

# Illini Journal of International Security

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## Letter from the Editor

Dear reader,

On behalf of the IJOIS Editorial Board, the Program in Arms Control & Domestic and International Security, the University Library, and the supportive academic community of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, I would like to thank you for reading the inaugural issue of Illini Journal of International Security (IJOIS)! IJOIS is a peer-reviewed academic journal that was founded in September 2015 by undergraduate students at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. We publish exceptional papers on topics within international security or foreign affairs.

For our first issue, we are excited to publish outstanding undergraduate papers that explore some of the most pressing issues within international security and foreign affairs, covering a wide range of topic areas and geographical regions. “Redefining Deterrence: Nuclear Forensics and Administration Spending Priorities” argues that nuclear forensics can be used to trace recovered nuclear material to its source and prevent terrorists from acquiring it, thus serving as a more effective deterrent than the traditional definition of deterrence which holds that mere force parity is sufficient. “What Do They See? A Look at the Appeal of IS to Young Muslim Women Raised in the United Kingdom” examines the recruitment of young Muslim women raised in the U.K. into the Islamic State and the reasons for IS’ appeal to this demographic group. “How US Joint Ventures are Playing a Political Role in US-Cuban Relations” provides a unique perspective on how relations between the U.S. and Cuba began to thaw and, with a primary focus on the US-Cuban tourism industry, demonstrates that economic interests played a role in this thaw.

“Disruptive Element: Frozen Conflicts and the CDRN,” focuses on the four separatist territories that make up the Community for Democracy and Rights of Nations and how frozen conflicts within these territories have derailed Western alignment, as well as the role that Russia plays in this process. “South Asia: After the Bomb” investigates whether the presence of nuclear bombs has impacted the ability to resolve territorial disputes between nations in South Asia. Finally, “American Foreign Policy Towards the Islamic State” examines the Obama Administration’s efforts against the Islamic State, and posits that Operation Inherent Resolve acts as a blueprint for battling the new paradigm in world terror, the Islamic State, and breaks free from the foreign policy axioms that hindered effective decision-making in the past.

These exceptional undergraduate papers present novel arguments on a wide array of issues within international security and foreign affairs. We hope that these papers will challenge and inform our readers, spark discussion, and encourage undergraduate students to explore these pressing issues or pursue international studies further.

We hope you enjoy reading!

Jonas Murphy  
Editor-In-Chief

## About the Illini Journal of International Security

The Illini Journal of International Security (IJOIS) is a peer-reviewed academic journal founded in September 2015 by undergraduate students at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. IJOIS is published biannually through the Program of Arms Control & Domestic and International Security (ACDIS) and is comprised of exceptional undergraduate and graduate papers on topics related to international security or foreign affairs. IJOIS utilizes a cross-disciplinary approach and accepts papers from students studying the social sciences, STEM fields, business and the humanities that analyze international security issues from innovative perspectives. While IJOIS is run by students at UIUC, the Journal accepts submissions from students at all University of Illinois campuses (Urbana-Champaign, Chicago, and Springfield).

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## **Redefining Deterrence: Nuclear Forensics and Administration Spending Priorities**

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### **Abstract**

The Obama Administration's budget for fiscal year 2017 included a like-for-like replacement of all legs of the US nuclear triad. This huge expenditure represents a reinforcement of traditional notions of deterrence between superpowers, without an analysis of whether or not these reflect the most pressing threats to national security. This paper will deal with several potential nuclear threats before turning to the current US responses to them in the context of deterrence theory. Particularly, the threat of nuclear terrorism is widely acknowledged by both scholars and high-ranking members of the Administration. Nuclear forensics can be used to attribute recovered nuclear material to its source, and prevent terrorists from acquiring it. However, the Administration's budget request focuses on updating capabilities useful only in a traditional definition of deterrence that requires force parity between the Soviet Union and the United States, without expanding investments in nuclear forensics.

### **About the Author**

Leah Matchett is a senior double major in Global Studies and Geology, graduating from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign this August. She focuses on East Asia and Global Security. She has lived, worked, and traveled in both Taiwan and China, and has just completed a senior thesis on energy security in Taiwan. She has had two internships at the US Department of State, one at the Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation in Washington DC and one in the Political Affairs office of US Consulate Guangzhou. She currently works in hydrology with the US Geological Survey, and is a co-founder and previous President of the ACDIS Security Studies group. In the fall she will be headed to the University of Oxford to pursue an MPhil in International Relations as a Marshall Scholar.

### **Introduction**

Many scholars have pointed to nuclear deterrence as the structure that held apart the two great nuclear arsenals of the Soviet Union and the US during the cold war. For years, national security was primarily defined in terms of Mutually Assured Destruction and force parity. However, after the fall of the Soviet Union and the terrorist attacks of 9/11, security analysts have begun to reevaluate the role of deterrence in the United States' national security. On February 9, the Obama Administration has released its fiscal year 2017 (FY2017) budget request, which included a like-for-like replacement of all legs of the US nuclear triad. A like-for-like replacement involves replacing each system with a system of same or greater capabilities. Despite a wide range of scholars and politicians who have recognized the need to redefine deterrence to reflect current threats to the United States, the current nuclear modernization plan is in opposition to these analyses and the Administration's own previously stated policy.

