemen, anarchy in Libya and a full-scale weapons bazar of Gadhafi's massive arms depot all demonstrate a much more unstable region.

According to Inbar, "the regional political alignment was also convenient for Israel." He claims that regional instability created "conspicuous restraint among conservative Arab states such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and the Persian Gulf monarchies (excluding Qatar), all of

[313] Both Qatar and Turkey hosted Hamas leadership and sponsored Hamas. Israel blamed the kidnapping that started Operation Protective Edge as being ordered by Hamas leader Saleh al-Arouri, based in Turkey. (McCoy 2014). Israel sought to base cease-fire negotiations on an Egyptian proposal which was closer to Israel's desired outcomes than the countervailing Turkish and Qatari proposals which Israel saw as benefiting Hamas. U.S. pressure on Israel to accept the Turkish and Qatari proposals particularly demonstrated lackluster U.S. support. (Issacharoff 2014).
[314] On July 17 Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17 was downed by Russian separatists.
[315] Part of the international credit was "thanks to Jerusalem's readiness to accept every ceasefire and partly due to the somewhat reserved U.S. support." (Inbar 2015). Israel accepted numerous ceasefires despite their harm to the war effort because it felt significant pressure from Secretary John Kerry's shuttle diplomacy.
[316] These groups posed a threat against Egypt as well and have been accused by al-Sisi as working with Hamas to carry out attacks against Egyptian targets. (Nashashibi 2015).

which were keen to see Hamas hit hard." Furthermore, the ability to work with the Egyptians as a go between for Israel and Hamas, allowed for negotiations. (Inbar 2015).

Except for somewhat reserved U.S. support, the global situation—due to regional instability, great power distraction, and an increase in the level of regional threats and threats from Gaza—A decisive ground operation should have been more likely in 2014 than in 2008.[317]

The escalation to Protective Edge was slow and Israeli retaliations were measured. Netanyahu said, "experience has shown that during moments like these, one must act in a levelheaded and responsible manner and not hastily," (Goodman 2015). Tit-for-tat escalation diminished Israel's operational surprise. When Protective Edge was officially launched, Hamas leaders had already abandoned their homes and taken shelter in a complex underground tunnel and bunker network.[318] This contrasts sharply to the disinformation campaign and highly damaging surprise attack launched to open Cast Lead (Shamir and Hecht 2014). The contrast shows how Israel's denial capabilities reinforced a management strategy despite Hamas demonstrating an unprecedented level of threat to Israel both before and during the operation.[319]

Prime Minister Netanyahu announced the beginning of a ground invasion by explicitly eschewing Israel's pursuit of decisive victory over Hamas. He stated Israel's goals as to "destroy the underground tunnels built for carrying out attacks in Israel." He announced that the operation would continue until the goals of "restoring quiet for the long term while inflicting significant damage on Hamas and the terror organizations" were met. (IDC Database 2014).

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[317] Despite being perceived as less supportive than previous administrations, the U.S. did eventually resupply Israel's Iron Dome batteries and strategic weapons stockpiles and President Obama did unequivocally reaffirm Israel's right to self-defense during this conflict. European diplomats generally affirmed Israel's right to self-defense while issuing requests for proportionality and minimizing of civilian casualties (Inbar 2015).

[318] Following the official start of the conflict on July 8, Israel launched an air campaign consisting of targeting launch sites and other strategic assets of Hamas on a large scale. On the first night Israel hit 50 targets including the homes of senior Hamas commanders (IDC Database 2014). The following days saw an intensification of air strikes, with the IAF hitting approximately between 150-200 targets per day.

[319] In the weeks leading up to the war, Hamas had already launched for the first-time rockets including the M-302 with a range of 160 km, and the M75 with a range of 75 km, as well as the shorter-range Grad and Qassam which were also utilized during Operation Cast Lead. New rockets put over 70 percent of Israel's population within range, including the only international airport, and the two largest cities, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv (IDC Database 2014). Throughout the air phase of the conflict, Hamas maintained a high level of rocket fire, with over 100 rockets fired per day, many long-range. Iron Dome shot down dozens of rockets headed towards populated areas each day (IDC Database 2014). On July 14 Hamas launched a drone into Israel in a first-time development. "The IDF intercepted it with a Patriot missile above Ashdod." (Rubenstein 2014).

On August 3, Israel withdrew most of its ground forces after destroying 32 cross-border tunnels. (IDC Database 2014). On August 4, Israel resumed its pre-ground invasion strategy of standoff airstrikes. "Finally, on August 26, Hamas agreed to a month-long ceasefire with no preconditions" (Shamir and Hecht 2014). Throughout the conflict 11 ceasefires were proposed, each were violated by Hamas. (IMFA 2014). Israel utilized the conflict to "mow the lawn." It removed its ground forces well before Hamas gave up fighting, signaling that it did not seek to defeat Hamas despite continued fighting and despite Israel's continued operational success.[320]

Like in Cast Lead, Israel's military goals were modest. They "can be summed up in one word – containment, that is a quiet border" (Shamir and Hecht, 2014). This goal changed due to intense political pressure from Bennet to counter the tunnel threat.[321] Notably, while prior to and during Operation Cast Lead, the rocket attacks unified domestic support towards a well-planned out operation in Gaza, in this operation it was not rockets which were relatively well dealt with, but underground infiltration that galvanized public support for further military action. Israel faced lower internal constraints when it its denial capabilities were lower and higher constraints when they were higher.[322]

Israel's attrition tactics in 2014 constituted a notable shift from longstanding Israeli doctrine. Major General Turgeman, who served as southern command chief in 2014 said in 2011 regarding a future conflict in Gaza: "We will do everything to shorten the duration of the campaign and will conduct a fast, lethal ground maneuver." (Inbar 2015). This was not the case. Socialization logic sees a state's ability to bargain as stemming from the ability to deter an

[320] In the first two days of the ground operation, the Israeli Defense Forces uncovered more than 30 tunnels, including "a labyrinth of tunnels dug 20 meters deep and running over two kilometers towards Israeli territory with multiple exits. The IDF Corps of Engineers detonated and demolished the discovered tunnels." Israeli forces continued to operate to destroy the tunnel network, launching invasions of the well-fortified neighborhoods of Khan Younis, Shajaiyeh, and Jabalya were they met stiff resistance. On July 25 Israel rejected a ceasefire proposed by John Kerry and eliminated the leader of PIJ's military wing as well as eight senior Hamas operatives. (IMFA 2014).
[321] On July 17 drone footage showed the emergence of 13 armed Hamas fighters only meters from Kibbutz Sufa. "This profoundly shocked the public and the political leadership" (Harel and Cohen 2014). The Israeli cabinet up until the point had been in relatively unified opposition of any ground invasion into Gaza. Following the publication of the Hamas infiltration, "Eshkol Regional Council head Haim Yellin, usually a moderate man, demanded in television interviews that the government order the IDF to act immediately to destroy all the tunnels" (Harel and Cohen 2014). The Eshkol region is immediately bordering Gaza.
[322] Goodman's analysis suggests the impact of Iron Dome: "Between the successes of the Iron Dome system and the relative lack of damage caused by the increasingly regular rocket attacks, given the complexities of mounting a major military operation in Gaza, and despite growing internal criticism for seeming inaction, the Israeli security cabinet, on the strong advice of the military-security establishment, opted to continue a policy of restraint vis-a-vis Gaza. The hope was that ultimately diplomacy would resolve the Gaza issue." (Goodman 2015, 14).

opponent. With Hamas, this required socialization through the threat of decisive victory. Although attrition favored Israel it signaled that Israel was unwilling to pursue victory.[323]

During Operation Protective Edge, Hamas leaders were difficult to target because they used civilian areas as headquarters. (ICT 2014). Due to Israel's constraints, hiding in this manner allowed Hamas leaders to avoid assassination despite Israel possessing the munitions to easily eliminate Hamas leadership.[324] Israel is too constrained to destroy Hamas headquarters in civilian sites. As Brigadier General (Res.) Shalom Harari put it: "Israel is not Russia and Gaza is not Chechnya." (Interview 2019).

Israel's ability to target Hamas leadership while minimizing civilian casualties improved as the conflict progressed.[325] Israel demonstrated its increasing ability to target Hamas leadership, but was unable to kill its primary targets including the elusive Mohammed Deif, the Hamas military wing's supreme commander. Israel secured a ceasefire but was unable to convince Hamas to enter peace negotiations. Hamas kept the quiet, taking measures to prevent terrorism and rocket fire while preparing for renewed fighting since the ceasefire began.[326]

The unmatched media and diplomatic attention on Israel during this conflict demonstrates the high level of external constraints Israel faced.[327] The United Nations Gaza Report was criticized by numerous military and legal experts for bias, and the head of the UN inquiry, William Schabas, quit after he acknowledged his prior work for the PLO. (UNWatch.org 2015). U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry arranged 11 ceasefires throughout the conflict, each one of them hampered Israel's ability to operate militarily, gave Hamas the ability to regroup and reposition, and each one was violated almost immediately by Hamas as was fully expected by Israel. In one of Hamas's attacks that violated an August 1 ceasefire two IDF soldiers were killed

[323] Inbar criticized the conduct of Operation Protective Edge, claiming that "deterrence depends on military might but also on the willingness to employ force," and that "the image of Israel merely reacting to Hamas's moves, waiting each time until the last minute to see whether the terror group would oblige and extend the ceasefire, is not conducive to Israeli deterrence." (Inbar 2015).

[324] Hamas used Wafa Hospital as a command center and rocket-launching site. (ICT 2014).

[325] On July 25, eight days after the ground incursion, the IAF killed Salah Abu Hassanein, the leader of Islamic Jihad's military wing, along with eight senior Hamas militants. Intelligence gleaned from operations, including the capture and interrogation of Hamas fighters led to increased Israeli intelligence gathering in a snowballing effect. As the conflict continued, the quality of Israeli targeting increased. "Towards the end of the conflict on August 21, an IAF airstrike killed three senior Hamas commanders in the Gaza Strip." (ICT 2014).

[326] Israel has unsuccessfully tried to kill or capture Deif since the 1980s. (Issacharoff 2017).

[327] Far more destructive conflicts raged in Ukraine, Syria and Yemen and received minimal attention.

by Hamas fire and Second Lieutenant Hadar Goldin was kidnapped during the exchange of fire. (ICT 2014).[328] Israel's acceptance of operational harm demonstrates the high strategic impact of its perceived external constraints. The U.S. halt on arms resupply to Israel not only materially constrained it, but also signaled that the U.S. might not support and might diplomatically or economically oppose Israeli hardline action.

More demonstration of the impact of constraints can be seen in Israel's sacrificing of strategic targets and advantages including surprise when they systematically took efforts to warn civilians including the use of leafleting, text messages and phone calls in Arabic, and even using missiles with very reduced warheads in order to "knock on the roof" and warn civilians (as well as terrorists) to vacate an area about to be struck. (ICT 2014).[329]

Hamas understood Israel's constraints and strategized accordingly. A captured Hamas manual explicitly directed fighters to use the civilian population to avoid being targeted.[330] "According to IDF figures: Militants fired 597 rockets from civilian facilities in Gaza. Approximately 260 rockets were fired from schools. Approximately 160 rockets were fired from religious sites, including mosques. Approximately 127 rockets were fired from cemeteries. Approximately 50 rockets were fired from hospitals. (IDF Blog 2014).[331]

Mortar fire was very effective for Hamas because Iron Dome could not shoot down such short-trajectory projectiles and Israel's warning siren only gives at most 15 seconds of warning due to the short-range of these projectiles. Israel responded by investing in denial technology. Israel demonstrated improvements to Iron Dome, including successfully shooting down mortars

[328] For a detailed report of Operation Protective Edge, including a full description of each of the 11 ceasefires, see the International Institute for Counterterrorism, "Operation Protective Edge A Detailed Summary of Events," 2014).
[329] "The IDF warned civilians prior to IAF strikes. The largest effort took place on July 17, when approximately 100,000 leaflets containing a warning message were dropped over Gaza and hundreds of thousands of citizens receive messages telling them to vacate their villages." (ICT 2014).
[330] "IDF forces in the Gaza Strip found a Hamas manual on 'Urban Warfare', of the Shuja'iya Brigade of Hamas' military wing, the Al-Qassam Brigades. The manual explains how the civilian population can be used against IDF forces. A reading of the manual demonstrates that Hamas' callous use of the Gazan population was both intentional and preplanned. In a section entitled 'Limiting the Use of Weapons,' the manual explains that: 'The soldiers and commanders [of the IDF] must limit their use of weapons and tactics that lead to the harm and unnecessary loss of people and [destruction of] civilian facilities. It is difficult for them to get the most use out of their firearms, especially of supporting fire [e.g. artillery].'" (IMFA 2014).
[331] Israelis were killed by Hamas' use of human shields. On August 22, 2014, four-year-old Daniel Tragerman "was killed by a mortar shell fired from the Gaza Strip on Friday afternoon… An Israeli army spokesperson said the fatal shell was fired from near a school used as a shelter for Palestinian refugees." (Associated Press 2014).

in combat in an operational first on May 29, 2018 when Hamas launched four barrages of rockets into Israel. (Gross 2018).

Israel's extensive civil defense preparations along with its highly successful Iron Dome system, significantly minimized damage from Hamas rockets.[332] Israel's denial capabilities during this conflict gave Israel to gain the upper hand from attrition for the first time in its history, meaning that Israel did not face severe domestic pressure to launch larger scale ground invasions into Gaza and defeat Hamas. Israel's mission in Protective Edge was to increase its denial capabilities. A comparison of Israel's planning, execution and objectives in Operation Protective Edge to previous Israeli operations before Israel had such impressive denial capabilities shows that Israel was more constrained in 2014 despite Hamas possessing far greater offensive capabilities.[333]

Protective Edge to the Present: Status Quo Management

As was the case in Cast Lead, in Protective Edge Israel set minimal goals for strategic and political outcomes. On August 26, after 51 days of fighting, Israel and Hamas reached a ceasefire, but no long-term agreement. (ICT 2014). The years since have been the calmest along the Israeli-Gaza front since 2005 albeit with numerous flare-ups of rocket fire and Israeli strikes. Protective Edge's outcome was primarily the continuation of the status-quo. Israel has used the quiet bought in Operation Protective Edge to continuously enhance its denial capabilities.

In August 2015, the IDF published its first official strategy and modernization plan known as the five-year Gideon Plan. (Eizenkot 2015). The document is the first to add defense as a fourth pillar of Israel's security strategy. It explicitly states that in Gaza, the IDF would prefer to secure long-periods of quiet by "using a mixture of debilitating firepower and limited ground operations rather than conquering the territory and fully dismantling Hamas's military capabilities." (Herzog 2015).[334] The defense pillar addresses the threat of enemy fire on Israel's

[332] Throughout the 2014 conflict "4,564 rockets and mortars were fired at Israel from the Gaza Strip. The Iron Dome intercepted 86% of them." (ICT 2014).
[333] In 2014 Hamas was able to shut down Israel's only international airport, shut down commerce and daily life to a large extent in the south, and was able to target Israelis in just about any part of the country. "More than 70% of Israelis live within range of Hamas' rockets." (ICT 2014).
[334] The IDF strategy document assumes a protracted series of armed conflicts with substate actors and strives to force long lulls by achieving and maintaining credible deterrence. It also envisions building "cumulative" deterrence through a series of unequivocal military victories. Deterrence, "unlike its near-binary role in preventing full-scale wars, requires constant boosting, for which purpose the IDF developed the concept of a "campaign between wars" --

heartland. “The most important element of this pillar is the ongoing development of a multilayered active defense system against rockets and missiles.” This document formally acknowledges Israel’s strategy of deterrence and offensive denial in its “campaign between wars,” and defensive denial with the construction of anti-ballistic missile layered defense. The strategy states that Israel will not pursue decisive victory over Hamas.

In July 2016, Israel’s Defense Ministry approved a budget of $530 million to build a concrete barrier along its border with Gaza. (The Tower Staff 2016). Israel complemented this defensive denial boost with Israel awarding its top defense prize to a project to locate attack tunnels from the Gaza Strip, which Israel has used to destroy at least 10 border-crossing tunnels since October 2017. (Gross 2018). Combined with investments in a maritime barrier and the construction of a new above ground “smart barrier” along the Gaza border, Israel has demonstrated through the sinking of massive investment, clear dedication to defensive denial as the dominant strategy.

Israel perceives Hamas governance function to be moderate. Capacity to control violence makes Hamas an address for carrots and sticks while low accountability means Israel cannot threaten Hamas with decisive defeat by weakening it relative to rivals. Despite over a decade of hardship for the people in Gaza, Hamas maintains a clear monopoly on violence. Its low accountability is demonstrated by its ability to suppress opposition with impunity.[335]

In 2017, Hamas released an updated charter that “underscored its ideological rigidity.” “While softer in tone, the manifesto reaffirms a call to armed struggle and the creation of an Islamic state in historic Palestine, including what is now Israel.” (Associated Press and TOI Staff

namely, clandestine, covert, and overt activities in Routine situations to thwart emerging enemy threats, especially the acquisition of specific arms.” (Herzog 2015).

[335] For example, Gazan writer, Abu Sharekh was jailed after criticizing Hamas spokesman Bardaweel for tweeting that “the people of Gaza are steadfast.” Abu Sharekh wrote, “people are not steadfast.” “They cannot do anything because you (Hamas) rule Gaza with iron and fire … you brought Gaza back to the Middle Ages.” His writing led to a five day imprisonment where he was subject to sleep deprivation and other abuses. Al-Taluli said “he and his friends received death threats to deter them from protesting, and that it was effective because no one can protect them from Hamas.” Over the past decade, Hamas has executed 28 people, “most of them alleged informers, after trials widely condemned as a sham.” (Ragson 2017).

2017). Hamas leaders continue to proclaim unyielding devotion to absolutist ideology.[336] Both Israeli leadership and prominent academic experts see Hamas as highly ideologically driven.[337]

Ya'alon explicitly stated that Israel is pursuing a management approach towards Hamas. (Ya'alon Interview 2018). Israeli leaders see management as the best option available, but not as a long-term optimal end.[338]

Statements made by Israeli leadership, including the prime minister, hint at a harsh Israeli response if Hamas escalates but are careful not to threaten a decisive victory campaign. They strongly suggest that Israel's strategy is to manage the conflict with Hamas.[339] Political analyst Ben Caspit argues that in the Gaza arena Israel is careful to preserve Hamas rule and takes actions to ensure that it does not cause Hamas to be toppled, even by accident. Eldar corroborates this assessment and cites external constraints, claiming that another war in Gaza "would result in a deluge of condemnations from all around the world." Both analysts cite Israel's striking of empty cars, unmanned posts and not targeting Hamas leadership, as evidence that Israel does not want to upset the status-quo in Gaza, preferring a containment and management strategy to another Gaza war. This follows the trend in Israel's increasing denial capabilities. Furthermore,

[336] In a May 16 2018 interview with al-Jazeera translated by MEMRI, the leader of Hamas in Gaza stated willingness to sacrifice women and children, even his own mother and daughter, to replace Israel with an Islamist entity. He claimed that Hamas "temporarily abandoned armed struggle" and vowed to "use any means required by the circumstances." (Memri 2018).

[337] Byman noted Hamas's high ideological drive, stating that Hamas is stagnating because "it wants to fight Israel and rule Gaza, but it can't really do both," and that "Hamas continues to see fighting Israel as part of its mission." He noted the centrality of continued aggression towards Israel to Hamas's entire purpose and their continued existence: "Hamas leaders see themselves as a "resistance" organization, and they worry that if they lay down their arms, they will be outflanked by more radical factions within the Palestinian community and, like Fatah before them, lose their credibility among ordinary Palestinians." (Byman 2018).

[338] The continuing conflict with Hamas drains Israel's resources, hurts Israel internationally and smolders in low level aggression including periodic rocket and small-arms fire, the kite bomb and incendiary balloons phenomenon, and weekly mass protests that threaten infiltration. This harms the morale of communities along the Gaza periphery. In April 2018 Hamas embarked on the "March of Return." At many of these demonstrations, held weekly for over a year, Hamas militants attempted infiltration, placed explosives and fired at Israeli forces. (Aharonheim 2010).

[339] After the bouts of rockets and kite and balloon incendiaries launched from Gaza in the Summer of 2018, Netanyahu made remarks suggesting the continuation of a management strategy appear. He referred to the security situation, stating: "I don't intend to elaborate on the processes that we are planning for Gaza. The power of the response will increase as needed. We are prepared for every scenario, and it is better that our enemies understand this, and now." The phrase "increase as needed" suggests management, with Hamas actions setting the pace of the conflict. (Keidar 2018). Public Security Minister Erdan believes that deterrence has held relatively well for the four years since Operation Protective Edge in 2014. He does not believe that the recent surge in violence including the kite and balloon incendiaries from Gaza shows that deterrence has eroded. (Sones 2018). On the four-year anniversary of Protective Edge, in response to arson from Gaza Defense Minister Liberman announced that "we are not looking for conflict or military adventures, but the conduct of Hamas is deteriorating the situation to the point that it might have to pay a much heavier price than it did in Protective Edge." (Ahronheim and Hoffman 2018).

Israel's current leadership does not view international pressure to change the status-quo in Gaza as high enough to warrant risking a deterioration of the current status quo through concessions aimed at securing peace talks. (Eldar 2018).

Jerusalem Institute for Strategic Studies (JISS) President Efraim Inbar said, "Israel must exact a higher price from Hamas to ensure quiet, including targeting the leadership." The goal in the short-term is to achieve ever-longer durations of quiet. The logic he expresses is that Hamas is ideologically incapable of making peace with Israel and that Israel has no desire to retake Gaza which is what would be necessary to fully defeat Hamas. Therefore, Israel does not look for long-term solutions with Hamas. It's short-term strategy states: "We want quiet from the Gaza Strip, and in order to achieve this we have to charge a price from Hamas so that they will have an interest in maintaining quiet. They love to kill Jews and cause damage to the State of Israel, and we must prevent this by creating pain for Hamas. Apparently, Israel has not caused enough pain for Hamas." Citing the perception of high external constraints, Inbar notes: "Unfortunately, we are not a superpower and we cannot do what the Americans do in Afghanistan or the Russians did in Chechnya, which are considerations that must be taken into account." He advocates for increasing short-term deterrence by small scale military operations intended to show Hamas that its leadership could be targeted, stating: "Hamas leaders should know that they are on our list of assassinations." (Cohen 2018).

Demonstrating its management strategy, at the start of 2019, Israel neared completion of its naval barrier to prevent infiltration from the Gaza Strip by sea. This defensive denial system compliments Israel's aerial layered anti-ballistic missile defense system, its comprehensive ground defenses which include a high-tech fence and traditional military border assets and its underground barrier to prevent subterranean infiltration. These expensive, permanent structures, demonstrate the reinforcing effect of denial technologies, increasing the effectiveness of a management strategy and the likelihood that it will be pursued instead of pursuing decisive victory or negotiations. (Ahronheim 2019).[340] Some parliamentarians draw a direct link between defensive denial technologies and Israel's self-imposed constraints on using force. Knesset

[340] While barriers represent the purest example of defensive technology, they also stave off enemy attacks if the conflict escalates to open warfare, They can potentially show increased resolve for a decisive victory campaign.

member Yoni Chetboun called Iron Dome "a sleeping pill," for Israel's security establishment and the public. He also criticized Israel's investment in physical barriers as ineffective.[341]

Israeli leaders understand that management is easier when the military has access to the territory to prevent the opponent from building capabilities. As of 2019, Israel's conflict with Hamas is synonymous with Gaza, the difference between the threat posed and resources necessary to deal with Hamas in the West Bank versus Gaza serves as a stark warning against withdrawing Israeli military forces from territory.[342] Comparing the two areas Frisch writes:

> Israel has been involved with Hamas not for security cooperation but to engage in bouts of war. In the West Bank, Israel can go after terrorists and either apprehend or kill them. In Gaza, most of those who launch missiles either run for cover in tunnels, take refuge in nearby apartment buildings, or launch the missiles from underground silos. In the West Bank, a company (100 men) is usually the highest number of soldiers required to chase terrorists or make preventive arrests. In the last bout in Gaza, Israel called up tens of thousands of reserves, and deployed hundreds of tanks and dozens of F-16s. That massed firepower inflicted some deterrent pain, but hardly made more than a dent in the Hamas infrastructure.

This not only demonstrates Israel's strategy towards Hamas but also the level of threat that has increased significantly over the duration of the conflict. The threat of the PA is kept in check by Israel's strategy of leveraging the threat to the PA posed by its rival Hamas.[343] This

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[341] Parliamentarian and security advisor Yoni Chetboun clearly decried a perverse incentive structure created by Iron Dome. He stated: "The Iron Dome has become a sleeping pill for the public and military leadership. From the time the Iron Dome came into the picture, the residents of Israel and the leadership have gotten used to it intercepting missiles. We've moved to a defensive approach in response to missile attacks on a sovereign state." Chetboun also views the billions of Shekels invested in the construction of the fence as demonstrating a new and strategically detrimental defensive posture as well increasing that posture's adoption into Israel's Gaza strategy: "They haven't overcome terrorism in any place in the world through fortification, concrete and fences. Ironically, the Iron Dome was supposed to allow the defense establishment to conduct an offensive campaign inside the Gaza Strip in order to bring about the elimination of terror. Instead, we have drugged ourselves and become accustomed to the constants rounds of rockets. We're still paying the price for it today." (Cohen 2019).

[342] The defense establishment views the relative quite in the West Bank, contrasted with Gaza, as due to Israel's advantaged denial capabilities there. This stems from army, police and Shin Bet engagement. (Haaretz 2019).

[343] According to Frisch: "For the PA, the stakes of not playing ball with Israel are high. Israel carries by far the heavier burden in terms of draining the large Hamas swamp in PA territory. Without Israeli bayonets, the PA could face defeat, as it did in 2007 when it lost Gaza, or even a prolonged civil war. It needs Israel." Frisch also noted that, "the PA pursues Hamas and Islamic Jihad terrorists, common enemies to both Abbas and Israel, and disrupts and destroys their front organizations with the same seriousness of purpose as does Israel. Its 6,000 officers make sure to remain in their barracks and at their stations when the IDF pursues terrorists on the run or makes preventive arrests against those planning terrorist acts. Intelligence flows freely in meetings between senior Israeli IDF officers and their Palestinian counterparts in Abbas's security services." He also noted how Hamas paints PA cooperation as treason. IDF and PA security forces cooperating at meetings "embarrassingly show up in photos in the Hamas media, prompting condemnation and derision." (Frisch 2019).

demonstrates an appreciation for the dynamic whereby governance function—high capacity and accountability—can promote moderation.

In January 2019, General Kochavi replaced General Eisenkot as the IDF Chief of Staff. Based on the annual assessment of the Israeli military intelligence's research division, Kochavi, "has already prioritized preparations for a potential Gaza war." This does not indicate that Israeli officials changed their opposition to overthrowing Hamas.[344] Although Netanyahu is generally hawkish, he and the defense establishment advocated for the release of hundreds of millions of dollars from Qatar to Hamas. Senior members of Israel's defense establishment claimed that this is because Hamas has "refrained from causing provocations." (Keider 2019).[345]

Kochavi has focused on boosting Israel's denial capabilities. He ordered the acceleration of the production of Iron Dome. "By the end of the year Israel will possess eight Iron Dome batteries, eight in operation and two in reserve." (Arutz Sheva Staff 2019). While boosting the IDF's offensive conventional capabilities in general, there is no push for decisively defeating Hamas militarily. Upon promotion to Chief of Staff, Kochavi "spelled out to the military top brass that he supports the continuation of the 'battle between the wars.'" (Kubovich 2019). This is a management strategy that entails using escalations and clandestine operations to reduce enemy capabilities. Israel's management strategy reflects its continued perception of high constraints despite generally warmer ties between the Netanyahu administration and President Trump when compared to ties during the Obama administration.

European and American relations are more important for Israel in terms of diplomatic cover versus pressure and economic ties versus isolation. In general, Israeli leaders perceived higher external constraints during the Obama administration years while the Trump years have thus far been viewed as permissive yet unpredictable, leading to a cautious approach. Israel sees European and UN scrutiny on Israel as high. In recent years, Netanyahu has been hedging against western isolation by forging diplomatic and trade connections with China and Russia.

[344] A report in Haaretz from late 2018 states: "Political and military leaders have concluded that it would be better for Israel not to overthrow the Hamas government in the Gaza Strip, officials who took part in the deliberations told Haaretz." Rather, they seek to weaken Hamas but strengthen its governing capacity, punish it with closures and attacks when there is escalation and reward it when there is quiet. This was the consensus by the end of 2018 and there is no indication that this has changed. (Kubovich and Landau 2018).

[345] Hamas generally responds to Israeli carrots and sticks, investigating and arresting terrorists that violate cease-fires when they fear retribution. Hamas investigated the shooting of an IDF officer in January 2019. (Rasgon 2019).

(Judah 2018). However, the U.S. remains its most important partner by far. Israel's perception that it still faces high constraints has reinforced its status-quo management strategy.

The PA supports Israel's containment of Hamas in Gaza. It acts as a spoiler to truce negotiations between Israel and Hamas because it views any separate accord between Hamas and Israel as delegitimizing its position. Israel's ability to maintain its control over what enters and exits Gaza, along with Egypt's cooperation in this effort, has left Hamas willing to negotiate what its leaders call "a long-term truce." Notably, this language shields it from having to moderate its ideological end goal which it still claims to be the replacement of Israel with an Islamic political entity. Mkhaimar Abusada, chairman of the department of political science at Al-Azhar University in Gaza, argues that Hamas "believes that a long truce with Israel is possible—depending on the outcome of Israel's coming elections." And that this is their desired outcome. (Abusada 2019). Israeli leadership supports this outcome as well, but Hamas remains unwilling to completely stop escalations.[346]

General HaCohen emphatically rejected peace with Hamas, stating: "The idea of an absolute solution is a dream." He reiterated that Israel can only hope to manage the conflict with Hamas. He thinks this is the case with the PA as well, calling the main difference between the two groups "strategy." Abbas realized after 2004 when he took over from Arafat that violence will not obtain Palestinian objectives. Instead, he claims Abbas wants to get as much as he can in terms of concessions without ever moving towards peace. In this respect, HaCohen prefers dealing with Hamas which he considers more honest than the PA. He cited Hamas calling ceasefires "hudnas" as honesty regarding their short-term nature. (HaCohen 2018).

At a briefing for the Future Battlefield Annual Talks in May 2019, Israeli military leaders exchanged briefings with U.S. Army officers about each country's strategic situation. Two senior IDF intelligence officers emphatically claimed that long-term peace with Hamas is impossible, explicitly citing their ideological commitment to destroying Israel as the reason. One claimed they have an ideology based in the Koranic call for perpetual jihad against "Dar al-Harb," the non-Islamic world, and a necessity to reconquer what was once part of the Muslim Caliphate.

[346] On February 26, 2019, Hamas risked significant reprisals when its political chief attempted to organize an attack in Israel. PA forces arrested a Hamas cell in Nablus preparing to carry out bombings. "The cell was receiving its orders from the Gaza Strip as well as from Lebanon." PA forces arrested the leader after he "received $50,000 from the deputy chairman of Hamas's politburo Saleh al-Arouri to carry out the attack." (Aharonheim and Toameh 2019).

This includes all of what is now Israel. Both claimed that Israel's strategy is to secure short-term periods of quiet, realistically lasting "a couple of years" through a carrot and stick approach. They also noted Hamas's tight grip over Gaza in terms of controlling violence and protest.[347]

Israel's strategy aims to keep Hamas strong enough to control violence in Gaza but too weak to threaten Israel substantially. According to Palestinian journalist Khaled Abu Toameh, there are no signs that Hamas rule over the Gaza Strip is facing any real challenges. However, the challenge that Hamas leaders do fear comes from the PA, not from Israel. Hamas has been working towards short-term understandings with Israel because it needs these understandings so that Israel will transfer Qatari cash to help Hamas maintain public support. (Toameh 2019).

The April 2019 ceasefire understandings reached between Israel and Hamas, are understood by Israeli leaders to be short-term in nature. This understanding is taken from Hamas leadership's direct language. Senior Hamas official Saleh Arouri explicitly stated that the ceasefire understandings between Israel and Hamas are not a peace agreement. Furthermore, regarding President Trump's long-awaited peace plan, Arouri stressed that Hamas will not accept any solution that recognizes Israel's right to exist. Hamas, he said, will be the "real wall blocking the deal of the century." (Toameh 2019).

Israel's increased tolerance for Hamas military build-up and escalation is unprecedented. In May 2019, Hamas escalation shattered four redlines showing Israel's adherence to management despite unprecedented Hamas violations. (Rozman 2019). This is the case despite a more permissive external context for hardline action with a supportive Trump administration which, unlike its predecessor, has voiced only support for Israel's "right to defend itself" without the accompanying call for de-escalation and restraint. (Cortellessa 2019). Realist theory would suggest that Israel exploit the permissive international environment to take military steps to keep Hamas from increasing its relative power. Israel's unprecedented restraint despite these conditions suggests that Iron Dome and the self-reinforcing feedback loop that incentivizes defense strategy has become a strong enough internal constraint to keep Israeli strategy one of management despite it proving increasingly unsuccessful at deterring violence and protecting Israel's citizenry. Indeed, in the Summer of 2019, Israel announced plans to build a second layer

[347] I sat in on the Future Battlefield (FBAT) talks on May 15, 20019. I cannot name the senior officers mentioned.

of physical barrier separating Israel from the Gaza Strip, spending tens of millions of shekels to increase its defensive denial capabilities. (Aronheim 2019).

Dr. Eran Lerman specifically argued that Hamas is difficult to deter because it does not view an Israeli threat to achieve decisive victory as credible. (Lerman 2018).[348] Israel's increased investment in border security, intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities, anti-ballistic missile defense and massive spending on surface, underground and underwater anti-tunneling sensors and barriers, suggests that managing the conflict is its preferred strategy.

CONCLUSION

From its official founding in 1987 until today, Israeli leaders see Hamas as highly ideologically driven towards the absolutist goal of destroying Israel. This perception was not softened by what Israeli leaders regarded as superficial and strategically motivated changes to its charter in 2006, (Nimer 2009) and 2017. (Clarke 2017).

In 1995, Israel undertook a management approach after Hamas demonstrated its ability to threaten Israel's security in a meaningful way. Israeli leadership believed that it could and should rely on PA forces to rein in Hamas instead of risking international and domestic condemnation for cracking down themselves. In 2002, as the peace process broke down with the PA and Israel perceived its constraints to be at their nadir, Israel launched a decisive victory strategy. This continued until 2008 when Israel came to understand that it could not overthrow Hamas in Gaza, but that Hamas governing capacity gave it the ability to enforce short-term quiet.[349]

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[348] Dr. Eran Lerman specifically argued that Hamas is difficult to deter because they do not view an Israeli threat to achieve decisive victory against them as credible. He compares this to the U.S. in Vietnam which utilized massively asymmetric firepower, but the Hanoi regime knew the U.S. did not want to occupy North Vietnam following the lessons of the Korean war. He writes: "Hamas leadership knows that Israel does not wish to retake Gaza… This realization greatly reduces the effectiveness of Israel's deterrent messages." (Lerman 2018). Israel would need to threaten Hamas leadership and legitimacy as a first step towards creating deterrence. He claims that Israel needs the "specific and accurate capacity to strike fear in the ranks of the organization, to threaten targets which Hamas highly values, and to threaten the survival of its senior command echelons as well as its very legitimacy in the eyes of a Gazan public." (Lerman 2018). He argues that Israel cannot do this because of its constraints.

[349] Following the Disengagement, Israel became less able to target Hamas leadership because it ceased regular ground operations in Gaza while Hamas leaders entrenched in subterranean tunnel and bunker networks, often underneath sensitive civilian areas. However, Israel's ISR and SIGINT technology improved as did Hamas' institutional learning. Therefore, Israel perceives Hamas to hover between a type C to a type B non-state opponent from 2007 until the present. Hamas maintains high governance function, with high capacity, and significant accountability due to the threats posed by rivals, Fatah as well as harder-line groups like PIJ, PFLP, DFLP, Shi'ite militants and Salafist groups. Israel sees Hamas governance function as allowing better management by providing an "address" for Israel's carrots and sticks. Hamas maintains tight control over Gaza despite domestic dissatisfaction that recently showed itself in rare organized protests in March of 2019. These protests were suppressed by force.

Israel shifted to management in 2008. In Cast Lead Israel first explicitly stated that it did not seek to overthrow Hamas. This continued throughout subsequent operations. Management largely succeeded at achieving quiet but not peace over the decade since. This strategy is likely to remain because Israel is too constrained to credibly threaten Hamas with defeat—and absent that—unable to socialize it into the type that can be negotiated with towards a peace treaty. Without the ability to negotiate, concessions cannot secure a peace treaty. Therefore, they will be minor, reversable, and used to reward short-term calm and punish escalation. Absent Hamas demonstrating its ability to threaten Israel in a sustained campaign that causes casualties daily, or absent its overthrow from the bottom up, this dynamic is unlikely to change. Hamas' military preparations and statements suggest its continued ideological drive.[350]

21 out of the 22 respondents that I interviewed see Israel's short-term goals toward Hamas as quiet and view a permanent peace agreement as impossible. Current Israeli leadership prefers to manage the conflict, working to secure quiet in exchange for better living conditions in Gaza. Neither Israeli political bloc advocates overthrowing Hamas rule. (Laub and Daraghmeh 2019). Instead, leaders are doubling down on defense.[351] Both Israel and Hamas quickly eschewed the possibility that carrots and sticks would lead to a long-term ceasefire or peace deal. (Toameh, Lazaroff and Deane 2019).

Even the most dovish Israelis do not see a negotiated peace settlement with Hamas as possible. Novelist Amos Oz—who led Israel's peace camp for decades—said that he does not see a prospect for compromise between Israel and Hamas. "I have been a man of compromise all my life," Oz said. "But even a man of compromise cannot approach Hamas and say: 'Maybe we meet halfway, and Israel only exists on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays." (Goldberg 2014).

Indicative of this perception's prevalence across the spectrum of Israeli leadership, former Chief of Staff, Blue and White leader Benny Gantz, who is running to the left of Likud, warned the leaders of Hamas that if they attack Israel while he is prime minister "the policy of

[350] "Despite pressure at home and economic difficulties, Hamas has been preparing for war with Israel since Operation Protective Edge ended in 2014, mainly by beefing up its subterranean abilities with a vast network of tunnels beneath Gaza, to contend with a possible Israeli entry into its territory." (Kubovich 2019).
[351] Following rocket fire on Israel's urban center, former deputy head of IDF Military Intelligence Brigadier General Meir Elran argued that Israel needs more anti-ballistic batteries to protect vulnerable areas in the country's center. He also suggested that citizens in these up until now protected areas that constituted an unspoken red line must also undergo civilian defense drills as take place in Gaza periphery communities. (Jeremy Bob 2019).

targeted killings of Hamas leaders would return." Gantz promised that there would be 'zero tolerance,' for firing on the Israeli south. Indicating that this would not be a policy to defeat Hamas, Gantz declared Operation Protective Edge that he commanded in Gaza, "a success," and said it "brought quiet to the south." (Hoffman 2019).

There are prominent voices that argue that a military strategy aimed at decisive victory over Hamas and the Gaza militants is the only way to end violence from Gaza.[352] Knesset Defense Committee Chairman Avi Dichter advocated that Israel "destroy the terror infrastructure in a very long battle, and attain access to the various places in Gaza, like we did during Operation Defensive Shield." (Kedar 2019). While Dichter believes that Israel's optimal outcome would be to end the conflict with Gaza and that this requires decisive force, most experts interviewed argue that the current consensus among Israel's leadership—that has taken shape since 2014—is that Israel should keep Hamas weak but strong enough to control violence against Israel. In a Security Cabinet meeting on July 3 2019, Netanyahu stated the goal of "restoring calm."[353] This is a short-term, suboptimal solution. It entails sporadic flare-ups of violence. It signals that absent an existential threat, one made less likely due to Israel's increasingly sophisticated denial systems, Israel will not pursue decisive victory.

If Israel had low constraints it might have pursued decisive victory to socialize Hamas or defeat it. A less constrained country might not have tolerated the containment of a neighboring terrorist threat capable of targeting all its major urban centers, airport, and capable of shutting down life regularly. Russia's operation in Chechnya suggests the strategy that a less constrained state might pursue against a contiguously located terrorist entity.

[352] Policymakers demanding victory include Knesset members Chetboun and Benet. Former Southern Command Commander BG (Res.) Zvika Fogel stated: "If we don't act against Hamas and Hezbollah and we'll pay a heavy price in the future, because in both places they'll understand that we're afraid to enter into a confrontation. If we don't finish this story at this time, we may not be able to do it in the future." (Arutz Sheva Staff 2018).
[353] Netanyahu met with MKs, regional council heads of the Gaza periphery, the commander of Southern Command and the Gaza division commander. He said. "Our policy is clear - we want to restore the calm, but at the same time we are preparing for a wide-scale military operation, if one is required." (Arutz Sheva Staff 2019).

Chapter 5: The United States Versus the Taliban: Misperception and Missed Opportunity

Adversarial relations between the United States and the Taliban go back to its seizure of power in 1996. Concerns over their provision of safe haven to violent extremists date to 1998 when the U.S. demanded that the Taliban cease protecting al-Qaeda, following Osama bin Laden's role in the U.S. embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania. Conflict resulted from their refusal to turn over bin Laden and expel al-Qaeda following the September 11, 2001 attacks. The U.S. pursued decisive victory until 2003 when it appeared that the Taliban was largely defeated. By 2005, the Bush administration began to recognize that the Taliban had reemerged, this time as a formidable insurgency. The Bush administration made plans in 2008 to defeat the Taliban through a surge. President Obama implemented the surge from 2009 until 2011. From 2012 until 2017 the U.S. sought to manage the conflict while gradually withdrawing. In 2017 the U.S. first stated the goal of negotiating with the Taliban in an official strategy document.

Existing explanations for these shifts look at the level of threat, the international context, domestic politics, institutional inertia and leadership. The most common argument is that the U.S. had no strategy. This is an oversimplification and conflates broader U.S. strategy for Afghanistan with its strategy towards the Taliban. U.S. perceptions of the Taliban's type, combined with varying constraints, best explain the timing and direction of the strategic shifts throughout this conflict. The perception that the Taliban is ready to put pragmatism above ideology, along with constraints, are driving the Trump administration to tentatively negotiate.

Overview

In this chapter I apply socialization logic to the U.S. campaign against the Taliban. In the next I look at the U.S. effort against al Qaeda. Both focus heavily on Afghanistan. Regarding the U.S. strategy for Afghanistan, the recently published "Afghanistan Papers" paint a picture of U.S. administrations systematically manipulating war reporting to hide a fundamental lack of strategy.[354] The core findings of this released information reiterate a theme that nearly all of the

[354] U.S. administrations actively sought to push the narrative of success in Afghanistan. For example, "in October 2006, Secretary Rumsfeld's speechwriters delivered a paper titled 'Afghanistan: Five Years Later.' Brimming with optimism, it highlighted more than 50 promising facts and figures, from the number of Afghan women trained in 'improved poultry management' (more than 19,000) to the 'average speed on most roads' (up 300 percent)… Five years on, there is a multitude of good news,' it read. 'While it has become fashionable in some circles to call Afghanistan a forgotten war, or to say the United States has lost its focus, the facts belie the myths.'" Regarding this

experts interviewed for this chapter agree with and argued forcefully: the U.S. never had a coherent strategy for Afghanistan. (Whitlock 2019). Actually, the U.S. originally aimed to defeat the Taliban. However, the U.S. never had a coherent strategy for exiting Afghanistan or for countering the Taliban once they had re-emerged as an insurgency. In this chapter, I examine public statements, documents, policies and expert testimony to deduce what U.S. strategy most resembled within the rubric of decisive victory, management or bargaining.

Looking back on the U.S. conflict in Afghanistan in 2019, General Barno, the commander of U.S. and coalition forces in Afghanistan from 2003–2005, lamented the failure to tie diplomatic, informational, military, and economic (DIME) resources into a comprehensive strategy.[355] U.S. strategy fluctuated between military defeat and management of the Taliban and building an Afghan government yet to be capable of governing. The Taliban—the only entity that had demonstrated the ability to exert a monopoly on violence in Afghanistan—was shut out of the process. (Dr. "K" Interview 2019). This followed from a misperception of the Taliban's type. From 1996-2001 the Taliban tightened their control over Afghanistan. This hinted at a reality that the U.S. only began to accept in 2017 and pursue in earnest in 2019; that the Taliban could potentially uphold a bargain acceptable to U.S. interests if they could be socialized into placing pragmatism above ideology.[356]

While this chapter is not about nation building in so far as creating a stable and democratic Afghanistan is concerned, the nation building aspects of counterinsurgency (COIN), for most of the conflict—from 2002-2016—were part of the strategy to either defeat the Taliban or to keep them at bay. Their flawed application hindered the campaign against the Taliban which benefited from the corruption that followed the U.S. effort to build central governance in Afghanistan. How and why the nation building efforts failed is not the purpose of this chapter. Rather, I assert that these flawed efforts stemmed from the fact that the U.S. effort to build an Afghan government excluded the Taliban, whereas socialization logic would suggest building

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report, Rumsfeld said, "this is an excellent piece. How do we use it? Should it be an article? An Op-ed piece? A handout? A press briefing? All of the above? I think it ought to get it to a lot of people." (Whitlock 2019).

[355] Barno is quoted: "the greatest flaw in our 21st-century approach to [counterinsurgency] is our inability to marshal and fuse efforts from all the elements of national power into a unified whole. This failure has resulted in an approach akin to punching an adversary with five outstretched fingers rather than one powerful closed fist." (SIGAR, 2019).

[356] This acknowledges that Taliban governance would likely be repressive and autocratic, but able to prevent terrorists from using Afghan territory to prepare attacks against the U.S. and U.S. interests.

the Taliban's governance function once they were socialized into putting pragmatism over ideology. This was arguably the case by December 2001, although both rational misperceptions and irrational cognitive motivations kept the U.S. from realizing this.

The core U.S. interest in Afghanistan was to end safe haven for al-Qaeda terrorists. This theoretically could be done with the Taliban in power, belying the need for nation building and potentially drastically shortening the conflict. The U.S., over multiple administrations, misperceived the Taliban's type, leading it to pursue what would have been the optimal strategy warranted by socialization logic had it been correct.

The Taliban has generally been pragmatically driven but was perceived as ideologically driven after its unpragmatic decision to face a NATO invasion instead of handing over Bin Laden and dismantling the al-Qaeda presence in Afghanistan. Taliban leader Mullah Omar's decision was ideologically motivated, but pragmatism won out quickly after the U.S. invasion brought the Taliban to the brink of defeat within months. The U.S. failed to see that the Taliban was pragmatically driven. This, along with national pride and a miscalculation regarding its ability to build the Taliban's opposition into an entity capable of governing Afghanistan, led the U.S. to refuse Taliban surrender terms in December 2001.[357]

From 1996 until September 10, 2001, the U.S. saw the Taliban as potentially state-like—a type D NSA. This makes sense because it governed Afghanistan. It had high governance function; with high governing capacity and moderate accountability to rivals that could be organized to overthrow it. Its leadership was hierarchical. There was substantial debate within the U.S. government regarding whether it was pragmatic or ideologically driven. Due to the U.S. removing its embassy from Afghanistan in 1989, it was profoundly ignorant regarding this secretive group. (Bergen interview 2019).[358] After September 11, but pre-invasion, the U.S. considered the Talban to be a type B NSA, ideologically driven, with difficult to target leadership but with high governance function.

[357] One can draw parallels to U.S. strategic thinking in Vietnam, where the U.S. saw the Vietcong as fighting out of an ideological commitment to Communism while they saw themselves as primarily anti-Colonialist, a pragmatic drive that aims to secure political sovereignty. For further discussion see (Khong 1992).
[358] The Taliban published very little written work, Mullah Omar rose form relative obscurity, and much of the Taliban is illiterate). (Bergen interview 9/19/19).

From September 2001 until December 2001, the U.S. saw the Taliban as shifting from a type B to a type C NSA because the invasion made Taliban leadership much more targetable. U.S. leaders believed that had the Taliban been pragmatically driven, Omar would have given up Bin Laden. Some of his most senior commanders advocated that he do this.[359] For the first months after the U.S. invasion, the U.S. used force effectively in a decisive victory strategy but failed to realize and thus capitalize on its success in socializing the Taliban into a type that could be negotiated with by December 2001.[360]

According to socialization logic, the U.S. should have bargained with the Taliban at this critical point and boosted its governance function in exchange for desired terms.[361] Instead, the U.S. rejected terms for surrender and allowed Omar to escape to Pakistan where he transformed the Taliban into an insurgency with far more difficult to target leadership and less governance function.[362] The U.S. opted to try to eliminate the Taliban. When this proved difficult due to its decentralization and safe haven in Pakistan, the U.S. sought to contain it. Meanwhile, since 2002, the U.S. sought to build its opposition into a legitimate, functioning and friendly government. This has yet to materialize. State-building in Afghanistan faces myriad challenges, including Afghan military inability to contest Taliban control.[363]

The U.S. failure to negotiate with the Taliban in December of 2001 cannot be explained by asymmetric information or a credible commitments problem stemming from uncertainty over future relative power. The asymmetries were large and unambiguous. Rather, it can be explained by a perception of the Taliban as an ideologically instead of pragmatically driven actor.[364] This misperception was originally rational, but following substantial evidence that the Taliban was pragmatically driven, the U.S. misperception is better explained by motivational and cognitive

[359] There were pragmatic reasons for the Taliban to stand up to U.S., including al Qaeda's material support for the Taliban. However, after the initial months of the U.S. invasion, U.S. resolve and capabilities were clear. Therefore, the U.S. did not consider the Taliban's continued refusal to face reality as pragmatically motivated.
[360] Instead of using decisive victory to convince the Taliban that they faced imminent and decisive defeat and through this, shifting the Taliban towards being a pragmatic actor, a type D NSA that could be negotiated with, the U.S. pursued total victory even once the Taliban appeared to have moderated by offering surrender terms.
[361] The U.S. should have accepted the offer of Omar's "retirement" from violence in exchange for eliminating future safe-haven support for terrorists. Instead, national pride, Afghan opposition and distrust led the U.S. to reject it.
[362] Decentralized insurgencies are hard to defeat and mountainous terrain and open border with Pakistan made victory untenable. The U.S. failed to socialize the Taliban by threatening victory and targeting its leadership.
[363] Blue on green attacks on friendly forces and a corruption are endemic problems as well.
[364] Jason Campbell describes the thinking in the George W. Bush administration in these early years as not having a clear understanding as to how they were different from al Qaeda. The administration also did not have much drive to explore how they were different. (Campbell interview July 24, 2019.

biases stemming from a revenge motive following 9/11 and poor intelligence. Therefore, at this point, these biases better explain U.S. strategy than socialization logic which assumes rationality. Socialization logic does explain why the misapplication of strategy likely prolonged the conflict.

Following Omar's escape the U.S. ability to target Taliban leadership was diminished, but from 2003 until 2005 the U.S. regarded the Taliban as a defeated entity. This is because they had not yet emerged as a capable insurgency and would not for several years. The security situation in Afghanistan was relatively calm and the U.S. took a small footprint approach—first to mop up the relatively few Taliban and al-Qaeda fighters that remained active in Afghanistan—and then to build Afghan institutions. The U.S. sought to forge the Afghan security forces into an organization that would be independently able to stabilize Afghanistan.

By 2006 after British troops faced stiff and unexpected resistance in Helmand, the U.S. began to worry about the Taliban reemerging as a formidable insurgency. In 2008, the Bush administration war czar General Doug Lute held the first interagency audit of the war effort and suggested that the incoming administration send 17,000 troops to Afghanistan to carry out COIN. President Obama put COIN specialist General Stanley McChrystal in command of the war effort, expecting that he would take a more aggressive approach to defeating the Taliban insurgency through population-centric COIN.[365] I code this as a decisive victory strategy because the goal was to convince the Taliban to surrender unconditionally. However, this approach was enfeebled from its outset by Obama's declaration of a withdrawal date. There is evidence that the Obama administration intended to pursue management from the outset despite clearly stating decisive victory over the Taliban as a goal in his March, 27, 2009 strategy announcement.[366]

[365] There is significant skepticism over if population-centric COIN can defeat an insurgency. (Davis 2014).
[366] The Washington Post reported that in an October 8, 2009 war room meeting, General McChrystal joined from Kabul to explain what he'd been doing since receiving orders in March: "In June, McChrystal noted, he had arrived in Afghanistan and set about fulfilling his assignment. His lean face, hovering on the screen at the end of the table, was replaced by a mission statement on a slide: 'Defeat the Taliban. Secure the Population.' 'Is that really what you think your mission is?' one of those in the Situation Room asked. 'We don't need to do that,' Gates said, according to a participant. 'That's an open-ended, forever commitment.' But that was precisely his mission, McChrystal responded, and it was enshrined in the Strategic Implementation Plan -- the execution orders for the March strategy, written by the National Security Council (NSC) staff. 'It was clear that Stan took a very literal interpretation of the intent' of the NSC document, said Jones, who had signed the orders himself. Whatever the administration might have said in March, officials explained to McChrystal, it now wanted something less absolute: to reverse the Taliban's momentum, deter it and try to persuade a significant number of its members to switch sides… Obama listened to McChrystal's presentation. The 'mission' slide included the same words: 'Defeat the Taliban.' But a red

The Obama administration drew down the U.S. military mission in Afghanistan in 2011 citing flagging domestic support and a desire to shift focus after eliminating Osama bin Laden. In the Spring of 2011 Obama officially announced that his administration was pursuing negotiations with the Taliban. By the end of 2014 he announced an end to U.S. combat operations and an end to the 13-year long Operation Enduring Freedom.

After over 18 years of ebbs and flows in the use of force since the official Taliban surrender, the Trump administration appears to perceive the Taliban as potentially a type D actor, one that is not facing defeat but is also not expecting victory and is tired of losing men, resources and living in fear. The Taliban's primary goal has always been pragmatic; to rule Afghanistan.[367] Therefore, a difficult stalemate might be enough to bring its pragmatism to the fore and secure a bargain. However, the Taliban may try to buy time if it believes that it stands to rise in power if the status quo continues. Therefore, the Trump administration should use force to convince the Taliban that the stalemate is not to its benefit as it embarks upon a negotiation process.[368]

U.S. strategy changed within the same administration under President's George W. Bush, Barack Obama and Donald Trump. It did not become more hawkish coincident with increased Taliban power or more dovish as Taliban power receded. Finally, domestic politics did play a role as an internal constraint, but it fails to explain why the U.S. refused to accept Taliban surrender in December 2001, why Obama surged troops and then pulled back or why Trump has sought to withdraw troops and negotiate. U.S. strategy in Afghanistan most closely matches its leadership's perceptions, sometimes mistaken, of the Taliban's type, while internal and external constraints distorted the strategy leading to management.

Shifts in Strategy

- 2001: Decisive Victory
- 2003: Viewed Taliban as defeated/Management
- 2008: Decisive Victory (through COIN)
- 2011: Management

box had been added beside it saying that the mission was being redefined, Jones said." "A participant recalled that the word 'degrade' had been proposed to replace 'defeat.'" (Kornblut, Wilson and DeYoung 2009).

[367] Unlike al-Qaeda, the Taliban does not have an ideological drive to wage global jihad. If the Taliban emerges as the ruler of Afghanistan following a U.S. withdrawal, it would undoubtably lead an oppressive and illiberal regime, but would likely act pragmatically to prevent further conflict.

[368] The Trump administration increased the use of aerial attacks to an unprecedented number in 2017, increased troop levels by around 4,000 as well. This uptick in force accompanied the administration's statement of intention to negotiate with the Taliban. (Landler and Gordon 2017). As negotiations enter their eight round in 2019, the Trump administration promising to withdraw over 7,000—nearly half—by 2020 as a potential concession. (Hudson 2019).

- 2017: Negotiations

Strategy Shift	Taliban Type	U.S. Constraints	My argument	Competing arguments[369]
2001 Decisive Victory (through regular warfare)	B → C →D →A	Low	U.S. perceived the Taliban as ideologically driven after refusal to hand over Bin Laden post 9/11. With low constraints, U.S. pursued optimal strategy to force moderation but failed to accept success due to cognitive and motivational biases.	1. Domestic rally around the flag. 2. Revenge motive. 3. Bush and Cheney's influence. 4. International support.
2003 No conflict/Management	A/B	Low/Medium	Increasing domestic constraints as threat seemed minimal. Decreased ability to target Taliban leadership due to decentralization and safe haven in Pakistan. Sense of Taliban as defeated, only mop up operations.	1. Iraq war distraction.
2008 Decisive Victory (through COIN)	A→ B	Medium	Management was failing; Taliban increasingly taking territory. Taliban gained strength and demonstrated high ideological drive. U.S. increased ability to target al-Qaeda and Taliban leadership.	1. Desire to shift away from Iraq War. 2. Lessons from Iraq surge success: Doctrinal inertia (Eikenberry 2013).[370]
2011 Management	B→ C	Medium/High	The surge successfully rolled back Taliban control but was unable to threaten defeat. Killing bin Laden increased constraints by eliminating what the public considered the core reason for being in Afghanistan.	1. War weariness and 2012 election concerns. 2. saw reduced threat after killing Bin Laden. 3. Obama's dovishness.
2017 Punishment/Negotiations	Potentially type D	Medium	Stalemate: Taliban casualties and governance in areas it controls convinced Trump that Taliban may be pragmatic.	1. War weariness, campaign on withdrawal. 2. Refocus on great power competition.[371]

The U.S. invaded Afghanistan in September 2001 following the most devastating attack on U.S. soil in its history and the first major attack since Japan bombed Pearl Harbor. As a democracy, the U.S. faces high internal constraints on the use of force—but like the national response to Pearl Harbor—in the immediate aftermath of these attacks, constraints were lowered. Public support was high to bring the perpetrators and their enablers to justice. Congress easily passed the authorization of the use of military force (AUMF) with only one member opposed. However, even at its lowest point, U.S. leadership was very casualty averse. This, along with lessons from the Soviet experience in Afghanistan and the success of a small footprint, special forces led approach in Panama, led the Bush administration to launch a decisive but decidedly

[369] These are not always different from my logic. Sometimes multiple explanations can explain U.S. strategy.
[370] To explain Obama surge 2009, Eikenberry argued: "When the Obama administration conducted a comprehensive Afghanistan strategy review in 2009, some military leaders, reinforced by some civilian analysts in influential think tanks, confidently pointed to Field Manual 3-24 as the authoritative playbook for success,". (Eikenberry 2013).
[371] The U.S. refocus on Great Power competition is explicit in the 2017 National Security Strategy and the 2018 National Defense Strategy. (NSS 2017) (NDS 2018).

small footprint invasion. Demonstrative of this approach, U.S. forces suffered only 12 deaths in their initial overthrow of the Taliban from October 2001 until March 2002. (Jones 2009).[372]

Unlike a small and easily isolated country like Israel, the U.S. generally faces low external constraints. It. is a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council, leads NATO, has the world's largest economy and most powerful military. The War on Terror began with the U.S. led invasion of Afghanistan to overthrow the Taliban and dismantle al-Qaeda. The U.S. went to war with the authorization of the UN Security Council, the full support and backing of NATO (a coalition that included troops from 43 nations) and even material logistical, diplomatic and intelligence support from Russia, a historic adversary.[373] During his address to the nation following the September 11, 2001 attacks, President Bush referenced international support for the U.S. effort to build an anti-terrorism coalition, stating: "The civilized world is rallying to America's side. They understand that if terror goes unpunished, their own cities, their own citizens might be next." (PBS 2001). Even the Taliban's primary ally, Pakistan, severed ties with it and openly sided with the U.S. following the U.S. ultimatum to the Taliban to hand over Bin Laden, although this was short-lived.[374]

After its refusal to hand-over Bin-Laden, dismantle al-Qaeda training camps, and the issuance of a religious edict (fatwa) to resist the Americans, the U.S. saw the Taliban as highly ideologically driven, with a high governance function due to its territorial control and the existence of a rival (the Northern Alliance), and difficult to target leadership. This was largely due to rugged terrain, porous borders with Pakistan, lack of good U.S. intelligence reconnaissance and surveillance (ISR) capabilities and the Taliban's reclusiveness.

In his address following September 11 2001, President Bush claimed that "the leadership of al-Qaeda has great influence in Afghanistan and supports the Taliban regime in controlling most of the country." Bush made it clear that the Taliban could avoid conflict. He demanded:

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[372] The overthrow of the Taliban, an entity that defeated nearly all opposition and ruled Afghanistan was a major accomplishment. The Taliban had more fighters and had heavy weaponry. U.S. air power proved overwhelming. Sustaining the peace proved to be the real challenge, one that could not be done through precision airpower.

[373] A Defense Intelligence Agency cable from October 15, 2001 stated that "Russia is reportedly delivering approximately forty to fifty T-55 tanks, sixty APCs, plus additional artillery, rocket systems, attack helicopters and a large quantity of ammunition to the Northern Alliance via the Parkhar supply base in southern Tajikistan." This was to aid the U.S. backed Norther Alliance to capture Kabul from the Taliban. (National Security Archives Document 17 – Information Paper).

[374] There were elements in the Pakistani government would aid the Taliban covertly. (Gopal 2015, 12).

> Deliver to United States authorities all of the leaders of al-Qaeda who hide in your land. Release all foreign nationals, including American citizens you have unjustly imprisoned. Protect foreign journalists, diplomats and aid workers in your country. Close immediately and permanently every terrorist training camp in Afghanistan. And hand over every terrorist and every person and their support structure to appropriate authorities. Give the United States full access to terrorist training camps, so we can make sure they are no longer operating. These demands are not open to negotiation or discussion. The Taliban must act and act immediately. They will hand over the terrorists or they will share in their fate. (Washington Post 2001).

Unlike al-Qaeda, the Taliban's ideology did not necessitate attacking the U.S.; they were primarily concerned with ruling Afghanistan.[375] However, the U.S. did not trust Taliban offers to hold a third-party trial for Bin Laden regarding the embassy bombings and perceived it as ideologically committed to harboring al-Qaeda. There were pragmatic reasons why Taliban hardliners supported protecting Bin Laden, namely his bankrolling of their war against the Northern Alliance, and killing their chief enemy, Ahmad Shah Masoud on September 9 2001. Pragmatism would have dictated that the Taliban hand over Bin Laden to avoid military ruin at the hands of a robust military alliance led by the world's only superpower. Their refusal to concede to U.S. demands post 9/11 reinforced U.S. perceptions of the Taliban as highly ideologically motivated.[376]

The U.S. pursued decisive victory against the Taliban in the aftermath of 9/11.[377] Unlike with al-Qaeda, where victory itself was the optimal goal, against the Taliban the decisive victory strategy applied optimally would have been a means towards socializing it to pragmatically concede terms and make peace. This would be aided by its high governance function.[378] In a 2009 report to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Senator Kerry stated, "when we went to war less than a month after the attacks of September 11, the objective was to destroy al-Qaeda

[375] The Taliban followed Deobandi Islam and a Pashtun ideology. This ideological foundation takes a strong stance against terrorism and does not promote violent jihad against the West. This differentiates it from al Qaeda's Wahhabi ideological foundation. (Puri 2009).
[376] While the Taliban primarily sought to rule Afghanistan, the legitimacy of the Taliban's rule was based on strict adherence to Islamic precepts. (Gopal 2015, 11). Omar aimed to boost his legitimacy. Surrendering Bin-Laden to non-Muslims would have been damaging to the Taliban's legitimacy. Following the first waves of American bombardments that left the Taliban senior leadership in shock, Omar sent out a message via radio claiming that the bombardment was "a test from the almighty" and the goal was "martyrdom." (Gopal 2015, 16).
[377] The U.S. pursued two incompatible means to secure Afghanistan. On one hand it bolstered warlords in its effort to defeat the Taliban and al-Qaedawith a minimal footprint. On the other, it sought to create a unitary government in Kabul. Warlords were more interested in setting up their own fiefdoms than in fealty to a central authority. (Interview with Jason Campbell July 24, 2019).
[378] Although both groups warranted a decisive victory strategy, the goal with the Taliban should have been to use the threat of victory to moderate them, while with al-Qaedathe optimal strategy is to annihilate them.

and kill or capture its leader, Osama bin Laden, and other senior figures in the terrorist group and the Taliban." (Kerry 2009). A misperception of the Taliban's type led the U.S. to conflate it with al-Qaeda and to reject negotiation after its surrender in December 2001.

The U.S. pursued military advancements to boost its ability to decisively defeat both the Taliban and al-Qaeda and to target their leadership. In the mountainous and cave riddled terrain, intelligence and precision targeting capabilities needed to be vastly improved. The U.S. military prioritized improving its ISR capabilities, integrating the reaper and predator drones into its force structure, and deploying CIA and Special Operations forces to gather HUMINT and SIGINT. By December 2001, the Taliban offered unconditional surrender in exchange for its leader's amnesty. U.S. misperception, bolstered by the emotional motivation to bring Omar to justice, led the U.S. to reject this offer. The U.S. was not going to negotiate with the Taliban "while the towers were still smoking" (Bergan interview 9/19/19). This ultimately led to Omar's escape to Pakistan and the creation of an insurgency that persists until today.[379]

Perceptions of the Taliban's Type

The Taliban blend ideological zeal and pragmatic goals. Prior to September 11, 2001, the U.S. perceived them to be a pragmatically motivated group that stringently implemented an extreme form of Islam as a political and legal system. The perception was that the Taliban was focused on internal control and had no ideological drive to attack the West. Omar's refusal to turn over Bin Laden and drive out al-Qaeda in the face of a clear, credible and potent threat to defeat it, ended the U.S. perception that the Taliban was pragmatically driven.[380]

After the U.S. refused to accept the Taliban's surrender, Omar escaped to Pakistan, transformed the Taliban into a decentralized insurgency and began to contest the U.S. backed Afghan government and forces around 2006. As an insurgency, the Taliban leveraged jihadist

[379] Israel perceived the PLO to be more pragmatically driven than they actually were. The U.S. perceived the Taliban to be more ideologically driven than they were. Both misperceptions led the states to pursue a strategy that failed to shorten the conflict. In both cases leaders chose strategies based on misperception of their opponent's type.
[380] In an October 7, 2001 State Department cable, the U.S. requested that "either Pakistani Intelligence ISI Chief Mahmoud Ahmed or Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf deliver a message to Taliban leaders directly from Washington informing the Taliban that 'if any person or group connected in any way to Afghanistan conducts a terrorist attack against our country, our forces or those of our friends or allies, our response will be devastating. It is in your interest and in the interest of your survival to hand over all al-Qaida leaders.' The U.S. warns that it will hold leaders of the Taliban 'personally responsible' for terrorist activities directed against U.S. interests." The short message concludes by informing Mullah Omar that "every pillar of the Taliban regime will be destroyed." (National Security Archives Document 16 – State 175415).

ideology to recruit a devoted following, leading the U.S. to continue rationally perceiving it as more ideologically driven than it actually was. Safe haven in Pakistan and a decentralized structure made it more difficult to target and threaten with defeat.

As the Taliban demonstrated ascendance in the final years of the Bush administration, the administration drew up a recommendation to surge forces to threaten decisive victory. The Obama administration implemented it with severe limitations—most importantly a short-term schedule. The U.S. drew down its forces from 2011-2014 before the Taliban faced defeat, leading to a stalemate.

Because of the Taliban's tenacity, it might not acquiesce to demands to end safe haven support for terrorist groups. It is also unlikely to recognize the authority of the ineffectual and corrupt Afghan government. The Taliban currently controls or contests the most territory since the U.S. invasion in 2001. The Trump administration sees potential for negotiation due to what Cronin would call a "mutually hurting stalemate" (Cronin 2009) whereby Taliban leaders and fighters have become weary enough of fighting to negotiate. Socialization logic would credit the potential for negotiations despite no threat of victory to the Taliban's primarily pragmatic drive.

The likely outcomes of this nearly two-decade long conflict are: a. the U.S. will accept bargain they were unwilling to accept in 2001; b. the status quo management strategy will remain, or; c. the Taliban will accept U.S. demands and then renege once U.S. forces withdraw, knowing that the U.S. is unlikely to redeploy.

Because the U.S. presumes that Taliban leadership knows that the U.S. lacks the ability to hold the Taliban to a bargain that includes peace with the Afghan government, status quo management is likely to remain the strategy for the foreseeable future. This goes against the predictions of socialization logic which would suggest that clear-eyed U.S. leadership would negotiate with the Taliban regarding its security demands—namely denying safe haven to terrorists—while ignoring other concerns such as human rights and democracy. U.S. domestic politics and its ideological drive to support liberal democratic elements, with sunk costs towards these ends enacted by the Bush administration, might better predict this outcome. However, the Trump administration's willingness to negotiate with the Taliban suggests that it believes it can secure a bargain that will protect U.S. security interests in line with what socialization logic would suggest. This remains to be seen.

1979-1996: SOVIET INVASION, PROXY WARS, SOVIET WITHDRAWAL AND CIVIL WAR

Understanding how the U.S. viewed and continues to view the Taliban requires understanding how fundamentalism took hold in Afghanistan and how the most fundamentalist group, the Taliban, took control.[381] The Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979 to support a Communist faction against a more extremist Communist faction. Soviet brutality led to the death of an estimated million Afghanis. President Carter's national security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski advised "bleeding the Soviets" in order to make Afghanistan "their Vietnam." The U.S. supported the most capable counter-Soviet militias, which happened to be Islamist extremists. (Greentree 2019).[382] In retrospect, it is easy to see why some consider Brzezinski to be the father of the Taliban. (Parenti 2001). Both the Soviet invasion and CIA patronage of the mujahedeen irrevocably changed Afghan society.[383]

After the fall of the Soviet Union, Washington and Moscow each cut funding and support for their proxies. This resulted in a civil war. Formerly allied mujahedeen, brought up on a U.S. funded stream of jihadist teachings, turned on each other in a competition for power. The civil war lasted from 1992 until 1996 when the Taliban largely succeeded in imposing a fundamentalist order reinforced by ethnic identity. [384] The Taliban's rivals were largely defeated but posed a credible threat—one that allowed the U.S. to mobilize them to contest Taliban rule following the U.S. led invasion in 2001.[385]

In 1994, a reclusive religious cleric named Mohammed Omar, established the Taliban as a movement of Islamic students who took up arms.[386] In 1996, the Taliban took control of Kabul, making it the de-facto government of Afghanistan. It began to enforce a strict form of Islamic

[381] Socialization logic defines ideological drive in terms of absolutist demands from a state, not fundamentalism.
[382] A U.S. financed children's textbook, illustrated with Kalashnikovs, reads "Aleph [is for] Allah; Allah is one Bey [is for] Baba (father); Father goes to the mosque Tey [is for] Tofang (rifle); Javed obtains rifles for the mujahedeen Jeem [is for] Jihad; Jihad is an obligation. My mom went to the jihad." (Gopal 2015, 56).
[383] When Brzezinski was asked in the late 1990s whether he had any regrets, he replied: "What is more important in the history of the world? The Taliban or the collapse of the Soviet empire? Some stirred-up Muslims or the liberation of Central Europe and the end of the Cold War?" (Gopal 2015, 67)
[384] The civil war consolidated Afghanistan's nearly 40 ethnic groups into political blocs. Taliban recruits came almost entirely from ethnic Pashtuns, who made up about 40 percent of the country. Their main opponents, the Northern Alliance, gathered support from ethnic Tajik, Hazara, and Uzbek communities. (Gopal 2015, 24).
[385] The existence and continued military and political relevance of the Northern Alliance as a rival to the Taliban constituted high governance function. The U.S. could boost their power relative to the Taliban. The existence of a rival should serve to boost U.S. deterrence and was ultimately a factor in making the Taliban a potentially credible bargaining partner when they surrendered in December 2001. (See Chapter 2, Table 1, page 30).
[386] The name "Taliban" derives from tālib, the Arabic word for "student."

law which prohibited modernity and eliminated any form of women's rights. However, they brought relative stability and ended a four-year civil war.[387] They were viewed by the Afghans they ruled over as strict and brutal but uncorrupt and fair in their application of justice. Under Omar's leadership, the Taliban addressed anarchy with "an unforgiving platform of law and order." Gopal claims that "jurisprudence is part of the Taliban DNA." (Gopal 2015, 80).[388] In 2000, Omar outlawed opium cultivation, considering it un-Islamic. The Taliban's ability to outlaw what had been a source of income and livelihood for farmers for as long as they could remember, demonstrates the Taliban's high governing capacity.[389]

By 2001, after five years of rule, the Taliban was an autocratic but effective governing entity that continued to face latent resistance. The resistance—known as the Northern Alliance—was too weak to contest Taliban rule from 1996 until 2001, but they were a ready entity that the U.S. knew they could utilize to support their invasion following 9/11. The Taliban's high governing capacity and moderate, latent vulnerability to rivals, gave it a high level of governance function. (See Chapter 2, Table 1 p. 32).[390] When the U.S. invaded, they leveraged the Northern Alliance, supporting them as a fighting force to contest and replace Taliban rule.[391] Pre-9/11, the U.S. was not in direct conflict with the Taliban, but the seeds of conflict were there. Specifically, declassified embassy cables from 1997 suggest that the U.S. was highly concerned over Taliban support for extremists. (National Security Archives 2004).[392]

1996-SEPTEMBER 2001: FRUITLESS NEGOTIATION

The following section demonstrates the original U.S. confusion over whether the Taliban was mainly ideologically or pragmatically driven. Diplomatic documents suggest that the U.S. increasingly came to view the Taliban is highly ideologically driven. This was corroborated by

[387] Afghanistan is notoriously difficult to govern due to its geography. Populations live in valleys interspersed between difficult to traverse mountains. This hindered the development of a centralized state. (Gopal 2015, 74).
[388] As the Taliban fought to control Afghanistan from 1994 until 1996, many locals feared them but saw them as the "last refuge of tradition in a world in upheaval" and as "seemingly impervious to the lure of foreign riches," while other tribal leaders were seen as acting corruptly on behalf of foreign powers.
[389] Notably, Hamid Karzai, The U.S. government's replacement for leadership of Afghanistan after the Taliban was overthrown, could not enforce the drug ban. (Zahedan 2002).
[390] An NSA with moderate accountability from vulnerability to rivals enhances a state's ability to threaten to weaken it relative to rivals, enhancing its potential for socializing the group by threatening decisive victory.
[391] Socialization logic suggests using this strategy as a pressure tactic to convince the Taliban to moderate its ideology to the point where it would be willing to end support for al-Qaeda and make peace with the U.S. However, instead of leveraging victory to secure a peace bargain, the U.S. pursued annihilation as a policy..
[392] Also, at this point, the U.N. embargoed and condemned the Taliban's oppression of women.

all of the experts interviewed for this chapter. U.S. Army intelligence analyst Dr. B.D. argued that pre-9/11, U.S. officials generally saw the Taliban as fundamentalist, but there was debate within the government regarding whether it was driven predominantly by pragmatic or ideological considerations. There was also a mixed view of Taliban governance function. Many in the Clinton administration thought they could deal with the Taliban on specific economic projects, but U.S. policy did not recognize them as the legitimate government. (Dr. B.D. interview 2019). Each of the experts interviewed contended that Omar's decision not to extradite bin Laden following the September 11 attacks solidified the U.S. perception that the Taliban was primarily ideologically driven. By September 2001, the U.S. saw the Taliban as a type B NSA. It had high governance function, reclusive leadership and high ideological drive.[393]

Diplomatic documents show that the U.S. perceived Taliban leadership as dishonest when they disavowed a relationship with the al-Qaeda in the years immediately preceding 9/11.[394] Some Taliban diplomats seemed to want to bargain over Bin Laden's arrest or expulsion in exchange for U.S. recognition of their regime in Afghanistan.[395] The U.S. was skeptical. The official U.S. embassy comment and action request stated: "the Taliban presented mixed signals on Bin Laden." It noted that "when Jalalabad fell to the Taliban in September 1996 bin Laden solidified his ties to the Taliban and the relationship grew." (Embassy Cable 1997 Document 1).

The U.S. perspective in 1997 was that while Bin Laden might originally have not been tied with or supported by the Taliban, almost immediately following the Taliban's taking of control over Afghanistan, their ties increased.

In early 1998 Bruce Riedel—who later advised President Obama's Afghanistan strategy—was part of a diplomatic team that met with the Taliban. The U.S. had two requests. The less urgent one was for the Taliban to agree to a ceasefire with the Northern Alliance. The more urgent request was for the Taliban to hand over bin Laden either to the U.S. or to the

[393] Within two months of the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, the landing of U.S. assets made it much more able to target Taliban leadership, shifting the Taliban to a type C NSA.
[394] U.S. embassy staff expressed the view that Taliban leadership was being duplicitous regarding their relationship with al Qaeda. For further information see the National Security Archives "the Taliban File," 2004.
[395] Taliban spokesman Ehsan claimed that the Taliban's enemies originally invited Bin Laden. Staneckzai, the Taliban's Deputy Foreign Minister said that the Taliban does not allow "foreigners to engage in terrorist acts from Afghan territory." He also claimed that Bin Laden had relationships with the Taliban's enemies, that perhaps they had terrorist camps, but "with Allah's help we are closing down those camps." He stated, "the Taliban don't want a thief in their house," and said, "we will solve this problem."

Saudis. Riedel recalled, the first request was met with a no, the second with a "hell no." The U.S. belief in the ability to negotiate with the Taliban soured further following the August 7, 1998, U.S. embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania. The U.S. knew that they were planned and carried out by al-Qaeda based in Afghanistan. (Riedel interview 2019).

On August 20 1998, the Clinton administration launched a series of missile strikes in Khost Afghanistan, targeting Bin Laden for al-Qaeda's role in the embassy bombings. The goal was to kill bin Laden and the U.S. had good intelligence. Bin Laden changed his plans and was not on site when the strike was launched. The strike did kill several Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence agents, demonstrating the ties between Pakistan and al-Qaeda that the U.S. did not fully appreciate until towards the end of the Bush administration. (Riedel Interview 9/25/19). On August 22, in a phone call initiated by Omar with the U.S. State Department, Omar spoke with U.S. director for Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh Affairs, Malinowski. He suggested that Omar's call indicated a pragmatic drive but also some unreasonable demands.[396]

The Taliban hardened its stance on extraditing bin Laden after the missile strikes. "Taliban religious leaders Mullah Zakiri and Mullah Shinwari issued a fatwa, an Islamic legal ruling, requiring Muslims to protect bin Laden" (Embassy Cable 1998 Document 4). In a meeting with a U.S. official, Abdul Mujahid, Taliban envoy to the United Nations, described Omar as "the primary reason why Osama bin Laden continues to be afforded sanctuary in Afghanistan." (Embassy Cable 1998 Document 6). That said, Omar's position won out. The U.S. never truly believed that the Taliban would hand over bin Laden. (Riedel Interview 2019).

The U.S. continued to pursue negotiations. However, the U.S. expressed trepidation as to whether the Taliban was indeed negotiating in good faith. As time passed, the U.S. began to lean towards the view that the Taliban was stalling and unwilling to hand over bin-Laden.[397]

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[396] This phone call is the only time Omar spoke directly with a U.S. government official. Omar suggested Clinton resign "to restore U.S. popularity in the Islamic world." He asserted that "the U.S. missile attack will spread bin Laden's anti-American message by uniting the fundamentalist Islamic world and will cause further terrorist attacks." He requested "proof that bin Laden was involved in the Africa bombings, claiming he saw no evidence implicating bin Laden in terrorist activities since he has been afforded sanctuary in Afghanistan." Omar's rhetoric "mirrors bin Laden's as he criticizes the U.S. for maintaining a military presence in Saudi Arabia," but Malinowski remarks that Omar "was in no way threatening." The document concludes that this unusual communication from the head of the Taliban "is indicative of the seriousness of how the Tall Ban [sic] views the U.S. strikes and our anger over bin Laden." (Department of State Cable 1998 Document 2).

[397] A declassified State Department cable from August 23, 1998, entitled "Message to the Taliban on Bin Laden," stated that the U.S. "is interested in a serious dialogue with the Taliban, particularly on the need to bring

From 1998 until September 20, 2001, the U.S. under both President Bill Clinton and then President George W. Bush, demanded that the Taliban hand over Bin Laden and cease all support for al-Qaeda. The State Department went so far as to argue in Islamic and Afghan tribal terms why the Taliban should turn over Bin Laden, stating in a 1998 cable:

> Some Taliban officials in the past have argued that Bin Laden cannot be expelled from Afghanistan because that would violate the code of hospitality (Melmastia) mandated by Pashtunwali. But bin Laden has violated Pashtunwali by not behaving as a guest should behave. He has abused Afghan hospitality by launching attacks from Afghan soil. No Pashtun should put up with such abuse. (State Department Cable 1998 Document 3).[398]

This entreaty suggests that the U.S. perceived the Taliban as capable of pragmatically negotiating with the U.S., even though their customs were strongly religiously and tribally driven. The U.S. did not give up on negotiating with the Taliban until September 2001. From 1998 until 2001, the U.S. still perceived the Taliban as pragmatically driven, blaming Omar for the main point of contention with the U.S., harboring Bin-Laden. A diplomatic cable from September 14, 1998 states:

> Meeting in Islamabad with a U.S. official, Abdul Hakim Mujahid, Taliban envoy to the United Nations, said that Mullah Omar is the primary reason why Osama bin Laden continues to be afforded sanctuary in Afghanistan, as 80% of Taliban officials oppose this policy, including Taliban Deputy Council leader Mullah Mohammad Rabbani. Mujahid added that "very few Afghans are in favor of bin Laden's presence in Afghanistan." Mujahid also tried to bolster relations with the U.S. by appealing to commonalities between the United States and Afghanistan, including their shared "dislike of Iran." (Embassy Cable 1998 Document 6).

U.S. patience with the Taliban eroded and contributed to growing suspicion that the Taliban was not being honest regarding the extradition of Bin Laden. In a 1998 embassy cable, Ambassador Milam asked for Pakistan's help on the bin Laden issue, claiming "U.S. patience was growing thin" and bin Laden's extradition was something the U.S. needed to have "settled 'in a matter of days' rather than weeks or months." (Embassy Cable 1998 Document 11).

U.S. relations with the Taliban continued to deteriorate as the Taliban became more brazen and less willing to negotiate. A State Department response to Omar suggested that the

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international terrorist Osama bin-Laden to justice." The memo praised the Taliban as a "broad-based, multi-ethnic government that is engaged in the great task of rebuilding the country." It also expressly stated that the August 20 strikes were not intended to "damage the Taliban." The preamble did express suspicion that "the apparent readiness of the Tall Ban (sic) for serious dialogue needs to be probed," and suspicion that "it could turn out to be a ploy for recognition or other benefits, or a device to stall for time." (Department of State Cable 1998 Document 2).

[398] The documents emphasized U.S. respect for Islam and that the U.S. did not seek conflict with religious Muslims.

Taliban shared ideology with al-Qaeda. This late 1998 exchange marks the start of a shift in U.S. perceptions towards seeing the Taliban as driven by an absolutist agenda that promotes terrorism to the detriment of pragmatic goals. It became increasingly clear that the Taliban was never going to end support for al-Qaeda training camps or turn over Bin Laden.[399] A series of diplomatic cables in October through November 1998 between the State Department and the Taliban reinforced this view.[400]

According to State Department sources, "the Taliban continue to grow hardened and more inflexible on the issue of extraditing Osama bin Laden." (Embassy Cable Document 12). The Taliban demanded evidence of his guilt, yet when the U.S. provided it, it was refused.[401] A December 1998 Embassy cable notes that "According to bin Laden, there was mutual respect between himself and the Taliban, as they considered each other to be "good Muslims." (Embassy Cable 1998 Document 17). By September 2000, Ambassador Milam made it clear that the request to extradite Bin Laden and end safe haven for al-Qaeda would not go away.[402]

Up until the months preceding the attacks of September 11, 2001, Taliban officials continued to express opposition to terrorism, dismay with bin Laden and potential willingness to

[399] According to the 1998 State Department cable in response to Mullah Omar: "this is a clash between the forces of the past and the forces of the future, between those who tear down and those who build up, between hope and fear, chaos and community. Those who continue to harbor and welcome terrorists must accept responsibility for the actions of the terrorists." "The only dividing line is between those who practice, support or tolerate terror, and those who understand that it is murder, plain and simple." (State Department Cable 1998 Document 7).

[400] These exchanges show a back and forth over Bin-Laden's guilt increasingly suggested that the Taliban was stalling. One proposal was for the U.S. to pay the Taliban a large sum for the purchase of bin-Laden. (Embassy Cable 1998 Document 9). Another notes U.S. frustration: U.S. Ambassador Milam met with the Taliban Minister of Foreign Affairs, Maulawi Wakil Ahmed, on October 11 in the first U.S. meeting with a major Taliban official since the U.S. missile strike. The Taliban called bin Laden 'a serious problem.' As the U.S. stressed the urgency in getting bin Laden out of Afghanistan, "Wakil continued to give the now repetitive Taliban explanation that the Afghan people would overthrow the Taliban if they handed bin Laden over." (Embassy Cable 1998 Document 10).

[401] A State Department cable notes that: Wakil Ahmed, a close aide to Taliban leader Mullah Omar communicated to the Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Pakistan that he had "personally discussed U.S. concerns with 'Amir-Al-Mumineen' (Commander of the Faithful) Mullah Omar," and the Taliban still consider Osama bin Laden "innocent," adding, "It is unbelievable that this small man did this to you." Wakil further claims that the Taliban remain "deeply upset" over the U.S. bombings of training camps in Khost and compares the U.S. cruise missile attacks to a terrorist bombing. "The U.S. said bin Ladin had killed innocent people, but had not the U.S. killed innocent Afghans in Khost too? Was this not a crime?" The cable quotes the Taliban official, "I (Wakil said) consider you (the U.S.) as murderers of Afghans." (Embassy Cable 1998 Document 16).

[402] U.S. Ambassador Milam for the Taliban official said that "the U.S. was not against the Taliban, per se, was not out to destroy the Taliban," however that the "UBL issue is supremely important and must be resolved so the other issues can be discussed in a more amenable atmosphere. The one issue that cannot be subordinated or diminished is bin Laden. If the U.S. and the Taliban could get past bin Ladin,'we would have a different kind of relationship.'" (Embassy Cable 2000 Document 23).

negotiate with the U.S. for his expulsion in exchange for recognition, while at the same time citing the problem turning over bin Laden would pose for their legitimacy, the lack of sufficient evidence, and anger over the U.S. strikes against al-Qaeda training bases. The State Department increasingly viewed the Taliban as noncredible due to two years of back and forth leading nowhere.[403] Furthermore, former White House counter-terrorism chief Richard Clark's January 2001 memo acknowledges that the U.S. understood that al-Qaeda was indeed working in close military partnership with the Taliban.[404]

A State Department report from July 2001 noted the many fruitless attempts by both the Clinton and Bush administration to negotiate with the Taliban.

> The U.S. government pressed the Taliban to expel Usama bin Laden over 30 times between 1996, when the Taliban took Kabul, and the summer of 2001, but the talks were always fruitless and only three of the approaches took place in the first year of the Bush administration. (State Department 2001).

Clarke's 2000 Strategy Paper noted the lackluster nature of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia pressure on the Taliban to comply with U.S. demands.[405] The U.S. settled on sponsoring UN Security Council sanctions against the Taliban.

At the end of 2000, the U.S. cosponsored sanctions against the Taliban but not their rivals the Northern Alliance, demonstrating a strategy to boost the Taliban's governance function by increasing the strength of their rivals and therefore their level of accountability. The U.S. had

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[403] In a January 2004 interview with Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, the 9/11 commission asked "why the State Department had so long pursued what seemed, and ultimately proved, to be a hopeless effort to persuade the Taliban regime in Afghanistan to deport bin Laden[?]" Armitage replied, 'We do what the State Department does, we don't go out and fly bombers, we don't do things like that[;] … we do our part in these things.'" (9/11 Commission 2004 93). This suggests that diplomacy towards the Taliban was not based in naivety.

[404] White House counter-terrorism chief Richard Clark discussed decisions regarding al-Qaeda to be deferred to the incoming Bush administration, noting that if the Taliban is able to wrest full control from the Northern Alliance, which he deems likely when the fighting resumes after the winter thaw, "the al-Qaeda55th brigade, which has been a key fighting force for the Taliban, would then be free to send its personnel elsewhere, where they would likely threaten U.S. interests." (Clarke 2001). The 2000 Clinton Administration Strategy Paper cited the 55th al-Qaeda brigade as a "major source of Taliban success" and their "best fighting unit." (National Security Council 2000, 7).

[405] Clarke's 2000 Strategy Paper noted that the Pakistani government told the Taliban to end support for al-Qaeda but "the Pakistanis did not condition support for the Taliban on compliance." It also noted that "frequent direct diplomatic contact with the Taliban by the U.S. failed to gain any cooperation on ending the al-Qaeda presence in Afghanistan." He noted that "while some in the Taliban leadership appear willing to cooperate with the U.S., the ruler (Mullah Omar) has prohibited any action against al Qida." The paper noted that Saudi efforts to press the Taliban to end sanctuary for al-Qaeda in the late 1990s failed as well. In terms of external constraints on its actions to diminish the Taliban, the paper notes Pakistan's support for the Taliban as intrinsically tied to the desire for strategic depth in the form of a friendly government in Kabul in case of another war with India. It cites Pakistan's acquiescence of Taliban safe haven support for al-Qaedaas "a product of the nexus between Afghanistan and Pakistan's proxy war in Kashmir." (National Security Council 2000, 11).

strong international support. The sanctions bills were cosponsored by Russia and passed 13-0 with two abstentions. (National Security Council 2000, 6). The U.S. had minimal external constraints even prior to September 11, 2001, suggesting that the decision to invade was not primarily due to decreased external constraints post 9/11 since they were already low. Internal constraints might have been deemed too high, but it is more likely that there was no invasion over Taliban support for al-Qaeda because U.S. leadership did not perceive the threat as warranting such drastic action, regardless of whether it might have been supported.

The U.S. saw potential to moderate the Taliban by exploiting its perceived internal divisions. Clarke's Strategy Paper calls on the U.S. to "explore possible efforts to remove the more extreme wing of the Taliban from power… to further divide the Taliban by amplifying and exploiting divisions within the leadership." The view that some elements were extremist, and those needed to be countered by "a combination of propaganda and covert action" suggests that the U.S. did not plan to decisively defeat the Taliban pre-9/11 and did not view it as impossible to negotiate with. Rather, only elements of it were. (National Security Council 2000, 10).[406]

The Taliban's devotion to absolutist ideology became increasingly evident before the September 11, 2001 attacks. On March 12, 2001, despite international disgust, the Taliban demolished two 2,000-year-old Buddhist statues in the cliffs above Bamiyan. In May 2001, reminiscent of the Nazis, the Taliban forced religious minorities to wear tags identifying them as non-Muslims. This increased the U.S. belief that the Taliban was ideologically driven. Omar purposely emphasized this because he believed that Taliban legitimacy in Afghanistan demanded maximalist ideological devotion which would appear weakened if he negotiated with the U.S. over bin Laden. In July 1999, President Clinton issued an executive order declaring the Taliban regime a state sponsor of terrorism. (9/11 Commission 2004, 125).

At its most hawkish, the pre-9/11 U.S. strategy for the Taliban proposed offensive denial in the form of "overt military action to destroy al Qida command/control and infrastructure and Taliban military and command assets." (National Security Council 2000, 11). However, the strategy did not aim to overthrow the Taliban.

[406] The aim of the proposed actions was not to diminish the Taliban out of fear of it attacking the U.S., rather the aim was to curtail Taliban safe haven in Afghanistan as al Qaeda's center of gravity.

On September 9, 2001 in the first suicide strike in Afghanistan's history, al-Qaeda assassinated Ahmed Shah Massoud, the leader of the Northern Alliance. This indebted the Taliban to al-Qaeda even further and gave the Taliban the anticipation of imminent full control over Afghanistan. The attacks of 9/11 brought this to an end. Many Taliban leaders saw this as a tragedy. One Taliban leader called this "the biggest mistake that ever happened to us." (Gopal 2015, 10). In the aftermath of the attacks, President Bush warned that the U.S. "will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbored them." (White House Archive 2001).

Following the 9/11 attacks, the U.S. continued to demand that the Taliban turn over Bin Laden and stop harboring al-Qaeda, but "the State Department did not expect the Taliban to comply," suggesting the clear U.S. perception by this point that they were ideologically driven. (9/11 Commission 2004, 332).

Finally, the U.S. threatened decisive force. Al-Qaeda and Taliban leaders did not take the threat as seriously as they later realized that they should have.[407] The majority of Taliban fighters and leadership were surprised by the 9/11 attacks, learning about it from village televisions after the fact. They were even more shocked by the effectiveness of the U.S. military response.

On September 20, 2001, President Bush demanded that the Taliban hand over bin Laden and all al-Qaeda leaders, close its terrorist training camps, or face the consequences.[408] Condoleezza Rice in a Principals Committee meeting on September 13, 2001 originally proposed looking at "what could be done to turn the Taliban against al-Qaeda" (Engel 2014, 360). On

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[407] According to French: "those who believe that al-Qaeda attacked the U.S. in order to draw us into an Afghan quagmire are wrong. Terrorists attacked America expecting that we'd respond as we traditionally had, by treating terrorism primarily as a law-enforcement problem, with the military response limited to cruise-missile attacks like Bill Clinton's ineffective 1998 strikes in response to the embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania." Writing in the Washington Post, Marc Thiessen quoted from Mitchell's account: "[KSM] looked at me and said, 'How was I supposed to know that cowboy George Bush would announce he wanted us 'dead or alive' and then invade Afghanistan to hunt us down?'" Mitchell writes. "KSM explained that if the United States had treated 9/11 like a law-enforcement matter, he would have had time to launch a second wave of attacks." He was not able to do so because al-Qaeda was stunned "by the ferocity and swiftness of George W. Bush's response." (French 2016).

[408] Bush demanded the Taliban "close immediately and permanently every terrorist camp in Afghanistan and hand over every terrorist and every person in their support structure to appropriate authorities." He also called for full U.S. access to terrorist training camps "so we can make sure they are no longer operating." Bush stated that U.S. demands "are not open to negotiation or discussion," "The Taliban must act and act immediately." Bush warned that the U.S. would track down each and every person involved in the September 11 attack, exclaiming: "I will not forget this wound to our country, or those who inflicted it," he said. "I will not yield. I will not rest." (PBS 2001).

September 21, 2001 - Abdul Salaam Zaeef, the Taliban's ambassador to Pakistan, implied that bin Laden would not be given up. On September 24, 2001, The Taliban called for a jihad if the U.S. invades Afghanistan. At this point the U.S. believed that only military victory could secure U.S. demands and the U.S. shifted its strategy to decisive victory. On October 7, U.S. led forces began bombing Taliban positions in preparation to invade.