### **Nuclear threats in a modern world**

Before examining the Obama Administration's FY2017 budget to analyze whether it addresses the most pressing nuclear threats to the United States, it is necessary to first examine these threats. While there is an immense diversity of threats posed by nuclear weapons, these can be divided into two major categories- the threats of a great power nuclear exchange and the threats posed by sub-state actors acquiring nuclear weapons. The types of nuclear force modernization that address each of these provisions are fundamentally opposed. Those policies that help to avert a great power nuclear conflict will increase the chances of a sub-state actor acquiring nuclear material. In a time of limited financial outflows, it is important to examine each of these threats to determine which should be emphasized in force modernization expenditures.

### **Great power nuclear relations**

The threat of a great power nuclear conflict has defined US nuclear policy since 1949, when the Soviet Union tested its first atomic bomb. Policy makers believed that they could only protect the United States if it maintained a significant nuclear superiority over the Soviet Union. As relations between the countries eroded after World War II, their relationship became one of deterrence, rather than trust. Deterrence relies on a country's ability to retaliate in the event of a nuclear attack, so that if either country launched a nuclear weapon, it was assured of a nuclear strike in return. This policy later became known as "Mutually Assured Destruction" (MAD). This was also the birthplace of the nuclear "triad", which refers to the three platforms for the delivery of a nuclear weapon (bombers, intercontinental ballistic missiles, and submarine-launched ballistic missiles) that the US and Soviet Union used to ensure a second-strike capability. As the relationship thawed at the fall of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold

War, both sides reduced their nuclear arsenals through various arms control agreements (most recently NewSTART).

Russia in recent years has become more aggressive internationally, and is pursuing a nuclear modernization program that many US scholars see as a continuation of the threat of great power nuclear conflict. New appeals to Russian nationalism and a recent conventional military buildup have led many Western scholars to view Russia as an adversary. In 2012, at a time of high oil prices, President Putin announced that if he were re-elected he would instigate the largest arms buildup in Russia since the Cold War (NTI, 2012). The plan called for \$772 billion (USD) to replenish the Russian arsenal, including building 400 new intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), and 8 new nuclear capable submarines (NTI, 2012). The overall Russian military budget has expanded significantly (over \$11 billion from 2014 to 2015), and there are ambitious plans to modernize over 70 percent of the military by 2020 (Einhorn et al, 2015).

The motivations behind this military buildup are beyond the scope of this analysis but several common interpretations are relevant. Many analysts cite growing Russian nationalism as a key cause for its rearmament. The desire to be viewed as a superpower and to exert the influence on the world that it did as the Soviet Union leads to a reassertion of Russia's role as a nuclear power (Pfier, 2015). In addition, despite these modernization efforts, Russia's conventional forces remain behind those of NATO. Emphasizing its nuclear capabilities allows Russia to compensate for a deficient conventional capability compared to NATO (Pfier, 2015). Other authors have also highlighted Russia's conventional weaknesses but have pointed to China, rather than NATO, as Russia's new competitor (Podvig, 2015).



This investment in military technology should be viewed not as a buildup of a new nuclear threat to the United States, but rather as a supplement to a declining nuclear force. The fall of the Soviet Union and the ensuing financial disasters led to drastic cuts in Russia's previously high military expenditures. These conventional weaknesses were in many ways countered by an expanded role for nuclear weapons in Russia's defense. In 2000, the new Russian military doctrine reemphasized nuclear weapons and attempted to lower the nuclear threshold in a conventional conflict. This has been seen as a means of ensuring national security while reducing the amount spent on conventional armed forces (Podvig, 2015). This policy was amended in 2010 to specify that nuclear weapons would only be used in a conventional conflict if there was an existential threat to the state (Podvig, 2015). By this time, the Russian economy had improved, allowing it to make greater investments in conventional weaponry. These policies indicate little change from traditional ideas of deterrence, and certainly no reason for alarm.

Existing arms control agreements are another assurance of the small likelihood of a great power nuclear conflict. Russia still abides by the NewSTART treaty, which limits its number of deployed warheads. These limits mean that the development of new ICBMs or other nuclear-capable technology will be met with the decommissioning of older delivery vehicles (Pfier, 2015). Before current modernization programs, Russia had significantly lower numbers of ICBMs, nuclear capable bombers, and nuclear submarines than the Soviet Union did in 1990 (Lieber and Press, 2006). Many of these old delivery vehicles are near, or past the end of, their intended service lifetime (Pfier, 2015); plagued by persistent maintenance and readiness problems, they have, in the past, cast doubt upon the very existence of a Russian deterrent force (Lieber and Press, 2006). From this perspective, the Russian force modernization can be thought of as ensuring the country's second-strike capability, rather than a new aggressive stance.