The Bush administration knew it would need Pakistan's support. The U.S. sought to lower external constraints by obtaining this support. State department officials secured strong but limited support from Pakistan's President Musharraf in exchange for substantial economic aid. Musharraf accused Bush's deputy secretary of state Richard Armitage of threatening to bomb Pakistan if it did not support the U.S. war effort. Armitage denies this. (Reuters 2006). Musharraf has been criticized for selective support, arresting some al-Qaeda leaders including 9/11 mastermind Khaled Sheikh Mohamad in 2003, but doing little to stop the escape of Taliban fighters into its Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). The inability to rely on Pakistan or violate its sovereignty outside of small targeted strikes in the FATA, was a high external constraint throughout the conflict.[409]

2001-2004: U.S. LED MILITARY CAMPAIGN OF DECISIVE VICTORY

In the weeks immediately following 9/11, the U.S. saw the Taliban as a type B NSA. The Taliban appeared to be ideologically driven, had a unified and hierarchical leadership that functioned as a government and before the invasion, the U.S. had limited ability to target their leadership. The first few months of the campaign made the Taliban leadership more targetable, making it seen as a type C NSA. By December 2001, after U.S. led forces inflicted extreme damage, the Taliban was ready to surrender with terms acceptable to U.S. security interests.[410]

The Taliban's offer should have convinced the U.S. that it was type D and led to negotiations. The U.S. refused to accept the terms.[411] Every expert that I interviewed cites this

[409] Peter Bergen wrote, "the key to the resurgent Taliban can be summarized in one word: Pakistan," He also noted that as of 2006, "not one senior Taliban leader has been arrested or killed in Pakistan since 2001." (Beehner 2006).
[410] Of around sixty thousand rank and file, half are estimated to have been killed, wounded, or captured in late 2001 and early 2002. The remainder blended into society or fled to the Pashtun- and Baloch-majority areas in Pakistan. The Taliban was not invited to the Bonn Conference. The new political order was constructed without its participation. (CFR 2019).
[411] Two-weeks before the battle of Tirin Kot, Omar ordered an assistant to reach out to Hamid Karzai to explore the possibility of surrender in exchange for an "honorable immunity." This was relayed to Rumsfeld. (Gopal 2015, 45).

decision as stemming from three factors: The Bush administration failing to differentiate between the Taliban and al Qaeda, the revenge motive and opposition from the Northern Alliance. The conflation of the Taliban and al-Qaeda led to a rational—but potentially mistaken—conclusion that the Taliban remained ideologically driven and that their surrender was dishonest.[412] Irrational motives for rejecting the ceasefire included national pride and revenge.[413]

Bush's Afghanistan and Iraq strategies suggest a "Vindicationist" foreign policy outlook that sought to actively promote democracy. (Monten 2005). Victory over the Taliban (and Saddam Hussein's in Iraq) presented the opportunity to rebuild a previously authoritarian state as a democracy. This led the U.S. to reject the idea of allowing the reemergence of Taliban rule if they promised to crush terrorism following their military defeat, like Putin's cooption of Ramzan Kadyrov after crushing Chechen separatists in 2009. Robert Grenier, then CIA station chief in Islamabad, criticized as a blunder that "no American effort was made, after Kandahar fell, to bring any senior Taliban figures into the Karzai-led government." (Steele 2015). Indeed, prior to the U.S. invasion, Grenier tried to get the Taliban's second in command to overthrow Omar, suggesting that he thought less ideologically driven Taliban leadership could be bargained with, but this initiative went nowhere. (Bergen Interview 2019).

The U.S. continued to pursue the Taliban after rejecting the surrender offer and much of the Taliban's leadership including Omar escaped to Pakistan. The Taliban thus morphed into a type A NSA, with a minimal governance role, difficult to target leadership, and an increasingly ideologically driven mission.[414] U.S. strategy inadvertently fueled the insurgency by fostering a climate of corruption and brutality. These outcomes demonstrate the danger of misinterpreting an opponent's type. As an insurgency, decisive victory to shift the Taliban's ideology would this time require not convincing it that it faced defeat as a governing entity, but as a disaggregated insurgency, a much more difficult proposition, but this was not recognized until 2005.

[412] Riedel and Bergen both contrasted the substantial amount of written work on al Qaeda's ideology versus the sparse accumulation of knowledge on the Taliban's, (Riedel and Bergen Interviews 2019).
[413] According to Campbell, Rumsfeld said he 'will not allow Taliban leaders to sleep comfortably so soon after 9/11.' (Campbell Interview 2019).
[414] The reason that the U.S. did not pursue decisive military action after the collapse of the Taliban as warranted by a type A opponent was because they viewed the Taliban to already be defeated from 2002-2005.

Following U.S. victory over advancing Taliban formations at Tarin Kot, the strategy of decisive victory appeared to have demonstrated to the Taliban that it faced defeat. News of the victory spread fast, leading to a mass defection of Taliban leaders throughout the south. (43). Overwhelming force led the Taliban to surrender less than three months after the invasion. The Bush administration was "surprised by its own success." (Dr. A Interview 2019).[415] However, the U.S. overestimated its ability to annihilate Taliban leadership and deemed this necessary because they did not differentiate between the motivating drive of al-Qaeda and the Taliban. The Taliban was indeed shocked, especially by U.S. precision airstrike capabilities.[416]

The U.S. continued to perceive the Taliban as ideologically driven when they were actually successfully socialized to pragmatically prioritize survival.[417] The Taliban still had hierarchical leadership and a reduced but high governance function. With their leadership willing to surrender, the Taliban at this point was actually a type D NSA, more closely approximating a defeated state. They offered unconditional surrender and disarmament in exchange for their leadership's peaceful retirement.[418] Had the U.S. administration viewed the Taliban in these terms, a negotiated end to the conflict might have been feasible in 2001. However, the U.S. had no intention of negotiating with the Taliban. This is clearly evident in the decision to exclude them from the Bonn Conference in December 2001 where world leaders met with the Afghan opposition to plan Afghanistan's future. (Byrd 2013). Furthermore, reconciliation received "little or no support from the Afghan leaders recognized by the international community, or from the

[415] Hoover Institute's Victor Davis Hanson argued that part of what drove the U.S. to invade Iraq was the view that it would be easy since they succeeded in 2001 in eight weeks where the Soviets failed in a decade. (Hanson 2013).
[416] Airpower allowed the U.S. use a light conventional footprint. "Coalition airpower transformed the Northern Alliance into an extraordinarily lethal fighting force." One warlord noted, "Tiger 01 has killed more Taliban in 48 hours with close air support than the Northern Alliance has been able to kill in the previous year." (Wills 2006, 40).
[417] On November 15, 2001, as the Taliban was being routed, the war's top figure, General Tommy R. Franks, the commander of U.S. Central Command stated: "The Taliban is not destroyed as an effective fighting force from the level of one individual man carrying a weapon until that individual man puts down his weapon." (Grant 2002).
[418] Gopal described the ceasefire thusly: "On December 5, a Taliban delegation arrived at the US special forces camp north of Kandahar city to officially relinquish power. According to a participant, Karzai was asked that he allow Mullah Omar to "live in dignity" in exchange for his quiescence. The delegation members, which included Defense Minister Mullah Obaidullah, Omar's trusted aide Tayeb Agha, and other key leaders, pledged to retire from politics and return to their home villages. Crucially, they also agreed that their movement would surrender arms, effectively ensuring that the Taliban could no longer function as a military entity. There would be no jihad, no resistance from the Taliban to the new order—even as leaders of al-Qaeda were escaping to Pakistan to continue their holy war. The differences between the two groups may have never been so apparent, but as Washington declared victory, they passed largely unnoticed." (Gopal 2015, 47-48). Demonstrative of the Taliban's belief that they were facing imminent defeat, the surrender proposal provided for the Taliban to surrender Kandahar, the surrounding Kandahar Province, the province of Helmand and Zabul. That would have reduced their control to a few pockets in the north, and to unpopulated mountainous areas in the east.

United States." (Masadykov, Giustozzi and Page 2010, 9). U.S. Army intelligence analyst Mr. D. claims that the U.S. saw the Taliban as "vanquished" from 2002-2005. (Mr. D. Interview 2019). Every expert interviewed noted that in the early years, between 2005 and 2005 or even 2006, the U.S. viewed the Taliban as defeated and therefore diverted efforts from Afghanistan. This view was convenient as the Bush administration's plans for invading Iraq were in full swing.

The surrender in Kandahar would have been the biggest breakthrough in the war but U.S. refusal to grant amnesty to Omar and former Taliban fighters in exchange for surrender, led many to flee to Pakistan where they eventually joined the Taliban insurgency.[419] Taliban spokesman Zaeef, said "the surrender agreement had been reached to save civilian lives." This marks the closest that the Taliban came to fearing decisive defeat. It showed how the successful application of a decisive victory strategy could socialize an opponent. At this point Taliban leadership became willing to surrender and choose pragmatism. Zaeef said that "the Taliban were finished as a political force," adding, "I think we should go home." (Knowlton 2001).

Rumsfeld alluded to a sense of justice and the desire to please Afghan security partners, when he refused to accept a negotiated settlement that would allow Mullah Omar to remain living "in dignity" in the Kandahar area. White House spokesman Ari Fleischer said that "those who harbor terrorists need to be brought to justice." He added that he "included Mullah Omar as one who has harbored terrorists." (Knowlton 2001).[420]

In retrospect, U.S. decisive victory was not as decisive as either side originally believed. Internal and external constraints led the U.S. to pursue decisive victory with a small footprint. Bin Laden's escape from Tora Bora demonstrates the inadequacy of this approach.[421] The U.S.

[419] As most of the government was crumbling, Kabul and other major cities had fallen, leaving just Kandahar, Helmand, and Zabul provinces still under Taliban control, some of Omar's chief lieutenants secretly gathered and decided to surrender to the forces of Hamid Karzai. This group included Tayeb Agha, at one-point Mullah Omar's top aide; Mullah Beradar, a former governor and key military commander; Sayed Muhammad Haqqani, the former ambassador to Pakistan; Mullah Obaidullah, the defense minister; Mullah Abdul Razzak, the interior minster; and many others. (Gopal 2010). Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld objected to portions of the deal that would allow Omar, to remain in Kandahar to "live in dignity" in opposition custody if he renounced terrorism. (Knowlton 2001).

[420] The U.S. also cited Afghan opposition to accepting Taliban surrender: "Mr. Rumsfeld said U.S. military officials had made it clear to friendly Afghan forces that 'our cooperation and assistance with those people would clearly take a turn south,' or sharply deteriorate, if they allowed key Taliban or Qaida leaders to escape justice." Rumsfeld stated that "to the extent that our goals are frustrated and opposed, we would prefer to work with other people."

[421] In December 2001, the U.S. carried out an assault against hundreds of al-Qaeda and Taliban terrorists in the mountains and caves in Tora Bora. "Gary Berntsen, who headed up the CIA's Jawbreaker team during the fighting at Tora Bora and requested the insertion of a battalion of Rangers, believed the refusal by CENTCOM to deploy conventional U.S. troops was a major mistake that allowed bin Laden to escape." (Krause 2008, 652).

chose to rely on local Afghan militias to block escape into Pakistan, despite requests from the CIA team leadership for U.S. troops to carry out that important task. The militias failed to prevent hundreds of Taliban and al-Qaeda fighters from escaping to Pakistan, with some accusing them of being bribed by Bin Laden. (Bernstein 2005). Omar fled after the Taliban's official surrender on December 9, 2001.[422] This made leadership much more difficult to target as demonstrated by the U.S.' inability to ever find Omar, this despite placing a 10-million-dollar bounty on his head in 2001. (Gilsinan 2015). [423]

Many Taliban insurgents rallied around their leader, waiting to re-exert control in remote areas and push back against the Taliban government once they had time to regroup in the mountains after their initial defeat. The Taliban insurgency was aided by Pakistani religious clerics and its intelligence service, the Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate of the army (ISI). (Riedel 2013). The Pakistani religious clerics had an ideological goal, "to get the Taliban back on their feet and waging jihad against the Americans." (Gopal 2015, 104). Their support made the Taliban insurgency more ideologically driven, helping to explain its persistence.

In the period following the Taliban's collapse and Omar's escape until around 2005, the U.S. assessed the security situation in Afghanistan to be generally calm. (Campbell Interview 2019). The U.S. was reluctant to pursue "nation building" due to the bad connotation it obtained from the Clinton administration's policies in Bosnia and Kosovo which were seen to have led to these countries' become wards of massive international support. The U.S. pushed to add the word "assistance" to the International Security Forces (ISF) making them ISAF to signal that rebuilding and securing Afghanistan must be primarily an internal effort. (Jones 2009). This

[422] Many Taliban fighters, ministers and high-ranking officials abandoned their struggle and all political aspirations as 2001 ended and the Taliban officially surrendered. Khalid Pashtoon, the spokesman for the new U.S. backed government exclaimed "ministers of the Taliban and senior Taliban are coming one by one and joining with us." This included Taliban ministers of defense, justice, health, information, commerce and all other facets of government. Indeed, the mass surrenders did not differ by ideological conviction. "leaders of the most notorious whip-wielding religious police were among the first to defect." In effect, the entire Taliban cabinet, military, diplomatic and government top officials that had worked with Mullah Omar all surrendered. (Gopal 2015, 104).
[423] Mullah Omar died in 2013, but this was kept hidden from the U.S. for two years and indeed a new book alleges that the Taliban leader hid "in plain sight" only miles from a U.S. base in Afghanistan. Whether this is fully true, partially true or untrue, he was able to evade U.S. detection for well over a decade. The debate over where he was emphasizes how difficult it was for the U.S. to target Taliban leadership at this point. (Dam 2019).

clearly did not materialize. Over the coming years, nation building efforts were hampered by U.S. mismanagement and incompetence. [424]

Massive corruption was an unintended consequence of the rise of U.S. support for Afghan nation building. Warlords used U.S. support to go after rivals and create exploitative business monopolies. Corruption and warlord brutality boosted the Taliban's legitimacy, helping them gain support and recruits as they morphed into an insurgency.[425]

Governance in Afghanistan after the U.S. led invasion took the form of competing for and restricting access to American dollars and soldiers. The new police forces were notoriously corrupt.[426] In the north where, tribal strongmen did not settle feuds and amass wealth by manipulating the American war effort, no strong insurgency developed. In the south, a cycle of violence, unwittingly perpetuated by American raids, fostered hostility and eventually fueled insurgency. Nowhere is this more clearly demonstrated than in Korengal Valley.[427]

Under this new corrupt order, popular discontent provided a door for insurgent support and for the Taliban to eventually return and secure control, especially in rural areas where Afghan government forces were weaker. The Taliban's reputation for clean dealings and lack of corruption, despite their primitive and brutal rule and backwards policies towards women's rights, gave them a high level of governance function in the areas they controlled.[428] If the U.S.

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[424] Creating a governing body to rule Afghanistan in the wake of the Taliban's ouster was proving to be a difficult prospect. The confusion endemic to U.S. strategy in Afghanistan in the early years is demonstrated by the ironic imprisonment of Taliban and anti-Taliban fighters together in Guantanamo Bay. Senseless raids and retributions created fertile recruiting ground for insurgents who were not previously engaged in violence against the U.S.. For example, anti-Taliban fighter Sabar Lal had fought the Taliban continuously since the 1990s. In a tribunal hearing in Guantanamo Bay he noted: "All I can tell you is that I fought for six years against the Taliban. I killed a lot of them. It was so ironic that I see a Talib and then I see myself here too. I am in the same spot as a Talib. I see those people on an everyday basis... They say. 'see, you got what you deserve, you are here too." (Gopal 2015, 142).

[425] Cooperative local leaders, such as Kandahar strongman Gul Agha Sherzai, flush with U.S. dollars, were able to use the U.S. military presence in Afghanistan to go after their own enemies, labelling them as terrorists. When asked why the pattern of killing that took hold after the Taliban's surrender southern Afghanistan never materialized in the north, political advisor to the UN mission to Afghanistan, Eckart Schiewek, said that the entire U.S. military force was concentrated in the South East near the Pakistan border so tribal strongmen "couldn't call on soldiers to settle your feuds." (Gopal 2015, 129).

[426] Afghan forces were comprised of former gang members from dominant tribes. They used their position to extort locals and local businesses like a mafia racket. In many villages "the precinct headquarters became drug trade central." (Gopal 2015, 190).

[427] Local rivalries manipulated U.S. forces for their own purposes and U.S. killing of notables and a general aura of lawlessness and confusion, turned what was a relatively peaceful, anti-Taliban, pro-U.S. and pro-Karzai region into "Afghanistan's Fallujah," a hotbed of Islamist militants and insurgents. (Gopal 2015, 138).

[428] The Taliban has arguably had high governance function potential. This could make a negotiated bargain more likely to succeed, with the U.S. threatening their rule if they follow ideological imperatives that threaten the U.S.,

had been willing to negotiate with the Taliban at this point, it could have used the Taliban's potential for returning to high governance function as a point of leverage. This would have allowed the U.S. to take a carrot and stick policy, rewarding moderation and punishing extremism. However, the U.S. strategy of decisive victory looked highly successful and Bush preferred to support the corrupt but democratic Northern Alliance to talking to the Taliban.[429]

Mullah Obaidullah, former Taliban minister of defense, and one of Omar's closest confidants illustrated what turned into the failed opportunity to bargain an end to the conflict. He stated that following the Taliban's decisive defeat, "we expected that if we offered no resistance, they would accept us, and we could live in peace." In January 2002 he approached Kandahar governor Gul Agha Sherzai with an offer to pledge loyalty to the American backed Karzai government and remove himself from all political or militant activity in exchange for amnesty. Six leading Taliban officials joined him in this offer. One of these six included perhaps the most ideologically driven Talib of them all, religious police leader Mullah Turabi, described as "a zealot's zealot." These most ideologically driven Taliban leaders demonstrated pragmatic drive, pledging loyalty to the American backed government after facing defeat. Out of Washington's list of 27 most wanted Taliban, the majority sought similar deals. The U.S. did not to capitalize on this success to end the conflict.

When U.S. officials got word of Sherzai's acceptance of this bargain, they were "furious." "Responding to Washington's pressure, Sherzai reversed his position, announcing that all Taliban would be detained and handed over to the Americans." In response most, including Obaidullah and his company, fled to Pakistan where they plotted and eventually formed the nucleus of a revitalized insurgency that led to over a decade of ongoing conflict. Cases of Taliban members surrendering but being met with refusal to accept surrender led to countless others fleeing continual police harassment and abuse to Pakistan where they rekindled Taliban affiliations. (Gopal 2015, 193).[430]

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and rewarding pragmatic decision making and stable governance. At this point however, stable Taliban governance was not considered to be a desirable or even possible outcome because the U.S. continued to see them as type A.

[429] President George W. Bush thought the U.S. could rid the world of a dictatorship and successfully install a democracy. His Vindicationist ideology reinforced this approach as it did de-Baathification in Iraq. (Monten 2005).

[430] Gopal argues that this treatment of the Taliban should have been expected due to their deplorable, brutal governance and human rights abuses. The problem was that the other actors now allied with the American's had similarly brutal records but were never targeted and indeed controlled the targeting and were abusing their positions to accrue power and wealth.

In late February 2002, in the mountainous Zurmat region, several hundred Taliban fighters under the command of Taliban leader Saif ur-Rahman Mansur again tried to negotiate with the Americans and the American backed government in Kabul. Mansur sent a letter offering to end "armed defiance of the interim administration." The U.S. was not interested. Instead, it continued to pursue decisive victory, launching Operation Anaconda in March 2002.[431] This was the largest U.S. military battle since the first Gulf War. The U.S. won decisively despite fighting in the geographically forbidding and defensively advantaged Shah-i-Kot Valley.[432] Operation Anaconda also demonstrated and foreshadowed operational difficulties. [433] Difficulty hunting down militants in the mountains of Afghanistan, even with superior and improving technology and full military focus, help explain why once the bulk of U.S. military assets were devoted to preparing for the upcoming invasion of Iraq, the U.S. abandoned pursuing decisive victory against the Taliban once it morphed into an insurgency, in favor of management.[434]

The U.S. began reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan in April 2002. The first year of the war, appeared to be a great success. "The Taliban posed a minimal security threat, the Afghan people were actively engaged in their nascent democracy, and a lasting political settlement seemed possible." (Barno and Bensahel 2019).[435] Save for "a few lone wolf attacks, U.S. forces in Kandahar in 2002 faced no resistance at all." (Gopal 2015, 107).

[431] Interestingly, in December (3-17) 2001, the U.S. did not lead the assault against Bin Laden's cave complex in Tora Bora. Despite intelligence pointing to bin Laden's, the assault is carried out by a ragtag Afghan contingent led by Hazrat Ali, Haji Zaman, and Haji Zahir. This action might be explained by political considerations, including wanting to minimize the U.S. role and use local forces to boost their legitimacy. These arguments are unconvincing. The action remains puzzling considering the importance of the target.

[432] The U.S. was determined to prevent a recurrence of the Tora Bora experience, "when local Afghan militias had failed to prevent hundreds of Qaeda fighters from slipping away to Pakistan." The U.S. leveraged considerable military assets during Operation Anaconda. "American commanders decided to use three light-infantry battalions under the command of the 101st Airborne Division's Third Brigade." These conventional forces aided Special Forces, CIA operatives and Afghan forces. (Naylor 2003).

[433] In "one battle, in one valley, proved fraught with intelligence shortcomings. Militants were able to fool U.S. ISR and complicate the mission. When Anaconda occurred, it was the only significant combat operation involving American troops anywhere on the planet. In the days before its launch, commanders assured their troops that "every national asset" -- satellites, spy planes, Predator drones -- was focused on the valley. Despite high-tech systems, the intelligence estimate failed to accurately portray the enemy's size, location, principal weapons and course of action. Those same systems also failed to notice that there were no civilians in the valley. Qaeda soldiers found numerous ways to hide from the unblinking eyes focused on their positions. Some would hug trees as Predators passed overhead. Others hid under dirt-colored blankets or established fighting positions in rock crevice." (Naylor 2003).

[434] According to Van Evera, "operation Anaconda in Afghanistan failed partly because needed U.S. troops were withheld from the battle to conserve them for the coming war with Iraq." (Van Evera 2006).

[435] Some argue that the untimely rotations of key U.S. military and diplomatic personnel squandered the first year of the war's promising opportunities. (Barno and Bensahel 2019).

Again, in late 2002, Taliban leadership met in Karachi and voted to reach out to Karzai. This last attempt to reach a bargain fizzled due to disfavor in Washington. Following this attempt, Omar organized a new leadership body—the Quetta Shura—and appointed Mullah Obaidullah to rebuild dormant Taliban networks. Resentment with American support for corrupt Afghan governance aided Taliban recruitment. (Gopal 2015, 195).

The refusal to accept Taliban surrender is one of many examples of U.S. strategy suffering from poor intelligence. It demonstrated a misapplied decisive victory strategy.[436] Rumsfeld acknowledged poor HUMINT. This arguably impacted both strategy and operations.[437]

The deluge of evidence suggesting that the Taliban were pragmatically driven suggests that the U.S. misperception of them as ideologically driven must have resulted from irrational cognitive biases, not the immediate post-9/11 rational misperception. Therefore, cognitive motives, including revenge and failure to assimilate evidence, better explain U.S. strategy at this point than socialization logic which allows for misperceptions but assumes rationality.

The first indication that the Taliban was developing into an insurgency came in March 2003 in Kandahar province, when an International Committee of the Red Cross staff-member was killed by a Taliban group led by Dadullah. Karzai was elected in the autumn of 2004 with minimal violence suggesting that the U.S. mission against the Taliban and al-Qaeda was successful. This was quickly shown to not be the case. Following the elections, terrorist incidents became increasingly common. So much so that the UN stopped travelling by road between Kandahar and Uruzgan. (Masadykov Giustozzi and Page 2010, 2).

External constraints due to Pakistani sovereignty limited the ability to crush the Taliban. The Taliban was dismantled, but not destroyed. "Aided by Pakistan's military and intelligence services, the Taliban's leadership began to reconstitute across the Durand Line, beyond the reach of the American military." The Taliban soon reestablished influence inside Afghanistan.[438]

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[436] In Zurmat, the U.S. would not accept Taliban surrender despite the clear majority of Taliban militants in the region abandoning the fight. When the prominent Taliban cleric Khalilullah Firozi abandoned the Taliban and openly supported Karzai, his home was raided, and he was arrested by U.S. forces. (Gopal 2015, 133).

[437] In a September 2003 private memo, Rumsfeld complained "We are woefully deficient in human intelligence…I have no visibility into who the bad guys are." (Whitlock 2019).

[438] Afghans "became frustrated when they realized that the U.S. would not attack the Afghan Taliban inside Pakistan because of Washington's worry that violations of Islamabad's sovereignty would risk more important strategic

On May 1, 2003, Rumsfeld declared an end to "major combat." On August 8 the U.S. turned control over the ISAF in Afghanistan to NATO. A common argument is that major combat was effectively defeating the Taliban and al-Qaeda and might have ultimately been successful had the U.S. not diverted resources to invade Iraq.[439] However, even at the height of the Iraq war, U.S. troop levels in Afghanistan grew steadily from 2003-2006 and increased at a sharper rate after that. (Belasco 2009, 30). The U.S. effort was redoubled during the Obama presidency, which surged troops to Afghanistan well before the U.S. began withdrawing from Iraq.[440] The Iraq War hurt U.S. capabilities in Afghanistan mostly by moving military leaders between the two conflicts but did not change the U.S. strategy there. (Dr. A interview 2019).

2003-2008: MANAGEMENT

As Bush shifted focus to Iraq, the U.S. saw the Taliban as largely defeated. (Dr. A Interview 2019). Commanding General of forces in Afghanistan, Barno did not see the Taliban as a threat in 2003 and officials reported relatively low levels of violence in 2004. (Jones 2009). The movement of key personnel, including General Barno and Ambassador Khalilzad, to Iraq made keeping stability in Afghanistan more difficult but reflected the administration's view that the Taliban was no longer an active threat.[441]

As the Taliban began to pose an increasing threat from 2005-2008, the U.S. perceived the them to be a type A NSA, with high ideological drive, low governance function and low leadership targetability. According to socialization logic, the optimal strategy to most quickly end the conflict would have been to pursue decisive victory. While the U.S. had the military resources to pursue and crush the Taliban, this was constrained by political boundaries. Gaining Pakistani agreement for large-scale COIN efforts in its territory would have been exceedingly difficult if not impossible. Furthermore, On October 9, 2004, Hamid Karzai was elected Afghan President in a landslide victory that appeared to justify the U.S. strategy. Karzai's victory and the

objectives (such as defeating al-Qaedaand preserving stability in a problematic, nuclear armed power)." (Eikenberry 2015, 5).

[439] Former Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage stated "the war in Iraq drained resources from Afghanistan before things were under control. And we never recovered. We never looked back." (Caldwell 2011, 173).

[440] In June 2010, over a year after President Obama announced plans to increase U.S. military efforts in Afghanistan, the U.S. still had 88,000 troops in Iraq. (Reuters 2011).

[441] The bottom line is that the U.S. saw the operation in Afghanistan as mostly stabilization. The U.S. saw the goal of defeating the Taliban as met by 2002 and a mop up operation by 2004. From 2002 onward, the U.S. focused on Iraq as the critical arena for fighting the war on terror.

establishment of a friendly Afghan democracy coupled with the apparent defeat of the Taliban reinforced the U.S. victory over the Taliban.[442]

The years that followed the election did not yield stability and successful governance. The Taliban and al-Qaeda started to re-emerge from the mountains and tribal areas of Pakistan and contest and gain control of swaths of Afghanistan. The Taliban was not defeated and neither side was willing to bargain. At first the U.S. believed it could manage the slowly emerging threat through advancements in ISR and precision targeting. The U.S. focused on building HUMINT networks and boosting the capabilities of Afghan forces. This can be seen in the 2004 Army interim field manual (Department of the Army 2004). It advised close coordination with the Afghanistan's internal defense and development organizations. Its lines of effort notably did not include finding, capturing, killing or dismantling the Taliban in its strongholds. (Masadykov, Giustozzi and Page 2010).[443]

The Taliban's Comeback as an Insurgency

Afghanistan fits Galula's description of terrain that favors insurgency.[444] This helps explain why the U.S. was too constrained to muster the forces necessary to defeat the Taliban insurgency from 2006-present. (Jones 2009, Chapter 10).

From 2001-2005 the Afghan population largely supported the government. (Masadykov, Giustozzi and Page 2010). This changed as the Taliban insurgency began to ramp up. The Taliban's increasing ability to monopolize violence in contested regions allowed them to expand control in a self-reinforcing manner. The more the Taliban could coerce the population the more powerful its insurgency became and the less able the U.S. coalition became to deter and socialize it into the type of NSA that could be bargained with. Furthermore, the reemergence of the

[442] On May 23, 2005, Karzai and Bush issue a joint declaration of strategic partnership. It gave U.S. forces access to Afghan military facilities to prosecute the GWOT. The goal was to "strengthen U.S.-Afghan ties and help ensure Afghanistan's long-term security, democracy, and prosperity." The agreement called for Washington to "help organize, train, equip, and sustain Afghan security forces as Afghanistan develops the capacity to undertake this responsibility," and to rebuild the country's economy and government. (White House Press Release 2005).
[443] The following list of possible lines of effort (LOEs) is not all inclusive but it gave commanders a place to start: "establish civil security, establish civil control, support HN [host nation] security forces, support to governance and restore essential services." (Masadykov, Giustozzi and Page 2010, 6).
[444] According to Galula, mountainous bordered landlocked countries with a dispersed rural population and a primitive economy most favor insurgencies. (Galula 1964).

Taliban as a splintered insurgency instead of as the hierarchical organization that it was in 2001 made it even harder to socialize through the threat of decisive victory.[445]

As the number of U.S. casualties doubled over the previous year, by the summer of 2005 newspapers began to cover a resurgent Taliban insurgency. Bush stated: "In 2006, this enemy struck back with vengeance." (Whitehouse Archives 2007).[446]

The Taliban adopted the use of suicide bombings from al-Qaeda which supported and exerted tactical influence on the Taliban. Suicide bombings posed a significant tactical challenge. Importantly, they increased the U.S. view of the Taliban as ideologically driven fanatics. IED use often led U.S. and ANSF forces to stop patrolling certain areas, giving the Taliban territorial control for the first time since 2001. (Gopal 2015). As casualties mounted so did domestic displeasure, increasing internal constraints.

By 2006, the Taliban was gaining considerable control in regions that the ANSF and NATO forces did not control.[447] Afghan Public opinion began to shift, to favor anti-government forces in unstable areas. (Masadykov, Giustozzi and Page 2010, 4). This appears to have been a crucial development. Popular Afghan discontent with the Afghan government, its corruption, and Taliban governance, began a trend of a growing U.S. view of Taliban governance that has allowed the Trump administration to see it as potentially able to be bargained with, underpinning the 2017-2020 U.S.-Taliban negotiations.

[445] For example, by Spring of 2005, there were 12 small, nearly autonomous Taliban groups operating in Wardak Province. These groups were led by former Taliban field commanders who were all under central authority of a group with a hierarchical structure and high governance function before the U.S. invasion in 2001. In 2005 each group made autonomous strategic decisions, raised their own funds and amassed their own weapons. This resulted in less operational efficiency but a less easily targeted structure, making it more difficult to threaten it with defeat.
[446] In a 2007 address, President Bush stated: "Across Afghanistan last year, the number of roadside bomb attacks almost doubled, direct fire attacks on international forces almost tripled, and suicide bombings grew nearly five-fold. These escalating attacks were part of a Taliban offensive that made 2006 the most violent year in Afghanistan since the liberation of the country." (Whitehouse Archives 2007).
[447] In 2006-7 the Taliban, in districts of the southern provinces, executed suspected informants. In other unstable areas, the Taliban also assassinated persons suspected of spying for ISF and for working for governmental organizations. (Masadykov, Giustozzi and Page 2010).

The Taliban received aid and funding from Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Saudi Arabian nationals and al-Qaeda. Agha Jan Motasim, the Taliban finance minister, fled to Pakistan where he continued to organize and fundraise. (Gall 2016).[448]

From May to June 2006 the U.S. supported Afghan, Canadian, and British troops in Operation Mountain Thrust. This operation sought to "degrade Taliban activity in southern and eastern Afghanistan." (Wiseman 2006). The stated goal of degrading instead of defeating suggests that the U.S. led coalition saw decisive victory as too costly.

By the summer of 2006, the director of the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency, warned Congress that the revived Taliban insurgency "represent a greater threat" to Karzai "than at any point since late 2001." (Wiseman 2006). On February 27 2007, a Taliban suicide bomber struck a checkpoint at Bagram Air Base while U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney was visiting, killing 20 and injuring 20 more. Cheney was not hurt but he was the target of this high-profile attack.[449] This drove home the message that the Taliban had reemerged as a potent threat. Cheney claimed that the Taliban were trying to send a message but that "it shouldn't affect our behavior at all." (CNN Archive 2007). Indeed, the U.S. did not shift its strategy at this point.

As the Taliban became more capable, the U.S. became less able to target its leadership or threaten decisive victory. Much of this stemmed from decreased Pakistani cooperation.[450] Since 2007 the Pakistani border became increasingly porous.[451]

In 2007-8 the Taliban "were able to easily assassinate government officials in Kandahar." (Masadykov, Giustozzi and Page 2010, 4). In 2008 insurgent attacks increased by 50

[448] In the Pakistani border town of Quetta, "he and other Taliban leaders regrouped and began organizing the insurgency." Between 2002 and 2007, Motasim traveled to Saudi Arabia two or three times a year to raise cash for the Taliban. (Gall 2016). Wealthy Saudi sheikhs and philanthropists privately financed Taliban insurgents while Saudi Arabia officially supported the U.S. mission and the Afghan government. It severed official ties with the Taliban following 9/11. (Bruno 2008).

[449] Taliban spokesman Qari Yousef Ahmadi told The Associated Press: "We knew that Dick Cheney would be staying inside the base," and "the attacker was trying to reach Cheney." The fact that the Taliban knew Cheney was staying at the base signaled the new sophistication and reach of the Taliban insurgency.

[450] In September 2006 Pakistan signed a treaty ceding control of Pakistan's northern Waziristan region to Taliban linked tribal chiefs creating a wild west for al-Qaeda and the Taliban. (Woodward 2010, 3). Bush authorized drone strikes with Pakistani knowledge in real time, but was aware that Pakistan passed warning to the terrorists. (4)

[451] Under Musharraf, the military had struck deals giving Islamist militants de-facto control over many of the semi-autonomous tribal areas along the Afghan border. In 2009, Musharraf's successor as President, the civilian Asif Zardari, agreed to give the Pakistani Taliban control over Swat. The Pakistani government appeared unable to change this situation. (Packer 2009).

percent from 2007, averaging 460 incidents per month (Afghan NGO Safety Office 2009; Iraq Coalition Casualty Count 2009). After only a few months, 2008 had broken the entire year of 2007's record for violent incidents which itself had been a record year. (Gopal 2015).

In line with increased Taliban vitality, the U.S. military increased its tempo of operations with the goal of denying the Taliban while building the Afghan government's capacity.[452] Increased force with a limited footprint was able to clear but not hold territory. (Jones 2009). This was counterproductive. Local communities in unstable provinces became increasingly willing to support the Taliban, providing shelter and food voluntarily, as well as hiding them in their compounds. (Masadykov, Giustozzi and Page Interviews, local villagers). By 2007, the Bush administration revised its assessment that the Taliban was defeated.[453] The U.S. also improved its relative power, greatly improving its targeting capabilities.[454]

2008-2011: TEMPERED DECISIVE VICTORY, COIN SURGE AND DRAWDOWN

In early 2008, al Yazid was appointed "General Leader" of al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. His close relationship with Omar bolstered the U.S. perception that the Taliban ideologically driven. (House Intelligence Committee testimony text session I 2008, 63). In October 2008, a draft of the National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) on Afghanistan (a joint report by America's 16 spy agencies) not due to be published until after the presidential election, was leaked to U.S. newspapers. It called into question "the coherence of U.S. and NATO policy in Afghanistan." U.S. intelligence agencies believed that the war in Afghanistan was in "a downward spiral." This sparked "an urgent strategy rethink by the Bush administration" as it entered its last three months in office. (Borger and Norton-Taylor 2008).

Increased Taliban attacks and the perception of the Taliban as ideologically absolutist and linked with al Qaeda, led the Bush administration to audit the war effort in 2008. The advice

[452] From 2006 to 2007 as the insurgency increased, the U.S. increased its airstrikes in Afghanistan by a third and doubled the number of bombs dropped. (The Economist, August 28, 2008). By 2007 the U.N. estimated the Taliban to control over half of the rural Pashtun territory in Afghanistan. (Library of Congress 2008).
[453] The Bush Administration noted a 30% rise in attacks by Afghan militants from 2007-2008.
[454] The U.S. military saw a major breakthrough in intelligence by 2008 by blending HUMINT and SIGINT. But HUMINT was the real breakthrough. (Woodward 2010, 6). This allowed the administration to establish the Real Time Regional Gateway program which created a major increase in ISR and targeting ability during Bush years. (Woodward, 7). This made management more feasible but also increased the U.S. military ability to target Taliban leadership as part of a decisive victory strategy. Troops testified that ISR from predator drones was a game changer. Only 36 deployed to central command, most in Iraq. Secretary of defense Robert Gates ordered a huge increase in predator drone program and Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles (MRAPs) in 2007. (22)

from the Pentagon included sending additional troops immediately.[455] The incoming Obama administration followed this advice, pledging 17,000 soon after taking office.

Increased threat and perception of ideological drive preceded a shift in U.S. strategy towards decisively defeating the Taliban by securing priority areas and driving the Taliban back, hurting it enough to convince it to surrender unconditionally. Obama was constrained by a dovish cabinet. His Vice President—Joe Biden—lobbied for a light footprint counterterrorism strategy. CENTCOM's assessment originally suggested surging 70,000 U.S. troops. The Obama administration saw this as unrealistic. The decision to send 30,000 was a compromise. (Campbell Interview 2019). The Obama administration's goal was to ramp up pressure to force negotiation and eventually withdraw. The strategy sought to "break the Taliban" and convince its leaders that they faced total defeat. (Dr. A Interview 2019). This underestimated the Taliban's ability to wait out pressure. (Dr. A Interview 2019).

Throughout 2008 the Taliban increased their territorial control, setting up increasing numbers of checkpoints to demonstrate and assert their control, especially over rural roads and villages. The Taliban extorted villagers and officials who used U.N. or U.S. funding to support government projects and intimidated Afghans working on behalf of the Karzai through kidnappings and beheadings (Gopal 2015).[456] The Taliban warned Afghans not to take part in the presidential elections or to face punishment.[457] As outsiders, U.S. forces were often blamed for death and destruction even when the actual blame lay mostly with the insurgents themselves.[458] This proved to be a significant constraint on the U.S. ability to use decisive force against the

[455] In September 2008, General David D. McKiernan, the top American commander in Afghanistan, said he "needed as many as 15,000 combat and support troops beyond the 8,000 additional troops that Mr. Bush had recently approved." (Shmitt and Shanker 2008).
[456] Taliban brutality, including massacring 25 afghan civilians, sparked a backlash, with villagers that had previously supported the Taliban due to U.S. backed abuses realizing that the Taliban were just as brutal if not more so. (Gopal 2015). From late 2008-9, the population in unstable areas voluntarily supported insurgents while the population in stable areas was distancing itself from the Afghan government. (Masadykov, Giustozzi and Page 2010, 4).
[457] The spread of Taliban activities and other outrageous acts were regarded as an attempt by the Taliban and anti-government elements to provoke U.S. forces to overreact, killing civilians and alienating the local population.
[458] The "Taliban also cause collateral damage within the civil population, not least by using civilians as human shields, but they have used civilian losses for their own propaganda as well. In rural areas, the population is largely illiterate, uneducated and without access to a variety of news sources. In the eyes of civilians, the international military forces are often wrong on both counts, even if the difficulty in targeting Taliban amid the general population is well understood to knowledgeable observers." (Masadykov, Giustozzi and Page 2010, 5)

Taliban, with both generals McChrystal and Petraeus implementing restrictive ROEs in their respective commands in Afghanistan in the upcoming years.

Perception of Threat and Ideology

From 2009-2013, some Obama administration officials saw the Taliban as a "narco-insurgency." Others saw it as irrational and driven by jihadist ideology. Others saw them as primarily Pashtun nationalists. Most officials saw the Taliban as having growing governance function in the areas it controlled. It is hard to tell which viewpoint was preeminent. (Dr. B.D. Interview 2019). Peter Bergen testified before the House permanent Select Committee on Intelligence assessing the fight against al-Qaeda in April 9, 2008 that the Taliban was increasingly adopting al Qaeda's ideology and tactics. (House Intelligence Committee testimony text session I 2008, 18). Steven Emerson testified at the same hearing that al Libi, bin Laden's most likely successor, "had only high regard for Taliban leaders he met in prison, illustrating the continued close relationship between al-Qaeda and the Taliban that is likely to persist should al Libi's position in al-Qaeda continue to rise." (61). This further bolstered the U.S. view of the Taliban's high ideological drive.

By late 2008 the Taliban was near the apex of its strength and its leader was signaling absolutist ideology to boost recruitment to its cause. His 2008 Eid message "rejected any offer of negotiations from the Kabul government." Omar rejected negotiations with Karzai, calling him an American stooge and warned civilians that "collaboration with NATO today will come home to haunt them later." Reidel, the author of the incoming Obama administration's review of U.S. strategy in Afghanistan noted: this looked like "a clear warning that the Taliban intend to export their revolution if they succeed." At the end of the message, Omar appealed to the entire Islamic community to "join in the jihad against America." (Reidel 2009).

Lauding mujahideen fighters in Iraq, Palestine and other countries fighting America, in 2009 Omar associated himself with global jihad while pre-2001 the Taliban was mostly driven by the ambition to rule Afghanistan. Omar's emphasis on high ideological drive and refusal to negotiate, immediately preceded Obama's surge announcement, suggesting that his policy was influenced by both increased threat and increased perception of high ideological drive.[459]

[459] Omar's 2009 Eid message combined "Afghan nationalist statement with a universal Islamic jihad theme in a way designed to portray the Taliban as both an anti-colonial nationalist movement and a part of the larger jihad against

Following the Fort Hood massacre in November 2009, committed by a U.S. service member who had "Soldier of Allah" written on his business cards, Omar appealed to "all Muslims in America, especially in the military, to follow the gunman's example and attack American soldiers wherever they are in the world. Omar also demonstrated his familiarity with U.S. constraints. In his speech he alluded to the war on terror being prosecuted not in the U.S. national interest but for "a small number of capitalists and suckers of blood." In a message designed to erode popular support for the war effort. (Reidel 2009). Furthermore, at that time, there was "no indication of a rift between him and bin Laden" who continued to "profess his loyalty to the man who has hosted him for over a decade." (Reidel 2009).

The desired end state under Bush was a complete removal of the Taliban. In retrospect this was unrealistic.[460] Hubris due to initially overwhelming the Taliban within months of the U.S. invasion, and a misinterpretation of the Taliban's prime motivation led to a policy of incoherent and disjointed applications of force. The thinking was that if the U.S. supported forces could mop up the Taliban and al-Qaeda they could exert control over Afghanistan, have an election, and the U.S. backed government could keep Afghanistan from reverting to a safe-haven for terrorists to plot attacks against the U.S. while also promoting democracy and human rights. As the Taliban insurgency gained strength, it became increasingly clear that Afghan forces were far from being able to function as a government with legitimacy. Karzai's government was unable to obtain loyalty of tribal leaders, control territory and maintain a monopoly on violence.[461]

Reiter's (2009) logic, if applied to NSAs, would suggest that the Taliban should be defeated and demoralized before the U.S. would pursue reconciliation and a peace treaty.

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the Crusader Americans." (Reidel 2009). By emphasizing both nationalist pragmatic drive and ideological drive, Omar appealed to the broadest base possible. His education in Islamic fundamentalist teachings added credibility to the persona of the Taliban as ideologically driven to supporters, potential recruits and to U.S. leadership.

[460] Decisive victory usually requires an unrelenting military effort that mobilizes significant resources, blocks media coverage and systematically destroys the opponent. This also requires full control over escape routes and the denial of safe-haven. As the U.S. learned in Vietnam, the inability to operate against safe havens in Laos and Cambodia in a sustained and high intensity manner made it impossible to decisively defeat the North Vietnamese forces.

[461] Weeks after taking command of CENTCOM Petraeus proclaimed: "Afghan tribes are needed as crucial battlefield allies against the Taliban and other extremists in the same way local militias rose up to oppose insurgents in Iraq." The U.S. inability to secure Afghan tribal support made decisive victory more difficult. More U.S. troops would be required due to the absence of local proxies, increasing internal constraints. (Associated Press 2008).

Following the logic of using force to socialize the Taliban to create the conditions for negotiating, the Obama administration quickly decided to surge troops and increase strikes.

Domestic constraints cut both ways as Obama took office. The U.S. public supported counterterrorism in Afghanistan but were also concerned over the cost of the war.[462] Domestic politics impacted Obama's strategy as well. After campaigning on opposing the Iraq war and calling Afghanistan "the good war." Obama felt required to follow through on his call to refocus on Afghanistan. This, along with the outgoing Bush administration's recommendations influenced his decision to surge troops in Afghanistan in 2009. (Bergen interview 2019).

Obama worked towards driving back the Taliban from priority areas and hurting them enough to convince them to surrender unconditionally. His concurrent proclamation of the intention to quickly withdraw troops rendered the strategy incoherent. Furthermore, Obama did not compliment the surge with a diplomatic initiative to negotiate. Ultimately the U.S. could not credibly leverage enough force to signal to the Taliban that they faced defeat. Pakistani safe haven and U.S. public war weariness, economic recession and Obama's campaign pledge of ending America's wars constrained U.S. action as well.[463] Obama set July 2011 as the start of the military drawdown. This was the first time in the eight-year war effort that a time frame was announced for the U.S. military presence.[464]

On February 17, 2009, newly elected President Obama announced plans to send seventeen thousand troops to Afghanistan. He reaffirmed that "Afghanistan is the more important U.S. front against terrorist forces." Secretary of Defense Robert Gates described the original mission in Afghanistan as "too broad" and called for establishing limited goals such as preventing and limiting terrorist safe havens. The new strategy focused on securing "priority districts," training and supplying the Afghan Army to hold those districts and continuing fighting the Taliban themselves, to allow the U.S. to leave.

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[462] Public opinion polls in 2008–2009 found that the U.S. population "worried about terrorism from Afghanistan and Pakistan, but were even more wary of never-ending war, and were angry at Washington for its spending addiction," during the economic recession. (Lynch 2015, 133).

[463] This campaign pledge led Obama to contradict the most effective means of conveying to the Taliban that they stand to lose by announcing a withdrawal date, signaling to them exactly how long they would need to hold out. This counteracted the message that increased military force was intended to send.

[464] The president originally did not detail how long the drawdown would take but then on June 22, 2011 he outlined a plan to withdraw thirty-three thousand troops by the summer of 2012. (CFR 2019).

Singh and Holbrooke at the State Department suggested to General McChrystal that the U.S. use its peak military strength to pursue negotiations with the Taliban. This was always seen as a side project, it was never articulated as a strategic goal, and it was quickly discarded by General Petraeus when he replaced McChrystal following the revelation of his criticism of Obama in the Rolling Stone article in 2010. (Campbell interview 2019).[465] Petraeus wanted to hold off talks "until the military made more solid gains." (Mcleary 2016).

The Surge

On March 27, 2009 Obama announced a new strategy with the goal, outlined in an interagency white paper, being "to disrupt, dismantle and defeat al-Qaeda and its safe havens in Pakistan." Notably, the remarks did not mention decisive defeat of the Taliban in Afghanistan. Obama did seem to promote socialization logic—militarily defeating hardliners to promote moderate elements coming to the fore:

> There is an uncompromising core of the Taliban. They must be met with force, and they must be defeated. But there are also those who've taken up arms because of coercion, or simply for a price. These Afghans must have the option to choose a different course. And that's why we will work with local leaders, the Afghan government, and international partners to have a reconciliation process in every province. (Whitehouse Archives 2009).

On May 11, 2009, Obama replaced General David McKiernan with COIN specialist General McChrystal whom he expected to take a more aggressive approach to countering the Taliban. When McChrystal took command of the NATO-led ISAF in the Summer of 2009, he argued that civilian casualties undermined counterinsurgency efforts and tightened the ROEs. (Hastings 2010).

The Obama Surge marked a significant strategic shift, but the decision was planned in the final year of the Bush administration, suggesting that the shift was driven by U.S. perception of the Taliban, not domestic politics and personal leadership. Bush's administration and CENTCOM advised surging roughly 30,000 troops to stabilize Afghanistan for the incoming Obama administration. Obama surged the minimal figure cited by CENTCOM to stabilize Afghanistan in February 2009. In November 2009 he surged approximately the number

[465] General McChrystal resigned in June 2010 after an article in Rolling Stone suggested that he criticized Obama's strategy, calling for more troops. The Obama team was leaning towards reducing the number of troops in line with Biden's smaller footprint vision deemed "counterterrorism plus." (Harnden 2009).

recommended by the Pentagon to convince the Taliban that they faced defeat to compel them to negotiate. (Riedel Interview 2019).

The Surge moved U.S. strategy away from management towards victory through population-centric counterinsurgency. This was far more expensive than the decisive victory strategy that Bush pursued from 2001-2003.[466] COIN doctrine drove the Afghan surge. Although Obama cited economic concerns in 2011 as he drew down forces in Afghanistan, recession and the need to budget resources do not explain U.S. strategy in Afghanistan at this point. In 2009, while the U.S. was in the midst of the 2008 recession, Obama greatly increased resources to the war effort in Afghanistan. (Eikenberry 2013).[467]

Eikenberry (along with Dr. Campbell and Dr. B.D.) suggested that doctrinal inertia due to COIN's perceived success in the Iraq surge influenced the Obama administration:

> The apparent validation of this doctrine during the 2007 troop surge in Iraq increased its standing. When the Obama administration conducted a comprehensive Afghanistan strategy review in 2009, some military leaders, reinforced by some civilian analysts in influential think tanks, confidently pointed to Field Manual 3-24 as the authoritative playbook for success.

Advocates of the COIN doctrine lobbied hard for its application. They asserted that with persistent effort, "the capacity of the Afghan government would steadily grow, the levels of U.S. and international assistance would decline, and the insurgency would eventually be defeated." COIN sought victory by denying it to the Taliban, not threatening its destruction. Its precepts, "clear, hold, and build," meant "push the insurgents out, keep them out, and use the resulting space and time to establish a legitimate government, build capable security forces, and improve the Afghan economy." Ultimately, COIN in Afghanistan did not align to the realities on the ground or to the desires of the Afghan people or the Afghan government.[468] Eikenberry warned

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[466] "Of the various strategies that the United States has employed in Afghanistan over the past dozen years, the 2009 troop surge was by far the most ambitious and expensive." (Eikenberry 2013)

[467] Eikenberry noted that "deploying highly trained U.S. soldiers and marines to Afghanistan to serve as social workers or to manage development projects comes at a very high price. The U.S. government spends about $1 million per year per soldier deployed in Afghanistan. At the height of the surge, Washington had about 100,000 troops in theater, costing about $100 billion annually." (Eikenberry 2013). The high price tag did not keep Obama from implementing the surge but did eventually impact its continuation. By 2012 even a majority of republicans opposed the war. (Wilson and Cohen 2012).

[468] Ethnic mistrust hampered the U.S. COIN strategy as U.S. forces aimed to pacify the insurgency in southern Afghanistan. (Chivers and Filkins 2010). In this region of the country a large proportion of the population is Pashtun. Many in this population felt that "the international community mainly supports the non-Pashtun ethnic groups, who together blame them for constituting the core of the insurgency," or at least accuse them of supporting

that the risk of senior commanders' "becoming intellectually arrogant and cognitively rigid is real." In Afghanistan, "the COIN paradigm was applied with such unquestioning zeal that critical thought was often suspended." He argues that in Afghanistan from at least 2009-2011, "groupthink" became the norm. (Eikenberry 2013, 8). Therefore, while socialization logic explains the U.S. decision to pursue decisive victory, doctrinal inertia explains the poor choice of population-centric COIN as the means to implement this strategy.

On December 1, 2009, in a nationally televised speech, President Obama committed an additional thirty thousand forces to the fight, on top of the sixty-eight thousand in place. These forces were intended to "increase our ability to train competent Afghan Security Forces, and to partner with them so that more Afghans can get into the fight. And they will help create the conditions for the United States to transfer responsibility to the Afghans."

Although this does not sound like a kinetic approach to defeating the Taliban, this strategy can be considered decisive victory because the goal was to convince the Taliban that they faced total defeat. Riedel suggested that the U.S. goal was to socialize the Taliban through the threat of defeat to convince more moderate elements to circumvent what the U.S. perceived to be highly ideologically driven leadership. The desired outcome was a negotiated settlement on terms favorable to the U.S. and their Afghan partners. Riedel stated:

> Let me comment on the Taliban. It's no surprise. We know that the core Taliban leadership, led by Mullah Omar, is determined not to negotiate with anybody. They want to take Afghanistan back to the medieval hell that they created in the 1990s. But there are many of the -- those involved in the insurgency who may not be so committed as that, and if we see the momentum of the Taliban broken this summer and over the course of the fighting season, we may see some fractures within that movement. And I suspect that the core Taliban leadership is very, very worried about just that kind of thing happening. (Whitehouse Archives 2009).

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the insurgents. This threatened to create a self-fulfilling prophesy whereby fear that they will be targeted unfairly for being insurgents leads them to join or support the insurgency. (Masadykov, Giustozzi and Page 2010, 6). At this time, the majority of Afghan tribal leaders in unstable areas supported the Taliban either directly or indirectly. (Masadykov, Giustozzi and Page 2010, 9). The Afghan public had severe disdain for former warlords and other notables who formed the nucleus of the U.S. backed Afghan government. These leaders were regarded by many as "no better than those leaders of the Taliban and Hezb-e-Islami who form the main opposition groups; this is especially so in the eyes of significant numbers of Pashtuns." Most of the Afghan population also regarded the 2009 elections as being fraught with corruption and widely illegitimate. (Masadykov, Giustozzi and Page 2010, 8).

One crucial puzzle is why Obama announced that the U.S. would begin withdrawing troops in 18 months. (Whitehouse 2009). The official explanation was that setting an end date would both reassure the Afghan government that the U.S. will eventually leave and force them to take responsibility for security knowing that the U.S. will not be there indefinitely. Opponents argued that this enabled the Taliban to wait out the surge. (Barno and Bensahel 2019). Obama ran on a dovish platform and was constrained by a public that elected him to make peace. This dictated that a troop surge be accompanied by the promise of clear dates for withdrawal, limiting worries of mission creep and allowing his administration to maintain its anti-war image.[469] Therefore, domestic politics, along with institutional inertia contributed to the poor application of the optimal strategy.

Obama laid out strategy with three core elements: "a military effort to create the conditions for a transition; a civilian surge that reinforces positive action; and an effective partnership with Pakistan." He cited external and internal constraints reasoning, noting the criticality of partnering with Pakistan, the 43-member international coalition and broad domestic support due to being attacked from Afghanistan unlike Vietnam. (Whitehouse 2009).

External constraints also decreased the effectiveness of the troop surge. As soon as Obama was elected, Director of National Intelligence (DNI), Michael McConnell warned him that Pakistan is dishonest and even that Pakistani ISI directorate S supported the Taliban. (Woodward 2010, 4). Sanctuary in Pakistani tribal areas allowed Taliban fighters to "withdraw to safety whenever U.S. military pressure increased and return to the offensive in Afghanistan whenever conditions were more favorable."[470] Invading, occupying and stationing troops inside of Pakistan's tribal regions to cut off this safe-haven was seen as diplomatically infeasible. (Barno and Bensahel 2019). The Obama administration also knew Omar was in the Pakistani

[469] Domestic opposition from President Obama's own party significantly contributed to the announcement of timelines for withdrawal as well. Vice President Biden was the most vocal critic of Obama's Afghanistan surge, advocating a light footprint counterterrorism strategy that Riedel considered infeasible. (Riedel Interview 9/25/19).
[470] Emerson testified that FATA served as a sanctuary for al Qaeda's global jihad and for the Taliban insurgency against the Afghan government and NATO troops." (House Intelligence Committee testimony 2008, 58). This problem persisted throughout the most of this conflict. Chairman Kerry stated: "I've many times said that Pakistan is the key to diminishing the insurgency in Afghanistan itself." He added: "Terrorists and insurgents are continuing to exploit the 1,200-mile porous border that separates the two countries. And we will have to work very closely with Pakistan in order to deal with the problem of the sanctuaries (Senate Foreign Relations Committee Testimony 2011).

town of Quetta but could not target him due to high potential for international incident due to civilian casualties. McConnell told Obama there was little that could be done about Omar residing in Pakistan. (Woodward 2010, 7).

Further increasing external constraints, increased U.S. involvement under Obama coincided with reduced international support. The Dutch government fell in 2010 due to opposition to their involvement in the war effort. (Kulish 2010). Canada and the Netherlands announced the withdrawal of their 4,500 troops shortly after. (Hastings 2010). Even absent external constraints, the U.S. did not ever send enough troops to fully crush the Taliban. According to Bergen, most of the decisions regarding whether to tighten or loosen ROEs and how many troops to employ, are self-imposed, not pushed by domestic or international politics considerations. The U.S. would need at least 300,000, a ratio of 20:100,000 for decisive victory over the Taliban. However, there was no domestic push for annihilating the Taliban. Perhaps another "9/11" emanating from Afghanistan and the FATA would have changed that. (Bergen interview 2019).

Two-Track Strategy: Kill and Capture Hardliners and Reconciliation with "Moderates"

The Obama administration sought to use the threat of defeat to socialize ideologically driven groups and to negotiate with those deemed moderate enough to bargain with in good faith. The perception of less ideological elements in the Taliban led the U.S. to start to pursue a reconciliation effort despite institutional hurdles stemming from legal barriers to political outreach to armed groups. This policy had the potential to moderate the Taliban by increasing its governance function through bolstering potential rivals who were seen as more pragmatic. These reconciliation efforts concerned Taliban fighters defecting to join Karzai's government or retire. They were not an effort to negotiate terms with the Taliban. There was no consideration as to what role the Taliban might play in peace negotiations, they were simply shut out. [471]

[471] In 2010 "the US had been walking a tightrope between an increasing awareness (especially within the State Department) of the role that reconciliation will play in stabilizing Afghanistan, and the legal and congressional constraints that make supporting political outreach activities to armed groups very difficult." (Masadykov, Giustozzi and Page 2010, 12). These reconciliation efforts were run by a NGO funded mostly by the U.S. government called "Program Takhim e-Solh (Strengthening Peace, commonly known as PTS)." (Nathan 2009). The program, founded in 2005, focused on low-level Taliban due to legal and political constraints. (Department of Defense 2005). The U.S. was "dissatisfied with the progress made under Mojaddedi's leadership and had previously sought to identify ways to reach a more substantial group of potential reconcilees." (Masadykov, Giustozzi and Page 2010, 12).

Although nothing came of the Holbrooke's initiative to negotiate with the Taliban, they show how countries can circumvent internal impediments to negotiations when so desired. (Masadykov, Giustozzi and Page 2010, 12). This casts doubt on the argument that the U.S. was blocked by its own laws from negotiating with the Taliban. It also suggests that the Bush administration's refusal to seek a bargain in December 2001 was not due to these reasons.[472]

2010-2011 was the peak of U.S. military power in Afghanistan and COIN was seeing some success.[473] By mid-2011 the Taliban was losing momentum and was plagued by infighting. The Taliban had no hope of re-exerting control in Afghan cities as they did in the mid-1990s. Some old-guard Taliban understood this stalemated reality and tired of attrition, expressing a desire to reconcile and end the fighting. The younger Talibs were more ideologically staunch and less willing to lay down their arms. The length of the U.S. campaign spurred the Taliban rank and file and leadership already predisposed to pragmatic goals—those desiring power and stability over conflict against infidels—to express willingness to bargain.

The surge failed to convince the Taliban that they faced defeat. Hardliners argued that they could wait out the U.S. presence and then secure victory. COIN drove and kept the Taliban out of cities but was failed to dislodge them from rural areas or threaten leadership that could escape to Pakistan. Pakistan played a double game, both supporting and opposing the Taliban when it helped their geo-political interests.[474] Ultimately, with a withdrawal timeline laid out, the

[472] Had Bush wanted to accept the Taliban's surrender in exchange for immunity for Omar, it could have circumvented any domestic constraints in order to make it happen. Instead the refusal is best explained as a deliberate policy choice by the Bush administration due to misreading the Taliban's type at the time.
[473] In February 2010 U.S. Marines led NATO and ANSF in Operation Moshtarak to secure Helmand Province. It was described as "the epitome of COIN," involving over 15,000 NATO and Afghan troops. (BBC 2010).
[474] The ISI supported the Afghan Taliban partly because they considered the Karzai government to be too close with their primary adversary, India. ISI played both sides, supporting the Taliban while handing over Taliban leaders to the U.S. when it was in their interest. An example of their considerable control over the Taliban and their goal of weakening the Karzai government was their arrest of senior Taliban leaders in 2010 due to suspicion that they had reached out to the Karzai government to explore peace talks and reconciliation. (Gopal 2015, 231). Muhibullah was arrested when he showed interest in reconciliation. Elements in ISI supported hardcore Taliban and "punish those who show an interest in reconciliation without their permission." Masadykov, Giustozzi and Page 2010, 15).

surge failed to convince Taliban leadership to negotiate and did not attempt to.[475] This created a mutually costly stalemate.[476]

2011-2017: RETURN TO MANAGEMENT

Throughout the 2009-2011 surge, the U.S. killed hundreds of mid-level Taliban field commanders, but this had no discernable impact on the Taliban's willingness to negotiate. Around 2012, a significant group of U.S. officials saw Omar as the tie that holds the Taliban together and thought it would collapse if he were to be killed or captured, "like Shining Path leader Guzman in Peru." Others saw the Taliban as institutionalized and able to continue without him. That said, the U.S. "never had a beat on Omar's whereabouts." Furthermore, the years following his death in 2013 have shown the resilience of the Taliban as an institutionalized organization. (Dr. B.D. Interview 2019).

Most Americans saw the war in Afghanistan as ultimately about defeating the al-Qaeda threat and bringing the perpetrators of the 9/11 attacks to justice. On May 2, a team of Navy Seals raided a complex in Pakistan, captured a trove of information and killed Osama bin Laden. This victory enhanced the legitimacy of Obama's promise to begin withdrawing troops by 2011. As the U.S. boosted its targeting capabilities, Taliban forces were increasingly governing in areas they controlled. Along with the U.S. recognition of a split between hardliners and a pragmatic element within the Taliban's ranks and leadership, these factors led the U.S. to see the Taliban as a type C and potentially a type D NSA by early 2011.[477] The killing of bin Laden and other high

[475] A long-lasting campaign can convince those with a moderate ideology to bargain in much the same way that two states caught in a long-term stalemate would have revealed their capabilities and resolve, making it more likely that a cost-saving bargain would be reached (Fearon 1995). But only the threat of total defeat can convince those that are not pragmatically driven to moderate.

[476] A "mutually hurting stalemate" is one of the conditions Cronin finds likely to end conflict with terrorist groups. (Cronin 2009). U.S. reduction in popular support for the war effort signified the "hurting" nature of this stalemate from the U.S. perspective. U.S. belief that the war was not worth fighting rose from 41 percent in 2007 to 64 percent in 2011. On February 18 2011, Secretary of State Clinton appears to have lowered the barriers to talks. She said that "previous American conditions for talks with the Taliban--that they lay down their arms, reject al-Qaeda, and embrace the Afghan Constitution--were no longer preconditions that the Taliban had to meet before negotiations could begin, but were 'necessary outcomes' of the final peace process." That said, Bergen cited a Western official familiar with the negotiations as stating that chances for a peace deal with the Taliban appear "negligible for the foreseeable future." (Senate Foreign Relations Committee testimony 2011).

[477] The Obama surge had been relatively successful in increasing its ability to target Taliban leadership but there is debate over whether that led to a moderation of ideology in favor of pragmatism. "General David Petraeus told the Senate Armed Services Committee in March that in one recent 3-month period 360 insurgent leaders were killed or captured. According to a wide range of observers, as a result the average age of Taliban commanders has dropped from 35 to 25 in the past year. Some U.S. military officials believe this is a good thing, as the younger commanders

level terrorists promoted the perception that the threat from Afghanistan was diminished.[478] The U.S. began tentative negotiations with the Taliban in early 2011, but the Taliban withdrew from them following anger over U.S. media leaks. The U.S. scrapped efforts to rekindle negotiations after "the Taliban raised a flag and hung a sign in front of their office in Qatar declaring the re-establishment of an Islamic Emirate separate from the Western-backed Kabul government."

The incompetence of the ANSF—along with the U.S. troop withdrawal—meant that the Taliban faced no credible threat of decisive defeat while the U.S. was still uncertain over whether it was predominantly ideologically or pragmatically driven. This set the stage for the conflict to settle into status-quo management strategy which became bloody attrition in which the Taliban increasingly had the advantage over the U.S. backed ANSF.

On May 24, 2011, shortly following the killing of bin Laden, Senate Foreign Relations Chairman John Kerry testified in favor of reconciliation. He stated:

> Security gains in the south—and they are real—coupled with bin Laden's death, have, at least in my judgment and certainly in the judgment of the people I talked with in Afghanistan last weekend, have created some political space. So, it's important that we seize that opportunity. Middle- and low-level Taliban fighters, many of them want to come in from the battlefield. We need to work with the Afghan Government in order to make sure that those who wish to lay down their arms can in fact do so, and as reconcilable elements of the insurgency enter into the peace process. (Senate Foreign Relations Committee testimony 2011).

Bergen testified that regarding reconciliation, "the moderate Taliban has already reconciled… The people who aren't reconciled are pretty hard core." He defined "hard core" as devoted to al Qaeda's global jihadist ideology. He corroborated Kerry's testimony that the Taliban was hit hard in Southern Afghanistan. The testimony showed broad perception among U.S. policymakers that the Taliban threat was diminished. (Senate Foreign Relations Committee testimony 2011).

Polls from June 2011 showed record U.S. domestic opposition to the war. A Washington Post-ABC News Poll found that 73 percent of Americans supported withdrawing troops from Afghanistan. (Washington Post 2011). A rising tide of Congressional Democrats also pressured

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are ``less ideological," while Ruttig, one of the world's leading authorities on the Taliban, says that the reverse is the case: the younger Taliban are more rigid ideologically. (Senate Foreign Relations Committee testimony 2011).

[478] Senator Lugar testified on May 24, 2011 that "the resources being spent in Afghanistan are far greater than the current threat warrants." He noted that "few terrorists in Afghanistan have global designs or reach." (Senate Foreign Relations Committee testimony 2011).

the President to sizably reduce U.S. forces in Afghanistan. (Council for a Livable World 2011). As internal constraints rose, Obama confirmed that the U.S. was holding preliminary peace talks with Taliban leadership, the first since the war began in 2001.

External constraints impacted the Obama administration's Afghanistan strategy as well. President Obama cited great power competition concerns in his 2011 National Defense Strategy in which he said "we're turning a page on a decade of war" that involved large ground forces and occupations under COIN. "As we end today's wars, we will focus on a broader range of challenges and opportunities, including the security and prosperity of the Asia Pacific." (Eikenberry 2013). While the Obama administration's official position was to pivot to Asia to contain China's growing assertiveness, the U.S. did not significantly expand military assets in the region, or restructure of the military for great power competition.[479] This did not shift until the Trump administration's 2017 National Defense Strategy penned by Defense Secretary Mattis. This suggests that it was not external structural considerations that led the Obama administration to shift away from his 2009 Afghan surge. Domestic concerns had more impact, including the weak economy and public war weariness. On June 22, 2011, Obama outlined a plan to withdraw thirty-three thousand troops by the summer of 2012.

Although Bin Laden had been killed and al-Qaeda central leadership was being decimated, the Taliban was not facing defeat. The combination of increased internal constraints, and the post-assassination of bin Laden perception of victory, coincided with the U.S. State Department being given limited resources to feel out negotiations with the Taliban. These overtures were not coordinated with the military and were seen as a sideshow that quickly ended when Petraeus took over command from McChrystal. (Campbell Interview 2019).[480]

Failure of COIN

Obama's population-centric COIN strategy was doomed to failure due to its inability to threaten the Taliban with defeat.[481] In 2010, Obama replaced General McChrystal with General

[479] The Budget Control Act of 2011 led to the sequestration cuts that gutted the U.S. military and degraded readiness more than any foreign enemy in our history according to joint chief of staff General Dunford and Defense Secretary Shanahan. Both testified before the House and Senate Appropriations Defense subcommittees that 'sequestration did more damage to readiness than any enemy.' I attended those hearings. House May 1, 2019 and Senate May 8, 2019.
[480] With reconciliation in mind, the UN Security Council days earlier split the sanctions list between members of al-Qaeda and the Taliban, making it easier to add and remove people and entities. (CFR 2019).
[481] Population-centric COIN, sometimes called "hearts and minds" attempts to remove popular support for an insurgency by demonstrating benign intentions and avoiding actions that create resentment. (Cox 2011).

Petraeus—the architect of the Iraq Surge—to command forces in Afghanistan. "Hearts and Minds" was the most prominent view among military and political leaders during the Obama years, following the publication of new military doctrine, Counterinsurgency FM 3-24 in 2006, written by Generals Amos and Petraeus. The Obama years in Afghanistan, guided by this hearts and minds approach to counterinsurgency, sought to win in Afghanistan by gaining support of the population, even if this undermined the effort to militarily crush the Taliban.[482] This has been unsuccessful. As the Taliban gained control over an increasing amount of territory, the population not only sees them as less corrupt due to the rampant corruption of the Afghan government under Karzai and now under Ghani, but they also fear them. Hearts and minds are influenced by fear. The Taliban look unlikely to be shaken from control, so the population is unlikely to contest them or risk their lives to help the U.S. effort. The hearts and minds approach combined with expensive nation building and the incompetence and corruption of the U.S. backed Afghan forces has been unable to defeat or socialize the Taliban, leading to continued stalemate. The former chief of Combined Forces Command Afghanistan put it bluntly in 2013; "In short, COIN failed in Afghanistan." (Military.com 2013). This led to continued stalemate.

As U.S. forces prepared to withdraw in 2012, it was evident that the ANSF would not be able to secure order, defeat or even hold-off the Taliban. Obama insisted on drawing down the U.S. military presence while Petraeus tried to "buy time."[483] (Campbell interview 2019). The Afghan government lacked legitimacy due to corruption and disunity. Assassinations were carried out against many U.S. backed strongmen not only by the Taliban but mostly by rival ostensibly also pro-U.S. militias.[484] Much of this resulted from the U.S. mismanaging resources due to not understanding incentives in Afghanistan's tribal society.[485] In 2012, with the U.S. dismantling its military infrastructure in Afghanistan, the message to the Taliban was clear, no

[482] For example, McChrystal sought to reduce the use of indirect ordinance and air-delivered bombs not because they were ineffective in military terms but due to their political effect.
[483] The Obama administration assessed three mission sets with DoD leadership. They focused on "what could be done with x amount of troops?" The administration decided to phase out combat operations against the Taliban by 2014 while continuing high value targeting and the train advise and assist role. (Campbell interview 2019).
[484] Gopal notes that by his count in Uruzgan alone there were some 30 pro-U.S. militias, many with opposing loyalties. Village strongmen jockeyed for patronage, promising to fight the Taliban if the Americans funded and armed them. In some cases, U.S. money went to the Taliban as local power brokers would take control for security on a main highway and then use part of those funds to pay off the Taliban not to attack it. (Gopal 2015).
[485] Gopal notes: "Of the 557 billion dollars that Washington spent in Afghanistan between 2001 and 2001, only 5.4 percent went to development or governance. The rest was mostly military expenditure, a significant chunk of which ended up in the coffers of regional strongmen." (Gopal 2015, 272).

major effort to defeat them was in the works. The U.S. was too constrained to threaten enough force to socialize hardline Taliban and even pragmatically driven Taliban had reason to hope that if they held out, they would secure more territory and power. The U.S. did continue strikes against wanted terrorists. The strategy of high value strikes while leaving only enough forces to not be overrun and the failure to build an Afghan security force capable of taking the fight to the enemy and defeating them, most closely resembles management.

In January 2012, the U.S. suggested that the Taliban open an office in Qatar as a first step to peace talks, but they never got off the ground. The Taliban withdrew, accusing Washington of reneging on promises to take meaningful steps toward a prisoner swap. Despite this failure, in February 2012, U.S. Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta announced plans to conclude combat missions by mid-2013 and shift to a security assistance role in Afghanistan. In June 2013, NATO gave control of the remaining ninety-five districts to the ANSF. The U.S.-led coalition's focus shifted to military training and special operations-driven counterterrorism. Concurrently, the U.S. resumed talks with the Taliban in Qatar. These negotiations did not lead anywhere because the U.S. was adamant in setting conditions involving human rights and democracy that were non-starters for the Taliban. (Interviews with Dr. A and Mr. D 2019).[486]

In 2013, the RAND counterinsurgency scorecard shed a cautiously optimistic tone on operations to defeat the Taliban. It was a slight improvement over early 2011 where Afghanistan scored in the middle of the historical record of wins and losses.[487] It warned that "conditions may change as coalition forces prepare to hand over responsibility for the country's security to the Afghan government and Afghan security forces in 2014." (Paul, Clark, Grill and Dunigan 2013). Taliban territorial control and contestation increased from this point forward, suggesting that the U.S. reduction was premature if the goal was to threaten victory to either fully defeat the Taliban or socialize them and achieve a bargain.

Ending the U.S. Direct Combat Mission

[486] Bergen cited the 2014 U.S. release of five high level Taliban officials in exchange for the release of deserter Bowe Bergdahl as "priming the pump" for future negotiations with the Taliban. (Bergen interview 2019). These five joined the Taliban negotiating team in Qatar in 2018. (Gannon 2018).

[487] The RAND study results revealed that "Afghanistan ranked among the historical COIN winners, but its score is equal to those of the lowest-scoring historical wins." The most critical area that needed improvement was "the need to disrupt the flow of insurgent support and the need for the Afghan government and Afghan security forces to better demonstrate their commitment and motivation." (Paul et. al. 2013).

On May 27 2014, Obama announced a timetable for withdrawing most U.S. forces from Afghanistan by the end of 2014, claiming that the under 10,000 to remain would not have a combat mission.[488] Their mission would be limited to training Afghan forces and conducting operations against "the remnants of al-Qaeda." Some analysts questioned this plan, pointing to the Taliban's resilience. (CFR 2018). Generals Mattis and Dunford testified in 2017 that the 2014 drawdown was too fast, ad hoc and due to domestic politics. (Campbell Interview 2019).[489]

Continued and improved high value targeting was the primary component of the U.S. use of sticks concurrent to deliberating overusing carrots. In 2015 the U.S. learned that Omar had died two years prior. Experts including Bergen and Petraeus believed Omar hid in Pakistan from 2001 until death. (Donati 2019). This demonstrated the difficulty the U.S. faced targeting Taliban leadership, but U.S. targeting was steadily improving. Immediately following the revelation of Omar's death, the U.S. killed the Taliban's new leader, Mullah Mansour, with a drone strike in Pakistan in 2016. (Entous and Donati 2016). Despite improved targeting, the reduction of troops and the inadequacies of the ANSF allowed the Taliban to steadily gain territory and power, making the threat of U.S. victory less credible. Absent the threat of decisive victory, the U.S. did not trust the Taliban because it was unsure if it was deterrable or not.[490] This dynamic continues to the present.

2017-PRESENT: NEGOTIATIONS

The U.S. has thus far kept Afghanistan from being the terrorist safe haven it was before 2001, but continued conflict is costly and unlikely to change the stalemate that has developed absent a significant increase in U.S. military presence, one deemed unnecessary and indeed detrimental to U.S. national security interests going forward.[491] Mattis argued that the conflict

[488] President Obama declared an end to the U.S. combat role in Afghanistan on December 28, 2014, with the 10,800 remaining U.S. troops taking on an advisory and logistics support role. (Nakamura 2014). Between then and the end of 2018, over 25,000 Afghan troops were killed and casualties remain high. (Gibbons-Neff and Mashal 2018).
[489] Thomas Lynch III claimed, "the Obama administration's November 2014 and March 2015 announcements of altered troop withdrawal timelines for Afghanistan reflected evolving domestic political drivers. These considerations have long-colored strategic options in Afghanistan" (Lynch 2015, 133).
[490] Seth Jones views credible commitment problems as the primary reason why negotiations have not succeeded and are unlikely to in the near-term. (Jones Interview 2019).
[491] The Pentagon cites the war as costing the U.S. around 45 billion dollars per year. (PBS 2018). The US has lost over 2,400 soldiers in Afghanistan since 2001 and spent over $900 billion. Taliban insurgents now control more territory than at any point in the conflict since 2001. They control "at least 13% of Afghan provinces and threaten 70% of the country's territory." (Singh 2019). However, the U.S. backed government controls the key urban centers and this is unlikely to change hands. (Campbell Interview 2019).

severely harms U.S. relative power by allowing Russia and China to study and adapt to U.S. military advantages while the U.S. is mired in expensive counterinsurgencies. (NDS 2018).

As the Trump administration refocused its National Security Strategy to prepare for great-power competition, this has led to a reassessment of what U.S. goals are in Afghanistan. Socialization logic suggests decoupling national security from other issues. The primary national security issue for the U.S. concerning Afghanistan is that whoever rules the country be willing and able to enforce that it not be used as a safe haven for terrorist groups planning to attack the U.S. and its partners and allies. A clear-eyed view of the Taliban suggests that despite their fundamentalist positions on women's rights, modernity, religious freedom and liberty in general, they do not seek to carry out attacks on foreign soil. In essence, they are pragmatically driven. This means that the U.S. might be able to deter them as they would a state, through the threat of higher costs to benefits, instead of needing to threaten decisive victory as would be needed to deter an ideologically driven group. Therefore, socialization logic would suggest that the U.S. come to terms with the odious positions of the Taliban on internal issues while boosting their governance function and using a combination of carrots and sticks while pursuing negotiations.

U.S. Army Intelligence Analyst Dr. B.D. believes that the Trump administration listens to ambassador Khalilzad who views the Taliban as a primarily pragmatically driven actor that can be deterred from allowing safe haven to al Qaeda. He noted that Taliban is fighting ISIS and that they have learned a lot since the 1990s when they wanted legitimacy but blew their chances by harboring al Qaeda. (Dr. B.D. Interview 2019).

The U.S. is unlikely to make concessions that hurt its military posture if it does not trust the Taliban not to take advantage once the concessions are made.[492] Kissinger related the current U.S. talks with the Taliban and the prospect of a U.S. troop withdrawal to his experience in the Paris peace talks with North Vietnam. Although President Nixon agreed to withdraw troops with the determination to use military force if the North Vietnamese violated the agreement (which he fully expected they would), domestic politics made this impossible. Kissinger sees this dynamic as likely. He believes that the Taliban will violate the agreement and that there would be no

[492] Bergen lays out the credible commitment problems with highly ideological opponents. Regarding the Taliban he testified: "they've reneged on every peace agreement they've been involved in. They had a peace agreement in Waziristan in 2005 and in 2006 and in Swat in 2009. They took those peace agreements as opportunities to essentially regroup and take over more territory." Senate Foreign Relations Committee testimony 2011).

political support for reapplying force.[493] Bergen disagrees. He claims that the 2018-2019 U.S. negotiations with the Taliban were based on a phased withdrawal that belies the need for trusting the Taliban not to renege on its word and allow safe haven for al Qaeda. He says that Taliban leadership must notice that the U.S. can still credibly threaten to return military to Afghanistan even post withdrawal. The Taliban saw how the U.S. withdrew from Iraq in 2011 and then returned in 2014. (Bergen interview 9/19/19).

If the aim is to end the conflict by convincing the Taliban that they face the continuation of a painful stalemate indefinitely, the U.S. would need to conduct negotiations while signaling its willingness to ramp up its use of force. The Trump administration's approach appears to be just that; pursuing negotiations while increasing force through more airstrikes and loosened ROEs. In essence, by making continued stalemate more painful for the Taliban, the Trump administration hopes to convince them to negotiate. His strategy specifically states this logic: "Strategically applied force aims to create the conditions for a political process to achieve a lasting peace." (Whitehouse 2017). A Carnegie Endowment assessment cites Trump's strategy as "increasing military pressure… to affect the behavior and calculations of the Taliban." (Tellis et. al. 2018).[494] The 2017 South Asia Strategy Review is the first time the U.S. explicitly stated a political agreement between the Taliban and the Afghan government as their goal. (Campbell Interview 2019). Whether this will succeed remains to be seen.

On August 21, 2017, Trump outlined his Afghanistan policy, stating that he will press ahead with an open-ended military commitment to prevent the emergence of "a vacuum for terrorists." Differentiating his policy from Obama's, Trump said withdrawal will be based on "conditions on the ground," rather than arbitrary timelines. (NYT Staff 2017).

Dr. Henry Nau argues that Trump is ramping up force, demonstrated by the first time use of the Mother of all Bombs (MOAB), a tunnel-busting bomb that buried Taliban terrorists on the Afghanistan–Pakistan border. He argues that "the best option remains, as Mattis implies, to

[493] I received this recent information on Kissinger through an email exchange between General (retired) Guy Swan and a retired Lieutenant Colonel who attended a session with Henry Kissinger attended by Joint Special Operations Command commander Lieutenant General Scott Howell. The email exchange was from August 29, 2019.
[494] In October 2017, the Trump administration expanded the CIA mission in Afghanistan. This "is a tacit acknowledgement that to bring the Taliban to the negotiating table —a key component of Mr. Trump's strategy for the country—the U.S. will need to aggressively fight the insurgents." (Gibson-Neff and Goldman 2017). Trump's 2017 National Security Strategy states the policy of boosting ANSF to "convince the Taliban that they cannot win on the battlefield and to set the conditions for diplomatic efforts to achieve enduring peace." (NSS 2017, 50).

continue what we are doing but do it more effectively, and for one purpose only — to keep the Taliban from setting up training camps to attack America" (Nau 2017).

The U.S. doubled the number of strikes in Afghanistan in 2017 compared to the year before. President Trump announced in August 2017 that the U.S. commitment in Afghanistan would deepen[495]. "General John Nicholson, the top general in Afghanistan, confirmed that this would include a ramping up of air support." This strategy gave U.S. forces in Afghanistan new authority to target Taliban revenue sources. General Nicholson announced several strikes on Taliban drugs labs in southern Helmand. (Perkiss, Serle and Fielding-Smith 2017).

Despite ramped up strikes, at the start of 2018, the Taliban controlled or contested more territory than at any time since 2001. The U.S. may not have the domestic will to spend more blood and treasure in Afghanistan.[496] Furthermore, Trump campaigned on a promise to end foreign engagements and felt he owed his based the completion of this promise.

Zalmay Khalilzad, U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation is leading negotiations. On December 20, 2018, Trump announced the decision to start withdrawing from Afghanistan. (Gibbon-Neffs and Mashal 2018). Alongside negotiations, the Trump administration signaled willingness to ramp up military force if negotiations fail.[497] This included further loosening ROEs.[498] The best explanation for the Trump administration's shift to pursuing negotiations is that it sees the Taliban as a type D NSA. It perceives the Taliban to be pragmatically driven.[499] It also recognizes the Taliban's ability to function as a government in

[495] Foreign policy magazine reported at the start of 2018 that "the War in Afghanistan looks set to intensify in 2018." The new Afghanistan strategy "raises the tempo of operations against the Taliban insurgency, with more U.S. forces, fiercer U.S. airstrikes, and more aggressive ground offensives by Afghan forces." The author cites senior officials in stating the aim of this increased use of force as "to halt the Taliban's momentum and, eventually, force it into a political settlement." (Malley 2018).

[496] Malley noted that the Taliban in 2018 "is better equipped and, even if pressured through conventional fighting, it would retain the ability to mount spectacular urban attacks that erode confidence in the government." It is more confident. "Between 2009 and 2012, the Taliban withstood more than 100,000 U.S. troops." (Malley 2018).

[497] While White House rumors suggest a potential withdrawal from Afghanistan by the 2020 election, the expansion of U.S. bases suggest otherwise. One remote U.S. military base, Camp Dahlke, 60 miles south of Kabul, is expanding rapidly. This is a clear example of U.S. force posture suggesting a continued presence. This also suggests that the U.S. has doubts that negotiations with the Taliban will succeed. (Lawrence 2018).

[498] On March 6, 2019, Trump revoked a 2016 Obama directive to disclose civilian casualties from drone strikes. This could loosen domestic and international constraints by allowing the U.S. to shape the narrative and use force while keeping the public in the dark in an attempt to quell protest. (Savage 2019)

[499] U.S. Marines "killed dozens of Taliban leaders in May 2018 using rocket artillery after tracking them to a meeting in volatile Helmand Province, according to the top American general in Afghanistan." "Twenty other Taliban leaders were killed in air strikes earlier this month by drones and Air Force A-10 Warthog jets." (Tomlinson

the areas it controls.[500] Indeed, the last group to wield a monopoly of violence over the entire country of Afghanistan was the Taliban from 1996-2001. It is unlikely that the Taliban succeeded in doing in five years what the U.S. and NATO backed Afghan forces failed to do in 18 years by winning the population's hearts and minds. Afghan ambassador Ayoob Erfani claims that the Taliban was able to rule Afghanistan because it could use tools of oppression and violence to coerce disparate ethnicities into obedience, while the U.S. backed Afghan government cannot. (Discussion with Ambassador Erfani 2019).

In terms of the Taliban's governance function potential, Koskinas noted that, "the Taliban is making money mining, the Afghan government is not," suggesting that the Taliban does a better job exercising territorial control than the Afghan government. This suggests that they have the foundation needed to control violence and enforce the peace were there to be a successful bargain. He argues that the Taliban is still not deterred, stating: "The petting zoo Taliban in Doha probably does not represent hardcore Taliban in the hills of Afghanistan." (New America 2019).

The Taliban continues to have a reputation as harsh and extremely religious, yet in the words of an Afghan native, Radio Free Afghanistan correspondent and U.S. National Guard cultural adviser Sharafudin Stanekzai, 'The Taliban are very clean' while the Afghan government in 2019 suffers from corruption and is widely perceived as "a mafia."[501] He argues that many Afghans see negotiations with the Taliban and bringing them into the government as only way to remove the stifling corruption rampant in the Afghan government. Stanekzai believes that the Taliban want to negotiate because "too many of them have died and are dying and they are tired of war," it remains to be seen whether a bargain can be reached and whether the Taliban would abide by its terms and be willing to share power. (Stanekzai Interview 2019).

2018). On June 15, 2018, the U.S. military carried out a strike on senior Taliban militant figure Fazlullah in the eastern Afghan province of Kunar, on the Pakistani border. Fazlullah was Pakistan's most-wanted militant, notorious for attacks including a 2014 school massacre that killed 132 children and the 2012 shooting of schoolgirl Malala Yousafzai." (Reuters 2018). The U.S. is continuing with its high value targeting.

[500] Hamid et al. argue that the Taliban is reconstituting its governance function. Noting that the post-Taliban formal courts have not been able to stop or resolve civil conflicts, and are widely perceived by the population as corrupt. They argue that "the Taliban has moved to fill the gap by providing free mediation of tribal, criminal, and personal disputes. Afghans report a great degree of satisfaction with Taliban verdicts, unlike those of the official justice system, where petitioners often have to pay considerable bribes." They note that the Quetta Shura of the Taliban has "established teams to travel throughout Afghanistan and uncover complaints from local populations against the Taliban—about corruption, brutality, or other mistreatment. It has also distributed phone numbers throughout the country for reporting abuses." (Hamid, Felbab-Brown and Trinkunas 2018).

[501] Interview with Sharafudin Stanekzai 3/28/2019.

Alongside diplomacy and signaling increased targeting and a more aggressive military posture, The U.S. is also trying to fully isolate the Taliban by using diplomacy to shut down Pakistani support for the Taliban.[502] Because of how instrumental a lifeline Pakistan's safe haven was for the Taliban's survival throughout this conflict, if the U.S. was able to end Pakistani safe haven support for the Taliban, this would go far in convincing them that they could be defeated.

The U.S. is negotiating with the Taliban at a time when Afghan security forces are on the defensive. (Nordland and Zucchino 2019). This makes it difficult for the U.S. to trust the credibility of Taliban commitments, making it less likely that the U.S. accepts a peace deal that involves fully withdrawing its military assets. A surge in Taliban aggression in September 2019 led the Trump administration to declare the talks "dead." (Holland and Stewart 2019). U.S. military leadership in the region stated the intention to ramp up military force which was already at a high tempo relative to the same period the previous year. (Reuters 2019).[503]

The February 2020 tentative announcement of a landmark deal to end the U.S. conflict with the Taliban accords with socialization logic. Its publicly available stipulations recognize and isolate the U.S. security mission, requiring the Taliban to end safe-haven support for terrorist groups that seek to attack the United States.[504] Secretary of State Mike Pompeo stated that unrelated topics, e.g., women's rights are "up to Afghan negotiators to decide." (Finnegan 2020).

CONCLUSION

In the years prior to al-Qaeda attacks on the U.S. on 9/11, the U.S. saw the Taliban as an illiberal regime that was reluctant to distance itself from terrorist elements but debated whether or not it was primarily pragmatically or ideologically driven. The U.S. did not recognize the Taliban as the legitimate government, but it functioned as such, nonetheless. After 9/11, the U.S.

[502] President Trump met with Pakistan's prime minister in late July 2019. "After years of tension between Washington and Islamabad, Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan insisted Tuesday the two are now on the same page and said he will do his best to convince the Taliban to open negotiations with the Afghan government to resolve the war." "Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan said the Taliban need to participate in the next Afghan presidential election in September." (INDOPACOM G2 2019).

[503] New America Senior Fellow and 20 year Special Operations veteran Koskinas claimed that Trump was sincere about negotiating with the Taliban. (New America 2019).

[504] Explicitly, "withdrawal is tied to the Taliban meeting its counterterrorism commitments, where the group agrees 'to prevent any group or individual, including al-Qaida, from using the soil of Afghanistan to threaten the security of the United States and its allies.' That means not giving them safe haven on Afghan soil, legal status like asylum or documentation such as visas or passports." (Finnegan 2020).

demanded that the Taliban hand over Bin Laden and dismantle al Qaeda. Taliban leader Mullah Omar refused. This solidified the U.S. view of the Taliban as highly ideologically driven.

The U.S. launched a decisive victory strategy to dismantle the Taliban as an organization. This successful campaign did socialize the Taliban into a pragmatically driven group that valued its own survival and had high governance function. The U.S. should have used decisive victory as a means to pursue a peace deal on acceptable terms. Instead, due to both rational and irrational cognitive biases, the U.S. failed to realize this and pursued decisive victory as an end in itself.

Taliban leadership was able to escape and after four years, the Taliban reemerged as a formidable insurgency with disaggregated, difficult to target leadership, relatively low governance function and perceived extremist motivations similar to al Qaeda. After finally realizing that the Taliban was not defeated, from 2005-2007 the Bush administration pursued a management approach aimed at denying the Taliban and building the Afghan government. By 2008, the outgoing Bush administration realized that this was failing and advised sending more troops to convince the Taliban to unconditionally surrender. The Obama administration first followed this strategy, surging troops to their highest level and launching several punishing military campaigns. Internal constraints—domestic war weariness and his own party's opposition—combined with external constraints—the inability to follow the Taliban into Pakistan—reduced its effectiveness. The Obama administration further diminished the ability to use force to convince the Taliban to surrender by publicly announcing an end date as the surge began. By 2011, Obama began withdrawing troops and shifted to a management strategy.

In 2017, the Trump administration shifted to pursuing the first explicit policy of negotiating with the Taliban, publicly acknowledging that it sought a settlement with the Taliban as part of the Afghan government. Up until this point there was no serious consideration of this possibility. The strategy appears to leverage the prospect of painful attrition, lowering the costs for the U.S. and raising them for the Taliban to get them to negotiate out of war weariness. This suggests the perception that the Taliban is pragmatically driven. Increased de facto Taliban governance and increased U.S. ability to target its leadership boosts this perception.

Socialization logic explains why the U.S. pursued decisive victory in 2001. It fails to explain the U.S. refusal to negotiate with the Taliban following its surrender offer in December 2001 because it assumes rationality and the evidence suggests that irrational motivations and

rational misperceptions led the U.S. to conflate the Taliban with al-Qaeda instead of recognizing its primarily pragmatic drive, leading to a missed opportunity. As the Bush administration began to see the Taliban as reconstituted as a threat, now as a decentralized insurgency with strong ties to al-Qaeda, socialization logic explains why it recommended surging forces to threaten it with decisive defeat. The Obama administration followed this path, but institutional inertia led it to misapply COIN that was successful in Iraq. Domestic political considerations led the Obama to hamstring the ability to threaten victory by announcing a withdrawal date at the outset of the campaign. Coincident with increasingly apparent de facto Taliban governance, as the Trump administration reassessed national security interests in light of a return to great power competition and increased ISR and strike capabilities, it began to see the Taliban as pragmatically driven, deterrable due to the cost of continued conflict, and a potential bargaining partner by 2017. It increased force to raise the cost for continued conflict and set conditions for negotiation that minimize demands extraneous to the core concern of ensuring that Afghanistan eliminate safe haven for terrorists, signaling that it views internal issues as their own to solve.

Chapter 6: The United States Versus al-Qaeda: Knocking Out Central, Choking Out Affiliates

Al-Qaeda is best examined as two NSAs: al-Qaeda central and al-Qaeda affiliates. Al-Qaeda central is highly ideologically driven, with leadership that was generally difficult to target until 2011 and no governance function. U.S. strategy correctly followed its view of al-Qaeda central as an undeterrable, archetypal terrorist organization. After the attacks of September 11, 2001, the U.S. launched widespread efforts to kill or capture al-Qaeda terrorists, disrupt its finances, destroy perceived Iraqi sponsorship and build partner capacity. These comprised a decisive victory strategy. In accordance with the predictions of socialization logic when facing a type A NSA, the U.S. sought al-Qaeda's annihilation. Al-Qaeda affiliates formed in 2003 after the Bush administration unintentionally created fertile ground for their rise when it deposed Saddam Hussein and dismantled Iraqi institutions. Al-Qaeda affiliates form an international network that share a global jihadist ideology. The U.S. also sees them as type A, and has sought to defeat them wherever they exist, aiding indigenous forces and launching operations from sub-Saharan Africa to North Africa, from Yemen to Iraq and Syria and in Afghanistan.

Overview

As socialization logic suggests, U.S. strategy towards al-Qaeda has seen minimal variation because its perceptions of al-Qaeda's type have not changed, and its constraints have varied minimally. (Bergen interview 2019). Prior to the attacks of September 11, 2001, the U.S. perceived al-Qaeda to be a type A NSA, a credible threat, but not a top priority. The U.S. thought it could manage the threat without a costly decisive victory strategy. The 9/11 attacks changed this view. In the aftermath, the U.S. launched a decisive victory strategy that quickly decimated al-Qaeda leadership in Afghanistan, but bin Laden and other core leaders escaped to Pakistan.

The Bush administration also began planning to invade Iraq immediately after 9/11. While cognitive factors, personal ideology, bureaucratic politics and domestic politics influenced Bush's decision making, the invasion was primarily part of a decisive victory strategy against al-Qaeda based on the strongly held but incorrect view that Saddam Hussein backed al-Qaeda.[505]

[505] Internal Bush administration memos suggest the view that there was a small but real chance that al-Qaeda was operating in Iraq prior to the U.S. invasion in 2003. (Jones 2009). National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice,

Starting in 2003, al-Qaeda affiliates emerged, some loosely and some more closely tied to the surviving central leadership. The affiliates relevant to this research are those with a global as opposed to only local agendas.[506] The U.S. pursued decisive victory against affiliates, using bases in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere to target terrorist networks. This chapter does not examine strategies to counter "adherents"—self-radicalized individuals claiming allegiance to al-Qaeda, beyond the logic that part of the strategy of decisive victory is an information campaign to counter al-Qaeda's ideological appeal.[507]

In 2011, the U.S. killed bin Laden and captured a trove of data that allowed it to further improve its targeting of al-Qaeda central leadership. This marked a shift from pursuing victory to ensuring that al-Qaeda central remained defeated. The U.S. withdrawal from Iraq and draw down in Afghanistan in 2011 along with the collapse of Libya, the Sinai and Syria into anarchy, led to the increased dispersion of al-Qaeda affiliates. Increased terrorist dispersion and better U.S. targeting reinforced Obama's desire to withdraw land forces, however, his decision to withdraw from Iraq in 2011 despite relatively high public approval for the war and strong council against it, is better explained by personal ideology than by socialization logic.[508]

As rollback operations become more successful, large-scale operations become less likely. Furthermore, the threat from groups without territorial control is lower because they are less able to coordinate high profile attacks.[509] As a Joint Forces quarterly paper put it, "the efforts of the past decade have reduced terrorism to the status of a gnat that the U.S. will keep chasing around the globe." (Field and Pikner 2014). Therefore, absent a successful attack on the U.S.