Despite the residual presence of a Cold War mentality among both Americans and Russians, as long as both sides adhere to the arms reduction treaties, there is little reason for the alarmist stance that many news outlets have taken on this issue (see Einhorn et al, 2015 for an example of such an article in the *New York Times*).

While Russia does have a nuclear arsenal capable of immense destruction, the likelihood of a great power nuclear conflict is incredibly low. Policy makers in countries all over the world find it difficult to even consider using a nuclear weapon (Cimbala, 1998, p. 22). More importantly, force parity is not required for deterrence, which means that it is not necessary for the United States to modernize and expand its nuclear program as Russia does. Increasingly, analysts and top policy makers have begun to question the need for a large nuclear deterrent force (Cimbala, 1998). As soon as the USSR developed nuclear weapons in 1949, the United States believed it had little advantage, despite possessing a substantially larger nuclear arsenal (Cimbala, 1998, p. 29). Maintaining nuclear superiority did not lead to better diplomacy or coercion for the United States during the early stages of the Cold War (Pelopidas, 2015). Especially in light of other threats to the United States, the perception that force parity is necessary for security has serious opportunity costs.

### **The threat of nuclear terrorism**

In 2009, President Obama gave a historic speech in Prague about the prospects for a world free of nuclear weapons. He declared that, with the fall of the Soviet Union, the greatest threat to the United States had changed from that of a bipolar nuclear conflict to that of nuclear terrorism. The 2010 Nuclear Posture Review echoed him, stating, “today’s most immediate and extreme danger is nuclear terrorism” (Nuclear Posture Review Report, p. iv). In the words of

President Obama, after the Cold War “the threat of global nuclear war has gone down, but the risk of a nuclear attack has gone up” (White House, 2009). In response to this threat, the early days of the Obama Administration included a reevaluation of the role of nuclear weapons in the national security of the United States. President Obama stated in Prague that the United States, “will reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy, and urge others to do the same,” (White House, 2009). The 2010 Nuclear Posture Review put combatting nuclear terrorism as the first among its priorities, followed by reducing the role of nuclear weapons in US national security strategy (Nuclear Posture Review Report). Although deterrence is mentioned as a priority, it is in the context of reassuring regional allies, and not in terms of mutually assured destruction.

This threat, which resonated strongly in the United States after the terror attacks of 9/11, is fundamentally different than the threat posed by the potential for a great power conflict. Deterrence and an increase in the number and capabilities of nuclear weapons can, according to some, help reduce the risk of a great power nuclear conflict. However, even the most ardent proponents of the nuclear peace theory do not believe that an increase in the United States’ nuclear arsenal will serve to dissuade a nuclear attack from a terrorist group. As Graham Allison states in his seminal book on nuclear terrorism, al-Qaeda has “no return address”, which means that there is no way to ensure retribution, or implement the logic of deterrence (Allison, 2004 p. 2). An increase in the size of nuclear arsenals actually increases the chance that terrorists will be able to buy, build, or steal a nuclear weapon. Therefore, traditional deterrence can increase the risk of nuclear terrorism. The solution to one perceived threat (great power conflict) only exacerbates the risk of the other (nuclear terrorism).

### **Responses and US weapons modernization**

Faced with this paradox, the United States' recent nuclear modernization can be qualitatively examined to determine how it affects these two perceived threats. The Obama Administration's policy, despite its verbal commitments to countering nuclear terrorism, has maintained a position of traditional deterrence against Russia. The US nuclear modernization program is estimated to cost approximately \$348 billion between FY 2015 and FY 2024, according to the Congressional Budget Office. However, independent estimates calculate the cost to be as high as \$1 trillion (Reif, 2015). These investments are primarily in delivery systems and warheads, which do little to decrease the likelihood of a great power nuclear conflict, and less to combat nuclear terrorism. The modernization program includes redesigning the Minuteman III missile, rebuilding the Ohio class nuclear submarine, and developing a new class of nuclear bombers and cruise missiles (Reif, 2015). This program is primarily a like-for-like replacement, which surprised many onlookers, given the Obama Administration's previous statements on nuclear disarmament. The Arms Control Association's analysis states that a credible deterrent force could be maintained by reducing the US arsenal to one third of NewSTART levels (Reif, 2015).

The development of the new bomber forces in particular has raised questions about the US' willingness to disarm. The bomber wing of the nuclear triad was the weakest before the most recent military modernization plan was announced, but significant investment will be made under the current plan to increase these capabilities. The plan replaces the Air Force's fleet of old B-52 bombers with a new fleet of dual-capable bombers (costing over approximately \$41 billion in Research and Development, and an additional \$500 million per unit), and the development of

a new nuclear tipped cruise missile (another \$25 billion) (Reif, 2015). Previously, analysts had assumed that the bomber force was a prime candidate for force reductions. Not only were the bombers old and limited in number, they have limited military usefulness when facing adequate air defenses (Johnson et al, 2009). While the development of a new bomber force may have some tactical applications, it represents an enormous expenditure, without adding any specific capabilities to the US nuclear forces.