Defense Secretary Rumsfeld and Secretary of State Colin Powell made statements that that affect as well. (AP 2002). Explanations for the 2003 invasion range from high domestic support, bipartisan congressional support, weapons of mass destruction, spreading democracy, oil and the need to demonstrate strength after 9/11. (Butt 2019).

[506] While the U.S. does recognize the threat of local agenda affiliates and aids local government forces with counterterrorism, this research looks state strategies towards groups they are in direct conflict with. This means groups that seek to attack U.S. interests abroad and the U.S. homeland, as opposed to those that are entirely focused on fighting within a specific region or state. This differentiation is not always static. Some al-Qaeda affiliates moved from local to global agendas. (Cronin 2012, 201). Bergen argues that some affiliates are more interested in local conflicts and use the al-Qaedabrand mainly for recruitment. (Bergen 2019).

[507] Decisive victory itself is likely to greatly diminish the appeal of its ideology similar to how left-wing communist terrorism decreased following the collapse of the Soviet Union.

[508] Following the successful U.S. led coalition against ISIS, started by Obama and intensified by Trump, the U.S. gained greater domestic and international legitimacy for a more aggressive approach to countering al-Qaeda affiliates, but the U.S. remains too constrained to muster the massive resources needed to rapidly defeat global jihad. Better small-footprint targeting makes ground invasions more difficult to sell domestically.

[509] For further discussion of how terrorists need centralization and bureaucracy to plan and execute high quality attacks see Shapiro 2012.

near the scale of the 9/11 attacks, the U.S. is unlikely to pursue decisive victory in a more urgent manner.[510] The GWOT is likely to continue for the foreseeable future because the cost to win quickly exceeds its perceived necessity.[511] As the U.S. steadily increases its ability to find, surveille and target terrorists, interdict plots, and strengthen regional partners, the cost-benefit gap will increasingly favor a slow-and-steady strategy of victory. However, no U.S. administration ever courted the idea of negotiating with al-Qaeda or believed they could be deterred. (Riedel Interview 2019).

Some explanations for U.S. strategy against al-Qaeda look at domestic politics or specific leaders' characteristics. Some suggest groupthink (Badie 2010). Others propose U.S. strategy as following a need for the U.S. to protect its identity as a hegemon (Epstein 2007).

In some specific instances, leadership characteristics and domestic politics explain policies that hindered the effectiveness of a decisive victory strategy, but at no point in the conflict did U.S. strategy deviate from the predictions of socialization logic.[512] The U.S. strategy of decisive victory did not shift coincident with new administrations or follow leader specific expectations.[513] The shift towards a slower, smaller footprint approach was more a factor of changing technology and regional developments, than the characteristics of U.S. administrations, although these did play a role.[514] The continuity of strategy over three dissimilar administrations and international contexts demonstrates how perception of NSA type, was and continues to be, the primary driver of U.S. strategy towards al-Qaeda.

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[510] Theoretically the U.S. could institute a draft and invest heavily in destroying al-Qaeda affiliates, no matter how small and no matter where. This is not necessary in a decisive victory strategy.

[511] Unlike Israel's management strategy towards the PLO and Hamas which entails carrots and sticks, al-Qaeda is dealt with only through sticks. Unlike Hamas, they have low governance function and global dispersion makes it harder to target their leadership. Unlike the PLO there is no debate over the absolutism of their ideological drive. Contrasted with Israel's management of the PLO and Hamas and the U.S. pursuit of a peace treaty with the Taliban, the case of the U.S. versus al-Qaeda demonstrates how a state counters a type A NSA.

[512] Obama withdrew from Iraq due to personal convictions and domestic politics. He supported Arab Spring uprisings out of personal convictions. Both policies harmed the decisive victory strategy against al-Qaeda affiliates.

[513] For example, the Obama administration was generally viewed as more dovish than either the Bush administration or the Trump administration. However, it was "more vigilant" and willing to target terrorists in Pakistan than the Bush administration. (Dr. A interview 2019).

[514] Evolving technology, arguably endogenous to the demands of the war against al Qaeda, include the rapid and massive increase in drones, ISR and targeting capabilities, that were in their infancy in 2001 and have permeated every aspect of the U.S. armed forces by 2019. For a detailed history of drone advancement and integration into the U.S. military, see Sifton 2012, "A Brief History of Drones" and Herzog 2016, "Rise of the Drones." Regional developments of importance were the "Arab Spring" and the collapse of stable autocracies into failed states.

Cronin (2006) argued that U.S. strategy towards al-Qaeda stemmed from the initial shock of a high profile attack on the home soil and has been ad hoc and self-perpetuating.[515] She incorrectly predicted that the U.S. will abandon military measures out of frustration.[516] Cronin (2012) argued that U.S. strategy towards al-Qaeda stemmed from a misapplication of analogical reasoning that saw the U.S. treat the war on al-Qaeda as it did the Cold War.[517] This is inaccurate. U.S. strategy towards the Soviet Union rested primarily upon the assumption that although ideological, it was primarily pragmatically driven, valued its own survival and could be deterred without the threat of decisive victory. The U.S. does not see al-Qaeda as deterrable and pursues decisive victory.[518]

Engelhardt and others argue that bin Laden purposefully goaded the U.S. into an unwinnable war to bleed U.S. resources, prompting its collapse, comparing it to the popular but misguided view among jihadis that the Mujahedeen in Afghanistan caused the soviet Union's collapse. (Engelhart 2015). Statements from 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed suggest this is not the case, al-Qaeda did not expect a U.S. decisive victory strategy.[519]

The 2003 invasion of Iraq has been attributed to several causes. However, the decision was primarily part of a decisive victory strategy against al Qaeda. The U.S. perceived need for action against Saddam Hussein was propelled by Bush's view that Saddam could exponentially increase al-Qaeda's lethality if he were to provide it with weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). Bush's obsession with Saddam and strongly held democracy promotion mission accelerated and facilitated use of force as a (mistaken) means towards decisive victory over al-Qaeda in part by

[515] Cronin wrote: "At the highest levels, U.S. counterterrorism policy has been formulated organically and instinctively, in reaction to external stimuli or on the basis of unexamined assumptions, with a strong bias toward U.S. exceptionalism." (Cronin 2006, 47).
[516] Cronin (2006) writes: "The only outcome that is inevitable in the current U.S. policy is that militarily focused efforts will end, because of wasteful or counterproductive effort and eventual exhaustion." (Cronin 2006, 48).
[517] Cronin claimed "U.S. strategic thinking in counterterrorism has aligned comfortably with the sophisticated intellectual tradition that developed during the Cold War against the Soviet Union." (Cronin 2012, 207).
[518] While the information campaign to counter jihadist ideology is superficially comparable to the information campaign to counter communism, the later was discredited by showing its failure to be economically viable. Lack of material benefit does not discredit jihadism which is a spiritually driven ideology. Therefore, decisive victory against al-Qaeda necessitates direct military force while victory over Communism necessitated discrediting it as an ideology by outperforming it economically and containing it until it collapsed upon itself.
[519] Khalid Sheikh Mohammed was surprised by the severity of the U.S. response. (Mitchell 2016). Thiessen quoted Mitchell's account: "KSM looked at me and said, 'How was I supposed to know that cowboy George Bush would announce he wanted us 'dead or alive' and then invade Afghanistan to hunt us down?'" KSM explained, "al-Qaeda was stunned "by the ferocity and swiftness of George W. Bush's response." (French 2016). Dr. James Mitchell was hired by the CIA following 9/11 to help craft an interrogation program for captured top al-Qa'ida leaders.

taking out Saddam, but the propelling cause of this strategy was perception of al-Qaeda's type.[520] U.S. strategy was and continues to be formulated based on an assessment of al Qaeda's type, filtered through its constraints environment over the past two-decades.[521]

In the 14 years since Cronin predicted an end to U.S. military operations against al-Qaeda out of frustration, U.S. operations have become more sustainable, moving from surges in Iraq and Afghanistan to multilateral counterterrorism and partner capacity building. This slow strangulation strategy is the, "road map for how it [al Qaeda] will be reduced to the level of a minor threat" that Cronin claimed did not exist. (Cronin 2006, 48). The goal is total victory.[522]

Significant periods:

- **2001**: Invasion of Afghanistan shift from management to decisive victory.
- **2002**: Decision to invade Iraq, part of decisive victory strategy against al Qaeda.
- **2011**: 2011-present keeping al-Qaeda central down and managing affiliates.
- **2017**: Expanded targeting and loosened ROEs.

Al-Qaeda Central: 1996-2019

Strategy "Shift"[523]	Al-Qaeda Central Type	U.S. Constraints	My Argument	Competing arguments[524]
2001 Decisive Victory	A	Low/Medium	U.S. perceived al-Qaeda as highly ideologically driven with no governance function and leadership that proved difficult to target. Sought to annihilate a type A archetypal terrorist group.	1. Ad hoc strategy stemming from shock of 9/11. (Cronin 2006). 2. Emotions clouded U.S. judgement. Al-Qaeda intended this. (Engelhardt 2015)
2011 Decisive Victory (CT and high value targeting).	A	Low/medium	U.S. continued to see al-Qaeda as type A, requiring decisive victory. After killing bin Laden, the U.S. considered al-Qaeda central to have suffered a "knock-out blow" and henceforth considered it "of largely symbolic importance."[525]	1. ISR and aerial targeting advances gave the U.S. new capabilities.

Al-Qaeda Affiliates: 2003-2019

Strategy "Shift"	Al-Qaeda Affiliates Type	U.S. Constraints	My Argument	Competing arguments

[520] Cronin's assessment of the Iraq war as stemming from "confusion of the threat of al-Qaeda with a long-standing obsession with Saddam Hussein and regime change in Iraq," compliments my logic. (Cronin 2012, 210).
[521] Clifford May advocates for a coherent "theory of victory." (May 2019). U.S. strategy towards al-Qaeda is not ad hoc as May claims. Rather, it aimed to quickly crush al-Qaeda central and slowly defeat affiliates, as would be predicted of a minimally, and then moderately constrained state, that saw its opponent as a type A NSA.
[522] In a 2019 interview, Defense Secretary Mattis referred to defeating global terrorism (the fight against al-Qaeda since 9/11) as a question of "how do we organize with allies to suffocate it." (Fox News 2019, minute 7:50).
[523] I put "shift" in quotations because while fluctuating in intensity, operations and tactics, the U.S. never deviated from pursuing decisive victory.
[524] These are not always different from my logic. Sometimes multiple explanations can explain U.S. strategy.
[525] DNI James Clapper told the Senate "As long as we sustain the pressure on it, we judge that core al-Qaeda will be of largely symbolic importance to the global jihadist movement," "regional affiliates and, to a lesser extent, small cells and individuals will drive the global jihad agenda." (McCormick 2014).

2003 Decisive Victory	A	Low/Medium	U.S. saw al-Qaeda affiliates as archetypal terrorists. Invaded Iraq primarily as part of conflict with al-Qaeda.	1. Ad hoc strategy towards unintended rise of AQI after misguided invasion of Iraq.
2011 A "slow and steady" approach to decisive victory.	A	Medium	The U.S. reduced its ability to defeat al-Qaeda affiliates when it left Iraq and supported the ouster of dictators during the "Arab Spring." However, U.S. targeting capabilities improved.	1. Domestic politics. 2. Obama's worldview. 3. The "Arab Spring" increased difficulty for the U.S. to aid states to counter al-Qaeda.
2017 More kinetic approach, loosened ROEs	A	Medium	Success against ISIS showed effectiveness of loosened ROEs, lowering constraints.	1. President Trump is hawkish.

INTRODUCTION

Most scholarship on the phenomenon of terrorism and counterterrorism acknowledges poor metrics for state success. Scholarship focuses primarily on factors that foster terrorism; such as state weakness, capturable resources, ethnic strife; and terrorist tactic and strategy. (Crenshaw 1991, Kydd and Walter 2006, Abrahms, 2006, Richardson 2007 and Pape 2005).

State leaders, as with any opponent, state or nonstate, must ascertain what their opponent wants before they can devise strategy to counter them.[526] In some cases a clear-eyed assessment of the opponent's objectives can reveal a path to end conflict short of war.[527] U.S. leadership clearly understood and continues to recognize that al-Qaeda's strategic goals leave no bargaining space. They are highly ideologically driven to pursue an absolutist agenda through violence; an agenda that the U.S. cannot pacify through concessions short of national suicide. This leaves two choices; manage the conflict indefinitely or use all instruments of national power to crush al-Qaeda. With type B and C NSAs, a state can use the threat of decisive victory to induce them to moderate their demands and settle upon a pragmatic agenda for negotiation. This is not the case with type A NSA's like al-Qaeda. U.S. leaders recognized this from the outset.

Regarding U.S. strategy towards al-Qaeda since 9/11, "George W. Bush, Barack Obama, and Donald Trump have exhibited dramatic differences in rhetoric and style and some real changes in policy, but overall, there has been remarkable continuity in their efforts. Instead of sharp reversals, policy has evolved as circumstances have changed." (Jenkins 2017). The only shift was relatively minor—from large-scale military involvements to a lighter footprint. This

[526] Understanding the opponent's goals is paramount to understanding the bargaining space.
[527] Cronin notes that terrorists use terrorism as a tactic to achieve a strategic goal. She says that due to their asymmetrical weakness relative to the target state, they cannot confront their adversary directly and therefore they use terrorism to try to secure their objectives. (Cronin 2012, 194).

occurred as U.S. constraints grew as the conflict dragged on and the U.S. developed increasingly successful methods for both targeting key terrorist operatives and improved domestic security.

Prior to September 11, 2001, al-Qaeda was only minimally on the U.S. radar. The Bush administration originally saw al-Qaeda as a threat mainly to U.S. assets abroad and had no concept of "homeland security." (Riedel Interview 2019). After 9/11, the Bush administration saw the threat from al-Qaeda as existential.[528] U.S. strategy aimed to militarily crush al-Qaeda in Afghanistan and destroy it through the use of all elements of national power globally. This has not changed and is unlikely to in the future. (Dr. B.D. Interview 2019). Jenkins describes the original U.S. strategy as "not simply to punish the terrorists, as Clinton had done, but to disrupt, disable, and destroy al-Qaeda—it was to be a fight to the finish." (Jenkins 2017). While the U.S. never believed that they could deter al-Qaeda, there is the belief that it can deter potential recruits from joining it. (Dr. B.D. Interview 2019).

Though generally associated with Afghanistan, Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) is actually a global mission. (Grady 2012). The operational plan for OEF called for the utilization of American forces to orchestrate an operation in Afghanistan "that relied primarily on indigenous forces to attack al-Qaeda, as well as dismantle the Taliban regime that had sheltered it." The next iteration was "a decision to rely more heavily upon decapitation tactics, targeting special operations against individual cells and leaders, and ramping up drone attacks against al-Qaeda leaders in the frontier regions of Pakistan and in Yemen." This was helped by the development of increasingly effective ISR and targeting technology, primarily the Predator and Reaper UAS. "As American forces grew in Afghanistan, the growing deployment of drones was stunning, going from nine strikes over the first three years of the program (2004-7) to 205 over the succeeding three years (2008-2010)." (Cronin 2012, 203). The U.S. approach was mostly military. "Of the $1.121 trillion enacted in the so-called GWOT by 2010, about $1.1 trillion or 94 percent, went to the Department of Defense." (204).

[528] Jenkins describes the evolution of U.S. thinking regarding international terrorism: "The worst terrorist attacks in the 1970s killed tens of people. Escalating terrorist attacks in the 1980s raised this to the hundreds; by the 1990s, attacks of this scale were not uncommon. On 9/11, terrorists killed thousands. Extrapolation suggested that future terrorists would escalate to weapons of mass destruction to kill tens or even hundreds of thousands. The terrorist threat was seen as existential." (Jenkins 2017).

In line with the socialization logic, U.S. decapitation strikes aimed to kill a; Qaeda leadership not as a demonstration of the ability to defeat them, but as part of the optimal strategy to annihilate an archetypal terrorist group. This has not changed since 2001, and U.S. leadership intended that to be the case. No termination date was set for existing authorizations on the use of force against al-Qaeda set forth in the 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF). This suggests that the conflict was seen by the U.S. at the time as generational and open-ended. (CRS 2018, 21). This language gave the executive branch authority to prosecute the GWOT without needing to seek, obtain and reobtain congressional approval, reducing internal constraints as socialization logic suggests. This remains U.S. official policy as of 2020.[529] Decisive victory is not pursued by military means alone. The 9/11 commission advised "the use of all elements of national power: diplomacy, intelligence, covert action, law enforcement, economic policy, foreign aid, public diplomacy and homeland defense. (9/11 Commission 2004, 364). Taken together, along with an information campaign and efforts to build partner capacity, this comprehensive approach, though not always followed, constitutes a decisive victory strategy because it aimed to decisively defeat al-Qaeda through an approach that would create an effect greater than the sum of its parts.[530]

U.S. strategy towards al-Qaeda central succeeded in defeating it as a salient threat. U.S. policy will likely continue to be to prevent its recuperation in Afghanistan as part of the preconditions for a peace treaty with the Taliban. U.S. strategy towards al-Qaeda affiliates will likely continue to seek their annihilation through building partner capacity, ISR, high value targeting, operational raids and strikes, and disrupting finances. The U.S. will also continue efforts to enhance homeland security.

Pre-September 11, 2001

[529] "At an October 2017 hearing, Defense Secretary Mattis and Secretary of State Rex Tillerson argued that the 2001 AUMF provides all legal authority necessary to conduct ongoing campaigns against these groups. In response to calls by some Members of Congress to amend or repeal the 2001 AUMF and replace it with a new AUMF, Secretary Tillerson said that 'any new authorization should not be time constrained' and that 'a new AUMF must not be geographically restricted.'" (Thomas 2018, 22).

[530] I say not always followed because, as Cronin 2012 (204) points out, the military effort took far greater priority than non-military initiatives. Furthermore, the U.S. invasion of Iraq did much to alienate coalition building efforts that had succeeded in Afghanistan prior to 2003. U.S. strategy was intended to be "a coalition strategy that includes Muslim nations as partners in its development and implementation." (9/11 Commission 2004, 364). The Bush administration's unilateralism in its invasion of Iraq went against and decidedly harmed its global counterterrorism and counter al-Qaeda effort.

The key take-aways from this section are that prior to 9/11, the U.S. saw al-Qaeda as an archetypal terrorist organization but did not implement a strategy of decisive victory because it did not see it as especially dangerous relative to other threats. However, preconceived views of al Qaeda's type from a decade of increasing familiarity with the organization, allowed the U.S. to immediately decide upon a decisive victory strategy post-9/11.

In 1988, bin Laden formally established al-Qaeda from a network of veterans of the Afghan insurgency against the Soviet Union. (Thomas 2018, 1). Its avowed purpose was to "evict the United states" from the Middle East and to replace *takfiri* (lapsed Muslim) governments (those seen as secular or pro-Western) "with Islamic fundamentalist regimes." (National Security Council 2000, 3).

The U.S. discovered in retrospect that al-Qaeda was behind some high-profile attacks on the U.S. in the early 1990s.[531] Richard Clark, National Coordinator for Security, Infrastructure Protection and Counterterrorism, noted this in a Clinton administration strategy paper in 2000. Declassified in 2005, it noted that the U.S. only attributed these attacks to al-Qaeda in the late 1990s, demonstrating its unfamiliarity with the threat of a global Islamic terrorist network.

Originally headquartered in Sudan, with training camps in Afghanistan, U.S. diplomatic pressure led to Bin-Laden's eviction from Sudan and rebasing in Afghanistan in late 1996. Throughout the late 1990s, al-Qaeda continued to focus on targeting the U.S. and partnered regimes, Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

In 2005 the New York Times broke a story claiming that "State Department analysts warned the Clinton administration in July 1996 that Osama bin Laden's move to Afghanistan would give him an even more dangerous haven as he sought to expand radical Islam 'well beyond the Middle East,' but the government chose not to deter the move, newly declassified documents show." The State Department assessment, written July 18, 1996, after bin Laden was thought to be relocating to Afghanistan, said Afghanistan would make an "ideal haven" for bin Laden to run his financial networks and attract support from radicalized Muslims. It stated that

[531] Early attacks included an attack on U.S. personnel in Yemen in 1992, the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, a 1993 attack on U.S. forces in Mogadishu, a plot to destroy the New York-New Jersey subway, a Manila cell plot to bomb U.S. airliners, a series of attacks in 1994, including a failed attempt to kill the Egyptian president. In 1995 al-Qaeda carried out a bombing in Riyadh that killed five Americans. (CNN Staff 2011).

"even a bin Laden on the move can retain the capability to support individuals and groups who have the motive and wherewithal to attack U.S. interests almost world-wide." This suggests that the State Department saw al-Qaeda as a significant threat.

Tom Fitton, president of Judicial Watch, said the released declassified material reveals "that the Clinton administration knew the broad outlines in 1996 of bin Laden's capabilities and his intent, and unfortunately, almost nothing was done about it." According to Michael Scheuer, who led the CIA unit that tracked bin Laden from 1996-1999, "the State Department documents reflected a keen awareness of the danger posed by Mr. bin Laden's relocation." In a 2004 book Scheuer argued that many officials in the CIA's operational side thought they would have a better chance to kill bin Laden in Afghanistan than in Sudan because Sudan's government protected him. (Lichtblau 2005).[532] This suggests that the CIA had substantial influence on U.S. strategy with the goal of making al-Qaeda leadership more targetable and then killing Bin Laden.[533]

The New York Times reported "before 1996, Mr. bin Laden was regarded more as a financier of terrorism than a mastermind. But the State Department assessment, which came a year before he publicly urged Muslims to attack the United States, indicated that officials suspected he was taking a more active role, including in the bombings in June 1996 that killed 19 members American soldiers at the Khobar Towers in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia." (Lichtblau 2005). Bin Laden issued his first directive to attack the U.S. as a fatwā on August 23, 1996 entitled "Declaration of War against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places."

On May 26, 1998, bin Laden, Ayman Al-Zawahiri—bin Laden's lieutenant—and military adviser Mohammad Atef, issued a public declaration of war against the U.S. Within three months of the declaration, al-Qaeda bombed U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania on August 7, 1998 killing 224 people, including 12 Americans. (CNN Staff 2002). A State Department spokesman said that it was not until after the embassy bombings in 1998 that bin Laden was

[532] Some critics accused the Clinton administration of ignoring the threat posed by bin Laden while he was in Sudan. They have pointed to claims by Sudanese officials that they offered to turn him over to the U.S. before expelling him in 1996. Clinton administration diplomats adamantly denied receiving this offer. The 9/11 commission concluded that it had "not found any reliable evidence to support the Sudanese claim." (Lichtblau 2005).
[533] The CIA's goal was not to make leadership targetable to use force and a demonstration of the ability to kill them in order to socialize moderation. Instead it was a step towards decisive victory. This is the course of action that my logic would suggest a state take against a group it considers a type A archetypal terrorist organization. The poor implementation of this strategy suggests poor coordination between U.S. bureaucracies, likely due to insufficient government attention to the threat pre-9/11.

recognized as a critical threat. “Yes, he was a bad guy, he was a threat, but he was one of many, and by no means of the prominence that he later came to be.” (Lichtblau 2005).

In 1998, the U.S. sought bin Laden’s extradition to either the U.S. or a third party such as Saudi Arabia. The Taliban rejected this. According to Riedel, the Clinton administration had a good shot at killing bin Laden in a 1998 guided missile attack, but bin Laden changed his plans at the last minute avoiding the attack. (Riedel Interview 2019).[534] President Clinton himself claimed that he had the opportunity to kill bin Laden in 1998 but called off the attack due to the potential for civilian casualties. This suggests that the U.S. did not consider bin Laden a critical enough threat to override constraints on causing civilian harm. (Muskal 2014).

A declassified State Department cable from August 23 1998, showed U.S. acknowledgement that al-Qaeda is intent on attacking the it. Furthermore, unlike the Taliban leader, bin Laden was called an “international terrorist.” The document claims the U.S. has “reliable intelligence that the bin Laden network was actively seeking WMDs - including chemical weapons - for use against U.S. interests.” (State Department 2004, Doc. 3). The fear that al-Qaeda sought WMDs factored heavily into Bush’s post 9/11 planning to invade Iraq.

The State Department viewed al-Qaeda as ideologically driven. Secretary of State Madeline Albright was quoted as saying about Bin-Laden’s attacks on the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, that “they were not political, they were not religious, they were murder.” (Doc. 3). The emphatic denial of a political goal suggests that the U.S. viewed bin Laden as having absolutist ideologically driven goals.

Bolstering this perception, the document cites the creation of “an Islamic front” by the bin Laden network called “the World Islamic Front for Jihad against the Jews and the Crusaders.” It threatened continuous attacks by various Islamic groups against the West. Pre-9/11 the U.S. saw this threat as dispersed but controlled by a single network with many affiliates. It noted that the central network “articulated a clear and violent anti-U.S. agenda.”

In the year preceding September 11, 2001, there was significant worry over the threat posed by al Qaeda. In 2000, CIA director George Tenet testified to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence that he considered bin Laden the “current greatest single threat to U.S. national

[534] Bruce Riedel was part of a U.S. delegation that met with Taliban leadership in 1998.

security." Stapleton Roy, Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research also testified that bin-Laden and his network were "the primary threat to U.S. interests at home and abroad." (Senate Intelligence Committee Hearing 2000).

The January 25, 2001 Clarke memo was the first counterterrorism strategy paper of the Bush administration. Noticeably it did not suggest any plan for decisive military victory or even a military-centric approach to al-Qaeda. It asks if the threat posed by al-Qaeda is first order or "a 'chicken little' overreaching" asking if "we can proceed without major new initiatives and by handling this issue in a more routine manner?" It also asks if the FY02 budget should continue funding increases "for state and CIA programs designed to implement the al Qida strategy?" (Clarke 2001).[535] This suggests that the U.S. did not yet see al-Qaeda as a significant threat since it was not designated as a first order issue despite the relative apex of U.S. security and relative power following the end of the Cold War, the end of the Gulf War and preceding the rise of Russia and China as potential peer adversaries. Clarke does argue that "we would make a major error if we underestimated the challenge al-Qida poses." (Clarke 2001).[536]

Dan Marcus, 9/11 Commission general counsel, testified that prior to September 11, 2001, U.S. strategy sought to contain al-Qaeda, not to defeat it:

> The goal was to roll back al Qaida over a period of three to five years, reducing it eventually to a rump group like others formerly feared but now largely defunct terrorist organizations in the 1980s. Quote, "continued anti-Al Qaida operations at the current level will prevent some attacks, but will not seriously attrite their ability to plan and conduct attacks," Clarke and his staff wrote.

[535] The declassified Strategy for Eliminating the Threat from the Jihadist Networks of al Qida: Status and Prospects, was an attachment developed by the Clinton administration and written in December 2000, linked to the Clarke Memo, which was written by Clinton's counterterrorism coordinator Richard Clarke. The other attachment, known as the Delenda Plan, officially called Pol-Mil Plan for al-Qida is a 1998 paper that remains classified.

[536] The U.S. did step up disruption efforts and efforts to build partner counterterror capacity after the East Africa Embassy bombings in 1998. Part of this was bolstering the Northern Alliance capacity through the provision of intelligence for them to be able to counter al Qaeda, something they were unable to achieve. The U.S. also began flying their first unmanned sorties using the Predator UAV operating out of Uzbekistan, but these were stopped. This was before UAVs could shoot at the targets while conducting surveillance. Furthermore, the CIA teams were trained and authorized to use force to apprehend al-Qaeda commanders. The U.S. adopted a multilateral approach to countering al-Qaeda finance but lacked sufficient actionable intelligence to be very effective in this regard. The U.S. also stepped up defensive measures to protect U.S. installations abroad. (NSC 2000, 7,8).

Pre-9/11 2001, al-Qaeda was not seen as an urgent threat but was seen as an undeterrable NSA that could not be negotiated with. Clarke criticized pre-9/11 strategy as unable to deny or defeat al-Qaeda.[537]

Despite blasting the DoD and the Bush administration for not taking steps to counter al-Qaeda, Clarke is clear that there was no strategy to pursue military decisive victory, suggesting that offensive denial was the strategy pre-9/11. Gorton asked, "there was no recommendation, on your part or anyone else's part, that we declare war and attempt to invade Afghanistan prior to 9/11?" Clarke responded, "That's right." (9/11 Commission Eighth Public Hearing, 2004). On the Senate floor on March 26, 2004, Senator Mitch McConnell (R-KY) asked, "how could the Bush administration be to blame in 8 months for the previous administration's failure over 8 years to truly declare war on al-Qaida?" (Congressional Record: March 25, 2004, Senate). In a 2006 interview, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice told the New York Post, "We were not left a comprehensive strategy to fight al-Qaida," adding that, "Nobody organized this country or the international community to fight the terrorist threat that was upon us until 9/11." (National Security Archive 2006).

Testifying before the Senate, Rice discussed the U.S. proposed strategy towards al-Qaeda following the attacks on the USS Cole in 2000. "We simply believed that the best approach was to put in place a plan that was going to eliminate this threat, not respond to it, tit-for-tat." Rice did at the time acknowledge that strategy would need to be decisive victory, but both the Clinton and Bush administrations' actions suggest a lack of urgency pre-9/11. (9/11 Commission Ninth Public Hearing, 2004).[538]

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[537] Clarke laid out a proposed agenda for urgent action by the new Administration… "Rice and Hadley told us that, although the Clinton administration had worked very hard on the Al Qaida program, its policies on Al Qaida, quote, 'had run out of gas,' and they therefore set about developing a new presidential directive and a new, comprehensive policy on terrorism.' Clarke testified that the pre 9/11 counter al-Qaeda approach waned in prioritization: It slowed it down enormously, by months. First of all, the deputies committee didn't meet urgently in January or February. When the deputies committee did meet, it took the issue of Al Qaida as part of a cluster of policy issues… and launched on a series of deputies meetings extending over several months to address Al Qaida in the context of all of those inter-related issues. That process probably ended, I think in July of 2001. So we were ready for a principals meeting in July. But the principals calendar was full and then they went on vacation, many of them in August, so we couldn't meet in August, and therefore the principals met in September." (9/11 Commission Eighth Hearing, 2004).

[538] Former President Bill Clinton disputed Rice's assessment. In a 2006 interview with Mike Wallace, Clinton said of bin Laden "I worked hard to try to kill him. I authorized a finding for the CIA to kill him. We contracted with people to kill him. I got closer to killing him than anybody has gotten since… When I failed, I left a comprehensive anti-terror strategy and the best guy in the country, Dick Clarke, who got demoted… The entire military was against sending Special Forces into Afghanistan and refueling by helicopter. And no one thought we could do it otherwise, because we could not get the CIA and the FBI to certify that Al Qaida was responsible while I was president."

High Ideological Drive

Even prior to 9/11, the U.S. understood al-Qaeda's primary drive to relentlessly attack the U.S. and other non-fundamentalist Muslim nations with nothing but their enemies' conversion to Islam able to placate them. This makes al-Qaeda one of the clearest examples of a group driven at its essence by an absolutist ideology. The mechanism by which the most highly ideologically driven groups are deemed impossible to deter is the perception that no material threat can override their pursuit of ideological goals. Secretary Kerry noted this in a report to Congress about the 2001 effort to kill bin Laden.[539]

Bin Laden was clear in his intentions to attack the U.S. out of ideological commitment to jihad. His and Zawahiri's 1998 fatwa is replete with religiously driven calls to wage holy war, with geo-political grievances constituting an afterthought to this core message.[540] The absolutist call "to ensure that no one but Allah is worshipped," is repeated by al-Qaeda throughout its conflict with the U.S. and it's the foundation of their ideology today. It also permeates their English language recruiting magazine "Inspire."

Bush noted al-Qaeda's absolutist ideological drive ten days after 9/11 in an address to a joint session of Congress. He stated: al-Qaeda's "goal is remaking the world and imposing its radical beliefs on people everywhere."[541] The writers of the 9/11 Commission noted al-Qaeda's ideology as a motivating factor in U.S. strategy, claiming that what the U.S. is fighting "is the threat posed by *Islamist* [italicized in source] terrorism—especially the al-Qaeda network, its

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(National Security Archives 2006). In reality, the Clinton administration did not formulate a coherent plan for defeating al-Qaeda. General Franks told Bush and Rumsfeld in the days following 9/11 that "the U.S. military did not have an off-the-shelf plan to eliminate the al-Qaeda threat in Afghanistan." He stated that "the existing Infinite Resolve options did not amount to such a plan." (9/11 Commission 2004, 332). Also, "combating al-Qaeda was not a major focus of the 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review, which was in the final draft stage in the days prior to the [9/11] attacks." (Collins 2015).

[539] Kerry stated: "Bin Laden expected to die. His last will and testament, written on December 14, reflected his fatalism. 'Allah commended to us that when death approaches any of us that we make a bequest to parents and next of kin and to Muslims as a whole,' he wrote, according to a copy of the will that surfaced later and is regarded as authentic. 'Allah bears witness that the love of jihad and death in the cause of Allah has dominated my life and the verses of the sword permeated every cell in my heart, and fight the pagans all together as they fight you all together. How many times did I wake up to find myself reciting this holy verse!'" (Kerry 2009).

[540] The first paragraph reads: "Fight and slay the pagans wherever ye find them, seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every stratagem (of war)"; and peace be upon our Prophet, Muhammad Bin-'Abdallah, who said: I have been sent with the sword between my hands to ensure that no one but Allah is worshipped." (FAS 1998).

[541] In his September 20, 2001 speech, Bush contrasted groups that seek material welfare with al Qaeda's apocalyptic drive: "Al-Qaeda is to terror what the mafia is to crime. But its goal is not making money; its goal is remaking the world -- and imposing its radical beliefs on people everywhere." (Whitehouse Archives 2001).

affiliates, and its ideology." The Commission directly stated that al-Qaeda sees America as the "front of all evil, the 'head of the snake,' and it must be converted or destroyed." It noted that this "is not a position with which Americans can bargain or negotiate." There is no room for dialogue, "it can only be destroyed or utterly isolated." (9/11 Commission 2004, 362). The Commission also stated that "the small percentage of Muslims who are fully committed to Usama Bin Laden's version of Islam are impervious to persuasion." (9/11 Commission 2004, 375). U.S. leadership clearly did not see bargaining with al-Qaeda as possible due to their absolutist ideological drive.

In a 2002 letter to America, bin Laden lays out several geopolitical grievances from support for "Jews" to supporting Middle Eastern leaders he sees as lapsed from following Sharia. Most importantly when trying to ascertain whether the group is driven by achievable political goals that the U.S. might prefer not to accept, but could bargain over, it is necessary to ascertain which demands are geopolitical—perhaps highly undesirable but not outright infeasible—and which can never be agreed to. Removing U.S. troops from the Arabian Peninsula falls under the first category. The demand to withdraw support from allies would be a major blow to the U.S. power, but even that falls under a political demand short of complete capitulation of national sovereignty.[542] Wholesale American conversion to Islam is clearly an unreasonable demand, it is a fundamental negation of national sovereignty. This was bin Laden's primary demand: "The first thing that we are calling you to is Islam." (The Guardian Staff 2002).

Bush continued to recognize al-Qaeda as ideologically driven following U.S. victory over Taliban rule. The 2002 U.S. National Security Strategy describes al-Qaeda as a "terrorist enemy whose avowed tactics are wanton destruction and the targeting of innocents; whose so-called soldiers seek martyrdom and death and whose most potent protection is statelessness." (Bush 2002). In this sentence, Bush notes al-Qaeda's ideological drive, and cites low governance function and dispersion as reducing the U.S. ability to inflict harm.

In a June 2002 speech at West Point, Bush stated that the U.S. could not rely on concepts such as deterrence and containment to deal with terrorists who are willing to die for their cause. He again noted how al-Qaeda's lack of governance function made deterrence impossible,

[542] The U.S. could theoretically be compelled to acquiesce to these geopolitical terms, however, al-Qaeda lacked and continues to lack the military power to do so.

stating: “the promise of massive retaliation against nations -- means nothing against shadowy terrorist networks with no nation or citizens to defend.” (White House Archives 2002).

The U.S. assessment did not change, even into Bush’s second term. This is important because the al-Qaeda leadership had suffered heavy losses and the U.S. was embroiled in two conflicts. War weariness at home, increased international displeasure and significant military achievements did not sway the U.S. from pursuing decisive victory. The unchanging U.S. perception of al-Qaeda as a type A NSA best explains the continuation of this strategy despite changed domestic and external circumstances.[543]

The captured Zawahiri-Zarqawi correspondence further entrenched the perception of al-Qaeda as an archetypal terrorist organization. The 2005 letter from al-Qaeda second in command Zawahiri’s to al-Qaeda in Iraq leader Zarqawi, shed light on al-Qaeda’s strategy in an internal memo not meant for an external audience. As such, its capture influenced U.S. analysts’ and policymakers’ view of al-Qaeda’s type more than public statements. Zarqawi and Zawahiri agree on the indivisible ideological drive to fight the West yet disagree over tactics.[544] It also shed light on the ideological enthusiasm of its rank-and-file: “One of the most important things facing the leadership is the enthusiasm of the supporters, and especially of the energetic young men who are burning to make the religion victorious.” (9) (Zawahiri, translated by CTC 2005).[545]

Al-Qaeda’s absolutist ideological drive was not lost on academics who influenced policy. Emerson testified before Congress that al-Qaeda was driven primarily by an absolutist ideology that superseded pragmatic goals.[546]

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[543] In a 2006 speech, Bush reiterated his view of al-Qaeda as driven primarily by an absolutist ideological agenda. He stated: “They are at war against us because they hate everything America stands for -- and we stand for freedom. We stand for people to worship freely.” Bush also referenced what he saw as al Qaeda’s ideologically driven territorial ambitions: “We know they know we stand in their way of their ambitions in the Middle East, their ambitions to spread their hateful ideology as a caliphate from Spain to Indonesia. (Whitehouse Archives 2006).

[544] Zawahiri warned Zarqawi that killing Muslims in pursuit of jihad was counterproductive.

[545] Zawahiri wrote: “The Mujahedeen must not have their mission end with the expulsion of the Americans from Iraq, and then lay down their weapons, and silence the fighting zeal… Their ongoing mission is to establish an Islamic state, and defend it, and for every generation to hand over the banner to the one after it until the Hour of Resurrection… We must maintain this support (of Muslim masses in Iraq) as best we can, and we should strive to increase it, on the condition that striving for that support does not lead to any concession in the laws of the Sharia… The victory of Islam and the establishment of a caliphate in the manner of the Prophet will not be achieved except through jihad.” (4)

[546] Emerson testified that “al-Qaeda must be seen in the context of what drives it - an extremist ideology based on a puritanical interpretation of Islam… this ideology is intrinsically hostile to secular democracies that value pluralism, separation of church and state, free speech, minority rights, and freedom of religion.” (House Intelligence

Emerson critiqued the U.S. government as being too coy about proclaiming Islamist ideology as behind the motivations of al-Qaeda under both Bush and Obama's leadership. While this has been a common critique from the right, U.S. strategy has targeted al-Qaeda militants with force and not carrots or any attempt to negotiate, suggesting that they understood, and continue to understand the type of opponent they are dealing with yet for strategic reasons do not wish to alienate the Islamic world or help al-Qaeda in their recruitment narrative of the U.S. as being "at war with Islam. Bergan testified: "We are not going to influence bin Laden. He is irreconcilable. What we are interested in is basically getting the Muslim world to change its opinion about the United States." (115).

Low Governance Function

All of the experts interviewed for this chapter agree that al-Qaeda had no governance function and has never desired any. U.S. Army intelligence analyst Dr. B.D. noted that the U.S. saw this as a fundamental difference between al-Qaeda and ISIS and that al-Qaeda saw the governance of territory as a strategic vulnerability for ISIS. (Dr. B.D. Interview 2019).

Low Leadership Targetability

The U.S. failed to kill or capture bin Laden for over a decade. His second in command, al Zawahiri remains at large. The U.S. perceived al-Qaeda to be a "rigidly hierarchical organization" on 9/11. Today al-Qaeda is seen as "flat, decentralized, and geographically dispersed." (Thomas 2018, 3). The view of al-Qaeda as hierarchical in 2001 made an invasion of Afghanistan a reasonable proposition for dismantling the group and increasing the U.S. ability to target its leadership. The U.S. came close to annihilating al-Qaeda leadership in December 2001 at Tora Bora. The Tora Bora operation was a tactical win for the U.S. in terms of hundreds of al-

Committee testimony 2008, 85). He continued: "In the eyes of al Qaeda, our most unforgivable crime is that we support un-Islamic systems of government at home, abroad, and especially in the Muslim world. This is a direct transgression against God because, according to their ideology, sovereignty in governance can belong only to God." (67). Furthermore, "unless we are prepared to accept severe restrictions on free speech, legitimize terrorist groups, allow the introduction of Islamic law in the U.S., prohibit any criticism of Islam, and propose the destruction of Israel, nothing we do will satisfy the 'grievances' of the radical Islamic believers." (97). Finally, Emerson expressed his view that what al-Qaeda and other Islamist groups like Hamas had in common was "the transcendence of radical Islamic theology over self-interest, over civil interests, over any national interests, over any economic interests." He noted that "15 of the 9/11 hijackers came from families that had wealth considered to be evaluated more than $10 million in value… it shows that wealthy families produced kids who carried out the 9/11 attacks. So that transcendence of radical Islamic theology is what we were dealing with." (106).

Qaeda fighters being killed, however, strategically it was a loss. Bin Laden and many top al-Qaeda leaders escaped to Pakistan where they became far harder to target. From 2004 onward al-Qaeda franchises emerged globally, leading analysts to view al-Qaeda central in Afghanistan and Pakistan and al-Qaeda affiliates as distinct enemies in the GWOT.

Start of the Conflict

Immediately prior to 9/11, "most U.S. policymakers concluded that the threat from al-Qaeda was waning and peripheral." (Cronin 2012, 193). This changed post- 9/11. On September 20 2001, Bush unambiguously stated that the U.S. sought decisive victory. He stated: "Our war on terror begins with al Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated…. Americans should not expect one battle, but a lengthy campaign, unlike any other we have ever seen." (Whitehouse Archives 2001). In a 2009 report to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Senator Kerry stated that the war in Afghanistan "had been conceived as a swift campaign with a single objective: defeat the Taliban and destroy al-Qaeda by capturing or killing bin Laden and other key leaders." (Kerry 2009).

While pursuing decisive victory, the U.S. sought to improve is inadequate national security apparatus. This manifest in streamlined intelligence and law enforcement agencies and increased authorities.[547]

With high international support from NATO, the U.N. Security Council, and Russia, and high domestic support, the U.S. was relatively unconstrained and was able to pursue the optimal strategy of decisively defeating al-Qaeda central in Afghanistan while aggressively targeting its finance networks and international affiliates. Immediately following 9/11, the U.S. considered

[547] The lack of domestic organization was evident in the difficulty law enforcement agencies had getting information about potentially terrorist linked detainees in Immigration and Naturalization Service custody. The U.S. quickly undertook efforts to rectify this. "A senior al-Qaeda detainee has stated that U.S. government efforts after the 9/11 attacks to monitor the American homeland, including review of Muslims' immigration files and deportation of nonpermanent residents, forced al-Qaeda to operate less freely in the United States." The 9/11 Commission reports that collecting and sharing intelligence between the intelligence and law enforcement communities "was not a priority before 9/11." Less than a week after 9/11 the Bush administration enacted the Patriot Act to change this. (9/11 Commission 2004, 328). Other defensive measures included shoring up the U.S. homeland, especially airline and border security, and "$33 billion in grant funding for homeland security assistance to states, specified urban areas and critical infrastructures (such as ports and rail systems)." (Cronin 2012, 202). Increased public vigilance also played a significant role. Despite this large price tag, this does not suggest a defensive denial based strategy. Homeland security paled in comparison to the amount spent on offensive actions. This contrasts with the more constrained Israel, which spends a significant portion of its defense budget on defensive denial systems.

targeting states that supported terrorism to be part of the decisive victory strategy.[548] This would manifest in the decision to invade Iraq.

The U.S. actively sought the international support it would need. The 9/11 Commission stated that "every aspect of U.S. counterterrorism strategy relies on international cooperation. (9/11 Commission 2004, 379). Support from Pakistan was especially important due to its strategic location sharing a porous border with Afghanistan that quickly became a safe haven for al-Qaeda and Taliban terrorists in the aftermath of the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan. Pakistan originally agreed to U.S. requests, but its support was selective at best.[549]

2001-2011: DECISIVE VICTORY

2001-2003: Pursuing Victory Over al-Qaeda Central

The pre-9/11 draft presidential directive on al-Qaeda, National Security Presidential Directive 9, evolved to be titled "Defeating the Terrorist Threat to the United States." This directive incorporated the President's determination not to distinguish between al-Qaeda and the Taliban, something that I argue in the previous chapter caused the administration to misperceive the Taliban's type in December 2001 and therefore pursue a suboptimal strategy.[550] (9/11 Commission 2004, 333). Phase three of OEF states that the U.S. would carry out "decisive operations" and use "all elements of national power to topple the Taliban and defeat al-Qaeda." (9/11 Commission 2004, 337).

Bush's undersecretary of Defense for Policy, Douglas Feith noted how Bush differed from previous administrations al Qaeda strategies by being the first to see the U.S. as at war. "He [Bush] decided that the U.S. would respond not with the FBI and U.S. attorneys, but with our armed forces and every instrument of U.S. national power." (Banusiewicz 2004). He thought that

[548] Defense Secretary Rumsfeld urged President Bush and his war council to "think broadly about who might have harbored the attackers, including Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Sudan and Iran." Rumsfeld "wondered aloud how much evidence the United States would need in order to deal with these countries" and discussed the timelines necessary for major strikes. (9/11 Commission 2004, 330).

[549] Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage secured a promise by Pakistan to undertake seven steps that the U.S. demanded from it on September 13, 2001. These steps included stopping al-Qaeda at the border, eliminating logistical support for Osama bin Laden, giving the U.S. access to Pakistani air space and intelligence, and cutting support for the Taliban. Pakistan quickly agreed, yet following the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan on October 7, 2001, Pakistan failed to live up to its commitments. (9/11 Commission 2004, 331).

[550] Prior to December 2001, the U.S. strategy of decisive victory was optimal towards the Taliban and al Qaeda. After the December 6 surrender, the U.S. failed to recognize that its strategy of decisive force succeeded in socializing the Taliban. It was at this point that the continuation of decisive victory became suboptimal against the Taliban, but still optimal against al-Qaeda which had not moderated.

"the decision to depart from past practice was 'momentous,' and that it showed proper comprehension of the problem… It looks obvious in retrospect… but that's often the case with grand insights. At the time the president decided to respond to 9/11 by going to war, he was departing radically and boldly from many years of a different policy." (Banusiewicz 2004).

Feith described the U.S. strategy for confronting the threat as "to organize and help lead international efforts to deny terrorist groups systematically what they need to operate and survive." This includes eliminating "safe havens, leaders, finances, ideological support and access to targets, and weapons especially weapons of mass destruction." While at first this might sound like a denial strategy, the ultimate goal was decisive victory; this was the desired outcome of denying al-Qaeda what they need to survive, not what they need to attack. This strategy involved kinetic operations and an information campaign to counter the jihadist ideology. The U.S. knew that only this information step could totally defeat al-Qaeda.[551]

Interestingly, domestic constraints actually contributed to setting the U.S. on an offense oriented strategy in the war on terror because democracy and individual liberties kept the U.S. from implementing what would be the necessary policies if the U.S. were to pursue defensive denial as a management strategy against al-Qaeda terrorists.[552] Regarding this, Feith stated:

> If we tried to do so we would have to clamp down drastically across America, intruding grossly on the privacy rights and other civil liberties of Americans. As terrorist attacks occurred, U.S. officials would continually be under pressure to move toward police-state tactics to sacrifice our freedom and change our way of life… Given that our aim is to preserve our society's liberties, we have no alternative to a strategy of offense… In other words, we concluded that in dealing with the terrorists we had either to change the way we live or change the way they live. (Banusiewicz 2004).

Within about two months of the start of combat operations in Afghanistan, U.S. and partnered forces had killed or captured about a quarter of known al-Qaeda leaders, including Mohammed Atef. (9/11 Commission 2004, 338). However, the U.S. was unable to successfully target al-Qaeda's top two leaders, bin Laden and al Zawahiri.

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[551] Feith stated: "The war on terrorism will never end if all we do is disrupt and attack terrorist networks, because while we are doing so, new terrorists are being recruited and indoctrinated -- probably faster than anyone on our side can capture or kill them." (Banusiewicz 2004).

[552] Jenkins claims that, "at home, the Bush administration rounded up suspects, obliged non-citizen, military-age males from Muslim countries to register, and initiated electronic surveillance that bypassed the rules established in the 1970s. These efforts were criticized as ineffectual, illegal, and contrary to American values." (Jenkins 2017).

December 2001: Lost Opportunity at Tora Bora

From the October 7, 2001 launch of OEF until December 6, 2001 when U.S. troops and Afghan tribesmen surrounded bin Laden and hundreds of his diehard supporters, the U.S. coalition had rapidly decimated the Taliban and killed hundreds of al-Qaeda fighters. One of the primary goals was to kill or capture bin Laden and in December 2001, he seemed to be in the crosshairs. The U.S. failure to devote more forces and take military leadership of this highly important raid is hotly debated. A decisive victory strategy by a relatively unconstrained state would suggest that the U.S. devote far greater resources at this critical moment.

According to Bergen, the U.S. military was weak and risk averse pre-9/11. This impacted the way it chose to operate immediately following 9/11. CENTCOM Commander General Tommy Franks was not the caliber of general who would be in that important of a position today. He lacked the quality and intelligence of Petraeus or McChrystal. Upper echelon command was risk averse. This risk aversion led the U.S. to use mainly CIA which was a less risk averse institution. (Bergen interview 2019).[553]

One common position is that the U.S., drawing lessons from the Soviet experience in Afghanistan, and Operation Just Cause in Panama, thought the best route to decisive victory was with a light military footprint. This approach left the U.S. with inadequate forces.[554] In a 2011 interview, Rumsfeld was asked why the U.S. didn't deploy more troops to close off bin Laden's escape route from Tora Bora, instead of relying on Afghan forces. Rumsfeld said he agreed with the decision to use fewer than 100 U.S. forces. “Rumsfeld indicated that while U.S. personnel weren't at Tora Bora in large numbers, an awe-inspiring amount of U.S. ordnance was used there.” Rumsfeld “appeared to be clinging to the so-called Rumsfeld Doctrine of relying on air power instead of ground forces.” Rumsfeld called the “notion that more U.S. troops would have improved the chances of capturing bin Laden ‘speculation.’” (James 2011). This suggests that the decision to have a small footprint—the decision potentially responsible for Bin Laden’s escape—was not a deviation from a decisive victory strategy; rather, it was an operational error.

[553] For example, when then Colonel Mattis pushed the 7th Marine Regiment to take the offensive in Afghanistan in November 2001, it was on his own initiative, not on directives from higher up. (Bergen interview 2019).
[554] Commander of coalition forces in Afghanistan, General Franks, explained his reasoning for not sending more U.S. soldiers to take on al-Qaeda’s hard core: “My decision not to add American troops to the Tora Bora region was influenced, as Hank [Crumpton] reports, by several factors: The comparative light footprint of coalition troops in theater, and the fact that these troops were committed to operations ongoing across Afghanistan.” (Bergen 2011, 73).

The U.S. was pursuing decisive victory, but its small footprint approach in Afghanistan, derived not from the inability to justify a larger deployment to U.S. citizens or the international community, but from lessons that U.S. defense leadership drew from the Soviet experience with large formations in Afghanistan ending in costly failure. Bush wrote this point in his memoirs.[555]

U.S. Army intelligence analyst Mr. D claims that the U.S. did not lead the battle of Tora Bora for three reasons: 1. Because the decision to have a small footprint meant that the U.S. did not have adequate forces in the vicinity. 2. The U.S. did not have enough ISR to adequately find enemy positions in the massive and rugged mountains. 3. The U.S. is highly casualty averse. The third reason demonstrates how high internal constraints can distort strategy, or in this case, harm the operational ability to carry out the desired strategy. (Mr. D interview 2019). Others argued that the decision to use indigenous forces was based on solid logic. It had worked in past conflicts, would boost the U.S. mission's legitimacy, and would bolster the legitimacy of Afghan forces when they formed a government. Indigenous forces proved unreliable. (Runkle 2013).[556]

The Chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence claimed that the U.S. did not put the proper resources into the fight "when we had bin Laden in Tora Bora. We left, according to Mr. Bergen, we pulled out the Fifth Special Forces which were the specialists." (House Intelligence Committee testimony 2008, 120). While the official argument of the Bush administration was that it would be better for local forces to storm the al-Qaeda compounds in Tora Bora for perceptions of the legitimacy of the campaign and for future prospects of setting up a legitimate Afghan government to which these forces would belong, it is curious why these minor diplomatic considerations led the U.S. to decide not to use its best forces in such a critical battle to maximize the likelihood of securing its highest value target, bin Laden.

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[555] Bush credited CIA director George Tenet's proposal to embed CIA teams to work with Afghan warlords to fight al-Qaeda as "a turning point in his thinking." (9/11 Commission 2004, 332). In his memoirs, Bush wrote: "We were all wary of repeating the experience of the Soviets and the British, who ended up looking like occupiers. This [light footprint] strategy worked well at first. But in retrospect, our rapid success with low troop levels created false comfort, and our desire to maintain a light footprint left us short of the resources we needed. It would take several years for these shortcomings to become clear." (Bush 2010, 194).

[556] The author quotes Major Dalton Fury, Commander of U.S. and British forces at Tora Bora, as saying that the indigenous forces could not be counted on : "We might as well have been asking them to fight the Almighty Prophet Mohammed himself," Major Fury concluded. "I am convinced that not a single one of our muhj fighters wanted to be recognized in their mosque as the man who killed Sheikh bin Laden." (Runkle 2013, 45).

Campaigning before the 2004 Presidential election, Senator Kerry "charged that the Bush administration missed a golden opportunity at bin Laden by relying on Afghan militias to safeguard the passageways out of the Tora Bora mountains when bin Laden was believed to be squirreled up there in December of 2001." By late November of 2001, the resistance controlled most of the country, and top Taliban/al-Qaeda leadership was on the run." (O'Hanlan 2004).[557]

In 2004, O'Hanlan penned an op-ed which argued that it is unlikely that the Bush administration failed to use the best means to kill or capture Bin Laden due to not knowing he was there.[558] He dismissed this claim by many Bush administration officials, stating that the administration "clearly had considerable confidence he (bin Laden) was at Tora Bora.[559] Cheney confirmed as much, telling Diane Sawyer on November 29, 2001: "I think he's probably in that general area." O'Hanlan estimated that deploying the necessary 1,000-3,000 troops to carry out the mission "would have taken a week or more," but, "two Marine Corps units with more than 1,000 personnel were already in the country in December and were somewhat idle at that time." (O'Hanlan 2004).[560] Kerry then provided evidence that the U.S. did not rely on the Afghan militias thinking they could carry out the mission but being wrong. Rather, the U.S. did suspect that the militias were either unwilling or unable to kill or capture bin Laden. This makes the

[557] External constraints being the fear of rising anti-Americanism stemming from a U.S. troops presence, but more importantly, reluctance from Pakistan to serve as a basing ground. Internal constraints were the risk of U.S. troop loss as most important among domestic considerations.

[558] O'Hanlan noted that the U.S. "relied almost exclusively on its Afghan allies to close off possible escape routes from the Tora Bora region." These allied forces "did not have night vision equipment or cold-weather gear. Nor did they necessarily care if bin Laden was captured or killed; having the Taliban out of power was for them the key issue." (O'Hanlan 2004).

[559] In a 2009 report as Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Kerry wrote: "After bin Laden's escape, some military and intelligence analysts and the press criticized the Pentagon's failure to mount a full-scale attack despite the tough rhetoric by President Bush. Franks, Vice President Dick Cheney and others defended the decision, arguing that the intelligence was inconclusive about the Al-Qaeda leader's location. But the review of existing literature, unclassified government records and interviews with central participants underlying this report removes any lingering doubts and makes it clear that Osama bin Laden was within our grasp at Tora Bora. For example, the CIA and Delta Force commanders who spent three weeks at Tora Bora as well as other intelligence and military sources are certain he was there. Franks' second-in-command during the war, retired Lt. Gen. Michael DeLong, wrote in his autobiography that bin Laden was 'definitely there when we hit the caves'--a statement he retracted when the failure became a political issue. Most authoritatively, the official history of the U.S. Special Operations Command determined that bin Laden was at Tora Bora. "'All source reporting corroborated his presence on several days from 9-14 December,' said a declassified version of the history, which was based on accounts of commanders and intelligence officials and published without fanfare two years ago." (Kerry 2009).

[560] Kerry reported: "The vast array of American military power, from sniper teams to the most mobile divisions of the Marine Corps and the Army, was kept on the sidelines. Instead, the U.S. command chose to rely on airstrikes and untrained Afghan militias to attack bin Laden and on Pakistan's loosely organized Frontier Corps to seal his escape routes." (O'Hanlan 2004).

decision to not use U.S. forces even more puzzling. Furthermore, Delta Forces Commander Fury proposed a number of options for killing or capturing Bin Laden, but each were rejected by General Frank. (Kerry 2009).

Kerry reported that on or around December 16, two days after writing his will, "bin Laden and an entourage of bodyguards walked unmolested out of Tora Bora and disappeared into Pakistan's unregulated tribal area." He further noted that, "most analysts say he is still there today." This suggests that the reason for not following bin Laden into Pakistan in the subsequent years had more to do with external constraints than anything else.[561] Kerry also noted that it was the U.S. defense establishment that was responsible for the decision not to pursue bin Laden and other senior al-Qaeda leaders.[562] Kerry claimed that Rumsfeld reasoned that "too many U.S. troops in Afghanistan would create an anti-American backlash and fuel a widespread insurgency."[563] (Kerry 2009).

The U.S. campaign against al-Qaeda was highly successful at the outset. Within two and a half years the U.S. had killed or captured two-thirds of al Qaeda's known leadership. (Banusiewicz 2004). Al-Qaeda's refusal to capitulate was not due to inadequate U.S. military

[561] Kerry cited the Army Delta Force Commander who goes by the pen name Dalton Fury, the highest-ranking officer at Tora Bora, to dispel any doubt that the U.S. knew bin Laden was at Tora Bora in December 2001: "Al-Qaeda fighters arrayed in the mountains used unsecure radios, which meant their communications were easily intercepted by his team and by a sophisticated listening post a few miles from the mountain. As a result, the Delta Force and CIA operatives had real-time eavesdropping capabilities on al-Qaeda almost from their arrival, allowing them to track movements and gauge the effectiveness of the bombing. Even more valuable, a few days after arriving, one of the CIA operatives picked up a radio from a dead Al-Qaeda fighter. The radio gave the Americans a clear channel into the group's communications on the mountain. Bin Laden's voice was often picked up, along with frequent comments about the presence of the man referred to by his followers as 'the sheikh.' Fury, who still uses his pen name to protect his identity, said there was no doubt the voice on the radios was bin Laden. 'The CIA had a guy with them called Jalal and he was the foremost expert on bin Laden's voice,' 'he said. He worked on bin Laden's voice for seven years and he knew him better than anyone else in the West. To him, it was very clear that bin Laden was there on the mountain.'" Other commanders, villagers, CIA informants, prisoners at Guantanamo Bay and foreign intelligence came to the same conclusion about bin Laden's whereabouts. (Kerry 2009).

[562] He wrote, "the decision not to deploy American forces to go after bin Laden or block his escape was made by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and his top commander, Gen. Tommy Frank." (Kerry 2009).

[563] CIA paramilitary commander in Afghanistan Gary Berntsen wrote: "We needed U.S. soldiers on the ground!... I'd sent my request for 800 U.S. Army Rangers and was still waiting for a response. I repeated to anyone at headquarters who would listen: We need Rangers now! The opportunity to get bin Laden and his men is slipping away!!" Berntsen recalled that "Following orders from Franks at U.S. Central Command headquarters," Maj. Gen. Dell Dailey, the commander of U.S. special operations forces in Afghanistan "refused to deploy U.S. troops, explaining that he feared alienating Afghan allies." (Kerry 2009).

capabilities. Bergan testified to the House Armed Services Committee that in 2002 "documents that were picked up on the battlefield after the fall of the Taliban revealed that al-Qaeda internally felt under great pressure, and there was a fair amount of criticism for months within al-Qaeda for attacking the United States. These documents say we have got an 800-pound gorilla coming after us, the United States. The attack was a dumb idea. In 2002, al-Qaeda, by its own account, not by our account, was on the ropes." (House Intelligence Committee testimony 2008, 103). Even so, al-Qaeda was unwilling to surrender.

The U.S. campaign in Afghanistan was limited due to geographical factors and external constraints stemming from the escape of al-Qaeda leaders into Pakistan where the U.S. was not given permission to follow. Emerson testified:

> U.S. led military operations reportedly eliminated 80% of al-Qaeda's core leadership… Osama bin-Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri and other key leaders managed to escape across the mountainous border to Pakistan finding a safe haven with Pashtun tribes… Since then, al-Qaeda has rebuilt its command-and-control structure in concert with a host of entities, including tribal groups, Islamist parties, Kashmiri terrorist groups, criminal elements, corrupt police officials, and rogue factions of Pakistan's Inter-Service Intelligence. The terrain and lack of governance capacity in the FATA regions allowed this regrouping… FATA quickly became a sanctuary for insurgents fighting NATO and Afghan troops in Afghanistan. (House Intelligence Committee testimony 2008, 56).

Emerson testified that Pakistan did not have the capacity to eliminate this safe haven because it could not fight insurgents in FATA region.[564] Military pressure against al-Qaeda central was not completely negated by the ability of terrorists to flee into Pakistan. The U.S. was still able to target many al-Qaeda leaders and fighters.[565]

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[564] Emerson testified, "Musharaf sent the Pakistani military into FATA, which has always been infamous for its hostility to external military power... Predictably, the Pashtun tribal and Taliban militias went to war with the Pakistani Army, resulting in high casualties for the Pakistanis, which peaked in 2004. President Musharraf then attempted to broker peace with the tribes and militias. This effort culminated in September 2006 with a counter-productive deal… According to the deal, foreign fighters were to leave North Waziristan and the tribal leaders were to clean house. Of course, this did not happen and the insurgency in FATA grew... Since then, the tribal and Taliban forces have been fiercely engaging the Pakistani Army, kidnapping large groups of soldiers - sometimes entire companies - and performing public and sometimes taped executions… It is in this environment that al-Qaeda has managed to survive and rebuild, relying on the protection of their tribal hosts and Taliban militias. (57).

[565] Robert Grenier, then CIA station chief in Islamabad testified that "there was a migration up into North Waziristan and into the Bajor Agency, and that is really still where the center, if you will, of safe haven activity on the part of al-Qaeda still exists." He claimed that "as a result of that, their sort of moving through these ratlines, if you will, through Pakistan, that we were able with our Pakistani allies to wrap up a very large number not only of senior al-Qaeda cadres, but also of simple fighters who were coming out of Afghanistan." (104).

Rumsfeld believed that al-Qaeda needed to be defeated and taking out its leader would not be enough. (Federal News Service 2002). By mid-2002, both al-Qaeda and the U.S. administration firmly believed that al-Qaeda was crushed. Bergan cited a 2002 letter written by an al-Qaeda member–addressed to KSM:

> Consider all the fatal and successive disasters that have afflicted us during a period of no more than six months. Those observing our affairs wonder what has happened to us. Today we are experiencing one setback after another and have gone from misfortune to disaster. … I say today we must completely halt all external actions until we sit down and consider the disaster we caused. The East Asia, Europe, America, Horn of Africa, Yemen, Gulf, and Morocco [terrorist] groups have fallen, and Pakistan has almost been drowned in one push.

Another document, released by al Suri, a prominent al-Qaeda ideologue in 2004, summarized the damage sustained by al-Qaeda in the aftermath of 9/11:

> America destroyed the Islamic Emirate in Afghanistan, which became the refuge for the mujahideen. They killed hundreds of mujahideen who defended the Emirate. Then America captured more than six hundred Jihadists from different Arab countries and Pakistan jailed them. The Jihad movement rose to glory in the ’60s, and continued through the ’70s and ’80s, and resulted in the rise of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan but was destroyed after 9/11.

Bergan noted that “al Qaeda’s cadres were right to be dispirited. The United States appeared to have soundly defeated the terrorist organization.” He cited Bruce Hoffman, a leading authority on terrorism to show the U.S. view of al Qaeda’s decisive defeat: “We believed not simply that al-Qaeda was on the run, but that it had been smashed to bits.” (Bergan 2007).

As 2002 drew to a close and efforts against al-Qaeda and the Taliban took the form of counterterrorist strikes against a defeated and disaggregated organization, yielding diminishing returns, the U.S. saw no need for continued large-scale operations in Afghanistan. This led the U.S. to shift efforts. The Bush administration decided that decisive victory necessitated expanding the war effort against al-Qaeda. Only days after 9/11, Bush directed his cabinet to look into al-Qaeda links to Iraq. As major combat drew to a close in Afghanistan and the Taliban and al-Qaeda appeared largely defeated, the White House shifted attention to Iraq.

2002-2008: Iraq Invasion as Part of a Decisive Victory Strategy Against al-Qaeda

In line with what the U.S. perceived decisive victory to require, the U.S. began removing significant resources from Afghanistan in preparation to go to war against Saddam Hussein in Iraq. The mistaken belief that Hussein empowered al-Qaeda was the primary driver of the Bush

administration's decision to invade Iraq. In a 2003 speech, Bush noted Iraqi support for terror and pursuit of nuclear weapons as the first and second items listed in his discussion of the decision to invade Iraq: "We acted in Iraq, where the former regime sponsored terror, possessed and used weapons of mass destruction, and for 12 years defied the clear demands of the United Nations Security Council." (PBS 2003).

The war on al Qaeda was the primary driver of the decision to invade Iraq. This plan was in development since immediately after 9/11. The danger of weapons of mass destruction getting into the hands of terrorists who could not be deterred increased the urgency of this threat for influential actors in the Bush administration. (Woodward 2004). The administration defined the primary threat in the GWOT as "the nexus among terrorist organizations, their state sponsors and weapons of mass destruction." Feith stated:

> The enemy is a far-flung network of terrorist organizations and their state and non-state sponsors… Terrorist organizations rely on state sponsors for safe haven, funds, weapons and other types of support… We cannot win the war on terrorism if we do not cut off state support for terrorist organizations. (Banusiewicz 2004).

While the Bush administration formulated its strategy towards al-Qaeda based on perceptions of its type, Its Iraq policy was distorted by support for democracy promotion. Feith stated: "Democratic reform and the success of democratic institutions in the Arab world and the Muslim world generally are essential parts of the strategy to defeat terrorism as a threat to our own freedom." (Banusiewicz 2004). The conflation of democracy promotion with counterterrorism led the Bush administration to destabilize an odious yet stable regime, costing the U.S. billions of dollars, thousands of lives, substantial international political capital, and enabling the rise of an al-Qaeda affiliate in Iraq.

Numerous statements from officials in the Bush administration show that the president had made up his mind in favor of invading Iraq shortly after the U.S. captured Kabul. In November 2001, Bush asked Franks to secretly update war plans for Iraq, and by the Spring of 2002, the Bush administration was publicly touting the decision.[566]

[566] "In March of 2002, Bush informally told a group of senators: 'We're taking him [Saddam] out.' That same month, Cheney told Senate Republicans that 'the question was no longer if the U.S. would attack Iraq, the only question was when.' By late July 2002, the British chief of intelligence returned from Washington concluding that military action against Saddam now seemed inevitable. National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice 'brushed back'

Many U.S. academics, strategists and policymakers look back in hindsight and see the decision to invade Iraq and especially to overthrow the instruments of Hussein's government as a blunder caused by cognitive pathologies and bureaucratic politics that undermined the U.S. war on al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan.[567] These factors appear to have been at play in the early post-9/11 period. However, for both sound and unsound, rational and irrational reasons, Bush thought decisive victory over al-Qaeda required deposing Saddam.

The decision to invade Iraq had broad popular support and bipartisan congressional support. It was primarily argued as part of the GWOT, specifically on al-Qaeda. The main premise was that Saddam had weapons of mass destruction that were at risk of falling into the hands of terrorists.[568] (Gompert, Binnendijk and Lin 2014, 161). CIA director Tenet called the WMD case against Saddam a "slam dunk." (Woodward 2004). Furthermore, decisive victory was deemed to require not only eliminating terrorist networks but also their entire support structure, including states deemed to support terrorism.

The Bush administration thought that Saddam was directly supporting al-Qaeda. This is generally seen as either a deliberate manipulation or an inadvertent mistake. Bush noted how the U.S. had been on combat footing towards Iraq for 11 years, how it was the only country were the U.S. had ongoing combat operations, and how Saddam supported Palestinian suicide bombers. These factors and others influenced his view that Saddam was likely to be supporting al-Qaeda.[569] (9/11 Commission 2004, 334).

State Department concerns about invasion, saying that 'the president had made up his mind.'" (Gompert, Binnendijk and Lin 2014, 166).

[567] A 2014 RAND analysis noted how "strategic blunders can result from faulty intuition, egotism, arrogance, hubris, grand but flawed strategic ideas, underestimating the enemy and the difficulties and duration of conflict, overconfidence in war plans, ignoring what could go wrong, stifling debate, shunning independent advice, and penalizing dissent." (Gompert, Binnendijk and Lin 2014).

[568] Shortly following the September 11 attacks, CIA Director Tenet presented President Bush with a list of countries that might help al-Qaedaacquire a dirty bomb: "Iraq was on the top of that list." The idea that al-Qaedamight come into possession of a weapon of mass destruction had a profound impact. Bush said: "I made my decision [for war] based upon enough intelligence to tell me that [our] country was threatened with Saddam Hussein in power." (Gompert, Binnendijk and Lin 2014, 168).

[569] The Bush administration's sense of immediate and extreme danger after the September 11 attacks was amplified by two events. "Soon after September 11, anthrax spores were mailed to the U.S. Congress and others, killing five people. Intelligence reports indicated, wrongly it turned out, that Saddam had weaponized anthrax, although he was not suspected of initiating these particular attacks. Also, the CIA received reports that Osama bin Laden was seeking "dirty" (i.e., radiological) bomb capability." (Gompert, Binnendijk and Lin 2014, 163).

Rumsfeld emphatically denied that the Bush administration saw war with Iraq as inevitable when it took office prior to 9/11. (James 2011). "When the George W. Bush administration entered office, its initial focus was on China and military transformation. 'Nation building…' CIA threat briefings concentrated on al-Qaeda, not Iraq." (Gompert, Binnendijk and Lin 2014, 162). This suggests that the invasion of Iraq had more to do with the U.S. strategy towards al-Qaeda than other factors such as Saddam's regional machinations, Bush's sense of unfinished business (strategic and personal),[570] or the desire to spread democracy. These factors existed prior to 9/11 and if they were the primary cause they would have influenced the Bush administration to consider war on Iraq as necessary upon taking office, not only post-9/11.

In a 2011 interview, Rumsfeld responded to criticism over not sending enough troops to Iraq to maintain stability post de-Baathification. He claimed, "a war plan was developed up the ranks that had the potential for as many as 400,000 U.S. troops to be deployed… But it was Franks and other generals who decided they could fight the war with fewer troops." This suggests that the Bush administration was prepared to send enough troops to ensure decisive victory in any situation, and that the decision to send fewer troops did not demonstrate a different strategy preference. Rather, it was an operational decision that ended up failing to ensure stability, similar to the small footprint approach in Afghanistan. (James 2011).

The relative power balance also seemed most propitious at the time that the U.S. was planning to invade Iraq. A RAND study noted that among policymakers, "there was growing recognition that U.S. military power was in a class of its own."[571] The U.S. had developed new military technologies and tactics that Rumsfeld championed as defense transformation."[572]

The Bush administration mentioned the potential for Iraqi made WMDs to be given to terrorists numerous times.[573] Because the U.S. deemed al-Qaeda to be undeterrable, preventing

[570] The fact that Saddam "tried to kill" President George H.W. Bush appears to have weighed on his son's decision-making. (Woodward, 2004, 187).
[571] This perceived triumph of U.S. military power was "on display during Desert Storm and more recently in Afghanistan, where this 'military transformation' technology toppled the Taliban regime effortlessly and created a sense of total American military dominance." The U.S. believed that "Iraq stood no chance in a force-on-force war." (Gompert, Binnendijk and Lin 2014, 164).
[572] These supposedly transformative military technologies included "data networking, accurate and voluminous intelligence, instantaneous command and control, and precision strike." (Gompert, Binnendijk and Lin 2014, 164).
[573] Fear of decline in relative power seems to have played a role in the U.S. decision to invade Iraq. In a 2002 UN General Assembly speech, Bush noted "with every step the Iraqi regime takes towards gaining and deploying the most terrible weapons, our own options to confront that regime will narrow." (White House Archives 2002).

this outcome was deemed even more urgent. The 2002 National Security Strategy stated: "The overlap between states that sponsor terror and those that pursue WMD compels us to action." (Bush 2002). Alleged links between Saddam Hussein and al-Qaeda were one of the six pillars that the Bush administration cited in justifying the need to go to war in Iraq.[574] (Pan 2005). It is impossible to say whether this perception was necessary or sufficient to explain the war but officials' statements, including Bush's own statements suggest that it was critical.[575]

The 9/11 Commission suggests that U.S. intelligence doubted a collaborative relationship between al-Qaeda and Saddam.[576] (CNN Staff 2004). However, this narrative did not carry much influence. Instead, Cheney, Rumsfeld and Deputy Defense Secretary Wolfowitz relentlessly argued for invading Iraq. They had the most influence on Bush. (Woodward 2004).[577]

National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice told Wolf Blitzer in a September 2002 interview, "what we will not wait for is that particular nexus of terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, that is extremism and the technology to come together in a way that is harmful to the United States." (CNN Blitzer 2002). A former high ranking NCO in the U.S. Army told me that as he prepared fueling and ammunition depots in Kuwait in 2002 in preparation for a U.S. invasion of Iraq the buzz around the Army was that the invasion was planned over Saddam's alleged development of WMDs.[578] The greatest U.S. fear was not that Saddam would use them as part of Iraq's arsenal but that he would give them to al-Qaeda terrorists who would use them

[574] "The Bush administration's rationale was built around six themes: Saddam's possession of WMDs; the threat Saddam posed to the Middle East; Iraq's links to al Qaeda; Saddam's harsh treatment of the Iraqi people; Iraq's lack of democracy; and the example a democratic Iraq would set for autocratic regimes in the region. (Pan 2005).
[575] In an October 2002 speech, President Bush said, "Iraq has trained al-Qaeda members in bomb-making and poisons and deadly gases." (CNN 2004).
[576] The initial report from the 9/11 commission said Osama bin Laden "explored possible cooperation with Iraq during his time in Sudan, despite his opposition to (Saddam) Hussein's secular regime." After bin Laden asked for space in Iraq for training camps, the report said, "Iraq apparently never responded." It also said: "There have been reports that contacts between Iraq and al-Qaedaalso occurred after bin Laden had returned to Afghanistan, but they do not appear to have resulted in a collaborative relationship." (CNN 2004).
[577] Richard Clarke recalled that Bush directed him on the evening of September 12, 2001 to "see if Saddam did this." In the week following 9/11, "the issue of simultaneously attacking Iraq was brought up at Camp David by Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, but the suggestion had little support among the National Security Council principals and was sidelined by the President. The timing was not fortuitous. However, on September 26, President Bush asked Rumsfeld in private to 'look at the shape of our plans on Iraq' and asked for 'creative' options." (Collins 2015). Rumsfeld stated that "his instinct was to hit Saddam Hussein at the same time—not only Bin Laden." Wolfowitz argued the case for striking Hussein "concurrent with the invasion of Afghanistan as part of this round of the war on terrorism." "A Defense Department paper specified three targets for initial action in the war on terror, al Qaeda, the Taliban and Iraq, citing Iraq's 'long-standing involvement in terrorism.'" (9/11 Commission 2004, 335).
[578] The NCO whom I spoke with wishes to remain anonymous.

without compunction.[579] The Bush administration saw the road to victory in the GWOT as going through Baghdad. The decision to invade Iraq, although deferred until 2003, was formulated in 2001 as part of the U.S. decisive victory strategy against al-Qaeda.[580] Although Bush declared victory shortly after toppling Saddam, it was clear to U.S. policymakers and experts that victory over al-Qaeda "will take decades rather than years." (Byman 2003).

2004: The Rise of al-Qaeda Affiliates

The 2003 invasion of Iraq diverted significant resources from the war effort in Afghanistan. Saddam was quickly defeated but an insurgency developed and al-Qaeda as well as other jihadists were able to exploit chaos in Iraq to expand power. Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) pledged allegiance to al-Qaeda in 2004. It expanded under the leadership of Abu Musab al Zarqawi and was rebranded following his death in 2006 as the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI).[581] Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) pledged allegiance to Al-Qaeda in 2006. Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) formed in 2009 following a merger between Al-Qaeda branches in Saudi Arabia and Yemen. Al-Shabaab formally joined Al-Qaeda in 2012. The Nusra Front emerged in Syria in late 2011 as an offshoot of the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI). It was designated by the State Department as an alias of AQI in December 2012, although it did not publicly declare its allegiance to Al-Qaeda until 2013. (Thomas 2018, 3).

In his 2003 speech to the U.N., weeks prior to the invasion of Iraq, Powell mentioned al-Zarqawi 21 times in a bid to establish him as the link between al-Qaeda and Iraq. (Department of State Archives 2003). According to the intelligence community, "although Zarqawi once travelled to Afghanistan hoping to meet Osama bin Laden, he was considered a poor recruit for al Qaeda." "Powell's U.N. speech helped elevate Zarqawi's status, and within months, he was rapidly gaining followers in Iraq, fomenting sectarian warfare and laying the groundwork for the organization that would become ISIS." (Breslow 2016).[582]

[579] The 9/11 Commission states that CIA director Tenet, "noted that Bin Laden considered the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction to be a 'religious obligation.'" (9/11 Commission 2004, 380).
[580] Bush told British Prime Minister Tony Blair on September 20, 2001, that despite strong council from his cabinet, "Iraq was not the immediate problem." (9/11 Commission 2004, 336).
[581] What began as a disagreement over operations in Syria would grow into a public rift as ISI leader Abu Bakr al Baghdadi ultimately rejected the authority of Zawahiri in 2013. This was the birth of ISIS.
[582] In an interview over a decade later, Powell expressed regret for his efforts. In the PBS Frontline documentary, the Secret History of ISIS, he stated: "Zarqawi was not anything uppermost in my mind," "It was not a significant part of the speech for me… It was almost a passing reference." (Breslow 2016).

Poor planning for the aftermath of conventional victory in Iraq set the stage for it to become a hotbed for terrorism, opposite to the intended purpose of the invasion. This can be attributed to deliberate obfuscation by pro-war officials to gain support for the invasion, as well as to pure naivety.[583] (Gompert, Binnendijk and Lin 2014, 173).[584]

The U.S. policy of de-Baathification removed all elements of governance, the police, military and bureaucracy, (even the fire department), leaving Iraq lawless. There is some debate over why the U.S. dissolved Iraqi institutions. The officially stated reason was to wipe clear any memory of Saddam's rule. (Thompson 2015).[585]

The Sunni minority that had previously ruled Iraq launched an insurgency that spiraled into sectarian violence. This lawlessness proved fertile ground for the rise and consolidation of violent extremist groups, including those that became al-Qaeda affiliates.[586] The U.S. fight against al-Qaeda continued in Afghanistan as well as Iraq where the al-Qaeda affiliate AQI developed into a formidable enemy under the leadership of Zarqawi.[587]

A U.S. Army history of the 2007 Iraq Surge stated that "although the Bush administration had hoped the occupation would be brief, it quickly became clear that a long, multiyear effort

[583] To some extent, "the proponents of invasion discouraged pre-invasion consideration of post-invasion risks lest it raise doubts or cause delay." Lack of foresight led the U.S. to commit "roughly half the forces in Iraq that independent experts and Army officers said would be needed" in the aftermath of conventional victory. A RAND study notes that "the post-invasion model in the minds of those who decided to invade was that Iraqis freed from Saddam's despotic rule would work through a peaceful political process to create a unified, democratic, and productive state that would serve as a model for others in the Arab world. The implication was that the demand for American occupation—troops, money, administration, and mediation—would be modest and brief." (Gompert, Binnendijk and Lin 2014, 172).

[584] Already in May 2003, Byman warned that "if the United States mishandles the reconstruction of Iraq, it too might become a new training ground for potential al-Qaeda recruits." (Byman 2003).

[585] "The Bush Administration tapped Paul Bremer to head the so-called Coalition Provisional Authority on May 11, 2003. Twelve days later, he issued an order wiping away the Iraqi military, with a pledge to build a new one from scratch, untainted by any ties to Saddam's regime." A Time Magazine article notes: "'President Bush had agreed with military planners that the Army was essential for the internal and external security of the country,' Pfiffner wrote in the professional journal Intelligence and National Security in 2010. 'When asked in 2006 by his biographer…about the decision, Bush replied 'Well, the policy was to keep the army intact. Didn't happen.' Pfiffner suggests the decision actually came from Cheney. "It may have been a mistake,' Cheney said in 2011 without confirming it was his decision." (Thompson 2015).

[586] The growing insurgency "opened the door to both foreign and Iraqi religiously motivated terrorists called (AQI), who attacked the new state and the Shia population, especially soft targets such as mosques and pilgrimages. This then precipitated a Shia backlash in the form of death squads, some from within the Interior Ministry, who targeted not just Sunni terrorists and insurgents but Sunnis in general. Meanwhile, Shia militias, buoyed by their new political clout and abetted by Iran, attacked the American occupiers." (Gompert, Binnendijk and Lin 2014, 172).

[587] Zarqawi clashed with al-Qaeda central leadership over the use of indiscriminate violence that killed Muslims while both agreed on the core mission of spreading jihad against the west through violence.

would be required to restore order in the country." It cited AQI as the key enemy in Iraq and viewed it as ideologically driven, "to wage jihad against the Americans and their allies." It claimed that prior to 2007, "strategy in Iraq focused on helping the Iraqi government provide its own security while working to reduce American involvement. 'As the Iraqis stand up, we will stand down' President Bush declared in a 2005 speech." (Schlosser 2017, 12).[588]

The military assessment was that "violence that had defined much of 2003 and 2004 seemed to be on an uneven but general decline throughout 2005." This suggested that decisive victory over AQI was near at hand. This view was shattered in early 2006, when Iraq "exploded into veritable civil war following the bombing of the Al-Askari Mosque on 22 February 2006." (Schlosser 2017, 13).[589] This largely stemmed from U.S. mismanagement due to ignorance of local dynamics.[590] As the situation deteriorated, Vice Chief of Staff, General John Keane advised the president that "if he did not act soon to turn things around in Iraq, the American war effort would be lost." Keane proposed that Bush increase the number of U.S. troops in Iraq. (Schlosser 2017, 15). After losing control of Congress in November 2006, Bush replaced Defense Secretary Rumsfeld with Robert Gates and began implementing a surge of troops to Iraq.

Bush's second term National Military Strategic Plan for the War on Terrorism (NMSP-WOT) laid out the U.S. view of al Qaeda as of 2006 after the decimation of al-Qaeda central in Afghanistan and as insurgencies in both Iraq and Afghanistan were underway.[591] It stated:

> The enemy is a transnational movement of extremist organizations, networks, and individuals -- and their state and non-state supporters -- which have in common that they exploit Islam and use terrorism for ideological ends. The Al Qa'ida Associated Movement (AQAM), comprised of al Qa'ida and affiliated extremists, is the most dangerous present manifestation of such extremism… The enemies of the United States and its partners are motivated by extremist ideologies. (JCS 2006, 4).

[588] The U.S. aimed to ensure that "a steady state of transition occurred as American forces handed off more and more of the security mission to Iraqi forces." (Schlosser 2017, 12).
[589] The Al-Askari Mosque is a holy shrine for Shia Muslims, a Sunni (likely AQI) attack on it is considered to have been the immediate cause of Iraq's dissention into civil war.
[590] In its haste to remove Saddam's legacy of Sunni minority rule, and to defeat Sunni al-Qaeda, the U.S. built Iraqi institutions that were dominated by Shiites who exacerbated sectarian violence. Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, who won a plurality of votes in the December 2005 parliamentary elections and took office May 2006, with U.S. backing, "appeared to tacitly condone the ethnic violence." (Schlosser 2017).
[591] While the NMSP-WOT lays out a military strategy, it clearly states that the war on terror requires a whole of government approach utilizing all instruments of national power diplomatic, information, military, economic, financial, intelligence, and law enforcement. (JCS 2006, 6).

This statement under the header "Nature of the Enemy," noted its franchised structure and high ideological drive. It cited ideology as al-Qaeda's "center of gravity." (JCS 2006, 18). It proposed that signaling capability and resolve to decisively defeat al-Qaeda is key to discrediting its ideology.[592] It called for a military strategic approach to "defeat terrorists and their organizations." This required "continuous military operations to develop the situation and generate the intelligence that allows us to attack global terrorist organizations." (JCS 2006, 7).[593] A sizable part of the effort focused on building international coalitions and regional capacity to fight al-Qaeda affiliates. Many affiliates were regionally oriented groups that joined the al-Qaeda "brand" for resources and recruitment.[594] Others, like AQI and AQAP posed an international threat.[595] AQI posed an especially significant threat due to its brutality, operational capability and proximity to U.S. forces.

The 2006 NMSP-WOT laid out a whole of government approach to its decisive victory against al-Qaeda. Van Evera claimed that "the strategy is good, but the effort is poor." Throughout his position paper, he consistently noted the strategy to "defeat al-Qaeda," and discusses "victory against al-Qaeda," demonstrating the lack of prominent voices that suggested managing or negotiating with al-Qaeda at this time.[596] (Van Evera 2006, 55).

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[592] The 2006 NMSP-WOT states: "Countering ideological support and the enemy's propaganda operations involves action as well as words. There can be value in actions demonstrating that the United States possesses, and is willing to use, overwhelming force against terrorists and other extremists." (JCS 2006, 18).

[593] Under the section: Defeat Terrorists and Their Organizations. The 2006 NMSP-WOT lays out the Bush administration's decisive victory strategy: "This military strategic objective directly addresses the enemy's ability to continue global terrorist operations. This requires continuous military operations to develop the situation and generate the intelligence that allows us to attack global terrorist organizations. This becomes the first object of military operations against the terrorists -- find the enemy. Once the situation is effectively developed, military operations may be authorized to: capture or kill senior leadership and senior operatives; eliminate safe havens; destroy training camps and resources; capture or kill cell members ('foot soldiers'); and disrupt recruiting and indoctrination efforts. As always, emphasis is on operating with and training partner nations to achieve this objective, while always being prepared to operate independently, if necessary." (JCS 2006, 24).

[594] AQIM is an example of a regionally focused group that uses the al-Qaeda brand for recruitment and financing. Originally known as the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat, after pressure from the Algerian government, Zawahiri announced the union and GSPC rebranded itself as AQIM in January 2007. (Laub and Masters 2015).

[595] AQAP carried out the shooting at the Paris offices of satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo in 2015. It was also involved in terrorist plots on U.S. soil, including the "Christmas Day Bombing" in 2009 and the "Times Square Bombing" in 2010. (Emerson 2019).

[596] The 2006 NMSP-WOT, defined the strategy of going after inputs that terrorist organizations require to sustain themselves and their operations: "Nine key inputs are identified: (1) Leadership; (2) Safe-havens for training and planning; (3) Funds and finance; (4) Communications, needed for exerting command and control over operatives and for inspiring a broader political base; (5) Movement, needed for gaining access to targets, especially in the United States; (6) Intelligence, needed to make strategy, to plan operations, and to plan countermeasures against

The U.S. pursued decisive victory against AQI as would be expected against a type A NSA. Force was more concerted and rapid than against other affiliates because the U.S. was already engaged in combat in Iraq.[597] The invasion of Iraq was not an abandonment of the decisive victory strategy against al-Qaeda central.[598]

In a 2005 audio message, bin Laden appeared to suggest that a U.S. withdrawal from Muslim lands could prompt agreement over a truce. In line with socialization logic's predictions of state strategy towards a type A NSA, Cheney rejected an apparent offer of a "long-term truce," describing it as a "ploy." Cheney said, "it was too early to draw firm conclusions about the tape but added that al-Qaeda was 'unlikely' ever to sit down and sign a truce." He said, "I think you have to destroy them. It's the only way with them." (BBC 2006).[599]

On June 7, 2006 the U.S. killed AQI leader, Zarqawi. (Burns 2006). The Bush administration realized that decisive victory necessitated stabilizing Iraq to ensure that al-Qaeda could not flourish or reemerge after the U.S. withdrew. In line with a decisive victory strategy, the U.S. maintained focus and carried out operations in other lawless areas, like Yemen while continuing efforts to defeat AQI.[600]

2007: The Iraq Surge as Part of a Decisive Victory Strategy

attack; (7) Weapons, including WMD; (8) Personnel, supplied by the recruitment, training and indoctrination of new operatives; and (9) Ideological support, needed to recruit and motivate new operatives and to gain broader support from host societies." Van Evera noted, "the Bush policy against al-Qaeda looks inadequate when measured against this scheme as well. The administration is moving firmly against only four vulnerabilities (numbers 1, 2, 4, and 5—al-Qaeda leadership, al-Qaeda safe-havens, and al-Qaeda ability to communicate and move)." (Van Evera 2006, 54).

[597] Emerson testified before Congress that: "AQI has largely been defeated by U.S. forces and U.S.-sponsored Sunni tribal militias in the western al Anbar Province, which was formerly the stronghold of the group. Still, AQI remains a viable force in Iraq and is looked to by senior al-Qaeda leadership as a vehicle to establish other al-Qaeda affiliates in the Middle East. Just months before his death, al Zarqawi stated, 'In Iraq we are very close to al-Aqsa Mosque of the Messenger of Allah, so we fight in Iraq and our eyes are on Jerusalem, which can only be restored by the guiding Quran and the sword of victory.'" (House Intelligence Committee 2008, 68).

[598] The House Armed Services Chairman stated: "We are where we are today because decisions were made to abandon the effort against al-Qaeda in Afghanistan and make a hard charge into Iraq." Rogers (R-Alabama) said "there has been no abandonment." (House Intelligence Committee 2008 120).

[599] Emerson testified that "the invasion of Iraq had no impact on the ideology and motivations of al Qaeda." (67). This fits socialization logic's predictions regarding a type A NSA. Carrots did not impact their drive either. Spain "pulled its military out of Iraq in the wake of the 2003 Madrid attacks, which shuttled a new government into power. However, this has not diminished the desire of Islamist terrorist organizations to strike at Spain." (77).

[600] In 2008, the DNI warned Bush that al-Qaeda was recruiting terrorists from 35 countries that did not need a visa to get into the U.S. (Woodward 2010, 5). DNI Chief McConnell said a "second immediate threat" was al-Qaeda in Yemen, noting that they bombed the U.S. embassy in Yemen in 2008. (Woodward 2010, 8).

The 2007-2008 Surge saw the largely successful implementation of the recently designed population-centric COIN doctrine. The Surge was not a new strategy, it was a new operational implementation of the decisive victory strategy that had faltered as Iraq devolved into sectarian violence. The goal was to use COIN to defeat the terrorist networks and leave Iraq stable enough to prevent their return.[601] This doctrine demanded more troops because ensuring security meant having troops in the streets, whereas killing terrorists could be done with less forces, conducting lighting raids and airstrikes from secure bases.[602] (Mannina 2016).

To support COIN, Bush deployed an additional 30,000 U.S. troops and trained Sunni militias to take responsibility for their own security. This led to the Sunni Awakening. Sunni tribesmen who were disillusioned with AQI's violence and religious rigidity began fighting alongside U.S. forces, turning the tide and leading to gradually improving stability. The integration of Sunni tribesman fostered decisive victory by bringing the total number of forces up to the recommended ratio of counterinsurgents per citizens.[603]

The insurgency that raged throughout most of Bush's second term, did not begin to subside until near its end. The Surge coincided with an expanding insurgency in Afghanistan. Fighting in two arenas with no end in sight decreased domestic public support. This was compounded in 2008 with the economic recession. Congress and the public exerted pressure to wind down fighting.[604]

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[601] U.S. Army infantry Captain Ryan Mannina argued that "U.S. strategy prior to 2006 was based on the enemy-centric approach to counterinsurgency (COIN), essentially a war of attrition in which US forces tried to kill or capture as many insurgents as they could." By 2006, that strategy was failing. Sectarian violence was increasing. Stabilization was needed to decisively defeat al-Qaeda in Iraq and secure this victory. This necessitated breaking the cycle of violence by providing security for the population. Only security would allow for reconciliation between the Sunnis and the Shia. The new strategy was based on the classic population-centric COIN approach. (Mannina 2016).

[602] The 2006 COIN manual suggested having 20 counterinsurgents for every 1,000 citizens for a successful counterinsurgency campaign. (FM 3-24 2006, 1-13).

[603] In 2007, "the United States began arming and funding militia forces made up of Sunni tribesmen, incorporating them into the ISF as a police auxiliary force called the Sons of Iraq. They eventually grew to more than 110,000 in strength." This helped bring total forces in Iraq closer to the recommended troop density ratio. (Mannina 2016).

[604] The struggle in Iraq "contributed to a growing doubt about America's capacity for competent leadership and effective action, pessimism about the vitality of American values and ideals, a weakening of foreign-policy bipartisanship in Congress and among the public, and a powerful feeling of exhaustion and even decline within the country as a whole — a sense, as Condoleezza Rice later acknowledged, that America was simply 'out of steam.' All this was before the Great Recession added its own body blow to the confidence of Americans and further weakened domestic enthusiasm for a globally engaged foreign policy." (Brands and Feaver 2019).

The U.S. was still relatively minimally constrained due to its superpower status, military power and economic as well as diplomatic clout. However, U.S. policymakers were cognizant of decreasing internal and external support.[605] U.S. unilateralism in Iraq also hurt support among key allies. France, and Germany opposed the war and Russia shifted from a critical supporter of the U.S. effort post-9/11 to an adversarial position as Putin denounced U.S. unilateralism.[606] President Obama campaigned on decreasing the use of American military power.

2008-2011: Refocusing on Decimating al-Qaeda Central

While the Surge in Iraq was yielding success and appeared to be creating a stable Iraq that would snuff out and keep out al Qaeda, it became increasingly clear that the U.S. had diverted resources from Afghanistan prematurely.[607]

Along with the Taliban, it became clear that al-Qaeda had also regrouped in Pakistan. At this time, approximately 90 percent of al-Qaeda central leadership was in Pakistan. Of the seven high value drone strikes that the U.S. launched into Pakistan in 2007, zero hit their mark. By 2008, the Bush administration stopped giving Pakistan advanced notice and the Obama administration was far more skeptical of Pakistan's support. (Riedel Interview 2019).[608] The easing of pressure in Afghanistan allowed al-Qaeda to regain confidence.[609]

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[605] The 9/11 Commission noted: "By 2003, polls showed that 'the bottom has fallen out of support for America in most of the Muslim world. Negative views of the U.S. among Muslims, which had been largely limited to countries in the Middle East, have spread…. Favorable ratings for the U.S. have fallen from 61% to 15% in Indonesia and from 71% to 38% among Muslims in Nigeria." (9/11 Commission 2004, 375).

[606] Political Scientist Dr. Allen Lynch listed the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003 as among the "key moments" in Russian-American and Russian-Western relations." (Lynch 2015). RAND's Brian Jenkins claims that in 2003, "the new level of international cooperation was rocked by the U.S. invasion of Iraq and by subsequent revelations that detained prisoners were being subjected to abuse and torture." (Jenkins 2017).

[607] The U.S. invasion of Iraq pulled valuable resources from the effort against the remnants of Taliban and al-Qaeda leadership in Pakistan. This is demonstrated by CIA reports. Keller, the CIA officer who ran a spy network in one of the tribal regions in early 2006, noted that "he was one of only a 'handful' of CIA officers doing this kind of work in the seven tribal regions where Al-Qaeda and Taliban militants are concentrated." He complained that, "a great deal of the resources have gone to Iraq," saying, "I don't think it's appreciated that the CIA is not really a very large organization in terms of field personnel." (Bergen 2007).

[608] The Bush administration has been accused of being "willfully naïve" regarding Pakistan's support for the U.S., choosing to ignore the double game they were playing in supporting the Taliban and al-Qaeda. This led the Bush administration to give Pakistan advanced warning whenever it targeted a high value al-Qaeda leader in Pakistan.

[609] In April 2008, Emerson testified before the House Permanent Select Committee On Intelligence that al Yazid's appointment by al-Qaeda as "General Leader" in Afghanistan showed confidence on the part of al-Qaeda leadership that they are well on their way to winning out against the U.S. and NATO. "A well-entrenched and well-respected leader such as al Yazid can handle problems in Afghanistan while bin Laden and al Zawahiri can focus attention on the larger-scale global strategy." (House Intelligence Committee Testimony 2008, 63).

By late 2007 and early 2008, the U.S. government perceived the level of threat from al-Qaeda central to have increased to its highest yet.[610] Experts testified before Congress that the U.S. faced continuing difficulty in targeting al-Qaeda leadership.[611] Finally, they testified to al-Qaeda's lack of governance function and high ideological drive.[612]

In another session before Congress, expert witness Lawrence Footer argued for cementing the decisive victory strategy. He advised the administration to publicly state that the U.S. is in Afghanistan for the long-term, to redouble attempts to kill or capture Bin-Laden, and to monitor and pursue terrorists in ungovernable regions. (House Intelligence Committee Testimony 2008, 30).

Bergan laid out evidence for al Qaeda's resurgence and significant capabilities.[613] He argued that U.S. drawdown in Iraq would strengthen al-Qaeda and testified his prediction that in

[610] Emerson testified to Congress regarding the National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) report that suggested al Qaeda's relative threat: "I agree with the NIE assessment that the terrorist threat from al-Qaeda and its affiliates to this country is at its highest point since 2001. As reported by the 2007 NIE, we can expect plots against high-profile targets that seek to inflict mass causalities and/or create fear and uncertainty in both our economy and populace." (Congressional testimony text session I 2008, 54).

[611] Bergan testified before the House permanent Select Committee on Intelligence assessing the Fight against al-Qaeda in April 9, 2008, that the hunt for bin Laden was going poorly despite significant evidence that he is alive, including the release of multiple video tapes. Grenier, the CIA's top counter-terrorism official from 2004–2006. testified before the committee as well. He agreed that it was extremely difficult to target Bin Laden "I am not terribly surprised at all that he has not been captured. Quite frankly, I think that it is quite likely that he is going to remain at large for an indefinite period of time." (40). Steve Emerson also testified to al-Qaeda's difficult to target franchised structure, pointing out the extent of its global network which even includes ties between Sunni al-Qaeda and Shia Iran in pursuit of global jihad. He noted: "as a point person in Shia Iran entrusted with bridging the gaps between Muslims against the common enemy, al-Rahman is a valuable asset for al Qaeda's leadership. His skill as a unifier, not to mention an explosives expert and Islamic scholar, separate him from the pack." (64) He described al-Qaeda structure as "self-anointed franchises… al-Qaeda sort of grew again by virtue of its children in the Maghreb, in Algeria, in Lebanon, in Gaza." (106). (House Intelligence session I 2008).

[612] Grenier stated that Zawahari's goal is to territorially spread jihad through a four-stage plan for Iraq and expanding jihad to secular states, and finally, stage 4, clash with Israel. He testified that al-Qaeda will attack America wherever it can "like a moth drawn to flames," and that the supposed purpose of al-Qaeda is to establish a Caliphate from Iraq to Indonesia, starting with Afghanistan, with Baghdad as the capital. Bergen testified that al-Qaeda is religiously/ideologically motivated, saying this has allowed them to withstand several blows to its leadership that would put regular criminal enterprises out of business. Emerson testified to al-Qaeda's high ideological drive: "Al-Qaeda was born out of an organization, as are almost all other Sunni movements, called the Muslim Brotherhood. That is what drives al Qaeda. It also drives Hamas. It drives Islamic Jihad. Their etiology-it is the etiology of al-Qaeda as well-is intrinsically hostile to secular democracies that value pluralism, the separation of church and state, free speech, minority rights, and freedom of religion." ((House Intelligence session I 2008 51).

[613] Bergen noted how in 2003 bin Laden called for action against Spain, six months later 191 people were killed in an attack in Madrid. The 2005 London terror attack showed al-Qaeda was resurgent. He listed 900 suicide attacks in Iraq, and the rise of suicide attacks in Pakistan. He noted that that the plot to down six airliners foiled in UK in August 2006 was directed from al-Qaeda in Pakistan. (House Intelligence session II 2008).

the next five years al-Qaeda would likely be able to pull off a radiological attack in a major city and/or down a commercial jet. He also noted the need to keep the decisive victory strategy strong. He claimed that al-Qaeda in Iraq was a wounded organization; foreign fighter recruitment has dropped, and fighters are trying to leave. Emerson also testified against withdrawing from Iraq, noting that while the threat of force is unlikely to deter fanatics like al-Qaeda, a display of weakness is sure to embolden them. He stated, "bin Laden has cited past American withdrawals from Somalia and Lebanon as proof of the fragility of American power." (67).

External constraints on U.S. attacks in Pakistan were high. The New York Times reported that Rumsfeld cancelled a 2005 attack on a meeting of top al-Qaeda leaders in Pakistan, "a meeting thought to include Zawahiri," partially "because the operation, which would have involved several hundred special forces and CIA personnel, could have destabilized Musharraf." (Bergen 2007). The Bush administration perceived critical constraints following a 2006 U.S. raid that killed numerous civilians and sparked international outrage.[614]

The Taliban began contesting and then retaking control over rural areas in Afghanistan. The Bush administration left the incoming Obama administration with a set of recommendations for boosting U.S. military presence in Afghanistan.[615] This demonstrates the continuity of strategy across administrations. U.S. strategy did not follow the preferences of a specific administration. In addition, the Obama administration, with technology that had drastically improved since the early years of the conflict, greatly accelerated aerial high value targeting, mostly through drone strikes. The idea to expand the use of drones originated in the Bush administration, suggesting that this was a continuation of the strategy across administrations.[616]

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[614] On October 30 2006, President Bush okayed a raid on al-Qaeda in FATA that killed over 80 civilians including many children and caused major incident with Pakistan. Zawahiri was reported by some to be the intended target. (The Bureau of Investigative Journalism). This ended the Bush administration's ground incursions into Pakistan. (Woodward 2011, 8). External opprobrium and domestic disgust meant that the U.S. faced considerable constraints in targeting al-Qaeda leadership, especially in Pakistan where most of them, including Osama bin Laden resided.

[615] The incoming Obama administration's Afghanistan policy review was led by Bruce Reidel, "a former C.I.A. analyst who came over to the National Security Council from Brookings." Retired general Lute, who served as war czar in the Bush Administration, stayed on at the National Security Council. General Petraeus, the CENTCOM commander, was part of the review. He was eventually chosen to replace McChrystal in implementing an Iraq style surge in Afghanistan. "In a sense, this review has been going on since last summer, when the Bush Administration initiated a policy review as it headed for the exits." (Coll 2009).

[616] In March 2012, the Washington Post ran a profile of the long-serving head of the CIA's Counter Terrorism Center [CTC], 'Roger.' It noted that "the CIA had planned for months an expansion of its Pakistan drones campaign: When Michael V. Hayden became CIA director in May 2006, Roger began laying the groundwork for an

Regarding decapitation, both Bergan and Grenier agreed that killing bin Laden would hurt al-Qaeda's operational capabilities and morale. They agreed that the U.S. would likely need to counter al-Qaeda in Afghanistan for the long-term, testifying, "we are going to be there for 15, 20 years." (House Intelligence session II 2008, 122).[617]

Representative Hoekstra cited internal division as a constraint on the ability to pursue decisive victory. He stated, "this country needs to develop a long-term, bipartisan consensus on how to defeat this threat. You know, we need Republicans and Democrats, Congress and the administration to come together and do that." (123). This demonstrates that U.S. representatives understood the need to reduce internal constraints in order to pursue optimal strategy.

The more external support the U.S. could rely upon the more internationally legitimate, the more operationally capable and the less domestically costly the war effort against al-Qaeda would be. Strong allied support would decrease constraints. The U.S. sought to increase external support. Emerson decried the lack of allied support for the war effort against al Qaeda.[618]

Testifying before the House, Steven Emerson discussed the U.S. strategy under George W. Bush, noting the decisive military victory strategy, the targeting of leadership, the difficulty in targeting leadership and the senior leaders that the U.S. had designated as key targets.[619] Demonstrating the increased ability for the U.S. to target senior leaders, most of the target list

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escalation of the drone campaign. Over a period of months, the CTC chief used regular meetings with the director to make the case that intermittent strikes were allowing al-Qaeda to recover and would never destroy the threat. 'He was relentless,' said a participant in the meetings." Roger argued that the CIA needed to mount an air campaign against al-Qaeda "at a pace they could not absorb" and warned that "after the next attack, there would be no explaining our inaction." (The Bureau of Investigative Journalism 2012).

[617] Bergan advocated that the U.S. "create an office of metrics where we can determine how are we doing." (121). There are poor metrics in counterterrorism, even killing leaders does not show how close victory is. (Cronin 2009)

[618] Emerson testified, "Secretary of Defense Robert Gates traveled to Europe to appeal to our NATO allies to increase their levels of support for our combined efforts in Afghanistan. Gates' pleas were met by a range of responses from indifference to contempt The American request for more troops to shore up the efforts fell on deaf ears. Some European allies have demonstrated a reluctance to allow their troops - currently deployed in Afghanistan - to serve in areas where much of the fighting is taking place, opting to keep them in already safe regions." (58).

[619] Emerson Testified: "During Operations Enduring Freedom and Anaconda many senior al-Qaeda leaders were captured or killed, including Operations Chief Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, Military Chief Mohammed Atef, and Senior Operations Facilitator Abu Zubaydah. Notably missing from this list were the most senior of the al-Qaeda leadership, Osama bin Laden and Ayman al Zawahiri, who, after escaping various American or allied strikes, remain free." "Bin Laden and al Zawahiri have shown a keen ability, as has the al-Qaeda network as a whole, to change and adapt… A new crop of al-Qaeda leaders has emerged to fill the void left by the capture and killing of many in the so-called old-guard…. A list of these senior leaders that are in the crosshairs of U.S. and allied forces in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and elsewhere includes Abu Yahya al-Libi, Mustafa Abu al-Yazid, Atiyah Abd al-Rahman, Abu Obaidah al-Masri, and Khalid Habib." (House Intelligence session II 2008, 60).

mentioned in the 2008 testimony have since been killed. U.S. ability to target al-Qaeda leadership expanded significantly by 2011.[620]

Obama maintained the same views as his predecessor regarding the inability to negotiate with al Qaeda. In his 2009 Nobel Prize acceptance speech he stated, "Negotiations cannot convince al-Qaeda's leaders to lay down their arms." (Engel 2014, 377).

In 2009, Senator Kerry reported that al-Qaeda had returned to strength and posed a significant and dispersed threat. He wrote, "eight years after its expulsion from Afghanistan, Al-Qaeda has reconstituted itself and bin Laden has survived to inspire a new generation of extremists who have adopted and adapted the al-Qaeda doctrine and are now capable of attacking from any number of places." (Kerry 2009).

Comparing Obama's strategy with Bush's, Jenkins notes, "While the Obama administration was wary of committing ground forces, it was not reluctant to take out terrorist leaders. Obama risked the raid that killed Osama bin Laden. He also oversaw a tenfold increase in the targeted killings of terrorist leaders and cadre that Bush had initiated. Special operations and airstrikes became the principal expression of America's counterterrorist strategy." (Jenkins 2017). The Obama administration continued pursuing decisive victory shifted operational means as vastly improved ISR and enabled the U.S. to carry out decapitation strikes more effectively than ever before. While this was not a shift in strategy, it laid the groundwork for a gradual shift from pursuit of rapid decisive victory to a slow-and-steady approach.

The strategy towards al-Qaeda central in Afghanistan by 2009 while remaining decisive victory, was increasingly seen as maintaining victory.[621] This would manifest in institutionalized counterterrorism operations, but no large-scale military operations.[622]

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[620] Abu Yahya al-Libi was killed by a CIA drone strike in 2012, Mustafa Abu al-Yazid was killed by drone strike in 2010, Atiyah Abd al-Rahman was killed by drone strike in 2011, Abu Obaidah al-Masri was found to have died in 2007 of natural causes and Khalid Habib was killed by drone strike in 2008.

[621] The 2009 Afghanistan Study Group report argued that the ongoing threat from al-Qaedawould be "better met via specific counter-terrorism measures, a reduced U.S. military 'footprint' in the Islamic world, and diplomatic efforts to improve America's overall image and undermine international support for militant extremism." (New American Foundation 2009, 5). The report also argues that attempting to establish an effective centralized government in Afghanistan to accomplish U.S. goals is an "ambitious and fruitless effort" with no clear "success" and no historical precedent. It is "not essential to U.S. security and it is not a goal for which the U.S. military is well suited" (4).

[622] A 2009 Afghanistan Study Group report argues that "there is no significant Al-Qaeda presence in Afghanistan today" and "should an al-Qaeda regroup in Afghanistan, the U.S. would have residual military capability sufficient to destroy it." (New America Foundation 2009, 4).

By 2010, CIA Director Leon Panetta noted that there were only "50 to 100 Qaeda operatives now in Afghanistan." Panetta warned that "as a worldwide 'franchise' organization, al-Qaeda does not need Afghanistan, or Pakistan for that matter." (Sanger and Mazzetti 2010). That being said, the U.S. maintained a military presence in Afghanistan near its peak of 100,000. This allowed it to conduct operations against al-Qaeda central while targeting global affiliates.[623]

2011-PRESENT: KEEPING AL-QAEDA CENTRAL DOWN, SLOWLY STRANGLING AFFILIATES.

The rapid integration of UAVs and dramatically improved ISR and targeting loosened what had been tightening internal constraints. The U.S. could fight terror with less risk to U.S. forces and at lower cost. While Obama was seen as more dovish than Bush, his administration increased drone strikes significantly and was even willing to target a U.S. citizen turned al-Qaeda operative, Anwar al-Awlaki, in a 2011 drone strike in Yemen. Whereas Bush launched fewer than 50 drone strikes throughout his eight years in office, the Obama administration oversaw over 400 in his first term alone (Byman 2013). The increased use of drones from the Bush to the Obama administration is primarily due to technological evolution.[624]

On May 2, 2011, the U.S. launched a daring raid on bin Laden's compound, killing the al-Qaeda leader and yielding a treasure-trove of intelligence. In rapid succession, the U.S. was able to decimate al-Qaeda central although Zawahiri is still at-large. The captured documents showed the effectiveness of drones. Drones that killed a leader killed all his expertise because it was not institutionalized. The drone strikes led al-Qaeda to prioritize internal security. They also helped the U.S. improve spying and targeting by revealing what al-Qaeda understood about spying methods. The documents showed that al-Qaeda saw drones as a challenge that led it to change tactics but not ideological drive.[625]

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[623] According to a 2010 report, al-Qaeda has influence in over 90 countries. (Krebs 2012).

[624] A significant factor of this increased use of drones is their far greater prevalence in the U.S. military than especially the early years of the Bush administration, when the technology of armed drones was just being integrated into the force structure. It was not until February 4, 2002, that the U.S. first used an armed drone. The strike in Afghanistan intended to target Osama bin Laden. (Sifton 2012). In 2003, when the U.S. invaded Iraq, "there were only a handful of aerial drones in its invasion force. By 2010 the Pentagon had nearly 7,500 drones in its arsenal." By 2016, "almost one in three U.S. military aircraft" did not have a pilot. (Herzog 2016).

[625] According to a senior al-Qaeda leader cited in the documents, the drone strikes created a need to hide which contradicted the jihadist doctrine of rushing in to fight and led to confusion. They also led al-Qaeda leadership to call upon would be jihadis to stay away from Afghanistan. (New America 2019).

Obama campaigned on getting the U.S. out of Iraq and refocusing to decimating al-Qaeda central in Afghanistan and Pakistan's tribal regions. In Afghanistan and Pakistan Obama applied a decisive victory strategy with mixed intensity and it yielded mixed results. The Obama administration was able to decimate much of al Qaeda's remaining leadership in Afghanistan and Pakistan but yielded diminishing returns as Pakistan cooperated poorly and the U.S. drew down its troop presence and implemented stricter ROEs.

Towards al-Qaeda affiliates, Obama made decisive victory more difficult by withdrawing troops from Iraq before it was stabilized, fence sitting in Syria and supporting the ouster of Mubarak in Egypt and Gaddafi in Libya. These two dictators were brutal human rights violators, but they maintained a monopoly on violence. After Gaddafi's death, Libya became lawless, fertile grounds for terrorist groups to exploit. Towards al-Qaeda affiliates, which by this point had replaced al-Qaeda central as the predominant threat to U.S. national security, the Obama years after 2011 can characterized by quotes from his administration such as "strategic patience" and "leading from behind." These suggest a management approach, yet the aim remained victory, just over a long-term engagement.[626]

Comparing Bush's 2006 NMSP-WOT to Obama's 2011 Counterterrorism Strategy demonstrates how both leaders saw the GWOT as a long-term effort.[627] Because the U.S. perception of al-Qaeda's type has not changed, socialization logic predicts continuity in strategy and vision across these very different administrations.[628] This continued even after bin Laden was killed. (White House Archives 2011, 10).[629]

[626] Unlike Hamas or the PLO which Israel manages because it does not aim to defeat them, U.S. strategy towards al-Qaeda affiliates clearly does not intend to maintain their existence to cooperate short-term management of violence.
[627] In the 2006 NMSP-WOT, under the Strategic Assumptions subject header, it states that the U.S. expects the war on terror, including primarily al Qaeda's global affiliates, to be a "long-term war of varying intensity." The document states: "defeating extremism can be expected to require decades of effort." (JCS 2006, 21).
[628] President Obama's strategy explicitly states "the need to pursue the ultimate defeat of al-Qa'ida and its affiliates." (White House Archives 2011, 7).
[629] Senate Foreign relations Chairman John Kerry testified in May of 2011 that bin Laden's death "does not signal the end of terrorism. Al-Qaeda still exists, motivated by the same vitriol and warped ideology that has always been the organization's trademark." (Senate Foreign Relations Testimony 2011). Obama's 2011 National Strategy for Counterterrorism also stated the view that al-Qaeda was ideologically driven, saying that al-Qaeda leaders call on their followers "to use violence in pursuit of its ideological goals." (Obama 2011, 12).

The first two core principles in Obama's 2011 National Strategy for Counterterrorism (NSC) are "adhering to U.S. core values" and "building security partnerships."[630] These principles constrained the use of force. (Obama 2011, 4).[631] While no country has a perfect record, liberal democracies are generally more constrained both morally and institutionally by the need to adhere to these values than authoritarian regimes like Russia (as will be explored in the next chapter). Obama was willing to use extrajudicial force to counter an imminent threat.[632]

The 2011 NSC started out by noting that since 2008, the U.S. has "eliminated more key al Qa'ida leaders in rapid succession, than at any time since September 11, 2001." It reaffirmed U.S. decisive victory strategy against al-Qaeda central, stating, "we now have the opportunity to seize a turning point in our effort to disrupt, dismantle, and ultimately defeat al Qa'ida. (Obama 2011, preface).[633] It cited "the President's top national security priorities: disrupting, dismantling, and eventually defeating al-Qa'ida and its affiliates." It also stated the need to defeat al Qaeda's ideology. (1). Regarding al-Qaeda central, the NSC calls for "preventing al-Qa'ida's return." (13). This suggests the perception that al-Qaeda central in Afghanistan was largely defeated while al-Qaeda in Pakistan was difficult to target due to external constraints.

AQ Affiliates

The U.S. strategy towards al-Qaeda affiliates was, and continues to be, decisive victory despite taking on attributes of offensive denial. A glaring demonstration of this is the statement that contains the phrase that became a sort of mantra for the Obama administration, "success also requires strategic patience: Although some of these end states may not be realized for many years, they will remain the focus of what the United States aims to achieve." (Obama 2011, 2).[634]

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[630] The NSC noted the need for cooperation with Pakistan in to defeat al-Qaeda in the FATA region, however, this was not forthcoming and U.S. operations in Pakistan were mostly limited.
[631] These "U.S. core values" are listed as: "respecting human rights, fostering good governance, respecting privacy and civil liberties, committing to security and transparency, and upholding the rule of law." (Obama 2011, 4).
[632] New York Times national security reporter Scott Shane wrote: "after a legal review, President Obama had added Awlaki to the kill list, authorizing his capture or killing on the basis that he posed an imminent threat to the United States. He was killed in an American drone strike in Yemen in September 2011 along with an American acolyte, Samir Khan, with whom he had published the slick English-language Al-Qaeda magazine Inspire." (Shane 2015).
[633] The document stated: "the United States deliberately uses the word "war" to describe our relentless campaign against al-Qa'ida," and we are at war with a specific organization—al-Qa'ida." (2).
[634] The Obama administration adopted "strategic patience" not only regarding al-Qaeda but also North Korea, China and Russia. Obama's 2015 NSS applies it to ISIS as well. (Korte 2015).

By 2010, Iraq had emerged from its civil war and AQI had become irrelevant. (Mannina 2016). However, Obama's support for Shia partisan Nouri al-Maliki, was regarded as a blow against the Sunnis who had fought alongside the U.S. against AQI. Writing in 2014, Ali Khedery, argued that by 2010, he "urging the vice president of the United States and the White House senior staff to withdraw their support for Maliki." He claims that he had "come to realize that if he remained in office, he would create a divisive, despotic and sectarian government that would rip the country apart and devastate American interests." (Khedery 2014).[635]

Beinart suggests that the Obama administration "never publicly challenged Maliki's power grab… perhaps because they believed his claim that Iraq's Shiites would never accept a Sunni-aligned government." (Beinart 2014). Others argue that Obama supported Maliki out of a desire to withdraw from Iraq as quickly as possible. (Sky 2015).[636] Both of these positions support the argument that Obama's preferences—for majority rule democracy in Iraq and to withdraw U.S. forces—distorted U.S. strategy from solidifying what appeared to be a trajectory towards decisively defeating AQI.

By 2011, al-Qaeda affiliated movements had taken root in the "Middle East, East Africa, the Maghreb and Sahel regions of northwest Africa, Central Asia, and Southeast Asia." (Obama 2011, 4). A key component of the 2011 NSC was to "degrade links between al-Qa'ida and its affiliates and adherents."[637] The strategy called to "isolate al-Qa'ida from local and regional affiliates." (9). The language called for U.S. "partners in the region—Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Yemen, and others—to take the lead." (14). This approach is indicative of what some call Obama's "leading from behind" approach. Krauthammer went so far as to call it "the Obama Doctrine."[638] (Krauthammer 2011).

Between "strategic patience" and "leading from behind," by 2011 the war effort took on a small global footprint. Congress and the population did not perceive the need for urgency due to

[635] Ali Khedery was the longest continuously serving American official in Iraq. He served as a special assistant to five U.S. ambassadors and as a senior adviser to three heads of U.S. Central Command.
[636] Emma Sky, author of *the Unraveling: High Hopes and Missed Opportunities in Iraq*, claimed that "U.S. officials became convinced that the quickest way to form a government was to keep Maliki as prime minister, and to cajole other Iraqis into accepting this." (Sky 2015).
[637] Affiliates refers to groups that have sworn allegiance to al Qaeda, adherents are individuals or groups with no formal ties to al-Qaeda that act in accordance with al Qaeda's ideological demands.
[638] Although "lead from behind" was originally used by a White House official to describe Obama's Libya policy, it was seen by some as representative of his foreign policy in general, including in the GWOT. (Carafano 2015).

increasingly effective management. This is alluded to in the NSC statement: "we have placed our CT campaign in a context that does not dominate the lives of the American people." (Obama 2011, 1).[639]

The U.S. State Department stated: "the best strategy for dealing with AQIM remains working with regional governments to increase their capability, foster regional cooperation, and counter violent extremism." The U.S. continued to bolster this approach.[640]

In line with socialization logic, Obama described the effort against AQIM in terms that leave no doubt as to the view that they cannot be bargained with. The specific wording called for the "long-term eradication of AQIM." (Obama 2011, 16). In the years following, U.S. efforts have mainly been to aid regional states conduct counterterrorism, and to support a multilateral approach with varying success. Allies have also played a key role. France led an initiative against AQIM in Mali and against Boko Haram, a powerful al-Qaeda affiliate operating primarily in Nigeria and Chad.[641] (Laub and Masters 2015).

The Obama Doctrine Applied to the Arab Spring and the 2011 Iraq Withdrawal

Characteristics of the Obama administration harmed but did not shift the U.S. effort to decisively defeat al-Qaeda affiliates. Obama's predisposition towards democracy promotion unintentionally harmed the decisive victory campaign by supporting the Arab Spring uprisings which led to regime collapse. His domestic politics driven motivation for withdrawing from Iraq led to a premature withdrawal of forces. Both of these decisions created vacuums of power that fostered and sustained al-Qaeda affiliates. Support for the Arab Spring does not suggest that domestic motives better explain U.S. strategy towards al-Qaeda because the harm was

[639] This is not a normative argument over more or less use of resources to counter al Qaeda. I define the state's optimal strategy as the one that will bring the conflict to an end sooner, not as the cheapest in terms of blood and treasure, or diplomatic and domestic political cost.

[640] The State Department-led Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Partnership in North West Africa includes military and police train-and-equip programs, counter radicalization programs, and public diplomacy efforts." Additional assistance is provided bilaterally. This includes an expanding role of Special Forces led "advise and assist" missions. (Thomas 2018, 17). In 2014, the U.S. backed the French initiative to create the G5 Joint Sahel Force. This multilateral military coalition is an "African counterterror operation supported by international partners (France, US, European Union and United Nations) and 'not an external counterterror operation.'" The U.S. pledged 60 million dollars to this force in 2017. (Essa 2017).

[641] In December 2012, "the UN Security Council authorized a military peacekeeping mission in Mali, known as MINUSMA, for which regional coalition Economic Community of West African States pledged thousands of troops. However, a rebel advance southward in January 2013, prior to the deployment of African forces, prompted Bamako to request immediate military assistance from France. French forces retook Gao, Kidal, and Timbuktu, pushing AQIM militants northward into the mountains." (Laub and Masters 2015).

unintentional. However, Obama's decision to withdraw U.S. troops from Iraq, despite clearly understanding that they had not achieved their mission of defeating AQI and the dangers of premature withdrawal, does suggest that regarding U.S. withdrawal from Iraq, U.S. strategy is better explained by domestic politics than by Socialization logic.

Obama's 2011 NSC called the Arab Spring helpful to discrediting al-Qaeda's ideology (Obama 2011, 12). The collapse of regimes from Syria, to Libya and Egypt, provided fertile ground for the rise of including al-Qaeda affiliates. AQIM benefited greatly from the collapse of the Gaddafi regime in Libya, the Ben Ali regime in Tunisia and the insurgency in Mali. [642] While Obama's support for revolutions intended to bring about democracy in the Arab Middle East, it ended up running counter to the pursuit of decisive victory over al-Qaeda.

The Obama administration published its 2011 NSC six months prior to its withdrawal of troops from Iraq. This document noted how years of instability following Bush's overthrow of Saddam's regime "enabled groups such as al-Qa'ida in Iraq (AQI) to spread chaos and sectarian conflict." it also designated AQI as "the main focus of U.S. CT efforts in Iraq." It also confirmed that U.S. goals of "building Iraqi CT capacity to defeat AQI and to contribute to lasting peace and security in Iraq," were nowhere near reached." (Obama 2011, 9). This clear-eyed assessment from June 2011 makes Obama's October announcement that the U.S. was withdrawing troops only four-months later, against the advice of his generals, puzzling. (Scarborough 2014).

Obama clearly did not believe that these major gaps were rectified by October. Indeed, a 2010 internal review by U.S. military planners concluded that "if U.S. troops withdrew completely by 2011, Iraq's security forces would be unable to defend the country." (Korb and Brennan 2015). Obama repeatedly touted his intention to withdraw all U.S. troops from Iraq by the end of 2011, despite near unanimous support among his military advisers for a continued presence of 10,000 to 20,000 troops. (Senate Armed Services Committee 2011). In the years following U.S. withdrawal, AQI gained strength, eventually morphing into ISIS. (CTC 2019).

Explanations for Obama's withdrawal from Iraq range from personal dovishness to domestic politics and international conventions. In 2002 Senator Obama strongly opposed the war. In 2008, Bush and Iraqi Prime Minister al-Maliki signed a status of forces agreement that

[642] Tunisia, generally credited as emerging as a successful democracy, became the top recruitment center for ISIS.

said all U.S. troops would leave by December 2011.[643] Some commentators say Obama merely executed in 2011 what Bush signed in 2008. Others contend that status of forces agreements often are amended to adapt to security environments and that the Obama administration should have worked harder to extend U.S. troop presence until Iraqi government forces were capable of maintaining stability on their own. (Rogin 2011). Compelling evidence suggests that the Obama administration purposefully ensured that the status of forces agreement would not be renewed, guaranteeing his preplanned decision to withdraw U.S. forces from Iraq. (Mannina 2016).[644]

Obama had vowed to end the war in Iraq as a presidential candidate, but upon taking office he said the U.S. had an "absolute obligation" to "stay in the country as long as it took to achieve success." His 2011 NSC clearly showed that he did not believe success was achieved, or even near at hand, when he decided to withdraw. Obama cast the end of the Iraq war in the context of a smaller U.S. military presence around the world. He stated that "'the tide of war is receding,' pointing to the start of a troop withdrawal in Afghanistan." (Montopoli 2011). This suggests that Obama's dovishness and domestic political concerns largely explain U.S. strategy both in the case of the Iraq withdrawal and the 2009 announcement of rigid timelines for an Afghanistan withdrawal. Finally, Obama announced the U.S. troop withdrawal from Iraq at a point in which the U.S. public held a generally optimistic outlook on the U.S. war effort in Iraq, the highest level of public support since 2005. (Pinto 2011).

The Obama administration did not see decisive victory as achieved although it clearly viewed that outcome as optimal. It also had relatively low internal constraints shown by

[643] The main contention over extending U.S. troop presence was the Iraqi parliament's opposition to U.S. insistence that it grant immunity from Iraqi law to U.S. troops who stayed past 2011. (Korb and Brennan 2015

[644] Mannina argues that U.S. withdrawal was a "foregone conclusion. He states: "Obama's insistence that US troops could only remain in Iraq under new SOFA came as a surprise to both US negotiators and to Prime Minister Maliki, who had been working off the understanding that the US presence could be extended through an exchange of diplomatic notes. The Bush administration had spent nearly a year negotiating the 2008 SOFA, but the Obama administration did not begin negotiations until June 2011, less than six months prior to the planned completion of the US troop withdrawal. The condensed negotiation timeline added to the confusion and ambiguity, complicating the new agreement's chances of success. Obama's insistence on legal immunity for US troops, while ostensibly reasonable, was an artificial barrier designed to kill the deal. When the same issue had arisen in 2008, Bush's lead negotiator, Brett McGurk, had devised a creative solution. He asserted that it was possible to "offer the Iraqis in principle what they say they need… while retaining in practice essential protections for all US military personnel in Iraq…. Obama refused to accept this solution, which had already been passed in Iraq's parliament and had been implemented without incident in the intervening period." (Mannina 2016).

relatively high public support for the war. This suggests that Obama's personal ideology impacted strategy more than its perception of al-Qaeda's type or the constraints environment.

Al-Qaeda Central:

From al-Qaeda's central's expulsion from Afghanistan in 2001 until 2015, "U.S. officials asserted that the group had only a minimal presence (defined as fewer than 100) in Afghanistan itself." According to Obama's Afghanistan advisor Bruce Riedel, the U.S. defense community believed al-Qaeda to have been largely decimated and the counterterrorism war largely won in Afghanistan by 2013. (Riedel Interview 2019). The U.S. officially ended its combat role in Afghanistan in 2014, but U.S. troops continued to engage in combat activities despite this official declaration, primarily aiding ANSF forces but also carrying out airstrikes against al-Qaeda and other militants. "In October 2015, the then-top U.S. and NATO commander in Afghanistan, General John Campbell, stated that, 'al-Qaeda has attempted to rebuild its support networks and planning capabilities with the intention of reconstituting its strike capabilities against the U.S. homeland and Western interests.'"[645] This led the U.S. to increase its efforts, demonstrating the continuation of a decisive victory that began in 2001. (Thomas 2018).[646]

Al-Qaeda Affiliates: Tightened ROEs, but Continued Pressure

In 2013, Obama introduced measures whereby strikes in areas of countries that were not active warzones, such as Pakistan and Yemen, had to go through an elaborate sign-off process with the White House. This created cumbersome bureaucratic hurdles when targets often appeared and disappeared quickly, decreasing the ability to use decisive force. (Perkiss, Serle and Fielding-Smith 2017). The Obama administration also interpreted the AUMF to limit which affiliates could be targeted.[647] This made the U.S. less able to target leadership. This did not

[645] In late 2015, U.S. Special Operations forces and their Afghan partners "discovered and destroyed a large al-Qaeda training camp in Qandahar Province." This indicated that al-Qaeda had expanded its presence in Afghanistan.
[646] "In April 2016, U.S. commanders publicly raised their estimates of AQ fighters in Afghanistan to between 100 and 300, and reported an increasingly close relationship between Al-Qaedaand the Afghan Taliban. In December 2016, U.S. officials announced that 250 AQ operatives (50 leaders and 200 other fighters) were killed or captured in 2016, including the AQ commander for northeast Afghanistan, Faruq Qahtani." "U.S. and Afghan officials reported killing over 80 members of Al-Qaedain December 2017." (Thomas 2018, 7). As of 2018, Approximately 2,000 of the 15,000 U.S. troops in Afghanistan conducted counterterrorism missions, including against al-Qaedain Afghanistan. U.S. forces continue to target senior leadership, primarily using manned and unmanned aircraft. (15).
[647] The Obama administration "followed a more limiting interpretation of the Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF, P.L. 107-40) enacted by Congress in September 2001, the primary law authorizing U.S. operations against Al-Qaedaand the Taliban. As al-Qaedaaffiliates emerged starting in 2004, U.S. administrations established categories of Al Qaeda-linked groups, each of which carries potentially distinct legal and policy implications. These categories include 'Associated Forces' and 'Affiliates.' 'Once established as co-belligerents, Associated Forces were

correspond to a change in U.S. perception of al Qaeda's type, but it also was not a shift in overall strategy. The Obama administration pursued decisive victory, but it was more apprehensive of the potential adverse strategic impacts of less constrained use of force.[648] In a May 2013 speech, Obama stated: "Our systematic effort to dismantle terrorist organizations must continue. But this war, like all wars, must end." (Brown 2013).

Rise of ISIS, no Official Distraction from Fight Against al-Qaeda Central and Affiliates.

The rise of ISIS caught the U.S. by surprise. In January 2014, Obama called it "al Qaeda's JV team." (Remnick 2014). By that Spring they had taken Mosul and laid siege to Baghdad. While the Obama administration eventually led a coalition to defeat ISIS, neither it nor the Trump administration halted operations against al-Qaeda central or al-Qaeda affiliates.

Obama reaffirmed and strengthened his administration's move away from forceful kinetic operations to a slow grinding approach to defeating al-Qaeda central and affiliates. His 2015 NSS began by stating:

> Globally, we have moved beyond the large ground wars in Iraq and Afghanistan that defined so much of American foreign policy over the past decade. Compared to the nearly 180,000 troops we had in Iraq and Afghanistan when I took office, we now have fewer than 15,000 deployed in those countries. (Obama 2015, Introduction).

The NSS notes the transition to a slow-rolling effort to defeat al-Qaeda that was argued to be tailored to a long-term struggle. The NSS directly states: "The challenges we face require strategic patience and persistence." (Introduction). It went on to elaborate:

> We are now pursuing a more sustainable approach that prioritizes targeted counterterrorism operations, collective action with responsible partners, and increased efforts to prevent the growth of violent extremism and radicalization. (9).

The NSS also notes the Obama administration's determination to act within the constraints of international and domestic law. However, regarding imminent threats, Obama clearly prioritized national security, showing the limits of these constraints.[649]

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considered legal targets of U.S. military force per the laws of armed conflict.' The Affiliates category contains groups that the Obama Administration considered the United States as not authorized to use force against based on the authorities granted by the AUMF." (Thomas 2018, 14).

[648] Obama stated that the tightening of targeting rules was intended to "address the underlying grievances and conflicts that feed extremism." (Brown 2013).

[649] Obama's decision to kill bin Laden without notifying Pakistan showed that the U.S. perceived its external constraints to not be absolute. His order to kill U.S. citizen Awlaki in Yemen, showed how, while more constrained than an autocracy, the U.S. did not see its internal constraints as prohibitively high. This despite officially stating the intention to begin "embracing constraints on our use of new technologies like drones." (Obama 2015, Introduction).

> We will continue to act lawfully. Outside of areas of active hostilities, we endeavor to detain, interrogate, and prosecute terrorists through law enforcement. However, when there is a continuing, imminent threat, and when capture or other actions to disrupt the threat are not feasible, we will not hesitate to take decisive action." (Obama 2015, 9).

Obama's personal ideology is similar to his predecessor's in the predilection to promote democratization. Obama's policy of working with illiberal partners to defeat al-Qaeda affiliates has followed a somewhat schizophrenic pattern, pulled between the determination to uphold democratization and human rights and pragmatic counterterrorism partnership with these regimes. The 2015 NSS claims to "support democratic transitions," but also notes how democratic transition often creates instability that harms counterterrorism efforts.[650]

It also states the U.S. intention to "continue to push for reforms in authoritarian countries not currently undergoing wholesale transitions." (21). In some ways this effort has harmed counterterrorism operations because it caused the U.S. to cut back cooperation with indigenous security forces who were not seen as living up to U.S. human rights standards. The most prominent example being the U.S. freezing of military aid to Egypt after Abdel Fattah al-Sisi seized power from the democratically elected Mohammed Morsi in 2013. Obama's pragmatism seemed to have overruled his disapproval of Sisi's coup when he reinstated aid in March, 2015. (Rampton 2015). Notably, Obama retained the option of working with Sisi when he declined to call Morsi's overthrow a coup. (Kirkpatrick 2018). Obama's policy towards Nigeria followed a similar dynamic.[651]

U.S. strategy towards al-Qaeda and ISIS were similar. In some cases, like Boko Haram in 2015, al-Qaeda affiliates swore allegiance to ISIS. This did not change U.S. strategy towards them as they continued to be considered a type A NSA. Nor did it detracted from the U.S. effort to defeat al-Qaeda. The 2015 NSS did use language that called to "defeat ISIS," contrasted with the call for "keeping pressure on al Qaeda." This illustrated the slower form of decisive victory

[650] The 2015 NSS states: "The popular uprisings that began in the Arab world took place in a region with weaker democratic traditions, powerful authoritarian elites, sectarian tensions, and active violent extremist elements, so it is not surprising setbacks have thus far outnumbered triumphs. Yet, change is inevitable in the Middle East and North Africa." (Obama 2015, 20).

[651] Obama said that Nigerian leader Buhari had a "very clear agenda" for defeating extremism. The U.S. has committed five million dollars to aid Nigeria's fight against al-Qaeda affiliate Boko Haram since Buhari came to power. However, "the US refuses to sell weapons to Nigeria because of concerns over its army's human rights record." (BBC 2015). As noted by the U.N. Security Council, "Boko Haram has maintained ties to al-Qaeda's North African branch, AQIM." (Emerson 2019).

strategy that the U.S. pursued towards al-Qaeda affiliates. (Obama 2015, Introduction).[652] This makes sense considering the dispersed nature of al Qaeda affiliates versus the at-the-time physical territorial control of the ISIS "caliphate."

In September 2016, National Counter Terrorism Center Director Nicholas Rasmussen stated to Congress"

> The tremendous efforts we are undertaking to counter the ISIL threat are absolutely warranted, but I want to stress that we still view al-Qa'ida and the various al-Qa'ida affiliates and nodes as a principal counterterrorism priority... We would not tier our priorities in such a way that downgrades al-Qa'ida in favor of a greater focus on ISIL. When we are looking at the terrorism threats that we face as a nation, including to the Homeland, al-Qa'ida still figures prominently in that analysis."

One year later, Rasmussen reiterated that, "...as focused as we are on addressing ISIS, Al Qaida has never stopped being a primary counterterrorism priority." (Thomas 2018, 5).

Al-Qaeda affiliates continued to gain strength despite U.S. led counterterrorism efforts and aid to indigenous security forces. Much of this was due to the growing instability in the aftermath of the U.S. withdrawal from Iraq, the collapse of Egyptian power under Morsi in the Sinai, the collapse of Libya into an arms laden state of anarchy, the civil war in Syria, and ongoing state fragility in the Sahel region and Somalia.[653]

The Nusra Front in Syria in 2011 developed into a formidable al-Qaeda affiliate by 2016. (Thomas 2018, 9). The confusing array of loyalties and "enemy's enemy" dynamics in Syria kept the U.S. from effectively supporting counterterrorism efforts in Syria. [654] Even leading to a confusing situation in which Syrian rebels backed by the Pentagon were fighting rebel groups backed by the CIA. (Bulos, Hennigan and Bennet, 2016).[655]

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[652] Obama's 2015 NSS starts out by noting: "We are leading over 60 partners in a global campaign to degrade and ultimately defeat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in Iraq and Syria, including by working to disrupt the flow of foreign fighters to those countries, while keeping pressure on al-Qa'ida." (Obama 2015, Introduction).
[653] An Atlantic article notes how instability has allowed al-Qaeda to flourish: "al-Qaeda now, with its leadership split between Iran, Pakistan, and Syria, has quietly rebuilt itself to the point of being able to call on tens of thousands of foot soldiers." (Levy and Scott Clark 2017).
[654] U.S. official assessments dismissed their leader's July 2016 announcement of splitting with al Qaeda, with U.S. officials "downplaying the announcement as a rebranding effort, noting the continuing role and presence of Al-Qaeda operatives within JFS." (Thomas 2018, 9).
[655] The U.S. array of rebel and regime forces in Syria is convoluted. Many of the rebels fighting the Alawite Syrian regime were Sunnis aligned with al-Qaeda and ISIS. Working with Assad—partnered with Iran, Russia and Hezbollah—was out of the question for the U.S. Notably, while not working with Assad, the Trump administration ended the official U.S. call for any solution to Syria to necessitate Assad stepping down. (Wright 2017).

The U.S establishing U.S. Army Africa Command in 2008 to support partners and direct military operations as part of the GWOT. The U.S. threw its support behind the French led G5 Sahel Force created in 2014, to counter al-Qaeda affiliates in this region. This has led to the killing and capture of several key AQIM commanders. (Thomas 2018, 9). In Somalia, "the Obama administration had officially designating the al Shabab group as an al-Qaeda affiliate at the end of November 2016." (Perkiss, Serle and Fielding-Smith 2017).[656] U.S. efforts against al Shabab expanded to include a limited U.S. military "train, advise, and accompany" mission inside Somalia. (Perkiss, Serle and Fielding-Smith 2017). "In April 2016, "small numbers" of U.S. personnel deployed to Yemen to support operations against AQAP.

The U.S. considers AQAP to be the most threatening al-Qaeda affiliate to U.S. national security.[657] The U.S. also perceived a substantial threat from the Khorasan Group.[658] On July 8, 2015, U.S. killed Muhsin al Fadhli, the leader of the Khorasan Group, in a targeted strike. Pentagon spokesman Capt. Jeff Davis said in a written statement: "his death will degrade and disrupt ongoing external operations of al-Qaeda against the United States and our allies and partners." (Crawford and Starr 2015).

The Trump Administration's Strategy: No Significant Shifts

The theme of this chapter has been continuity. This fits the predictions of socialization logic. The U.S. goals towards al-Qaeda central and affiliates follows the logic that conflict with archetypal terrorist groups can only be ended through a sustained campaign ending in decisive victory. When dealing with globally dispersed affiliates, this requires a generational struggle that due to its slow and steady application of force, can resemble management. The U.S. pursuit of victory against al-Qaeda affiliates resembles gradual strangulation, while the early U.S. victory over al-Qaeda central resembled a knockout blow, with the fighter vigilant should the defeated

[656] A Heritage Foundation report from 2002 predicted the rise of an al-Qaeda affiliate in Somalia. It noted, Somalia, "is a failed state whose lawless anarchy would permit terrorists to operate relatively freely. The al-Qaeda network has operated there in the past and has longstanding ties to a small minority of Somali Islamists." (Phillips 2002).
[657] Acting Director of the National Counterterrorism Center Lora Shiao described AQAP in December 2017 as 'the only known al-Qa'ida affiliate to have attempted a direct attack against the U.S.' adding that it 'continues to threaten and call for attacks against the U.S.'" (Thomas 2018, 8). In December 2017, the Trump Administration reported that a "small number of United States military personnel" operated against AQAP in Yemen, and CENTCOM later confirmed "multiple ground operations" in 2017." (17).
[658] Khorasan reportedly "intended to use Syria as a base of operations for attacks against the West." The official asserted that, "the Khorasan Group has the capability to conduct successful attacks in the U.S.." Military officials stated that al-Qaeda and Khorasan operatives "have one main goal, and this is to plan attacks in the west. That is what they do." (Thomas 2018, 11).

enemy attempt to rise again. This strategy, while fluctuating in intensity across and within administrations, has held steady through three very different presidencies.

Strangling al-Qaeda affiliates requires cutting off their ability to find safe haven to recruit, train and plan. In the long run this requires spreading stability like an ink blot, or "oil spot," as the 19th century counterinsurgent Gallieni put it. (Safire 2006). This requires supporting stability. Revolutions and regional conflicts are setbacks. In unstable regions, the U.S. strategy of slow and steady decisive victory requires carrying out strikes against terrorist leadership while working to build indigenous ability to control violence and govern. In 2017, the Trump administration viewed al-Qaeda affiliates as far from defeated and potentially gaining strength.[659]

Within months of taking office, Trump loosened restrictions on the military's ability to use force.[660] This followed advice that preceded his administration by several years, from top officials in Washington. (Mehta 2017).[661]

The Trump administration has not deviated from the strategy of decisive victory, but its methods differ in key ways from his predecessors. Trump does not share Obama or Bush's impulse to spread democracy and liberal values. His administration is more willing to work with dictators and human rights violators to combat terrorism and instability. Combined with an

[659] Due to the long-term nature of the U.S. decisive victory strategy, it is difficult to measure success. Optimists point to successful leadership targeting, increased partner capacity in some regions, and the lack of any spectacular attacks on U.S. soil since 2001. Pessimists point to the high price-tag of this "long-war," and the resilience of terrorist networks. "Al Qaeda's affiliates have proven resilient, with one expert describing them as 'resurgent.'" (Thomas 2018, 2). DNI Coats stated in early 2017, "while U.S. and global counterterrorism operations have significantly reduced al-Qaeda's ability to carry out large-scale attacks inside the U.S., al-Qaeda and its affiliates 'remain a significant counterterrorism threat overseas.'" Shiao described evolution in al-Qaeda's methods and organization as 'evidence of its resiliency' and that it 'retains the intent to carry out attacks' against the U.S." (6).

[660] The changes "relax constraints on drone strikes and commando raids outside of previously limited battlespace." It also expanded strikes to occur in countries where militants were operating but that the U.S. had previously not targeted. The ROEs also changed "to allow a more liberal approach to target selection." Under the new policy the U.S. could strike low level enemy fighters while previously it could only strike high level militants posing an imminent threat. In addition, "proposed drone attacks and raids would no longer have to undergo high-level vetting." An off-the-record official commented to the New York Times, "the replacement rules should be taken as 'clearer and less bureaucratic' than President Obama's." This gives drone operators and land forces commanders "fewer impediments to face before launching strikes." (Gormley 2017).

[661] Al Jazeera reported that "according to Micah Zenko, an expert on drones at the Council on Foreign Relations, Obama conducted one strike every 5.4 days; Trump has thus far averaged one strike or raid every 1.25 days." (Stone 2017). In Yemen, the U.S. launched 30 strikes against al-Qaedawithin a month of Trump's declaration of loosening the ROEs that Obama had tightened in 2013. That number was nearly as many as all of 2016. (Perkiss, Serle and Fielding-Smith 2017). U.S. counterterror airstrikes doubled in Trump's first year, including a significant increase in Yemen and Somalia. The amount of munitions dropped in 2017 approached levels last seen during the 2009-2012 surge. (Perkiss, Serle and Fielding-Smith 2017).

impulse for isolationism, this manifests in policies like supporting the proposition of Assad remaining in power in Syria, withdrawing U.S. troops in Syria and Afghanistan, and negotiating with the Taliban. Trump also loosened the ROEs for air strikes against al-Qaeda affiliates globally. There is significant debate over whether increased drone strikes help defeat terrorist organizations or counterproductively aid their recruitment.[662]

The U.S. continued its policy of hunting down and killing al-Qaeda leaders both in Afghanistan and among affiliates. The U.S. killed al-Qaeda's deputy leader Abu al Khayr al Masri in a drone strike in Idlib in February 2017. Trump also granted the U.S. military broader authority to carry out strikes in Somalia against al Shabab. (Reuters 2017). The increase in airstrikes as an operational tool allows the U.S. to pursue kinetic operations to degrade al-Qaeda in a casualty averse society. This allowed the U.S. to slowly work towards defeating affiliates, despite moderately high internal constraints, while denying their ability to target U.S. interests, denying them safe haven, and minimizing the risk of U.S. casualties. In November 2017, the U.S. received public approval from the Nigerien government to arm U.S. drones stationed there. (Baldor et. al 2017).

Building partner capacity has increased and was codified as a priority in the 2017 NSS and the 2018 National Defense Strategy (NDS). "The 2018 NDS names building "the capability required to counter violent extremism," among other threats, as a priority in Africa and the Middle East. In 2017, CENTCOM Commander General Joseph Votel stated:

> Building partner capacity is a lower-cost alternative to U.S. boots on the ground, has longer-term sustainability, and is necessary for interoperable, combined coalition operations… By building capacity and enabling partners to assume a larger role in providing for the stability and security of their sovereign spaces, we will enhance regional stability while still maintaining our critical access and influence in the Middle East and North Africa. (Thomas 2018, 16).

This official prioritization suggests that the U.S. sees maintaining the strategy of defeating al-Qaeda as a long-term effort for which the U.S. seeks to establish an approach that is sustainable given its internal and external environment.

[662] Cronin (2013) argued that drone strikes can be useful for short-term denial but in the long run they create more enemies. In the same issue of the journal, *Foreign Affairs*, Byman called drones "the centerpiece of U.S. counterterrorism strategy." He claimed that they performed remarkably, killing terrorist leaders and denying safe haven in Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia. He argued that this success cost less, risked less U.S. casualties and killed fewer civilians than alternative methods would have. (Byman 2013, 32).

Byman reviewed the U.S. counterterrorism strategy in 2017 and argued that U.S. counterterrorism efforts have substantially degraded al-Qaeda and its affiliates to the point of potential irrelevance under Zawahiri's leadership. (Byman 2017).[663] This relative success is not leading the U.S. to reduce focus. Increased targeting and loosened ROEs suggest that U.S. is still pursuing a decisive victory strategy. Socialization logic would predict this since the U.S. sees al-Qaeda as an archetypal terrorist organization, incapable of being deterred or moderated.

In 2018, Zawahiri's calls for renewed jihad appeared to have no impact on U.S. decision making, signaling the extent to which the U.S. viewed al-Qaeda central as impotent. (Benari 2018).[664] Indeed, on the 18th anniversary of 9/11, al-Qaeda leadership made no public threat to the U.S., marking the first time that they have failed to do so since 2001. Riedel believes that this strongly suggests that al-Qaeda central is largely defunct. (Riedel Interview 2019).

The Trump administration's strategy is not purely military. Like both prior administrations, victory is considered to require a whole of government approach. This includes countering the jihadist narrative to hurt their ability to recruit. While increasing military targeting of al-Qaeda affiliates, the Trump administration has increased Countering Violent Extremism efforts across all elements of national power.[665]

CONCLUSION

Currently, the U.S. is working to reduce external constraints that make it difficult to target leadership of al-Qaeda central due to their being based in Pakistan. This is being pursued

[663] Dr. Byman cited al-Qaeda as suffering a "major loss" when its Syrian affiliate, Hay'at Tahrir al Sham (HTS) "split from the al-Qaeda core in an acrimonious divorce." He argued that "HTS' apparent determination to focus on the Syrian theater rather than the global targets that al-Qaeda favors – hinders its ability to threaten the west and raises questions about its overall relevance under Ayman al-Zawahiri's leadership." (Byman 2017).

[664] Al-Qaeda leader al-Zawahiri "urged Muslims to carry out jihad against the United States as it prepares to move its embassy to Jerusalem, AFP reported. In a five-minute video entitled "Tel Aviv is Also a Land of Muslims," Zawahiri said America's decision to move its embassy to Jerusalem was evidence that negotiations and "appeasement" have failed Palestinians. U.S. President Donald Trump 'was clear and explicit, and he revealed the true face of the modern Crusade, where standing down and appeasement does not work with them, but only resistance through the call and jihad,' Zawahiri said in the video." (Benari 2018).

[665] "Examples of CVE programs in the Middle East and Africa for which funding was obligated in 2017 include: $1 million in NADR/CTPF-OCO to support the expansion of the International Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism Capacity Building Clearinghouse Mechanism (ICCM) for use in Lebanon, Mali, Somalia, and Jordan (among others); $6 million in FY16 for CVE programs in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Nigeria under the TSCTP; $4 million in ESF and ESF-OCO for Africa Security Challenges Pilot Programs, including a program to provide CVE messaging in the Lake Chad Basin; and $12.5 million in NADR and CTPF-OCO for a Counterterrorism Partnership with Kenya, including programs to "strengthen the response of Kenya's criminal justice system to terrorism and violent extremism." (Thomas 2018, 18).

through negotiations with Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan, with whom the Trump administration has used economic pressure in an effort to compel action against terrorists in the FATA region and Afghanistan. (Chakravarty 2019).[666]

Decisive victory against al-Qaeda central has also curbed its affiliates.[667] "As Peter Bergan noted in 2012, a year after Osama bin Laden's death, the group's leadership had been destroyed, its resources had disappeared and its support among the Arab public had plummeted. It has not launched an attack on Western soil since the [2005] London bombings." (Zakaria 2015).

Current U.S. strategy in the aftermath of relative victory over al-Qaeda central entails keeping it down (what Seth Jones calls "small footprint"). This includes increased ISR, increased building partner capacity and continued counterterrorism. In Afghanistan and Pakistan this means making sure al-Qaeda is unable to regroup. This means that negotiations with the Taliban must include provisions for continued coalitional counterterrorism operations or they will likely fail.[668] Towards global affiliates sustained decisive victory means continued pressure through an all-of-government approach, working with partners and carrying out counterterrorism strikes.[669]

The continuity of the U.S. decisive victory strategy against an opponent it sees as type A across three very different administrations and international contexts demonstrates the explanatory power of socialization logic. The sustained decisive victory strategy over nearly two-decades of conflict show that the U.S. decision to "knock-out" al Qaeda central was not ad hoc, nor was it intended by al-Qaeda. Finally, the U.S. did not abandon military efforts against

[666] In a July, 2019 meeting between Trump and Prime Minister Khan, Khan travelled to Washington "to 'reset' bilateral ties," after "President Trump had cancelled US$1.3 billion in economic and military aid, blaming Pakistan for deceit and treachery in promoting terrorism and playing the spoiler in Afghanistan." (Chakravarty 2019).
[667] Al-Qaeda affiliates continue to operate in Africa, the Middle East and South East Asia. The U.S. views al-Qaeda as a diminished but still salient threat to national security. As such, it continues to target al-Qaeda globally. An August 2019 U.S. missile strike killed over 40 senior al-Qaeda leaders in Syria. (BBC 2019).
[668] Current U.S. negotiations in Afghanistan suggest maintaining counterterrorism to prevent theorist resurgence, in what Pape calls an "over-the-horizon" counterterrorism policy. (Pape 2019). Regarding al-Qaeda central Senate Armed Services Committee chair Inhofe said that he would be opposed to the complete removal of troops. Senator Graham said John McCain told him regarding the war effort, "boy, you've got to keep it going." (Bo Williams 2018)
[669] Al-Qaeda affiliates are too dispersed to be decisively defeated in a rapid military campaign, but the U.S. is working with partner nations to systematically eradicate them. This effort will likely be generational until weak states can deny safe haven. A joint U.S.-Afghan raid killed the leader of al-Qaida in the Indian Subcontinent provides a recent example of sustainable pressure and targeting. (Snow 2019).

al-Qaeda affiliates out of frustration. The U.S. did not have a coherent al-Qaeda strategy pre 9/11 because it was not prioritized as a critical threat. The U.S. invaded Iraq in 2003 based on faulty assumptions, due to seeing it as necessary to decisively defeating al Qaeda. Bush supported de-Baathification and Obama supported the Arab Spring out of a Vindicationist worldview that supported democracy promotion. Both leaders sincerely thought democracy promotion would help, or at least not hurt, the effort to defeat al-Qaeda. Therefore, they do not represent a purposeful deviation from the decisive victory strategy.

Obama withdrew from Iraq prematurely in 2011 against the advice of his defense establishment due to domestic politics. This despite compelling evidence that there was a strong chance that this would negate the decisive victory strategy. Therefore, insofar as withdrawing from Iraq in 2011 was a shift from a decisive victory strategy (specifically in Iraq), this particular instance is better explained by domestic politics, namely, Obama wanting to fulfil the campaign promise of "getting out of Iraq." Indeed, he consistently campaigned on this "achievement" in his 2012 re-election bid. In the GWOT, the Obama administration increased its use of force, including drone strikes, and the Trump administration expanded these as well. Both administrations sought to defeat al-Qaeda affiliates by building partner capacity as well.

The U.S. continues to see al-Qaeda as a type A archetypal terrorist organization. As such, it sees negotiation as impossible and uses force not to moderate but only to defeat the opponent. The relative success of U.S. efforts to slowly neutralize the threat posed by al-Qaeda and gradually roll it back through a whole of government based, slow rolling decisive victory approach, makes deviation from this approach, such as large-scale mobilization of force, unlikely. The U.S. will likely continue working with partners to slowly choke-out al-Qaeda instead of mobilizing large-scale capabilities to land a knockout blow.

Chapter 7: Russia Versus Chechens: Low Constraints, Optimal Strategy, Resolved Conflict

Of the five cases of asymmetrical state versus non-state conflict examined, Russia's conflict in Chechnya is the only one to reach a formal conclusion and it is the shortest. President Putin oversaw rapid economic and military growth from its nadir in the early 1990s. Unlike under President Yeltsin, Putin's Russia had minimal internal and external constraints and Putin actively worked to reduce them. Socialization logic provides a more complete explanation for Russia's strategy towards the Chechens than Realism which only explains its use of military force in general. By 1999, Russia saw the Chechens as a type B NSA, with high ideological drive, difficult to target leadership and potentially high governance function that could be exploited. Under Putin, Russia's minimal constraints, including a rebuilt military, allowed it to credibly threaten decisive victory, socializing Chechen rebel leadership to choose pragmatism and accept a bargain whereby they receive money and power in exchange for loyalty. The first shift in Russia's strategy was Yeltsin's 1994 failed invasion. Facing high internal and moderate external constraints, Yeltsin shifted to a management strategy in 1996 which also failed due to his inability to deter the Chechens, not due to their type but due to Russia's military weakness. The third shift was in 1999 when Putin launched a decisive victory campaign and then boosted Kadyrov's governance function. For the next decade Putin used force augmented by "Chechenization" to eliminate remaining rebels. In 2009 Putin declared the conflict over. Unlike Israel or the U.S.—which had military superiority but also significant constraints—Russia was able to combine decisive force with backing an illiberal strongman to achieve pacification.

Overview

Russia's conflict with Chechnya dates back to Russian territorial expansion in the 19th century. The period in focus spans from the Chechen declaration of independence in 1991 through President Putin's 2009 declaration of the end of counterterrorism operations. In 1991, as the Soviet Union was collapsing and territories were breaking away from Moscow's rule one-by-one, Chechens overthrew the Communist leader Doku Zavgayev. Dzhokhar Dudayev won a presidential poll and proclaimed Chechnyan independence. At this time, Russia perceived Chechen separatists to be a type C NSA. Their aims were pragmatically motivated, they had high

governance function potential and Russia struggled to target their leadership.[670] Russia was relatively constrained due to a collapsed economy, a weak government, a decrepit military and a major reduction in international clout.

Despite Russia's severe decline in the 1990s, Yeltsin was unwilling to allow Chechnya to break away. There are several proposed explanations for this: The region's geostrategic importance, not to reward terrorism, not to set a precedent that would lead to more separatist movements, security concerns over a potential zone of instability on the soft underbelly of Russia. Less important reasons included the region's petroleum and the threat posed by rampant organized crime. Yeltsin followed the precepts of Realism, rationally but mistakenly believing that Russia could maximize its security by easily quashing Chechen separatism and deterring its resumption through military intimidation.

Yeltsin was influenced by his Minister of Defense Pavel Grachev to use force to prevent cessation. Grachev argued that it would be a quick and easy victory. (Urbanovich interview 2017). This was not the case. In 1994, Russia's first military campaign into Chechnya since the fall of the Soviet Union was a disaster. Following severe and publicly broadcast losses, Yeltsin faced eroding domestic support in the newly democratic Russia. In response, Yeltsin sought to manage the conflict. Yeltsin withdrew Russian forces in 1996 and signed a peace deal in 1997 that allowed Chechnya to become de-facto independent but avoided a discussion of de-jure independence. Yeltsin signed this deal with Aslan Maskhadov's government following Maskhadov's victory in Chechen presidential elections which Russia recognized.

Yeltsin clearly regarded the Chechen rebels as a separatist movement, albeit with some jihadist undercurrents. Separatism—which seeks territorial sovereignty—is a prime example of pragmatic drive. Unlike the most highly ideologically driven groups, pragmatically driven groups—like states—can be influenced by the threat of material costs imposed by war. However— also like states—just because they can be deterred does not mean that they will be. Deterrence requires the ability to credibly signal capability and resolve to impose unbearable costs. In 1994, Russia was severely weakened following the collapse of the USSR, suffering severe economic and military decline and a major hit to its prestige. The threat that Russia posed

[670] Chechen governance function was high, with moderate accountability and high capacity. Chechen factions contested Dudayev's control, but he did unite the Chechens militarily in opposition to Russia in times of conflict.

to Chechen separatists at this period was insufficient to deter them from seceding. When Russia's capabilities were tested, they proved insufficient.[671]

From 1997-1999, Chechen violence steadily eroded the fragile stability that followed the 1997 formal peace declaration that Yeltsin signed from a position of weakness. From 1998-1999 Chechens kidnapped several high-profile Russian officials, some of whom they killed.[672] In early 1999, Maskhadov announced that Islamic religious law would be phased in as Chechen law over three years. Wahabi elements had been increasing their influence in Chechnya since the start of the First Chechen War. These factors bolstered Russia's perception that Chechen separatists were more ideologically driven to attack Russia than pragmatically driven by the desire for self-determination. In late 1999, Chechen rebels carried out incursions into Dagestan with the aim of creating an Islamic state. This further bolstered this perception. From 1996 through 1999 it became increasingly clear that Maskhadov could not control Islamist factions and therefore had low governance function. By late 1999, Russia saw the Chechen rebels as a type A or B NSA, with low governance function, moderate leadership targetability and high ideological drive.

In September 1999, Russian authorities blamed a series of apartment bombings on Chechen rebels and launched the Second Chechen War. Regardless of whether the Federal Security Service (FSB) carried out these attacks as a pretext to invade Chechnya, as some allege, or they were carried out by Chechen terrorists, the result was the significant reduction of constraints on Russian use of military force.[673] Putin, the head of the FSB, had just been named Yeltsin's prime minister. He achieved overnight popularity by vowing revenge against Chechen terrorists. Putin was given charge of the 1999 campaign in Chechnya, where he used decisive force without regard for civilian casualties.[674] Due to his success, he was easily elected president.

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[671] Like states, even the most pragmatic groups cannot be deterred if the state cannot credibly signal capability and resolve. Yeltsin used force because he could not deter Chechnya from seceding, and Russia's poor military showing from 1994-1996 further eroded its ability to now compel Chechnya to revoke its secession.
[672] This will be discussed in detail in this chapter's section that examines the interwar "management" period.
[673] There is substantial debate over who was responsible for these apartment bombings, with many postulating that it could have been a Russian false flag attack, timed to boost Yeltsin and his Prime Minister Putin's popularity. Many journalists involved in investigating these attacks were conspicuously murdered. (Satter 2016).
[674] Civilian casualty statistics are hard to pin down due to conflicting methodologies and estimates. This is the case in many conflicts where militants often do not wear uniforms and official record keeping is unreliable. Estimates of civilians casualties for the Second Chechen range between 20,000 and 200,000 from 1999-2009. (Trotter 2013).

By February 2000, Russian troops had captured Grozny and razed much of the city to the ground. In May 2000, Putin declared direct rule from Moscow. Russian strategically used massive force to signal to the Chechens that they faced decisive defeat. This effectively socialized Chechen leadership into putting pragmatism ahead of ideology for the sake of survival. Russia fostered this shift towards pragmatism with patronage and military support. In June 2000, Russia appointed separatist-turned-loyalist Ahmad Kadyrov to lead the Russian administration in Chechnya. Russia increased Chechen governance function to increase its ability to deter Chechen violence. By appointing Kadyrov as a strongman beholden to Moscow, Putin increased Chechen leadership targetability. This essentially transformed Chechen separatists into a type D NSA. Putin's Chechenization strategy of looking for cooperative leaders yielded operational and strategic success. It allowed military force to be used with maximum efficiency while paving the way for stable pacification on Russia's terms. Ahmad Kadyrov agreed to cooperate but was killed by hardline rebels and replaced by his son Ramzan. Following nearly a decade of increasingly successful operations to kill and capture rebel leaders, Putin declared an end to the conflict in 2009. Ramzan Kadyrov signed a deal with Moscow which poured huge sums of money into Chechnya and to Ramzan. As of today, Ramzan loyally maintains order and suppresses militancy in Chechnya.

Regime type explanations for Russian strategy claim that Russia's lack of democratic or liberal humanist norms allowed for brutal but effective suppression. A correlate cites this same lack of constraints as allowing Russia to co-opt an illiberal strongman whilst more constrained states could not. These explanations complement my assertion that less constrained states are more likely to follow optimal strategy and thus end asymmetrical conflict versus non-state opponents sooner. They explain how Russia was able to use decisive force and cooptation but not why it chose to. Realism explains the use of force and can explain cooptation as a tactic to maximize its effectiveness. Socialization logic adds an additional layer by explaining the war and the peace. Cooptation aided military victory, but it also helped socialize the Chechen leadership into the type of actor that could be trusted to keep the peace. Socialization logic comprehensively explains Putin's policies as a strategy to pacify Chechnya as rapidly as possible.

Prospect theory might also explain why Russia—starting out controlling Chechnya—was less willing to concede its independence.[675] This is challenged by the post-Soviet tide of Russian chauvinism and nationalism that manifest in support for divesting responsibility for peripheral imperial holdings filled with non-ethnic Russians as Chechnya certainly was.

Some cite Putin as manipulating war in Chechnya to cement and augment his power. (Satter 2016), (Van Herpen 2015). While plausible, demonstrating personal leadership or domestic politics as the primary cause for Russia's strategy requires evidence of Putin's personal motives for the policies he oversaw, evidence that is unlikely to be found.[676] Regardless of Putin's personal characteristics, a rational leader with low constraints and the ability to minimize them further would use the threat of decisive victory to socialize the Chechen rebels into prioritizing pragmatic goals, and then use diplomacy to cement stability. This successfully pacified Chechnya. Stability is undergirded by the credibility of Russia's threat to decisively defeat the Chechens should they renege and challenge the status quo.

Shifts in Strategy

- 1994: Yeltsin launched a slapdash invasion of Chechnya in a failed attempt at decisive victory.
- 1997: Yeltsin tried to manage the conflict by granting de-facto Chechen sovereignty
- 1999: Following increased Chechen radicalism and violence, Putin pursued decisive victory through a large-scale invasion. He then coopted Chechen leadership.
- 2009: Formal end to the conflict, Putin aims to maintain stability with Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov.

Strategy Shift	Chechen Type	Russia's Constraints	My Argument	Competing arguments[677]
1994 Decisive victory	C	Medium	Russia wanted to deter Chechnya from separating. Yeltsin thought demonstrating power would curb Chechen ambitions but signaled the opposite when the campaign failed spectacularly.	1. The FSB sought war to consolidate power in Russia. (Van Herpen 2015). 2. Prospect Theory.
1996 Management	C	Medium/High	Yeltsin was too constrained to continue a losing campaign. He faced popular dissatisfaction and international weakness. He thought granting de-facto sovereignty to a pragmatically driven group would yield stability.	1. Yeltsin and Russia's defense establishment were incompetent. 2. Foreign pressure from the U.S. 3. Greater concern with NATO expansion.

[675] Prospect theory maintains that one places greater value on, and is more likely to accept risk over losing something it believes it owns versus gaining something new. (Kahneman and Tversky 1979).
[676] Leader specific arguments require looking at variables that are difficult to find and gauge. The domestic politics argument is reasonable but unproven. If the same policy can be explained by broader variables, like constraints and the perception of an opponent's type, determining those variables is more analytically useful, parsimonious, generalizable and easier to demonstrate.
[677] These are not always different from—and sometimes exist alongside—my explanation.

1999 Decisive victory	A/B → C	Low/Medium	Putin perceived Chechen rebels to have become ungoverned and driven by jihadist ideology. He actively reduced Russia's internal and external constraints, allowing it to credibly threaten the rebels with defeat this time around.	1. Russian leadership drew on analogies to the 19th century to decide that Chechens respect force. 2. Putin sought war to boost his power and manipulated events to create a casus belli. (Satter 2013).
2009 Maintain stability	D	Low	Putin saw Kadyrov as pragmatic, loyal and able to uphold stability. Russian strategy seeks to keep Kadyrov loyal through patronage and the underlying threat of force.	1. Russia is no longer threatened from Chechnya as many fighters joined jihadists abroad. 2. Russia is more concerned with NATO and EU expansion and operations in Syria.

Background

Chechnya is one of the 85 federal entities that constitute the Russian Federation. Many of these entities' borders roughly conform to ethnic groupings. Chechnya—one of the 21 (22 including Crimea) constituent republics—exemplifies this. Chechnya covers roughly 7,000 square kilometers in the North Caucasus region. Almost 30 percent of Chechnya's population is ethnically Russian. It is situated between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. Its terrain is dominated by the Caucasus Mountains.

Russia has waged two intense military campaigns (1994-1996 and 1999-2009) against Chechnya, although most high-intensity combat in the Second Chechen War subsided years before Putin declared a formal end to what it called "counterterrorist operations," in 2009. Russia's conflict with the people of Chechnya dates back to early Tsarist history.

Following the reign of Ivan the III and his successful conquests eastward, Russian tsars sought to continuously expand their territories through conquest. The nations of the Northern Caucasus could not avoid this fate. Knezys and Sedlickas trace the roots of Chechen resistance to Russian authority to 1663 when Russia began its first attempt to conquer the Caucasus. Despite fierce resistance, Russia slowly completed its conquest of Chechnya.[678] In 1858, after decades of violent resistance, Russia conquered Chechnya after defeating Imam Shamil and his fighters, who sought to establish an Islamic state. In 1922, The Soviet Union established a Chechen autonomous region that became the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic in 1934. In 1944, alleging collaboration with the Nazis, Stalin deported the entire Chechen population to Siberia and Central Asia, killing thousands in the process of rapid, forced

[678] For over three centuries, "the Chechens never once laid down their arms." (Knezys and Sedlickas 1999, 12).

relocation. In 1957, Khrushchev allowed Chechens back to the Caucasus and restored the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic as part of his process of "de-Stalinization." (BBC 2018).

Chechens accumulated grievances following a list of traumatic events. When North Caucuses was incorporated into the Russian Empire after the nearly 50-year long Caucasian war (1817-1864), many who resisted were deported to far regions of the Russian empire or to the Ottoman Empire. The Soviet forced collectivization of the North Caucuses caused significant trauma as well. Yuri Urbanovich claimed that the most significant trauma was committed when the Soviet Army liberated the North Caucuses from the Nazis in February 1944. Some describe the 1944 deportations in the Chechen psyche as comparable to the Holocaust for the Jewish psych. (U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum 2004). All were deported by Stalin for accusations (many true) of Nazi collaboration. Khrushchev's rehabilitation did not go smoothly. Moving destitute masses back from exile was difficult. Chechens were never psychologically rehabilitated, and the collective historical trauma was transmitted generationally. Until today, Chechnya was not given a chance to mourn, nor was there any formal Russian recognition and apology for the history of trauma. (Urbanovich Interview 2017).

Professor Yuri Urbanovich believes that accumulated trauma translated into violence after the fall of the Soviet Union. Although in the late 1990s, Chechen separatists had their cause exploited by Wahhabi radicals, looking at the conflict as primarily religious is overly simplistic. For centuries, Russians coexisted with Muslims without problem. Furthermore, Chechens are traditionally Sufi Muslims. Wahhabism never fully coopt Chechen militancy although it became more prevalent in the aftermath of the break-up of the Soviet-Union and especially after the 1994 Russian invasion. (Urbanovich Interview 2017). Islam was a unifying force for disparate Chechen clans and the influx of Wahhabi cash from Arab nations aided Chechen resistance as well. (Vachagaev in Howard 2011). Although the influence of Wahhabi Islamism grew in Chechnya throughout the late 1990s, it was not welcome. Chechen discontent with the expanding control of austere and radical Wahhabism helped drive Chechen leaders and former separatist militants like the Kadyrov clan and others from the less radical Gudermes Valley in North Chechnya to collaborate with Putin. (D.D. and "Ilya" Interview 10/10/19).

Gorbachev's "Sinatra Doctrine" allowed, but was neither intended nor expected, to produce self-determination among the Soviet states. Following the fall of the Soviet Union, many former Soviet controlled countries declared independence. Due to a resurgence of Russian nationalism which eschewed the burdens of empire, many formerly controlled areas were let go with minimal, if any, objection. Indeed, President Yeltsin himself contributed to the break-up of the Soviet Union—however—the disintegration of the Russian Federation was unacceptable.

The Chechen bid for independence was seen as a bridge too-far. Yeltsin was determined to keep Chechnya within Russia and not to set a precedent that could lead to the dissolution of many non-ethnic Russian territories in the Russian Federation. Chechnya, with its warrior culture and long history of opposition to Russian domination emerged in 1991 as a major challenge to Russian territorial unity. On November 1, 1991, former Soviet Air Force Major General Dzhokhar Dudayev proclaimed Chechen independence.

Yeltsin initially tried negotiations, but in mid-1994 the Kremlin abandoned diplomacy and opted for a military solution. In December 1994, Yeltsin ordered an invasion of Chechnya in what was originally billed as a small-scale intimidation action. Planning showed an expectation of minimal resistance. Instead, it turned into a three-year long, massively violent conflict during which the already crumbling Russian military was outclassed by an opponent that they underestimated. Following the recapture of Grozny by Chechen rebels in 1996, Russia withdrew its forces.[679] An official peace treaty was signed in 1997, followed by two years of de facto Chechen independence. This inter-war period was characterized by "chaos, hostage-taking, and Chechnya becoming a hotbed of jihadi militants." (Cheterian 2015). It was in the context of Post-Soviet Russian morass and military failure that Chechnya's festering lawlessness and terrorism increasingly threatened the Russian heartland. At the end of one of the worst decades in Post-WWII Russian history, amid gloomy political prospects, the drunk and inept Yeltsin appointed Vladimir Putin as his prime minister. Following his successful command of the Chechen

[679] Russian forces were in disarray. Poorly trained conscripts did not know to abandon their tanks and disperse when facing insurgents with armor piercing weapons. This led to a massacre as an entire Russian armor brigade was pinned down in Grozny. It was so bad that Chechen militants argued over who got to shoot the next tank. Russia eventually took Grozny after a sustained artillery barrage that saw the firing of over 10,000 rounds per day, leveling the city. In 1996 Chechen rebels retook Grozny, signaling Russian failure and leading Yeltsin to seek the cessation of fighting. (Chechnya: a History of Resistance 2016).

campaign, Putin was elected President with the aim of making returning Russia to great power status, ending anarchy, and defeating Chechen terrorism.

1991-1994: WHY DID RUSSIA NOT CONCEDE?

Diplomacy and intragovernmental debate

According to Professor Allen Lynch, post-Soviet Russian foreign policy sought to maintain "two important policy objectives that are in potential tension with each other: Establishing Russian diplomatic and security hegemony throughout the territory of the former Soviet Union as well as Russia's 'great power' status in international councils, while concurrently avoiding a rupture with the G-7 states." (Lynch 2001, 8). Given the importance Russia placed on its first objective, hegemony in former Soviet states, Russia would have an even greater desire to stem the spread of the dissolution of the Soviet Union to territories once part of imperial Russia. Both foreign ministers Kozyrev and Primakov, widely seen as leaders of diametrically opposed schools of thought regarding Russian foreign policy, agreed during the mid-1990s that they supported the "claim that Russia's security borders were those of the defunct Soviet Union." (Lynch 2001, 10). This would naturally include Chechnya which linked Russia to the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in the Southern Caucasus.[680] That said, it is difficult to pin down the influence that either foreign minister had on Russian policy in Chechnya, which does not conform to these ministers' assumed preferences.[681] Former Moscow correspondent and Hudson Institute senior fellow David Satter claimed that once a Russian leader decided on a policy there was minimal deliberation. (Satter Interview 2019). Jamestown Institute scholar Dr. Stephen Blank lamented the scarce data on Russian intragovernmental debate as well.[682] (Blank Interview 2019).

Economy

[680] These CIS states are Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. Russia demonstrated the importance it placed on maintaining a supremacy of influence in Georgia when it went to war in 2008 following NATO overtures.
[681] Russia's decision to invade Chechnya in 1994 was made while pro-Western Kozyrev was foreign minister even though it risked degrading relations with the West, while Russia chose to withdraw from Chechnya while the more hawkish Primakov was foreign minister.
[682] Dr. Blank from the Jamestown Institute claims that there is sparse if any data on Russian intragovernmental deliberation or disagreement regarding strategy towards Chechnya. Therefore, evidence presented of the perceptions, inclinations and policy decisions of Russian leadership focus specifically on those of Yeltsin and Putin.

At first glance, Chechnya might be seen as more trouble than it would be worth for Russia, in chaos after the collapse of the Soviet Union, to maintain. It comprised one percent of Russian territory and less than one percent of the population. It is home to a fierce, independent and mostly non-ethnic Russian population, and rugged terrain. At a period when Russian chauvinism, ethno-nationalism and resentment over economically and militarily supporting an empire was at its highest, Russian leadership still viewed Chechnya as important.[683]

Chechnya is situated at the crossroads of the Caucasus on terrain critical for "the overland movement of oil from the Caspian Sea reserves to Russia's oil handling facilities on the Black Sea coast." Indeed, a primary objective of the first major Russian assault on December 12, 1994 was to secure control of the oil pipeline that runs from Baku, Azerbaijan via, the Chechen capital of Grozny, to Russia's Black Sea port of Novorossiysk, that Russia "intended as the terminal for the proposed Kazakh and Azerbaijani pipelines."[684]

From Moscow's perspective, Russia could not afford to lose the Caucasus, the link to Caspian Sea oil and the pathway to Russian influence in the Middle East and Central Asia. Russian control could thwart efforts by powers like Turkey and Iran from increasing their influence in the Caucasus.

Security

In the early 1990s, Russian leadership saw Chechen independence as a national security threat due to lawlessness, corruption, and its geostrategic importance. Loosing face as a great power by making concessions to the "terrorists," setting a precedent, and allowing a zone of instability and insecurity was unacceptable for Russia. A proximate and facilitating cause for Russian intervention in Chechnya was the perception of growing lawlessness and banditry.[685]

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[683] For a good discussion of Russian nationalism as the Soviet Union broke up, and its attitudes towards supporting regions filled with ethnic non-Russians, see (Drobizheva 1996).

[684] Grozny had a refinery with a "processing capacity of 12 million tons per year." Working with corrupt politicians in Moscow, during its period of self-proclaimed independence, "Chechnya illegally exported crude oil and refined oil products worth hundreds of millions U.S. dollars." (Empric 2002, 4).

[685] Trenin noted in 2003 that "it is almost forgotten that the first Chechen war (1994–1996) was provoked, among other things, by a series of bus hijackings in southern Russian towns. The hijackers were Chechen criminals after money, not independence." (Trenin 2003, 2). Criminal activities in Chechnya in the early 1990s where rampant, including: about 150 unsanctioned flights every month from Grozny "free" airport; train robberies; smuggling of oil; smuggling of arms and narcotics; forgery of money and bank documents. (Urbanovich).

In terms of geostrategic importance to perceived national security interests, Russia considers the North Caucasus and the Transcaucasus to be part of a "security complex." This includes: The southern oblasts and national republics of Russia; "the Adygea, Karachayevo-Cherkesiia, Kabardino-Balkariya and Dagestan Republics" as well as "Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkey and Iran." (Empric 2002, 4). Russian policy in Chechnya continued its policy of boosting its influence in the Caucasus, which it saw in terms of great-power competition. By its re-conquest of Chechnya, Russia "served notice to the U.S. that Russia intended to scuttle U.S. plans to gain control over the region" (Pike 2011).

Despite the corrupt and derelict nature of the Russian military at that time, and Russia's knowledge of the existence of well-armed and organized Chechen militias, Russian leadership envisioned an easy Russian victory in Chechnya.[686] According to Urbanovich, Yeltsin was strongly influenced by his Minister of Defense Pavel Grachev to use force to prevent cessation. Grachev, a former paratrooper, argued that it would be a quick and easy victory requiring 'one-paratrooper brigade.' Obviously, this was a gross miscalculation.[687]

Domestic politics

In 1994, domestic political considerations led Yeltsin to wager that he could boost support for the pro-Kremlin Russia's Choice party which was rapidly losing support, by successfully ending what had been three years of de-facto Chechen independence.[688] There is extensive literature suggesting that external military adventures might be used for domestic political gain.[689] Throughout Russian and Soviet history, from Ivan the Terrible through Stalin,

[686] General Grachev ordered half of the Soviet arsenal in Chechnya to be removed and half turned over to Chechen leader Dudayev in a directive issued on May 28, 1992. However, Russian troops were forced to leave Chechnya in a hurry and left the bulk of their arsenal in Chechen hands. By early 1992, Chechen fighters had begun raiding Russian arms depots, stealing many tons of weaponry. The fact that these thefts occurred without bloodshed raised suspicion of corruption. (Dunlop 1998, 164-167).

[687] According to several U.S. Army Intelligence analysts who focus on Russia, one of whom, "Ilya," interviewed Russian troops when he served alongside them in the Balkans, Russian troops heading into Chechnya in 1994 had no idea they were being sent into combat. (Interviews 10/10/19).

[688] Russia's Central Election Commission reported on December 25, 1993 that "the ultranationalist Liberal Democratic Party, headed by Vladimir Zhirinovsky, had won 59, or almost 24 percent, of the 225 seats at stake in the party contest, followed by Yegor Gaidar's pro-Yeltsin reform party, Russia's Choice, which garnered 40 votes, or 15.4 percent. (Mr. Gaidar has since resigned his post as deputy premier). The Communist Party was next with 32 votes (12.4 percent), followed by the centrist Women of Russia Party with 21 votes (8.1 percent). The remaining 52 votes were split among four other parties." (Library of Congress 1994).

[689] For an exhaustive look at the literature on diversionary war theory see: Pickering and Kisangani (2005), Chiozza and Goemans (2004), DeRouen (2000), Mitchell and Prins (2004), and Oneal and Tir (2006).

successful territorial expansion went hand-in-hand with increased centralization of power. Artyom Borovik wrote: "as a general to whom I became quite close to in Afghanistan put it, 'all of the wars that Russia lost led to social reforms, while all the wars it won led to the strengthening of totalitarianism." This was the case both for the Cold War and Russia's campaign in Afghanistan. However, counter to this pattern, the Russian losses in the First Chechen War led to a strengthening of Russian totalitarianism that helped it win the Second Chechen War. (Van Herpen 2015, 160).[690]

Perceptions of extremism

Yeltsin's December 27, 1994 speech barely mentioned religious extremism and did not mention Wahhabism or jihad. It did mention banditry, including train robberies and embezzlement. Yeltsin also noted the presence of "professional terrorists and mercenaries from other states." Primarily, Yeltsin decried separatism, stating: "Russian soldiers are defending the integrity of Russia. It is an essential condition for the existence of the Russian state. ... None of the territories has the right to secede from Russia." (Associated Press 1994).

From Chechnya's declaration of independence until Yeltsin's 1994 invasion, the Chechen factions were fractious. There were several coup attempts against Dudayev's presidency and there was substantial internal fighting. (Baltic Defence Review 1999, 75).[691] Chechen factions were united in their pro-independence position. Alarm at the growing influence of radical Islam influenced the Russian decision making regarding the Second Chechen War but not the First. The prevailing thought was that Islam played a minimal role in the tensions between Moscow and Chechnya between 1991 and 1994 or with the Chechen resistance after Russia's December 1994 invasion. (Walker 1998). A panel of U.S. Army Intelligence Russia experts unanimously agreed that this was the case. (Interviews 1010/19).[692]

Regarding extremism, Colonel Empric claimed that "the situation only began to change when it became clear that the West would not support Chechen demands for independence, at

[690] There are those who are convinced that Putin manipulated the launch of the Second Chechen War specifically to secure and enhance his hold on power. This will be discussed in the section dealing with Putin's alleged domestic motivations for invading Chechnya in 1999.
[691] One of these coup attempts was carried out by Russian and pro-Russian forces in March 31, 1992. The date was significant because March 31 was the day in which "subjects of the Federation" were to sign the new Federation Treaty. This would make the toppling of the separatist Dudaev's regime symbolic. This Russian putsch attempt failed. (Dunlop 1998, 170).
[692] See Appendix, Chapter 7 for an full write-up of the interviews conducted for this chapter.

which point Dudayev began to look to the Islamic world for support." Russia did not perceive the Chechen rebels as ideologically driven prior to the First Chechen War. After war broke out, Islam started becoming an important theme for the Chechen militants. "Chechen resistance fighters, the 'boeviki,' drew inspiration from the Afghan mujahidin… they began to wear green armbands and headbands. Dudayev and the Chechen field commanders also began to adopt more of the symbols of Islam." (Empric 2002, 6).

Dudayev was not seen as a radical Islamist. "Dudayev, like Maskhadov after him, was a relatively Sovietized Chechen. He had risen through the ranks of the Soviet Air Force as a pilot and had served loyally in Afghanistan as leader of a bomber wing, apparently unconcerned by orders to bomb the villages of Afghan Muslims." (Walker 1998, 3). Russia's invasion in 1994 precipitated the influx of radical Islamic ideology into the Chechen separatist movement. As radical elements gained prominence among the rebels, Russia increasingly viewed the Chechens as ideologically driven. This influenced Putin's strategy in 1999.

1991-1994: Run-up to Conflict

In November, 1991, Chechen President Dudayev declared Chechnya to be independent. Yeltsin originally sent 2,500 Russian troops into Chechnya after it declared independence. These troops were greeted by thousands of armed demonstrators at the airport, prompting Yeltsin to cancel the operation and withdraw its troops to avoid an escalation while the Soviet Union was on the brink of breaking apart. Instead, Russia implemented economic blockades on Chechnya that increased corruption and criminality in the territory.

In the chaotic aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russian foreign policy had twin interests: "Predominance within the CIS and good relations with the G-7 states." Yeltsin was still moving Russia towards the west. Indeed, when he shut-down opposition that had impeached him in October 1993, Yeltsin neutralized the anti-liberal opposition and anti-liberal elements had no potency under Russia's new constitution. (Lynch 2001, 11).[693]

The December 1993 Duma elections "strengthened the nationalists in Russian politics" and Yeltsin moved politically in a more nationalistic and authoritarian direction. He appointed

[693] On October 4, 1993, in an event that saw the largest-scale street violence in Moscow since the 1917 Bolshevik revolution, "months of political conflict climaxed when President Boris Yeltsin declared a state of emergency and ordered the army to shell and storm the country's legislature." (Sokolov and Kirilenko 2013).

several ministers and advisers with "a hawkish and decidedly anti-Chechen attitude to influential positions." Yeltsin sought to leverage pro-Russian factions bolstered by Russian soldiers disguised as mercenaries to attack Grozny in late November 1994. This attack failed and embarrassingly revealed the involvement of Russian soldiers when some were taken prisoners by Dudayev. After this humiliation Yeltsin decided to launch a full-scale military intervention. (Baltic Defence Review 1999, 76).

Yeltsin's decision to invade Chechnya despite the predicted international fall-out, taken while the more pro-Western and liberal Kozyrev was foreign minister, suggests either that Russian leadership did not expect its actions in Chechnya to lead to large-scale combat, or that it was willing to risk harming relations with the West in order to maintain control over Chechnya. It is likely a combination of both. Russian leadership did not expect serious combat but was willing to risk damaged relations with the West if combat escalated.[694] Several U.S. Army analysts mentioned how Russian troops were not told to expect large-scale combat, or even any combat larger than a show of intimidation. It is impossible to know if Yeltsin's government believed this to be the case due to a lack of source material. (Interviews 2019).

When Yeltsin invaded Chechnya in 1994, Kozyrev had not yet been replaced by Primakov as Foreign Minister. This replacement in January 1996 "was widely hailed as signaling a shift in Russian diplomacy from a Western-oriented to a Eurasian-oriented foreign policy. (Lynch 2001, 9). The invasion of Chechnya, using much publicized massive bombardments and violence, was widely condemned by Western powers. Therefore, this action suggests a shift towards a Eurasian oriented foreign policy, however, it preceded Russia's change in foreign ministers by over a year. Indeed, shortly after Primakov's appointment as foreign minister, Yeltsin began negotiating with the Chechens to withdraw Russia from the conflict in Chechnya. Considering the speculated foreign policy preferences from Russia's diplomatic apparatus, one would expect the initial invasion to have taken place under the auspices of a Primakov and negotiations for Russian withdrawal to take place under Kozyrev, but the opposite occurred.

[694] Lynch argued that both sides of Russia's post-Soviet competing foreign policy community (the pro-Western Kozyrev and the anti-Western Primakov school) agreed that Russia must reverse its rapid internal decline and that "primary foreign policy focus must be in the CIS region." (Lynch 2001, 11). Geographically, the loss of control over Chechnya, and Chechnya's slide into antagonistic separatism, lawlessness or both, could impact Russia's ability to maintain a primacy of influence in CIS states Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan.

A plausible explanation is that Yeltsin's invasion and his appointment of Primakov after the start of military actions in Chechnya, followed and accelerated what began as a gradual shift away from a Western oriented foreign policy due to the perceived snub of the specter of NATO expansion.[695] Talks of NATO expansion in the early 1990s, led Russia to see the West as more interested in pursuing realist geopolitical expansion than in following the ideals of liberalism.[696]

Yeltsin's decision to invade Chechnya in 1994 and his replacement of Kozyrev with Primakov in 1996, did not follow or create a fundamental shift in Russian foreign policy, but looking back over two-decades, these policies appear to follow a trajectory of increased Russian assertiveness.[697] Yeltsin's decision to invade Chechnya does not appear to have been driven by an exogenous shift towards hawkishness, be it domestic or foreign. Rather, Yeltsin invaded Chechnya to boost Russia's relative power but underestimated Chechen military capability.

YELTSIN'S RUSSIA: WEAKER, MORE DEMOCRATIC, MORE CONSTRAINED

Russian disunity during the First Chechen War constrained its ability to suppress violent opponents and emboldened those opponents to be more assertive. "Periods of strong central authority – such as the 1930's and much of the Cold War era – were almost entirely devoid of new insurgent movements. Periods of transition were violent without exception." (Zhukov 2010, 4). The years between the collapse of the Soviet Union and the rise of Putin's strong leadership typify a period of transition.

In the First Chechen War, Russia was relatively highly constrained due to internal factors: Its crisis ridden political and economic condition, its relatively prevalent and free media which U.S. Army analyst "Ilya" claimed was "robust" and its poorly functioning military.

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[695] According to Lynch, Yeltsin's replacement of Kozyrev followed domestic politics, and Primakov's foreign policy did not diverge significantly from his predecessor's. "In all central respects Primakov continued Kozyrev's balancing act." (Lynch 2001, 23).

[696] In 1993, NATO offered former Warsaw Pact members limited associations in the form of the Partnership for Peace program. (BBC 2012). "The issue of NATO expansion was formally raised by the Polish leadership in a controversial summit meeting between Lech Walesa and Boris El'tsin in August 1993." (Lynch 2001, 17).

[697] From this point forward, and greatly accelerated under Putin following the U.S. invasion of Iraq, which Putin saw as foreshadowing a growth in threatening U.S. unilateralism, Russia moved steadily towards a realist, security-through-power foreign policy. Putin also pursued greater domestic authoritarianism that facilitated such a foreign policy, in line with centuries of Russian history. For further discussion of Russia's propensity for strong central rule see Allen Lynch, *How Russia is Not Ruled,* 2005.

(Interviews 2019). Economic collapse, widespread corruption and the 1993 constitutional crisis harmed Russia's ability to rebuild its military and effectively use force in Chechnya.

High internal constraints

Throughout the First Chechen War there were minimal press restrictions. Independent television portrayals of the violence and internal Russian military problems increased public anti-war sentiment. By contrast, aggressive censorship stymied such discussion and contributed to less discontent during the Second Chechen War." (Byman 2016).[698] According to a group of U.S. Army Russia experts, Chechnya set the narrative in the First Chechen War. Chechens had significant popular support among Russians from 1994-1996. (Interviews 2019).

Moderate external constraints

While Russia's internal constraints were high, its external constraints were moderate. Although Russia was perhaps at its most vulnerable to external pressure, the U.S. was reluctant to pressure it so as not to derail its tentative liberalization.[699] "By the end of 1993 it had become clear to Russian leaders that, in the southern CIS at least, neither the United States nor any of its NATO powers were prepared either to intervene to challenge Russia's claim to be the regional policeman or to inflict an economic or diplomatic price on Russia for such interventions as it deemed in its interests." (Lynch 2001, 24). If Russian leaders believed external sanction or intervention was unlikely in the southern CIS states which were all nominally sovereign countries, it must have appeared even less likely that there would be external intervention or

[698] In the Second War, "the media coverage was much more stage-managed." "Russian General Staff swiftly adopted an 'airbrushing policy', dismissing claims of atrocities by Russian troops and suppressing the number of soldiers killed by insurgents." (Garwood 2002, 83). Although Russia's media and politics were more open when Putin first took office, there was still better control of media coverage in 1999 and increased public support for fighting the Chechens due to anger over terrorism. Taking to heart the lessons of bad press following the Kursk Submarine disaster in the summer of 2000, Putin quickly began expanding state control over the media, in tandem with government reforms that reduced free and fair political competition. (Denisova and Coalson 2015).