The modernization plan includes only \$8 billion dollars for “force improvement” in personnel and logistics, an area of the US nuclear forces that has been consistently weak (Reif, 2015). For years, Scott Sagan and others have raised questions about the efficacy of the command and control structures and personnel of the nuclear arsenal (Cohen and Sagan, 1993; Schlosser, 2013). Schlosser’s recent book on this topic highlights the underappreciated danger inherent in maintaining a sizeable nuclear arsenal by examining a number of nuclear accidents and near-catastrophes in the last 50 years (Schlosser, 2013). For instance, on multiple occasions, personnel working with nuclear weapons have been caught abusing illegal drugs (“Finger on the Trigger”, 2015) or cheating on proficiency tests (Cooper, 2014). The appropriations for the nuclear modernization plan include very little funding or emphasis on solving these problems, instead favoring an emphasis on traditional deterrence policies.

Perhaps the most glaring omission of the nuclear modernization program is the lack of funding and programs focused on reducing the risk of nuclear terrorism. While nuclear terrorism was highlighted in the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review as a key step to ensuring US nuclear security, it has not received funding or support on the same magnitude as deterrence. Congress has passed several bills that include mandatory funding and the reporting of progress in nuclear

forensic capabilities including the Nuclear Forensic and Attribution Act (“Text of the Nuclear Forensic and Attribution Act”, 2010). Despite a high level of interest in this field, the current nuclear modernization program continues outdated notions of deterrence and great-power nuclear relations, without more deeply analyzing the usefulness of deterrence in our current situation.

### **Creating a New Deterrent through Nuclear Attribution**

If the United States expands its definition of a deterrent force to include countering nuclear terrorism, it will allow its nuclear modernization program to more fully match the stated priorities of the administration. Early scholarship in this field discarded the idea of deterring nuclear terrorism. As terrorist groups often have no clear location or leadership structure, it becomes difficult to punish or deter them effectively (Allison, 2004). Terrorist groups that have little concern for the lives of their membership will not be easily dissuaded by threats of violence (Talmadge, 2007). However, it is possible to use the logic of deterrence to prevent terrorists acquiring the material required to construct a nuclear weapon.

It is widely accepted that a terrorist organization cannot produce its own nuclear explosive material (NEM). A uranium bomb relies on a complicated, expensive, and highly visible enrichment procedure that is believed to only be achievable by states. The plutonium used in nuclear weapons is extracted from low burn-up nuclear reactor fuel and is also commonly considered to be secure from non-state actors (Talmadge, 2007). Therefore, the nuclear material necessary to create a bomb must at one point have been created by a state and either given freely, bought, or stolen by a terrorist organization (Allison, 2004). Deterrence, therefore, can be applied to states capable of creating nuclear material to persuade them that it is in their interest to not allow terrorists to acquire nuclear material, either on purpose or by accident.

Nuclear attribution, a subset of nuclear forensics that allows recovered nuclear material to be traced back to its source, is the key to a modernized idea of deterrence. It works by comparing the isotopic characteristics of the nuclear material to pinpoint a source location (Kristo and Turney, 2012). These analytic tools fall into one of three main categories- bulk analysis tools, which analyze the overall isotopic composition of the sample; imaging tools, which provide detailed images of the material to confirm homogeneity; and microanalysis tools, which classify the constituents of the sample (International Atomic Energy Agency, 2006, p. 25-26). For example, by using scanning electron microscopes, it is possible to determine the dimensions of a sample's source, in order to determine whether or not there is more material on the nuclear black market (Kristo and Turney, 2012). The data that scientists gain from this analysis can then be compared to data on locations, processes associated with the formation of nuclear material, and other seizures of illicitly trafficked material in order to attribute the nuclear material to a geographic location.

One of the main challenges that nuclear attribution faces today is a lack of information on various locations around the globe. Many scientists have advocated for the establishment of an international library where information on nuclear materials from around the world could be kept for comparison (Kristo and Turney, 2012; Decker, 2011; International Atomic Energy Agency, 2006). Such an institution would increase both accuracy and impartiality of results by allowing scientists to collaborate on attribution of nuclear-explosive material. The IAEA established the Illicit Trafficking Database (ITDB) in 1995, which reports incidents of nuclear material trafficking (International Atomic Energy Agency, 2006). If the powers of this body were to be expanded to include sharing of data on the isotopic characteristics of various nuclear processing

locations around the globe, it would be easier to attribute nuclear materials to their sources, and develop an effective deterrent.

Once nuclear material is attributed to a source, the United States can determine where non-state actors obtained nuclear material, and hold those states responsible. The IAEA gives states the responsibility for combating illegal trafficking of nuclear material (International Atomic Energy Agency, 2006). If states were to face fiscal or military consequences for nuclear material taken from their territory by non-state actors, they would have increased incentive to secure loose nuclear material (Kristo and Turney, 2012). Former US National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley has previously stated that the United States “will hold any state, terrorist group, or other non-state actor fully accountable for supporting or enabling terrorist efforts to obtain or use weapons of mass destruction, whether by facilitating, financing, or providing expertise or safe haven for such efforts” (Van de Velde, 2009, p. 691). However, there has been little follow through on this statement. Nuclear forensics can create a new kind of deterrence where states are held accountable for their nuclear material, and security can be achieved with a minimal arsenal.

### **Looking Forward: Policy priorities**

Although the highest levels of the Obama Administration and Congress hold nuclear forensics forth as a policy priority, it is viewed as in addition to, rather than a vital part of, deterrence. By expanding the definition of deterrence beyond Cold War notions of force parity, the United States can ensure that its investments in its nuclear forces and infrastructure reflect the most relevant of current threats. The perceived necessity of a like- for-like deterrent is a direct product of an outdated concept of deterrence that fails to address what the administration itself defines as the greatest risk to US national security. Spending up to a trillion dollars to



modernize the nuclear triad will not address the threat of nuclear terrorism. It is uncertain it will even be effective in increasing the US deterrent, which has already almost removed the chances of a great power nuclear conflict.

Policy makers and authors are unsure about the effects of a powerful nuclear arsenal. Some, like Winston Churchill, have referred to nuclear weapons as the “means of preserving peace”<sup>1</sup> (Booth and Baylis, 1989, p. 239), while others including former Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara have famously stated that “nuclear weapons serve no military purpose whatsoever” (McNamara, 1983 p. 79). The latter group of scholars contend that “nuclear weapons neither crucially define a fundamental stability nor threaten severely to disturb it” (Mueller, 1988 p. 55). Therefore, the undeniable influence of nuclear weapons in security planning and strategy, they would argue, is misplaced (Wilson, 2008; Booth and Baylis, 1983; Pelopidas, 2015)<sup>2</sup>. Due to the destructive power of nuclear weapons, force imbalances become almost meaningless because even an inferior nuclear arsenal can act as a deterrent. While this is still under debate, with new quantitative studies highlighting both stability and instability in the international system connected to nuclear weapons (Rauchhaus 2015), it is not clear that a modernized nuclear triad is necessary or desirable to increase US national security<sup>3</sup>.

A critical examination of Obama Administration’s FY2017 budget request shows a fundamental disconnect between the threats which face the US (as stated by the Administration itself and

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<sup>1</sup> This is known as the “Nuclear Peace hypothesis”. For more read Waltz 1981 and 1990

<sup>2</sup> These scholars argue that the “Long Peace” after WWII was neither particularly long nor particularly peaceful. It is impossible to prove that without nuclear weapons a war would have broken out (ie proving the counterfactual). This period without a great power conflict can be linked instead to increasing economic connectedness or a period of war weariness (Wilson, 2008)

<sup>3</sup> Examples of times when deterrence failed to reduce conflict include Israel and the Six Day War (Cohen, 1988) and border wars between Russia and China and China and India (Pelopidas, 2015)

outside sources) and its spending priorities. Despite a prominent emphasis on nuclear material security and nuclear terrorism during its first term in office, the Obama Administration has failed to critically evaluate the role of the nuclear triad in coming decades. The move to a like-for-like replacement of all triad capabilities comes at the expense of real improvements in nuclear forensics capabilities, which have the potential to become a new form of deterrent relevant to the post-Cold War world.

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## **What Do They See?**

### **A Look at the Appeal of IS to Young Muslim Women Raised in the United Kingdom**

Rebecca Davis

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

#### **Abstract**

This scholarly research investigates the recent recruitment of young British Muslim women by the Islamic State (IS) in an effort to determine the appeal of said group upon this demographic. Noting that such recruitment falls under the foreign fighter complex, which is usually male oriented, this research seeks to understand why IS is able to extend its appeal to young women. In so doing, many of the preexisting theories for extremism are examined and found to be irrelevant to this particular demographic. Thus, I am arguing that it is not poverty, lack of education, or other economic determinant as is commonly believed to be the roots of radicalization/extremism but rather a search for a personal identity these women feel is lacking, growing up as Muslims in an immigrant context in a non-Muslim country.

### **About the Author**

Rebecca Davis is a senior, graduating with a dual degree in Global Studies and Spanish and a certificate in Global Security. Throughout her work in Global Studies, she has focused on understanding the nature of and root issues behind terrorist behavior and especially the motivations for the foreign fighter complex. She will be continuing this research at the School for International Service at American University in Washington, D.C. in the Fall of 2016.

### **Introduction**

In February of 2015, newspaper headlines covered the story of three young British Muslim women who had gone missing while on holiday and were suspected to be en route to Syria. These girls were Amira Abase and Shamima Begum, both fifteen, and their classmate, Kadiza Sultana, sixteen. The three girls were outstanding pupils at London's Bethnal Green Academy in Tower Hamlets, a rapidly growing community with a heavy concentration of immigrants. Family members described the girls, detailing their favorite TV shows and hobbies and speaking of their high academic achievements. While not the first of such recruits, the trio quickly became the face of the new recruitment efforts by IS. Since their arrival in Syria, at least two of them have been married to IS fighters (Dodd and Khomami, 2015). Amira is the most vocal of the trio, using social media to post updates glorifying life under IS and trying to recruit more girls like herself.