[699] Lynch describes the "more permissive international environment that has emerged since the end of the Cold War." He notes how "West European and North American powers have generally been reluctant to press Russia forcefully to observe important international legal and political norms." This permissive atmosphere included the failure of Western powers to press Russia concerning "the conduct of the Russian Army during each Chechen war." (Lynch 2001, 10). He also noted that Western leaders, in particular, President Clinton, were reluctant to pressure Yeltsin, worrying that it would undermine his rule, and could lead to the overthrow of a leader that generally supported core Western interests. Clinton supported Yeltsin, reducing Russia's external constraints from 1994-1999. Furthermore, Russia was not an area of focus for the U.S. at this time. U.S. Army Intelligence Analyst, "Jim" worked as a Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) treaty inspector in Russia. He claimed that the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) was not an effective external constraint in either Chechen war because Russia would not allow inspections within the conflict zone, citing "force major." (Interviews 10/10/19).

sanction over Russia flexing its military muscles in Chechnya. In terms of the ability to use decisive force as a strategy, Russia's greatest constraint—resultant from its domestic decay—was that its military muscles were at their weakest.[700]

1994-1996: A poorly contrived military campaign

On November 30, 1994 Yeltsin decided to send troops to Chechnya and signed secret decree 2137 "on measures to restore constitutional law and order in the Chechen Republic." This was done without proper planning and disregarding a wealth of urban combat knowledge gained by in World War II. Much of this stemmed from poor intelligence and arrogance which underestimated the threat posed by well-organized and heavily armed Chechen rebels, whose members had substantial military experience, many—including Dudayev—having served as high ranking officers in the Soviet Army. Grachev's planning and timetable reflected expectations of limited resistance. (Oliker 2001, 11) In the invasion of Grozny, "planners failed to take elementary precautions or to forecast how the Chechens might defend the city." (Grau 1995, 3).

Yeltsin's campaign in Chechnya was unsuccessful, despite its extreme brutality. Russia bombed Grozny to an extent not seen in a major European city since the Allied bombardment of Dresden in WWII. (Van Herpen 2015). "According to statistics from the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs, 26,000 people were killed from 1994-1995, including 2,000 Russian servicemen." The campaign killed thousands of civilians and "turned almost a third of the republic's population into refugees." (Meakins 2017, 3)

Despite minor victories, like killing Dudayev, the Russian campaign was a catastrophe. (Gordon 1996). In June, 1995, Chechen rebels took hundreds of hostages at a hospital in Budennovsk. More than 100 patients, mostly mothers and babies, were killed in the unsuccessful Russian commando rescue operation. The tragedy and inept Russia response was broadcast to the Russian public. This embarrassing fiasco forced Russia to capitulate to Chechen demands for a

[700] In the First Chechen War, most Russian units were unprepared and cobbled together. Only some had counterterrorism expertise. (E.P. Interview 2019). Explaining the extent to which Russia's army was unprepared in 1994, U.S. Army analyst "Ilya" claimed that the Russian soldiers did not know they were going to war. They thought they were being deployed for a brief intimidation action. Sniper fire during rail transport was the first indication that there would be combat. Russia's military was defunct. The former Soviet Union's best units were decaying in a "junk yard" and operators were incompetent "drivers could not drive tanks." (Ilya Interview 2019).

ceasefire that allowed the rebels to regroup in exchange for the release of the rest of the hostages. This severely damaged Yeltsin's popularity in the run up to legislative elections that winter. (Hiatt 1995). In August 1996, Chechen rebels successfully recaptured Grozny.

Part of Russia's military failure in Chechnya from 1994-1996 stemmed from poor use of information and meager intelligence.[701] Although Yeltsin was able to use brutality despite being a democracy, internal constraints made it difficult for Yeltsin to control the information space.[702] This harmed Russia's ability to capitalize on intelligence yielded through this brutality and harmed its ability to continue the fight, in part because there was significant sympathy for the Chechen's within the Russian population. Putin was able to mitigate those problems that plagued Yeltsin, allowing Russia to capitalize on its brutality instead of suffering from it strategically.[703]

As Russia's military campaign faltered, Russian military leaders and Chechen rebels signed the Khasavyurt ceasefire accords in August, 1996. These were followed by an agreement for Russian troop withdrawal in November, 1996. In January 1997, Russia recognized Aslan Maskhadov's government following his victory in the Chechen presidential elections, and on May 12, 1997, Yeltsin and Maskhadov signed a formal peace treaty which ignored the issue of de-jure Chechen independence. (Stanley 1997). Instead, it officially rejected the use or threat of force and postponed a final resolution of Chechen-Russian relations until the year 2001. (Kovalev 2000). This was clearly a stop-gap measure. Yeltsin did not intend to honor it and Maskhadov was unable to regardless of his intentions. The inability to enforce the terms of the accords demonstrate how low governance function makes a peace treaty less credible. While disparate Chechen factions backed Dudayev and then Maskhadov throughout the war, they refused to disband, disarm or obey Maskhadov's rule, and he had no way of compelling them

[701] Putin worked hard to rectify these shortcomings from 1999 onwards, investing heavily in recruiting collaborators, information warfare, and blocking media access for rebels and Russians alike. This allowed Putin to seize and maintain the initiative where Yeltsin had failed.
[702] Empirical support for democracies being less brutal is mixed. (Rich and Duyvesteyn 2012). Democracies can commit brutality—but cannot leverage it for advantage the way a strong autocracy can.
[703] A RAND study compares Yeltsin's failure in Chechnya to British success in Northern Ireland, demonstrating the importance of creating and using actionable intelligence. It states: "Seizing and maintaining the initiative depends in large part on actionable intelligence." In Chechnya, Russian forces conducted an all-out attack on Grozny. "However, the insurgents were lying in wait, prepared to ambush the cumbersome COIN advance. Russian tanks were trapped in the narrow streets as Chechen snipers picked off retreating soldiers as they fled. On the opposite side of the spectrum, British COIN forces in Northern Ireland seized the initiative in Operation Motorman in 1972, a comprehensive sweep of insurgent no-go zones aided by reliable human intelligence and an actionable plan for how to exploit that intelligence." (Paul, Clarke Grill and Dunigan, 2013, 106).

to.[704] Chechen criminals, militants and Islamists began provocations that violated the accords and gave Russia a pretext to invade almost as soon as the treaty was formalized.[705]

The 1996 bargain began to break down immediately. Neither Yeltsin nor the Chechens expected it to succeed at the time of its signing. (Blank Interview 2019). The Russians also made no effort to implement their side of the bargain, failing to send the promised aid to rebuild Chechnya.[706] The Russians would not implement a bargain that involved concessions, likely due to being defeated yet remaining the stronger party as well as suspicions regarding Chechen sincerity and ability to maintain the peace.

The Khasavyurt accords and the subsequent Russian withdrawal ended the 1994-1996 Chechen conflict. The bargain failed. Yeltsin was unable to apply enough force to deter the Chechens. Furthermore, and unintended by Russia, Chechen militants became more ideologically driven following Russia's devastating yet failed campaign.

1996-1999: MANAGEMENT

Yeltsin pursued management of Russia's conflict with Chechnya because he believed that he would not be able to maintain public or international support for continued military operations. Russian military weakness made it likely that continued operations would be costly failures. According to Socialization logic, Yeltsin negotiated with the Chechens at this point because he thought that given Chechen pragmatic drive, moderate governance function and moderately targetable leadership, the threat of Russian retaliation could deter Chechen militants from jeopardize de-facto sovereignty to carry out attacks against Russia's vital interests.[707] Increasingly brazen Chechen violence from 1996-1999 demonstrated that this was not the case. From 1996-1999 Chechen militants demonstrated that they were not as "state like" as Yeltsin had thought. Rather, they increasingly appeared to Russian leadership to have high ideological

[704] This is similar to the problem I describe in chapter three concerning Israel's doubt over the PLO's willingness, but also ability to uphold the terms of a peace deal.
[705] The Chechens violated the Khasavyurt accords. "The commitments assumed by the Chechen leadership to combat crime, terrorism and manifestations of national and religious enmity were not fulfilled." (Pike 2011).
[706] "Yevgeny Primakov and then Sergei Stepashin were the prime ministers during this period. Their strategy focused on working with Maskhadov, who was a moderate and a former Soviet Army officer. When the Russians, at the initiative of General Aleksandr Lebed agreed to withdraw from Chechnya, and agreed on a timetable for Chechen self-determination, they also promised major aid. The promised aid to repair the destruction from the 1994-96 war never arrived, and the Russians did nothing to moderate the situation in Chechnya." (Pike 2011).
[707] Although Russia killed Dudayev in 1995, Russia's military weakness at the time makes it impossible to say it had high ability to target Chechen leadership.

drive, low governance function and difficult to target leadership. In 1999, Putin abandoned Yeltsin's management strategy, fearing that Chechen militants could not be deterred and were driven to attack Russia's vital interests.

Chechen separatists did not capitalize on their victory in 1996. Instead they shifted from separatism and banditry to a new absolutist and ideologically driven goal of carrying out jihad. When Chechnya obtained quasi-independence, "its leaders tragically failed at state building. Kidnapping for ransom became a thriving sector of the economy. What had appeared as a movement of national liberation degenerated into warlordism. Secularism was put on the defensive by the rising forces of Islamic radicalism. Jihad against Russia was not only proclaimed, but attempts were made to turn the North Caucasus into an Islamic republic," the Caucasus Emirate. (Trenin 2003, 2).[708]

While most experts agree that Yeltsin likely foresaw a return to conflict following the 1996 Khasavyurt accords. (Interviews 2019), the new perception by Russian leadership of an ideologically driven opponent shaped the form of the Russian intervention to come. The perception of Chechen militants as intractable and ideologically driven terrorists was bolstered by a series of actions between 1997-1999.

In May 1998, Russia's presidential representative in Chechnya, Valentin Vlasov, was kidnapped and held for six months. In March 1999, Moscow's top envoy to Chechnya, General Gennadiy Shpigun, was kidnapped from the airport in Grozny. He was later found to be killed. Maskhadov gave unconvincing explanations for the kidnappings, of which rescue attempts were seldom made and the kidnappers seldom caught. This shook Russia's perception that Maskhadov was a moderate and interested in preserving peace and order.[709] In early 1999, Maskhadov announced that Islamic religious law would be phased into Chechnya's legal system. This, along with increasingly prominent jihadist international terrorism, increased Russian perceptions of high Chechen ideological drive. Already in 1997, "the norms of Islamic law were introduced in

[708] The Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in 1996 bolstered the permeation of Chechen rebel ranks with ideologically extremist Afghan-trained militants and mercenaries from the Balkans and the Middle East. (Hill 2002).
[709] Despite being moderate and not wanting to establish an Islamic Caliphate in Chechnya as some of his most dangerous rivals wanted, Maskhadov did little to crack down on Islamist criminal actions that he knew would provoke the Russians. "After every reported kidnapping of a well-known victim, the president of Chechnya made public statements in which he explained events, in vague and extremely unconvincing terms, as "provocations by the Russian secret service." There were hardly any attempts to rescue prisoners. There were no attempts to track down or to punish the organizers of these crimes." (Kovalev 2000).

Chechnya in a particularly harsh form, including corporal punishment, the amputation of limbs, and public executions broadcast on local television…. All of this forced people friendly to Chechnya to doubt the sincerity of Maskhadov's intentions to defend the secular nature of the state." (Kovalev 2000). The invasion of Dagestan in support of Wahhabi militants cemented the perception that the Chechens were no longer separatists but ideologically driven extremists.[710]

1999: AUTHORITARIAN COIN FOR DECISIVE VICTORY

On August 7, 1999, Chechen warlord Shamil Basayev, together with his radical Arab Wahhabi fellow field commander Ibn al-Khattab, led an invasion into Dagestan with the declared aim of joining Dagestan and Chechnya to create a fundamentalist Muslim state. Russian analysts at the time understood this to be his motive as well. (Hearst 1999). Maskhadov was either unable, unwilling, or both, to stop Basayev's invasion. On August 9, 1999, Yeltsin chose Putin as prime minister and heir to the presidency, Putin led Russian operations to defend Dagestan against the Islamist Chechen invaders and deftly announced his intention to run for the presidency after first expelling the invaders. The realist, security argument is straightforward. Putin defines Russia's "most elementary" security interests as first-and-foremost, security along Russia's borderlands. By 1999 Chechnya was a bleeding sore in terms of lawlessness and militarization. Heavily armed gangs extorted and kidnapped with impunity. It was also a magnet for foreign fighters, driven to attack Russia for the sake of carrying out violent jihad. "Thousands of Islamists from Syria and elsewhere in the Middle East have fought in Chechnya in two Russian-Chechen wars since 1994." (Lynch 2015). Security maximization would compel Russia to deal with these problems militarily as soon as it was capable of doing so at an acceptable cost.

There is also an argument, made by several authors and reporters, that claims Yeltsin and Putin orchestrated the Second Chechen War for domestic political gain. I will explore this before examining the Realist argument and the argument that Russian strategy aimed to socialize the Chechen's into a type that it could trust to uphold peace and stability.

The Domestic Politics Argument

[710] In August, 1999 "Basayev, a prominent warlord and unsuccessful presidential candidate, together with Saudi cleric Ibn al-Khattab, launched raids into Dagestan accompanied by 1,500 fighters with the ostensible aim of founding a Wahhabist Caliphate in the Caucasus. The attacks killed many ethnic Russians and represented a serious threat to the country's security" (Meakins 2017, 3)

David Satter is convinced that Putin manipulated the launch of the Second Chechen War specifically to secure and enhance his hold on power. This is a central theme in his 2016 book *the Less You Know, the Better You Sleep: Russia's Road to Terror and Dictatorship Under Yeltsin and Putin.* This premise is unprovable, while security concerns in the run up to the 1999 invasion are clearly observable.

Kovalev casts doubt on the argument that domestic politics drove the Russian intention to invade Chechnya in 1999. Although Putin did benefit politically, this was an (unintended) result—not the cause—of the 1999 campaign. He argued that at the time of the signing of the formal peace treaty between Yeltsin and Maskhadov, "no one in his worst nightmare could have dreamed that there would be politicians in Russia who, being of sound mind and memory, would resume the Chechen war on an even greater scale than before." At the time, "it was even more difficult to imagine not only that the war itself would be supported by the Russian public, but that it would result in unprecedented political dividends for the Russian leaders who presided over it, particularly Vladimir Putin." Kovalev saw a 1999 Russian invasion of Chechnya as analogous to the U.S. resuming the war in Vietnam in 1978 to tremendous popular support, something patently unthinkable. (Kovalev 2000).

Van Herpen, among others, noted that although Yeltsin had publicly named Putin his successor for the year 2000 after firing Stepashin, most analysts doubted that Yeltsin's party and his non-descript and mostly unknown heir could defeat their experienced political opponents, including former prime minister Primakov, Moscow mayor Luzhkov, or Communist Party leader Zyuganov. Putin's prospects of succeeding Yeltsin were considered especially slim after the financial crisis of August 1998, which reduced Yeltsin's reputation to the point where his support was more of a liability than a blessing. Van Herpen (2015) argued that Putin capitalized on hostilities in Chechnya to rally the Russian public and secure a victory that would cement Putin's leadership. Kovalev argued that this is not the entire story. If Putin wanted to paint the Chechens as radical jihadis bent on killing Russians, the Chechen rebels were very willing to play that role. Kovalev contends that had Chechnya developed into a moderate de-facto state post 1997, it is unlikely that Russia would have launched another invasion.

Kovalev also argued that Chechen mistreatment of Russian journalists, whose work had benefited them by exposing Russian misdeeds in the First Chechen War did much to sour

Russian journalists' views of the Chechens, leading them to push a narrative that heightened domestic anger towards Chechnya. Indeed, when Kovalev claimed that Chechens were as indebted to the Russian journalists who had "told Russia and the world the truth about the last war," "for the peace as they were to the military victories of the Chechen militia," he credited internal constraints for curtailing Yeltsin's ability to wage unrestrained war in Chechnya. (Kovalev 2000). The factors that reduced media openness and favorability towards Chechens in the Second Chechen War enhanced Putin's ability to wage a decisive victory campaign.[711]

The Moscow apartment bombings controversy

The domestic politics argument for Putin's invasion of Chechnya in 1999 notes the suspicion regarding a series of terrorist attacks, culminating with the bloody Moscow apartment bombings. Some also speculate that Putin deftly manipulated Basayev into invading Dagestan providing a pretext for Russia to go to war.[712] These arguments take a "who benefited" approach and propose that while the Russian public did not care enough about Dagestan to support another bloody war in Chechnya, the attacks on Russia's center did solidify Russian popular support.

The theory claims that the FSB carried out these bombings as a false flag operation, blamed it on Chechen terrorists, covered up their role, and assassinated journalists and anyone else who investigated the bombings. Satter noted these suspicions and a fifth bomb that was discovered before it was detonated which was found to have been planted by FSB agents who were arrested by the local police. Moscow's official explanation was that this was part of a

[711] According to Kovalev, the result of Chechen mistreatment of Russian journalists "was not long in making itself felt: correspondents stopped traveling to Chechnya, and a completely new, diametrically opposed attitude toward the republic formed among Russian journalists." (Kovalev 2000).

[712] In Putin's Wars: The Rise of Russia's New Imperialism, Van Herpen promotes the possibility, which he acknowledges is still unsubstantiated, the Putin used the Russian secret service, the FSB, to manipulate Chechen rebel leader and Wahhabi Islamist Shamil Basayev into giving Russia a casus belli. The Russian authorities presented the Chechen invasion of Dagestan in August as a complete surprise. The speculation by the Russian weekly newspaper Versiya went that sometime before the early August 1999 Chechen incursion into Dagestan led by Basayev, the head of Yeltsin's presidential administration, Aleksandr Voloshin met in France with Basayev. Basayev had previously worked with the Russian Army intelligence service, the GRU, fighting alongside Russia against Georgia in 1992. The report claimed that the GRU arranged this meeting in which Russia convinced Basayev to fight a limited war with Russia which would be mostly theater and would benefit both sides. The reasoning was that it would embarrass Maskhadov and thus boost Basayev relative to the recognized Chechen government while allowing Yeltsin and Putin who he was grooming to be his successor to showcase a victory which would increase his popularity and win him the elections. Van Herpen argues that according to the theory, Basayev played the role of a "useful idiot" because instead of sparking the show conflict that would benefit both sides as agreed upon, Russia used the incursion to justify waging all-out war against Chechnya. Van Herpen acknowledges that there has not been any concrete evidence that this meeting took place. (Van Herpen 2015, 175-177).

training exercise, but tests found the bomb to contain live explosive agents of the same type as the other bombs. (Satter 2016).[713] Although there is significant suspicion, especially regarding the disappearance of journalists, and the complexity and professionalism of the attacks, there is no conclusive evidence for this theory.

Despite Putin clearly benefiting politically from the Second Chechen War, Kovalev does not believe that the Moscow apartment bombings were a Russian orchestrated false flag attack. He maintained that although suspicious, there is little evidence to support that theory and it may be giving the FSB too much credit in terms of skill.[714] (Kovalev 2000).

Although solving the mystery of the apartment bombings is normatively important, proving a false flag would still not prove that the invasion of Chechnya in 1999 was carried out for domestic politics despite Putin clearly benefiting from his successful prosecution of the war. It is just as plausible that Russian leadership, which did indeed see Chechnya as a major security threat, leveraged a false flag attack to reduce constraints enough to allow a decisive victory strategy. This would fit with both Realist logic socialization logic. Regardless of whether the apartment bombings were carried out by Chechens or by Russia itself, they reduced Russia's constraints, allowing it to pursue what it considered to be its optimal strategy.

Realist security maximization

Because the domestic argument is plausible, yet unproven. Furthermore, had the war gone as poorly as the First Chechen War, it would have hurt Putin's popularity. The most plausible and generalizable explanations are socialization logic and Realist relative power maximization.

[713] In a 2016 article, Satter wrote that By 2007, when he testified before the House Foreign Affairs Committee about the Moscow apartment bombings, he "was the only person publicly accusing the regime of responsibility who had not been killed." "Russian human-rights defenders Sergei Yushenkov, Yuri Shchekochikhin, Anna Politkovskaya, and Alexander Litvinenko also worked to shed light on the apartment bombings. But all of them were murdered between 2003 and 2006." (Satter 2016).

[714] Kovalev wrote: "I do not claim that Putin deliberately organized the September explosions in order to have an excuse to begin the war. The story of the explosions is very murky; but I have no reason to believe, as some do in Russia and the West, that the explosions were the work of the Russian secret service. Frankly, I think Western commentators are inclined to exaggerate both the power and, more important, the professionalism of the KGB and its successors. I have had dealings with this organization for many decades; in my view they don't have people who are sufficiently qualified and decisive to carry out such an action." (Kovalev 2000).

Realism fails to explain why Russian leadership decided that security maximization required a decisive victory strategy as opposed to targeted strikes, containment, concessions or negotiations. Socialization logic, specifically, Russia's perception that the Chechen's were ideologically driven and thus incapable of negotiating credibly until socialized through the threat of defeat, can explain why the peace accords of 1997 began to fail as soon as they were agreed upon, Putin's strategy of cooptation and why order has generally held since Putin coopted Kadyrov in June, 2000.

Putin's political motives for conducting operations in Chechnya from 1999-2009 are impossible to distinguish from his actual security concerns, although one can speculate. It is clear that Chechen militants did pose a significant terrorist threat, regardless of whether, and to what extent, one believes that Putin played up that threat. It is also clear from statements and interviews that Putin and Russian leadership truly saw the Chechens as driven by an absolutist jihadist ideology in the run up to the 1999 invasion. In fact, nearly two years prior to the September 11, 2001 attacks, in a 1999 New York Times op-ed, Putin claimed that Chechen rebels were financed by Osama Bin Laden. (Putin 1999). Putin actively worked to reduce Russia's constraints by linking Chechen militancy to global jihadist terrorism. This was the rational course of action according to the socialization logic because it increased Russia's ability to threaten an ideologically driven NSA with decisive defeat.

Increased Russian perception of Chechen's as highly ideologically driven

Putin ruled out negotiating with Chechen separatist leaders, calling them terrorists. Andrei Illarionov, Putin's senior economic adviser between 2000 and 2005, noted that "all official statements said that we are fighting a war against international terror." (Shuster 2011). Russian leadership believed that talking with moderate Chechen separatists would be futile because hard-liners would continue their fight against Russia. (Pike 2011).

Putin constantly promoted the notion of a campaign against terrorism to American and European leaders. He was among the first to warn about terrorist training camps in Afghanistan, linkages between these camps, well-financed terrorist networks, and Islamic militant groups operating in Europe and Eurasia, and supported the Northern Alliance against the Taliban in

Afghanistan.[715] In December 2000, "Moscow joined Washington in supporting United Nations sanctions against the Taliban and later appealed for sanctions against Pakistan for aiding the Taliban." Putin's immediate and substantial support for Bush after the 9/11 attacks was consistent with his efforts to draw world attention to the terrorist threat. (Hill 2002).

Putin had evidence for considering the Chechen rebels as ideologically driven by the same type of absolutist jihadist agenda as al-Qaeda, and strategic reasons for playing up this belief. Following 9/11, Putin gave Russia's full moral and material backing to the U.S. war effort in Afghanistan while Bush and his administration was inclined to sympathize with Russia's fight against Chechen rebels which he contextualized within the GWOT.[716] Putin used his expanding control over the Russian media to promote this narrative.[717]

By the Spring of 1999, several high-profile Chechen attacks and several Chechen statements and actions increasingly demonstrated adhesion to radical jihadist ideology. "During the interbellum, Islamic factions became increasingly powerful within Chechnya and they eventually forced Maskhadov to adopt Sharia law in 1999." (Meakins 2017, 3).[718] In August, 1999, Chechen forces led by Shamil Basayev "invaded Dagestan to support the 'Wahhabis,' providing one of the triggers for a new war between Moscow and Chechnya." (Hill 2002). Basayev and Khattab mounted a "liberation crusade" into Dagestan. They and the other Chechen units saw themselves as "internationalist warriors for Allah." (Kovalev 2000).

It is hard to tell to what extent statements from Russian politicians that Russia saw Chechen rebels as driven by jihadist ideology from 1999 onward were sincere and how much was played up to justify military action. This creates a difficult question of equifinality. Did Putin choose to pursue decisive victory primarily because of his perception of Chechen rebels as

[715] Al-Qaeda second in command, Zawahiri and Mohammed al-Atta, the chief organizer of 9/11, tried to join the Chechen struggle in the late 1990s. A leader of AQAP and two 9/11 hijackers fought in Chechnya. (Meakins 2017)
[716] U.S. NSA Condoleezza Rice, in an October 16, 2001 interview said, "we cannot fight international terrorism in Afghanistan and welcome it in Chechnya." (Radio Free Europe 2001).
[717] Hill noted that Russian leaders depict the struggle against Chechen terrorism as "one between traditional communities and well-financed foreign Islamic networks, which have exploited Russia's weakness to infiltrate its Muslim communities and promote "alien" and politically radical forms of Islam." (Hill 2002).
[718] The Russian perception of jihadist ideology driving Chechen violence was bolstered by Chechen rebel leadership's ties to Islamist militants. "The main rebel commander in 1999 was Shamil Basayev. He led the Chechen militant group known as Riyadus Salihin against Russian forces. He would later be replaced by Doku Umarov, who would lead the Islamic insurgency that had engulfed the Caucasus in the 2000s. There was another Muslim leader who went by the name of Ibn Al-Khattab. He led the Wahhabi Islamic movement in Dagestan, which was aided by the Chechen rebels." (Pike 2011).

driven by an absolutist ideology, or did he insist Russian intelligence paint them as such to justify a preconceived military campaign? The opaque nature of Russia's investigation into the Moscow bombings and the suspicious death of journalists investigating the attacks, suggests that something about the attacks were purposefully covered up, but this could be due to the desire to hide an embarrassing intelligence failure, rather than a deliberate false flag. Putin had ample reason to believe that Chechen rebels were increasingly jihadist, including significant linkages between global jihadist elements and Chechen rebels.[719] However, it is also likely that Putin did all he could to play up their extremist ideology. Mashkhadov decried Putin's attempt to tie Chechen rebels to bin Laden post 9/11.[720]

Military victory was needed to reverse the Chechen perception of Russia as lacking power and resolve. Chechen rebels were not necessarily failing to receive Russia's deterrent message because they were too ideologically driven to be deterred. Rather, Russia's demonstrated weakness up until then made it so even pragmatically driven actor would not be deterred. Putin's decision to pursue decisive victory in Chechnya in 1999 was likely made regardless of his perception of his opponent's type. The overdetermination of Putin's strategy makes the question of whether he believed that Chechen' rebels were ideologically driven, or wanted to make it look that way, irrelevant for explaining his choice of strategy. However, Putin's decision to co-opt Kadyrov in 2000 is best explained by socialization logic as a decision

[719] As early as 1996, Russian defense officials worried about growing linkages between Islamist militants and Chechen rebels. A Brookings Institute report from 2002 noted: "After the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in 1996, they complained that Afghan-trained militants and mercenaries from the Balkans and the Middle East had moved into Chechnya. The actual numbers and provenance of these fighters among the forces in Chechnya remained uncertain, but discussions usually centered on the figure of "Khattab," an Arab who joined the Chechens in 1995 during the first war with Moscow. Russian officials described Khattab and his close associate, Chechen field commander Shamil Basayev, as having "tens," sometimes "hundreds," of Arab and other foreign nationals at their command. Some Chechen fighters were also described as having been trained in Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and other Muslim countries... Since September 11, an explicit linkage has been made between fighters in Chechnya and al Qaeda. The press commonly describes al-Qaeda forces captured and killed in Afghanistan as a mixture of Arabs, Pakistanis, and Chechens…. Al-Qaeda forces were also reported to have fled Afghanistan to seek refuge among the Chechen population in Georgia's Pankisi Gorge." (Hill 2002). Out of the 19 9/11 hijackers, "11 were Saudi citizens who had left home saying they were going to jihad in Chechnya." (Cheterian 2015).

[720] A 2001 report cited the Chechen president as condemning the 9/11 attacks "as 'truly barbarous' and 'madness.'" Aslan Maskhadov told RFE/RL's Russian Service that "all attempts by the Russian leadership and Russian intelligence to demonstrate that Osama bin Laden is 'the godfather of the Chechen resistance' have failed. He pointed out that the conflict between the Chechen people and Moscow dates back 400 years, long before bin Laden was born." (Radio Free Europe 2001).

to bolster the governance function of pragmatically driven factions while crushing the other factions, thus socializing the Chechens into a type D NSA.

Increased perception of Chechnya as having low governance function.

Coincident with the series of events and policies that increased Russia's perception of Chechnya as ideologically driven, Russia noticed how the governance function of the more moderate Maskhadov was eroding to the point of non-existence. Finally, by 2000, "the last vestiges of the system of state authority disappeared in the confrontation between the government and the field commanders." (Kovalev 2000).[721] By 1999, Russia saw the enemy in Chechnya as having low governance function. This perception made fostering pragmatism and increasing governance function through cooptation of more pliable elements the optimal strategy to socialize them. Cooptation first required threatening decisive defeat.

Russia's decision on a decisive victory strategy was not the leader specific brainchild of Putin. "Then-President Yeltsin in early December 1999 highlighted a pacification plan that included freeing areas from 'gangsters' by forcing civilians to flee, killing the 'gangsters,' resettling civilians in the cleared areas, fostering a pro-Moscow Chechen regime, and providing aid for infrastructure rebuilding." (Nichol 2000, 6).

Putin actively worked to reduce Russia's constraints

Upon taking office, which coincided with the campaign in Chechnya, Putin dramatically reduced Russia's constraints. He reduced Russia's internal constraints through increased media control, the consolidation of electoral power, fraud, the fostering of a cult of personality and wise economic policy. Putin reduced Russia's external constraints through economic expansion, paying off sovereign debt, and rebuilding the military. Putin also gained increased international

[721] According to Kovalev, from 1997-2000, "the president and government of Chechnya have not been willing to risk taking decisive measures to bring order to the republic." He claimed that this is due to lack of military capability to keep a monopoly on violence, stating: "Their reasons are obvious—they were afraid that the first firm step they took would lead to an uprising and civil war." He argued that "Maskhadov's timidity led to the worst possible outcome: almost complete loss of control over the country and the transfer of real power into the hands of the so-called 'field commanders,' among whom are such people as the slave traders Arbi Barayev and Ruslan Khaikhoroyev, the terrorists Salman Raduyev and Shamil Basayev, and the Jordanian Islamic fanatic Khattab, who many assert is an ally of Osama bin Laden." (Kovalev 2000).

legitimacy for combat in Chechnya by supporting the U.S. war effort in Afghanistan post-9/11 and playing up Russia as a staunch ally of the U.S. in the War on Terror.[722]

- **Reducing external constraints**

In the Second Chechen War, Russia blocked NGOs and journalists from the combat zones. The Russian government successfully manipulated public perceptions, convincing the majority of Russians that Chechnya was an "outpost of international terrorism rather than an aspiring nation state." (Miakinkov 2011, 648). Military reports from Chechnya continuously emphasized this counterterrorism rhetoric.[723] Russia increasingly referred to the war as an "antiterrorist special operation." (Kovalev 2000). Clearly Russia was not killing thousands of terrorists in each confrontation. Civilian casualties were lumped in with the killed militants.

Putin launched the most brutal stages of the campaign, including the firebombing of Grozny, prior to 9/11 and prior to Bush taking office. However, the U.S. was growing increasingly concerned with global jihadism several years before 9/11. Conflating Chechen rebels with international terrorists, especially al-Qaeda, gained Russia both domestic and international support. Trenin lamented that many U.S. officials and experts "who embrace Russia as an ally in the GWOT, mistakenly see Chechnya as just another battlefield in that war." (Trenin 2003, 1). Putin actively promoted this impression in order to reduce Russia's constraints.

After the terrorist attack on 9/11, "Putin was the first foreign leader to reach out to President George W. Bush to assure him of Russia's commitment to fighting terrorism. Counterterrorism became instrumental for the Kremlin to subdue domestic criticism about the lack of security and stability in Russia. Counterterrorism also secured a green light for Putin's regime to continue military action in Chechnya." (Pokalova 2015).

[722] Trenin argued that Putin saw his chance to link the conflict in Chechnya within the broader war on terror following 9/11 after which Putin declared solidarity with Washington and offered practical support. Trenin argued that Moscow's view was that it was fighting radical jihadist terrorism since the apartment bombings in 1999 and that on 9/11, the U.S. finally awoke to the global struggle. Trenin contrasts Governor George W. Bush's public threat of sanctioning Putin over "bombing women and children and causing huge numbers of refugees to flee Chechnya," in an interview on February 16, 2000, to his much softer line in an interview as President in November 2002. In his post-9/11 interview, Bush referred to Putin as "my friend," said Putin handled the situation in Chechnya "as best he could" and blamed "the terrorists" for the death and destruction in Chechnya. (Trenin 2003, 5).

[723] For example, one official report stated: "A group of three thousand terrorists has been surrounded in Gudermes"; "two and a half thousand terrorists were liquidated in Shali." (Kovalev 2000).

Putin's response to the 9/11 attacks turned Russia overnight into an ally of the West. However, the U.S. did not suddenly see Russia as an altruistic actor, it continued to view Russian actions in Chechnya as in pursuit of its own interests. That being the case, "the only reward that the White House deemed appropriate was toning down U.S. government criticism of the conduct of the Chechen war (Trenin 2003, 1).

In a 2001 article, Lynch noted that Russia had recently "experienced an unprecedented disintegration of the classical sinews of international power, i.e. a decade-long depression in the industrial economy and the virtual decomposition of the armed forces as a coherent combat organization, and an external debt which cannot be serviced without further indefinite infusions of foreign credit, rescheduling and forgiveness, de facto or de jure." Given this miserable power prognosis, Lynch asked how Russia has "managed the delicate balance between asserting Russian prerogatives and maintaining Russia's relations with the G-7 powers, on whom it is financially dependent and without whom, most Russian foreign policy elites agree, Russia's most vital national interests cannot be secured?" (Lynch 2001, 7). Lynch also noted the internal constraints that Russian leadership understood that it faced. He described Russia as a state that "lacks the resources, institutions and coherence to perform many of the minimal functions of governance, including the levying of collectable taxes, control of the armed forces," and was unable to suppress internal rebellion." (Lynch 2001, 8).

The perception of vulnerability by Russian foreign policy experts connotes the gravity with which Russia still felt the need to delicately proceed in its foreign policy, including concerning Chechnya. The Russian economy had still not recovered from the massive shocks of the 1990s. To ensure international support, or at least avoid sanction, Putin took steps to reduce Russia's economic vulnerability while framing the conflict in Chechnya within terms that the most important international players, primarily the U.S. would be sympathetic to.[724]

Sergei Markov, director of Moscow's Center for Political Studies, said Putin has insisted "the war is a domestic problem in which other countries should not meddle." He also said the war is "becoming part of the international terrorist threat," and "we are witnessing the formation

[724] Lynch noted the primacy of Russia's relationship with the U.S.in terms of its international relations. Ranking its importance in a 2001 article in which he wrote in this context: "in the first place the United States, whose cooperation remains essential to Russia's internal as well as external prospects." (Lynch 2001, 8).

of a coalition between the United States, Israel, and Russia, allies for a hard line toward terrorism." (Feifer 2002).

The Russian linkage of Chechen terrorism with broader jihadist terrorism is not contrived. Substantial revealed connections between Chechen rebels, the Taliban and al-Qaeda "served as a clear indictment of the Chechens." Post-9/11 Terrorist attacks in Moscow; the music theater takeover in 2002 and the rock concert suicide bombings in 2003 "were widely seen to confirm the nature of the threat Russia was facing from the North Caucasus." The use of suicide bombings as a tactic shared by Chechens and al-Qaeda greatly helped Russia paint the Chechens as highly ideologically driven extremists, a perception that Russian leadership honestly held. Trenin argued that "the Bush administration was coming around to agreeing that Chechen terrorism posed a threat to Russia not dissimilar to the one that Osama bin Laden's organization presented to the United States." (Trenin 2003, 2).

In 2003, the U.S. added three Chechen groups to the international terror lists. Those groups all played a role in the 2002 Moscow theatre hostage crisis and were determined by the U.S. to have links to al-Qaeda. (PBS 2003).[725] According to Hill, post-9/11 Russia saw itself as having a green light from the U.S. to combat radical jihadists in Chechnya. (Hill 2002).[726]

- **Reducing internal constraints**

Putin also undertook measures to increase its governing capacity and reduce its internal constraints which were relatively high when he took office. These included consolidating

[725] The three groups, were: "Riyadus-Salikhin Reconnaissance and Sabotage Battalion of Chechen Martyrs, the Special Purpose Islamic Regiment and the Islamic International Brigade according to the Federal Register." "State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said all three groups were 'directly involved' in the October 2002 seizing of some 800 hostages in a Moscow theatre by Chechen separatists. 129 hostages and 41 of the hostage-takers were killed when Russian forces used a gas to storm the theatre and end the standoff. Boucher also said that the three Chechen groups showed evidence of 'training and money links' to the al-Qaida terrorist network." . (PBS 2003).

[726] There was certainly some international alarm and condemnation over concerns that Putin would launch an aggressive military campaign in Chechnya. "The prospect of another full-scale war in Chechnya prompted Western governments to issue statements of concern over Russian tactics against rebels in the breakaway republic. However, there appeared to be little appetite among outside powers to intervene in the conflict with anything more than public complaints." (Pike 2011). A CRS report from 2000 states that "the U.S. Administration has been increasingly concerned about the escalating reports of human rights abuses by Russian forces in Chechnya but, as Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott stated in a major speech in October 1999, wants to continue a policy of engagement with Russia. He supported Russia's efforts to combat terrorism and separatism but added that these efforts should not set back democratization or result in human rights abuses." (Nichol 2000, Introduction).

political power, creating fake opposition parties, increasing government control over the media, promoting a cult of personality, and rebuilding a formidable internal security force.

Markov said both the political elite and the public backed Putin's stance.[727] Putin saw public support as important. “On the eve of the Second Chechen War, on September 8, 1999, Putin said: ‘Russia is defending itself. We have been attacked. Therefore, we must throw off all syndromes, including the guilt syndrome.” (Van Herpen 2015, 166).[728] Putin’s sought to stoke public anger, allowing it to commit atrocities including indiscriminate bombing that exceeded the bombing of Sarajevo by orders of magnitude.[729] The high public perception of the Second Chechen War as necessary and justified also reduced Putin’s internal constraints. Most Russian’s saw Putin’s invasion and subsequent operations in Chechnya as both necessary and successful. These perceptions have been shown to increase a population’s casualty tolerance even in democracies. (Feaver, Gelpi and Reifler 2006).[730] Public anger and fear over Chechen terrorism also strengthened Russia’s move away from democracy and a free press.

Putin has systematically increased Russia’s power and wealth, reduced political constraints and presided over an apparatus that solidified his popularity through control over the media, popular policy and charisma. By promoting economic growth while simultaneously eroding democratic liberties and cementing authoritarian control, Putin was able to reduce Russia’s internal constraints from popular dissatisfaction and its external constraints from vulnerability to economic pressure.

[727] According to a 2002 poll by the All-Russia Center for the Study of Public Opinion, “49 percent of respondents said Russian troops are not taking tough enough measures in Chechnya; only 9 percent said the military was acting too harshly. Putin's approval rating following the hostage crisis has meanwhile remained steady at a whopping 77 percent.” (Feifer 2002).
[728] The “guilt syndrome” alludes to the Russian acknowledgement of the role that Stalin’s deportations and Russia’s general mistreatment of the Chechens had in fostering feelings of Chechen nationalism that led to separatism.
[729] Putin used artillery and aerial bombs despite having precision munitions. This was due to the decision of not wanting to waste these munitions as well as on a deliberate strategy of demoralizing the Chechen civilians.
[730] Feaver, Gelpi and Reifler (2006) find that public support hinges on their view of the conflict as necessary combined with expectations of success. An analysis of Russians’ attitudes regarding the Second Chechen War suggests that domestic support for the war would be high. “Only 21 percent of Russians believed that the second war in Chechnya was pointless, while more than 50 percent said the goals set by the Russian government in that war were either fully or partially achieved, according to a 2014 Levada Center poll. The poll found that Russians saw the second Chechen war as a success despite the estimated 3,700 soldiers and 25,000 civilians who perished during the military phase and the conflict’s subsequent low-intensity phase from 1999 to 2010.” (Saradzhyan 2015).

In 2001, Putin lowered taxes and introduced a flat tax rate of 13%. The corporate rate of tax was also reduced from 35 percent to 24 percent; Small businesses also get better treatment. The old system with high tax rates has been replaced by a new system where companies can choose either a 6-percent tax on gross revenue or a 15-percent tax on profits. The overall tax burden is lower in Russia than in most European countries. Putin's tax policies, as well as other wise economic policies, sparked impressive economic growth. (Mitchell 2003).[731]

Unused manufacturing capacity and rising oil prices "helped usher in an era of unprecedented prosperity that Putin is still remembered for, with real disposable income doubling between 1999 and 2006." (Luhn 2015). Putin directed that a portion of Russia's oil revenue went to the stabilization fund established in 2004. This allowed Russia to repay all of the Soviet Union's debts by 2005. In early 2008, it was split into the Reserve Fund, designed to protect Russia from global financial shocks. This proved to be a wise decision that allowed Russia to weather the 2008 global crisis better than its western counterparts. (Cooper 2009).

Along with economic reforms, Putin continuously reduced Russian liberties and consolidated control. This was done throughout the Chechen conflict. For example, in mid-September 2004, "Putin announced plans for a radical overhaul of his country's political system, with the goal of centralizing power in the Kremlin. Acting in the wake of the hostage crisis in Beslan, during which Chechen separatists killed hundreds of children, Putin claimed that his power grab was necessary to help Russia win its own war on terrorism." Goldman argued that whatever Putin's motivations, "the move represents a major step backward for Russian democracy." (Goldman 2004).

[731] Under the first Putin administration "the economy made real gains of an average 7% per year (2000: 10%, 2001: 5.1%, 2002: 4.7%, 2003: 7.3%, 2004: 7.2%, 2005: 6.4%, 2006: 8.2%, 2007: 8.5%), making it the 7th largest economy in the world in purchasing power." Its nominal Gross Domestic Product (GDP) increased six fold, rising from "22nd to 10th largest in the world." In 2007, Russia's GDP exceeded that of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic in 1990, meaning that it overcame the devastating consequences of the 1998 financial crisis and the preceding recession in the 1990s. "During Putin's first term of eight years in office, industry grew by 76%, investments increased by 125%, and agricultural production and construction increased." "Real incomes more than doubled and the average monthly salary increased sevenfold from $80 to $640." From 2000 to 2006 "the middle class grew from 8 million to 55 million." Finally, "the number of people living below the poverty line decreased from 30% in 2000 to 14% in 2008." (Russian Political Atlas 2019, 106).

According to Lynch, Putin has "reconstituted a functioning state after it had virtually ceased performing the most elemental tasks of statehood in the late 1990s." Putin also "presided over an unprecedented increase in private living standards, restored national pride in domestic and foreign affairs, unified the foreign and domestic branches of the Russian Orthodox Church, and successfully contained the further encroachment of NATO toward Russia's frontiers through limited wars in Georgia (2008) and Ukraine (2014)." Putin has achieved "a remarkable degree of political legitimacy based on both charismatic and traditional elements." "Putin has constituted a political machine that is fundamentally a personalist network." "Putin is the "indispensable power broker who ensures, in addition to resources adequate to sustain a viable state, a reasonable distribution of spoils among strategic clients." (Lynch 2018). This does not mean that Putin is immune from, or insensitive to, popular opinion. In 2004, Putin responded quickly to appease mass protests against his benefits reform policy, doubling increases in pension payments and reintroducing free public transportation. (Bigg 2005).

Putin also worked to reduce internal constraints on military force directly by allowing very permissive ROEs to soldiers operating in Chechnya in a zone where both domestic and international media access was severely curtailed. Trenin noted that "under Putin, senior military commanders are allowed to operate with maximum leeway in Chechnya. Once outside of the war zone, however, their activities are severely restricted." For many soldiers and policemen, "Chechnya has become an area of unprecedented freedom from the usual restrictions." This is because "the rules of engagement are determined by circumstances and are left to the discretion of the relevant commander." In Chechnya, the military operates "under the motto, a la guerre comme a la guerre, which they loosely translates to no holds barred." (Trenin 2003, 5). In the Russian mode of enemy-centric counterinsurgency, loose ROEs facilitated the effective use of brutality in ways that more constrained countries cannot.[732]

[732] The democratic model for fighting terrorism and insurgencies that the United States espouses has several common features, some of which are codified in the Field Manual 3-24 on counterinsurgency. An ideal type description of a democratic approach would emphasize that success requires convincing the population to accept government authority as legitimate, often through improved governance. The government should attempt to "win the hearts, minds, and acquiescence of the population." Force is necessary, but its employment should be limited: The sentiment that "you cannot kill your way out of this war" is prevalent. In general, democracies are more likely to bring in disenfranchised communities and otherwise reduce grievances while seeking to maintain public safety. A democratic political system is valuable because it increases legitimacy, makes the government more responsive to the population, and makes a regime less likely to use force. If these criteria are indeed the most important, then the authoritarian track record should be much worse. Authoritarian regimes should find it harder to cut peace deals and

In addition to repression, authoritarian states use intelligence penetration and information operations to control the population and subdue insurgents. Measures used to ensure obedience domestically also help subdue suspect populations. Authoritarian regimes typically gather considerable information on their citizens and control access to travel and news. Putin's Russia follows the legacy of the Soviet Union and its most effective and feared institution, the secret police, in its ability to collect intelligence and utilize information warfare. Military victory comes from successful population control. Population control employs some combination of three sets of tactics: physical measures (e.g. walls, resource controls and forced resettlement), cooption (of local elite and often the insurgents themselves) and "divide and rule" strategies. All three of these can be seen in Putin's campaign in Chechnya. Ultimately, whether the counterinsurgent wins "hearts and minds" matters far less than whether it can control them. (Cohen 2014).[733]

Ucko points out that authoritarian regimes try harder to win the hearts and minds of their own population than they do that of the insurgents. (Ucko 2015). This follows the logic of reducing internal constraints in order to free up the ability to leverage a decisive victory strategy to socialize an opponent. In the First Chechen War when Russia was more of a democracy, "independent television portrayals of the violence and internal Russian military problems increased public anti-war sentiment. By contrast, aggressive censorship stymied such discussion and contributed to less discontent during the Second Chechen War." (Byman 2016).

The ability Putin's government to shield itself from the domestic repercussions of civilian death took away a tool often utilized by extremists—taking hostages and threatening civilian casualties in exchange for concessions. In 2004, Chechen militants took more than 1,100 hostages in School Number One in Beslan. Russian special forces stormed the school. In the ensuing slaughter, over 334 people were killed, including over 180 children.[734] In a democracy

win over pro-insurgent populations. For all its horrors, Russian violence prevented the Chechen population from giving succor to the rebels, allowing Russia to eventually destroy the Chechen insurgency. (Byman 2016).

[733] Galula, an early giant in the study of modern insurgency, sees military control as critical for ending an insurgency. "As long as there is no privacy, as long as every unusual move or event is reported and checked, as long as parents are afraid to talk in front of their children, how can contacts be made, ideas spread, recruiting accomplished?" Putin aimed for Russia to exert this control until it could be transitioned to co-opted Chechens, freeing Russia of the task of maintaining it. While good HUMINT is often seen as a reflection of popular goodwill, it can also be obtained "through blackmail, vendettas, bribes, and other less savory methods." (Byman 2016).

[734] "The European Court of Human Rights ruled that Russia's use of tanks, grenade launchers and flame-throwers to break the hostage situation "contributed to the casualties among the hostages." (Withnall 2017).

with high internal constraints, this type of disregard for casualties would be highly unlikely due to values, institutional constraints and electoral concerns. The Russian response was brutal and led to the deaths of what likely were an unnecessarily high number of civilians. The rapid and heavy-handed response did signal that terrorists would gain nothing, only death from carrying out these types of attacks. Basayev took credit for the Beslan hostage taking operation. Russia killed him killed in a strike within two years of the attack.

Decisive victory military campaign

Putin made Chechnya the showcase of his strategy to make Russia strong again. Using overwhelming force, Russian troops re-invaded Chechnya in 1999 with 100,000 troops compared to 35,000 in 1994.[735]

Russian actions in Chechnya followed enemy-centric COIN. This model uses force to induce fear to gain the compliance of the population. Compliance yields actionable intelligence and collaboration allowing the systematic targeting of the enemy until pacification is achieved either through surrender or degradation of enemy capabilities to the point of irrelevance.[736] In 1999, Putin planned to defeat the Chechens, but defeat did not mean annihilation. Kilcullen defined enemy-centric COIN as "first defeat the enemy, and all else will follow." (Kilcullen 2007). The "all else" to follow was the socialization of Chechen leadership through the threat of decisive victory to enable Russia to co-opt the opponent once it was made clear that its military victory would be decisive. Enemy-centric COIN can be done well or poorly. If done well, it can convince the opponent that it faces defeat, a necessary step to socializing an ideologically driven opponent to moderate enough to bargain with. If the state cannot convince the opponent that it faces defeat, it is unlikely to be able to successfully pressure even a pragmatically driven opponent. The poorer that the state performs militarily, the less it is able to succeed in securing favorable terms regardless of the opponent's type. In the first Chechen war, Yeltsin failed to convince the Chechens that Russia was able to do them harm without be forced to pay a price that they would be unwilling to pay. In 1999, Putin set out to correct this.

[735] Cheterian claims that "there are no precise figures on Russian military casualties, or of Chechen fighters, or of civilians, but Russian losses in Chechnya are higher than Soviet losses during the invasion of Afghanistan. Chechen civilian losses could be as high as in hundreds of thousands." (Cheterian 2015).
[736] Enemy-centric counterinsurgency "approaches counterinsurgency as a variant of conventional warfare. It sees counterinsurgency as a contest with an organized enemy, and believes that we must defeat that enemy as our primary task." (Killcullen 2007).

The Second Chechen War officially started on September 22, 1999. From the outset, Putin was unequivocal regarding his goal of brutally suppressing the Chechen rebels, without mercy, without negotiation, and without concern for civilian collateral damage. In his 1999 presidential campaign, Putin promised to "wipe out" Chechen rebels "in the outhouse." (Oliphant 2015), or "bury them in their own crap." This tough rhetoric in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks sent Putin's popularity ratings on a steep rise. (Kovalev 2000).[737] Speaking in front of the European Union on November 11, 2002, Putin reiterated this harsh message. "Responding to a question from a reporter on whether Russia's assault against terrorists would also eliminate portions of Chechnya's civilian population, Putin did not mince words, even leveling at the journalist a thinly veiled threat of castration." (Feifer 2002).[738] Throughout the campaign, Putin enjoyed strong domestic backing and felt unconstrained by the international community. The U.S., leading its own war on terror and planning to invade Iraq, unilaterally if need be, was not seriously pressuring Putin to take a more discerning military approach in Chechnya.

Van Herpen cites six Russian tactics used in the Second Chechen War that demonstrate the full involvement from the Kremlin down to all levels of the military in decreasing constraints and leveraging cruelty and total war to break the will of the Chechens. The Russian concept for warfighting sees warfare, once started, as limitless (*bespredel*). The six tactics used by the Russians were: Bombardments, the use of contract soldiers, sweep operations, filtration points, forced disappearances and Chechenization.

Kalyvas argues that a country's ability to prevent indiscriminate killing is more a function of military and intelligence capabilities, and the precision and accuracy of weapons systems, than whether it is a democracy or autocracy. (Kalyvas 2006). In the Second Chechen

[737] In 1999, describing his counterterrorism strategy relating to Chechnya, Prime Minister Putin said: "We will chase terrorists everywhere. If in an airport, then in the airport. So if we find them in the toilet, excuse me, we'll rub them out in the outhouse. And that's it, case closed." (Oliphant 2015).

[738] Putin told the reporter who asked about civilian casualties: "I think you are from a country that is, in fact, an ally of the United States of America. You are in danger. They speak about the necessity of killing all kafirs [nonbelievers], all non-Muslims, all 'cross-bearers,' as they call them. If you are a Christian, you are in danger. But if you reject your religion and become an atheist, you are also slated for liquidation, according to their way of thinking and their rules. You are in danger. If you decide to become a Muslim, even this will not save you, because they consider traditional Islam to be hostile to their aims. Even in this case, you are in danger. If you want to become a complete Islamic radical and are ready to undergo circumcision, then I invite you to Moscow. We are a multidenominational country. We have specialists in this question [circumcision]. I will recommend that they carry out the operation in such a way so that afterward, nothing else will grow," (Feifer 2002).

War, Russia had precision munitions and was increasingly able to obtain accurate and actionable intelligence, but often chose to forgo their use. This was in part to save them for what it considered high value contingencies to its West (Van Herpen 2015), but also to leverage the fear and panic created by indiscriminate bombing for its strategic effect, namely convincing the Chechens that Russia would not hesitate to carry out atrocities.[739]

Putin's bombardment of Grozny caused less casualties than Yeltsin's 1994-1996 campaign because past experience convinced most of the population to flee. During the war, over 25 percent of the Chechen population fled to neighboring republics, primarily Ingushetia. On December 6, 1999, Russia leafletted Grozny warning the civilian population to evacuate within five days but failed to facilitate the evacuation process in any way. Gilligan cited this as "the symbolic moment" when Russia revealed the intention to subject the Chechen population to brutality. (Van Herpen 2015, 189).

Gilligan described a decisive victory campaign at its extreme, with Russia signaling its willingness to pursue victory whatever the civilian cost. This strategy cannot be used by liberal democracies like the U.S. and Israel because their non-state opponents understand enough about the norms and constraints of their asymmetrically stronger state opponent to not grant credibility to this threat. Liberal democracies in turn know not to threaten it, due to constraints and to their understanding that it will not be seen as credible. This allows militants to leverage the civilian population to their advantage against liberal democracies but not against a minimally constrained state like Russia.

Van Herpen argued that Russia's use of contract soldiers, many of which came from former Russian military special forces, had the dual advantage over Yeltsin's use of mainly conscripts of reducing Russian constraints and boosting combat effectiveness. *Kontraktniki* wore

[739] The first tactic in Russia's decisive victory campaign involved massive aerial bombardment with imprecise munitions. Van Herpen claims that Russia learned from the NATO operation in Kosovo to minimize risk to its ground forces by conducting an intensive and crushing aerial campaign, however, the Russian version of this shows its minimal constraints. Unlike NATO which used precision munitions to minimize collateral damage in Kosovo, Russia used cheap and imprecise munitions with high blast radiuses to cause utter destruction. Felgenhauer claims that Russia deliberately targeted the civilian population "in direct violation of the Geneva Convention," using the Heavy Flamethrowing System (TOS-1), known in Russia as "Buratino." These fuel bombs disperse fuel into the air and detonate it causing massive incineration. They are banned even against military targets. Russia also used "Tochka" and "Tochka-U" ballistic missiles that "can cover up to seven hectares with cluster shrapnel." (Van Herpen 2015, 188).

their own self-created uniforms and conducted operations that gave Russia plausible deniability when carrying out operations that violated international law. They were also well paid and had better morale than conscripts, making them more effective, as well as more brutal combatants. Trenin claimed that some of the volunteers who fight under contract do so because their official pay can be augmented by looting "which generates enough to buy an apartment in a small town, otherwise out of reach for an ordinary policeman. (Trenin 2003, 5).[740]

Contract soldiers and regular units alike conducted sweeps that rounded up civilians and militants alike. These allowed Russia to find and dismantle terrorist networks while rewarding its troops with looting and targeting the will of the Chechen population, using force, torture, and the threat of violence and atrocities to gain compliance and cooperation from the population in a macabre reversal of the Western "hearts and minds" model. Fear is in the heart and mind as much as respect, admiration and identity is. It is even more primal a drive. Together with filtration, forced disappearances, optimized by the brutality and cultural familiarity of using Chechen co-ethnics, Russia was able to root out militants and gain the compliance of the population in doing so, despite increasing the population's bitterness towards Russia. This brutal policy follows the Machiavellian precept that fear ensures compliance more reliably than love.[741]

Western militaries are generally unable to employ the brutal battlefield tactics adopted by the Russians, making their study irrelevant in terms of transferring lessons learned into operational practice, however, there is much value to be learned from the study of Russia's successful indigenization of the conflict. Russia's war effort relied heavily on pro-Russian Chechen forces familiar with the Chechen geographic, cultural and interpersonal landscape to great effect. This can be compared to Israel's policy of relying on PA security forces to keep order in the West Bank, or the U.S. use of indigenous forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. While the U.S. and Israel generally used economic, social and political incentives and shared interests to gain indigenous support, Russia used bribery, threats, coercion, intimidation and disinformation.

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[740] While there is no doubt that Russian military units carried out brutality against the Chechens, U.S. Army intelligence analysts claim that Russia did not start using contract soldiers until 2008, and this was after the conflict had largely ended. Part of the confusion may stem from Van Herpen's definition of Kontraktniki. He cites Alpha Group as an example, but, as U.S. Army Analyst M.L. and Ilya pointed out, Alpha Group is not Kontraktniki, it is FSB Spetznatz (special operations forces). (Interviews 10/10/19).

[741] Russia employed heavy artillery and aerial bombardment to avoid bloody urban combat that Yeltsin's campaign fell prey to: "One scholarly analysis estimated that up to 80% of the city's high rises and 50% of its homes were destroyed…. "by mid-March of 1999 all of the large urban centers were under Russian control." (Meakins 2017, 4).

Lyall's study of Russia's use of loyal Chechens found that in this case, co-ethnics were more effective than Russian troops. (Lyall 2010).[742] Lyall also found that indiscriminate violence was an effective component of Russia's decisive victory strategy, that required the state employing it to have low constraints. (Lyall 2009).[743]

The Chechen rebels were asymmetrically weaker than the Russians but they still posed a formidable threat on the battlefield.[744] Meakins cited seven factors that created significant challenges for Russian military success in Chechnya: Geography; the brutalization of Chechens; structural weaknesses within the Armed Forces, equivalent deficiencies within the Special Forces, difficulties with state building, foreign fighters and terrorism within Russia and the tactical success of the insurgents. (Meakins 2017). He attributes Russian success to four key factors: "Manipulation of the media and a peculiar reversal of the traditional 'hearts and minds' strategy, the brutal tactics adopted by the Russians, the 'indigenization' of the conflict and a Russian campaign to rebuild the republic." He notes that "the first three of these elements could not have been achieved in a functioning liberal democracy with an accompanying aversion to violence." (Meakins 2017, 9).

Putin was able to leverage the type of large-scale conventional tactics that a liberal democracy with a free media, or a small country vulnerable to potential external intervention might be too constrained to use. His systematic blocking of media presence aided in reducing both internal and external constraints as the launched the 1999 campaign.

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[742] Lyall examined sweep operations (zachistki) in Chechnya from 2000-2005. "Evidence suggests that the intensity and timing of insurgent attacks are conditional on who 'swept' a particular village." "For example, attacks decreased by about 40% after pro-Russian Chechen sweeps relative to similar Russian only operations." "These changes are difficult to reconcile with notions of Chechen solidarity or different tactical choices. Instead, evidence, albeit tentative, points toward the existence of a wartime "coethnicity advantage." Russia was able to "put a local face" (Rand 2013), on its operations in its successful 1999-2006 campaign in Chechnya. (Lyall 2010, 1).

[743] Lyall found that: "Shelled villages experienced a 24% reduction in insurgent attacks and commonly-cited "triggers" for insurgent retaliation, including the lethality and destructiveness of indiscriminate violence, are either negatively correlated with insurgent attacks or are statistically insignificant." (Lyall 2009, 331).

[744] "From the start Chechen guerrillas were well-armed as they had freely looted Soviet stockpiles of weapons in Chechnya and neighboring republics. One scholar estimates that the Chechens had '139 artillery pieces, numerous anti-tank weapons and nearly 40,000 firearms.'" The Chechen rebels were highly adept and experienced insurgents. "Like ISIS today, Chechen rebels made extensive use of suicide and car bombs, employing women and children and turning every civilian into a potential threat." Chechen rebels were capable of conducting coordinated attacks. They were effective snipers and had effective Anti-Aircraft capability. Russian troops lacked night-vision, lacked sufficient pilot training, and had aging and damaged equipment. (Meakins 2017, 8).

Russia is especially able to utilize brutal suppression as a tool against a non-state opponent. Western military thinking generally considers this counterproductive. This is only partially true; for brutal suppression to work, it must be thorough.[745] Byman, citing Zhukov, noted that Russia's long history suggests "repression works, but not in moderation." (Byman 2016). "Russia has successfully defeated 18 out of 21 insurgencies fought since the start of the 20th century, the vast majority of which occurred within the territory of Russia." (Zhukov 2010, 12). "Chechnya seems to be no exception to this trend and in spite of the brutality of the Russian campaigns, the republic is now firmly under federal control. Whatever the failings of Putin's Chechnya policy, it is clear that the insurgency of the 1990s has been decisively defeated and that the secession of Chechnya is highly unlikely in the near term." (Meakins 2017, 2).

Russia used blackmail, vendettas, bribes, and threats of violence to obtain HUMINT that aided in suppressing Chechen rebels. Russia was also able to control movement and close off the conflict zone, barring media penetration as well as constraining rebel mobility. Trenin described the situation in 2003 as Chechnya being "effectively sealed off to investigative reporters, and Russian media were brought back under government control. Not only do the politically correct media report the war scantily and selectively, but much of the Russian public today do not want to hear about the war." (Trenin 2003, 5). Authoritarian regimes like Putin's Russia can use draconian measures, such as extreme curfews, to isolate an area and physically separate insurgents from potential supporters.[746] Putin launched an unambiguous decisive victory strategy aimed at convincing Chechen rebels of Russia's capability and resolve to defeat them as an organization. "By bombing urban centers into submission and using overwhelming force, the Russians gradually gained control of all big cities and population points." (Schaefer 2011, 218).

Leadership Targetability

[745] Proponents of population centric COIN, argue that brutal suppression fuels rebels by rallying the population to their cause, while winning the "hearts and minds" of a potentially hostile population can dry up the support a rebel group depends upon to survive. Proponents of enemy centric COIN channel Machiavelli in arguing that fear is a stronger motivator than love, and that populations will aid the rebels out of fear if they believe that they will remain and punish collaborators. The impact of state brutality is non-linear. Moderate brutality will drive popular hatred without creating the necessary fear and suppression of enemy capabilities. For brutality to work, the state must be willing and able to use it wholesale. Liberal democracies are constrained from this type of barbarism, thus true military suppression strategies remain outside of their toolkit.

[746] Toft and Zhukov found in their study of Russia in the Caucasus, such an effort "transforms the conflict zone into a closed system," preventing insurgents from melting into the hinterlands, bringing in reinforcements, extracting valuable outside support. (Toft and Zhukov 2012).

Along with large-scale military invasion and occupation, Putin also targeted rebel leadership in a systematic campaign. Khattab was poisoned in 2002. In 2003, Yandarbiyev—the former president of Chechnya in 1996 and a leading figure in the Chechen separatist movement—was killed after a bomb blew up his car in Doha.[747] Maskhadov, was killed in a raid in 2005, Basaev was killed in 2006. "The Russians conducted a 'relentless, extensive and protracted high value targeting campaign." (Schaefer 2011, 218). Russia was able to capitalize on its HUMINT and information warfare campaign along with intimidation, coercion and bribery to yield a high rate of success in killing high profile Chechen rebel leadership.

According to U.S, Army Intelligence Russia analyst "Pat," in the Second Chechen War, Russia set up a network of informants that significantly enhanced Russia's ability to target Chechen leadership. In 1994 no such network existed, many Russian soldiers did not speak Chechen, and Chechen leadership targetability was low. The tactic of Chechenization greatly enhanced Russia's ability to target Chechen leadership. This reinforced co-optation, allowing Russia and its client Chechen forces to threaten the rebel leadership with death and defeat.

Deliberate repression of a non-state opponent and its population is possible only under severe asymmetries favoring the state. Under less severe asymmetries, this type of repression may only be possible in the short term, but due to the relative strength of the insurgent, would require a long-term investment that is unlikely to be supported by the population of the state due to an asymmetry of resolve, in line with Womack's (2015) logic.[748] In the Second Chechen War, Putin had the ability to carry out short-term repression, but his policy of Chechenization and cooptation of Chechen leadership stemmed from the desire for sustainability. As a policy, it ensured that Russian troops not be responsible for stabilizing Chechnya in the long-term.

In 2001, some sources floated the possibility about Russia negotiating with the Chechen rebels.[749] These were most likely to save face in the international community and did not reflect

[747] A Qatari judge sentenced two Russian secret agents for that attack which it claimed was directed by the Russian government. (Myers 2004).
[748] In the case of Israel's repression of the Palestinians in Gaza, the population did tire of it and actively supported peace in the 1990s, only to be convinced by the violent and spectacular failure of the peace process that repression was the only viable option to manage a mortal threat.
[749] These negotiations were never likely to lead anywhere. Maskhadov warned that the Chechens "will never agree to lay down their arms." Maskhadov also made it clear that Chechnya would not give up on Chechen independence in any negotiation, while Putin Cleary rejected the idea in its entirety, making the issue a potentially non-divisible good. Mashkadov made his position clear, stating that in any negotiations "the first issue on the agenda should be

Putin's true intentions.[750] While Putin was working hard to reduce Russia's constraints by improving its military power, economic and political clout and reducing democratic and media freedoms domestically, in 2001 Russia was still relatively weak. Over the years Putin increased Russia's international power and the Kremlin's control over Russia.

Chechenization: Co-opting a Strongman, Building Governance Function and Boosting Leadership Targetability

From the start, Putin made clear his unwillingness to negotiate with the existing Chechen leadership. Analysts saw this as representing a desire to put in place a new leadership that was loyal to Moscow. Kremlin's stern line was that "an ultimate political solution in Chechnya must involve not talks with the separatist leadership but a referendum on the region's future and new elections." (Feifer 2002). Russia needed to have a Chechen leadership that was able to keep the peace. Maskhadov denied that his government was involved in the incursions into Dagestan in August and September 1999, but "he appeared to have scant authority over many guerrillas." (Nichol 2000. Introduction).

Each of the U.S. Army Intelligence analysts that I interviewed claimed that Putin decided upon the tactic of Chechenization and promoted the potential to coopt Ahmad Kadyrov before the 1999 invasion. (Interviews 2019). Satter argued that this was not thought of by Yeltsin, but that Putin learned from Yeltsin's failure. (Satter Interview 2019).

In June 2000, Putin appointed separatist-turned-loyalist Ahmad Kadyrov head of Russian administration in Chechnya. Ahmad Kadyrov, "the former Mufti of Chechnya" was a vocal opponent of 'Wahhabism.'" This action increased Chechen pragmatism, governance function and made its leadership even more targetable by making it beholden to Russian support. After a decisive campaign in 1999, Putin succeeded in shifting the Chechen rebels to a type D NSA; moderated ideology, high governance function, and targetable leadership.

In a parallel track with decisive force, Putin also leveraged political incentives to give Chechen leadership high governance function, including money and legitimacy, in exchange for

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defining relations between the Russian Federation and the Chechen Republic Ichkeria. Only resolving that key problem, Maskhadov said, can ensure that there will not be yet another war." (Radio Free Europe 2001).

[750] The U.S. National Security Advisor, Condoleezza Rice, did appear to perceive a sincere desire by Putin to negotiate with the Chechens, stating: "We like President Putin's statements now. It seems he really wants to initiate negotiations with the Chechen leaders." (Radio Free Europe 2001).

loyalty to Moscow. Kadyrov was able to be co-opted partly due to his fear and displeasure with Salafi/jihadi elements gaining strength in Chechnya.[751] (Cheterian 2015). This dynamic demonstrates how Putin's strategy gave the Kadyrov clan the right level of governance function for Putin to exploit. With Putin's help, Chechen leadership gained the governing capacity to enforce stability in the aftermath of a bargain, but faced enough pressure from rivals, like the Salafis, to allow Russia to offer Kadyrov assistance against them in exchange for loyalty. The ability to threaten Chechen rebels with decisive defeat was a necessary prerequisite for coopting their leadership. This can be seen in a comparison with Israel's inability to successfully co-opt the PA or Hamas despite similar governance function dynamics regarding rival groups.[752]

Between 2002 to 2006, remaining Chechen factions became more radical and religious due to Russian targeted assassinations. In Putin's campaign, Russia bolstered its moderate strongman while targeting hardline leaders who refused to submit to Kadyrov's leadership.

By late 2003, it appeared that neither separatism nor jihad were strong motivators for continued Chechen terrorism. Revenge for Russian brutality was a self-reported reason for continued resistance. (Trenin 2003).[753] Putin's continued policy of rebuilding Chechnya through payments to Kadyrov aims to convince the population that peace will be rewarded with prosperity. Even a minimally constrained leader of a powerful country understands the need to address grievances to maintain peace.

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[751] Kadyrov was an active participant in anti-Russian resistance in first Chechnya war, but was increasingly antagonized by the Salafi-jihadi ideology imported by Khattab, which contradicted the Sufi tradition of North Caucasian Islam. When Ahmed Kadyrov was assassinated in a bomb attack in 2005, his son Ramazan took his place establishing a stable, although ruthless police state." (Cheterian 2015).

[752] Israel, unable to credibly threaten Hamas with decisive defeat due to its constraints, is unable to convince it to moderate its ideology enough to become loyal to Israel in exchange for Israel elevating it over its rivals which are a nuisance to it. However, Israel is aided in its ability to manage Hamas by threatening to weaken it in the event of an escalation to the point where it can no longer repress dissent from rival groups in Gaza. Israel has succeeded in gaining a certain level of security cooperation from the PA, partially due to its ability to protect the PA from Hamas rivals in the West Bank, although the Mahmud Abbas is certainly not coopted into a loyal actor like Kadyrov.

[753] A 2003 poll found that Chechens overwhelmingly stated revenge on Russian forces for their brutality as the reason for armed resistance. 69 percent gave revenge as a reason for suicide bombing and 56 percent cited it as a reason for continued armed resistance against Russian forces. Eight percent stated jihad and another eight percent stated struggle for independence as reasons for suicide bombing. When asked about reasons for resistance, 24 percent claimed separatist motives while only six percent cited jihad. However, 78 percent of those polled supported Chechnya remaining part of Russia and only 19 percent supporting Chechen independence, suggesting that while separatism might be a primary motive for violence, it is not a prevalent position. (Trenin 2003, 4).

Russia's strategy towards Chechen rebels utilized hardline military force and sustained patronage from its outset until the present. The original use of hardline force aimed to defeat Chechen militants (and the jihadists from other Muslim countries) and convince potentially pragmatic actors to prioritize pragmatic aims and work with Russia towards realizing them. The sustained use of force after the initial Russian assault in 1999 aimed to defeat those elements who were too ideologically committed to fall into line and obey the authority of the Kadyrovs who are loyal to Putin.

In 2005 Ahmed Kadyrov was assassinated by Chechen hardliners. His son Ramazan took his place and established a Russian backed, stable but ruthless police state. Ramzan Kadyrov is so loyal to Putin that he offered to send fighters to combat ISIS in Syria. (GDN 2015).[754]

2009-PRESENT: MAINTAINING STABILITY

While Dmitry Medvedev was nominally president in 2009, Putin is widely acknowledged to have maintained the actual reigns of control during his four-year tenure as prime minister from 2008-2012.[755] On April 16, 2009, Medvedev formally ended counterterror operation in Chechnya. Medvedev's decreed that up to 20,000 of the 50,000 Russian troops deployed in Chechnya would be withdrawn. This declaration was touted as a major propaganda victory for Ramzan Kadyrov, with some claiming it possibly heralded Chechnya's de facto independence. The declaration changed little on the ground, Putin intended to have Kadyrov rule Chechnya with wide discretion, so long as he maintained order.

For several years prior to April 2009, the Russian military played a minimal role in the low-level fighting in rural areas in Chechnya. Chechen rebels still operate in the southern

[754] The assassination of Nemtsov has raised suspicion of political reciprocity towards Putin by his client in Chechnya. Putin suggested in December 2014 that Russian political opposition members could be part of a "fifth column" undermining the country. One of the opposition's leading voices, former deputy PM Boris Nemtsov, was assassinated in front of the Kremlin in February 2015, allegedly by security officers loyal to Chechnya's ruler, Ramzan Kadyrov, who was awarded a medal by Putin shortly afterwards. (Luhn 2015). Kadyrov has been quick to emphasize his loyalty. In 2015, he professed his readiness to fight for Russia against ISIS in Syria, stating: "'As a Muslim, as a Chechen, as a patriot of Russia, I am stating that in 1999, when our republic was seized by these devils, we gave our oath on the Koran that all our lives we would fight against them, wherever they are. I am not just saying this, I'm asking that we are allowed to go there and take part in these special operations." (GDN 2015).

[755] Russians call this a "castling move," describing the King and the Rook switching positions in Chess. The term is used to connote the fact that power never actually changed hands. (Barry 2011).

districts of the republic, but their main conflict is not with Russian troops but with pro-Moscow units loyal to Kadyrov.

Regarding the one Russian regiment slated to stay in Chechnya, Ramzan Kadyrov was quoted as saying that" it is imperative that some Russian Defense Ministry and Interior Ministry troops remain in Chechnya, 'not because there is any danger of banditism and terrorism, but in the event of an external threat. We have to defend Russia as a whole, and the Caucasus in particular.'" This declaration was a way for Ramzan to tout his authority and control, deflect criticism that could arise from Russian troops being stationed in Chechnya, and also demonstrate loyalty to Moscow by supporting Russia against foreign threats. (RadioFreeEurope 2009).

U.S. Army Intelligence Analyst "Ilya" stated that Russia's goal in Chechnya is pacification, not integration. (Interviews 2019). This is disputed. Urbanovich notes that Chechnya has been as much integrated in the Russian Federation as any other territorial unit of the North Caucasus. It is represented in the State Duma and the Federation Council. Also, Chechens are quite successful in the Russian business community and support Russia's war effort in Syria. Putin's goal vis-à-vis Chechnya from 2009 until the present and into the foreseeable future is to maintain stability. He does this through the implicit threat of force if Kadyrov were to renege, while also keeping Kadyrov's leadership contingent on support from Moscow.[756]

Kadyrov's rule over Chechnya and the newfound prosperity that has allowed Grozny to be rebuilt after decades of devastation flows at the behest of Putin and can be cut off if loyalty is in doubt. Lynch cites Putin's special relationship with Kadyrov, stating
"Putin's personalismo may be seen in the status of Chechnya, whose relations with the rest of Russia are mediated through a personal bond between Putin and Chechen warlord Ramzan Kadyrov." (Lynch 2018). This has raised concerns by some that after Putin leaves office, Russia's ability to control the Kadyrovs could end. Or, if Russia were to face an economic

[756] Chechnya remains dependent on subsidies from Moscow for the majority its annual budget, "24.5 billion rubles ($734.5 million) in 2009." Furthermore, the Russian company Russneft "controls the extraction, export, and refining of Chechnya's oil and has systematically opposed all attempts, both by Kadyrov and his late father, to secure total control of the remaining oil reserves." (RadioFreeEurope 2009). This further curtails Chechen independence.

downturn and Moscow were to cut subsidies to the Kadyrovs, they could switch their loyalty and resume fighting. (Interviews 2019).[757]

Ultimately, it is unlikely that the Chechen population would again give support to a rebel group that advocated warfare with Russia, or a position that threatened to escalate to violence and a resumption of destruction in Chechnya. Under Putin, Russia leveraged the threat of military defeat and heavy destruction, balanced with a demonstration of Moscow's commitment to support the Kadyrovs' rule and rebuild Chechnya if peace is upheld.[758] Russia was able to socialize the Chechen separatists into a group that can be negotiated with by applying a carrot and stick approach, threatening decisive victory while boosting Chechen governance and leadership targetability.

In 2017, Kadyrov discussed resigning as the leader of Chechnya. He stated, "once there was a need for people like me to fight, to put things in order. Now we have order and prosperity ... and time has come for changes in the Chechen Republic," Kadyrov said "he was ready to step down, leaving it for the Kremlin to choose his successor." (Reuters 2017). Kadyrov's statement acknowledges the critical variables: order, governance function, moderated ideology, and clearly identified and supported leadership. The Kremlin rejected Kadyrov's retirement plans. It was not the first time that Kadyrov had announced his resignation. "Kremlin Spokesperson Dmitry Peskov told reporters that Kadyrov 'plans to continue working as the country's president orders him,' adding that the Chechen would 'remain serving as the republic's acting head.'" (The Moscow Times 2017). Over two-decades since Russia's decisive actions in Chechnya, the situation demonstrates a successful shift of the Chechen rebels to a type D NSA, one with which a successful bargain can, and in this case, has been concluded.

Writing in 2010, after Putin's formal declaration to an end of fighting in Chechnya, Zhukov asserted that "despite serious setbacks in Afghanistan and the first Chechen War, Russia

[757] U.S. Army Intelligence Russia Analyst "Ilya" argued that there is a personal and patronage connection between Putin and Kadyrov. Kadyrov understands the contract as "keep stability and do whatever you want." Putin could reduce funds to Kadyrov if there is an economic shock. This could threaten stability. Also, stability could be threatened when Putin leaves office. (Interviews 2019).

[758] Cronin argued: "Sometimes even highly radicalized populations can pull back active or passive support for a group, especially if the government engages in strong repressive measures and people simply become exhausted. The apparent loss of local popular support for Chechen terrorist groups is a good example." (Cronin 2006, 28).

has one of the most successful track records of any modern counterinsurgent," with success defined as a cessation of hostilities on favorable terms. (Zhukov 2010, 2).[759]

Scholars and policymakers often wrongly assume authoritarian states will fail to defeat insurgents unless they reform and neglect the distinct ways they wage counterinsurgency. (Byman 2016). In Russia's case, "reforms" went backward. Instead of becoming more politically open, Russia centralized authority. Instead of trying to defeat insurgents in Chechnya by supporting a process of liberal democratization as the U.S. did in Iraq and Afghanistan, Putin used military might and patronage to coopt an illiberal strongman to uphold order. Russia's centralization of authority follows a broad historical trend. The process might have been accelerated by the Chechen wars was likely not caused by them. However, the lessons of Russia's success suggest the advantages possessed by a powerful authoritarian state. Putin continues to centralize Russian authority and boost Russian power.[760] This further signals that brutal repression will result from any Chechen resumption of violence.

Russia's strategy towards the Chechens shifted from decisive victory to management due to inadequate state power and the perception of a pragmatic "state like" opponent during Yeltsin's tenure. Putin worked to strengthen Russia internally and externally and pursued decisive victory until the Chechen rebels had been socialized to the point where a patronage-based bargain backed by the tacit threat of force was achieved. In contrast, U.S. and Israeli constraints limited their ability to credibly threaten their non-state opponents with defeat, their opponents were not socialized, and the conflicts continue at varying intensities.

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[759] Definitions of success in a campaign differ between regime types. A democracy might not consider pacification through means antithetical to liberal values such as forced resettlement, to be a success. Measures have been used from win-lose-draw to measures of casualties per year or duration of conflict that do not speak to success in achieving political/military aims. Using the win-lose-draw framework that mimics the interstate measure hostilities ended on favorable terms, Zhukov finds "Russia's overall COIN success rate to be 18 in 21, or 85.7 percent." He notes that "Russia's campaigns seem surprisingly short, "given the conventional wisdom" and Reiter and Stam's (2002) finding that autocracies are willing to fight longer wars. "Russia's counterinsurgency war duration average has been less than half the historical average from the same time period (8.27 years)." (Zhukov 2010, 13).

[760] Russia "spends a higher percentage of its GDP on defense than the United States, and has allocated a record $81bn in 2015." (Luhn 2015). Putin continue to consolidate power and lessen constraints. E.g., "On September 12, 2019, Russian authorities raided the homes and offices of political opposition activists across the country, detaining some for interrogation, seizing electronics and blocking personal accounts in one of the biggest ever coordinated strikes against the Kremlin's political opponents. The Russian government coordinated strikes against nearly 200 homes and offices in 42 cities targeting Kremlin opponents." (Grove 2019).

CONCLUSION

Chechen resistance to Russian rule dates back centuries. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Chechens finally saw their opportunity to declare independence with the military power to back it up against the crumbling Russia that emerged from the Soviet collapse. Yeltsin was rational according to Realist principles when he postponed dealing with Chechen de-facto independence from 1991-1994, seeking to utilize the Russian resources that remained towards more central needs.

In 1994, Yeltsin also acted according to the precepts of Realism. As the security situation in Chechnya worsened, he saw Russia as far superior to the Chechens in terms of military power and therefore assumed a high payoff for a low cost to using force. This was a miscalculation. Yeltsin faced relatively high constraints compared with Putin because Russia was in shambles economically, politically and militarily, there was a robust and open press and a relatively democratic political system, and the world's sole superpower was not at war with global terror.

Yeltsin was forced to withdraw from Chechnya in 1996 and manage the conflict through concessions but not in the form of granting de-jure independence to the Chechen people. While Chechen rebels sought the pragmatic aim of separatism, Russia lacked the power to deter this through the threat of imposing costs greater than it could suffer at the hands of a capable Chechen resistance. Yeltsin did not concede further because Russia was still the stronger party and Chechnya could not threaten high enough costs to force Russia to relinquish its rule.

As Wahhabi extremist fighters and cash poured into Chechnya to fight the Russians during the First Chechen War, these elements gained increased prominence and Russian leadership began to see Chechen demands as ideologically driven for the first time in this conflict. Putin began systematically boosting Russian power and centralizing control. Putin also used the specter of jihadi terrorism to boost domestic support and reduce international criticism for what he deemed counterterrorism in Chechnya. By reducing internal and external constraints, Putin was able to leverage extreme brutality while shutting out domestic and international media.

Putin's ability to leverage brutality enhanced Russia's ability to threaten decisive victory. This allowed Russia to successfully socialize the Chechens. The final step was using the carrot of

cooptation to turn the military victory into a political victory and obtain the desired pacification of Chechnya and the end to the conflict.

Without the use of unrestrained force to threaten defeat and the unrestrained ability to pay-off and coopt an illiberal and corrupt strongman, Russia would have been hard pressed to come to an accommodation with the Chechens. If Russia was as constrained as the U.S. or Israel, it may not have been able to pursue the optimal strategy warranted by its non-state opponent's type and the conflict would likely have likely continued, comparable to the continued management strategy pursued in the U.S. conflict with the Taliban or Israel's conflict with Hamas and in a less violent way, with the PLO.

The reason repression worked so well in the Second Chechen War was that it was tailored to a specific purpose. It was part of a decisive victory strategy to socialize the Chechen leadership into becoming pragmatically driven and thus open them up to the ability to be co-opted through carrots that increased their governance function, and their prominence, thus increasing their targetability as well. Putin's use of force and then cooptation turned Chechen militants from a group that Putin perceived to be potentially an archetypal terrorist group into a state like actor motivated by pragmatic concerns. The resumption of violence threatens to harm those concerns. This keeps Kadyrov dedicated to upholding order.

A key lesson from comparing the Russian model with the Israeli and U.S. models is that an authoritarian great power is advantaged in its ability to optimize strategy towards a non-state opponent with the goal of socializing it with sticks, carrots and political institutionalization. While both Russia and Israel tried to turn their opponents into legitimate governments, Israel had no way to bind the PLO through the credible threat of decisive force and the tying of its fortunes to the goodwill of the Israeli government. Russia was able to make it clear to Kadyrov that his government's power and legitimacy required keeping Putin happy. The U.S. in Afghanistan did not work to boost the Taliban's governance function as part of socializing it to keep order and stability and prevent terrorist safe haven in Afghanistan, despite this being the optimal goal in terms of ending conflict on acceptable terms. U.S. values and politics appear to preclude this. Instead the U.S. threw trillions of dollars behind building a government in the image of a western democracy to pacify Afghanistan, but this entity, 19 years later, is still unable to exert military control over large swaths of the country. Had the U.S. pursued the Russian model, they would

have co-opted pragmatic Taliban leadership after decisively defeating them in December 2001 and offered them their desired legitimacy along with military and economic support, human rights be damned, in exchange for loyal pacification.

These lessons of authoritarian advantage appear dark for those who feel strongly that democracy and liberal values are normatively superior to oppression. Others might advocate that first and foremost, the stability and increased prosperity that comes from even an oppressive pacification is preferable to continued violence. A normative discussion may debate whether oppressive stability and peace are preferable to liberty and violence. Normative considerations are the purview of a philosopher. However, externally powerful democracies like the U.S. could derive lessons from the Russian model's success in Chechnya as to how it might be applied by a liberal democracy as a first step to securing peace before promoting liberal values. Indeed, in Maslow's hierarchy, physical security is paramount. The U.S. has historically supported dictators that offend the notions of liberal democracy. This is underscored by the famous quote allegedly made by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt regarding General Somoza's 1938 take-over of Nicaragua: "He may be a son of a bitch, but he's our son of a bitch." Kadyrov fills that role for Russia. If the U.S. is willing to put pragmatism over liberal democratic ideology once again, it could potentially use the Russian model to end its conflict with the Taliban.

Chapter 8: Socialization Logic Applied to Eight Twentieth-Century Case Studies

This chapter tests the potential application of socialization logic to eight twentieth and twenty-first century cases of asymmetrically stronger states countering non-state opponents. Though there are hundreds of cases of extra-state conflict, these eight spans a broad spectrum of states involved, strategic and political contexts. Each of the four NSA ideal types of are represented as well. This chapter does not intend to provide a compelling argument that socialization logic best explains the cases. To do so would require much more extensive research and analysis. Rather, it aims to show the potential generalizability of socialization logic by demonstrating how it can explain state strategy in a broad array of cases that fit within the scope of conflicts that it applies to.[761] In each of these cases I examine the state's strategic choices to counter its non-state opponent along with its perception of its opponent's type, its own perceived constraints and the vitality of the threat that its opponent posed.

This chapter examines: 1. Great Britain's conflict with Jewish insurgents in Mandatory Palestine; 2. Great Britain's conflict with Irish Militants in both the Irish War of Independence and the Troubles. 3. South Africa's conflict with the African National Congress. 4. The U.S. conflict against the Vietcong. 5. Algeria's conflict with the Armed Islamic Group. 6. Peru's conflict with the Shining Path. 7. One episode of Turkey's conflict against the Kurdistan Workers' Party. And 8. France and the G5 Sahel Force against al-Qaeda affiliates.

A cursory survey suggests that most these cases can be explained by socialization logic, with the asymmetrically more powerful state pursuing a strategy to make the non-state opponent resemble a state in its ideological drive, governance function and leadership targetability. State strategy was often distorted by high internal and external constraints. In these cases, the state either opted for management while its constraints were high or conceded if the opponent had a pragmatic aim that did not threaten the state's perceived vital interests. Negotiated peace was more likely to obtain in cases where the NSA was closer to type D. Finally, cases where states

[761] This includes some cases that go "against the tide of history" "(either the end of the colonial era or the end of apartheid)." As noted, "fighting against the tide of history is only surely observable as an ex post facto judgment." (Paul, Clarke, Grill and Dunigan 2013)

did not apply socialization logic—or applied it but misperceived their opponent's type—resulted in long, unnecessary and costly conflict.

Socialization logic applied to modern asymmetric conflicts between a state and a non-state opponent

Conflict	NSA Type	State Constraints	Optimal State Strategy According to Socialization Logic	Actual State Strategy	Outcome
GB vs Haganah, Etzel and Lehi 1944-1947	Haganah: D. Etzel and Lehi C	High	A bargain was available through territorial and political concession.	Both parties understood that GB was too constrained to defeat the Jewish insurgents. After lackluster attempts to target NSA leadership and coerce, and an unsuccessful management approach, GB conceded to acceptable demands.	GB withdrew; bargain.
GB vs IRA 1919-1921 and PIRA 1968-1998	Independence: D. Troubles: B → D	High/Medium	A bargain was available through territorial and political concession.	GB granted Irish independence in 1921. In 1998 GB conceded to moderated PIRA demands for increased political rights. This followed 30 years of conflict in which the British increased PIRA targetability through a large-scale but relatively restrained military operation.	Bargain
SA vs ANC 1950-1993	B/C → D	Moderate	Increase the ANC's governance function. And bargain once SA perceived the ANC to be pragmatically driven.	South African leadership perceived ANC to become more pragmatically driven primarily due to an exogenous factor. They then conceded political rights boosting its governance function.	Bargain.
US vs Vietcong 1960-1975	Perceived as B, actually C	Increasingly high internal, low/moderate external	Bargain with Vietcong to end unnecessary U.S. involvement.	Incremental escalation from management to decisive victory and then de-escalation to bargain due to Cold War theorizing and domestic politics.	Bargain.
Algeria vs GIA 1992-2002	B	Low	The GIA would not exist had Algeria pursued optimal strategy towards the FIS. Once it did, its optimal strategy was decisive victory.	Algeria pursued decisive victory against the GIA. Eventually, Algeria offered amnesty. The GIA refused, the main groups accepted, and the GIA became isolated and irrelevant.	GIA became irrelevant.
Peru vs Shining Path 1980-2000	A → B	Moderate/Low	Decisive victory.	Decisive victory through leader capture and a decisive military campaign through arming and mobilizing local militias.	State victory
Turkey vs PKK 1984-1999	C → D	Low	Decisive victory followed by concessions.	Decisive victory through enemy-centric COIN, leadership capture, then concessions.	Bargain.
France and the G5 Sahel Force vs ISIS and AQIM 2017-ongoing	A	Moderate	Decisive victory	Decisive victory	Ongoing

The eight cases above cover relatively powerful and relatively weak states, authoritarian and democratic governments and NSAs ranging from independence seeking proto states to archetypal terrorists. Some NSAs (the Haganah, Etzel and Lehi, and the Irish Republican Army [IRA]) went on to lead independent countries. Some gained representation in the government of their former opponent (the African National Congress [ANC]). Others lost relevance following a decisive victory campaign against them. (Shining Path, and the Armed Islamic Group [GIA]). AQIM, ISIS affiliated Boko Haram and various jihadist groups remain a threat that a coalition of states—supported by the France and the U.S.—pursue decisive victory against. With Peru and

Turkey's conflicts, the states' capture of its opponents' leaders led to a successful end to the conflict, either through dismantling the group in Peru's conflict with the Shining Path, or through increasing the state's belief in its ability to deter the group by threatening its captured leader with death as in Turkey's conflict with the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).[762]

In the following eight brief surveys, I apply socialization logic and look at the distorting impact of constraints to explain the states' choice of strategy and the conflicts' outcomes. In each case I demonstrate where socialization logic appears to uniquely explains a strategy or an outcome, where it might, and where it clearly does not.

- **The British versus Jewish insurgents in Palestine: 1944-1947**

Throughout the late 1930s, Jewish groups in the British controlled Mandate of Palestine walked a fine line between working with the British as their benefactors and arming themselves in preparation for what they saw as an inevitable war with the Arabs and likely British betrayal. British policies—most notably the May 1939 White Paper that barred Jewish immigration to Palestine—were seen as a betrayal and signaled worse to come.[763]

David Ben Gurion, the leader of the main governing Jewish body in Palestine—the Yishuv—supported working with the British and volunteered Jewish fighters to serve in the British Army to gain military experience and demonstrate loyalty.[764] Throughout WWII, the Haganah worked with the more radical Etzel and Lehi groups to defy the British blockade.[765]

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[762] Nothing increases a state's ability to target its opponent's leadership like having that leader sitting in a jail cell. Outcomes suggest that if a state can capture a NSA's leader, it may be able to socialize it into a moderate actor and end the conflict. This depends on how important the leader is to the group's function and how much control that leader has over it's actions. Turkey's conflict with the PKK is ongoing, but their first insurgency ended with a the PKK declaring a unilateral ceasefire at the request of its leader Ocalan after Turkey captured him in 1999. Peru's successful capture of Shining Path leader Guzmán in 1992 and then its next leader Ramírez in 1999, led to the end of that conflict as well. These outcomes demonstrate how states actively aim to increase leadership targetability with the goal of successfully socializing the group to become more moderate. With the Shining Path, the leaders' capture and imprisonment led it to put pragmatic self-preservation above ideology. Turkey's capture of the PKK leader in 1999 led the already pragmatically driven group to abandon the fight. In Peru's case, the capture of Shining Path leaders' and effective military pressure led to an end of the conflict. In Turkey's case, the capture of the PKK leader deterred a group that was arguably already deterrable but which Turkey had failed to show that it could impose high enough costs upon until after the leader's capture following a sustained decisive victory campaign.

[763] Blocking Jewish immigration coincided with an increasingly dire situation for Europe's Jews as Hitler prepared for and rapidly advanced the German conquest of Europe.

[764] The British were wary and generally kept the Palestinian Jews in support units so that they did not gain valuable combat experience that could later be used against them.

[765] The Stern Gang, also known as "Lehi" split off from the Etzel on July 17, 1940. The Etzel supported cooperating with the British during WWII while the Lehi advocated fighting the British at this period as well. (Etzel.org). Lehi

The Haganah did not carry out military attacks against the British until after WWII and encouraged the Etzel to refrain as well.[766] Ben Gurion famously stated that the Jews in Palestine would fight the British like there was no WWII and fight Hitler like there was no White Paper.

As WWII drew to a close, it became increasingly clear that the British would not support Jewish independence in Palestine. As hundreds of thousands of surviving Jewish refugees languished in Europe, barred by the British from entering Palestine, the Jewish groups worked together, waging a concerted campaign of illegal immigration and violence against the British. Eventually, international and domestic pressure and an intense and effective Jewish guerilla campaign led the British to withdraw from Palestine and turn over the mandate to the U.N. which voted in favor of partition.[767] The Jewish groups declared independence as the State of Israel. This ended the conflict between the Jewish insurgents and the British. After Great Britain withdrew, the Jewish insurgents had no ideological or pragmatic motivation to continue conflict with them. Therefore, this can be categorized as a successful bargain. Indeed, only seven years later, the Israelis worked with the British against the Egyptians in the 1956 Suez Crisis.

The Haganah was a type D NSA. It was the official military wing of the Yishuv. The other more radical Jewish militant groups, the Irgun and Lehi were both Type C. At critical periods, especially post-WWII, the Haganah collaborated with the more radical groups to take on the British. Following statehood, they combined into one political entity.

While the Etzel and Lehi were less open to compromise over territory and desired a greater portion of the British Mandate for Palestine for Jewish sovereignty, none of the groups' Zionist ideology was absolutist.[768] Zionism called for the pragmatic goal of territorial sovereignty. It promoted the goal of pursuing independence in a specific and limited territory

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was always a relatively small organization, never numbering over several hundred members and even few fighters. They were the most radical, even supporting Nazi Germany over the British in WWII until more information came to light about Hitler's "Final Solution." Etzel, also known as "Irgun" was larger, with membership in the thousands.

[766] Etzel and Lehi attacked the British in the few months between the May 1939 White Paper declaration and the September 1, 1939 outbreak of WWII. Etzel refrained from attacking British targets during WWII. (Yahel 2018).

[767] British Foreign Secretary Earnest Bevin started considering turning the mandate over to the U.N. after it became clear that there was no room for compromise between Arab and Jewish positions on the future of Palestine. Jewish leaders supported partition. Arab leaders demanded a unified state under Arab control. (Weiler 2016, 172).