Since the departure of these girls, experts have tried to understand their radicalization process, examining the possible explanations of radicalization by a relative, the school, or an outside contact. According to the principal of the school, it was impossible that the girls were

radicalized there, stating that access to social media is blocked on school property (“Syria girls: Trio 'not radicalised' at Bethnal Green Academy.”, 2015). However, concern has been voiced over some of the school staff and their ideological affiliations, noting that some have been involved with radical organizations within the UK and abroad. There are also reports that Shamima contacted a well-known woman from IS who had also left the UK for Syria about a year and a half prior (“Syria girls: Trio 'not radicalised' at Bethnal Green Academy.”, 2015). This was shortly before the trio left the country, and suggests that a peer network may have been influential in their radicalization. In addition, another friend and classmate from Bethnal Green had also left for Syria just a few months before.

Given the example above, this research seeks to answer the *why* question by examining three related areas. First, pre-existing radicalization theories are evaluated to decide if they accurately account for the involvement of female foreign fighters. Second, possible motivations are investigated for why these young women are leaving their homes in the United Kingdom to join a movement in Syria, even though many have no prior connections to the country. Third, the appeal of IS and their ideologies on this demographic is examined.

### **Literature Review**

Before delving into an overview of the theories, a clarification of terminology is requisite. Fundamentalism will be defined as the “the belief or advocating of a conservative adherence to literal or traditional interpretations of the Qu'ran and the Sunnah” (Collins Dictionary, 2015). This may lead to extremism-adoption of a position that lies on the fringes of the ideological spectrum. Extremism may or may not lead to extremist acts of terrorism. Terrorism, as referred to in this research, will utilize the definition provided by the United States Department of State, “premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against

noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience.” (Krueger & Maleckova, 2003, 120). The term, noncombatants, refers to not only civilians but also “military personnel (whether or not armed or on duty) who are not deployed in a war zone or a war-like setting.” (Legislative requirements and key terms, 2005, 9). When combined with an Islamic religious perspective, this is the definition of *salafi-jihadism*. This is a fundamentalist approach to practicing Islam with an aspect of violence, advocating for the overthrow of all governments that are not adhering to the teachings of the Prophet and Sharia law (Stern and Berger, 2015, xii-xiii). It is important to note that abiding by an extremist ideology is not necessarily correlated with committing acts of terrorism. One merely becomes more vulnerable to committing such acts in an effort to bring about the desired changes.

A new dimension to this extremist problem is the foreign fighter complex, a phenomenon that has existed for centuries, though mostly focused on male participation. Even though foreign fighters are often associated with jihadists such as the *mujahideen*, they are not strictly an Islamic phenomenon, as demonstrated by Malet (2010). In his research, Malet (2010) cites several examples of American heroes who would also be considered foreign fighters, people such as Davy Crockett who left the United States to fight in the Mexican territory of Texas (Malet, 2010, 99). Adding complexity to this issue is the emerging recruitment of female foreign fighters by IS from the Muslim immigrant community in the UK. It is a unique and concerning phenomenon, one that cannot be explained by conventional theories on extremist recruitment.

### **Existing Theories on Extremist Recruitment**

In counter-extremism studies, there are four theories that attempt, with varying levels of success, to offer explanations for why individuals adopt extremism and go on to commit terrorist acts, namely Poverty, Illiteracy, Cultural Alienation, and Transnational Ideology. The first two



are the most prevalent in official foreign counter-extremism programs; the latter two are newer theories which are more applicable to this case study.

### **Poverty as a Push Factor**

The first of these theories is predominant in counterterrorism. It sees extremist movements as arising from the impoverished masses. As J. Brian Atwood states, there is a “strong correlation between the absence of material well-being and the prospects for violence” (Atwood, 2003, 160). Quoting research done by the World Bank, he goes on to say that the material divide in a country can lead not only to political instability within a nation state, but can also create animosity between developed and developing countries (Atwood, 2003, 160). However, terrorism as a direct result of poverty is more difficult to substantiate than merely the existence of a higher probability of incidence of violence in poverty conditions. Regardless, it is known that terrorist organizations frequently recruit their manpower from this demographic (Atwood, 2003, 161), using economic benefits as leverage. Thus, instead of viewing socio-economic inequality and lack of access to resources as the causes of terrorist activity, they should be viewed as two of several factors that can increase a population’s vulnerability to their appeals. As stated by Asef Bayat, “the poor cannot afford to be ideological” and “to be ideological requires certain capacities (time, risk-taking, money) that the disenfranchised often lack” (Bayat, 2013, 201).

### **Lack of Education as a Push Factor**

The second theory for extremism holds that a lack of education can make a population vulnerable to its appeals. This common view is held by many, including those in government. Colin Powell once stated that “that the root cause of terrorism does come from situations where

there is poverty, where there is ignorance, where people see no hope in their lives.” (Berrebi, 2007, 3). John O. McGinnis writes that “Ignorance and poverty are the greatest friends of the terrorist, because the ignorant and impoverished are easy prey for the conspiracy theories and millennial religious visions that are staple of the Islamic fanatics.” (McGinnis, 2003). However, one of the main drawbacks for this theory is that statistics do not support it. Multiple studies have shown that terrorists tend to be educated. For instance, in research conducted by Hassan among Palestinian suicide bombers, all were educated and none were impoverished (Hassan, 2001). Other studies surveyed terrorists from a variety of national backgrounds, including several European countries and Turkey, and found that they all shared a tendency to possess high levels of formal education (Krueger and Maleckova, 2003, 141). Other researchers see terrorism as a mode of political participation, albeit a violent one. Political participation, they argue, is a common trait among educated individuals and terrorism is simply another expression of it (Krueger and Maleckova, 2003, 142).

### **Cultural Alienation of Immigrant**

While the previous theories attempt to explain the radicalization and involvement in foreign fighting, they fail to explain why many extremists are neither poor nor illiterate. Furthermore, they do not explain why a poor, uneducated individual with no prior ties to a country, its struggle or its dominant ideology will join an extremist movement. This policy response vacuum can be filled by a relatively underutilized theory of foreign fighter recruitment that focuses on the cultural alienation of the immigrant.

Once an individual adopts an extremist viewpoint, they may become radicalized enough to seek deeper involvement which may involve foreign fighting. However, Malet (2010) argues that in order to be a foreign fighter, one must be recruited from outside of the country in which

the conflict is taking place. Thus, there has to be an underlying motivation to join which takes the form of a shared transnational identity, linking the foreigner with the fighters in the conflict. Motivations to join can be encouraged through a shared religious affiliation (Malet, 2010, 99-100) of the country in conflict and the foreign recruit. Thus, while radicalization may not directly cause an individual to leave their home to join in a conflict, foreign fighter recruitment could also attract people who have held those beliefs for a long time. Diaspora communities are particularly vulnerable to this, due to their shared ethnic, ideological, and religious ties that transcend the physical borders of the state.

### **Transnational Religious Ideology**

The final reason is the presence of a transnational religious ideology. This is perhaps the most applicable theory to this case study. Adherence to a transnational religious ideology can provide a personal identity that individuals may feel that they are otherwise lacking, especially in an immigrant community. Taking part in a shared religious faith can provide this identity and help them to define themselves in a country where they may feel othered by the citizens of both the sending and receiving countries. This hypothesis derived from records of interviews with former radical Muslims from the UK and research done in a fundamentalist Islamic group, Hizb ut-Tahrir (HuT), which has a strong presence in the UK. Malet (2010) also hints at it in his research, quoting former jihadists who describe the appeal of fundamentalist Islam in their lives. One of these men states that they were “Men who had no home. Men reviled in the West because they were not white and Christian, and reviled at home because they no longer dressed and spoke like Muslims.” (Malet, 2010, 109). In the context of recruitment, he also says that “Transnational ideological affiliation was a highly salient identity because immigration and modernization had destroyed other communal ties and produced isolated, embattled individuals”

(Malet, 2010, 109). Alienation, which can make them vulnerable to the appeal of radical ideology (Richardson, 2006, 69), can play a key role in these diaspora communities.

These are just a sampling of the theories for why some people become radicalized or assume a position of extremism. There is also significant variation in the process of choosing to become a foreign fighter; they can pursue different paths but they all have a common thread. Each path involves radicalization at some point. The first two theories say that radicalization stems from a social or educational disadvantage. The third theory posits that foreign fighter involvement comes from an appeal to a shared transnational identity. This could be religious (radicalized or not), ethnic, or otherwise. However, none of these theories fully applies to the case study at hand. Thus, the fourth option is the most applicable here. While it is true that none are mutually distinctive, I argue that it is more of a matter of reordering the pieces. Whereas the first two theories posit that it is poverty and ignorance that can contribute to someone turning to extremism, I contend that it is a search for personal meaning and identity. This identity can then become a transnational one, which can lead to foreign fighter recruitment as described by Malet. I posit that this is what is taking place in the case of the young female British recruits to IS.

### **The Role of Religion and Alienation in the Extremist Appeal**

Religion, and in this case, Islam, can provide a unifying force for extremist groups. As Richardson states, “it provides a unifying, all-encompassing philosophy or belief system that legitimizes and elevates their actions.” (Richardson, 2006, 63). Religious extremist groups have the tendency to be more violent as well, as they can claim divine permission for their behavior (Richardson, 2006, 61). Changing the existing government from secularism to one of Islamic principles is usually among the goals of Islamic fundamentalists. To this end, they prey upon the alienation of Muslims by promising a better future once the new government is

achieved (Richardson, 2006, 67). Thus, while Islam is not culpable for causing terrorism, it can be the vehicle for creating transnational ties that can motivate a person to leave their home and take sides in a foreign conflict (Richardson, 2006, 68).