[768] Etzel was commanded by its founder and the founder of revisionist Zionist ideology, Ze'ev Jabotinsky, whose revisionist (Betar) school of thought provided their ideological grounding. They sought the creation of a Jewish state on both sides of the Jordan, with continued Jewish immigration to achieve a Jewish majority and a Jewish military for defense. For more information on Etzel ideology see Jabotinsky, "the Iron Wall" (1923).

over which negotiation was possible. The Jewish militants had high governance function. The Haganah served as a proto-governmental security force and they, along with the other groups, had the capacity to control their rank-and-file. The various militant groups were political rivals and represented opposing political platforms. Therefore, the Jewish militants had high governance accountability as well.[769] Finally, while Haganah political leadership was easily identified and targeted, the rival and at times partnering militant groups Etzel and Lehi had difficult to target leadership, with a command structure in which members,—and even upper level commanders—did not know each-others identities.[770] British frustration in trying to penetrate the secretive Etzel command structure means that Etzel can be coded as having relatively difficult to target leadership. (Etzel.org).[771] The British arrested Etzel leader David Raziel on May 19, 1939 and killed Lehi leader Avraham Stern in February 1942.

The Jewish insurgents wanted national independence a specific territory, one not vital to British interests. Even the most extreme of the Jewish militants were clearly willing to be pragmatic about this ideal goal.[772] Although Etzel and Lehi originally did not accept the 1947 U.N. Partition Plan, they came to terms with the results of the War of Independence despite its failure to yield control over the territory that they desired.[773] The Jewish militant groups disbanded and integrated into the state government.[774]

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[769] Lehi split from Etzel and became rivals for a period. The Haganah was a powerful rival to both. For a time, following the Lehi assassination of Lord Moyne (the British Minister of State for the Middle East), the Haganah worked with the British to capture, interrogate and even deport Etzel and Lehi members.

[770] The Etzel had a strict hierarchical structure that was led by a High Command, which set policy and gave orders. Underneath it was the General Staff. They oversaw the activities of the Etzel. The military staff was split into operational units that oversaw operations and support units in charge of instruction, planning and weapons storage and manufacture. The military and support staff never met jointly; they communicated through the High Command making it more difficult to extract information that could compromise other group members. Under the general staff there were six district commands: Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Haifa-Galilee, Southern, Sharon, and Shomron. Each had its own district commander. The command structure was both hierarchical and split in cells. The cells were not autonomous, but their rank and file did not know who was in other cells, making it difficult for British authorities to extract information leading to capture, even by means of coercive measures. (Bell 1976).

[771] Raziel was killed in 1941 while on a British mission to sabotage pro-Nazi forces in Iraq. (Jewishhistory.org).

[772] Yitzchak Shamir (who went on to become an Israeli prime minister), a leader of Lehi took his code name from IRA leader Michael Collins another nationalist militant leader. "He once described himself as a great admirer of Irish Republican Army founder Michael Collins." (Telegraph 2012).

[773] Etzel and Lehi wanted to establish the State of Israel in all of the territory originally mandated by the British in the Balfour Declaration, and rejected the Peel Commission's proposed division in 1937. Arab leadership did as well.

[774] "In August 1948, the newly formed Israeli cabinet voted to issue an ultimatum telling the Irgun and Lehi to join the IDF or force would be used against them. The groups disbanded and were integrated into the army the following

Future Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin became the leader of Etzel in 1943. Etzel ended cooperation and formally started its revolt against the British on February 1, 1944. The stated aims were to obtain Jewish sovereignty in British controlled Palestine.[775] At this point, Ben Gurion's dominant faction which controlled the Jewish Paramilitary, the Haganah, was still working with the British and strongly opposed Etzel and Lehi attacks. Jewish disunity in 1944 aided the British ability to carry out a hardline strategy. By 1945 these groups worked together against the British, making it much more difficult for the British to pursue decisive victory or even manage the situation.[776]

Post WWII, as it became clear that the British were not going to concede to Jewish demands to let in refugees from Europe, or for independence, the Haganah joined Etzel and Lehi in fighting the British. In 1945, these militants negotiated a formal accord, known as the Hebrew Rebellion Movement. (Morris 2008). They were well organized, had strict discipline and many had military experience.[777] They proved to be formidable foes to the British.

Difficult to target, decentralized leadership made it hard for the British to deter the groups by targeting its leaders. The British faced such severe difficulties in targeting Jewish militant leadership because of their organization structure and because the British lacked agents who could infiltrate tight-knit Hebrew and Yiddish speaking communities.[778] (Walton 2014).

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month." (Jewishvirtuallibrary). Etzel and Lehi did not retaliate for the Altelena Affair, in which Ben Gurion ordered the Haganah—which became the Israeli Defense Forces—to fire upon their rogue arms shipment.

[775] Upon declaring war against the British, Begin stated: "There is no longer any armistice between the Jewish people and the British Administration in Eretz Israel which [turns - check] our brothers over to Hitler. Our people is at war with this regime — war to the end... This then is our demand: immediate transfer of power in Eretz Israel to a provisional Hebrew government." (Bell 1976, 112). The group's nationalist demands are clearly stated.

[776] On November 6, 1944, Lehi assassinated the British Minister of State for the Middle East, in Cairo. This was denounced by the Palestinian Jewish community. Ben-Gurion called for a "liquidation of the terror" and appealed to the community to assist the British authorities in the "prevention of acts of terror and the elimination of its perpetrators." The Yishuv made a concerted effort after Moyne's assassination to bring the Etzel under control. According to Begin, the Agency and Haganah handed over a large number Etzel fighters to the British. The British were able to exploit Jewish disunity to an extent during what the British called the "Hunting Season," 1944-1945. Etzel would not retaliate against the Haganah, but Lehi was willing to. (Jewish Virtual Library).

[777] Etzel's discipline was as strict as any army. They had a combat corps, intelligence units, planning units and a well-organized propaganda arm. Many militants had significant military experience. Some were former soldiers in the British armed forces, in the Palmach, or fought the Nazis as partisans in Europe. (Hoffman 2015).

[778] According to British historians, "the problem for MI5 in London, and local security forces in Palestine, was the extremely difficult nature of detecting and countering the Irgun and the Stern Gang. Both groups were organized vertically into cells, whose members were unknown to those in other cells, and whose extreme loyalty meant they were nearly impossible to penetrate." Etzel leader "Begin was known to travel under several aliases, and in the wake of the King David Hotel bombing he managed to elude the Palestine police and the bounty on his head by a series of

The British were somewhat willing and able to utilize force, but these mostly dragnet operations were not aimed at decisive victory. Rather, a highly constrained Great Britain aimed to manage the conflict. Great Britain was unable to convince Jewish insurgents that they would be militarily defeated if they did not renounce violence. Their hardest line action was Operation Agatha, launched in June 1946, after increasingly brazen Jewish insurgents began killing British soldiers.[779] The attacks of "Night of the Bridges," convinced the British to launch Operation Agatha with the goal of rounding up Jewish militants, hoping to then negotiate with more moderate elements. (British Palestine Police Organization).[780] The British failed in this goal.

In Operation Agatha, British forces conducted mass arrests, culminating with the detention of more than 2,700 Zionist leaders and minor officials, as well as Haganah and Palmach officers. The British were unable to capture any important Etzel or Lehi leaders in this operation. The Jewish militants responded harshly. "On July 22, Etzel dealt a devastating blow, codenamed Operation Chick, to the heart of British rule in Palestine when it bombed the King David Hotel in Jerusalem, which housed the offices of British officialdom in the Mandate, as well as serving as the headquarters of the British Army in Palestine." (Walton 2014). This attack killed dozens of British soldiers and police as well as Arab and British civilians in the process.

The assistant secretary at the Colonial Office, Trafford Smith, noted the constraints on British action post-WWII. He stated, "we are out to suppress terrorism, and because we can find no better means we order measures which are intrinsically wrong, and which, since their consequence is evident to the whole world, let us in for a lot of justifiable and unanswerable criticism." (Walton 2014). The British conducted more sweeps and the Jewish insurgents conducted more attacks. Shamir was arrested in Operation Shark on July 30, 1946.

The Jewish civilian population in Palestine did not cooperate with the British authorities. They supported and sheltered Jewish militants and demonstrated against the British. At one point the British had one soldier for every five Jews in Palestine. The British pursued increasingly

clever disguises. In November 1946, the Palestine police produced alarming reports that he might be traveling incognito to Britain." (Walton 2014)

[779] Between November 1945 and the end of June 1946, the United Jewish Resistance killed 13 members of the Palestine Police and wounded 63. (Brinn 2018).

[780] In mid-June 1946, Jewish Palmach insurgents "destroyed eleven bridges linking Palestine to the neighboring countries of Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Egypt, from where troops and weapons were reported to be heading to the Arab residents of the British Mandate area." (Brinn 2018).

draconian measures including curfews, arbitrary arrests, collective punishments, cordons, surprise searches, mobile checkpoints and raids. Unable to quell the insurgency, the British eventually withdrew into fortified security zones. British defensive denial did not threaten the survival of the insurgency or fully prevent attacks on the British forces within. It emboldened the Jewish militants. In March 1947 the Etzel bombed the British Officers' Club in Jerusalem, deep within a security zone. (Piers 1998). The British declared martial law on March 1, 1947 following this attack. (National Library of Australia 1947).

In July 1947, Etzel fighters hanged two British sergeants and booby-trapped their bodies in response to the British hanging Etzel fighters who were captured in a spectacular attack on the British prison fortress in Acre. This hanging, combined with spiraling violence and the Exodus affair convinced the British public to support withdrawing from Palestine.[781] British strategy gradually shifted due to the realization that they were to constrained to force victory and they were willing to bargain for peace by withdrawing from Palestine which was deemed a non-vital interest and not worth the conflict. (Jewishvirtuallibrary). The British increasingly realized that the costs to pacify their mandate outweighed the benefit and began preparing to withdraw.[782]

Because the Jewish insurgents were motivated by nationalism and because the territory of Palestine was not deemed vital to British interests post-WWII, Great Britain did not consider it necessary to pursue decisive victory. British leadership did see the Jewish militants as able to threaten British core interests. This was due to their demonstrated ability to hit high value targets internationally and even in the heart of London. The British understood that this threat would not persist if the British conceded, as they eventually did, on their vested interest of maintaining their collapsing imperial holdings in Palestine.[783]

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[781] The impact of the hangings "was naturally outrage, but it was also symbolized by the Manchester Guardian headline: 'Time To Go.'" The Guardian noted "the wave of revulsion in Britain" which it claimed "was directed as much against British presence and tactics as against Jewish terror." (Jewishvirtuallibrary).

[782] By 1947, "it was apparent that things could only get worse so it was decided that all non-essential British civilians should leave; some by air, others overland to Egypt." (King 2012).

[783] Jewish militants posed a significant threat to Great Britain's vital interests, threatening targets in Great Britain as well as in their colonial holdings. Etzel and Lehi "launched a series of operations outside Palestine, just as the reports coming into MI5 had warned. At the end of October 1946 an Irgun cell operating in Italy bombed the British Embassy in Rome, and followed this in late 1946 and early 1947 with a series of sabotage attacks on British military transportation routes in occupied Germany. In March 1947 an Irgun operative left a bomb at the Colonial Club, near St Martin's Lane in the heart of London… The following month a female Irgun agent left an enormous bomb, at the Colonial Office in London. The bomb failed to detonate. The head of Metropolitan Police Special Branch, estimated

The British faced immense constraints post-WWII. Their economy was in shambles, their military overstretched and their empire was breaking apart, including its crown jewel, India which was granted independence in 1947, concurrent with its turning over of the Palestine Mandate to the U.N.. The most critical external constraint came from U.S. opposition to any hardline policy.[784] Britain was paying around 40 million pounds a year to maintain its troops in Palestine, while going through a deep economic crisis resulting from WWII. (Piers 1998). It was also negotiating a critical loan from the U.S.. The issue of Palestine was a major point of conflict for U.S.-British relations. American Jews lobbied Congress in support of Jewish independence—and against heavy handed British policy. President Truman put substantial pressure on the British government over the Palestine issue as well. (Kochavi 1998).

Jewish insurgents also actively worked to increase external constraints on Great Britain by pursuing publicity victories intended to embarrass the British over their policy of detaining and blocking Jewish refugees fleeing the aftermath of the Holocaust. Begin explicitly advocated increasing British constraints to force them to concede.[785] The Etzel and Lehi orchestrated a well-organized propaganda campaign aimed at portraying British policies in Palestine as anti-Semitic, and Jewish resistance as self-defense. This resonated with the anti-colonial international climate and the U.S. position following WWII. In the *Exodus* case, the British Navy detained a ship full of thousands of Holocaust survivors and sent its passengers to displaced persons camps

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that it would have caused fatalities on a comparable scale to the King David Hotel bombing — but this time in the heart of Whitehall. At about the same time, several prominent British politicians and public figures connected with Palestine received death threats from the Stern Gang at their homes and offices. Finally, in June 1947, the Stern Gang launched a letter-bomb campaign in Britain, consisting of 21 bombs in total, which targeted every prominent member of the cabinet… In the spring of 1946, MI5 received apparently reliable reports from SIME that the Irgun and the Stern Gang were planning to send five terrorist 'cells' to London, 'to work on IRA lines…' MI5's new director-general was so alarmed that in August 1946 he personally briefed the prime minister on the situation, warning him that an assassination campaign in Britain had to be considered a real possibility… The Irgun and the Stern Gang's wartime track record ensured that MI5 took these warnings seriously." (Walton 2014)

[784] Post-WWII Great Britain needed U.S. financial, diplomatic and military support. The Truman administration heavily pressured Great Britain to avoid a hardline approach against the Jews in Palestine. "Most historians agree about the importance of the growing Anglo-American rift, the displaced persons, and the pressure from Washington in the British government's decision-making: given the Cold War context and Britain's financial insolvency, Whitehall could ill afford to alienate Washington over a highly emotional issue that, when all was said and done, was not a vital interest." (Morris 2008, 38) In Parliament, in special session on 12 August, there was an all-party consensus to quit Palestine, quickly; "no British interest" was served by soldiering on, said Churchill." (40)

[785] Begin stated in his memoir: "History and our observation persuaded us that if we could succeed in destroying the government's prestige in Eretz Israel, the removal of its rule would follow automatically. Thence forward we gave no peace to this weak spot. Throughout all the years of our uprising, we hit at the British government's prestige, deliberately, tirelessly, unceasing." (Begin 1977).

in post-war Germany. On board, the Jews organized a hunger strike. (Exodus 1947 Yad Vashem). This incident dealt a significant blow to the British reputation and increased British domestic pressure to withdraw.[786]

The Jewish insurgents were able to target vital British interests. However, their goals did not pose an existential threat to, or unacceptable demands from the British. Therefore, the British were able to safely abandon Palestine. This proved to be a successful bargain, ending British conflict with their non-state opponent in Palestine.

It is likely that if Great Britain deemed Palestine to be a vital interest, as it did India in the nineteenth century—and the British were at the height of their power, facing low external, internal, and strategic constraints—they would have pursued a decisive victory strategy similar to their crushing of the Indian Rebellion in 1857. In Palestine, three factors combined according to socialization logic to explain Great Britain's strategy and the successful end of the conflict. The international context increased Great Britain's external constraints and its economic situation increased its internal constraints. The Jewish insurgents were already the type of NSA that could be bargained with due to their pragmatic mission and high governance function. Finally, the territory which the militants sought was not vital to British interests. Together, these factors explain why the British were willing and able to reach a compromise.

The British withdrawal from Palestine took place amidst the collapse of the British Empire. Although socialization logic can explain this case, British withdrawal was arguably overdetermined by the post-WWII context. The British empire was weak, and the U.S. clearly supported Jewish independence, and the dismantling of the British empire.[787] While the British ideally would have preferred to maintain its empire—including in Palestine—the inherently pragmatic aims of the Jewish militants allowed for a peaceful conclusion to the conflict. The dynamics of Great Britain's struggle with Irish nationalists follow a similar dynamic.

[786] The Guardian noted British popular revulsion with "the exhausted Exodus refugees dragged screaming back from the Promised Land, the death of two young men trapped in a humiliating and pointless struggle against a persecuted people, the weekly lists of dead and maimed that brought no thanks from either Jew or Arab. So, instead of adamant demands for vengeance and reprisals, as some expected, the consensus gradually formed, as the Guardian predicted, that the time for evacuation had arrived." (Jewishvirtuallibrary).
[787] The dismantling of its empire was a major stipulation of U.S. support for the British in WWII that was written into the Atlantic Charter. (State Department Office of the Historian).

- **The British versus Irish separatists: the Irish War of Independence 1919-1921 and "the Troubles" 1969-1998**

The British conflict with Irish militants is multifaceted. They involved both pro-British and pro-Irish NSAs, each along a spectrum from legitimate political actor to terrorist. Demands and grievances were both religious and politically motivated, but ultimately, the conflict was over territorial sovereignty, a pragmatic aim. In both conflicts, the British were eventually able to secure a successful bargain. In both the Irish War of Independence and the Troubles, the British strategy utilized military force aimed at revealing a bargain.

The Irish War of Independence began in 1919 and culminated in the Anglo-Irish treaty in 1921. It resulted in an independent Ireland, sovereign in the majority of Ireland but not in the heavily Protestant and pro-British North. On the Island of Ireland, Catholics are the majority, but they are a minority in Northern Ireland which remained part of Great Britain. Loyalist Protestants mistreated Catholics in Northern Ireland and discriminated against them in terms of law enforcement, labor and housing. Their grievances set off a thirty-year conflict from 1968-1998. Many militants originally sought a unified and independent Ireland. This itself was not an absolutist agenda. They ended up settling for an even more pragmatic compromise that addressed grievances but did not grant Irish sovereignty over the North.

A brief overview starts with the unrest in 1916, although the dynamics which fostered discontent predate this by several decades or longer. In 1916, Nationalist elements in the Irish Volunteers, largely directed by the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB), opposed Irish support for Britain in WWI. Believing that the existing arrangement of Home Rule provided inadequate Irish independence, they launched an insurrection known as the Easter Rising in Dublin and proclaimed an Irish Republic. (Dorney 2012). The British military put down the rebellion, killing over 500 and the British police force in Ireland—the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC)—arrested thousands of Irish nationalist activists. These activists were soon released in a British bid to restart negotiations for indirect rule. Many joined the nationalist Sinn Fein party which won the Irish vote by a landslide and declared independence. As violence between Republicans and Unionists escalated, the British were able to arrest most of Sinn Fein's political leadership, they were unable to arrest the two leaders of the IRB, Michael Collins and Richard Mulcahy.

To put down what was developing into a full-blown insurgency, the British government under Prime Minister Lloyd George deployed paramilitary police from Britain—the Black and Tans and Auxiliary Division—made up largely of WWI veterans. He also passed the Restoration of Order in Ireland Act, giving special powers to the police and military. (Dorney 2012). The British used a heavy-handed military operation. Many regular units carried out reprisals against the IRA and the Catholic civilian population. By the summer of 1921, the Irish revolutionaries were critically short of ammunition and weapons and many fighters had been imprisoned.

The IRB had pragmatic drive. It wanted an independent, democratic Ireland and was willing to compromise. In December 1921, an Irish delegation led by Michael Collins and Arthur Griffith, signed the Anglo-Irish Treaty which created the Irish Free State, an entity comprising 26 of Ireland's 32 counties. It also gave Northern Ireland the option to opt out of the Irish Free State, which it exercised. The Irish Free State came into existence when its constitution became law on December 6, 1922. This negotiated outcome did not please everyone. IRA hardliners split with the Irish Free State, leading to the Irish Civil War from 1922–23. During this civil war, Collins was killed, but Irish Free State forces won out.

This outcome shows how the Irish nationalists, a type D NSA with pragmatic motivations, high governance function, and targetable leadership, were able to use force itself to stimulate negotiation from a relatively constrained Great Britain.[788] Following British military pressure and the Irish militants signaling resolve, the IRB secured Irish independence in exchange for conceding on its desire for a united Ireland by agreeing to partition of the North. Although violence simmered and erupted again in the Troubles nearly a half century later, this round of fighting ended in a peace deal. This was possible because the Irish separatists were pragmatically driven and had high governance function. They also had relatively targetable leadership. The British were dealing with a type D NSA. Therefore, military conflict revealed a bargain as it might between two states.

The British were able to negotiate because it could trust their opponent to uphold the terms. This was due to the NSA's characteristics. The fact that the core of the Irish separatists

[788] Multiple interests and actors (IRB, and Constitutional Nationalists) led to competition for governance in the early years (1886). By 1916, the IRB had high governance function in terms of capacity and accountability.

did not have an ideological drive to attack Great Britain's vital interests allowed it to make concessions that were acceptable to both parties. The Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921 ended an important episode of violence and can be counted a successful bargained end to a conflict between Great Britain and Irish revolutionary forces.

The Troubles

The Troubles was a thirty-year terrorist campaign launched by the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) from 1968-1998. The PIRA originally sought to end British rule in Northern Ireland and create a unified all-Ireland Irish Republic. It had a considerable impact on Northern Ireland, "an enclave with a population of about 1.5 million, with over 3,500 killed and up to 50,000 injured over a thirty-year period" (Dorney 2015).

The violence at times involved the support of Sinn Féin, the IRA's political party in the Republic of Ireland. It also involved Loyalist (pro-British) paramilitaries and British forces.[789] British forces viewed their role as neutral, trying to uphold law and order in British Northern Ireland, but they were often seen as supporting British loyalist Protestants against Catholic citizens in Northern Ireland. (Goddard 2006).

From 1922 until 1972, Northern Ireland was a self-governing region of the United Kingdom. Catholics in Northern Ireland faced political and social discrimination. Gerrymandering diluted Catholic representation, the police were mostly protestant, Catholics faced poorer employment prospects, and Irish history and symbols were repressed. The state and pro-British loyalists responded with violence to republican civil rights marches. Growing unrest led to a series of riots across Northern Ireland in August 1969 in which several people were killed and hundreds of homes destroyed. (O'Doherty 2019). In response, the British deployed their Army to restore order. This was originally welcomed by Northern Ireland's Catholics.

After the riots, the IRA split into the more hardline Provisionals who advocated renewed campaign of violence against Northern Ireland, and the Officials who favored a political solution. The Provisionals dominated the pro-Irish side of the conflict. (Goddard 2006).

[789] The PIRA was the backbone of the Irish separatist forces. There were several smaller groups who were active as well. Ostensibly on the British side, "were a range of state forces –the Royal Ulster Constabulary or RUC, the regular British Army and a locally recruited Army unit, the Ulster Defense Regiment (UDR)" (Dorney 2015).

The PIRA was originally a type B NSA, with a pragmatic drive, low governance function and difficult to target leadership. Through a mix of political incorporation and successful British targeting, they eventually were molded into a type D NSA. The outcome of thirty years of conflict was a resolution in 1998 that conceded political equality and ended discrimination against Catholics in Northern Ireland. Great Britain did not concede to the PIRA's maximalist demand for a unified republican Ireland.

This case provides an excellent example of a bargain being successfully reached between a state and a NSA that was at first considered impossible to bargain with. After gradually improved British military operations and Great Britain's purposeful fostering of PIRA governance function, including the political incorporation of Sinn Féin into legitimate party politics in Northern Ireland, the British eventually came to consider the PIRA a valid bargaining partner and concluded the Good Friday Agreement of 1998.

This case demonstrates how force, diplomacy and concessions can be used successfully to change a NSA's type, but only if used appropriately. The British originally used decisive force poorly but heavily. More than 300,000 British soldiers served in Northern Ireland during that 30-year campaign. "At the height of the Troubles in 1972, there were 27,000 military personnel in Northern Ireland, based in more than a hundred locations. That is a thousand more than the number of British soldiers deployed for the invasion of Iraq in 2003." (Kearny 2013).[790]

Eventually, the British used force more efficiently, setting up an intelligence network prior to Operation Motorman in order to create a platform for the effective use of force. This shifted British force away from the counterproductive policies that targeted civilians and alienated the population—only increasing support for the PIRA, including the Bloody Sunday Massacre—to much more successfully applied force, including Operation Motorman in 1972.

[790] The British Broadcasting Corporation's Northern Ireland correspondent described the scale of the British operation: "It was like a scene from a war movie as thousands of British soldiers disembarked from ships in Belfast in the summer of 1969. The small peacetime garrison in Northern Ireland was reinforced from army bases all over the world. Troops and equipment landed from throughout the United Kingdom, Germany and France. Many soldiers arrived with bayonets fixed. Some of the signs they carried warned rioters to disperse - in Arabic. Military commanders thought their troops would be deployed for a few weeks. Operation Banner, the name given to the army's support role for the police during the Troubles, lasted for 38 years. It was the longest continuous campaign in the history of the British Army." (Kearny 2013).

(Bennet 2010).[791] A combination of British efficient use of force and concessions eventually lead to a compromise where the PIRA renounced violence in exchange political concessions.

The British goal in "the Troubles" was not to defeat a group that was attacking British rule. Rather, it was to end sectarian violence between Catholics and Protestants and restore functioning governance in Northern Ireland. The sectarian violence and perceived British support for loyalists helped the PIRA gain support for the more maximalist agenda to seek to overthrow British rule in Northern Ireland.[792] Great Britain eventually began rounding up and imprisoning PIRA leadership and disrupting their ability to plan and carry out attacks.

As the PIRA ratcheted up violence in Northern Ireland, Great Britain launched Operation Motorman in 1972. In this operation, the British utilized meticulous intelligence gathering and planning to increase their ability to target PIRA leadership with the expressly stated goal of getting them to realize the futility of violence and negotiate. Bennet argues that this was the critical operation that laid the groundwork for negotiations to succeed decades later. The British strategy in Motorman came close to decisive victory. It aimed for "total domination" of PIRA strongholds and aimed to arrest top PIRA leaders.[793] It was designed to socialize the PIRA into a type D NSA and then secure a peace deal. [794]

The Good Friday Agreement of 1998 also increased PIRA governance function. Concessions in the form of equal representation ended the Unionist discrimination towards

[791] On "Bloody Sunday," January 30 1972, the British Army killed 13 civil rights marchers in Londonderry.
[792] The PIRA did not have an ideological mission to destroy the British or kill Protestants. They pursued the pragmatic goal of ending partition and unifying Ireland. Their immediate impetus was even less absolutist. They aimed to end injustice in terms of law enforcement, vote counting, housing, and other forms of discrimination against Catholics. The British were unwilling to force the Stormont government in Northern Ireland to implement reforms that might have alleviated grievances and allowed a maintenance of the pre-1969 status quo. Pre-1969, the IRA was largely demobilized. Increased sectarian tensions and the often-correct perception of the British at best turning a blind-eye to Protestant persecution of Catholics in the north—and at worst, full collusion with the Protestants—led to the remobilization of the PIRA. They used newfound popular support for protection and ending injustice to advance their larger agenda of seeking to create a unified Ireland. (Coogan 1996).
[793] The British military planned three phases for Motorman. In the first phase "the army sought to establish bases in 'all hard Catholic areas….' Phase two entailed achieving 'total domination' in these areas." Phase three "involved gradually accumulating intelligence by mass patrols and selectively arresting key terrorists for interrogation." These steps aimed to "neutralize the IRA and separate them from the Catholic community." (Bennet 2010, 521).
[794] Bennet (2010) argues that "By varying the degree and type of force used, military strategy sought to weaken support for the Provisionals and show the government's willingness to negotiate." (512). I argue that negotiation succeeded due to the use of force in Operation Motorman greatly increasing PIRA leadership targetability, shifting the PIRA type into a type C NSA. Later concessions granted them political legitimacy, turning them into a type D NSA. British force convinced the PIRA to accept reduced demands and renounce violence.

Catholics in Northern Ireland. The affirmation of the 'consent principle' assuaged Northern loyalists' concerns of being incorporated against their will into a majority Catholic unified Irish state. The result was a peace accord with the PIRA once British strategy succeeded in shifting it to a type D NSA. The agreement gave the Republicans some important concessions but also retained Northern Ireland as part of Great Britain and reinstituted indirect rule. The socialization of the PIRA into the type of NSA that the British believed it could credibly bargain with was easier than other cases. This is largely because although the PIRA originally lacked governance function and its leadership was hard to target, it started out with a pragmatic drive.[795]

British constraints during the Troubles were moderate; with low external constraints and high internal ones. In terms of external constraints, Great Britain had a permanent seat on the U.N. Security Council and therefore a veto over any resolutions interfering with their strategy in Northern Ireland. Furthermore, the U.S. government generally did not pressure Great Britain to change its policies towards Northern Ireland despite significant U.S. diaspora support for Irish nationalists. The British—having a robust parliamentary democracy, including politicians who supported withdrawing from Northern Ireland—had relatively high internal constraints. Unionists "argue that the conflict consisted in the main of republican terrorism combated by a state constrained by the rule of law." (Dorney 2012).

Irish nationalist insurgents were able to target vital British interests, including targets inside Great Britain and British military and diplomatic targets abroad. However, in this case as well, PIRA goals did not pose an existential threat to, or unacceptable demands from the British. Eventually, the PIRA did not even demand unification. The British got Loyalists to grant important concessions. In 1996, the British Government, Irish government and the PIRA came together to agree upon a set of principles known as the Mitchell Accords. Under these principles, the insurgents agreed to disarm, renounced the use of violence, agreed to resolve disputes through a democratic political process, and to abide by the terms of the agreements.[796] This clear

[795] As a pragmatically driven actor, the PIRA was more easily deterred by threats to increase material costs and incentivized by material concessions. Conversely, highly ideologically driven groups must be convinced of the credibility of a state's ability and will to decisively defeat them in order to be socialized to put pragmatism above the pursuit of an absolutist ideology, a prerequisite to achieving a negotiated settlement.

[796] The 1996 Mitchell Principles formed the basis for the Good Friday Accord that ended the conflict. The Report recommended that "participants in all-party negotiations should affirm their total and absolute commitment (a) To democratic and exclusively peaceful means of resolving political issues. (b) To the total disarmament of all paramilitary organisations. (c) To agree that such disarmament must be verifiable to the satisfaction of an

demonstration that the PIRA had become a state-like NSA and a credible negotiating partner set the stage for a successful bargain.

In April 1998, the Good Friday Agreement was signed and hailed as the end of the Troubles. It established the Northern Ireland assembly. In 2004 Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams proclaimed the need to disband the IRA as part of a final settlement, and in September 2005, international monitors oversaw the IRA's voluntary disarmament. In a clear demonstration that the parties put the conflict behind them, in 2014, former IRA commander Martin McGuinness was invited to a banquet at Windsor Castle where he shook hands with the Queen.

- **South Africa versus the African National Congress: the ANC uprising 1950-1993**

South African forces had asymmetrically strong military power but faced significant difficulties targeting ANC leadership. South Africa became increasingly highly constrained. Internally, shifting political tides—including popular opposition—made it harder for the government to crack down on ANC militants. As the international community, including the U.S. increased pressure on South Africa to end its policy of apartheid, its external constraints increased. The international anti-apartheid movement began in 1959. Throughout the 1980s, international boycotts of South African goods took a major toll on South African industry. Economic and cultural sanctions increased throughout the 1980s as well. (Levy 1999).

The ANC was seen as a type B/C NSA at its outset. Its leadership was moderately targetable. Nelson Mandela was repeatedly arrested throughout the 1950s and imprisoned for 27 years in 1962. However, ANC operational leadership was more difficult to target, franchised, with some leaders located outside of the country—where South African government forces had little reach. The ANC had moderate governance function, with various affiliated movements, including the south African Communist Party and a political and military wing. The South African government saw ANC ideology in the context of the Cold War, as devoted to the absolutist ideology of Communism and therefore a vital threat to South African security. This

independent commission. (d) To renounce for themselves, and to oppose any effort by others, to use force, or threaten to use force, to influence the course or the outcome of all-party negotiations. (e) To agree to abide by the terms of any agreement reached in all-party negotiations and to resort to democratic and exclusively peaceful methods in trying to alter any aspect of that outcome with which they may disagree and. (f) To urge that 'punishment' killings and beatings stop and to take effective steps to prevent such actions." (The Irish Times 1996).

may have also reduced South Africa's external constraints by providing some international sympathy among anti-Communist hawks. This changed after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The international community was no longer concerned with Communism, was increasing pressure on South Africa and South African leadership saw the ANCs ties with Soviet Communism give way to purely pragmatic self-rule goals.

The collapse of the Soviet Union drastically reduced the salience of Communism in the ANCs core motivating ideology. With the ANC being perceived more as a nationalist movement driven by pragmatic goals. South African President De Klerk understood the decoupling of the ANC and the Communist Party made note of it in his explanation of why he was willing to negotiate the end of apartheid. (Tainted Heroes 2016, 1:03:00). After the fall of the USSR, South Africa faced greater external pressure and also saw the ANC as a type C and potentially a type D NSA. By the 1990s, much of the Soviet sponsored external support for ANC leadership was gone, making it more targetable and perceived to be more pragmatically driven. Finally, it already was a political party. South African concessions increased this role, making it truly a type D NSA by the time a bargain was reached—that being the end of apartheid and the ANC's incorporation as a legitimate political party.

South Africa successfully negotiated with the ANC only a few years after the ANC had ramped up its military threat. This occurred despite the South African government still not being able to target ANC leadership effectively. The ANC loosened its targeting policy due to an increasingly impatient military wing. This manifest in at least 25 bombings in 1988, mostly in urban areas. ANC leaders sought "to increase white casualties to undermine white morale."[797]

According to a CIA terrorism review, "some senior ANC officials began to question the efficacy of a policy directed solely at military and government targets when hundreds of blacks are being killed in clashes with security forces." "Pretoria's repressive measures and unwillingness to consider reform have convinced many blacks that peaceful protest alone will not convince the government to negotiate." This suggests that in 1988 the ANC began to increasingly target South African civilians. South Africa's strategy towards the ANC was poorly implemented and unable to kill or signal the ability to target ANC leadership. Operational

[797] A July 2, 1988 attack on a Johannesburg stadium was seen as having been intended to maximize white civilian casualties. (CIA 1988).

constraints such as communication and logistics problems precluded "tight control of ANC members and township militants, especially by externally based leaders." (CIA 1988, 11)

Abrahms (2013) suggests that terrorists reduce their credibility when they target civilians because it convinces the government that they will not abide by their commitments in the event of a bargain. This reduces the likelihood that a government will grant concessions as terrorism against civilians rises. However, shortly after the ANC increased its terrorism campaign, the De Klerk government granted full concessions; ending apartheid and the conflict.

Socialization logic can potentially explain this case which cuts against Abrahms' terrorist credibility paradox logic. While increased ANC terrorism did potentially convince the South African government that concessions would be futile, this calculus changed as the Soviet Union—a core ideological backer of the ANC—collapsed. This removed the ideological impetus for their existence. Only the pragmatic drive—that of political and social freedom—remained. With the South African government no longer seeing the ANC as driven by an absolutist ideology but by pragmatic goals, it believed that it could make concessions despite ANC atrocities because conflict is costly and if opponent no longer had an absolutist ideological drive, a bargain could be revealed through concessions that made continued violence unnecessary.

This reveals a flaw in Abrahms' "terrorist credibility paradox" logic. While Abrahms argues that committing atrocities negates the credibility of an NSA's commitment to end the pain if a bargain is achieved, why would this apply only to NSAs, but not rival states? States have made peace with numerous state rivals who have committed atrocities against civilians. What makes their promises credible but not those of NSAs?

Socialization logic uses realist assumptions that states are rational actors and war is costly, therefore, despite atrocities, after war reveals capabilities and resolve, a bargain can be found and concluded. This is because the states want to maximize security and a victorious state can trust a bargain because it knows that the opponent understands that it stands to lose if it reneges. Reiter (2010) expands on this, demonstrating how states need to secure the ability to create this understanding before a conflict can be concluded. It does so by creating the situation whereby the opponent—rationally driven to maximize its security—understands that reneging and resuming conflict goes against this interest. Applying this logic to non-state opponents, it is not the committing of atrocities, or lack thereof that creates or destroys credibility to uphold a

bargain, rather it is the perception that the actor has a rational, security maximizing motive that convinces the state that it will not renege.[798]

In the case of the ANC, despite continued violence and atrocities against civilians, the collapse of the Soviet Union caused the South African government to assess that the ideological impetus of spreading Communism no longer drove the ANC. Therefore, regardless of atrocities, the South African government believed it could conclude a bargain with the ANC that it now believed was pragmatically driven and this able to credibly signal its willingness to adhere to a bargain and commit to renouncing violence in exchange for concessions.

In 1986, the South African government declared a state of emergency and targeted the ANC in a three-year crackdown. This was understood to be essential to, and intended to, create a condition more conducive to negotiation. (Tainted Heroes 1:02). It somewhat reduced violence, but the ANC was still willing and able to carry out attacks against civilians. It was not until February 1990, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, that De Klerk released Nelson Mandela from prison, paving the way for a referendum in 1994 that ended apartheid and the conflict.

- **The United States versus the Vietcong: the Vietnam War 1960-1975**

In the Vietnam War, the U.S. fought a nationalist and communist insurgency, the Vietcong. The U.S. saw the Vietcong as primarily driven by communist ideology and placed this conflict and the reasons for involvement within the broader context of the Cold War. While Ho Chi Minh was a communist, the U.S. did not find evidence that the Vietcong was supported by the Soviet Union. Secretary of State Dean Acheson called Ho Chi Minh "the mortal enemy of native independence in Indochina." This statement is most ironic because they were the ones who sought and secured Vietnamese independence.

Herring laments that Acheson, and the American people, "were unable to accept the essentially nationalist origins of the Vietnamese revolution." (Herring 2004, 18). Rather, the U.S. viewed the Vietnamese rebels as "part of a monolithic Communist bloc controlled by the Kremlin." Influenced by NSC68, the U.S. saw them as emissaries of the Soviet Union's

[798] While committing atrocities can signal fanaticism, the successful bargained conclusion of conflict between states that have committed atrocities shows that it does not have to. Pragmatically driven actors can commit atrocities towards their aim while fanatic actors can temporarily refrain from atrocities towards their aim as well. It is not the atrocities themselves that signal pragmatism or fanaticism. Rather the state reads this through the opponents' statements, actions and external factors.

"fanatical faith… that sought to impose its absolute authority on the rest of the world." (State Department Archives 1950). Therefore, the U.S. viewed the Vietnamese rebels as driven by an absolutist ideology that could not countenance peace with the U.S.—although this was completely mistaken. Socialization logic explains U.S. involvement and the pursuit of decisive victory which would have been optimal had the U.S. been correct in their assessment of the Vietcong's type. They were mistaken. Socialization logic and misapplied Cold War analogies and theories explain the U.S. involvement in Vietnam, while domestic politics explains its incrementalism approach.

Like the Korean War, the U.S. saw Vietnam within the logic of Domino Theory. Similar to the Taliban, the U.S. belief that the Vietcong were an ideologically driven actor was reasonable but mistaken. Also like the U.S. conflict with the Taliban, U.S. leadership's mistake regarding NSA type led the U.S. to continue the costly strategy of pursuing decisive victory when they could likely have bargained an acceptable end to the conflict far earlier.

While the Vietcong were clearly and staunchly Communist, their main goal was to gain Vietnamese independence which they fought the French to achieve. Their ultimate aims were not to assist the Soviet Union in spreading world Communism and defeating capitalism. Therefore, the Vietcong did not pose a threat to any vital U.S. interest. This can be seen in the minimal repercussions to the U.S. international position after the U.S. withdrew and the Vietcong reneged on their deal and took over South Vietnam.

Had the U.S. understood nationalism and the reunification of Vietnam to be the Vietcong's primary drive they might not have been as certain in their view that Vietnam was a "domino" in the Cold War. In that case, the U.S. might have been willing to negotiate Vietnamese independence far earlier and with far less expenditure in blood and treasure.

The U.S. saw the Vietcong as a type B NSA, but it was actually type C. It functioned as a government in North Vietnam, had difficult to target leadership, and most importantly, its nationalist goal was its primary drive despite its Communist ideology. (Haas 2000). The rational U.S. misperception of the Vietcong as driven primarily by Communist ideology made the U.S. less willing to bargain. It also led the U.S. to believe that it had to use force to defend its vital interest of containing the spread of Soviet influence. This prolonged the conflict unnecessarily. The U.S. managed to secure a bargained end to the conflict without shifting the Vietcong's type

in any way. The Vietcong reneged on their commitment, invading south Vietnam, but the U.S. knew this was likely to be the case and saw it unfold as it withdrew its forces. This did not change the outcome in terms of the conflict between the U.S. and the Vietcong ending.[799]

The U.S faced moderate to high constraints during the Vietnam war. Constraints increased as the war dragged on. In terms of external constraints, the U.S. feared escalation with China, especially after the Gulf of Tonkin incident in 1964. The U.S. did not fear it enough to refrain from bombing North Vietnamese installations were Chinese military personnel were stationed and killed. The U.S. also feared Soviet involvement to an extent. This is seen in debates between the Secretary of Defense McNamara and the office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. (Cosmas 2009). The U.S. also understood Soviet policy as desiring to avoid escalating into direct conflict with the U.S. in Vietnam. Meanwhile, China was constrained from intervening due to the crisis stemming from the failed "Great Leap Forward" and escalating crisis throughout the 1960s between it and the Soviet Union. (Walton 2002).

The U.S. did not face significant international opposition. Indeed, the U.S. believed that the credibility of the Western security alliance against the Soviet Union was threatened by not intervening. This view was expressed by President Johnson and Secretary of State Rusk. (Girling 1967). The U.S. did face strong internal constraints in terms of domestic opposition, but administrations also felt pressure not be seen as the administration that lost Vietnam.[800] Therefore, internal constraints cut both towards increased engagement and towards withdrawal. These conflicting domestic pulls created the U.S. reluctance to commit all at once. Increasing involvement in incrementally was more domestically palatable and was also deemed sufficient for victory at the outset. "The United States when it initially entered the Vietnam conflict greatly overestimated its ability to wage a successful fight with minimal cost." (Wittman 1979, 755).

[799] While the conflict did not ed for the U.S. on favorable terms, they were acceptable terms by definition since the U.S. did not resume conflict.

[800] Wittman argues that military factors had a large impact on the decision to withdraw U.S. troops and rely more heavily on air power. He also acknowledges that "the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam is seen as a result of the voters' demand for a disengagement." (Wittman 1979, 752).

U.S. strategy did not appear to follow what bureaucratic politics models might suggest.[801] The democrat Kennedy and Johnson administrations substantially escalated U.S. involvement while the republican Nixon administration withdrew troops and ended U.S. involvement. In the Johnson administration's early years, between 1966 and 1967, Secretary of Defense McNamara advocated diplomacy while Secretary of State Rusk supported the military's policy of escalation. (Prados 2004). Incremental, middle-of-the-road policies kept both extremes on board. "The Right was to be given escalation. The Left was to be given occasional peace overtures. The middle would not be asked to pay for the war.'" (Gelb 1972).

Gelb and Betts describe U.S. strategy in Vietnam as deploying the minimal resources necessary not to lose until 1965 and then "doing the maximum feasible to win within certain domestic and international constraints." In April 1965, McNamara noted that "the U.S.' objective in Vietnam was to break the will of the Vietcong and the Northern Vietnamese allies by 'depriving them of victory.'" (Cashman 2013, 124). The major question was how strong that will was. If U.S. leadership had understood the Vietcong to be seeking self-determination, they would understand that an actor pursuing sovereignty would likely fight to the death. They would also understand that a bargain was obtainable without pursuing decisive victory.[802]

Administration officials quoted Maxwell Taylor when explaining the Johnson administration's assumption that the Northern Vietnamese "would seek and accommodation with us when the cost of pursuing a losing course became excessive." This reasoning was flawed because the North Vietnamese did not calculate costs in the same way that the U.S. did, they were willing to pay a far greater price. (Thies 1980, 277). Vietcong leadership understood U.S. constraints and tailored its strategy accordingly.[803] Indeed by this time, Taylor—who was appointed ambassador to South Vietnam—opposed increased U.S. military deployment. U.S. restraint in terms of denying the Vietcong victory, did not create the desired deterrence because it

[801] Graham Allison (1972) lays out the Bureaucratic Politics model in a case study on the Cuban Missile Crisis. The model suggests that bureaucracies compete for their own interests "where you stand is determined by where you sit" and those with more influence on the executive branch win out in foreign policy decisions.
[802] Self-determination wars often are won by the group fighting for it because they care more. Womack (2015) calls this an asymmetry of attention. For a state to win, it would need to absolutely crush its self-determination seeking opponent. Although the self-determination seeking actor requires decisive defeat to be swayed from its course, its ends are not absolutist. A bargain acceptable to both parties can be reached, making costly conflict unnecessary.
[803] The Vietcong shaped based their strategy on the understanding of the U.S.' constraints environment. "Gaip recognized that the U.S. possessed the military resources needed to end the conflict quickly, but he also believed that it faced competing interests and pressures that would restrain its freedom of action in Vietnam." (Wirtz 2017, 90).

was seen as weakness and lack of resolve. Denial may have ratcheted up costs enough to dissuade an actor with other goals, but not one intent on self-determination. In this case, pragmatic drive led the Vietcong to bear higher costs than an insurgency driven by Communist ideology might have been willing to. The tragedy was that the pragmatic aims that the Vietcong were willing to sacrifice so much blood over were not absolutist, not unacceptable to the U.S. and could have been bargained over at the outset.

The 1968 Tet-Offensive was the beginning of the end of U.S. engagement in Vietnam. Although it was operational failure for the Vietcong and an operational success for U.S. forces, its strategic impact was the opposite, it signaled to the U.S. that it was far from achieving victory in Vietnam, despite the expenditure of so much blood and treasure.[804] Soon, large-scale domestic protests in the U.S. reached crisis levels. President Nixon began withdrawing U.S. troops while originally increasing aerial bombardments and expanding those actions to Cambodia and Laos. In January 1973, representatives of the U.S., North and South Vietnam, and the Vietcong signed a peace agreement in Paris. The agreement exchanged U.S. withdrawal for peaceful unification of Vietnam and elections. U.S. leadership knew that this would not be the case and that any threat to return troops to Vietnam in the event of a violation was not credible. Indeed, the U.S. continued its withdrawal, evacuating troops by helicopter as North Vietnamese troops surged into Saigon with lists of supporters of the U.S. to round up and kill. Despite this bitter outcome after over 15 years of fighting and over 58,000 America lives lost, along over a million of Vietnamese deaths, the conflict ended and the loss of Vietnam to Communist forces had little to any impact on U.S. interests up to and following the end of the Cold War. Therefore, this war—largely carried out over the misperception that the North Vietnamese were implacable ideological foes threatening vital U.S. interests—can be regarded among the most futile tragedies of U.S. foreign policy.

- **Algeria versus the Armed Islamic Group: Algerian Civil War 1992-2002**

[804] Historian George Herring argues that "Tet 'represented the high-water mark of post-World War II American hegemony, that point at which the nation's establishment came to recognize that its international commitments had begun to exceed its ability to pay for them…. Senior officials in the White House, however, were asking their own sets of questions. Among them was Clark Clifford, the new secretary of defense who had replaced Robert S. McNamara while the Tet fighting raged on. How was it possible the enemy could launch such a wide-ranging offensive? Was the ongoing fighting in Vietnam actually weakening the United States, both at home and abroad? Was it true, as Clifford recalled, that the price was no longer 'commensurate with the goal?'" (Daddis 2018).

The Algerian civil war is commonly referred to as "the dirty war" (*la sale guerre*). This is partially due the heavy-handed tactics; including torture and atrocities committed against politicians, public servants, military and civilians on all sides. Mainly, it gets its name from the atrocities committed by the radical jihadist Armed Islamic Group (GIA).[805] For this reason, I primarily examine Algeria's strategy against the GIA, despite it being one of the smaller rebel factions in the Algerian Civil War.

The GIA was a type B NSA. The Algerian government saw it as driven by absolutist Islamist ideology. This was based on ample evidence of their devotion to commit atrocities in support of this uncompromising agenda.[806] It had somewhat targetable leadership, and minimal governance function. The Algerian government applied socialization logic, using decisive military force to target hardliners and convince them of defeat to drive them to choose pragmatism over suicidal adherence to ideological drive. It then offered amnesty as a concession to hardline rebels. The GIA refused. This is likely because Algerian forces were unable to socialize it through the use of force, largely due to the GIA's use of difficult urban terrain and its dispersed structure.[807] Amnesty boosted the governance function of the GIA's main rival rebel group, the Islamic Salvation Front's (FIS). After the Algerian government made peace with the FIS, the GIA faded into irrelevance and Algeria's conflict with them ended without a bargain.

After securing independence from French colonial rule in 1962, the National Liberation Front (FLN)—the secular coalition that had led the independence movement—dominated the Algerian government. After decades of one-party rule, parties espousing pan-Islamist ideas began rising in influence in the 1970s and 1980s and the FLN struggled to maintain its dominance. The 1988 drastic drop in oil prices led to massive riots against the government.

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[805] According to Wang, The GIA transformed the conflict into one in which religion became the primary cleavage, and one in which the killing of innocent civilians became routine, thereby giving the conflict its moniker – la sale guerre ("The Dirty War"). (Wang 2017).

[806] The GIA pursued "total war." This "completely transformed the conflict." It was "much more focused on dividing all Algerians into 'supporters of jihad' and 'enemies of Islam.'" They "had no qualms about massacring those who were enemies of Islam. Some of their victims include civilians, journalists, politicians, artists, and a multitude of foreigners. Their tactics also forced civilians to choose between two very different sides: one that supported the GIA's mission of Islamic fundamentalist rule, and one that did not." (Wang 2017). The GIA targeted "journalists and intellectuals who were deemed a threat to the Islamists' agenda." (WPF 2015).

[807] The GIA embedded itself in dense and difficult urban terrain. Government forces were better able to operate in more rural terrain. "In contrast to the MIA and AIS, the GIA was active for the most part in urban settings." (Schulhofer-Wohl 2007, 108). The government was able to significantly weaken the MIA and other groups.

(Wang 2017). Algerian President Chadli Bendjedid launched ambitious political reforms, including a new constitution in 1989 that ended single party rule. (Associated Press 1989).

Over thirty new parties emerged. FLN incumbents launched a military coup as soon as the FIS looked likely to electorally defeat the FLN.[808] The most popular theory explaining the start of the 1992 Civil War is that it followed the military coup enacted to suppress a potential FIS election victory.[809] The government then officially banned the FIS. This led to an Islamist insurgency and a heavy-handed government military response. Violence spiraled into civil war. The Algerian government originally did not differentiate between the FIS and the far more ideologically driven and absolutist GIA.

The FIS originally emerged from the 1988 riots. Banned and put under government pressure, the FIS went underground and formed the Armée Islamique du Salut (AIS) which then split into the GIA, which was far more radical. The radical jihadist GIA emerged as the most violent actor in the conflict. The FIS retained no control over the GIA which perpetrated mass atrocities. (Wang 2017).

Conflict erupted after the Algerian government halted the democratic election. The ensuing conflict, which lasted from 1992-2002, claimed between 150,000 and 200,000 lives according to different sources. (World Peace Foundation [WPF] 2015).[810] Although called a civil war, this case fits within the scope of asymmetric conflict because I am looking at the government's conflict with the GIA specifically and these two sides were never near parity. Although the conflict began between the Algerian government and the FIS, the GIA quickly became the main violent actor opposing the government and therefore the focus of this survey. GIA insurgents were always asymmetrically weaker than the government although the government was never able to convince them that they faced decisive defeat, only bloody attrition. However, the government was able to harm the GIA, leading it to devolve into a

[808] Immediately after the new Algerian Constitution permitted multi-party elections, "two teachers, an ex-fighter and a preacher, formed the FIS, with the aim to 'Islamize the regime without altering society's basic fabric.'" They were "poised to win the elections when the FLN-backed military cancelled the elections, launched a coup, and imprisoned FIS leaders." Evidence for President Bendjedid's involvement in the military coup is inconclusive. (Wang 2017).
[809] In January 1992, the FIS won the elections overwhelmingly, "with twice the number of votes than the ruling FLN. Rather than accepting the Islamists' victory, the military promptly stepped in and cancelled parliamentary elections, banned the FIS and arrested its leaders." (WPF 2015).
[810] The most frequently cited death toll is 150,000 from 1992-1998. These were the most violent years of the conflict. It was generated by Algeria's government, "which has not made its data sources available." (WPF 2015).

criminal enterprise that alienated popular support and caused it to collapse. Part of this harm may have been caused by a government strategy to infiltrate the GIA with state agents and commit atrocities to divide the rebels, turning more moderate elements against the GIA and causing splits within itself.[811] Algeria was then able to offer concessions and make peace with the more moderate elements that remained. The GIA continued to carry out attacks until 2001. (Vriens 2009). However, violence decreased substantially from its peak in the mid-to-late 1990s. (Schulhofer-Wohl 2007).

Originally, Algeria used hardline military pressure against a group, the FIS, that could be classified as a type D NSA and did not warrant hardline force. It was a political party with pragmatic goals—findable and targetable leadership that the government easily captured and jailed—and governance function. The optimal strategy would have been to bargain, but wanting to preserve a monopoly on power—and fearing the potential fundamental change to the state that could follow Islamists coming to power—the FLN chose repression. This led to the suboptimal outcome of prolonged conflict. Repression through military force was counterproductive, again demonstrating how applying the wrong strategy can lead to adverse consequences including prolonging and escalating conflict. In this case, Algeria's use of hardline force split the FIS and resulted in the more fundamentalist GIA. (WPF 2015).

Throughout the majority of this conflict, the Algerian government was minimally constrained. The conflict began following a military coup, so there were minimal internal constraints on the military which ruled the country. Externally, although the Algerian government faced increasing international condemnation for its failure to protect civilians, "the international community only played a limited role during the conflict." Neither "the European Union nor the U.N. took action." A U.N. delegation visited Algeria in 1998, but "its report was criticized for its conciliatory attitude towards the Algerian government and lack of investigation into the massacres." (WPF 2015).

In 1994, the minimally constrained Algerian military "mounted an extensive campaign to 'make fear change sides,'" with the aim of eradicating the FIS and its affiliates." This was a

[811] In 2001, Habib Souaïdia became the first, but not the last, "Algerian officer to allege that members of the security forces had committed many of massacres dressed as "Islamists". He outlines a ruthless strategy of 'terrorizing the terrorists,' in his book The Dirty War: 1992-2000." (Al Jazeera 2010).

decisive victory strategy intended to socialize the FIS. The FIS and its actual affiliates, including its armed branch, the AIS, had pragmatic drive. It sought political reform and to be reinstated as a legal political party. The GIA "was the most radical and ideologically opposed to the AIS." It "sought to impose strict Salafi Islamic practice on the population." Indeed, the GIA was so radical that "even al-Qaeda withdrew its support for the group because it disagreed with the GIA's position that an entire civilian population could be labeled apostate." (WPF 2015).[812]

It is widely alleged that the Algerian government used its military to infiltrate the GIA with the goal of splitting the rebellion. While splintering the rebels decreased their ability to enforce order and uphold a bargain, it also degraded their ability to fight. (International Crisis Group 2004). The GIA had increased governance accountability due to the emergence of a rival. In 1998, "a faction of the GIA, dissenting with the massacres of civilians, split to create the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC)." (Al Jazeera 2010). GIA's governance function remained low because despite increased accountability. Its already low capacity was reduced by these splits.[813]

Hardline military actions did succeed in socializing some of the more radical Algerian rebels into a pragmatic type. Political concessions, including the granting of amnesty to Islamist groups, led to an end of the conflict. These concessions (primarily amnesty) were mostly accepted by groups that were already driven by a pragmatic agenda. Interestingly, rebel revulsion with the GIA—which had devolved into banditry and wanton, indiscriminate violence—also contributed to the decision by the AIS to end its military campaign.[814] This facilitated the ending of the conflict as well. After the FLN won the newly reinstated Algerian elections in April 1999, President Abdelaziz Bouteflika announced his commitment to striking a deal with the Islamists. In July 1999, he introduced in the National People's Assembly the Civil Harmony Law, which granted amnesty to those Islamists who renounced violence. (Tlemçani 2008). This

[812] By 1994, "clear ideological and tactical differences had emerged that broadly divided the rebellion into three main camps: The first camp, led by the AIS, presented itself as the armed wing of the FIS. As the most ideologically moderate of the insurgent groups, it did not seek to overthrow the state but aimed to induce reform and pressure the regime to legalize the FIS. The second camp, fronted by MEI and several other groups, aimed at overthrowing the regime and establishing an Islamic state. The third camp, typified by the GIA, was often referred to as the Algerian 'Afghans,' as many of its leaders had fought against the Russians in Afghanistan." (WPF 2015).
[813] the GIA "allowed the leaders of local groups to act in its name without hesitation." (Schulhofer-Wohl 2007, 108).
[814] "The massacres of civilians by the GIA in 1997 and 1998 helped prompt the AIS's decision to end its military campaign, alienated civilians and accelerated the breakup of the GIA as groups." (WPF 2015).

accommodation reduced violence. The AIS and other groups disbanded in 2000. (WPF 2015). By the early 2000s, Algerian Islamists parties "abandoned their brief but intense flirtation with revolution and reverted to essentially reformist strategies. The Islamist parties now accept the nation-state and have either tacitly abandoned the ideal of an Islamic state or reconciled it with democratic principles. They no longer advocate fundamentalist positions on Islamic law and have begun to accept equality of the sexes, including women's right to work outside the home and participate in public life." (International Crisis Group 2004). This explicit demonstration of a moderate agenda helped the incumbent FLN accept their existence without fears of their agenda to fundamentally transform the state from secular to Islamist.

This case is complex due to the multitude of actors and factors in its conclusion. The Algerian government can be blamed for the outbreak of conflict and the creation of its more ideologically driven and radical foe, the GIA. By outlawing the FIS instead of conceding a democratic election, the Algerian government created conflict with an actor that was not a non-state opponent but a legitimate political party with pragmatic goals. Once the conflict began in 1992, the GIA broke off from the FIS and truly was a type B NSA. It was highly radical but had targetable leadership making it vulnerable to a hardline decisive victory strategy. The minimally constrained Algerian government was able to carry out hardline repression but did not militarily defeat the Islamists. Because the Algerian rebels had many pragmatically driven groups among them, the Algerian government was able to secure peace by granting concessions after carrying out a military campaign that increasingly isolated the more hardline GIA from more moderate factions. A bargain was never reached with the GIA, but the organization is now largely defunct. Algeria's successful bargain with the more moderate groups that were arrayed against it alongside the GIA, led to the GIA's isolation and eventual irrelevancy. The U.S. State Department dates the GIA's last significant terrorist attack to 2001. Many of its members broke off to join al-Qaeda or its affiliate AQIM. (Vriens 2009).

- **Peru vs Shining Path: Communist guerilla insurgency 1980-2000**

Peru's twenty-year conflict with the Shining Path provides an opportunity to survey how socialization logic might have applied to a state countering an absolutist non-state opponent that was driven by Communist, not religious ideology. Furthermore, unlike the U.S. mischaracterization of the Vietcong, Shining Path was not seeking pragmatic goals such as

independence, territory and sovereignty, it truly was motivated by the desire to spread Communism and tear down the Peruvian capitalist system.

The Shining Path originated in 1980 as a type A NSA. It was highly ideologically driven by an absolutist Communist ideology. Its founder, Abimael Guzman ("Comrade Gonzalo"), was a true believer. He was a philosophy teacher inspired by the Marxist, Jose Carlos Mariategui. "The name Shining Path came directly from a passage in Mariategui's writing, "Marxism-Leninism will open the shining path to revolution." Guzman began the group with a core of intellectuals and idealists. They were extremely willing to kill and die for their ideology.[815]

Peruvian forces originally had difficulty targeting Shining Path leadership, but due to its highly hierarchical, cult of personality leadership, it was able to severely harm the group when it captured its leader in 1992. Shining Path had minimal governance function. It controlled territory but not people, and gained most of its revenue through drug trafficking, kidnapping and extortion. (Council on Hemispheric Affairs 2008).

When Peruvian forces were finally able to arrest its leader and then his successor. The group became a type B NSA. The state's optimal strategy was to pursue decisive victory. Peru achieved this by locking up the Shining Path's leaders and arming and mobilizing local communities "rondas campesinas" to fight the Shining Path in their base of operations, the mountainous rural regions.[816]

Peru originally had moderate constraints. The U.S. supported the Peruvian government's fight against Communist insurgents, especially during the Cold War. The U.S. also supported Peru because of the U.S. war on drugs and the Shining Path's linkages with drug traffickers. The

[815] The Shining Path was "distinct from other insurgencies across Latin America in idealizing the 'blood quota.' Dying for the cause was romanticized through extensive rhetoric such as 'crossing the river of blood.' The results were not only a fiercely determined corps of militants, but also harsh treatment of its victims… The rebels often held public executions—sometimes mass executions—by stoning." (Peru Reports).

[816] By 1990 "the Shining Path was officially designated a terrorist organization by governments throughout the world, including the United States and European Union. In 1990, Alberto Fujimori was elected President of Peru. He increased the pressure on the Shining Path by sending rifles to the 'rondas campesinas,' locally organized vigilante forces in the Andean highlands which opposed the Shining Path." The conflict "changed course once the rondas had explicit support from the government." Shining Path's philosophy "never converted many followers from the indigenous populations of the Andes, many of whom had converted to Protestants and were horrified by the Shiny Path's violence. The armed rondas prevented the Shining Path from safe shelter in the towns, and the rebels could no longer extort defenseless populations for supplies." (Peru Reports).

U.S. trained the Sinchis, a special counter-terrorist police force notorious for heavy-handed tactics and human-rights abuses. (Scott in Crenshaw 2007).

Internally, the Peruvian government faced capacity problems due to poor, weak, corrupt and inept institutions. President Alberto Fujimori decried Congress tying his hands and preventing a heavy-handed crack down. On April 5, 1992 the Fujimori government drastically reduced already low internal constraints when he dissolved the Peruvian Congress and abolished its constitution. His government's stated reasoning was to reduce internal constraints that he considered a major hinderance to defeating the Shining Path insurgency. He claimed that the Congress was slow to pass anti-terrorism legislation. (Reuters 1992). Fujimori enacted military courts to try suspected members of the Shining Path and ordered an iron fist approach. He also withdrew Peru from the jurisdiction of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in July 1999, reducing external constraints.[817]

Peru sought to decisively defeat the Shining Path by killing its fighters and targeting its leadership but faced operational difficulties. Peru's armed forces did not have the necessary physical presence in and familiarity with, the rural, mountainous areas to allow it to effectively deploy against the Shining Path. Therefore, Peru's use of force initially was poorly implemented, exacerbated violence and aided Shining Path's recruitment.[818]

Improved intelligence-based police and military operations eventually led to the capture of the group's leader Guzmán in in 1992, leading to many defections from the group and an eventual winding down of hostilities.[819] Guzmán's role as the leader was taken over by Óscar Ramírez, who was captured by Peruvian authorities in 1999. After Ramírez's capture, the group splintered, and guerrilla activity sharply decreased. The drastic reduction in hostilities denotes an end to the conflict without a peace deal. This can be coded as decisive military victory for Peru.

[817] Peru gave various reasons for withdrawing, including: "infringement of Peru's sovereignty; the Court's distance from a terrorist atmosphere; and its lack of authority to order the modification of laws." (Soley and Steininger 2018).
[818] Peru's government "struggled to respond to the threat in the Andean highlands. The Peruvian military was almost entirely recruited from the urban coast. The cultural differences between the Creole security forces and the local indigenous populations strained a working relationship." (Peru Reports).
[819] On September 12, 1992, Peruvian police captured Guzmán and several other Shining Path leaders in an apartment in Lima. The police had been monitoring the apartment. Shortly after Peruvian government forces captured Guzmán, most of the remaining Shining Path leadership was captured as well. (United States Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services 2003).

The Shining Path still operates sporadically in the Jungles and highlands, but through government force, their ability to coordinate, recruit, and operate has been severely curtailed.

Demonstrative of socialization logic's assumption that states will not grant concessions to groups they still consider driven by an absolutist ideology, in 2011, Shining Path lawyers attempted to register it a new political party, Movadef. The electoral authority denied the registration on the grounds that the organization promoted terrorism. (Tegel 2012). Shining Path was once a vital threat to Peru. Now it cannot carry out violence in a meaningful way, but its members are still arrested on drug trafficking charges. This conflict ended with Peru decisively defeating the Shining Path, landing a knock-out blow against what was once a type A NSA by capturing its leadership and arming local militias to deny it territorial safe-haven.

- **Turkey versus the Kurdistan Workers' Party: Separatist insurgency 1984-1999**

Although conflict between Turkey and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) is ongoing, the first bout of fighting, from 1984 until 1999 ended with the PKK announcing a unilateral ceasefire and withdrawal. This period of peace lasted for seven years, until clashes resumed in 2006 after the PKK called off its ceasefire in 2004. (Marcus 2007). Considering the seven years of peace, the 1999 treaty can be regarded as a successful bargained conclusion to a distinct conflict if examined in isolation. This case provides a clear example of a minimally constrained state capturing the leader of a type C NSA, shifting it to a type D NSA and securing a bargained end to the conflict. The PKK had pragmatic drive, high governance function and at the outset its leadership was hard to target but eventually became as highly targetable as possible due to Turkey capturing and imprisoning its leader Abdullah Öcalan in 1999. Turkey had low constraints, pursued decisive victory to socialize an already mostly state-like group and concluded a bargained end of the conflict once it saw the PKK as a type D NSA.

From the PKKs launch of military campaigns in 1984, like the Vietcong, the group had predominantly nationalist motives that were tinged with Communist ideology. Although predominantly Muslim, the PKK never had any Islamist agenda and was not perceived by either Turkey or any foreign governments as having such an agenda. The Turkish government never considered the PKK to be ideologically driven. Although Marxist, the PKK sought territorial sovereignty. It originally sought to establish an independent Kurdistan in Turkey's southeast. (CFR 2019). These were pragmatic and non-absolutist motives, but because states

value sovereignty and aim to maximize security through strength, it is easy to understand why Turkey did not concede Kurdish independence when that required dismembering a portion of its territory. As Turkey succeeded in militarily pressuring the PKK, it moderated its agenda further. "In the 1990s the PKK rolled back on its demand for independence, calling instead for greater cultural and political autonomy." (BBC 2019). By this point, the PKK was clearly pragmatically driven, with goals that could be negotiated over.

The PKK had high governance function. They provided services for Kurdish populations in the southeastern Turkish region where they are the majority population.[820] The PKK was never hegemonic; multiple Kurdish parties and groups were organized and subsequently banned. Multiple Kurdish political parties were "shut down one after another," and party members were harassed and imprisoned. "Most famously, in 1994 Leyla Zana--who, three years prior, had been the first Kurdish woman elected to the Turkish parliament--was sentenced to 15 years for 'separatist speech.' Her party was banned." (FAS).[821]

Turkey originally had difficulty targeting PKK leadership. As a distinct ethnicity, Turkish nationalism is supported by diaspora populations in Syria, Iraq and Iran. Öcalan spent the majority of this 15-year conflict in Syria, where Turkish forces could not reach him until U.S. and NATO pressure forced his expulsion. Once he was captured and imprisoned, the PKK went from having difficult to target leadership to its leader sitting in a Turkish prison. This was the primary factor that shifted it to a type D NSA. According to a RAND study, "Turkey's 1999 triumph over the PKK indicates that victory largely hinged on the capture of the PKK's leader, Öcalan." (Paul, Clarke, Grill and Dunigan 2013, 144).

The Turkish government faced minimal constraints. It had high domestic support for countering any sign of Kurdish separatism and saw the PKK as a threat to Turkey's vital interests. Externally, as a NATO member, the U.S. generally supported its actions against the PKK. "Both the U.S. State Department and the European Union designate the group as a foreign terrorist organization." Indeed, U.S. backing strongly aided Turkish efforts to capture the PKK's leader. Öcalan had sanctuary in Syria before Turkey forced Syria to expel him in October

[820] This was in part due to the Turkish government's systematic withholding of resources from the Kurdish region.
[821] There were "at least seven parties established by this (Kurdish) political movement." Five of them were active during the 1990s. These parties were successively closed by the Turkish Supreme Court on the grounds that they had been involved in separatist terrorist activities connected to the PKK, violating the constitution." (TRT World 2019).

1998. “The U.S. strongly backed Turkey and also pressured Syria to expel him. The U.S. denounced Öcalan as a terrorist and pressured any other state in which he applied for refuge to extradite him to Turkey for trial. Öcalan was finally captured in the Greek Embassy in Nairobi, Kenya, thanks to U.S. intelligence, which had pinpointed his location.” (Kaya 2012).

The minimally constrained Turkish government pursued a decisive victory strategy against the PKK. “Immediately after the PKK launched its military campaign in 1984, the state responded with increased force, deploying some 300,000 troops in the southeast at an annual cost of $8 billion.” Additionally, “Turkish armed forces instituted a system of ‘village guards,’ paying and arming Kurds to keep the PKK guerillas out of their villages. Villages that refuse to participate in the guard system face demolition by the Turkish military.” Turkey was not restrained in its use of force. “Between 1984-91, an estimated 2,500 people had been killed. Over the next four years, that figure shot up to 20,000. Some 3,000 villages have been destroyed by the military in an effort to rout out PKK sympathizers, creating more than 2 million refugees.” (FAS). Over 40,000 people were killed in the conflict between 1984 and 1999, a large majority were Kurdish civilians. (Blakemore 2019). The Turkish military utilized “drastic measures to separate the insurgents from the population in the mountain villages in the area of conflict.” It “aggressively pursued insurgents into the mountains, sought to cut off cross-border support to them, and, most tellingly, made a political deal with extranational hosts to capture the authoritarian leader of the PKK.” (Paul, Clarke, Grill and Dunigan 2013, 54).

Once its leader was captured and sentenced to death, he called upon his followers to lay down their arms.[822] Because the PKK is hierarchical and has high governance function, the group respected its imprisoned leader’s call for ending the conflict and the Turkish government trusted this appeal to be credible, allowing it to end military operations form 1999-2004. Indeed, Öcalan was both willing and able to enforce the terms of a bargain. He has demonstrated his control over the PKK from his prison cell for well over a decade.[823]

[822] The PKK “announced that it intends to comply with the request of its imprisoned leader Abdullah Öcalan.” Turkey's Kurdish rebels “are prepared to lay down the sword after 15 years of armed struggle for autonomy,” according to an August 4, 1999 written statement by the PKK. “From now on all our political, organisational and military activities will follow the policy set out in our chairman's declaration,” it said. (Morris 1999).
[823] In 2012, Öcalan “passed a message from his prison cell, ordering the ending of a hunger strike by hundreds of Kurdish activists. His order was immediately obeyed.” (Reynolds 2013).

Öcalan and his adherents valued his life and the PKK's announcement of a peace treaty stayed Ocalan's execution. Turkey did not halt the execution due to international pressure. "There was no pressure from Washington or the EU. The state was worried for another reason. If Öcalan was executed, it was calculated that the southeast would rebel." Turkey's concession—of staying the execution and withdrawing forces—towards a type D NSA follows socialization logic. Hardline force shifted the PKK into a type D NSA. This allowed Turkey to abandon military measures and offer concessions (staying Öcalan's execution) to secure peace with a credible bargaining partner. (Ali-Birand 2012).

- **France and the G5 Sahel Force versus al-Qaeda and ISIS in the Islamic Maghreb: 2017-ongoing**

This case is unique because it is the only case that examines a coalition taking on a non-state opponent. It examines a coalition's approach to countering two type A non-state opponents. Each country separately would not be a good test because the state is too weak and the non-state opponent too strong for it to fit within the realm of asymmetrical state versus non-state opponent conflict to which socialization logic applies. As a coalition with strong western backing in the form of U.S. and French funding and military support, the state forces are asymmetrically stronger than their two main opponents, AQIM and ISIS affiliate Boko Haram. A brief examination suggests that by coalescing and pursuing decisive victory to crush, not moderate the NSAs, the states are acting in accordance with the predictions of socialization logic.

Furthermore, U.S. support for the G5 Sahel Force and other partnered efforts against al-Qaeda affiliates and ISIS in the Sahel region are in-line with its strangulation based decisive victory strategy against al-Qaeda and other transnational type A NSAs discussed in chapter 6.[824] U.S. Air Force chief of staff General Dave Goldfein explained the U.S. mission in Niger in precisely these term, saying: "You're going to see us continue to focus on keeping our boot on the throat of violent extremism." (Losey 2018).

The Sahel region is vast, poorly governed, and proximate to the Middle East with large Muslim populations. It is home to several jihadist groups as well as political insurgents and

[824] According to Abdoulaye Diop Foreign Minister of Mali, Chair of Ministers G-5 Sahel, G-5 Sahel is a regional response to a dispersed, transnational terrorist threat. Terrorists fleeing from the U.S. War on Terror are fleeing to the Sahel and reestablishing themselves there. (CSIS 2019).

criminal enterprises.[825] The most dangerous, largest, richest and best organized militants in the region are al-Qaeda and ISIS affiliated Salafi-jihadist groups. Boko Haram was the world's fourth deadliest terrorist group in 2017, responsible for 1,254 deaths in that year. In 2014 it was the deadliest terrorist organization in the world. (Dudley 2018).

The region spans approximately 2400 square miles immediately south of the Sahara Desert. It reaches from Senegal on the Atlantic coast, through parts of Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Nigeria, Chad and Sudan to Eritrea on the Red Sea coast. It is semi-barren and sparsely populated. It bridges the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa, making it a site of interaction between Arabic, Islamic and nomadic cultures from the north, and indigenous and traditional cultures from the south. (Suleiman 2017). Governments in the region face severe capacity shortfalls. Due to the vast terrain spanning multiple countries and the states' poor governance and ability to control the territory, they formed a military alliance to fight terrorist and criminal networks, making what might be a symmetric fight, asymmetrical.[826] According to Abdoulaye Diop, Foreign Minister of Mali, Chair of Ministers G-5 Sahel, the G-5 Sahel Force is doing their part in fighting a global threat by building capability to counter transnational terrorist groups in the region. He and the other Sahel force leaders are adamant that strategy and operations must be coordinated between countries to defeat these terrorist groups. (CSIS 2019).

Following the Western led campaign to remove Libyan leader Moammar Kaddafi, the ensuing anarchy greatly increased the terrorist threat in the Sahel. (CSIS 2019). In 2017, the U.S. backed the French in creating the G5 Joint Sahel Force. That said, the G5 Sahel Force is not a U.S. or French initiative that would be more demonstrative of U.S. or French strategy. Rather, it aids their strategy but primarily derives from the strategy of the countries which comprise it.[827] This multilateral military coalition is an "African counterterror operation supported by international partners (France, U.S., European Union and United Nations) and 'not an external

[825] Extremist groups like ISIS "tend to gravitate to places that are ungoverned or weakly governed." There are currently "at least 11 offshoots of terrorist groups operating in that region of Africa, mostly splintered from al-Qaida, ISIS and Boko Haram." (Losey 2019).

[826] Foreign Minister Ibrahim Yacoubou of Niger argues that the terrorists in the Sahel are more narco-traffickers than religious extremists. Although Boko Haram (now allied with ISIS) are religious extremists. (CSIS 2019). ISIS affiliate Boko Haram is responsible for the most deaths and violence in the region.

[827] According to analyst Frowd, "although the G5 Sahel Force has a huge amount of French backing, both diplomatic and financial, he would not describe it as a Western proxy… In fact, it is fairer to say that the G5 Sahel is a proxy for regional leaders such as Niger's Mahamadou Issoufou and Chad's Idriss Deby, who have been adept at courting Western partners on counterterrorism and irregular migration." (Essa 2017).

counterterror operation.'" According to the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, "The G5 Sahel was created by the region's leaders as a way of taking their security into their own hands and encouraging regional development by coordinating their efforts." (France Diplomatie 2019). The U.S. pledged 60 million dollars to it in 2017. "The G5 Sahel Force's official mandate is to combat terrorism and drug trafficking," (Essa 2017).[828]

The coalition of sates making up the G5 Sahel Force is primarily focused on combating type A NSAs—AQIM and ISIS.[829] They are highly ideologically driven, have difficult to target and franchised leadership and minimal governance function. Furthermore, these groups pose a severe threat to the vital interests of the states in which they operate, disrupting society through terrorist attacks against civilians and state militaries, kidnappings, and intimidation. Socialization logic would suggest that each state pursue a decisive victory strategy and work to reduce their constraints to make this feasible. By joining together to fight, they are doing both.

From 2017 until the present, France and the G5 Sahel Force—comprised of Mauritania, Niger, Chad Burkina-Faso and Mali—have been fighting some of the world's most ideologically driven extremist organizations. The individual states pursue a decisive victory strategy against these type A opponents and collaborate with the western backed G5 Sahel Force in this effort. The G-5 Sahel Force compliments the countries' ongoing military and police operations. It focuses on cross border threats especially. (Park 2017). Organizing as a multilateral and western backed force reduces both internal and external constraints on pursuing decisive victory through cost-sharing, increased military capabilities and increased international legitimacy. The G5 Sahel Force does not call for concessions and negotiations. They aim to "eradicate terrorism."[830]

The G5 Sahel Force's effectiveness is yet to be proven. They have shown promise in boosting military capabilities through joint training missions and intelligence as well as best

[828] The force has three main operations. The first is "along the Mali-Mauritania border; the second on the cross-border region between Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger known as Liptako Gourma, and lastly on the Niger-Chad border." "High on the agenda will be tackling groups like AQIM, Jamaat al-Nasr al-Islam, Ansar al-Dine, as well as Katiba Masine (an affiliate of Ansar al-Dine), among other groups." (Essa 2017).
[829] AQIM and Boko Haram pursue the absolutist principles of Salafi-jihadist ideology. Boko Haram shares a common ideology and often fights alongside AQIM. In 2015, its leader pledged allegiance to ISIS. (Emerson 2019).
[830] In his 2017 speech before the U.N. General Assembly, French President Emmanuel Macron described the G5 Sahel Force's mission in these terms: "Our challenge today is to eradicate terrorism, and to achieve this, to strengthen national capacities so that the states themselves can take charge of their own security… This is why, since taking office, I have supported the deployment of the G5 Sahel joint force and I am calling here to your collective mobilization." (France Diplomatie 2019).

practices sharing. The Force reduces external constraints and boosts military capabilities because its international construct addresses the challenge of "preventing fighters and traffickers from evading pursuit by slipping across national boundaries." They have carried out several operations including against al-Qaeda linked militants in the border regions of Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso. (Reuters 2017). In its first year, it still not fully manned and equipped force and had conducted only six operations. (Kelly 2018). As of 2019, they are still not at full capacity. (Security Council Report 2019).[831] Continued funding and western backed military, intelligence and logistical support, as well as a whole of government approach to improve governance and standard of living in this region, will likely decide whether the efforts of the G5 Sahel Force helped to defeat archetypal terrorist organizations in the region.

CONCLUSION

This chapter provided a brief survey of asymmetric state versus NSA conflict. It does not look at these cases in enough depth to rule out opposing arguments which may have more explanatory power in any single one of these cases. This survey does demonstrate how in a variety of cases within the aforementioned scope, socialization logic usually explains state strategy quite well upon superficial examination. In some cases, the states were great or colonial powers, either during periods of strength, like the British during the Irish War of Independence, or in periods of internal and international weakness, like the British during their Post-WWII conflict with Jewish insurgents in Palestine. Other states were not great powers but still had military capabilities that far exceeded those of their opponents, like Peru, Algeria and South Africa. Finally, an examination of the G5 Sahel Force suggests that socialization logic can explain the creation and coherence of a regional counterterrorism force.

This chapter also examines state conflict against each type of asymmetrically weaker NSA. Great Britain faced state-like type D NSAs when it fought the Haganah in Palestine and the Irish Republican Brotherhood in the Irish War of Independence. It faced a type B NSA at the outset of the Troubles, but through increasingly well aligned military force, socialized it into a type D NSA and secured a durable bargain.

[831] The G5 Sahel Force faces severe budgetary challenges. Although backed by France, the U.S. and other European countries, Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso are among the poorest countries in the world. (Cooke 2017).

Peru, Turkey, the U.S., and South Africa all faced groups with some measure of Communist agenda. Turkey understood Communism to be secondary in importance to the PKK's nationalism, while the U.S. failed to realize the same about the Vietcong. South Africa eventually understood the ANC to be pragmatically motivated and for Peru it did not matter, the Shining Path was an archetypal terrorist organization and Peru's decisive victory strategy made them irrelevant without achieving a bargain.

Peru knew it was dealing with a true proponent of Communism that sought an ultimate absolutist goal of overthrowing Peru's capitalist system. It reduced its already modest constraints by disbanding Congress and socialized the Shining Path by capturing its leaders and arming local militias to fight the terrorists in their remote areas of operation.

Turkey understood the PKK to be pragmatically motivated and this factored into its ability to use the concession of sparing the life of their captured leader to secure a credible peace deal that lasted nearly seven years. Because the PKK already was a type C NSA, with pragmatic drive and high governance function, the captured of its leader allowed Turkey to trust a bargain with a group that stood-down when its imprisoned leader asked them to.

South Africa believed that it faced a group that was driven by Communist ideology. The collapse of the Soviet Union convinced De Klerk that the ANC's pragmatic, liberty and justice seeking agenda was its primary drive. This allowing his government to grant concessions to a group it now perceived as a type C NSA, giving it governance function to make it a type D NSA and thus ending the conflict.

Like Peru—and the U.S. conflict with al-Qaeda—the countries comprising the G5 Sahel Force are fighting primarily type A NSAs, including AQIM and Boko Haram. They carry out military operations to slowly achieve decisive victory over these dispersed and decentralized groups. U.S. backing of this force can be understood as part of its slow strangulation strategy it continues to pursue against al-Qaeda affiliates.

State strategy in nearly all of these conflicts can be explained by socialization logic. Algeria's "Dirty War" is better explained by the domestic politics of single party authoritarian regimes, namely the desire to hold onto power at any cost. Algeria's FLN party treated the legitimate political opposition like a non-state opponent that warranted being crushed by decisive

force when instead it was a political party espousing pragmatic goals, that should have been accommodated. The conflict began—and the GIA came into existence—due to the FLN launching a coup to prevent losing power democratically.

The most tragic conflicts arguably occurred needlessly—either when socialization logic was not applied or was misapplied. An example of the former was where Algeria did not follow socialization logic, instead pursuing domestic political power at all costs. An example of the latter was the U.S. effort in Vietnam, where the U.S. did follow socialization logic but was mistaken over its opponent's type.

The U.S. considered the Vietcong to be primarily driven by an absolutist ideology that posed an intractable and severe threat when in reality it was driven by a pragmatic, nationalist agenda that posed no threat to vital, or even vested, U.S. interests. Further demonstrating the futility of the Vietnam War, while the U.S. could have made concessions without dismembering its territory or even harming its security, Turkey could not. However, Turkey was far better positioned to capture the PKK's leadership and end the conflict while the U.S. faced difficulty threatening Vietcong leadership and therefore their survival.

The lessons of the Vietnam war provide a prelude to a key conclusion of this study; that states must ensure that they correctly understand their opponents' type, otherwise the results can be protracted and pointless war. The conflict in Afghanistan is similar to Vietnam in that the U.S. arguably misperceived its opponent's type, considering the Taliban to be an archetypal terrorist group when it surrendered in December 2001, while in reality it was more likely a type D, state-like actor. This is not to say that the Taliban was normatively a good actor. It espoused the evils of intolerance, oppression and brutality; but it had a targetable leadership at that point and was the only actor in decades to even moderately successfully exert bureaucratic and military control over Afghanistan. Its ideology, while odious, primarily sought control in Afghanistan, not jihad against the West. Recently declassified files, the Afghanistan Papers are similar to the Pentagon Papers covering the Vietnam War. They paint a picture of U.S. incompetence, strategic aimlessness, waste and cover up. Both conflicts are understandable. The U.S. originally pursued a clear and important mission in Afghanistan—destroying al-Qaeda and ending Taliban safe-haven support for them. In Vietnam, cognitive biases led U.S. leaders to tragically misapply Cold

War Domino Theory. Prolonged conflict in Afghanistan might have been avoided and conflict in Vietnam avoided altogether, had the U.S. correctly understood its opponents' type.

Chapter 9: Implications and Avenues for Further Research

This thesis has attempted to provide a generalizable logic—socialization logic—through which to understand state strategy against asymmetrically weaker non-state opponents; a timeless yet increasingly prevalent form of conflict. Socialization logic addresses state strategy towards these opponents with the goal of ending the conflict as soon as possible and within certain constraints which are mailable to an extent but not entirely. This thesis aimed to explain state strategy and also how these types of wars end. The empirical chapters suggest that state leaders often employ socialization logic throughout their conflicts with non-state opponents, tailoring their strategy with the goal of making their opponent more state-like in order to create the conditions necessary to end the conflict. The empirical chapters also show that constraints matter and that state leaders sometimes misjudge their opponent's type. This misjudgment does not counter the applicability of socialization logic. Rather, it demonstrates that states do pursue it but must take care to avoid mischaracterizing their opponents to avoid disastrous results. The empirical chapters show that when states correctly tailor their strategies according to the precepts of socialization logic, they can end their conflicts sooner. This is more likely to be the case when states are less constrained.

Contributions to International Relations Theory

Socialization logic bridges an important gap in International Relations theory by applying universal realist concepts that were developed and tested in the interstate context to a currently more prevalent form of conflict, often characterized as terrorism and counterinsurgency studies. These sub-subfields have been undertheorized and compartmentalized. The debates often yield conflicting operational and tactical suggestions that focus on questions like whether decapitation works (Jordan 2014; Johnston 2012) whether population-centric COIN is superior to enemy-centric COIN (Nagl, Amos and Petraeus 2007, Zhukov 2010 and Hazelton 2017), and the utility of drone strikes (Byman 2013 and Cronin 2013). Abrahms (2013) puts forth questionable logic to explain a sound empirical finding regarding state concessions towards terrorists who target civilians. Cronin (2006) puts forth several wise policy proposals towards defeating al-Qaeda but does not explain why the goal is victory without negotiation in that case specifically but perhaps not in others. Her 2009 book finds that democracies negotiate with terrorists to manage conflict but does not discuss under which conditions, or how this might actually end the conflict.

Unlike the terrorism and insurgency literature, realist logic pertaining to intestate war has many decades of theory built upon the logic and testing of scholars. Fearon (1995) has convincingly argued how realist concepts of deterrence between rational actors—who understand that war is costly—prevent war when each actor fully understands the other side's capabilities and resolve. Reiter (2010) applies these concepts to conflict termination, showing how states will end conflict when these factors are revealed, and through this revelation, the actors no longer fear that the other will cease being deterred and resume conflict at an advantageous time, thus allowing them to make peace. Socialization logic applies these concepts to states countering asymmetrically weaker non-state opponents, where capabilities are usually well understood but resolve is not. It also explains state strategy in cases where the opponent cannot be deterred by rationally weighing costs and benefits towards security maximization.

Bringing in these interstate concepts through socialization logic provides a more logically consistent and practically useful explanation for conflict termination with terrorists than Abrahms' credibility paradox. Abrahms finds that states are less likely to make concessions towards, and bargain with terrorist groups that heavily target civilians. He argues that states mistrust NSAs that target civilians because they do not trust them to abide by commitments in the case of a negotiated settlement and thus do not offer concessions or negotiate. Socialization logic bridges the gap between terrorism and interstate international relations theory by demonstrating that it is not a history of atrocities, but interstate concepts of rational security maximization or the lack thereof, that make a state more or less willing to negotiate peace with its opponent. Russia's successful bargain with the Chechens, Great Britain's with the PIRA, U.S. negotiations with the Taliban, De Klerk's ending of apartheid and gestures towards the ANC and Israel's willingness to negotiate with the PLO between 1995-2000 show that states can and do negotiate and offer concessions to some NSAs who have heavily targeted civilians, but not others. Socialization logic and the empirical record suggest that states are willing to offer concessions and potentially make peace with NSAs when they believe these groups to be pragmatically instead of ideologically driven. This is because it is not the history of atrocities that suggest whether or not a bargain can be deemed credible, but whether or not the state believes that its opponent can be deterred.

A history of committing atrocities does not necessarily signal that an actor can or cannot be deterred because rational security maximizing actors have committed mass atrocities. This arguably applies even to Hitler. (Copeland 2000).[832] While committing atrocities signals fanaticism, this is not always the case. Pragmatically driven actors like the IRA, the Tamil Tigers and others have done so out of weakness in pursuit of non-absolutist goals like sovereignty and political/civil rights. If the state understands these to be the group's agenda, it can and usually will offer concessions and carry out diplomatic efforts to secure a bargain.

Realist concepts of deterrence, credible commitments and asymmetry of information matter for asymmetric conflict between states and non-state opponents, but they obtain in a way that approximates interstate conflict conclusion logic only under certain conditions. Realist international relations theory generally assumes states to be rational security maximizers. A highly ideologically driven non-state opponent may not be perceived to have these characteristics. Realist theory assumes states to be unitary rational actors. NSAs with low governance capacity also might not fit this description.

Finally, socialization logic endogenizes its opponent's characteristics to the deliberate actions of the state. This might superficially appear to approach Wendtian constructivism, where through interactions, states develop identities and promote those identities in others, and this shapes their actions. Socialization logic does in some sense argue that states aim to shape their opponent's identities, but not to make them aggressive or friendly, rather, to make them able to be deterred. States primarily pursue this not through integration and culture—while this might help—but through carrots and sticks, primarily the threat of decisive victory and the elimination of their leadership, to make them value survival over pursuing an absolutist ideological agenda.

Socialization logic applies the interstate realist concept of deterrence to states versus nonstate opponents. Wars can end if the state believes that the opponent can be deterred. This is because the state fears its opponent's future intentions and this fear cannot be assuaged if it believes that it cannot deter the opponent from resuming conflict.

[832] I agree with Copeland that rational security maximization—the fear of deep and inevitable decline vis-à-vis the Soviet Union can explain Hitler's actions to a point. I believe that irrationality might provide a better or complimentary explanation because of Hitler's diversion of troops and materials from the war effort towards implementing the Final Solution.

Like between states, deterrence between states and their non-state opponent's rest on two factors, the opponent's perceptions of the state's capabilities and resolve. In the asymmetric concept capabilities are generally revealed, although this is not always the case. In 1994 the Chechen's did not believe that Russia was militarily powerful enough to inflict high enough costs on them for them to be deterred. In many cases, the asymmetrically weaker opponent, if pragmatically driven, understands that the asymmetrically stronger state has the capabilities to inflict costs that opponent is unwilling to pay but might not have the resolve to do so. Gaip, the military leader of the Vietcong assumed this of U.S. resolve in the Vietnam War and based Vietcong strategy accordingly. In this case, although the Vietcong could be considered a rational, security maximizing actor. Deterrence is not about threatening costs, it is about threatening costs that the actor would be unwilling to pay. If the actor is highly driven by absolutist or even messianic ideology, credible threats to militarily harm it, even severely, may not reach this threshold. In the case of Vietnam, a rational security maximizing actor, motivated by the desire for sovereignty, is willing to pay just about any cost because sovereignty is considered the fundamental goal—even the definition—of rational security maximization. This explains why actors fighting for independence are undeterred by the threat of going up against a clearly more powerful state, are willing to pay enormous costs, and often win.

Womack's concept of international asymmetry explains asymmetric relations between states and can be applied to non-state opponents as well, both within the logic of realist deterrence. This can explain why states abandon colonial holdings that are willing to pay a higher cost for independence than the state is willing to pay for domination. After a struggle, these conflicts become what Womack calls mature asymmetric relations. This logic does not apply to highly ideologically driven actors, or those with low governance function. Here, Socialization logic fills a gap in International Relations theory on asymmetry.

Womack (2015) puts forth sound logic through which mature asymmetric relations are obtained. This occurs when the asymmetrically weaker side is deterred from aggression against a state's core interests while the stronger side is deterred from provoking the weaker side into costly conflict by threatening its sovereignty, for which it is willing to pay the ultimate price. Highly ideologically driven groups like Hamas, the PLO, or al-Qaeda are willing to antagonize a state and threaten the its vital interests, including demanding the dismantling or fundamental

restructuring of that state or its principles. Clearly no rational security maximizing state will be willing to concede its own sovereignty, so unlike in asymmetric relations between a rational security maximizing dyad, an asymmetrically weaker ideologically driven actor might still attack the stronger party's core interests even when it knows that it will suffer. Because deterrence requires demonstrating capability and resolve to make the aggressor pay costs it is unwilling to pay, if ideology demands aggression at all cost, the highly ideologically driven opponent will not be deterred. In this case, the failure of deterrence stems neither from the target failing to comprehend the sender's capabilities nor its resolve. Rather, the target simply is willing to pay any cost. Therefore, we see groups like Hamas and al-Qaeda that are willing to constantly absorb destruction of infrastructure, military power and death of its fighters. Indeed, in every round of escalations between Hamas and Israel, the destruction wrought upon Hamas is far higher than on Israel, yet Hamas is unwilling to make peace. The same can be said for al-Qaeda.

General principles:

The empirical record of the cases examined in this thesis find that states, while sometimes mistaken regarding their opponent's type, generally seek to socialize their opponents through force and diplomacy, turning to negotiations only if and when, the state believes the opponent to be closer to a state-like pragmatically driven actor. This is because states optimally seek to end wars, and this requires the state to believe it can trust its opponent's ability to uphold the peace. This requires the actor to be pragmatically driven so that it can be deterred by the state's asymmetric power and for it to be unitary so that it can enforce abidance.

The standard definition of a rational actor in realist theory contains assumes a unitary actor. If an opponent has low governing capacity, it cannot be considered a rational actor because it is not unitary. Socialization logic assumes that a state wants its opponent to be willing and able to enforce the terms of a treaty before it offers concessions to seal the deal. An opponent driven by absolutist ideology is deemed unwilling to abide by the terms of a peace treaty, while an opponent with low governing capacity is deemed unable.

Both the accountability aspect of governance function and the variable of leadership targetability impact the ability of the state to use force to socialize their opponent to become pragmatically driven. An ideologically driven actor might be willing to pay any cost. Therefore, a state sees its only hope of socializing that actor to be by threatening the ultimate cost, its very

survival. This follows the assumption that even the most ideologically driven foes wish to survive if only to fight another day. This is not always the case. With type A archetypal terrorist groups, the state seeks not to socialize but to annihilate the opponent because it understands that even if it is able to leverage the force needed to threaten it with decisive victory, it still is unlikely to socialize it into a pragmatic actor due to its lack of governance function and difficult to target leadership.

While a state aims to end conflict as quickly as possible, real-world constraints impact its ability to pursue the strategy that socialization logic would deem optimal to this end. The state might seek to socialize a non-archetypal but still ideologically driven non-state opponent but faces constraints that make it unable to threaten the opponent with decisive defeat. The opponent can see a state's constraints and operate accordingly. Therefore, while a state can surprise its adversary, a highly constrained state generally cannot credibly threaten its opponent with decisive victory because the opponent knows the state cannot actually pursue this. Hamas knows that Israel theoretically can destroy its entire organization within days, but also knows that it will not leverage this type of force due to domestic and international sanction and liberal democratic values. The Chechens understood that once Russia boosted its military capabilities by 1999, it was both willing and able to pursue decisive victory.

States have some leverage in reducing their constraints and they optimally try to reduce them if their strategy calls for more use of force or concessions that the public opposes.[833] Democratic governments can influence the media to an extent, using the leadership pulpit to promote a narrative in favor of a certain strategy. They are also not incapable of somewhat hiding operational and strategic failure and costs, as shown by the Afghanistan Papers. Authoritarian regimes like Putin's Russia actively sought to minimize constraints.[834]

When a state is too constrained to socialize its opponent, it may opt for management through offensive, defensive, or both types of denial. This is self-reinforcing. As management becomes more practicable and efficient, the state can less credibly threaten deviating from this to

[833] States may be constrained not from decisive victory but from making necessary concessions. Hypothetically, if the PLO was pragmatically motivated and desired the division of Jerusalem, Israel would not be able to conclude conflict in this potentially optimal way due to public opposition.
[834] Putin's consolidation of power reduced Russia's constraints, moving it from a fragile democracy to an autocracy. While not solely aimed at threatening the Chechens with decisive victory, it did aid Putin in this endeavor.

pursue decisive victory. This is likely to prolong the conflict, but I make no normative statement in this regard.

Finally, a state's optimal strategy to end conflict with an archetypal terrorist opponent is through annihilation. This must be done in a feasible way. If the opponent is dispersed, such as with al-Qaeda and ISIS affiliates, the state must pursue decisive victory sustainably. This resembles management because it is slow and sustained, but it is not management because the state aims to destroy the opponent, while in a management strategy, like Israel's towards Hamas or the PLO, this is not the case.

Cases where socialization logic fit and where it did not fit:

Socialization logic provided the only comprehensive explanation for each of Israel's strategy shifts towards the PLO, including the Oslo peace process which derived from Israel's rational but misperceived view of the PLO as pragmatically driven by 1993. Israel's strategy towards Hamas in its targeted assassination campaign, decisive victory campaign and management since 2009 adhere to what socialization logic would predict for a highly constrained actor, with Israel pursuing decisive victory when it was least constrained, during the Second Intifada and post-9/11. Other explanations, including the characteristics of individual leaders or international pressure, can explain some shifts but not each. Therefore, socialization logic, while not an exclusive explanation, is comprehensive and useful for understanding trends and generating models for the future, instead of explaining specific policies in hindsight.

The U.S. conflict with al-Qaeda is straightforward. Socialization logic, considering constraints, explains the U.S. decisive victory through knock-out strategy towards al-Qaeda central and through strangulation towards affiliates. U.S. strategy towards the Taliban is more complex. Clearly the personal ideologies of Bush, with his predisposition to Vindicationist democracy promotion, and Obama's disposition for the same and for U.S. withdrawal from the global stage in terms of a military footprint, skewed U.S. strategy. U.S. strategy towards the Taliban also suffered from cognitive motives, including the revenge motive, which, while understandable, cuts against socialization logic which assumes rationality. This cognitive bias led the U.S. to conflate the Taliban with al-Qaeda and therefore ascribe an absolutist ideological agenda to it when in December of 2001 it was probably at its most pragmatically driven and state-like. This arguably led to over 18 years of continued conflict.

Furthermore, U.S. biases towards western values constrained its ability to bargain. Socialization logic looks at vital interests and security. U.S. concern with liberty and tolerance, including religious freedom and women's and minority rights precluded it from considering supporting the Taliban's consolidation of control over Afghanistan if it were willing to end safe haven support for terrorists. Russia, on the other hand, unconstrained by liberal values, was able to grant the odious strongman Kadyrov dominion over Chechnya in exchange for keeping the peace. I do not make a normative argument for which is better in terms of absolute good or utilitarianism, that is the purview of the philosophers. But, Russia's ability to coopt an illiberal strongman, as well as its ability to threaten unrelenting brutality, did end its conflict sooner.

Implications for Achieving Peace:

The majority of the conflicts examined in this work are ongoing. In this section I apply socialization logic to predict their likely outcomes. Regarding Israel's conflict with the PLO, absent the ability to socialize it by threatening decisive victory, Israel is likely to continue managing this over five-decade long conflict indefinitely. Israel might be able to socialize the PLO to put pragmatism over ideology and negotiate terms if it can threaten decisive political victory. This might be possible if Israel, emboldened by a staunchly supportive Trump administration, were to expand its settlement enterprise. As of now, Israel is unlikely to change radically in this direction due to domestic political instability and the need to hedge against changing international climates. If Trump were to win reelection, Israel might move towards a political decisive victory strategy and this might socialize the PLO and lead to a peace deal.

Management is likely to remain Israel's strategy in its conflict with Hamas. This is because it has developed such a successful apparatus for denying Gaza based terrorism that it is increasingly unlikely to face political pressure to pursue a decisive victory strategy which would be costly in terms of lives, treasure and international reputation. This could change if Hamas succeeds in carrying out a mass casualty attack, but even this is unlikely to shift its strategy. If Hamas did obtain and demonstrate the ability to threaten Israel's security in a sustained manner, this might remove Israel's constraints and lead it to pursue decisive victory. This would likely entail putting the PA in charge of Gaza as well as the West Bank.

In Afghanistan the U.S. seems to be warming to the idea that the Taliban has moderated enough to inspire confidence that it can be incorporated into the Afghan government as a

legitimate political party. They will have to abandon their role as "zealots" and will likely be framed by more extremist groups, notably ISIS as "sell outs."[835] Perhaps the Taliban will be decisively defeated the same way that the U.S. and partnered nations are seeking to vanquish al-Qaeda, or Peru defeated the Shining Path, by pursuing and degrading them while strengthening denial and institutions until the ideologically driven NSA is no longer able to disrupt life in any meaningful way and fades into irrelevance. With the Taliban, this seems distant and suboptimal if the U.S. and its Afghan partners come to see them as pragmatically driven.

The U.S. will likely continue pursuing a sustainable whole of government and partnered approach to defeating al-Qaeda affiliates and will seek to keep al-Qaeda central from reemerging as a threat. This might be a generational struggle due to their dispersion. This also applies to ISIS affiliates now that the Caliphate has been defeated. Like al-Qaeda, the U.S. aimed to knock-out ISIS central and is now working to strangle its affiliates.

Russia has largely succeeded in ending its conflict with Chechen rebels. They are now a type D NSA, with clearly identifiable leadership that serves as a government and is loyal to Putin because they desire to remain in power—a pragmatic goal. As long as Russian leadership can keep Kadyrov as a loyal subject, through implicit deterrence and patronage, this situation is likely to remain stable. Kadyrov might doubt the resolve of another leader when Putin is replaced, he might be overthrown and replaced by a more ideologically driven faction, or Russia might face economic downturn and potentially reduce or end patronage to Kadyrov. Any of these developments, or a combination of them, may threaten the peace.

Policy Implications

Socialization logic yields several policy recommendations. They can aid state leaders in formulating practicable policy within their specific geopolitical environments for optimally and sustainably countering non-state opponents.

1. In formulating strategy against a non-state opponent, state leaders should determine their goals and then examine and reexamine their view of the NSA's type based on the three variables put forth in this thesis.

[835] The terms "zealots" and "sell outs" refer to Kydd and Walter "Strategies of Terrorism." See their article for more information on how and why terrorist groups act as spoilers in a peace process. (Kydd and Walter 2006). As the U.S. and the Taliban "seem close to a deal on an American troop withdrawal, the Islamic State in Afghanistan is making clear that it stands to inherit the role of violent spoiler if any peace agreement is reached." (Mashal and Ghazi 2019).

2. States should set the boundaries for actions that they can take based on their constraints environment. Leaders should understand the feasibility, costs and benefits of manipulating these constraints and decide their strategy towards a non-state opponent accordingly.[836]
3. If leaders want to bring long-standing conflicts to an end, they should work to lower their internal and external constraints to best be able to optimize strategy towards non-state opponents. Even democratic leaders can do this, through actions to boost and insulate the power of the executive, and the active promotion of a sense of purpose regarding the necessity of force.
4. States can easily misperceive the type of NSA that they are facing. This can have disastrous results in terms of prolonged conflict, blood, treasure and prestige. Key examples of this can be seen in the long and bloody conflicts that emerged from the U.S. mistakenly seeing the Taliban and the Vietcong as more ideologically driven when in fact they were likely primarily driven by pragmatic motives and could have been negotiated with far earlier. In Israel's case, misperceiving the PLO to be pragmatically motivated when they were actually ideologically driven led Israel to embark upon the Oslo peace process which culminated in one of the bloodiest episodes in Israel's history. Conversely, the U.S. and Israel were not mistaken regarding the type of their respective opponents, Hamas and al-Qaeda. While these conflicts continue, neither state undertook policies that exacerbated the problem.
5. Even highly constrained states can target enemy leadership to socialize extremists, if used as part of a strategy, not simply as a tactic. With difficult to deter NSAs, this might not be able to socialize the group, but can aid management, yielding periods of quiet.[837]

Avenues for further research

This thesis takes an in-depth look at a specific type of conflict; state versus non-state in an asymmetric conflict. It is a first attempt to apply Realist concepts towards a comprehensive and generalizable theory of state versus non-state international relations and it endogenizes state strategy to NSA type. There is much further research that could be done to see if it is

[836] For example, In Afghanistan, Petraeus advocates that the U.S. should "adopt a force posture that is both sustained and sustainable." (Petraeus and Serchuk 2019).
[837] Israel appears to be applying this formula to the PIJ which has been gaining prominence in Gaza. Netanyahu wants to create an understanding whereby PIJ is deterred in the short-term by threatening to kill its leaders. He conveyed a message to PIJ that Israel was prepared to assassinate its leaders in Syria if rocket fire from Gaza did not cease immediately. He told Gaza border community leaders that "every terrorist and commander knows that we can reach him personally." (Lazaroff 2019).

generalizable to other conflicts within its scope. Finally, this thesis is about conflict termination. Further research could look at how states can prevent the rise of non-state opponents or get them to develop as moderate actors from the outset.

Concluding thoughts

Ultimate decisive victory over the amorphous ideological drive for terrorism, that appears to be what remains of ISIS, should defeat the ideology by defeating its strongest backers. As long as the Soviet Union appeared strong, its ideology inspired a bevy of communist terrorist organizations. As soon as it was defeated, the ability of its ideology to recruit followers willing to kill and die for its cause was greatly diminished to the point of near irrelevance. Perhaps the slow containment and strangulation of radical Islamist groups and their backers will lead to a similar outcome. This may take longer since jihadism does not promise material well-being and its most hardline adherents and the "lone-wolves" it inspires do not seek it. Decisive victory over ideologically driven terrorism requires an unrelenting yet sustainable targeting of that ideology's promoters and adherents towards defeat.

Information operations similar to those promoting freedom and democracy over Communism are essential. To sustain the ability to fight the propagators of absolutist and violent ideologies, free nations must regain conviction in the superiority of their ideology (liberty) to ensure continued will to defeat the opponents. This existed during the Cold War. It will need to be fostered by government and popular messaging once again to sustain a long fight against radical absolutist ideological foes. Optimally, this will take place alongside increasing denial capabilities to protect the public. Strong management capabilities can decrease the sense of urgency to defeat the opponent. However, in the case of fighting a globally dispersed archetypal terrorist group, the optimal decisive victory strategy is long and slow. Here denial aids a sustained approach to decisive victory, unlike against an localized group like Hamas where it dampens resolve to defeat the opponent.

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Appendix

Chapter 3

The following are the results from interviews with 22 Israeli political experts, academics, practitioners and senior political and military advisers. (*Not every question was answered by every interviewee).*

- **Dr. Daniel Sobelman 9/28/2018:**

Bio: Assistant Professor, International Relations Department, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Jerusalem, Israel. Lebanon and Hezbollah expert. Served in the elite Military Intelligence Unit 8200. Former Arabic correspondent for Haaretz.

IVs

Israeli perceptions of PLO ideology:

Maximalist ideology but more likely than Hamas to make de-facto territorial compromise. Higher ideological drive than Hezbollah but lower than Hamas.

Israeli perceptions of PLO governance function:

Capable during Oslo years, relatively high, corrupt and unpopular, dependent on Israeli support.

Israeli perceptions of PLO leadership targetability:

Israel has well known ability to destroy PA leadership, but this will not necessarily destroy the organization.

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Balance of power with the PLO:

Perception of Israel's internal and external constraints:

Israel faces high external and internal constraints.

Israeli strategy pre-Oslo (and why?):

Why Oslo?

Why did Netanyahu uphold Oslo?

Why camp David 2000?

Why Operation Defensive Shield?

Why Disengagement?

Short and long-term strategy towards PLO (and why?):

Israel wants quiet but a formal peace treaty is seen as unrealistic.

- **Yossi Beilin 10/2/2018:**

Bio: Architect of the Oslo Accords: More left wing, Oslo failed in large part due to Israeli right coming to power. Arafat was partner, Abbas may be too. Labor, Meretz, main architect of Oslo.

IVs

Israeli perceptions of PLO ideology:

Pre-1988, PLO was pragmatically motivated. It used terror tactics due to weakness "like the IRA."

PLO changed in 1974: Gave up its maximalist agenda. "Even 'phased strategy' is a change." Moderated further in 1988: Declaration of Algiers recognized UN Resolution 181, accepted UN Resolution 242. Both Likud leadership (Shamir) and Labor leadership dismissed the sincerity of this change. Only Beilin accepted the change as legitimate.

Beilin contends that Arafat wanted Oslo to succeed.

Arafat was paranoid and unapproachable. Abbas is reachable.

The Second Intifada was no pre-planned by Arafat, "perhaps by Barghouti." But not for September 2000.

Israeli perceptions of PLO governance function:

Arafat was difficult to deal with but, Arafat was the decision maker, the address for Israel to reach the Palestinians.

Must increase Arafat's governance function otherwise negotiations with the PLO would be futile. Arafat's ability to control extremists was exaggerated. Israeli leadership perceived the PLO to be more capable than it actually was. Arafat gained money and status from Oslo. Abbas was the Secretary General of the PLO Executive Committee. He was seen as Arafat's deputy throughout the Oslo period until Arafat's death.

Israeli perceptions of PLO leadership targetability:

High targetability.

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perception of Israel's internal and external constraints:

Balance of power with the PLO:

Israeli strategy pre-Oslo (and why?):

Israel worked to militarily defeat the PLO. Israel Saw it as an implacable enemy.

Why Oslo?

Slow shift in PLO goals (1974, 1988). Beilin led the shift in Israeli perception, influenced Rabin.

Shift in international context put PLO on the ropes: Decline and fall of the USSR, by 1988 USSR appeared on the decline. PLO desired to hedge against this by working to improve relations with the United States. Jordan renounced claims over West Bank in 1988. Up until this point Israel preferred to negotiate with a state actor (Jordan.) The PLO felt abandoned by the Arab world which wanted better relations with the West.

Beilin was the driving force behind Rabin's acceptance of openly and legally negotiating with the PLO. There was "hatred between Peres and Rabin." Peres supported negotiations, Rabin as well.

Consent from the PLO to negotiate with Israel was critical. Beilin worked to change law to allow this. Met Terry Lawson Norwegian politician and sent Israeli academics Hirshfield and Pundik representing Beilin in Oslo talks with Abu Ala. The goal was to present Rabin with a *fait accompli* in order to show that there was enthusiasm and material support for talks already.

Peace was possible in 1995. Had Peres given a "green light" peace could have been reached. He did no due to "electoral concerns."

Why did Netanyahu uphold Oslo?

Netanyahu saw Oslo as a disaster. He read public opinion in 1996. Cancelling Oslo was not popular domestically. Netanyahu de-facto killed Oslo by cancelling redeployments.

Why camp David 2000?

Peace was very close. The negotiations failed because the PLO were passive and Barak was a "poor negotiator." He made the talks a zero-sum game and needed a clear decision. It was rejected in Beilin's opinion because it was not enough for Arafat.

The 2003 Geneva initiative showed that peace was possible. The practical considerations are the basis for future peace deals.

Why Operation Defensive Shield?

The Second Intifada killed the Israeli perception that Arafat and the PLO were honest negotiating partners. The launch of Operation Defensive Shield was the "first formal decision to break Oslo."

Why Disengagement?

Sharon proposed disengagement in order to forestall the implementation of the Geneva initiative. Sharon did not believe the PLO was a partner. He "did not trust the Arabs."

Short and long-term strategy towards PLO (and why?):

Rabin wanted a formal peace agreement and a complete end to the conflict. He came to power on this campaign pledge. Negotiations were kept secret even from Israeli intelligence. Had Rabin not been assassinated, there might have been peace by 1999 deadline. Beilin admits that this is unknowable.

Israel's policy from 1996 until the present has been to destroy Oslo with two exceptions: 2000 (camp David) and 2005-2009. Olmert used Geneva initiative materials. He thought he could make peace with Abbas.

Deals were reached in 1995 and 2003 (Geneva). This is proof deals with the PLO could be reached.

Netanyahu's policy from 2009-present is to manage the conflict with the PA. He wishes to increase Palestinian autonomy but not sovereignty and to defer partition. "Both sides of the conflict pay lip service to achieving peace." Both major Israeli parties (Center and right) state that conditions today are not conducive for a peace deal.

- **Dr. Eado Hecht 10/2/2018:**

Bio: Professor of Political Science at Bar-Ilan University, Taught at Haifa University and at the IDF Command and General Staff College. Serves on the Editorial Advisory Panel of The Journal of Military Operations. Expert in tunnels, underground warfare, Israel vs. Hamas.

IVs

Israeli perceptions of PLO ideology:

Most Israelis and leadership viewed the PLO as ideologically driven to pursue the full destruction of Israel.

Arafat was insincere, it used the threat of violence from Hamas as a negotiating tool. But, most did not see Arafat as deliberately sponsoring terrorism until the Second Intifada. After the Second Intifada there was a gradual reversion to the perception that the PA was a terrorist group driven by maximalist ideology. "Black March" in 2002, saw a drastic increase in terrorist attacks, culminating in the Passover Massacre. During Operation Defensive Shield Israel found a paper trail showing that Arafat ordered terrorism.

The failure of the Camp David negotiations changed Israel's view of Arafat as a peace partner. Arafat made new unacceptable demands that threatened Israel's vital interests. This and the Second Intifada led to Sharon's victory. Many on the left could not bring themselves to vote for Sharon but did not want Barak to win due to the public viewing the Second Intifada as a war requiring hardline policy. Hence, the February 2000 elections had very low turnout. The first Intifada was an uprising, the Second was war.

Abbas's rejection of Olmert's 2008 offers convinced Israeli leadership that the PA maintains an absolutist ideology.

Arab groups, including the PA and Hamas see Israel as a temporary foreign entity. "It took over 200 years to drive out the Crusaders. This is why resistance is critical." Both Hamas and Fatah share this ideology. Abbas pursues this agenda indirectly. He is "the ultimate in mission command."

Israeli perceptions of PLO governance function:

Partially unable but also partially unwilling to control Hamas and exercise a monopoly on violence. Israeli leadership viewed and continues to view the PA as too corrupt to be trusted to enforce a peace treaty when inconvenient.

Israeli perceptions of PLO leadership targetability:

Possible, but not desired post Oslo. Arafat was isolated during Defensive Shield. Not desired since Disengagement.

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perception of Israel's internal and external constraints:

Israel always faced disproportionate external constraints. This is due to great power interests and blatant ethical double standards. From 2000-2006 Israel perceived high external constraints but somewhat lowered immediately post September 11, 2001. "If the USA is behind Israel, Europe doesn't matter."

At a conference, Generals Ya'alon and Amidror cited the dire necessity to minimize civilian casualties. The Russian general said that in Chechnya Russia killed 30,000 and now the situation is quiet. This juxtaposition shows the constraints faced by a small democracy.

Israel faces high internal constraints.

Fear of tactical unpreparedness, high casualties originally kept Israel from undertaking a large-scale operation in the West Bank at the outset of the Second Intifada. This gradually changed as the argument that tactics would be successful influenced decision makers from the bottom up. (Colonels influenced Generals who in turn influenced policy makers.)

Israel does not know what to make of the Trump administration but viewed previous administrations as always desiring Israeli concessions. The view of the current administration is "backing like never before but not a fully free hand."

Balance of power with the PLO:

Israel perceived an existential threat by the PLO during Second Intifada. The threat level was successfully reduced by Operation Defensive Shield.

Israeli strategy pre-Oslo (and why?):

Why Oslo?

Why did Netanyahu uphold Oslo?

Why camp David 2000?

Why Operation Defensive Shield?

The goals were to capture safe havens, clear, search and destroy PA terror infrastructure, capture and kill terrorists and disrupt their ability to carry out terrorist operations, and to reconquer Judea and Samaria but not to stay. The goal was not to defeat the PA.

"Defensive Shield would not have been undertaken if not for 9/11." Dr. Hecht told an anecdote of a commander in the field being told by Condoleezza Rice to withdraw from an incursion pre-September 11. 2001.

Israeli leaders viewed the Second Intifada as a potential existential threat.

Why Disengagement?

Best to cut losses, International pressure would force Israel to withdraw eventually anyways.

Withdrawal will lead to better international support.

Mistaken perception that Gaza could be successfully isolated and could be managed through airpower alone.

Short and long-term strategy towards PLO (and why?):

In the long-term, the left wants a peace treaty through negotiations. The right would prefer to end the conflict through annexation and political/military defeat.

In the short-term there is political consensus to manage the conflict.

Originally there was no change to Israeli strategy since Oslo under Sharon. Instead the strategy was to continue negotiations in order to "save the peace process." This changed in 2002 for three reasons: 1. Decreased external constraints post September 11, 2001. 2. Increased confidence in tactics and 3. A drastic increase in PLO caused casualties lowered internal constraints.

The goal is denial. This is in line with Israel's security doctrine. Israel does not have the ability to decisively defeat its opponents due to high internal and external constraints. Although this would make peace more likely.

- **Dr. Kobi Michael 10/3/2018 and 6/12/2019**

Bio: Senior researcher at the INSS: Peace and war studies; strategy; national security; civil-military relations; socio-military relations; peace maintenance; and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Dr. Michael served as the deputy director general and head of the Palestinian desk at the Ministry for Strategic Affairs. Kobi served with General Ya'alon when he was minister of strategic affairs in 2009. He helped form Israel's Gaza policy.

IVs

Israeli perceptions of PLO ideology:

A few leaders in power, (Peres, Beilin, and maybe Rabin), believed that the PLO had truly moderated.

Most Israeli leaders and the public believed the PLO to have a maximalist ideology. The 1997 tunnel riots where the first instance of clashes between PA security forces armed under Oslo II and the IDF. This increased Israel's perceptions that the PA was still ideologically driven towards the absolute goal of destroying Israel, and was not a partner.

In 2006, Olmert saw Abbas as a rational, security maximizing actor.

Pre-2009 elections, Israel increasingly viewed the PA as a pragmatic potential peace partner. This changed after 2009 when PLO officials including Erekat refused to negotiate with Netanyahu.

Israeli perceptions of PLO governance function:

Israel wants to increase its governing capacity, but this reduces Hamas's governance capacity. Israel stopped working to boost the PA's governance function by working to return it to control in Gaza following 2009.

Israeli perceptions of PLO leadership targetability:

Possible, but not desired post Oslo. Arafat was isolated during Defensive Shield. Not desired since Disengagement.

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perception of Israel's internal and external constraints:

High internal and external constraints. Israel is in highest point of international legitimacy. EU is not monolithic, Good relations with some EU countries (Hungary, Poland, Czech, Germany, UK…) Regional legitimacy of Israel is highest ever.

Balance of power with the PLO:

The PLO is not an existential threat.

Israeli strategy pre-Oslo (and why?):

Why Oslo?

Why did Netanyahu uphold Oslo?

Internal and external constraints kept Netanyahu from scrapping Oslo despite his desire to do so.

Why camp David 2000?

Why Operation Defensive Shield?

Why Disengagement?

Offer was made due to sincere belief that the PA was a partner. Olmert felt a mandate to continue the Disengagement. He also had a political motive to counter Netanyahu. This was the peak of the peace process.

Short and long-term strategy towards PLO (and why?):

Peace is the highest long-term goal. Short-term strategy seems to be to maintain the status quo.

- **General Moshe Yaalon 10/3/2018:**

Bio: Senior researcher at INSS. Israel's defense minister (2013-2016); minister for strategic affairs and vice prime minister (2009); chief of general staff (2002-2005), during the Second Intifada; commander of Israel's Ground Force Training Facility (Tze'elim) (1993); Commander of IDF Paratroop Brigade (1990-92). He was the Judea and Samaria division commander until immediately before the Oslo Accords of 1993.

IVs

Israeli perceptions of PLO ideology:

High ideological drive. The main problem is the reluctance to recognize Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state. However, Israel has good cooperation with Abbas due to shared interests. This is similar to Israel's relationships with Jordan and Egypt in the 1970s, however, peace never came to fruition with the PLO due to its maximalist ideology.

Arafat brazenly smuggled illegal personnel into Israel as soon as he was allowed back into the territories following Oslo I in 1993. This warning sign was ignored by Peres and did not lead Rabin to rethink Oslo.

Israeli perceptions of PLO governance function:

Capable of cooperation, dependent on Israeli protection.

Israeli perceptions of PLO leadership targetability:

Israel had the ability to effectively target PLO leadership throughout the history of the conflict.

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perception of Israel's internal and external constraints:

Israel has high external constraints even with a supportive US administration. Israel perceived higher external constraints under Obama administration.

Israel has very high internal constraints

Balance of power with the PLO:

Israeli strategy pre-Oslo (and why?):

Why Oslo?

Oslo came about due to the cognitive mistakes of Peres and his cohort. Ya'alon claims that they had a Western mindset. "Western politicians look for solutions. They should look to manage."

Peres ignored evidence that Arafat did not abandon maximalist ideology. He claimed the need to "create an atmosphere of peace." Rabin understood that Peres was mistaken. He insisted that Arafat change the PLO charter to eliminate this absolutist rhetoric. It was never changed.

Why did Netanyahu uphold Oslo?

Why camp David 2000?

Why Operation Defensive Shield?

The goal was to convince the PA that terrorism will fail to secure its objectives and to demonstrate Israel's resilience. This operation rebuilt Israel's "Iron Wall." It also demonstrated to Hezbollah that Israel was not a flimsy "spider web" as Nasrallah had claimed.

It coincided with the United States' war on global terrorism. In the early 2000s both the US and Israel were on the offensive against terrorism.

Why Disengagement?

Ya'alon described the evolution of Israel's policy from Defensive Shield until the Disengagement as offense → fence → defense. Ya'alon rejected this plan. He claimed it destroyed what remained of Israel's Iron Wall strategy and was a tailwind to terror. He claims it came about because politicians were unwilling to admit that there was no solution to the conflict.

After Disengagement Hamas kidnapped Gilad Shalit and Hezbollah launched its raid that precipitated the 2006 Lebanon war.

Sharon's reasoning for the Disengagement was to deflect attention from a corruption investigation. Ya'alon claims Sharon did not discuss the Disengagement Plan with the defense establishment leadership.

Short and long-term strategy towards PLO (and why?):

Pre-Oslo Israel's strategy was Jabotinsky's "Iron Wall." The goal was to convince the PLO and Hamas post 1987 that terror would fail to dislodge Israel. The Iron Wall was weakened with Oslo.

Israel defeated the First Intifada. It favored dealing with local leadership pre-Oslo.

Israel is concentrating on a bottom-up process towards the PA (bypass the PA and talk to local leadership in towns.) This is reminiscent of the Village League strategy of the 70s and 80s.

The current goal is to postpone hostilities, maintain quiet. No political or military solution.

Israeli policy is to deter and deny. For example, house demolitions punish terrorists and successfully reduced stabbing terrorism. This was a very successful policy.

- **Maj. Gen. (res.) Uzi Dayan**: **10/4/2018:**

Bio: Former head of the IDF Central Command, IDF Deputy Chief of Staff, National Security Adviser to the Prime Minister of Israel and Head of National Security Council (NSC). Served fifteen years in Sayaret Matkal, eventually serving as its commander. President, Zionist Council in Israel. He was the head of the Security Committee during the implementation of the Oslo Peace Process from 1996-1999.

<u>IVs</u>

Israeli perceptions of PLO ideology:

High ideological drive. No Palestinian leader will ever sign an agreement to end the conflict because this would mean abandoning maximalist agenda of fully replacing Israel. Uzi spent a lot of time with Arafat. His impression was that Arafat worried about being seen as selling out he Muslim world. Arafat said he could not sign away the demand for the right of return because he had "no mandate to sell out their [the Palestinians] dreams."

Abbas said he "will not return to Safed" but he will also never sign away Palestinian claims to it. Abbas will never sign an end-of-claims deal with Israel.

The current Israeli view, citing Arafat's refusal to accept Barak's Camp David offer in 2000 and Olmert's offer in 2007 is that "we tried everything" and "there is no partner to work with."

Israeli perceptions of PLO governance function:

The PA is weak. Hamas would win if there were elections in the West Bank. Hamas would take over militarily if the IDF stopped operating in the West Bank.

Israeli perceptions of PLO leadership targetability:

Possible, but not desired post Oslo. Arafat was isolated during Defensive Shield. Not desired since Disengagement.

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perception of Israel's internal and external constraints:

Israeli policy is driven by high internal constraints. External constraints are also high but not as impactful on Israeli policy. Israel's population is highly casualty averse. Hamas thinks they can always leverage Israel's high constraints in order to show commitment to ideology while preserving a way to end the conflict by promising to cease the current round of violence. Israel has the capability but not the will to achieve decisive victory.

The region is starting to pay less attention to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Time is on Israel's side.

Balance of power with the PLO:

Israeli strategy pre-Oslo (and why?):

Why Oslo?

Peres had motivational bias. He thought peace was imminent. He did not test PLO commitment.

The deportation of the PLO from Lebanon to Tunisia is what led the PLO to the negotiating table at Oslo.

Why did Netanyahu uphold Oslo?

Why camp David 2000?

Uzi Dayan was Barak's deputy Chief of Staff at the time. He was one of the only advisers to council Barak not to go to this summit. He claimed Barak would not be able to achieve peace because Arafat will not sign. Barak said he must demonstrate to the world that he "went the distance" for peace. Uzi advised that "the world will not cheer when his experiment goes up in flames."

Why Operation Defensive Shield?

Why Disengagement?

Uzi advised for Disengagement in 2002. Sharon did not want to hear of it.

Short and long-term strategy towards PLO (and why?):

Rabin thought that if territorial concessions would bring peace it would be worth it. Israel's optimal goal was to secure peace.

Israel views unilateral concessions as useless following Arafat and Abbas's rejectionism.

Netanyahu does not support territorial compromise. 80% of Israelis support the idea of territorial compromise but most also believe it will fail with the PLO and Hamas.

Israelis believe they can live with managing the status quo in the short-term. Even the Israeli left does not view peace as possible today.

Israel's long-term goal requires a solution to the conflict in order to see Israel continue as a Jewish democracy.

- **Barry Shaw 10/7/2018:**

Bio: Barry Shaw is the Senior Associate for Public Diplomacy at the Israel Institute for Strategic Studies and the author of numerous books and articles on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

<u>IVs</u>

Israeli perceptions of PLO ideology:

Arafat was always very clear about his pursuit of an absolutist ideology in his Arabic statements.

Regarding the Letters of Mutual Recognition between him and Rabin, Arafat said at a speech in a mosque in South Africa that "this paper is nothing but a 'Treaty of Hubadiyyah,'" insinuating that it was a short-term ceasefire out of strategic necessity.

Israel does not believe that a two-state solution would yield a peaceful, democratic entity. Abbas is also anti-Semitic. This is seen by statements such as not "allowing Jewish filth" into the al Aqsa.

When Arafat returned to the territories from Tunisia, the IDF found illegal weapons in his limousine and his entourage also smuggled wanted terrorists into Israel. This demonstrated bad faith to Rabin but he did not make a fuss about it due to international pressure. Even so, the international community did not think Israel went far enough.

The PA would have benefited from accepting Oslo and making peace. They did not due to their ideological drive.

Israeli perceptions of PLO governance function:

The PA is weaker than previously perceived. Today, "by the ballot or by the bullet, Hamas will usurp power." Hamas won the last two student elections at Beir Zeit University. "This is Abbas's back yard."

The PA has low accountability as well. Therefore there have been no elections since 2006. Those elections were pushed against Olmert's wishes by President George W. Bush.

Israeli perceptions of PLO leadership targetability:

Possible, but not desired post Oslo. Arafat was isolated during Defensive Shield. Not desired since Disengagement.

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perception of Israel's internal and external constraints:

There is and has been significant international push for Israeli concessions to create a two-state solution. There is no international pressure for Abbas to take risks for peace. President Trump is the first world leader to truly pressure Abbas.

Israel faces incomparably high external constraints. This is only increasing as the American democratic party and European politics becomes more anti-Israel. For example, there is a high chance that the staunchly anti-Israel Corbyn will come to power in Great Britain. Israel is extremely dependent on American support in the UN, thus its policy must coincide with US objectives. Israel also faces high internal constraints.

Balance of power with the PLO:

Israel fears that conceding critical territory will lead to existential threats to Israel's existence. The West Bank overlooks critical infrastructure, power stations, Ben Gurion Airport, economic centers and Israel's military headquarters in Tel Aviv.

Israeli strategy pre-Oslo (and why?):

Why Oslo?

Peres was a utopian. "His mantra was John Lennon's 'Imagine.'" Peres was very persuasive, and pressure from the White House led to Oslo as well. Oslo was based on a misperception.

Why did Netanyahu uphold Oslo?

Why camp David 2000?

Why Operation Defensive Shield?

Rabin would have sent tanks into Ramallah way before Sharon finally did had he not been assassinated.

Why Disengagement?

Short and long-term strategy towards PLO (and why?):

The Israeli public is more suspicious today than during the Oslo Peace process period from 1993-2000. They will not support a leader willing to "get duped" in new negotiations with Abbas.

Netanyahu's strategy is to wait out Abbas in the hope that someone more moderate will come to power.

- **Eldad Shavit 10/8/2018:**

Bio: Col. Eldad Shavit: Senior researcher at the Institute for National Security Studies and former assistant for assessment to the head of the research division in the IDF intelligence Corps. Former Intelligence Chief for the Prime Minister's Office.

IVs

Israeli perceptions of PLO ideology:

High ideological drive to destroy Israel but amenable to pragmatic cooperation.

Israeli perceptions of PLO governance function:

Since Oslo, increased governance function. This explains increased cooperation and decreased violence (especially since Operation Defensive Shield.)

Israeli perceptions of PLO leadership targetability:

Possible, but not desired post Oslo. Arafat was isolated during Defensive Shield. Not desired since Disengagement.

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perception of Israel's internal and external constraints:

Israel has very high external constraints. US support is of utmost importance to Israel. EU support is important too. Finally, good relations with Russia is deemed important. The United Stated provided crucial military support for the past 30 years and important military, economic and political support for longer than that.

Perceptions of high external constraints influenced Israel's operations towards Hamas, Hezbollah and the PLO. However, Israel also uses international scrutiny to obtain political goals of ensuring quiet through military means. President Trump is perceived to support Israel but Israeli leaders are still cautious. Furthermore, Trump's perceived support by other actors reduces US credibility for negotiating future agreements.

Balance of power with the PLO:

Israeli strategy pre-Oslo (and why?):

Why Oslo?

Domestic politics.

Why did Netanyahu uphold Oslo?

Domestic politics.

Why camp David 2000?

Domestic politics.

Why Operation Defensive Shield?

Public demand to take a strong stance against terrorism

Why Disengagement?

The goal was to separate and use concession as leverage. The unintended consequence was to increase Hamas power.

Short and long-term strategy towards PLO (and why?):

Israel's goal is increasingly long periods of quiet. No thought of long-term peace deal.

- **Daniel Seaman 10/8/2018:**

Bio: Adviser and spokesperson to the governments of six prime ministers: Yitzhak Shamir, Shimon Peres, Yitzhak Rabin, Benjamin Netanyahu, and Ehud Barak. Acting director of the Government Press Office 2000-2010. English language editor of Mida.

IVs

Israeli perceptions of PLO ideology:

Highly ideologically driven, not deterrable through leveraging classic cost benefit calculations. This was ignored during the early Oslo process despite numerous demonstrations that Arafat was still driven by absolutist ideology. Peres and Rabin to a lesser extent, used the argument that Hamas is a spoiler to ignore and excuse Arafat's clear support for terror.

Israeli perceptions of PLO governance function:

It was a huge mistake to give the PA territorial control. In 2014 ISIS demonstrated the realities of extremist territorial control.

Israeli perceptions of PLO leadership targetability:

Possible, but not desired post Oslo. Arafat was isolated during Defensive Shield. Not desired since Disengagement.

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perception of Israel's internal and external constraints:

Israel faces extremely high external constraints. This led to strategic damage during the 2006 Lebanon War. Learning from this, during Operation Cast Lead Israel blocked foreign journalists.

This caused a major international uproar. The international media and international organizations apply different, higher standards to Israel.

Israel also faces extremely high internal constraints. This is due to and exacerbated by a very open media. Internal constraints on hardline policy were somewhat lowered by the year 2000 due to the ascension to political power of Russian immigrants with hawkish attitudes who arrived in Israel following the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Israel has raised the moral bar for counterterrorism too high to operate effectively.

Balance of power with the PLO:

Israeli strategy pre-Oslo (and why?):

Why Oslo?

The Israeli media strongly supported the Oslo process. The Israeli and international media fed off of each other to push for the Oslo process. The international community never held Arafat responsible. Neither did Israel under Peres. He called the victims of PLO terrorism during the Oslo process in the 1990s "sacrifices to peace."

Oslo came about in 1993 due to Israeli misperceptions. The reasoning was that the PLO was defeated after the crushing of the First Intifada, Israel's peace treaty with Egypt, the expulsion of the wealthy Palestinian community in Kuwait following the Gulf War, and the fall of the USSR. The Israelis saw the PLO as defeated but the PLO did not see themselves that way.

In the late 1980s Peres and Beilin handpicked co-ideologues to "swamp the foreign ministry" with those who supported negotiations with the PLO. Peres was naïve, he saw Arafat as he wanted to see him. Seaman, like Barry Shaw, also drew the John Lennon metaphor to explain Peres's world view. Arafat was caught smuggling terrorists into the territories as soon as he returned from Tunisia as part of the 1993 Oslo I process. These violations were ignored. Personal pride led to the inability to admit that Arafat cheated them. "Being seen as a sucker is the biggest insult in the Middle East."

Why did Netanyahu uphold Oslo?

From 1996-1999 Netanyahu faced high internal and external pressure to continue the Oslo process. This led to foreseeable domestic political repercussions. The public punished Netanyahu by not voting for him in 1999 due to his concessions to the PA during the 1998 Wye Memorandum.

Why camp David 2000?

Why Operation Defensive Shield?

By the year 2000, the Israeli public had become anti-concessions and turned against the peace process.

Why Disengagement?

Sharon enacted the Disengagement due to high external pressure from the international community, domestic and personal political reasons, and he was highly impacted by the media.

Short and long-term strategy towards PLO (and why?):

The public and current government is against a peace process. They do not view the PA as a potential partner. The short-term strategy is to maintain the status quo. Only hardline political victory would be able to convince the PA to make peace, but this is not being pursued currently. There is a growing push to implement this type of policy.

- **B.G. (Ret) Gideon Avidor 10/9/2018:**

Bio: Gideon Avidor: Founder of the Institute for Advanced Military Thinking (2012). Retired from the Israeli Defense Forces in 1999 after 42 years of service (30 years in active service and 12 years in active reserve.) He took part in and commanded armored units at various levels in the 1967, 1973 and 1982 wars. Between 1983 and 1986, he served as the Israeli Ministry of Defense and the IDF Defense Adviser to Singapore, Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines. He graduated from the US Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC) in 1978 and from the Israeli National Defence College in 1982. He received his B.A. in History from Tel-Aviv University and got his MA from Haifa University in Geography. From 2007 to 2011 he established and managed the Institute for land Warfare Studies in Latrun.

IVs

Israeli perceptions of PLO ideology:

Arafat was highly ideologically driven to pursue terrorism. Abbas is seen as unwilling to sign a peace deal but also as being against terrorism as a strategy, and willing to cooperate with Israel.

Israeli perceptions of PLO governance function:

The PLO under Arafat had the political power to conclude peace but never wanted to.

Israeli perceptions of PLO leadership targetability:

Possible, but not desired post Oslo. Arafat was isolated during Defensive Shield. Not desired since Disengagement.

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perception of Israel's internal and external constraints:

Contrasting Israel's more recent wars with the large interstate wars of its past, today Israel faces higher internal and external constraints due to the increased role of international nongovernmental organizations, public opinion and the international community. This is further increased by the rise of social media proliferation and globalization in general.

Netanyahu perceived high internal and external constraints stemming from the lack of movement in the peace process with the Palestinians.

During Protective Edge, the need to minimize international opprobrium led to increasingly centralized military control and a deviation from the IDF's long standing culture of mission command.

Israel never considered "the Russian solution," meaning pursuing decisive military victory over any of its non-state opponents. This was, and continues to be, due to perceptions of high internal and external constraints.

Israel perceives an international double standard in terms of scrutiny. Avidor considers this partly due to religion. The world is more interested in Israel because it is a Jewish state which makes it unique.

Balance of power with the PLO:

Israeli strategy pre-Oslo (and why?):

Israel pursued the containment and defeat of the PLO. It did not negotiate with Arafat.

Why Oslo?

Israeli leadership considers full peace with the Palestinians as the optimal long-term goal. The PLO was seen to be "in bad shape" and "desperate" in 1992. This led Israeli leadership to think a peace deal was now reachable with the PLO.

The Oslo process started with Peres who eventually convinced Rabin that it was possible to force the PLO to sign a peace deal.

Why did Netanyahu uphold Oslo?

Why camp David 2000?

Why Operation Defensive Shield?

Sharon viewed the West Bank as strategically and politically important and was willing to fight to maintain control and order there militarily.

Why Disengagement?

Sharon viewed controlling Gaza as undesirable.

Short and long-term strategy towards PLO (and why?):

In the long-term, concluding a peace deal is seen as optimal, but currently, if left to Israel and the PA, the status quo will remain.

- **Dr. Hillel Frisch 10/9/2018:**

Bio: (Ph.D. Hebrew University) Expert on Palestinian and Islamic politics, institutions and military strategies; Israeli Arabs; Islamic fundamentalism in the Middle East; Palestinian-Jordanian relations; and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Jordan. Senior fellow at the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies.

IVs

Israeli perceptions of PLO ideology:

Pre-Oslo, Israel viewed the PLO as highly ideologically driven. On the eve of the Oslo Accords, Arafat's deputy Faisel al-Husseini wrote an article in al-Katib claiming that Arafat will never change. Sari Nusseibeh penned an article claiming Arafat's goal was his Phased Plan, and that Arafat was a pure terrorist.

Immediately after Arafat returned from Tunisia as part of the Oslo I process, he tried to smuggle wanted terrorists into the territories.

Highly ideologically driven, but convinced to give up violence following Israeli military victory during Operation Defensive Shield.

The Second Intifada increased Israel's perception of the PA as a true terrorist organization, ideologically driven to destroy Israel.

Israeli perceptions of PLO governance function:

Israel's goal during Oslo was to boost the PLO's governance function by creating the PA, in order to create a partner with the authority to sign and implement a peace treaty.

Israeli perceptions of PLO leadership targetability:

Possible, but not desired post Oslo. Arafat was isolated during Defensive Shield. Not desired since Disengagement.

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perception of Israel's internal and external constraints:

Israel perceives high external constraints due to the prioritization of the Iranian threat and Iranian entrenchment in Syria. This means that any sort of operation in Gaza risks diverting Israeli readiness for this threat.

Israel's constraints give hope to its non-state opponents that they can survive and continue to fight against Israel in accordance with their ideologic imperatives. This is similar to the Irgun's reasoning. They held out hope to defeat the British knowing that the British were constrained both externally and internally regarding the amount of force they could use against the Jewish militants in the 1940s.

Balance of power with the PLO:

A PA state is seen as posing an existential threat to Israel. The Second Intifada was Israel's only conflict during which Israel's economy contracted.

Israeli strategy pre-Oslo (and why?):

Why Oslo?

The Israeli elite wanted peace and increased international legitimacy. Rabin witnessed the panic of the Israeli public during Saddam Hussein's Scud attacks in 1991 and thought the Israeli people had lost the will to fight. Israeli leadership saw the PLO as defeated and weak and this "allowed them to be engineered." The collapse of the USSR heavily influenced this perception. Prior to this, the Eastern European bloc had heavily supported the PLO.

Finally, Israeli leadership truly believed Arafat had moderated the PLO's ideology. Frisch claimed, "I also believed him and I cannot believe it now that I did."

Why did Netanyahu uphold Oslo?

Netanyahu did not believe that Arafat had moderated, however, he maintained Oslo due to perceiving high external demand to maintain the peace process.

Why camp David 2000?

Why Operation Defensive Shield?

The Second Intifada convinced Israel to be more skeptical of the PA.

Why Disengagement?

Short and long-term strategy towards PLO (and why?):

The PA can be "tamed." It was tamed following Operation Defensive Shield.

- **Dr. Ehud Eiran 10/11/2018:**

Bio: Board Member at Mitvim and an Assistant Professor of International Relations, in the School of Political Science at the University of Haifa. Founding Co-Director of the Haifa Research Center for Maritime Strategy. Dr. Eiran holds degrees in Law and Political Science from Tel-Aviv University, Cambridge University, and Brandeis University. He held research appointments at Harvard Law School, Harvard's Kennedy School, and Brandeis University and was a lecturer in the Department of Political Science at MIT. Prior to his academic career Dr. Eiran held a number of positions in the Israeli civil service including clerking for two Attorney Generals, and as Assistant to the Prime Minister's Foreign Policy Advisor.

IVs

Israeli perceptions of PLO ideology:

Arafat's 1988 UN speech and PNC made Arafat appear more moderate. Some in the government saw Arafat's 1874 Phased Plan as a sign of moderation. Dr. Eiran claims they saw it as similar to early Zionism where hardline Zionists claimed the desire for full control over the territory promised in the Balfour Declaration but eventually moderated and accepted a pragmatic compromise in 1948.

Eiran was an officer in IDF intelligence at the time of the Oslo Accords. He claims anecdotally that Arafat was viewed by many in the intelligence community as a liar, and this did not change with Oslo.

Israeli perceptions of PLO governance function:

The PLO had high governing capacity and cynically used Hamas as a spoiler. Israeli leadership saw through this. They viewed Arafat as capable but unwilling to curtail violence during the Oslo Process.

Today the PA is seen as too weak to enforce a deal. Defense Minister Liberman called Abbas a "chicken without feathers."

Israeli perceptions of PLO leadership targetability:

Possible, but not desired post Oslo. Arafat was isolated during Defensive Shield. Not desired since Disengagement.

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perception of Israel's internal and external constraints:

High internal and external constraints.

Balance of power with the PLO:

Israeli strategy pre-Oslo (and why?):

Israel's strategy was to militarily contain the PLO and to pursue decisive military victory during its invasion of Lebanon in 1982.

Why Oslo?

The goal of Oslo was to secure a final status agreement. Israeli leadership hoped that since Arafat was cornered, he would be willing to sign a peace deal. This was a rational misperception. Israel believed that Arafat could be deterred or that if deterrence failed, that it could militarily roll back concessions.

Why did Netanyahu uphold Oslo?

Netanyahu was constrained by internal norms to uphold a treaty signed by the previous government and external considerations. Six weeks prior to his election he stated that "Oslo will be accepted." The Hebron and Wye agreements demonstrated his commitment to Oslo.

Why camp David 2000?

Why Operation Defensive Shield?

Israel came to view the PA as responsible for the sharp increase in violence. On the morning of the start of the Second Intifada, the PA forces shot and killed IDF soldiers on a joint patrol. This confirmed to the security establishment that Arafat was an ideological enemy. This confirmed previous suspicion that this was the case following the Western Wall tunnel riots which were the first time PA units armed and trained as part of the Oslo II Accords fired on IDF soldiers.

Why Disengagement?

Sharon ran on a platform against withdrawal. He claimed “Netzarim is like Tel Aviv.” Sharon lost key political allies due to the Disengagement.

Despite this, he enacted the Disengagement due to high US pressure, Sharon’s son arguing for it, and increasingly worrying internal dissent. This followed the refusal of a number of elite IAF pilots to serve in the territories.

The goals of the Disengagement were to weaken and isolate Arafat in the short-term. It is unclear if Sharon had a long-term strategic vision. Sharon did prepare a plan to withdraw from 18 settlements in the West Bank. He suffered a stroke before this was to be implemented.

Short and long-term strategy towards PLO (and why?):

Israel’s short-term strategy is management and keeping the PA and Hamas as separate entities. In both the West Bank and Gaza Israel sees improving economic prospects as useful for forestalling violence. Israel does not have a unified long-term plan.

- **Dr. Boaz Ganor 10/11/2018:**

Bio: Dean and the Ronald Lauder Chair for Counter-Terrorism at the Lauder School of Government, Diplomacy & Strategy, as well as the Founder and Executive Director of the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism at the Interdisciplinary Center, Herzliya, Israel. Prof. Ganor serves as the Founding President of the International Academic Counter-Terrorism Community. His Ph.D. thesis for the Hebrew University was on Israel's counter-terrorism strategy. *The Counterterrorism Puzzle: Manual for Counterterrorism at all Levels.*

IVs

Israeli perceptions of PLO ideology:

Israel originally perceived the PLO as rational but ideologically devoted to Israel’s destruction through military force. During the Oslo process there was euphoria. Post-Oslo the Rabin government came to view Arafat as a pragmatic potential partner. The Western Wall tunnel incident shook this perception. Israel eventually found the PA to be working with Hamas and PIJ to conduct terrorism during the Second Intifada. This ended the peace process.

Israeli perceptions of PLO governance function:

Israel viewed increasing their governance function as facilitating peace. Currently, Israel views the PA as unable to secure peace due to weak governing capacity stemming from high corruption and low public support.

Israeli perceptions of PLO leadership targetability:

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perception of Israel’s internal and external constraints:

Israel perceives high internal and external constraints. Dr. Ganor calls the impact of internal constraints the democratic dilemma in counterterrorism.

Balance of power with the PLO:

Israeli strategy pre-Oslo (and why?):

Israel perceived the PLO as an umbrella terrorist organization. Israel's only policy at this time was military denial and retaliation. Israel pursued targeted killings with the goal of both offensive denial and deterrence.

Why Oslo?

Israel's perceptions of the PLO changed in the early 90s. This was due to domestic politics; Rabin won his election on a campaign to bring about a final peace accord with Israel's opponents. This included Syria as well as the Palestinians. External pressure also led to Oslo stemming from increased US prestige following the Gulf War. Shamir opposed negotiating with the Palestinians but was forced by the United States.

Why did Netanyahu uphold Oslo?

High external constraints and the irreversibility of Oslo without violence, led Netanyahu to maintain the Oslo process despite being against it and viewing the PA as an untrustworthy entity.

Why camp David 2000?

Why Operation Defensive Shield?

Israel came to view the PA as responsible for the massive increase in violence during the Second intifada. This ended the peace process. The goal of the military operation was to put an end to terror attacks.

Why Disengagement?

Israel was positive that Arafat was not a peace partner. Israel had no strategic or ideological interest in Gaza. The withdrawal was strategically mistaken due to being unilateral.

Short and long-term strategy towards PLO (and why?):

There is no long-term strategy. The consensus among Israel's leadership is that the PA is not a peace partner. The short-term strategy is to maintain the status quo quiet. This is due to skepticism stemming from the trauma of the Second Intifada.

- **Dr. Yohanan Tzoreff**

Bio: Yohanan Tzoreff is a specialist on Palestinian affairs, a Research Fellow at the Israeli Institute for Security Studies, and former Advisor on Arab Affairs at the Israeli Civil Administration in the Gaza Strip.

<u>IVs</u>

Israeli perceptions of PLO ideology:

Up until 1988, high ideological drive towards absolutist goal. Oslo period perception of potential pragmatism.

High suffering made the PLO more pragmatic pre-1988.

Israel views PA as incapable of making peace, just like Hamas. This is due to their ideologies, both are different, both are intransigent. This is post 2009.

Pre-2009 Israel did try to make peace with PLO, not Hamas.

Israeli perceptions of PLO governance function:

An address, corrupt.

Israeli perceptions of PLO leadership targetability:

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perception of Israel's internal and external constraints:

The international community supported Israel in boycotting Hamas during talks with PLO (Oslo and Camp David).

Tzoreff personally believes that Israel is at the height of its external constraints but admits that its leaders and the public agree with his colleague Kobi Michael that Israel is actually at the height of its international legitimacy and thus faces lower external constraints, especially with President Trump in office.

Balance of power with the PLO:

Israeli strategy pre-Oslo (and why?):

Why Oslo?

Why did Netanyahu uphold Oslo?

Why camp David 2000?

Barak overtures to PLO were in good faith, major failure.

Why Operation Defensive Shield?

During second Intifada the goal was to defeat terrorism, mainly suicide bombings

Why Disengagement?

In 2003, disengagement idea was Sharon's strategy to corner the Palestinians and gain international legitimacy and save settlement project in the WB by sacrificing Gaza. Move was backed by US administration. Sharon never believed in the ability to make peace with the Palestinians (PLO). Sharon believed in unilateralism because of this. He intended to continue the disengagement in the WB.

Olmert entered in 2006, their platform came with the idea of realignment (same logic of disengagement, but this time from WB. Idea was to disengage from 90% of WB, keep settlement blocs.) This was the same as Sharon's platform.

The war in Lebanon 2006 prevented Olmert from continuing realignment because the settlers threatened to not be part of IDF. This served as an internal constraint on Israeli unilateral denial strategy.

Short and long-term strategy towards PLO (and why?):

PA can regain control over Gaza and Israel can make peace with Israel, but Israel is preventing it by its way of managing the conflict with Hamas. **Kobi Michael:** Israel is not preventing the PA from regaining control over Gaza, this is internal to their rift.

- **Dr. Yigal Henkin 6/11/2019**

Bio: Military historian, specializing in urban warfare and counterinsurgency at the Jerusalem Institute for Strategic Studies, and teaches military history at the IDF Command and Staff College, and is a reservist with the IDF history department.

IVs

Israeli perceptions of PLO ideology:

Two views: Almost up to Oslo, just about everyone said they are highly ideologically driven. Even Shalom Achshav (Peace Now) called the police when someone waved the PLO flag at their rallies (around 1992). Impossible to imagine this today. Talked to Palestinians who are not PLO, and if it was, government, they did not did not admit it. i.e. Madrid negotiations spoke to those who spoke on behalf of PLO.

Pre-Oslo not as peace partners. Oslo years, potentially pragmatic, could be bargained with. This prevailed up until 2000, even among IDF leadership. Starting in 2000, seen as ideologically driven towards Israel's destruction. In 2002 DM Shaul Mofaz told Sharon, must eliminate Arafat. No longer seen as a partner post 2002.

Until 1993 PLO seen as enemy by all in government.

From 1993-1999 the view that PLO violence was like "politics by other means" basically pragmatic actor that could be bargained with.

By 2000, three sets of views. Public began to see Arafat/PLO is a historic enemy. (See Stiemitz Center peace index yearly polls). Public change of heart started in 2000. Before that it was a partisan issue, after, it was not. Right and left up until 2000 were divided by peace agreement with PLO. (Arafat killed the left by convincing the public that the debate was no longer relevant, PLO could not be bargained with, Labor could not reinvent itself). Government started seeing the PLO is impossible to make peace with. IDF echelons started pushing for more aggressive policies.

Israeli perceptions of PLO governance function:

High post-Oslo

Israeli perceptions of PLO leadership targetability:

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perception of Israel's internal and external constraints:

High.

Most famous saying of Rabin: "the Palestinian security forces will fight Hamas without the constraints of Btselem, Israel's Supreme Court and "Mothers against Silence" (basically internal constraints). This turned out to be wrong.

Dominant perception was that external constraints matter a lot. If the security situation is dire, it can override this, e.g. Second Intifada loosened salience of external constraints on policy. Leadership matters most, e.g. Barak worried about external "political tsunami." If a policy is seen as critical (existential) constraints are less constraining.

Israel has perception that you can use enemy to fight worse enemy. (Hamas as responsible adult against PIJ). Arafat leveraged this.

Balance of power with the PLO:

Israeli strategy pre-Oslo (and why?):

Target leadership, no negotiations,

Why Oslo?

Up until 1987 Israel believed it could do what it wanted and would not face violent opposition. Intifada proved this wrong.

Rabin was not impressed with IDF ability to control the situation (hearsay).

Collapse of USSR, Iraq War (expulsion of Palestinian Kuwaitis, loss of funding) led Israel to believe Arafat was up against the wall, could not continue to pursue absolutist ideology. Prevailing view is that this perception was wrong.

Peres' book *New Middle East* said agreements to create ability for peace instead of reflecting existing ability to make peace. Henkin says some call this the "best science fiction of all time."

Why did Netanyahu uphold Oslo?

During the Oslo process 1993-1996 the Israeli government spoke to PLO, thought could bargain. Even under Netanyahu 1996-1999 there was high cooperation with PLO. The government and IDF believed that the goal was a peace agreement, PLO possible partners. This changed from 2000 onwards.

Why camp David 2000?

Why Operation Defensive Shield?

When Second Intifada started, IDF was prohibited by the Israeli government from invading Area A. This policy changed formally in 2002, Operation Defensive Shield.

In Defensive shield Israel's strategy was decisive victory. This was because Israel had the operational capability to. Israel does not want to defeat Hamas because it would either leave Israel in control of Gaza's population, or if PLO takes over which is unlikely to be stable, it would give them a stronger hand and Israel does not believe it can bargain with.

Strategy changed slowly from 2001-2002 away from negotiating and towards hardline force. Move back to Israel taking charge of security alone, not trusting PLO with some of it.

Why Disengagement?

Disengagement was not a concession, it was to improve Israel's ability to deny. Hard to know what changed Sharon's mind. Arnon Soffer Haifi U. geography professor says he convinced Sharon to withdraw due to demographics. Dov Wieisglass, Sharon's chief of staff said it was to show there was no Arab partner, so no need to withdraw from J+S. A year later he said it was to prepare to withdraw from J+S. Others say it was due divert attention from criminal investigations into him and his family. Hard to know which was true. Disengagement was part of not trusting PLO.

Short and long-term strategy towards PLO (and why?):

Israel has a status quo management approach towards the PLO today.

- **Dr. Dan Schueftan 6/12/2019**

Bio: Dr. Dan Schueftan is Chairman of the National Security Studies Center at the University of Haifa and senior lecturer at Haifa University's School of Political Sciences. He has taught at the Israel Defense Forces National Security College and the IDF's Command and Staff College. Dr. Schueftan was an advisor to Israel's National Security Council, and to former Prime Ministers Yitzhak Rabin and Ariel Sharon. Schueftan advanced the concept of "unilateral disengagement" as articulated in his 1999 book, *Disengagement: Israel and the Palestinian Entity.*

<u>IVs</u>

Israeli perceptions of PLO ideology:

Pre-Oslo, PLO seen as intransigent, ideologically driven enemy.

During Oslo, Beilin and Peres viewed the PLO as pragmatically driven. Dr. Schueftan recalls advising Beilin that indeed the PLO is not, but this went against the prevailing perception at the time. Israel "misinterpreted PLO tactical moves as showing a strategic desire for peace."

"Beilin has a vested interest in defending the Oslo process."

“Supporters of Oslo were clueless of the PLO’s type. I said exactly how it would fail the day it started.”

Profound mistrust from 2000-2004. View that Israel probably made a mistake in trusting PLO moderation during Oslo process.

Israeli perceptions of PLO governance function:

Relatively high governing capacity post Oslo.

Israeli perceptions of PLO leadership targetability:

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perception of Israel’s internal and external constraints:

“Russia has a government and civilian population that does not care about killing civilians, the world does not care either.” Israel is highly constrained both internally and externally. Significant pressure to avoid harming civilians by the USA, Israel’s most critical partner.

Israeli leadership would have liked to pursue even stronger decisive victory during Operation Defensive Shield, worried over external condemnation, domestic repercussions.

Israel perceived the Obama administration to be highly critical, increased constraints, worked hard to undermine Israel’s bargaining position.

Trump boosts Israel’s bargaining position. His instinct is correct, that the Arab world does not care about the Palestinians.

Balance of threat:

Israel had more room to maneuver due to end of key existential threats by the time of Oslo. This includes: peace with Egypt, destruction of Iraqi military and fall of key benefactor to its enemies, the USSR. This precipitated a major decrease in the proportion of Israel’s GDP spent on defense and coincided with significant economic growth. Lebanon War 1982-2000 showed difficulties of fighting non-state opponents.

Balance of power with the PLO:

Israel is asymmetrically superior.

PLO and Hama are dangerous: Israel was the first state in modern history to fight on the home front a non-state actor that could directly threaten its civilian population in a meaningful way.

Overwhelming military superiority is not enough when the enemy is embedded within the civilian population, if the state follows western norms.

Israeli strategy pre-Oslo (and why?):

Why Oslo?

"Beilin was "courageous." Courageous means "stupid, not practical." Oslo was "courageous" because of a flawed assumption that concessions would shift the PLO to become even more moderate and negotiate peace. The population supported concessions during the Oslo process.

Israeli leadership thought that Arafat sincerely rejected violence after seeing Egypt reject it, seeing the USSR fall, and seeing the U.S. as strongly in Israel's corner. Basically, the view was that the PLO was at its most vulnerable and thus could be persuaded to make pragmatic moves, primarily accepting Israel's right to its pre-1967 borders. This was all a misperception.

Why did Netanyahu uphold Oslo?

Why camp David 2000?

Why Operation Defensive Shield?

Decisive victory over PLO and Hamas terrorists. Would have expelled or even killed Arafat absent high perception of constraints.

Why Disengagement?

Not a concession. Carried out due to lack of ability to impose decisive victory due to constraints.

Short and long-term strategy towards PLO (and why?):

Management is best, peace is impossible. The Palestinian public supports terrorism. Pessimistic about peace, optimistic about Israel's ability to thrive in its absence.

- **General Ram Yavne 6/16/2019**

Bio: General Ram Yavne served in the IDF for 32 years. He served as the Head of the Strategic Division in the Planning Directorate of the IDF General Staff (J5) from 2015-2018. Where he was responsible for the IDF's strategic planning and policy formulation, military diplomacy and international cooperation. He previously served as the head of the Regional Strategy Department, the senior intelligence officer in the IDF's Northern Command, and in other key intelligence positions.

IVs

Israeli perceptions of PLO ideology:

Highly ideologically driven

Israeli perceptions of PLO governance function:

Relatively high governance function post-Oslo

Israeli perceptions of PLO leadership targetability:

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perception of Israel's internal and external constraints:

Constrained not just by internal and external but also due to uncertainty in the region, weak states, power vacuums, uncertainty over where to target deterrence, carrots and sticks.

Balance of threat

More regional uncertainty but also weakening allure of hardline ideology and more room for pragmatism in the Middle East in general. No clear ideology resonates today in the Islamic world as did pan-Arabism, Communism, or Islamism at times.

Balance of power with the PLO:

Israel is asymmetrically stronger, has the economic and diplomatic upper hand.

Israeli strategy pre-Oslo (and why?):

Why Oslo?

Explicit application of interstate bargaining concepts to the PLO. "If we could make them into a state, they would make peace." "Oslo shattered this dream."

Why did Netanyahu uphold Oslo?

Why camp David 2000?

Why Operation Defensive Shield?

Crush PA and especially Hamas militarily in the West Bank and manage the terror groups through offensive and increasingly defensive denial in Gaza.

Why Disengagement?

Denial, management. No expectation of Hamas coup in 2007.

Short and long-term strategy towards PLO (and why?):

Management. PA not seeking or able to deliver a final status agreement. Israel cannot trust agreement with PA. Management until now has been relatively successful.

- **Dr. Meirav Mishali 6/16/2019**

Bio: Dr. Meirav Mishali-Ram is a lecturer in the department of political studies at Bar Ilan University. PhD degree in international relations from Bar Ilan University. Post-doctoral fellow in the Center for International Development & Conflict Management at the University of Maryland, and a visiting assisting professor at the University of California Berkeley. Research associate of the International Crisis Behavior (ICB) project and a research fellow in the Institute for Policy and Strategy at the Interdisciplinary Center (IDC) Herzliya. Main areas of expertise are international conflict, civil war, and South Asian studies. She has published on various aspects of conflict, focusing on ethnicity and religion, foreign fighting and transnational jihad, as well as on the role of non-state actors in worldwide conflicts.

IVs

Israeli perceptions of PLO ideology:

Since 1995 the public has been growing more pessimistic about the PLO's ability to negotiate. Perception of pragmatism high-point was from 1993-1995, Oslo years, pre-suicide attacks of 1995-96. Pre-Oslo Israel was unwilling to talk with the PLO, perceived it as ideologically driven to pursue Israel's destruction.

Israeli perceptions of PLO governance function:

High capacity but low legitimacy.

Israeli perceptions of PLO leadership targetability:

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perception of Israel's internal and external constraints:

Israel's leadership knows well that it is unable to cause high civilian harm due to high constraints. This limits its military options.

Rabin argued that the PA police force could bypass Israel's constraints. "the Palestinian security forces will fight Hamas without the constraints of Btselem, Israel's Supreme Court and "Mothers against Silence" (basically internal constraints). This turned out to be wrong.

Balance of power with the PLO:

Israel is asymmetrically stronger.

Israeli strategy pre-Oslo (and why?):

Why Oslo?

Rabin saw the Oslo process key to regional peace. Also saw failure to subdue violence in the First Intifada. Peres dragged Rabin in. His optimism influenced Rabin.

Why did Netanyahu uphold Oslo?

Why camp David 2000?

Why Operation Defensive Shield?

Why Disengagement?

Short and long-term strategy towards PLO (and why?):

Netanyahu is not willing to give territorial concessions, would rather manage the conflict, improve Israel's international standing and security without solving the conflict with the PA.

Netanyahu prefers the status quo.

- **Dr. Eran Lerman 6/17/2019**

Bio: Dr. Lerman was deputy director for foreign policy and international affairs at the National Security Council in the Israeli Prime Minister's Office. He held senior posts in IDF Military Intelligence for over 20 years. He also served for eight years as director of the Israel and Middle East office of the American Jewish Committee. He teaches in the Middle East studies program at Shalem College in Jerusalem, and in post-graduate programs at Tel Aviv University and the National Defense College. He is an expert on Israel's foreign relations, and on the Middle East. He holds a Ph.D. from the London School of Economics, and a mid-career MPA from Harvard University.

IVs

Israeli perceptions of PLO ideology:

Highly ideologically driven.

Israeli perceptions of PLO governance function:

High governing capacity post Oslo, high corruption, low public trust.

Israeli perceptions of PLO leadership targetability:

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perception of Israel's internal and external constraints:

In general, very high. A bit lower under Trump, but Israel sees a need to hedge. Israel will act despite high constraints when a vital interest is threatened. For example, Obama gave orders no to launch a ground incursion in 2014 but Israel decided to anyway.

Balance of power with the PLO:

Israeli strategy pre-Oslo (and why?):

Why Oslo?

Why did Netanyahu uphold Oslo?

Why camp David 2000?

Why Operation Defensive Shield?

Why Disengagement?

Not due to U.S. pressure. The argument that it was due to corruption is unconvincing. Likely due to demographics concerns.

Sharon promised a massive response to rockets. Later his response was weak. This was due to domestic political considerations, notably not wanting his policy to be seen as a failure. Also, the PA was still nominally in control of Gaza at the time.

Olmert did not follow through with heavy force either.

Hamas coup and political victory in Gaza came as a surprise to Israel's political, defense and intelligence leaders.

Short and long-term strategy towards PLO (and why?):

Managing the status quo.

- **Brigadier General Shalom Harari 6/17/2019 (telephone)**

Bio: Brigadier General (Res.) Shalom Harari is a Research Associate at the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT) at the Interdisciplinary Center (IDC) Herzliya. He served in the territories for twenty years as a senior advisor on Palestinian affairs for Israel's Defense Ministry. He served in the IDF Military Intelligence Research Department and Collection Department. In 1983 he was appointed the Head of the West Bank's Palestinian Affairs Department of the Israeli Civil Administration. From 1984 until 1997, he served as the head of the Department of Palestinian Affairs in the Ministry of Defense.

IVs

Israeli perceptions of PLO ideology:

Highly ideologically driven. Seen as pragmatic by some key members of the government and academics in 1992,3 but this perception became the minority soon after Oslo.

No one in mainstream politics or the government thinks peace with the PA is possible due to an ideology that makes permeant peace undesirable and low governing capacity due to lack of domestically legitimate leadership.

Israeli perceptions of PLO governance function:

Can control violence with Israel's help. Is not domestically legitimate.

Israeli perceptions of PLO leadership targetability:

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perception of Israel's internal and external constraints:

High internal constraints. High external constraints.

Israel cannot take high casualties. Iron Dome makes it more difficult for Israel to justify or rally the public behind a major offensive. Barak called it a system to "prevent wars."

Only the demonstration of massive, recurring attacks on Tel Aviv would create enough popular support for a truly decisive victory strategy. This is looking at Hamas.

Israel also needs a causus belli to show the international community.

For example, Israel's Supreme Court forced the return of 500 Gazans, including Hamas and PIJ militants that had been exiled to Lebanon. While in Lebanon they forged a relationship with Hezbollah and became more dangerous.

Rabin argued that arming the PLO police force would bypass internal constraints on counterterrorism, claiming the 'PLO police forces would round up terrorists without having to worry about international condemnation or the Supreme Court.'

Balance of power with the PLO:

Israel is asymmetrically stronger.

Israeli strategy pre-Oslo (and why?):

Why Oslo?

Why did Netanyahu uphold Oslo?

Why camp David 2000?

Why Operation Defensive Shield?

Why Disengagement?

Short and long-term strategy towards PLO (and why?):

Status quo management.

- **Dr. Efraim Karsh 06/19/2019**

Bio: Professor Efraim Karsh is the Director of the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies. Professor Emeritus of Middle East and Mediterranean Studies at King's College London; Professor of Political Science at Bar-Ilan University; Principal Research Fellow (and former Director) of the Middle East Forum (Philadelphia), where he also edits the scholarly journal Middle East Quarterly; founding editor of the scholarly journal Israel Affairs, and founding general editor of a Routledge book series on Israeli History, Politics and Society, with over 60 books published.

<u>IVs</u>

Israeli perceptions of PLO ideology:

Incapable of a trustworthy peace bargain. Viewed this way up until Oslo and since 2000 after the start of the Second Intifada.

Only new leadership with decreased ideological drive and a more legitimate government can be seen as a potential peace partner.

PLO will never accept two-state solution.

No major difference with Hamas.

Israeli perceptions of PLO governance function:

Relatively high capacity to control violence with Israel's help. Low legitimacy.

Israeli perceptions of PLO leadership targetability:

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perception of Israel's internal and external constraints:

Israel faces high internal and external constraints. Cited the Rabin quote about the Supreme Court as a constraint on Israel's ability to conduct military operations, pursue victory.

Israel has only a right-wing. Left-wing politics is dead since the Second Intifada proved the Oslo "land for peace" paradigm a failure and the rise of Hamas in Gaza did the same for the Disengagement logic.

Balance of power with the PLO:

Israeli strategy pre-Oslo (and why?):

Why Oslo?

Beilin was a "true believer" in the PLO's moderation and pragmatism. Peres pushed Oslo for his won political ambitions. Both dragged Rabin into the process despite his skepticism. Rabin was mentally weak, had a nervous breakdown during the Six-Day War.

Why did Netanyahu uphold Oslo?

Due to international and domestic constraints. Did not ever see Arafat/the PLO as a partner.

Why camp David 2000?

Why Operation Defensive Shield?

Why Disengagement?

Many say it was to get the Courts and media to end corruption investigations (they did end following the announcement of the Disengagement plan.) Goals were to increase domestic legitimacy and to increase international legitimacy for attacking terrorists in Gaza if Israel withdrew its population and military.

Short and long-term strategy towards PLO (and why?):

Until 1988, Rabin tried to get a peace deal that would see Jordanian control over the West Bank Palestinians.

Olmert offered statehood due to his corruption charges (like some argue regarding Sharon and the Disengagement.)

Process to socialize the PLO ended with Oslo.

The prevailing view in the Israeli government is that withdrawal from the West Bank would lead to the creation of an armed camp like Gaza in a far more threatening piece of territory. Demilitarization promises are "like Oslo, they are not worth the paper they are written on."

Most Israelis would sign a peace deal tomorrow if it was truly credible.

Total responses (proportion breakdown)[838]

Perception of level of PLO ideological drive:

Pre-Oslo:

- More pragmatic: 1/22
- More ideologically driven: 20/22

Around Oslo:

- More pragmatic: 20/22
- More ideologically driven: 0/22

Defensive Shield:

- More pragmatic: 1/22
- More ideologically driven: 20/22

Disengagement:

- More pragmatic: 1/22
- More ideologically driven: 20/22

Present:

- More pragmatic: 1/22
- More ideologically driven: 20/22

Perception of level of PLO governance function:

Pre-Oslo:

- High: 0/22
- Medium: 7/22
- Low: 10/22

Around Oslo:

- High: 11/22
- Medium: 10/22
- Low: 0/22

Defensive Shield:

- High: 5/22
- Medium: 10/22

[838] I coded by the administration in power's perceptions at the time. Willingness to cooperate but not to make peace is coded as ideologically driven. The views reflect the interviewee's description of leadership's perceptions, not their own.

- Low: 5/22

Disengagement:

- High: 5/22
- Medium: 7/22
- Low: 8/22

Present:

- High: 11/22
- Medium: 8/22
- Low: 2/22

Perception of ability to target and destroy PLO leadership

Pre-Oslo:

- High: 22/22
- Medium: 0/22
- Low: 0/22

Around Oslo:

- High: 22/0
- Medium: 0/22
- Low: 0/22

Defensive Shield:

- High: 22/22
- Medium: 0/22
- Low: 0/22

Disengagement:

- High: 22/0
- Medium: 0/22
- Low: 0/22

Present:

- High: 22/0
- Medium: 0/22
- Low: 0/22

Perception of Israel's internal and external constraints:

Pre-Oslo:

- High: 11/22

- Medium: 10/22
- Low: 0/22

Around Oslo:

- High: 22/22
- Medium: 0/22
- Low: 0/22

Defensive Shield:

- High: 11/22
- Medium: 10/22
- Low: 0/22

Disengagement:

- High: 22/22
- Medium: 0/22
- Low: 0/22

Present:

- High: 18/22
- Medium: 3/22
- Low: 0/22

Chapter 4

Hamas Interviews

The following are the results from interviews with 22 Israeli political experts, academics, practitioners and senior political and military advisers. (*Not every question was answered by every interviewee).*

- **Dr. Daniel Sobelman 9/28/2018:**

Bio: Assistant Professor, International Relations Department, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Jerusalem, Israel. Lebanon and Hezbollah expert. Served in the elite Military Intelligence Unit 8200. Former Arabic correspondent for Haaretz.

IVs

Israeli perceptions of Hamas ideology:

High ideological drive to destroy Israel and continue fighting towards this goal. Hamas cannot recognize Israel's right to exist in peace. Maximalist agenda. Marketed as liberators of Palestine.

Israeli perceptions of Hamas governance function:

Relatively high: “Address in Gaza.” Hamas is seen to have the ability to enforce a ceasefire if it so desires.

Israeli perceptions of Hamas leadership targetability:

Israel has well known ability to destroy Hamas leadership, but this will not necessarily destroy the organization.

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Balance of power with Hamas:

Asymmetry, but, Hamas at its height of relative power post 2014. Most threatening to Israel at this time. Deters Israel as well through promising unacceptable costs in the case of a conflict. Hamas has low vulnerability given Israel’s constraints.

Perception of Israel’s internal and external constraints:

Israel faces high external and internal constraints.

Why Operation Defensive Shield?

Why Disengagement?

Why Cast Lead/Pillar of Defense/Protective Edge?

Short and long-term strategy towards Hamas (and why?):

Israel trying to create and keep deterrence. No desire to overthrow. “Hamas is the address for Israeli policy towards Gaza violence.” No support for retaking Gaza or toppling Hamas. Liberman’s rhetoric to this regard was just signaling. Carrots in terms of economy and boosting governance function in order to “give Hamas something to lose.”

Hamas assesses that Israel does not wish to destroy them.

Israel is constrained from large-scale action against Hamas most significantly by the Iranian (and Hezbollah) threat in the northern arena. This gained urgency since the rise in Iranian entrenchment in Syria and thus impacted strategy from around 2012 on. This constraint impacted only Operation Protective Edge in 2014.

- **Yossi Beilin 10/2/2018:**

Bio: Architect of the Oslo Accords: More left wing, Oslo failed in large part due to Israeli right coming to power. Arafat was partner, Abbas may be too. Labor, Meretz, main architect of Oslo.

IVs

Israeli perceptions of Hamas ideology:

Hamas are terrorists that cannot be negotiated with. They are motivated by maximalist ideology.

Hamas can never be fully deterred.

Israeli perceptions of Hamas governance function:

The address in Gaza, fully controls Gaza since 2007.

Israeli perceptions of Hamas leadership targetability:

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perception of Israel's internal and external constraints:

Balance of power with Hamas:

Why Operation Defensive Shield?

The Second Intifada killed the Israeli perception that Arafat and the PLO were honest negotiating partners. The launch of Operation Defensive Shield was the "first formal decision to break Oslo."

Why Disengagement?

Sharon proposed disengagement in order to forestall the implementation of the Geneva initiative. Sharon did not believe the PLO was a partner. He "did not trust the Arabs."

Why Cast Lead/Pillar of Defense/Protective Edge?

Short and long-term strategy towards Hamas (and why?):

- **Dr. Eado Hecht 10/2/2018:**

Bio: Professor of Political Science at Bar-Ilan University, Taught at Haifa University and at the IDF Command and General Staff College. Serves on the Editorial Advisory Panel of The Journal of Military Operations. Expert in tunnels, underground warfare, Israel vs. Hamas.

IVs

Israeli perceptions of Hamas ideology:

Throughout the 90s it became clear that Hamas was a maximalist, ideologically driven terror organization.

Leaders perceive it to be impossible to deter Hamas completely due to their high ideological drive. There is a consensus among Israeli leadership that Hamas ceases to have purpose if it stops fighting Israel.

Hamas is driven by absolutist religious ideology. This is less mailable than secular absolutist ideology.

Israeli perceptions of Hamas governance function:

Hamas is Israel's address in Gaza.

Israeli perceptions of Hamas leadership targetability:

Demonstrated ability to hit Hamas leadership, but this entails risk of unwanted costs.

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perception of Israel's internal and external constraints:

Israel always faced disproportionate external constraints. This is due to great power interests and blatant ethical double standards. From 2000-2006 Israel perceived high external constraints but somewhat lowered immediately post September 11, 2001. "If the USA is behind Israel, Europe doesn't matter."

At a conference, Generals Ya'alon and Amidror cited the dire necessity to minimize civilian casualties. The Russian general said that in Chechnya Russia killed 30,000 and now the situation is quiet. This juxtaposition shows the constraints faced by a small democracy.

Israel faces high internal constraints.

Fear of tactical unpreparedness, high casualties originally kept Israel from undertaking a large-scale operation in the West Bank at the outset of the Second Intifada. This gradually changed as the argument that tactics would be successful influenced decision makers from the bottom up. (Colonels influenced Generals who in turn influenced policy makers.)

Israel does not know what to make of the Trump administration but viewed previous administrations as always desiring Israeli concessions. The view of the current administration is "backing like never before but not a fully free hand."

Balance of power with Hamas:

Israel is militarily limited. Asymmetric disparities are not so vast. Opponents have hope in the ability to survive Israeli force and achieve strategic goals.

Why Operation Defensive Shield?

The goals were to capture safe havens, clear, search and destroy PA terror infrastructure, capture and kill terrorists and disrupt their ability to carry out terrorist operations, and to reconquer Judea and Samaria but not to stay. The goal was not to defeat the PA.

"Defensive Shield would not have been undertaken if not for 9/11." Dr. Hecht told an anecdote of a commander in the field being told by Condoleezza Rice to withdraw from an incursion pre-September 11. 2001.

Israeli leaders viewed the Second Intifada as a potential existential threat.

Why Disengagement?

Best to cut losses, International pressure would force Israel to withdraw eventually anyways.

Withdrawal will lead to better international support.

Mistaken perception that Gaza could be successfully isolated and could be managed through airpower alone.

Why Cast Lead/Pillar of Defense/Protective Edge?

Increase deterrence and denial.

Short and long-term strategy towards Hamas (and why?):

Pre-2000 the general consensus was that the problem of Hamas could be solved with an agreement with the PA.

In Gaza, Israel's targeted killings were intended to increase deterrence.

Deterrence and denial. Hamas did not think Israel had resolve to defeat them or even to launch a large-scale operation. The were surprised in 2014 Operation Protective Edge.

Israel cannot help the PA take control of Gaza. Even in Judea and Samaria, Hamas would take over without Israeli support.

From 2007 until the present, the management trend is in Israel's favor. 2014-2018 were the quietest four years since the 1990s.

Israel's short and long-term goal towards Hamas is to maintain quiet.

- **Dr. Kobi Michael 10/3/2018:**

Bio: Senior researcher at the INSS: Peace and war studies; strategy; national security; civil-military relations; socio-military relations; peace maintenance; and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Dr. Michael served as the deputy director general and head of the Palestinian desk at the Ministry for Strategic Affairs. Kobi served with General Ya'alon when he was minister of foreign affairs in 2009. He helped form Israel's Gaza policy.

IVs

Israeli perceptions of Hamas ideology:

Highly motivated by absolutist religious ideology. Israeli leadership views a formal peace treaty as impossible. But, it is easier to reach a long-term *hudna* with Hamas due to its ideological honesty.

Israeli perceptions of Hamas governance function:

Hamas is the entity capable of keeping order in Gaza. Israel wants to increase its governing capacity.

Israeli perceptions of Hamas leadership targetability:

Israel can target Hamas leadership but for now does not want to.

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perception of Israel's internal and external constraints:

High internal and external constraints.

Balance of power with Hamas:

Hamas is not an existential threat.

Why Operation Defensive Shield?

Why Disengagement?

Offer was made due to sincere belief that the PA was a partner. Olmert felt a mandate to continue the Disengagement. He also had a political motive to counter Netanyahu. This was the peak of the peace process.

Why Cast Lead/Pillar of Defense/Protective Edge?

The goal of Cast Lead was to bring the PA back into control of Gaza and unify it with the West Bank. The goal of all three operations was to drastically weaken Hamas.

Short and long-term strategy towards Hamas (and why?):

Until 2009 Israel wanted to bring the PA back t control in Gaza. Post 2009: Isolate Gaza in order to boost the PA and stir up popular revolt against Hamas by making visibly better conditions in the West Bank. After understanding that this will fail, new strategy post 2010 was to have Hamas as a reliable partner in Gaza while at the same time weakening it militarily and creating deterrence. Since 2014 the zero-sum game between Hamas and the PA has increased in salience. There is no real chance of Hamas-PA reconciliation or of PA rule in Gaza. Abbas is the biggest spoiler in any Israel-Hamas negotiations.

There is a strategic and moral impulse to improve the humanitarian situation in Gaza.

Israel perceives that there is no solution for Gaza, only management. The goal is to buy lulls in violence through deterrence while increasing relative military power during the lulls.

- **General Moshe Yaalon 10/3/2018:**

Bio: Senior researcher at INSS. Israel's defense minister (2013-2016); minister for strategic affairs and vice prime minister (2009); chief of general staff (2002-2005), during the Second Intifada; commander of Israel's Ground Force Training Facility (Tze'elim) (1993); Commander of IDF Paratroop Brigade (1990-92). He was the Judea and Samaria division commander until immediately before the Oslo Accords of 1993.

<u>IVs</u>

Israeli perceptions of Hamas ideology:

High ideological drive. Same goal as PA but religiously motivated. The 1979 Iranian Revolution increased the strength of radical Islamist movements.

Israeli perceptions of Hamas governance function:

The address in Gaza, fully controls Gaza since 2007.

Israeli perceptions of Hamas leadership targetability:

Hard to target Hamas leadership. “In 1993, Hamas’s fundraising leadership was based in Virginia.”

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perception of Israel’s internal and external constraints:

Israel has high external constraints even with a supportive US administration. Israel perceived higher external constraints under Obama administration.

Israel has very high internal constraints

Balance of power with Hamas:

Hamas can impose costs but is not an existential threat.

Why Operation Defensive Shield?

The goal was to convince the PA that terrorism will fail to secure its objectives and to demonstrate Israel’s resilience. This operation rebuilt Israel’s “Iron Wall.” It also demonstrated to Hezbollah that Israel was not a flimsy “spider web” as Nasrallah had claimed.

It coincided with the United States’ war on global terrorism. In the early 2000s both the US and Israel were on the offensive against terrorism.

Why Disengagement?

Ya’alon described the evolution of Israel’s policy from Defensive Shield until the Disengagement as offense → fence → defense. Ya’alon rejected this plan. He claimed it destroyed what remained of Israel’s Iron Wall strategy and was a tailwind to terror. He claims it came about because politicians were unwilling to admit that there was no solution to the conflict.

After Disengagement Hamas kidnapped Gilad Shalit and Hezbollah launched its raid that precipitated the 2006 Lebanon war.

Sharon’s reasoning for the Disengagement was to deflect attention from a corruption investigation. Ya’alon claims Sharon did not discuss the Disengagement Plan with the defense establishment leadership.

Why Cast Lead/Pillar of Defense/Protective Edge?

Short and long-term strategy towards Hamas (and why?):

The goal is to maintain quiet. No political or military solution. Elimination campaign is possible, but the question remains, who will run Gaza once Hamas is defeated. Israel does not wish to control Gaza.

- **Maj. Gen. (res.) Uzi Dayan**: **10/4/2018:**

Bio: Former head of the IDF Central Command, IDF Deputy Chief of Staff, National Security Adviser to the Prime Minister of Israel and Head of National Security Council (NSC). Served fifteen years in Sayaret Matkal, eventually serving as its commander. President, Zionist Council in Israel. He was the head of the Security Committee during the implementation of the Oslo Peace Process from 1996-1999.

IVs

Israeli perceptions of Hamas ideology:

High ideological drive towards pursuing absolutist agenda.

Israeli perceptions of Hamas governance function:

The address in Gaza, fully controls Gaza since 2007.

Israeli perceptions of Hamas leadership targetability:

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perception of Israel's internal and external constraints:

Israeli policy is driven by high internal constraints. External constraints are also high but not as impactful on Israeli policy. Israel's population is highly casualty averse. Hamas thinks they can always leverage Israel's high constraints in order to show commitment to ideology while preserving a way to end the conflict by promising to cease the current round of violence. Israel has the capability but not the will to achieve decisive victory.

The region is starting to pay less attention to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Time is on Israel's side.

Balance of power with Hamas:

Asymmetrically skewed in favor of Israel but Hamas can impose high costs. The general trend is that this is increasing.

Why Operation Defensive Shield?

Why Disengagement?

Uzi advised for Disengagement in 2002. Sharon did not want to hear of it.

Why Cast Lead/Pillar of Defense/Protective Edge?

The goal of these conflicts was to hit Hamas hard but minimize casualties.

Short and long-term strategy towards Hamas (and why?):

No party in Israel believes peace with Hamas is possible.

Hamas can be beaten "if it faces an existential threat." That pressure can be brought to bear in one of two ways: either by killing much of the leadership or by stripping it of its territory. Only

threatening its existence can truly deter it. If Israel was less constrained it could pursue the ideal strategy towards ending conflict. This would be to destroy Hamas. This strategy would signal resolve to the next group to come to power in Gaza, creating significant deterrence.

- **Barry Shaw 10/7/2018:**

Bio: Barry Shaw is the Senior Associate for Public Diplomacy at the Israel Institute for Strategic Studies and the author of numerous books and articles on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

IVs

Israeli perceptions of Hamas ideology:

Hamas is highly driven to pursue an absolutist ideology that aims to destroy Israel. "Pure antisemitism and religious fanaticism." Hamas cannot be deterred in the long-term. Israeli leadership is overwhelmingly unanimous in that it cannot change Hamas's ideology or get them to moderate.

Israeli perceptions of Hamas governance function:

The address in Gaza, fully controls Gaza since 2007.

Israeli perceptions of Hamas leadership targetability:

Lower since disengagement. Still high.

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perception of Israel's internal and external constraints:

There is and has been significant international push for Israeli concessions to create a two-state solution. There is no international pressure for Abbas to take risks for peace. President Trump is the first world leader to truly pressure Abbas.

Israel faces incomparably high external constraints. This is only increasing as the American democratic party and European politics becomes more anti-Israel. For example, there is a high chance that the staunchly anti-Israel Corbyn will come to power in Great Britain. Israel is extremely dependent on American support in the UN, thus its policy must coincide with US objectives. Israel also faces high internal constraints.

Balance of power with Hamas:

Asymmetrically skewed in favor of Israel but Hamas can impose high costs. The general trend is that this is increasing.

Why Operation Defensive Shield?

Rabin would have sent tanks into Ramallah way before Sharon finally did had he not been assassinated.

Why Disengagement?

Why Cast Lead/Pillar of Defense/Protective Edge?

Short and long-term strategy towards Hamas (and why?):

Israel's short-term policy is to preserve the status quo. Attrition is not optimal but is deemed better than large-scale use of force.

- **Eldad Shavit 10/8/2018:**

Bio: Col. Eldad Shavit: Senior researcher at the Institute for National Security Studies and former assistant for assessment to the head of the research division in the IDF intelligence Corps. Former Intelligence Chief for the Prime Minister's Office.

IVs

Israeli perceptions of Hamas ideology:

High ideological drive but can be deterred and refrain from violence in the short-term.

Israeli perceptions of Hamas governance function:

Israel's address in Gaza. Hamas is largely capable of maintaining order and containing violence from Gaza if it so desires.

Israeli perceptions of Hamas leadership targetability:

External leadership is more difficult to target. Generally high.

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perception of Israel's internal and external constraints:

Israel has very high external constraints. US support is of utmost importance to Israel. EU support is important too. Finally, good relations with Russia is deemed important. The United Stated provided crucial military support for the past 30 years and important military, economic and political support for longer than that.

Perceptions of high external constraints influenced Israel's operations towards Hamas, Hezbollah and the PLO. However, Israel also uses international scrutiny to obtain political goals of ensuring quiet through military means. President Trump is perceived to support Israel but Israeli leaders are still cautious. Furthermore, Trump's perceived support by other actors reduces US credibility for negotiating future agreements.

Balance of power with Hamas:

Asymmetrically skewed in favor of Israel but Hamas can impose high costs. The general trend is that this is increasing.

Why Operation Defensive Shield?

Why Disengagement?

The goal was to separate and use concession as leverage. The unintended consequence was to increase Hamas power.

Why Cast Lead/Pillar of Defense/Protective Edge?

Short and long-term strategy towards Hamas (and why?):

Israel's goal is increasingly long periods of quiet. Israel has no interest in retaking Gaza. Today there is deterrence vis-à-vis Hamas. There is almost total consensus among Israeli leadership that the next conflict in Gaza will be like prior ones, with the goal of creating periods of quiet, not of overthrowing Hamas.

- **Daniel Seaman 10/8/2018:**

Bio: Adviser and spokesperson to the governments of six prime ministers: Yitzhak Shamir, Shimon Peres, Yitzhak Rabin, Benjamin Netanyahu, and Ehud Barak. Acting director of the Government Press Office 2000-2010. English language editor of Mida.

IVs

Israeli perceptions of Hamas ideology:

Highly ideologically driven, not deterrable through leveraging classic cost benefit calculations. Most Israelis "intuitively understand" that the result of a Hamas breakthrough would be murder.

Israeli perceptions of Hamas governance function:

Israel's address in Gaza. Hamas is largely capable of maintaining order and containing violence from Gaza if it so desires.

Israeli perceptions of Hamas leadership targetability:

Can be targeted but constraints limit the likelihood that it will be. Hamas knows this. Hamas leaders leverage this, hide amongst civilians.

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perception of Israel's internal and external constraints:

Israel faces extremely high external constraints. This led to strategic damage during the 2006 Lebanon War. Learning from this, during Operation Cast Lead Israel blocked foreign journalists. This caused a major international uproar. The international media and international organizations apply different, higher standards to Israel.

Israel also faces extremely high internal constraints. This is due to and exacerbated by a very open media. Internal constraints on hardline policy were somewhat lowered by the year 2000 due to the ascension to political power of Russian immigrants with hawkish attitudes who arrived in Israel following the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Israel has raised the moral bar for counterterrorism too high to operate effectively.

Balance of power with Hamas:

Israel has the military capability to annihilate Hamas but is too constrained to do so.

Why Operation Defensive Shield?

By the year 2000, the Israeli public had become anti-concessions and turned against the peace process.

Why Disengagement?

Sharon enacted the Disengagement due to high external pressure from the international community, domestic and personal political reasons, and he was highly impacted by the media.

Why Cast Lead/Pillar of Defense/Protective Edge?

Short and long-term strategy towards Hamas (and why?):

Hamas must be annihilated for the conflict to be ended. Avi Dichter, the former director of the Shabak and the head of the Knesset Foreign Affairs committee argues for the assassination of Hamas leadership.

The increase in external pressure has been linear and risen due to both the "red-Green alliance" between European leftists and Islamists and due to the rise in social media proliferation. This has drastically reduced Israel's perceived strategic window for military operations.

- **B.G. (Ret) Gideon Avidor 10/9/2018:**

Bio: Founder of the Institute for Advanced Military Thinking (2012). Retired from the Israeli Defense Forces in 1999 after 42 years of service (30 years in active service and 12 years in active reserve.) He took part in and commanded armored units at various levels in the 1967, 1973 and 1982 wars. Between 1983 and 1986, he served as the Israeli Ministry of Defense and the IDF Defense Adviser to Singapore, Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines. He graduated from the US Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC) in 1978 and from the Israeli National Defence College in 1982. He received his B.A. in History from Tel-Aviv University and got his MA from Haifa University in Geography. From 2007 to 2011 he established and managed the Institute for land Warfare Studies in Latrun.

IVs

Israeli perceptions of Hamas ideology:

There is no potential for peace with Hamas due to its high ideological drive. It is impossible to deter Hamas in the long-term.

Israeli perceptions of Hamas governance function:

Israel's address in Gaza. Hamas is largely capable of maintaining order and containing violence from Gaza if it so desires.

Israeli perceptions of Hamas leadership targetability:

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perception of Israel's internal and external constraints:

Contrasting Israel's more recent wars with the large interstate wars of its past, today Israel faces higher internal and external constraints due to the increased role of international nongovernmental organizations, public opinion and the international community. This is further increased by the rise of social media proliferation and globalization in general.

Netanyahu perceived high internal and external constraints stemming from the lack of movement in the peace process with the Palestinians.

During Protective Edge, the need to minimize international opprobrium led to increasingly centralized military control and a deviation from the IDF's long standing culture of mission command.

Israel never considered "the Russian solution," meaning pursuing decisive military victory over any of its non-state opponents. This was, and continues to be, due to perceptions of high internal and external constraints.

Israel perceives an international double standard in terms of scrutiny. Avidor considers this partly due to religion. The world is more interested in Israel because it is a Jewish state which makes it unique.

Balance of power with Hamas:

Asymmetrically skewed in favor of Israel but Hamas can impose high costs. The general trend is that this is increasing.

Why Operation Defensive Shield?

Sharon viewed the West Bank as strategically and politically important and was willing to fight to maintain control and order there militarily.

Why Disengagement?

Sharon viewed controlling Gaza as undesirable.

Why Cast Lead/Pillar of Defense/Protective Edge?

Israel's goal in these conflicts was to ensure quiet. This is a misperception. Casualties and destruction are good for Hamas.

Short and long-term strategy towards Hamas (and why?):

Keep quiet.

- **Dr. Hillel Frisch** 10/9/2018:

Bio: (Ph.D. Hebrew University) Expert on Palestinian and Islamic politics, institutions and military strategies; Israeli Arabs; Islamic fundamentalism in the Middle East; Palestinian-

Jordanian relations; and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Jordan. Senior fellow at the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies.

IVs

Israeli perceptions of Hamas ideology:

It is possible to convince Hamas to refrain pragmatically from violence by enacting upon it "severe pain." Hamas does not perceive Israel's government as willing to overthrow it. With enough pain, Hamas can be deterred in the long-term. Already following Operation Cast Lead, "Hamas changed its rhetoric to the defensive." Frisch claims this as his opinion and that the Israeli government might not see it that way.

Decisive military victory can induce Hamas to pragmatically change its behavior but not its ideological desire.

Israeli perceptions of Hamas governance function:

Hamas has high governing capacity in Gaza. Israel wants this to continue and even strengthen it to continue having an address in Gaza.

Israeli perceptions of Hamas leadership targetability:

High targetability but fear of ensuing chaos if targeted. Who will replace current leaders?

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perception of Israel's internal and external constraints:

Israel perceives high external constraints due to the prioritization of the Iranian threat and Iranian entrenchment in Syria. This means that any sort of operation in Gaza risks diverting Israeli readiness for this threat.

Israel's constraints give hope to its non-state opponents that they can survive and continue to fight against Israel in accordance with their ideologic imperatives. This is like the Irgun's reasoning. They held out hope to defeat the British knowing that the British were constrained both externally and internally regarding the amount of force they could use against the Jewish militants in the 1940s.

Balance of power with Hamas:

Asymmetrically skewed in favor of Israel but Hamas can impose high costs. The general trend is that this is increasing.

Why Operation Defensive Shield?

The Second Intifada convinced Israel to be more skeptical of the PA.

Why Disengagement?

Why Cast Lead/Pillar of Defense/Protective Edge?

Short and long-term strategy towards Hamas (and why?):

Israel's strategy towards Hamas looks to be becoming similar to its strategy towards its Arab state opponents up until 1973. This entails a series of rounds of violence, with Israeli military victories in each round increasingly convincing the opponent to refrain rom violence and perhaps eventually to make peace. Hamas can eventually be "tamed." With enough pain. Israel's current objective is to have a separate understanding with Hamas that maintains quiet in Gaza. The Hamas conflict is deemed manageable due to geography; Gaza is relatively removed from Israel's major centers.

Maintain status quo but prepare for 4th round of conflict, humanitarian aid is not the solution to reducing terrorism, withdrawal is dangerous, management approach… Hamas faces pressure to be more confrontational with Israel from its core constituency of approximately 50,000 die hard supporters. This is the reason for the "March of Return." Hamas calculated escalation, fire on the immediate Gaza vicinity but avoid firing towards population centers like Be'er Sheva. Deterred by Israel's hawkish new DM Liberman. Only decisive victory in a fourth round of fighting in Gaza has the potential to end the fighting. Concessions will only beget more low-scale violence to compel an unlimited list of future concessions. Like Yom Kippur War, decisive military victory might "induce a change in behavior, though hardly a change of heart." (Jpost 2018).

- **Dr. Ehud Eiran 10/11/2018:**

Bio: Board Member at Mitvim and an Assistant Professor of International Relations, in the School of Political Science at the University of Haifa. Founding Co-Director of the Haifa Research Center for Maritime Strategy. Dr. Eiran holds degrees in Law and Political Science from Tel-Aviv University, Cambridge University, and Brandeis University. He held research appointments at Harvard Law School, Harvard's Kennedy School, and Brandeis University and was a lecturer in the Department of Political Science at MIT. Prior to his academic career Dr. Eiran held several positions in the Israeli civil service including clerking for two Attorney Generals, and as Assistant to the Prime Minister's Foreign Policy Advisor.

IVs

Israeli perceptions of Hamas ideology:

Hamas is seen as highly ideologically driven and less prone to compromise due to the religious nature of its ideology.

Israeli perceptions of Hamas governance function:

Hamas has high governance capacity and faces rivals ISIS and other Salafi groups.

Israeli perceptions of Hamas leadership targetability:

Highly targetable.

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perception of Israel's internal and external constraints:

High internal and external constraints.

Balance of power with Hamas:

Asymmetrically skewed in favor of Israel but Hamas can impose high costs. The general trend is that this is increasing.

Why Operation Defensive Shield?

Israel came to view the PA as responsible for the sharp increase in violence. On the morning of the start of the Second Intifada, the PA forces shot and killed IDF soldiers on a joint patrol. This confirmed to the security establishment that Arafat was an ideological enemy. This confirmed previous suspicion that this was the case following the Western Wall tunnel riots which were the first time PA units armed and trained as part of the Oslo II Accords fired on IDF soldiers.

Why Disengagement?

Sharon ran on a platform against withdrawal. He claimed "Netzarim is like Tel Aviv." Sharon lost key political allies due to the Disengagement.

Despite this, he enacted the Disengagement due to high US pressure, Sharon's son arguing for it, and increasingly worrying internal dissent. This followed the refusal of several elite IAF pilots to serve in the territories.

The goals of the Disengagement were to weaken and isolate Arafat in the short-term. It is unclear if Sharon had a long-term strategic vision. Sharon did prepare a plan to withdraw from 18 settlements in the West Bank. He suffered a stroke before this was to be implemented.

Why Cast Lead/Pillar of Defense/Protective Edge?

The goal of these operations was offensive denial; to degrade Hamas's capabilities. Between these conflicts there is constant management deemed "actions between big wars."

Short and long-term strategy towards Hamas (and why?):

Israel pursues short-term denial and deterrence-based management. Israel negotiates with Hamas to create short-term quiet through Egypt. There is no talk of pursuing a peace deal.

- **Dr. Boaz Ganor 10/11/2018:**

Bio: Dean and the Ronald Lauder Chair for Counter-Terrorism at the Lauder School of Government, Diplomacy & Strategy, as well as the Founder and Executive Director of the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism at the Interdisciplinary Center, Herzliya, Israel. Prof. Ganor serves as the Founding President of the International Academic Counter-Terrorism Community. His Ph.D. thesis for the Hebrew University was on Israel's counter-terrorism strategy. *The Counterterrorism Puzzle: Manual for Counterterrorism at all Levels.*

IVs

Israeli perceptions of Hamas ideology:

Hamas is highly ideologically driven.

Israeli perceptions of Hamas governance function:

Hamas controls violence in Gaza.

Israeli perceptions of Hamas leadership targetability:

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perception of Israel's internal and external constraints:

Israel perceives high internal and external constraints. Dr. Ganor calls the impact of internal constraints the democratic dilemma in counterterrorism.

Balance of power with Hamas:

Asymmetrically skewed in favor of Israel but Hamas can impose high costs. The general trend is that this is increasing.

Why Operation Defensive Shield?

Israel came to view the PA as responsible for the massive increase in violence during the Second intifada. This ended the peace process. The goal of the military operation was to put an end to terror attacks.

Why Disengagement?

Israel was positive that Arafat was not a peace partner. Israel had no strategic or ideological interest in Gaza. The withdrawal was strategically mistaken due to being unilateral.

Why Cast Lead/Pillar of Defense/Protective Edge?

Short and long-term strategy towards Hamas (and why?):

Rabin took a hardline approach to Hamas in the 1990s. He deported over 1000 PIJ and Hamas terrorists immediately after his election following the killing of a Border Police officer.

There is no long-term view of the possibility of peace. Hamas is not a potential partner. Israel is satisfied with pursuing quiet in Gaza. Israel can contain but not deter Hamas. Israel aims to keep Hamas from gaining power in the West Bank.

- **Dr. Yohanan Tzoreff**

Bio: Yohanan Tzoreff is a specialist on Palestinian affairs, a Research Fellow at the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, and former Advisor on Arab Affairs at the Israeli Civil Administration in the Gaza Strip.

IVs

Israeli perceptions of Hamas ideology:

Hamas is highly ideologically driven. Disagreement between Fatah and Hamas began at the start of 1st intifada. Hamas split due to perception that PLO would negotiate a side by side state. This was the number one issue that led Hamas to come into being. Israel would not negotiate with Hamas due to perceived absolutist ideology. Hamas not part of Oslo, did not accept Quartet parameters.

Israeli perceptions of Hamas governance function:

Hamas controls violence in Gaza. Since 2007, Israel perceived Hamas as having high governance capacity in the Gaza Strip. 30 years later (post 1988), Hamas is part of the Palestinian establishment. There is a base level legitimacy.

Israeli perceptions of Hamas leadership targetability:

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perception of Israel's internal and external constraints:

The international community supported Israel in boycotting Hamas during talks with PLO (Oslo and Camp David).

Tzoreff personally believes that Israel is at the height of its external constraints but admits that its leaders and the public agree with his colleague Kobi Michael that Israel is actually at the height of its international legitimacy and thus faces lower external constraints, especially with President Trump in office.

Why Operation Defensive Shield?

During second Intifada the goal was to defeat terrorism, mainly suicide bombings

Why Disengagement?

In 2003, disengagement idea was Sharon's strategy to corner the Palestinians and gain international legitimacy and save settlement project in the WB by sacrificing Gaza. Move was backed by US administration. Sharon never believed in the ability to make peace with the Palestinians (PLO). Sharon believed in unilateralism because of this. He intended to continue the disengagement in the WB.

Olmert entered in 2006, their platform came with the idea of realignment (same logic of disengagement, but this time from WB. Idea was to disengage from 90% of WB, keep settlement blocs.) This was the same as Sharon's platform.

The war in Lebanon 2006 prevented Olmert from continuing realignment because the settlers threatened to not be part of IDF. This served as an internal constraint on Israeli unilateral denial strategy.

Short and long-term strategy towards Hamas (and why?):

Post 2006 strategy of demonstrating Hamas to fail while the PA improves living standards allowed Israel to re-engage with the PA.

Hamas 2007-2019: 3 confrontations with Israel led Hamas to reevaluate. Great destruction in 2014. Hamas cannot act as they used to. This is because they are accountable to the population. Abbas stopped financing Gaza in April 2014 until they come under PLO umbrella. By October 2017 Hamas concluded it cannot control Gaza. The sticking point is Hamas does not want to disarm. Hamas wants PA to take responsibility to civilian issues and funding, but Hamas keeps arms (Lebanese model.) Abbas says this a lot.

2009 after Cast Lead, strategy implemented by Netanyahu coalition: keep Gaza and WB divided, keep Hamas weak. Israel reached conclusion in 2009 that Hamas will keep power in Gaza. Formalized interest (not officially publicized, even to political echelon). Keep Hamas as an address in Gaza, keep Hamas in charge of Gaza civilians responsibility, but weak and deterred. Strong capacity internally, weak military. This means Hamas needs capacities that Israel can provide. This gives Hamas something to lose so they can be deterred. This strategy is hard to explain to the public. Hard to build consensus around this due to Israeli domestic politics. This was hidden strategy from 2009-2014, revealed post 2014. Bidul strategy, keep both PLO and Hamas weak politically.

Balance of power with Hamas:

Israel can destroy Hamas militarily.

- **Dr. Yigal Henkin 6/11/2019**

Bio: Military historian, specializing in urban warfare and counterinsurgency at the Jerusalem Institute for Strategic Studies, and teaches military history at the IDF Command and Staff College, and is a reservist with the IDF history department.

IVs

Israeli perceptions of Hamas ideology:

Hamas is highly ideologically driven.

Israeli perceptions of Hamas governance function:

Hamas controls violence in Gaza.

Israeli perceptions of Hamas leadership targetability:

Lowest from 1993-2003.

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perception of Israel's internal and external constraints:

High.

Most famous saying of Rabin: "the Palestinian security forces will fight Hamas without the constraints of Btselem, Israel's Supreme Court and "Mothers against Silence" (basically internal constraints). This turned out to be wrong.

Dominant perception was that external constraints matter a lot. If the security situation is dire, it can override this, e.g. Second Intifada loosened salience of external constraints on policy. Leadership matters most, e.g. Barak worried about external "political tsunami." If a policy is seen as critical (existential) constraints are less constraining.

Israel has perception that you can use enemy to fight worse enemy. (Hamas as responsible adult against PIJ). Arafat leveraged this.

Why Operation Defensive Shield?

When Second Intifada started, IDF was prohibited by the Israeli government from invading Area A. This policy changed formally in 2002, Operation Defensive Shield.

In Defensive shield Israel's strategy was decisive victory. This was because Israel had the operational capability to. Israel does not want to defeat Hamas because it would either leave Israel in control of Gaza's population, or if PLO takes over which is unlikely to be stable, it would give them a stronger hand and Israel does not believe it can bargain with.

Strategy changed slowly from 2001-2002 away from negotiating and towards hardline force. Move back to Israel taking charge of security alone, not trusting PLO with some of it.

Why Disengagement?

Disengagement was not a concession, it was to improve Israel's ability to deny. Hard to know what changed Sharon's mind. Arnon Soffer Haifi U. geography professor says he convinced Sharon to withdraw due to demographics. Dov Wieisglass, Sharon's chief of staff said it was to show there was no Arab partner, so no need to withdraw from J+S. A year later he said it was to prepare to withdraw from J+S. Others say it was due divert attention from criminal investigations into him and his family. Hard to know which was true. Disengagement was part of not trusting PLO.

Short and long-term strategy towards Hamas (and why?):

Israel has a status quo management approach towards Hamas today.

Israel began cooperating with PLO in lower echelons (tactical and operational levels) in 2007 after PA war with Hamas. This does not change anything at the political/strategic level. No push for Oslo years peace process. Current strategy is status quo management to improve Israel's international standing. Is this towards peace? This depends on if the PLO will want peace and can deliver on it.

Current strategy is not solely due to Netanyahu's leadership. The structure of conflict matters most.

Balance of power with Hamas:

Israel has always been able to decisively defeat Hamas.

- **Dr. Dan Schueftan 6/12/2019**

Bio: Dr. Dan Schueftan is Chairman of the National Security Studies Center at the University of Haifa and senior lecturer at Haifa University's School of Political Sciences. He has taught at the Israel Defense Forces National Security College and the IDF's Command and Staff College. Dr. Schueftan was an advisor to Israel's National Security Council, and to former Prime Ministers Yitzhak Rabin and Ariel Sharon. Schueftan advanced the concept of "unilateral disengagement" as articulated in his 1999 book, *Disengagement: Israel and the Palestinian Entity*.

IVs

Israeli perceptions of Hamas ideology:

Hamas is highly ideologically driven. More honest than PLO about ideological drive.

Israeli perceptions of Hamas governance function:

Hamas controls violence in Gaza.

Israeli perceptions of Hamas leadership targetability:

Generally high, less so since the Disengagement. Difficult but improving throughout the 1990s

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perception of Israel's internal and external constraints:

"Russia has a government and civilian population that does not care about killing civilians, the world does not care either." Israel is highly constrained both internally and externally. Significant pressure to avoid harming civilians by the USA, Israel's most critical partner.

Israeli leadership would have liked to pursue even stronger decisive victory during Operation Defensive Shield, worried over external condemnation, domestic repercussions.

Israel perceived the Obama administration to be highly critical, increased constraints, worked hard to undermine Israel's bargaining position.

Trump boosts Israel's bargaining position. His instinct is correct, that the Arab world does not care about the Palestinians.

Balance of threat:

Israel had more room to maneuver due to end of key existential threats by the time of Oslo. This includes: peace with Egypt, destruction of Iraqi military and fall of key benefactor to its enemies, the USSR. This precipitated a major decrease in the proportion of Israel's GDP spent on defense and coincided with significant economic growth. Lebanon War 1982-2000 showed difficulties of fighting non-state opponents.

Why Operation Defensive Shield?

Decisive victory over PLO and Hamas terrorists. Would have expelled or even killed Arafat absent high perception of constraints.

Why Disengagement?

Not a concession. Carried out due to lack of ability to impose decisive victory due to constraints.

Short and long-term strategy towards Hamas (and why?):

Management.

Balance of power with Hamas:

Israel is asymmetrically stronger.

- **General Ram Yavne 6/16/2019**

Bio: General Ram Yavne served in the IDF for 32 years. He served as the Head of the Strategic Division in the Planning Directorate of the IDF General Staff (J5) from 2015-2018. Where he was responsible for the IDF's strategic planning and policy formulation, military diplomacy and international cooperation. He previously served as the head of the Regional Strategy Department, the senior intelligence officer in the IDF's Northern Command, and in other key intelligence positions.

IVs

Israeli perceptions of Hamas ideology:

Hamas is highly ideologically driven. "Resistance" is key to their reason for being. Long-term strategy "Israel will vanish like the Crusaders, over 100+ years."

Israeli perceptions of Hamas governance function:

Hamas controls violence in Gaza.

Israeli perceptions of Hamas leadership targetability:

Became much more targetable after Israel spent years gathering intelligence on them. Israel was preoccupied with the PLO until the early 1990s when it started to see Hamas as a growing threat.

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perception of Israel's internal and external constraints:

Constrained not just by internal and external but also due to uncertainty in the region, weak states, power vacuums, uncertainty over where to target deterrence, carrots and sticks.

Balance of threat

More regional uncertainty but also weakening allure of hardline ideology and more room for pragmatism in the Middle East in general. No clear ideology resonates today in the Islamic world as did pan-Arabism, Communism, or Islamism at times.

Why Operation Defensive Shield?

Crush PA and especially Hamas militarily in the West Bank and manage the terror groups through offensive and increasingly defensive denial in Gaza.

Why Disengagement?

Denial, management. No expectation of Hamas coup in 2007.

Short and long-term strategy towards Hamas (and why?):

Management. Israel cannot trust agreement with Hamas. Israel can create short-term pragmatism in Hamas actions. Management until now has been relatively successful.

From 2007-2009 Israel aimed to collapse Hamas. From 2009 until the present, Israel wants to manage the situation, keep terror from Gaza from having a strategic impact, and prevent a humanitarian crisis in Gaza. No long-term vision. Israel does not seek a "Hudna" (strategic ceasefire) that would allow Hamas to increase its level of threat, despite Hamas wanting it. This stems from view that Hamas is not capable of giving up violence in the long-term.

Balance of power with Hamas:

Israel asymmetrically stronger, Hamas not an existential threat, but is very disruptive.

During Second Intifada, the most damaging attacks were led by Hamas. The same was the case in 1995-96.

"Israel can militarily conquer Gaza in a week." Clearing out all Hamas and PIJ networks will take time.

Internal and external constraints "do not allow the Chechen model." These include: values, the threat of international isolation and domestic political concerns.

- **Dr. Meirav Mishali 6/16/2019**

Bio: Dr. Meirav Mishali-Ram is a lecturer in the department of political studies at Bar Ilan University. Her PhD degree in international relations is from Bar Ilan University. She was a post-doctoral fellow in the Center for International Development & Conflict Management at the University of Maryland, and a visiting assisting professor at the University of California Berkeley. She has long been a research associate of the International Crisis Behavior (ICB) project and a research fellow in the Institute for Policy and Strategy at the Interdisciplinary Center (IDC) Herzliya. Her main areas of expertise are international conflict, civil war, and South Asian studies. She has published many articles in peer reviewed journals on various aspects of conflict, focusing on ethnicity and religion, foreign fighting and transnational jihad, as well as on the role of non-state actors in worldwide conflicts.

<u>IVs</u>

Israeli perceptions of Hamas ideology:

Hamas is highly ideologically driven. More religiously motivated than PLO, but both are absolutist. Hamas is a blend of religious and nationalist ideology.

In the 1970s and early 80s, Israel did not see Hamas's precursor as militaristic. Israel officially recognized it as a terrorist organization in 1988.

Israeli perceptions of Hamas governance function:

Hamas controls violence in Gaza.

Israeli perceptions of Hamas leadership targetability:

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perception of Israel's internal and external constraints:

Israel's leadership knows well that it is unable to cause high civilian harm due to high constraints. This limits its military options.

Rabin argued that the PA police force could bypass Israel's constraints. "the Palestinian security forces will fight Hamas without the constraints of Btselem, Israel's Supreme Court and "Mothers against Silence" (basically internal constraints). This turned out to be wrong.

Why Operation Defensive Shield?

Why Disengagement?

Short and long-term strategy towards Hamas (and why?):

Short-term management "Hasdara and Hudna." Keeping Hamas governing capacity high is key to management. Implementing a plan to put the PLO in charge of Gaza is not considered feasible. Israel never considered real concessions to Hamas, only a variation in the intensity of carrots and sticks.

Balance of power with Hamas:

Israel is asymmetrically stronger.

- **Dr. Eran Lerman 6/17/2019**

Bio: Dr. Lerman was deputy director for foreign policy and international affairs at the National Security Council in the Israeli Prime Minister's Office. He held senior posts in IDF Military Intelligence for over 20 years. He also served for eight years as director of the Israel and Middle East office of the American Jewish Committee. He teaches in the Middle East studies program at Shalem College in Jerusalem, and in post-graduate programs at Tel Aviv University and the National Defense College. He is an expert on Israel's foreign relations, and on the Middle East. He holds a Ph.D. from the London School of Economics, and a mid-career MPA from Harvard University.

IVs

Israeli perceptions of Hamas ideology:

Hamas is highly ideologically driven.

No on in Israel's government, IDF or defense establishment thinks Hamas can be moderate enough to trust peace with. "Their key agenda is to kill you."

Israeli perceptions of Hamas governance function:

Hamas controls violence in Gaza. Pre-2006 it was regarded as purely terrorist. Post 2006, it is the de-facto government in Gaza.

Israeli perceptions of Hamas leadership targetability:

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perception of Israel's internal and external constraints:

In general, very high. A bit lower under Trump, but Israel sees a need to hedge. Israel will act despite high constraints when a vital interest is threatened. For example, Obama gave orders no to launch a ground incursion in 2014 but Israel decided to anyway.

Why Operation Defensive Shield?

Defeat terrorists.

Why Disengagement?

Not due to U.S. pressure. The argument that it was due to corruption is unconvincing. Likely due to demographics concerns.

Sharon promised a massive response to rockets. Later his response was weak. This was due to domestic political considerations, notably not wanting his policy to be seen as a failure. Also, the PA was still nominally in control of Gaza at the time.

Olmert did not follow through with heavy force either.

Short and long-term strategy towards Hamas (and why?):

Israel pursued short-term deterrence towards Hamas. It killed Hamas leaders but stopped when there was "good behavior." After the Ashdod bombing in 2003, Israel ramped up its targeted killing strategy. The goal was offensive denial, "to degrade their capabilities."

Hesitation about the effectiveness of targeted assassinations. When Israel killed Abu Jihad, Fatah fell apart as a military threat. When it killed Mussawi, Nassrallah replaced him and was a more formidable military threat.

Hamas victory in 2006 elections and 2007 coup came as a surprise to Israel.

The goal of Cast Lead was to create short-medium term deterrence. This logic continued with 2012, 2014 conflicts.

Israel can only convincingly threat Hamas's survival with a ground incursion.

Triangular relationship between Israel, Egypt and Hamas. Israel wants Egypt "Hamas's CEO in Gaza." Israel fought extra weeks in 2014 so that Egypt, not Turkey, involved itself in the

ceasefire and subsequent conflict management. Israel's force is directed to convince Egypt to convince Hamas that Israel is serious about overthrowing it.

Long-term Israel would like to see bottom-up uprising to overthrow Hamas.

In the next round, Israel will likely launch a ground operation and take prisoners in order to create more power4ful deterrence.

Balance of power with Hamas:

Israel is asymmetrically stronger.

- **Brigadier General Shalom Harari 6/17/2019 (telephone)**

Bio: Brigadier General (Res.) Shalom Harari is a Research Associate at the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT) at the Interdisciplinary Center (IDC) Herzliya. He served in the territories for twenty years as a senior advisor on Palestinian affairs for Israel's Defense Ministry. He served in the IDF Military Intelligence Research Department and Collection Department. In 1983 he was appointed the Head of the West Bank's Palestinian Affairs Department of the Israeli Civil Administration. From 1984 until 1997, he served as the head of the Department of Palestinian Affairs in the Ministry of Defense.

IVs

Israeli perceptions of Hamas ideology:

Hamas is highly ideologically driven. Pre-1988 it was mostly a social and religious organization (Dawa) It was not seen as militant at that time.

Israel first began to see Hamas as a military threat in 1988. COGAT and SIBAT were the first to raise the alarm.

No one in government or mainstream politics thinks peace with Hamas is possible. Only a "hudna."

Israeli perceptions of Hamas governance function:

Hamas controls violence in Gaza.

Israeli perceptions of Hamas leadership targetability:

There was a significant intelligence gap. It was not until 1995 that Israel's Shabak had a full map of Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood.

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perception of Israel's internal and external constraints:

High internal constraints. High external constraints.

Israel cannot take high casualties. Iron Dome makes it more difficult for Israel to justify or rally the public behind a major offensive. Barak called it a system to "prevent wars."

Only the demonstration of massive, recurring attacks on Tel Aviv would create enough popular support for a truly decisive victory strategy.

Israel also needs a causus belli to show the international community.

For example, Israel's Supreme Court forced the return of 500 Gazans, including Hamas and PIJ militants that had been exiled to Lebanon. While in Lebanon they forged a relationship with Hezbollah and became more dangerous.

Rabin argued that arming the PLO police force would bypass internal constraints on counterterrorism, claiming the 'PLO police forces would round up terrorists without having to worry about international condemnation or the Supreme Court.'

Why Operation Defensive Shield?

Militarily crush terrorist groups and dismantle their ability to carry out attacks.

Why Disengagement?

Short and long-term strategy towards Hamas (and why?):

Israel wants Hamas weak but governing. This has been the policy since 2007. Hamas is Israel's "address."

2008/9 created some deterrence. Protective Edge in 2014 created more deterrence than most give it credit for, over four years of relative quiet.

Netanyahu is managing the situation well, but flare-ups are the price.

Balance of power with Hamas:

Israel could demolish Gaza and kill Hamas leadership, but this would require a painful occupation of Gaza to clear out terror cells. Hamas and PIJ have created a formidable hornet's nest inside Gaza, including internal tactical tunnels which pose a major threat. Israel would take casualties that it could not justify internally. "Israel is not Russia and Gaza is not Chechnya."

- **Dr. Efraim Karsh 6/19/2019**

Bio: Professor Efraim Karsh is the Director of the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies. Professor Emeritus of Middle East and Mediterranean Studies at King's College London; Professor of Political Science at Bar-Ilan University; Principal Research Fellow (and former Director) of the Middle East Forum (Philadelphia), where he also edits the scholarly journal Middle East Quarterly; founding editor of the scholarly journal Israel Affairs, and founding general editor of a Routledge book series on Israeli History, Politics and Society, with over 60 books published.

<u>IVs</u>

Israeli perceptions of Hamas ideology:

Hamas is highly ideologically driven.

Hamas will never accept two-state solution.

Israeli perceptions of Hamas governance function:

Hamas controls violence in Gaza.

Israeli perceptions of Hamas leadership targetability:

Harder to target due to lack of Israeli military presence.

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perception of Israel's internal and external constraints:

Israel faces high internal and external constraints. Cited the Rabin quote about the Supreme Court as a constraint on Israel's ability to conduct military operations, pursue victory.

Israel has only a right-wing. Left-wing politics is dead since the Second Intifada proved the Oslo "land for peace" paradigm a failure and the rise of Hamas in Gaza did the same for the Disengagement logic.

Why Operation Defensive Shield?

Defeat and dismantle terrorists.

Why Disengagement?

Many say it was to get the Courts and media to end corruption investigations (they did end following the announcement of the Disengagement plan.) Goals were to increase domestic legitimacy and to increase international legitimacy for attacking terrorists in Gaza if Israel withdrew its population and military.

Short and long-term strategy towards Hamas (and why?):

Management. Israel must "beat them up strong enough that quiet lasts for 10 years, not two years." Most Israelis would sign a peace deal tomorrow if it was truly credible.

Cast Lead and other operations since then had the goal of keeping Hamas weak but still in power and creating short-term deterrence.

Balance of power with Hamas:

Israel is asymmetrically stronger. Israel has the full ability to destroy Hamas but does not due to a paradigm shift starting with Oslo. Israel can crush a Hamas insurgency in Gaza in one year but has no desire to rule.

- **Dr. Ophir Falk 7/7/2019**

Bio: Dr. Ophir Falk is a lecturer and research fellow at the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism at the Interdisciplinary Center, Herzliya, Israel where he has researched counter terrorism policies, legal precedence and suicide terrorism. He is currently a Visiting Researcher at Georgetown University. Falk served as a leading member of a counter-terrorism team

commissioned by the International Olympic Committee. He is an author of; 'Suicide Terror: Understanding and Confronting the Threat' published by John Wiley & Sons and holds a BA in International Relations, degrees in law (LLB), Business Administration (MBA), and a PhD. in International Relations.

IVs

Israeli perceptions of Hamas ideology:

Dedicated terrorists. Highly ideologically driven. Israel only attempts to secure short-term bargains. Israel views a long-term peace deal as impossible and does not attempt to secure one.

Israeli perceptions of Hamas governance function:

Hamas controls violence in Gaza since 2007.

Israeli perceptions of Hamas leadership targetability:

Harder to target from 1993-2003 due to lack of Israeli military presence. Israel gained intelligence breakthroughs making Hamas leadership much easier to target by 2003. After the Disengagement; 2005-the present, Harder to target due to lack of a military presence on the ground and Hamas use of human shields and hidden subterranean complexes, but easier than from 1993-2003 due to technology and HUMINT breakthroughs, so moderate for the last period.

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perception of Israel's internal and external constraints:

Israel faces very high internal constraints and generally high external constraints. Internal constraints have the highest impact on constraining Israel's use of force and pursuit of diplomatic victory.

Cites Rabin's quote on Oslo process allowing the PLO to fight terrorism "without B'tselem or the Supreme Court."

Sharon planned Operation Defensive Shield in advance but had to wait until a national tragedy occurred that reduced mostly internal but also external constraints enough to launch the hardline operation. After the 2002 Dolphinarium suicide bombing attack, Sharon stated "restraint is an element of strength." It was not until later in 2002, after the Netanya Passover Suicide bombing that he launched the operation.

Israeli strategy pre-Oslo (and why?):

Israel had a unified strategy of not bargaining with the PLO or Hamas. It considered both groups to be terrorists that cannot be bargained with. Israel pursued hardline strategies against the PLO. Hamas was not prioritized as a security threat until its 1993 wave of attacks following the Oslo process with the PLO. Israel saw Hamas as a social organization "like Shas." Pre-1988.[839]

[839] Shas is a Jewish ultraorthodox religious party and social network.

Why Operation Defensive Shield?

Israel did not differentiate between the PLO and Hamas in this operation. The goal was both denial and to demonstrate Israel's ability to decisively defeat the PLO and Hamas.

In 2004 Israel shifted its strategy towards Hamas to decisive victory. When Israel took out Yassin it was the first time it stopped differentiating between Hamas spiritual, political and military leadership.

Why Disengagement?

Not a concession. Boost to Israel's denial capability. Boost to Israel's international legitimacy, not purely security. This is shown by the withdrawal of three settlements that were geographically beneficial to Israel's security.

Sharon is a security hawk but not a territorial maximialist who believes in "Greater Israel." He is a "Mapainik."[840]

Short and long-term strategy towards Hamas (and why?):

The goal of targeted killings against Hamas was denial and to create short-term deterrence. The most effective ones targeted Hamas senior political leadership, Rantisi and Yassin in 2004.

Israel has not active policy to use force to make Hamas more moderate ideologically with the goal of negotiating peace.

Cast Lead goal was to create short-term deterrence and denial.

Israel believes that peace is only possible with Hamas and the PLO after they are fully isolated, most importantly by regional powers. In essence, only decisive diplomatic victory can make Hamas and the PLO moderate enough to negotiate with. This follows Jabotinsky's 1923 "Iron Wall" reasoning. Only the Palestinian perception of Israel's invincibility can make them moderate enough for Israel to consider concessions to secure a peace deal.

Balance of power with Hamas:

Israel is asymmetrically stronger. Israel has the full ability to destroy Hamas.

Total responses (Percentage breakdown)[841]

<u>Perception of level of Hamas ideological drive:</u>

1987-1995:

- More pragmatic: 0/22

[840] A Mapainik is someone who stems from the Mapai (early Labor party) ideological roots. They are more dovish than Likudniks who stem from Herut ideological roots.

[841] I coded by the administration in power's perceptions at the time. Willingness to cooperate but not to make peace is coded as ideologically driven. The views reflect the interviewee's description of leadership's perceptions, not their own.

- More ideologically driven: 22/22

1995-2002:

- More pragmatic: 0/22
- More ideologically driven: 22/22

Defensive Shield 2003-2004:

- More pragmatic: 0/22
- More ideologically driven: 22/22

Disengagement 2004-2007:

- More pragmatic: 0/22
- More ideologically driven: 22/22

Hamas takeover of Gaza 2007-2009:

- More pragmatic: 0/22
- More ideologically driven: 22/22

2009-Present

- More pragmatic: 0/22
- More ideologically driven: 22/22

Perception of level of Hamas governance function:

Hamas takeover of Gaza 2007-2009:

- High: 15/22
- Medium: 7/22
- Low: 0/22

2009-Present

- High: 15/22
- Medium: 7/22
- Low: 0/22

Perception of ability to target and destroy Hamas leadership

1987-1995:

- High: 0/22
- Medium: 4/22
- Low: 8/22

1995-2002:

- High: 6/22

- Medium: 3/22
- Low: 0/22

Defensive Shield 2003-2004:

- High: 18/22
- Medium: 4/22
- Low: 0/22

Disengagement 2004-2007:

- High: 12/22
- Medium: 10/22
- Low: 0/22

Hamas takeover of Gaza 2007-2009:

- High: 12/22
- Medium: 10/22
- Low: 0/22

2009-Present

- High: 5/22
- Medium: 17/22
- Low: 5/22

<u>Perception of Israel's internal and external constraints:</u>

1987-1995:

- High: 22/0
- Medium: 0/22
- Low: 0/22

1995-2002:

- High: 10/22
- Medium: 12/22
- Low: 0/22

Defensive Shield 2003-2004:

- High: 0/22
- Medium: 12/22
- Low: 10/22

Disengagement 2004-2007:

- High: 10/22

- Medium: 12/22
- Low: 0/22

Hamas takeover of Gaza 2007-2009:

- High: 10/22
- Medium: 12/22
- Low: 0/22

2009-Present

- High: 17/22
- Medium: 5/22
- Low: 0/22

Chapters 5 and 6

Taliban and bin Laden Interviews

The following are the results from interviews with 8 U.S. political experts, academics, practitioners and senior political and military advisers and operators. (*Not every question was answered by every interviewee).*

- **Dr. Seth Jones 5/22/19**

Bio: Prior to joining CSIS, Dr. Jones was the director of the International Security and Defense Policy Center at the RAND Corporation. He also served as representative for the commander, U.S. Special Operations Command, to the assistant secretary of defense for special operations. Before that, he was a plans officer and adviser to the commanding general, U.S. Special Operations Forces, in Afghanistan (Combined Forces Special Operations Component Command–Afghanistan). In 2014, Dr. Jones served on a congressionally mandated panel that reviewed the FBI's implementation of counterterrorism recommendations contained in the 9/11 Commission Report. Dr. Jones specializes in counterterrorism, counterinsurgency, unconventional warfare, and covert action, including a focus on al-Qaedaand ISIS. Dr. Jones is a graduate of Bowdoin College and received his M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Chicago.

<u>IVs</u>

U.S. perceptions of Taliban ideology:

Views were pretty consistent that the Taliban was extremist. The refusal to hand over bin Laden confirmed views of Taliban ideological drive.

Generally, over the past 20 years: highly ideological goal extreme version of "Deobandi Islam" that yearns to establish an Islamic Emirate.

Recently, Trump administration thinks they are willing to negotiate. Khalilizad (in charge of negotiating) thinks they are more pragmatic. This in the minority. The ideological divide makes the success of negotiations unlikely.

They have worked with groups that have plotted attacks on the U.S. but they themselves do not.

U.S. perceptions of Taliban governance function:

De facto government from 1996-2001

U.S. perceptions of Taliban leadership targetability:

U.S. perceptions of al-Qaedaideology:

Highly ideologically driven

U.S. perceptions of al-Qaedagovernance function:

None.

U.S. perceptions of al-Qaedaleadership targetability:

Increased over the duration of the conflict.

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perceptions of U.S. internal and external constraints:

Perceptions of Taliban's relative threat:

In 2000, minimal caring about the Taliban. Efforts to target al-Qaedaleaders in Afghanistan.

Perceptions of al Qaeda's relative threat:

U.S. strategy towards the Taliban 2001-2006:

Primary focus and concern of U.S. strategy in the region is counterterrorism.

U.S. strategy towards the Taliban 2006-2008:

Counterterrorism.

U.S. strategy towards the Taliban 2008-2011:

Counterterrorism.

U.S. strategy towards the Taliban 2011-2017:

Counterterrorism.

U.S. began to change views on negotiations when political officials assessed that they were unlikely to defeat the Taliban on the battlefield, around 2011. Taliban victory not viable, U.S. victory not viable. Some push from Obama, real push from Trump for negotiations. US public war weariness. Many in administration believe Taliban would violate terms of negotiation.

U.S. strategy towards the Taliban 2017-Present:

Counterterrorism. At this point, 19 years of supporting government where if anything the Taliban is slightly gaining. 2. Reasons: incompetent security forces and poor governance.

What will Taliban's relationship be with terrorist groups?

Do we trust them enough to leave entirely? Would keeping some forces for CT be a sticking point?

Would Taliban be willing to do in 2019 what it wasn't in 2001? Potential 2 state?

All assume a more pragmatic Taliban.

U.S. strategy towards the al-Qaedapre-2001:

Counterterrorism.

U.S. strategy towards the al-Qaeda2001-2003:

Counterterrorism.

U.S. strategy towards the al-Qaeda2003-2011:

Counterterrorism.

U.S. strategy towards the al-Qaeda2011-Present:

Counterterrorism.

- **Jason Campbell 7/24/19**

Bio: Jason H. Campbell is a policy researcher at the RAND Corporation, where he focuses on issues of international security, counterinsurgency, intelligence, and measuring progress in post-conflict reconstruction. From June 2016 through September 2018, he served as country director for Afghanistan in the Office of the Secretary of Defense for Policy. His most recent work has concentrated on reconciliation and reintegration efforts in Afghanistan, the development of the Afghan national security forces, and the United States' transition in Iraq. In a previous position at the Brookings Institution, Campbell co-authored The Iraq Index and established The Afghanistan Index and The Pakistan Index projects. Campbell earned his M.A. in international affairs from Catholic University.

IVs

U.S. perceptions of Taliban ideology:

Pre 9/11 split but generally pragmatic. Post 9/11 until around 2008 seen as highly ideologically driven "same as al Qaeda." 2008, General Doug Lute, Bush's war Czar, evaluation, starts to recognize Taliban as different from al Qaeda. Still uncertainty due to fluid loyalties regarding jihadist ideology to attack or pragmatic to rule Afghanistan. Taliban was never designated as a terrorist organization.

U.S. perceptions of Taliban governance function:

1996-2001 de facto government

U.S. perceptions of Taliban leadership targetability:

Fluctuated but always constrained by Pakistan safe haven.

U.S. perceptions of al-Qaedaideology:

Extremely ideologically driven. Archetypal terrorist like ISIS, cannot negotiate, will always try to attack.

U.S. perceptions of al-Qaedagovernance function:

Low.

U.S. perceptions of al-Qaedaleadership targetability:

Increasingly high for al-Qaedacentral, culminating in 2011 assassination of bin Laden. Difficult for affiliates due to global spread.

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perceptions of U.S. internal and external constraints:

Support for the war effort in Afghanistan steadily diminished. Pakistani duplicity and safe haven/support for the Taliban was a problem. Towards al Qaeda, high popular support for drone strikes and high value targeting, minimal external constraints.

Perceptions of Taliban's relative threat:

Low from 2002-2005. Rising in 2006.

Perceptions of al Qaeda's relative threat:

U.S. strategy towards the Taliban 2001-2006:

Decisive victory. Thought this was mostly accomplished.

U.S. strategy towards the Taliban 2006-2008:

Management.

U.S. strategy towards the Taliban 2008-2011:

Hurt them enough militarily so that they will surrender. Beginning of feelers for diplomacy (Holbrooke). Petraeus no negotiation. COIN designed to defeat Taliban but not through dismantling them in all of Afghanistan, just securing priority zones.

U.S. strategy towards the Taliban 2011-2017:

Management

U.S. strategy towards the Taliban 2017-Present:

First formal codification in strategy document of goal to negotiate with the Taliban.

U.S. strategy towards the al-Qaedapre-2001:

Minor attention.

U.S. strategy towards the al-Qaeda2001-2003:

Decisive victory

U.S. strategy towards the al-Qaeda2003-2011:

Decisive victory

U.S. strategy towards the al-Qaeda2011-Present:

Decisive victory and scales of management

- **Dr. "A" 8/8/19**

Bio: Intelligence Analyst for the U.S. Army with a focus on Afghanistan.

IVs

U.S. perceptions of Taliban ideology:

There have always been voices in each administration that said the Taliban was pragmatic. There have also always been voices saying its highly ideologically driven "same as al Qaeda." The biggest change in who had the ear of the President came in 2016 when Donald Trump empowered those who argued for the Taliban's pragmatism.

Obama administration eventually sought negotiations in Doha in 2013 but not in earnest due to having many preconditions relating to democracy and human rights that the Taliban rejected outright.

In December 2001, the Bush administration clearly saw the Taliban as indistinguishable from al-Qaedain terms of ideological drive.

U.S. perceptions of Taliban governance function:

1996-2001 de facto government, starting in 2006 Taliban had territory to govern for the first time since 2001, in rural areas in Afghanistan.

Taliban does protect NGOs operating in areas that it controls. This shows that it can uphold the stipulations of a negotiation if it wanted to. Since 2017, the administration listens to the position that the Taliban want to be the government in Afghanistan, not perpetual insurgents.

U.S. perceptions of Taliban leadership targetability:

Fluctuated but always constrained by Pakistan safe haven. From 2010-2012 increased targeting ability in Pakistan "for classified reasons."

U.S. perceptions of al-Qaedaideology:

Unchanging view that they are extremely ideologically driven, will always try to attack.

U.S. perceptions of al-Qaedagovernance function:

Low.

U.S. perceptions of al-Qaedaleadership targetability:

Targetability decreased after escape of al-Qaedaleadership from Afghanistan in 2001/2002.

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perceptions of U.S. internal and external constraints:

Leaders feared future domestic ire if they increased troop commitments. Pakistani duplicity and safe haven/support for the Taliban was a problem. Towards al-Qaedacentral high popular support for drone strikes and high value targeting, minimal internal constraints, especially in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, but moderate external ones due to sovereignty issues and refuge for many but not all al-Qaedaand Taliban leaders in Pakistan. Towards al-Qaedaaffiliates, generally low internal constraints and higher external ones due to sovereignty issues. Harder to justify need to violate sovereignty after bin Laden raid.

Perceptions of Taliban's relative threat:

Highest immediately after 9/11 due to view of strong ties to Bin Laden. Lower from 2002-2006. Rise as insurgency stiffens. From 2014 until the present, Taliban can contest rural areas but is unlikely to be able to overthrow Afghan government.

Perceptions of al Qaeda's relative threat:

Pre 9/11, "lack of imagination over the potential devastation a terrorist attack could create." Post 9/11, always high but diminishing with time. The 2011 Bin Laden Raid was a turning point that suggested reduced but still high threat.

U.S. strategy towards the Taliban 2001-2006:

Decisive victory, U.S. surprised by its own success.

U.S. strategy towards the Taliban 2006-2008:

Management in the form of counter terrorism and COIN operations but mostly building ANSF capabilities.

U.S. strategy towards the Taliban 2008-2011:

Hurt them enough militarily so that they will unilaterally surrender and accept any terms offered.. Beginning of feelers for diplomacy Petraeus no negotiation. COIN designed to defeat Taliban but not through dismantling them in all of Afghanistan, just securing priority zones.

U.S. strategy towards the Taliban 2011-2017:

Schizophrenic between democracy promotion and national security.

U.S. strategy towards the Taliban 2017-Present:

First real effort to negotiate with the Taliban. Decreased U.S. pressure for human rights and democracy guarantees. Loosened ROEs.

U.S. strategy towards the al-Qaedapre-2001:

Minor attention

U.S. strategy towards the al-Qaeda2001-2003:

Decisive victory

U.S. strategy towards the al-Qaeda2003-2011:

Decisive victory, Obama more "vigilant" than preceding and following administrations.

U.S. strategy towards the al-Qaeda2011-Present:

Open-ended, part of strategy to counter all global terrorist organizations, including ISIS. Generally seen as aggressive containment. No negotiations. Another spectacular attack could lead the U.S. to launch a more aggressive, potentially full decisive victory campaign.

- **Mr. "D" 8/8/19**

Bio: Intelligence Analyst for the U.S. Army with a focus on Afghanistan.

IVs

U.S. perceptions of Taliban ideology:

High ideological drive "like al-Qaedaimmediately following 9/11. Intelligence community was consistent that the Taliban was pragmatically driven since 2006. Policy makers did not see it that way until 2012. The Obama administration's pursuit of Afghan-Taliban reconciliation in Doha 2012 was a major shift but ended up being "a no go." The Current administration is starting to see the Taliban to be "as trustworthy as any other actor in Afghanistan."

U.S. perceptions of Taliban governance function:

1996-2001 de facto government

U.S. perceptions of Taliban leadership targetability:

Fluctuated but always constrained by Pakistan safe haven. Mostly limited after most leadership escaped into Pakistan in 2002. Exception of Mansour assassination in 2016.

U.S. perceptions of al-Qaedaideology:

Extremely ideologically driven. Archetypal terrorist, cannot negotiate, will always try to attack, cannot be deterred.

U.S. perceptions of al-Qaedagovernance function:

None.

U.S. perceptions of al-Qaedaleadership targetability:

Increasingly high for al-Qaedacentral, unblinking eye in Afghanistan due to rapid increases in ISR and sensor-shooter loop. Lower for affiliates due to sovereignty issues.

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perceptions of U.S. internal and external constraints:

Relatively high external constraints stemming from sovereignty issues. Relatively low internal constraints, administration can manipulate public opinion, high public willingness to send troops to fight, "warrior caste" volunteer force shields them from the effects of war, widespread public cheering after bin Laden raid. Internal constraints are still high because leaders understand the public to be highly casualty averse. U.S. did not lead the attack against bin Laden at Tora Bora in 2001 due to too small a footprint, not enough ISR and high casualty aversion.

Perceptions of Taliban's relative threat:

No direct threat to the homeland from the Taliban, only secondary threat from harboring al Qaeda. Threat to U.S. forces in Afghanistan: 2002-2005 Taliban seen as vanquished, rose steadily after 2006.

Perceptions of al Qaeda's relative threat:

Pre 9/11 lack of imagination, seen as dangerous for U.S. missions abroad, not an existential threat. Post 9/11 seen as an extreme, perhaps even existential threat. This has decreased following decades of degrading al-Qaedaand no spectacular terrorist attack succeeding on U.S. soil. However, fear that any breathing space could allow al-Qaedato regain its high threat levels.

U.S. strategy towards the Taliban 2001-2006:

Decisive victory. Thought this was mostly accomplished.

U.S. strategy towards the Taliban 2006-2008:

Management through COIN. Switch to COIN under Bush, continued with Obama surge.

U.S. strategy towards the Taliban 2008-2011:

COIN designed to defeat Taliban, secure unconditional surrender.

U.S. strategy towards the Taliban 2011-2017:

COIN to secure total surrender but with steady withdrawal of troops. Surge in large part due to institutional carry over, "hey it worked in Iraq." Surge was also schizophrenic. The U.S. media and intelligencia talked almost primarily about Afghanistan metrics in terms of human rights and liberal values, not security.

U.S. strategy towards the Taliban 2017-Present:

First real push to negotiate with the Taliban. Use carrots and sticks to secure stability in order to withdraw.

U.S. strategy towards the al-Qaedapre-2001:

Minor attention.

U.S. strategy towards the al-Qaeda2001-2003:

Decisive victory, GWOT is due to al Qaeda. It is broad and open ended: See 2001 AUMF, suggesting the perception of a generational struggle and the impossibility of a negotiated settlement.

U.S. strategy towards the al-Qaeda2003-2011:

Decisive victory. Al-Qaedastrategy did not factor at all into the Bush administration's decision to invade Iraq, despite sending Secretary of State Colin Powell to make that connection in public in his 2003 United Nations address which he has subsequently expressed contrition over.

Kill them "whack-a-mole" wherever the threat goes.

Killing bin Laden seen as mostly symbolic, did not change perceptions of threat or the U.S. strategy.

U.S. strategy towards the al-Qaeda2011-Present:

Aggressive containment, kill and assist local forces to kill where possible. (no major shift since 2001. This is unlikely to change.

- **Peter Bergen 9/19/19**

Bio: British-American journalist and author pf several best-selling books about al-Qaedaand the Taliban. He is CNN's national security analyst, New America's vice president, and a professor of practice at Arizona State University. He produced the first television interview with Osama bin Laden in 1997.

IVs

U.S. perceptions of Taliban ideology:

Pre 9/11 the U.S. was largely ignorant of Taliban ideology and structure. They are a secretive group, high illiteracy so not much written work. The U.S. closed its Afghanistan embassy in 1989, this limited the amount of knowledge they had of Afghanistan's rulers going forward.

Mullah Omar was a true believer in jihadist ideology, but immediately after 9/11 the U.S. had very little knowledge of this. The U.S. did see the Taliban as ideologically driven and not different from al-Qaedaimmediately after 9/11.

The Abbottabad documents captured in the Bin Laden raid in May 2011 showed a tight relationship between the Taliban and al-Qaedaleaders (bin Laden and Tayib Agha), but this did

not suggest joint planning. There have always been a portion of the Taliban that resented al Qaeda.

U.S. perceptions of Taliban governance function:

De facto government from 1996-2001.

U.S. perceptions of Taliban leadership targetability:

Increased drastically in 2008 due to technological advances in the drone program and President Bush's desire to make progress before he left office.

U.S. perceptions of al-Qaedaideology:

Always maximalist, driven to jihad. This has not changed.

U.S. perceptions of al-Qaedagovernance function:

The U.S. always saw al-Qaedacentral as having no governance function or desires. Some al-Qaedaaffiliates are interested in local conflicts and potentially governing locally.

U.S. perceptions of al-Qaedaleadership targetability:

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perceptions of U.S. internal and external constraints:

The U.S. administrations are minimally constrained in their ability to use force. Most of the decisions, whether to tighten or loosen ROEs are self-imposed, not pushed by domestic or international politics considerations. The U.S. would need over 300,000, a ratio of 20:100,000 for decisive victory over the Taliban. However, There was no domestic push for annihilating the Taliban. Perhaps another "9/11" emanating from Afghanistan and the FATA would have changed that. The Obama administration shifted resources to Afghanistan after campaigning on Afghanistan as "the good war."

The Obama administration originally wanted to wind down the War on Terror but the Detroit underwear bombing attempt and the capture of Najibullah Azizi who plotted to bomb the New York City Subway convinced Obama to increase actions against al Qaeda.

The U.S. military was weak and risk averse pre 9/11. This impacted the way it chose to operate immediately following 9/11. Central Command Commander Tommy Franks was not the caliber of general who would be in that important of a position today, not the quality or intelligence of Petraeus or McChrystal. Upper echelon command was risk averse. This risk aversion led the U.S. to use mainly CIA which was a less risk averse institution.

As a Colonel, Mattis pushed his marines to take the offensive on his own initiative when he commanded the 7th Marine Regiment in Afghanistan in November 2001.

The U.S. military really began to build institutional expertise and come into its own in fighting terrorism and COIN in 2005 in Iraq. This was led by Joint Special Operations Command.

Perceptions of Taliban's relative threat:

Pre 9/11 there was alarm over the Taliban's sheltering of al-Qaedafollowing the African embassy bombings. This increased in 2000 following the bombing of the USS Cole. In general the U.S. sees the Taliban as locally focused, not intent on attacking the U.S. outside of Afghanistan.

The Taliban became more threatening to U.S. personnel in Afghanistan, learning from the Iraq insurgency that developed in 2004.

Perceptions of al Qaeda's relative threat:

Pre 9/11 there was alarm over embassy bombings. This increased in 2000 following the bombing of the USS Cole.

U.S. strategy towards the Taliban 2001-2006:

Immediately after 9/11, CIA station chief Grenier met with the Taliban second in command to discuss overthrowing Mullah Omar but nothing came of the meeting.

Primary focus and concern of U.S. strategy in the region is counterterrorism. No negotiations at this time. The U.S. did not negotiate when the Taliban offered surrender in December 2001. The U.S. did not want to talk to them "while the towers were still smoking."

U.S. strategy towards the Taliban 2006-2008:

Counterterrorism.

U.S. strategy towards the Taliban 2008-2011:

Counterterrorism.

U.S. strategy towards the Taliban 2011-2017:

Counterterrorism and containment.

U.S. began to change views on negotiations following the decision to negotiate over the release of Bowe Bergdahl. The high level Taliban released in exchange for Bergdahl facilitated further negotiation.

U.S. strategy towards the Taliban 2017-Present:

Containment. Open to negotiations, but little optimism. The U.S. primarily wants the Taliban to end safe haven for al Qaeda.

The U.S. negotiations are based on a phased withdrawal that belies the need for trusting the Taliban not to renege on its word and start to allow safe havens to develop. The U.S. can still credibly threaten to return military to Afghanistan even post withdrawal. The Taliban saw how the U.S. withdrew from Iraq in 2011 and then returned in 2014.

U.S. strategy towards the al-Qaedapre-2001:

Management, minimal attention.

U.S. strategy towards the al-Qaeda2001-2003:

Decisive victory over al-Qaedacentral, defensive denial.

Following 9/11, the U.S. undertook major improvements in homeland security. These included: a major increase in the number of people on the no-fly list and the Terrorist Identities Datamart Environment (TIDE) and greatly increased spending in intelligence. Public vigilance also increased the U.S. ability to defend the homeland.

U.S. strategy towards the al-Qaeda2003-2011:

Decisive victory over al-Qaedacentral, slow push to defeat affiliates, defensive denial.

The Obama administration ramped up drone strikes in Yemen and Pakistan.

U.S. strategy towards the al-Qaeda2011-Present:

Decisive victory over al-Qaedacentral, slow push to defeat affiliates, defensive denial.

The U.S. approach to fighting al-Qaedahas been relatively consistent throughout three administrations.

- **Bruce Riedel**

Bio: Bruce Riedel is a senior fellow and director of the Brookings Intelligence Project, part of the Brookings Center for 22st Century Security and Intelligence. In addition, Riedel serves as a senior fellow in the Center for Middle East Policy. He retired in 2006 after 30 years of service at the Central Intelligence Agency. He was a senior advisor on South Asia and the Middle East to the last four presidents of the United States in the staff of the National Security Council at the White House. He was also deputy assistant secretary of defense for the Near East and South Asia at the Pentagon and a senior advisor at the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in Brussels. In January 2009, President Barack Obama asked him to chair a review of American policy towards Afghanistan and Pakistan, the results of which the president announced in a speech on March 27, 2009.

IVs

U.S. perceptions of Taliban ideology:

More pragmatically than ideologically driven. Decision to shelter Bin Laden was in exchange for al Qaeda's financial and military support. Al-Qaedakilled the Taliban's arch enemy Ahmad Shah Masoud two days before September 11, 2001. Taliban ideology is likely what is keeping them from renouncing al-Qaedain 2019. This ideology has grown over the past 18 years of sheltering al Qaeda.

U.S. perceptions of Taliban governance function:

The Taliban had a strong but not perfect monopoly of violence over Afghanistan by 2001. They had no governance function from 2002-2006. They had high governance function in the territory

that they controlled following their resurgence which made up significant portions of southern Afghanistan and other rural areas.

U.S. perceptions of Taliban leadership targetability:

The U.S. ability to target senior Taliban leadership was low. Mullah Omar was elusive. President Bush increased the U.S. ability to target Taliban leadership in 2008 when it stopped giving Pakistan advanced warning of a U.S. strike on its territory. Targeting the Taliban was of lower priority than al-Qaedafor the Obama administration and then Iraq for the Bush administration.

U.S. perceptions of al-Qaedaideology:

Highly ideologically driven.

U.S. perceptions of al-Qaedagovernance function:

No governance function, no desire for any.

U.S. perceptions of al-Qaedaleadership targetability:

Drone technology was rudimentary in 2001, increased exponentially. Shift in targeting in late Bush administration and throughout the Obama administration, especially as these administrations stopped revealing imminent strikes to Pakistan. 90 percent of al-Qaedaleadership was in Pakistan.

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perceptions of U.S. internal and external constraints:

President Bush felt externally constrained from carrying out strikes in Pakistan. President Obama withdrew from Iraq due to domestic pressure and announced a timeline for withdrawal from Afghanistan, harming the campaign, due to unpopularity among democrats. Vice President Biden was one of the most vocal critics of Obama's decision to surge troops to Afghanistan.

Perceptions of Taliban's relative threat:

The Taliban was never perceived as a threat to the U.S. homeland. By 2005 and certainly by the end of President Bush's first term, the Taliban was seen as very dangerous in Afghanistan.

Perceptions of al Qaeda's relative threat:

Pre 9/11, President Bush did not see al-Qaedaas a national security threat, only as a threat to U.S. overseas assets. Since 9/11, each U.S. administration saw al-Qaedaas a significant threat. Al-Qaedacentral was considered decimated by 2013. 2019 is the first year that al-Qaedaleader Zawahiri did not issue a threat to the U.S. This signifies that al-Qaedais defunct.

U.S. strategy towards the Taliban 2001-2006:

Defeating the Taliban was seen as a necessary step on the way to defeating al-Qaedabut was never in itself a priority. From 2002-2005 the U.S. saw the Taliban as largely defeated.

U.S. strategy towards the Taliban 2006-2008:

President Bush's administration and CENTCOM advised surging roughly 30,000 troops to stabilize Afghanistan for the incoming Obama administration.

U.S. strategy towards the Taliban 2008-2011:

Obama surged the minimal figure cited by CENTCOM to stabilize Afghanistan in February 2009 and then in November 2009 he surged approximately the number recommended by the Pentagon to convince the Taliban that they faced defeat in order to compel them to negotiate.

U.S. strategy towards the Taliban 2011-2017:

President Obama sought to wind down U.S. troop presence. Domestic political concerns drove what turned out to be s poor strategic decision to make timetables known. "The Taliban can take a couple years off and then get back to business."

The U.S. set up the Doha office to build a line of communication to negotiate with the Taliban but never pursued talks in a meaningful way.

U.S. strategy towards the Taliban 2017-Present:

The first direct U.S. push to negotiate with the Taliban.

U.S. strategy towards the al-Qaedapre-2001:

President Clinton tried to kill bin Laden in 1998. Poor ISR to targeting capabilities meant that the U.S. had aerial surveillance of bin Laden a number of times between then and the end of his presidency but was unable to launch a strike. The incoming Bush administration did not prioritize targeting al Qaeda.

U.S. strategy towards the al-Qaeda2001-2003:

Decisive victory.

U.S. strategy towards the al-Qaeda2003-2011:

Decisive victory.

U.S. strategy towards the al-Qaeda2011-Present:

Decisive victory.

- **Dr. "B.D." 10/10/19**

Bio: Intelligence Analyst for the U.S. Army with a focus on Afghanistan.

IVs

U.S. perceptions of Taliban ideology:

Pre-911, minimal U.S. attention. Seen as fundamentalist. Debate within the U.S. government regarding pragmatic versus ideological drive. Mixed perception of Taliban governance function.

Many in the Clinton administration thought they could deal with the Taliban on specific economic projects, but U.S. policy did not recognize them as the legitimate government. Refusal to hand over bin Laden confirmed the position that Taliban had high ideological drive post-9/11. In the early years, the U.S. did not differentiate between Taliban and al Qaeda. The U.S. saw them as defeated from 2002-2006. From 2009-2013, Steve Coll and David Mansfield along with top Obama administration officials increasingly saw the Taliban as a "narco-insurgency." Others saw it as irrational and driven by jihadist ideology. Another line of thought was that they were primarily Pashtun nationalists. Most officials saw the Taliban as having growing governance function in the areas it controlled. It is hard to tell which viewpoint was preeminent. The Trump administration listens to ambassador Khalilzad, views the Taliban as a primarily pragmatically driven actor that can possibly be deterred from allowing safe haven to al Qaeda. They are fighting ISIS and they want international legitimacy. They have learned a lot since the 1990s when they also wanted legitimacy but blew their chances after harboring al Qaeda. That said, the Taliban does not want to burn its bridges with al Qaeda.

U.S. perceptions of Taliban governance function:

High pre-9/11. None from 2002-2006. Moderate to high in the areas it controlled from 2009-the present.

U.S. perceptions of Taliban leadership targetability:

Always low. U.S. never knew where Mullah Omar was. Did kill Mansour, Mullah Dadullah and Anas Haqqani, did not kill Zakir although he was captured in 2001 and released to Afghan custody in 2007 and set free in 2008. U.S. authorizations to target Taliban in Pakistan are highly classified. The U.S. killed hundreds of mid-level Taliban field commanders but this had no discernable impact on the Taliban's willingness to negotiate. Around 2012, a significant group of U.S. officials saw Mullah Omar as the tie that holds the Taliban together and thought it would collapse if he were to be killed or captured (like Shining Path leader Guzman in Peru). Others saw the Taliban as institutionalized and able to continue without Omar.

U.S. perceptions of al-Qaedaideology:

Highly ideologically driven. Cannot be deterred but the U.S. can potentially deter potential recruits from joining.

U.S. perceptions of al-Qaedagovernance function:

No governance function and no desire for any.

U.S. perceptions of al-Qaedaleadership targetability:

Gradually improved throughout the conflict, relatively high post the killing of bin Laden.

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perceptions of U.S. internal and external constraints:

2003-2009, the war in Iraq diverted resources. This constrained U.S. actions in Afghanistan. Civilian casualties caused a rift with Karzai.

Perceptions of Taliban's relative threat:

Seen as a rising threat to U.S. forces in Afghanistan from 2006-2009.

Perceptions of al Qaeda's relative threat:

Always seen as high post-9/11. Somewhat eclipsed by ISIS since 2014.

U.S. strategy towards the Taliban 2001-2006:

Decisive victory and then saw them as defeated.

U.S. strategy towards the Taliban 2006-2008:

Management in the form of damage control; actions to roll back the Taliban.

U.S. strategy towards the Taliban 2008-2011:

Decisive victory to force them to negotiate on U.S. terms. COIN as a strategy saw momentum from its proponents who designed and carried it out in Iraq.

U.S. strategy towards the Taliban 2011-2017:

Decisive victory to force them to negotiate on U.S. terms. This was on paper, in reality, the U.S. reduced pressure gradually but substantially, demonstrating more of a management approach.

U.S. strategy towards the Taliban 2017-Present:

Reduced demands in order to withdraw while saving face.

U.S. strategy towards the al-Qaedapre-2001:

Minimal attention, international law enforcement.

U.S. strategy towards the al-Qaeda2001-2003:

Decisive victory.

U.S. strategy towards the al-Qaeda2003-2011:

Decisive victory.

U.S. strategy towards the al-Qaeda2011-Present:

Decisive victory.

- **Dr. "K" 11/9/19**

Bio: Former U.S. military commander involved in Afghanistan from 2002-2016.

IVs

U.S. perceptions of Taliban ideology:

Debate, but general perception of pragmatic drive pre-9/11. Post 9/11 seen as ideologically driven. In the early years, U.S. leadership did not differentiate between Taliban and al Qaeda.

U.S. perceptions of Taliban governance function:

High pre-9/11. However, never very much provision of services or tax collection due to premodern Afghan structure. "Only real bureaucracy was the religious police." None from 2002-2006. Moderate to high in the areas it controlled from 2009-the present. From 2008-2010 the U.S. increasingly accepted the Taliban as an Afghan nationalist movement.

Constant doubt over the Taliban's ability and desire to uphold a peace bargain if one were to obtain.

U.S. perceptions of Taliban leadership targetability:

U.S. perceptions of al-Qaedaideology:

Highly ideologically driven. Cannot be deterred but the U.S. can potentially deter potential recruits from joining.

U.S. perceptions of al-Qaedagovernance function:

No governance function and no desire for any.

U.S. perceptions of al-Qaedaleadership targetability:

Gradually improved throughout the conflict, relatively high post the killing of bin Laden. Improved with technology but decreased due to diminishing returns and al-Qaedaleadership fleeing.

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perceptions of U.S. internal and external constraints:

The U.S. became more constrained as it propped up the Karzai government because they had to express publicly condemnation of U.S. counterterrorism operations. The U.S. military was increasingly constrained by regulations when ISAF took over the mission in 2006.

Perceptions of Taliban's relative threat:

Seen as a rising threat to U.S. forces in Afghanistan from 2006 onward. This is where the data (CSS, New America etc.) shows an uptick in insurgent attacks.

Perceptions of al Qaeda's relative threat:

Al-Qaedais irrelevant.

U.S. strategy towards the Taliban 2001-2006:

Decisive victory and then saw them as defeated. George W. Bush wanted to pawn off the Afghanistan stabilization and government building mission on the U.N. as it prepared to invade Iraq. Generally, no unified strategy over the duration of the conflict. Theater commands first created "areas of operation." The Taliban were shut out of the effort to build the Afghan government. U.S. pursued a "peace of the victor.

U.S. strategy towards the Taliban 2006-2008:

Management in the form of damage control.

U.S. strategy towards the Taliban 2008-2011:

There was always talk of "taking the fight to the Taliban." COIN was pushed by those who deemed it successful in Iraq. Alleged "ink blot" strategy."[842] This was always more talk than action. In reality, there was no concerted strategy to take the fight to the Taliban. There was actually a steady reduction in ambition in terms of secured territory.

U.S. strategy towards the Taliban 2011-2017:

The U.S. reduced pressure gradually but substantially, demonstrating more of a management approach. The goal was to find an acceptable way for the U.S. to exit. Decreasing ambition from controlling regions to controlling cities.

U.S. strategy towards the Taliban 2017-Present:

Reduced demands in order to withdraw while saving face.

U.S. strategy towards the al-Qaedapre-2001:

Minimal attention, international law enforcement.

U.S. strategy towards the al-Qaeda2001-2003:

Decisive victory. U.S. pursued revenge.

U.S. strategy towards the al-Qaeda2003-2011:

Decisive victory.

U.S. strategy towards the al-Qaeda2011-Present:

Decisive victory.

Chapter 7

Interviews

[842] See Gallieni, Lyautey, on the colonial method of spreading pacification outward in the form of expanding zones of control known as Tache d'huile (oil spot). For more information see Griffen 2009.

The following are the results from interviews with 9 experts, academics, practitioners and senior political and military advisers and operators. (*Not every question was answered by every interviewee).*

- **Yuri Urbanovich 11/16/17**

Bio: Dr. Yuri Urbanovich received his Ph.D. in International Relations from the Diplomatic Academy of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1984. In 1993, at President Jimmy Carter's invitation, he participated in a working session on the Caucasus at the second Consultation of the International Negotiation Network at The Carter Center. He is a Professor at the University of Virginia and the author of numerous publications on the problems of disarmament, international negotiations, national negotiating styles, nationalism and ethnic conflict, societies in transition, politics in Russia and the post-Soviet region, U.S.– Russian relations.

IVs

Russian perceptions of Chechen ideology:

1994 war seen as separatists, 1999 war seen as jihadists. Due to their history of persecution going back to the 19th century and more recently to Stalin's forced deportations, Chechens were never psychologically rehabilitated, trauma was transmitted generationally, no chance to mourn, no recognition and apology of trauma. Accumulated trauma translated into violence after the fall of the USSR. They were exploited by Wahhabi radicals volunteering to fight from the ME. A simplistic approach looks at the Russian-Chechen conflict as a religious conflict, but for centuries Russians coexisted with Muslims without problem. Religious explanations only go so far. The Chechens were Sufis, Wahhabism did not ever fully coopt Chechen militancy, but it became more prevalent in the aftermath of the break-up of the Soviet-Union, and especially after the 1994 Russian decision to use military force.

Russian perceptions of Chechen governance function:

Dudaev had high governance function, as did the Kadyrov governments. Maskhadov could not control violence.

Russian perceptions of Chechen leadership targetability:

Increased post 1999.

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perceptions of Russian internal and external constraints:

Russia was a mess in the early and mid-1990s. This constrained Russia's ability to use force effectively and to use force to threaten Chechen defeat.

Perceptions of the Chechen rebel's relative threat:

Russian policy regarding Chechnya sought not to reward terrorism, not to set a precedent that would lead to more separatist movements and followed security concerns over potential zone of

instability on its border (soft underbelly of Russia). Two more minor concerns were oil and that the Chechen region became a serious criminal hub.

Russian strategy towards the Chechen rebel's 1991-1994:

Not of top importance due to massive Russian instability. Russia sought to maintain stability without granting Chechnya de-jure independence.

Russian strategy towards the Chechen rebel's 1994-1996:

Yeltsin influenced by his Minister of Defense Pavel Grachev (former paratrooper) to use force to prevent cessation. Grachev argued that it would be a quick and easy victory. Obviously, this didn't happen.

Russian strategy towards the Chechen rebel's 1996-1999:

First military campaign was a disaster. Because Russia had no more political ability to keep resourcing a losing fight, Chechnya became a de-facto independent state.

Russian strategy towards the Chechen rebel's 1999-2005:

Putin was in charge of the 1999 campaign in Chechnya. It was very brutal (over 100,000 killed from 1999-2006). Putin and his advisors drew on analogies to the 19th century to decide that Chechens respect force, they are very tough people. Putin's strategy of looking for potentially cooperative leaders. Ahmad Kadyrov agreed to cooperate, was killed by rebels, his son Ramzan did sign a deal with Moscow. Moscow poured huge sums of money into Chechnya and to Ramzan.

Russian strategy towards the Chechen rebel's 2005-Present:

As of today, Ramzan is one of the most loyal leaders to Moscow. Putin maintains a patronage based relationship with his goal being to maintain stability.

- **Stephen Blank 9/11/19 (Phone Interview)**

Bio: Dr. Stephen Blank is a Senior Fellow and resident Russia expert at the American Foreign Policy Council and the Jamestown Foundation. Previously, he worked as a professor at the Strategic Studies Institute of the U.S. Army War College at Carlisle Barracks, PA.

IVs

Russian perceptions of Chechen ideology:

Putin believed that they were terrorists and an existential threat. Alexander Lebed, Yeltsin perceived them as separatists. Putin started to see them as jihadist driven.

Russian perceptions of Chechen governance function:

Kadyrov exerts total control. Terrorists have gradually been suppressed. Not much worry that Ramzan Kadyrov reneges. Thought they would win quickly

Russian perceptions of Chechen leadership targetability:

Much more systematic ability to target Chechen leadership under Putin.

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perceptions of Russian internal and external constraints:

Yeltsin's administration had no choice but to negotiate. No one ever believed that the Chechens were honest partners.

1994-1996: High constraints. Putin used information warfare as a force multiplier to loosen constraints over time.

No good evidence of debate between Russian agencies over Chechnya strategy throughout the conflict.

In 1999, Russia implemented new tactics, understood political and informational aspects. Lower external constraints due to post 9/11 global support.

Perceptions of the Chechen rebel's relative threat:

Putin articulated existential threat "must be stopped." Putin said he invaded Chechnya "to save the Russian state," and means and believes it.

Russian strategy towards the Chechen rebel's 1991-1994:

Chechnya was not prioritized due to ongoing calamities.

Russian strategy towards the Chechen rebel's 1994-1996:

1994-1996: Thought they would win quickly. Yeltsin underestimated the amount of force needed: "1 paratrooper regiment in 2 weeks."

Russian strategy towards the Chechen rebel's 1996-1999:

Yeltsin had no option but to negotiate.

Russian strategy towards the Chechen rebel's 1999-2005:

Decisive victory: Total surrender, cooptation. Classic imperial Russian tactic goes back to the 15th century.

Russian strategy towards the Chechen rebel's 2005-Present:

Decisive victory: Total surrender, cooptation.

Chechnya is pacified but there is the possibility that Kadyrov will try to assert himself in Russian politics when Putin goes. It is also possible that a post Putin government will try to clip his wings, which could lead to instability.

- **U.S. Army Intelligence Analyst M.L. 10/10/19**

Bio: U.S. Army Intelligence Analyst, Russia desk.

IVs

Russian perceptions of Chechen ideology:

Pre 1994 and 1994-1996: Separatists. Really started being seen as Jihadist between 1997 and 1999. Seen sincerely as Jihadist after Shamil Basayev linked up with Wahhabi Saudi Arabian militant Ibn al-Khattab. Seen by Russia as highly ideologically driven by 1999.

Putin saw Chechens from Gudermes in the Chechen valley as less ideologically driven, and potentially open to Russian assistance to "help Chechens get rid of the terrorist threat."

Russian perceptions of Chechen governance function:

Dudaev effectively governed Chechnya, Maskhadov could not control jihadist elements, Ahmad and Ramzan Kadyrov have high governance function.

Russian perceptions of Chechen leadership targetability:

Higher post 1999.

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perceptions of Russian internal and external constraints:

Russian units were put together "on the fly" in 1994.

Chechnya set the narrative in the First Chechen War. Chechens had significant popular support among Russians from 1994-1996 but not from 1999 onward. In 1999 Russia controlled the narrative and Chechen's were more isolated.

Russia had far lower constraints post 1999. There was international sympathy for counterterrorism and it was easy for Russia to block media access and the spread of information of the internet.

Perceptions of the Chechen rebel's relative threat:

Russian strategy towards the Chechen rebel's 1991-1994:

There was so much other crisis in Russia at this point that Chechnya was not a clear strategic priority. For example, the constitutional crisis that Yeltsin quashed by force in October 1993.

Russian strategy towards the Chechen rebel's 1994-1996:

Lack of coherent Russian strategy.

Russian strategy towards the Chechen rebel's 1996-1999:

Russia could not fight on due to its internal crises and defunct military.

Although Putin benefited, it is impossible to show that he orchestrated the pretexts for war in 1999.

Russian strategy towards the Chechen rebel's 1999-2005:

Putin saw and promoted the potential to coopt Ahmad Kadyrov before the 1999 invasion.

New strategy to coerce, coopt, control the narrative through information warfare and a tight grip on the media.

Russia sought to deliberately link Chechens with Arab jihadists from 1996-1999 to reduce internal and external constraints.

Russia began withdrawing units from major combat to continue clean-up operations in the mountains in 2001. Goal was decisive victory.

Russian strategy towards the Chechen rebel's 2005-Present:

Personal and patronage connection between Putin and Kadyrov. Stability could be threatened when Putin leaves office. Kadyrov understands the contract as "keep stability and do whatever you want."

Russia's goal in Chechnya is pacification, not integration. Russia officially ended its counterterrorism regime in Chechnya in 2005.

"Kontraktniki" were not used until around 2008/9. This counters Van Herpen's (2015) assertions. Also counter to Van Herpen, "Alpha Group" is not Kontraktniki, it is FSB Spetznatz.

- **U.S. Army Intelligence Analyst M.D. 10/10/19**

Bio: U.S. Army Intelligence Analyst, Russia desk.

IVs

Russian perceptions of Chechen ideology:

Separatist in 1994, Islamist by 1999. Seen by Russia as highly ideologically driven by 1999. Basaev was seen by Russia as a "loose cannon" who Russia could not negotiate with.

Putin saw Chechens from Gudermes in the Chechen valley as less ideologically driven, and potentially open to Russian assistance to "help Chechens get rid of the terrorist threat."

Chechens were seen as more driven by radical Salafi ideology after Basaev linked up with Khattab between 1996-1999.

Russian perceptions of Chechen governance function:

Chechnya was poorly controlled even in the early 1990s. Between 1997-1999 it was clear to Russia that Chechen leader Maskhadov could not control jihadist Salafi elements. The 1999 invasion of Dagestan drove this message home.

Since 2000, Chechen leadership is well co-opted and loyal to Russia. Chechens aided Russia in working on the ground to rebuild Lebanon after its 2006 war with Israel. They have been fighting for Russia in Syria since at the latest, 2015. There is a low chance of resumption of conflict. But, Russian leadership worries that since Kadyrov's relations with Putin are transactional, Chechnya could defect if Kadyrov goes.

Russian perceptions of Chechen leadership targetability:

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perceptions of Russian internal and external constraints:

Yeltsin was in charge of a largely hectic Russia. In the early 1990s, he said to all obalasts and autonomous republics "take as much sovereignty as you can swallow."

Chechnya set the narrative in the First Chechen War. Chechens had significant popular support among Russians from 1994-1996 but not from 1999 onward. In 1999 Russia controlled the narrative and Chechen's were more isolated.

President Clinton supported Yeltsin, this reduced Russia's external constraints in 1994-1999 and Russia was not an area of focus for the U.S. at this time.

In 1999 Russia was relatively stable, other crises were generally managed. There was much improved economic stability that carried over into overall reduced constraints on military action.

Russia had far lower constraints post 1999. There was international sympathy for counterterrorism and it was easy for Russia to block media access and the spread of information of the internet.

Perceptions of the Chechen rebel's relative threat:

Russian strategy towards the Chechen rebel's 1991-1994:

There was so much other crisis in Russia at this point that Chechnya was not a clear strategic priority. For example, the constitutional crisis that Yeltsin quashed by force in October 1993.

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Russia's goal in Chechnya is pacification, not integration. Russia officially ended its counterterrorism regime in Chechnya in 2005.

"Kontraktniki" were not used until around 2008/9. This counters Van Herpen's (2015) assertions. Also counter to Van Herpen, "Alpha Group" is not Kontraktniki, it is FSB Spetznatz.

- **U.S. Army Intelligence Analyst "Jim" 10/10/19**

Bio: U.S. Army Intelligence Analyst, former Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) treaty inspector in Russia.

IVs

Russian perceptions of Chechen ideology:

Separatist in 1994, Islamist by 1999. Seen by Russia as highly ideologically driven by 1999.

Putin saw Chechens from Gudermes in the Chechen valley as less ideologically driven, and potentially open to Russian assistance to "help Chechens get rid of the terrorist threat."

Chechens were seen as more driven by radical Salafi ideology after Basaev linked up with Khattab between 1996-1999.

Russian perceptions of Chechen governance function:

Between 1997-1999 it was clear to Russia that Chechen leader Maskhadov could not control jihadist Salafi elements. The 1999 invasion of Dagestan drove this message home.

Since 2000, Russian leadership worries that since Kadyrov's relations with Putin are transactional, Chechnya could defect if Kadyrov goes.

Russian perceptions of Chechen leadership targetability:

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perceptions of Russian internal and external constraints:

Chechnya set the narrative in the First Chechen War. Chechens had significant popular support among Russians from 1994-1996 but not from 1999 onward. In 1999 Russia controlled the narrative and Chechen's were more isolated.

The Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) was not an effective external constraint on Russia in either Chechen war because Russia would not allow inspections within the conflict zone, citing "force major."

President Clinton supported Yeltsin, this reduced Russia's external constraints in 1994-1999 and Russia was not an area of focus for the U.S. at this time.

Russia had far lower constraints post 1999. There was international sympathy for counterterrorism and it was easy for Russia to block media access and the spread of information of the internet.

Perceptions of the Chechen rebel's relative threat:

Russian strategy towards the Chechen rebel's 1991-1994:

There was so much other crisis in Russia at this point that Chechnya was not a clear strategic priority. For example, the constitutional crisis that Yeltsin quashed by force in October 1993.

Russian strategy towards the Chechen rebel's 1994-1996:

Lack of coherent Russian strategy.

Russian strategy towards the Chechen rebel's 1996-1999:

Russia could not fight on due to its internal crises and defunct military.

Although Putin benefited, it is impossible to show that he orchestrated the pretexts for war in 1999.

Russian strategy towards the Chechen rebel's 1999-2005:

Putin saw and promoted the potential to coopt Ahmad Kadyrov before the 1999 invasion.

New strategy to coerce, coopt, control the narrative through information warfare and a tight grip on the media.

Russia sought to deliberately link Chechens with Arab jihadists from 1996-1999 to reduce internal and external constraints.

Russia began withdrawing units from major combat to continue clean-up operations in the mountains in 2001. Goal was decisive victory.

Russian strategy towards the Chechen rebel's 2005-Present:

Personal and patronage connection between Putin and Kadyrov. Stability could be threatened when Putin leaves office. Kadyrov understands the contract as "keep stability and do whatever you want."

Kadyrov enjoys "living the good life."

Russia's goal in Chechnya is pacification, not integration. Russia officially ended its counterterrorism regime in Chechnya in 2005.

"Kontraktniki" were not used until around 2008/9. This counters Van Herpen's (2015) assertions. Also counter to Van Herpen, "Alpha Group" is not Kontraktniki, it is FSB Spetznatz.

- **U.S. Army Intelligence Analyst E.P. 10/10/19**

Bio: U.S. Army Intelligence Analyst, Russia desk.

IVs

Russian perceptions of Chechen ideology:

Separatist in 1994, Islamist by 1999.

Putin saw Chechens from Gudermes in the Chechen valley as less ideologically driven, and potentially open to Russian assistance to "help Chechens get rid of the terrorist threat."

Chechens were seen as more driven by radical Salafi ideology after Basaev linked up with Khattab between 1996-1999.

Russian perceptions of Chechen governance function:

Since 2000, Russian leadership worries that since Kadyrov's relations with Putin are transactional, Chechnya could defect if Kadyrov goes.

Russian perceptions of Chechen leadership targetability:

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perceptions of Russian internal and external constraints:

Most Russian units were unprepared and cobbled together, some had counterterrorism expertise.

Russia had far lower constraints post 1999. There was international sympathy for counterterrorism and it was easy for Russia to block media access and the spread of information of the internet.

Perceptions of the Chechen rebel's relative threat:

Chechnya was stealing oil and selling it on the black market. This threatened Russia with significant economic harm.

Russian strategy towards the Chechen rebel's 1991-1994:

There was so much other crisis in Russia at this point that Chechnya was not a clear strategic priority. For example, the constitutional crisis that Yeltsin quashed by force in October 1993.

Russian strategy towards the Chechen rebel's 1994-1996:

Lack of coherent Russian strategy. Russia wanted to coerce without launching kinetic strikes.

Russian strategy towards the Chechen rebel's 1996-1999:

Russia could not fight on due to its internal crises and defunct military.

Although Putin benefited, it is impossible to show that he orchestrated the pretexts for war in 1999.

Russian strategy towards the Chechen rebel's 1999-2005:

Putin saw and promoted the potential to coopt Ahmad Kadyrov before the 1999 invasion.

New strategy to coerce, coopt, control the narrative through information warfare and a tight grip on the media.

Russia sought to deliberately link Chechens with Arab jihadists from 1996-1999 to reduce internal and external constraints.

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Personal and patronage connection between Putin and Kadyrov. Stability could be threatened when Putin leaves office. Kadyrov understands the contract as "keep stability and do whatever you want."

Russia's goal in Chechnya is pacification, not integration. Russia officially ended its counterterrorism regime in Chechnya in 2005.

"Kontraktniki" were not used until around 2008/9. This counters Van Herpen's (2015) assertions. Also counter to Van Herpen, "Alpha Group" is not Kontraktniki, it is FSB Spetznatz.

- **U.S. Army Intelligence Analyst "Pat" 10/10/19**

Bio: U.S. Army Intelligence Analyst, Russia desk.

IVs

Russian perceptions of Chechen ideology:

Separatist in 1994, Islamist by 1999. Seen by Russia as highly ideologically driven by 1999. Ahmad Kadyrov was seen as a Chechen nationalist when he was appointed by Putin to the head of Chechen administration.

Putin saw Chechens from Gudermes in the Chechen valley as less ideologically driven, and potentially open to Russian assistance to "help Chechens get rid of the terrorist threat."

Chechens were seen as more driven by radical Salafi ideology after Basaev linked up with Khattab between 1996-1999.

Russian perceptions of Chechen governance function:

Between 1997-1999 it was clear to Russia that Chechen leader Maskhadov could not control jihadist Salafi elements. The 1999 invasion of Dagestan drove this message home.

Russian perceptions of Chechen leadership targetability:

Post 1999, Russia set up a network of informants that significantly enhanced Russia's ability to target Chechen leadership. In 1994 no such network existed, many Russian soldiers did not speak Chechen, and Chechen leadership targetability was low.

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perceptions of Russian internal and external constraints:

Russia was "in crisis" from 1992-1996.

Chechnya set the narrative in the First Chechen War. Chechens had significant popular support among Russians from 1994-1996 but not from 1999 onward. In 1999 Russia controlled the narrative and Chechen's were more isolated.

Russia had far lower constraints post 1999. There was international sympathy for counterterrorism and it was easy for Russia to block media access and the spread of information of the internet.

Perceptions of the Chechen rebel's relative threat:

Russian strategy towards the Chechen rebel's 1991-1994:

There was so much other crisis in Russia at this point that Chechnya was not a clear strategic priority. For example, the constitutional crisis that Yeltsin quashed by force in October 1993.

Russian strategy towards the Chechen rebel's 1994-1996:

Lack of coherent Russian strategy.

Russian strategy towards the Chechen rebel's 1996-1999:

Russia could not fight on due to its internal crises and defunct military.

Although Putin benefited, it is impossible to show that he orchestrated the pretexts for war in 1999.

Russian strategy towards the Chechen rebel's 1999-2005:

Tactic of Chechenization in service of a decisive victory strategy. Putin saw and promoted the potential to coopt Ahmad Kadyrov before the 1999 invasion.

New strategy to coerce, coopt, control the narrative through information warfare and a tight grip on the media.

Russia sought to deliberately link Chechens with Arab jihadists from 1996-1999 to reduce internal and external constraints.

Russia began withdrawing units from major combat to continue clean-up operations in the mountains in 2001. Goal was decisive victory.

Russian strategy towards the Chechen rebel's 2005-Present:

Personal and patronage connection between Putin and Kadyrov. Stability could be threatened when Putin leaves office. Kadyrov understands the contract as "keep stability and do whatever you want."

Russia's goal in Chechnya is pacification, not integration. Russia officially ended its counterterrorism regime in Chechnya in 2005.

"Kontraktniki" were not used until around 2008/9. This counters Van Herpen's (2015) assertions. Also counter to Van Herpen, "Alpha Group" is not Kontraktniki, it is FSB Spetznatz.

- **U.S. Army Intelligence Analyst "Ilya" 10/10/19**

Bio: U.S. army intelligence analyst. Served alongside Russian units in the Balkans. Interviewed participants in the Russian attack on Grozny.

IVs

Russian perceptions of Chechen ideology:

Separatist in 1994 with minimal homage to Islam. Islamist by 1999. Seen by Russia as highly ideologically driven by 1999.

Putin saw Chechens from Gudermes in the Chechen valley as less ideologically driven, and potentially open to Russian assistance to "help Chechens get rid of the terrorist threat."

Chechens were seen as more driven by radical Salafi ideology after Basaev linked up with Khattab between 1996-1999.

Russian perceptions of Chechen governance function:

Between 1997-1999 it was clear to Russia that Chechen leader Maskhadov could not control jihadist Salafi elements. The 1999 invasion of Dagestan drove this message home.

Clans are more important than religion in the Caucuses.

Russian perceptions of Chechen leadership targetability:

Russia had better targeting capabilities in 1999.

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perceptions of Russian internal and external constraints:

Russia was "in crisis" from 1992-1996.

Russia's army was unprepared in 1994. The soldiers did not know they were going to war, they thought they were being deployed for a brief intimidation actions. Sniper fire during rail transport to Chechnya was the first indication that there would be combat. The Russian press was robust in 1994.

Russia's military was defunct in 1994. The former Soviet Union's best units were decaying in a "junk yard" and operators were incompetent "drivers could not drive tanks."

Chechnya set the narrative in the First Chechen War. Chechens had significant popular support among Russians from 1994-1996 but not from 1999 onward. In 1999 Russia controlled the narrative and Chechen's were more isolated.

In 1999 Russia was relatively stable, other crises were generally managed. There was much improved economic stability that carried over into overall reduced constraints on military action.

Russia had far lower constraints post 1999. There was international sympathy for counterterrorism and it was easy for Russia to block media access and the spread of information of the internet.

In 1994, most Chechens were familiar with Russian tactics and could spy on Russian frequencies. Many were former Soviet Army officers. Maskhadov was one of the Red Army's best artillery officers.

In 1994 the Chechen rebels were well supplied and had an escape route through Georgia. In 1999 Russian forces closed off Chechen supply routes in the Pankisi Gorge/Valley in Georgia.

Perceptions of the Chechen rebel's relative threat:

Chechens were tied to upheaval in other Russian territories including Tartarstan and Bashkiria. Threat of precedent was seen as very Salient in 1999.

Russian strategy towards the Chechen rebel's 1991-1994:

There was so much other crisis in Russia at this point that Chechnya was not a clear strategic priority. For example, the constitutional crisis that Yeltsin quashed by force in October 1993.

Russian strategy towards the Chechen rebel's 1994-1996:

Lack of coherent Russian strategy.

Russian strategy towards the Chechen rebel's 1996-1999:

Russia could not fight on due to its internal crises and defunct military.

Russian leadership knew that it would fight again in Chechnya, but the invasion of Dagestan was a proximate cause that probably accelerated the planned invasion by 2-3 years.

It is impossible to confirm if Putin manipulated Chechen rebels into war with Russia. This belongs to the "realm of conspiracy theory." Basaev was incapable of subtle manipulation (countering the narrative that he conspired with FSB on behest of Putin to invade Dagestan and start the war). Although Putin benefited, it is impossible to show that he orchestrated the pretexts for war in 1999.

Russian strategy towards the Chechen rebel's 1999-2005:

Putin saw and promoted the potential to coopt Ahmad Kadyrov before the 1999 invasion.

New strategy to coerce, coopt, control the narrative through information warfare and a tight grip on the media.

Russia sought to deliberately link Chechens with Arab jihadists from 1996-1999 to reduce internal and external constraints. Russia rebroadcast Chechen videotapes of beheadings for the purpose of showing the Chechens as terrorists to the Russian public and the international community.

Russia began withdrawing units from major combat to continue clean-up operations in the mountains in 2001. Goal was decisive victory.

Russian strategy towards the Chechen rebel's 2005-Present:

Personal and patronage connection between Putin and Kadyrov. Stability could be threatened when Putin leaves office. Kadyrov understands the contract as "keep stability and do whatever you want." Putin could reduce funds to Kadyrov if there is an economic shock. This could threaten stability.

Russia's goal in Chechnya is pacification, not integration. Russia officially ended its counterterrorism regime in Chechnya in 2005.

"Kontraktniki" were not used until around 2008/9. This counters Van Herpen's (2015) assertions. Also counter to Van Herpen, "Alpha Group" is not Kontraktniki, it is FSB Spetznatz.

- **U.S. Army Intelligence Analyst D.D. 10/10/19**

Bio: U.S. Army Intelligence Analyst, Russia desk, PhD.

IVs

Russian perceptions of Chechen ideology:

Separatist in 1994, Islamist by 1999. Seen by Russia as highly ideologically driven by 1999. Ahmad Kadyrov was seen as a Chechen nationalist when he was appointed by Putin to the head of Chechen administration.

Putin saw Chechens from Gudermes in the Chechen valley as less ideologically driven, and potentially open to Russian assistance to "help Chechens get rid of the terrorist threat."

Russian perceptions of Chechen governance function:

Between 1997-1999 it was clear to Russia that Chechen leader Maskhadov could not control jihadist Salafi elements. The 1999 invasion of Dagestan drove this message home.

Chechens were seen as more driven by radical Salafi ideology after Basaev linked up with Khattab between 1996-1999.

Russian perceptions of Chechen leadership targetability:

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perceptions of Russian internal and external constraints:

Russia was "in crisis" from 1992-1996.

Chechnya set the narrative in the First Chechen War. Chechens had significant popular support among Russians from 1994-1996 but not from 1999 onward. In 1999 Russia controlled the narrative and Chechen's were more isolated.

President Clinton supported Yeltsin, this reduced Russia's external constraints in 1994-1999 and Russia was not an area of focus for the U.S. at this time.

In 1999 Russia was relatively stable, other crises were generally managed. There was much improved economic stability that carried over into overall reduced constraints on military action.

Russia had far lower constraints post 1999. There was international sympathy for counterterrorism and it was easy for Russia to block media access and the spread of information of the internet.

Perceptions of the Chechen rebel's relative threat:

Russian strategy towards the Chechen rebel's 1991-1994:

There was so much other crisis in Russia at this point that Chechnya was not a clear strategic priority. For example, the constitutional crisis that Yeltsin quashed by force in October 1993.

Russian strategy towards the Chechen rebel's 1994-1996:

Lack of coherent Russian strategy.

Russian strategy towards the Chechen rebel's 1996-1999:

Russia could not fight on due to its internal crises and defunct military.

Russian Chief of Staff under Putin, Anatoly Kvashnin, knew that the conflict did not end in 1996. The Russian Army learned many valuable lessons from 1994-1996.

Although Putin benefited, it is impossible to show that he orchestrated pretexts for war in 1999.

Russian strategy towards the Chechen rebel's 1999-2005:

Tactic of Chechenization in service of a decisive victory strategy. Putin saw and promoted the potential to coopt Ahmad Kadyrov before the 1999 invasion.

New strategy to coerce, coopt, control the narrative through information warfare and a tight grip on the media.

In 1994 it was "Russia against Chechnya." In 1999 it was "Russia with Chechnya against the terrorists."

There was "a sea change in Russian tactics" due to lessons learned from 1994-1996.

Russia began withdrawing units from major combat to continue clean-up operations in the mountains in 2001. Goal was decisive victory.

Russian strategy towards the Chechen rebel's 2005-Present:

Personal and patronage connection between Putin and Kadyrov. Stability could be threatened when Putin leaves office. Kadyrov understands the contract as "keep stability and do whatever you want."

Russia's goal in Chechnya is pacification, not integration. Russia officially ended its counterterrorism regime in Chechnya in 2005.

"Kontraktniki" were not used until around 2008/9. This counters Van Herpen's (2015) assertions. Also counter to Van Herpen, "Alpha Group" is not Kontraktniki, it is FSB Spetznatz.

- **David Satter 10/23/19 (phone interview)**

Bio: David Satter is a former Moscow correspondent and a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute.

IVs

Russian perceptions of Chechen ideology:

Separatist in 1994, Islamist by 1999.

Putin worked to promote this narrative and manufactured terrorist attacks, most notably the apartment bombings. This was to create a pretext to launch a war to benefit his rise to power.

Russian perceptions of Chechen governance function:

Governed in 1994, Russian government linked gangs carried out kidnappings from 1997-1999. This suggests the Russia worked to weaken Chechen governance function.

Russian perceptions of Chechen leadership targetability:

Russia was able to capitalize on Chechen security lapses throughout the conflict.

Logic, Context, and Distorting Variables

Perceptions of Russian internal and external constraints:

Russia was "in crisis" from 1992-1996. Putin used weapons in 1999 that Yeltsin had but did not use, suggesting that Putin felt less constrained. Russia wants to be seen as "part of the civilized world," but Putin was determined to win in Chechnya.

Perceptions of the Chechen rebel's relative threat:

Never seen as an existential or even salient threat to Russian security.

Russian strategy towards the Chechen rebel's 1991-1994:

Russian strategy towards the Chechen rebel's 1994-1996:

Lack of coherent Russian strategy. Yeltsin wanted a quick and easy win.

Russian strategy towards the Chechen rebel's 1996-1999:

Russia could not fight on due to its internal crises. Yeltsin wanted to end the conflict due to upcoming elections.

Russian strategy towards the Chechen rebel's 1999-2005:

Tactic of Chechenization. Putin learned from Yeltsin's mistakes.

Russian military was "much less amateurish." Carried out over 2,000 disappearances, mass arrests, filtration camps, but splitting and coopting the resistance was the most critical.

Putin manufactured a crisis to create domestic support and a pretext to go to war: Madeline Albright on Senate Foreign Relations committee said she had no evidence that the Chechen rebels were responsible for the apartment bombings and declined to answer when the Chairman asked if she knew who was behind it. It is impossible to deny that the bomb found and claimed to be part of training was real. It was examined and photographed and studied by French explosives experts who said it was real.

Russian strategy towards the Chechen rebel's 2005-Present:

Personal and patronage connection between Putin and Kadyrov.

The situation is based on force, suppression of Chechen national aspirations, no idea when it will erupt.