This alienation can also lead to a cultural reactionary push back. Experiencing rejection from the receiving nation's culture can lead a population to be vulnerable to the appeal of ultra-orthodox teachings and can result in a complete rejection of the host country's culture. Instead of gradually assimilating into the receiving culture, they instead create a parallel culture, based upon either their heritage or the perceptions of that heritage. This is seen occurring in Muslim migrant communities within the UK. One example is Tower Hamlets, the hometown of the Bethnal Green trio. Termed "Jihadi Cool" by the popular media, it is a complete rejection of everything Western and is the latest cultural youth trend. The more devout one appears, the more 'in' they are. Ironically, though, some of the strongest proponents of this "rejection of all things deemed Western" utilize the latest fashionable social media platforms to target their audience (McCaul, 2014). They also are co-opting other facets of pop culture to spread their message, posting jihadi rap videos to YouTube and distributing t-shirts with slogans glorifying jihad (Chumley, 2014). Thus, it is clear that at least part of the allure of "Jihadi Cool" is a form of cultural self-redefinition that occurs in other cultures as well. However, in this situation and with a militant form of Islam, the result is more threatening than in other cases.

### **Data and Methods**

To examine whether the aforementioned religious appeal and cultural alienation theories apply to female foreign recruits, I collected and analyzed data on young British Muslim women who have left or been detained in attempting to leave the UK to join IS. Whereas it is much more common to see men joining foreign military movements, the participation of women as foreign

fighters has had little historical precedent. The UK has been selected for this study as it has experienced an alarming and significant number of such cases.

This research consists of a media review, examining the issue of this recent recruitment trend. The data is collected from newspaper editorials published in news sources including the BBC, The Washington Times, The Atlantic, The New York Times, and the Guardian. These sources span the ideological spectrum, offering differing perspectives on the same topic or case and avoiding the distortion of political viewpoints in reporting. Some of these online newspaper articles included embedded video footage and commentary on the women, which proved helpful as well. Through the use of such sources, I sought to construct an idea of each young woman's life, economic status, ethnic background, and path to radicalism. I also incorporate published interviews with the remaining family members of these girls.

In collecting and examining these resources, I analyzed them for any common themes that could give clues to their paths to adopting extremist views and acting upon them. These themes include criteria such as age at time of departure, ethnic background, and degree of observed religiosity. These were noted for each of the subjects and were of particular importance as they provided the necessary evidence to counter the radicalization theories discussed previously. Commonalities within the data were noted and efforts made to draw accurate conclusions. I also attempted to determine any common individuals, institutions or alternate sources that these women have taken to reach the point of radicalization. For example, through using available sources, I sought to determine methods of radicalization/recruitment and whether there was a common peer network or a radicalized family member involved.

The results of this media review were then compared and contrasted to the arguments in the literature review. These results gave insight to an under-examined element of the foreign

fighter phenomenon - the engagement and experiences of women. This was in order to determine whether the prominent theories in the field of anti-terrorism research were applicable here.

### **Preliminary Argument/Hypothesis**

I am arguing that the preexisting theories on radicalization and adopting extremist ideology are not applicable to the case of the young British Muslim women that have responded to the appeal of IS. Examination of the data corroborate this idea. Popular ideas offered for adopting extremist views include poverty and a lack of education, among other things. This has not been the case for these women. At least several of them have been young women with exceedingly bright futures ahead of them; young women who were attaining high academic achievements and had promising opportunities for advancement. These findings are substantiated by research done by other terrorism experts such as Hassan (cited above) and Horgan (2014) who found that those who adopt extremist views often have at least completed high school education (Horgan, 2014, 67). However, it is true that these findings can vary geographically.

My argument in the current case is that the young women are turning to the form of Islam that is espoused and glorified by IS in an effort to create an identity that they feel they are lacking, growing up in an immigrant context. I posit that this type of faith is leaving them vulnerable to the appeal of IS and is what differentiates them from the thousands of other law-abiding, peaceful Muslims residing in the UK. It is not an issue of Islam itself, but rather how it is practiced that can become dangerous. I further contend that the appeal of IS to these women comes from the current societal culture in which these women are growing up. It is a culture that rejects everything associated with Western ideology and sees pure Islam as “cool”. This leaves them especially vulnerable to the ideological appeals of an organization that is calling for the reestablishment of a pure Islamic caliphate.

### **Presentation and Analysis of Data**

In the process of the collection of the data for this research, it has been interesting to note both the existence and lack of certain trends. By this, I mean the commonalities that group them together as a subject group and the differences that at the same time cause them to retain their humanness and uniqueness. While many of them share an immigrant background, there are a few, such as Sally Jones, who would be termed ethnically British and are not acting from an immigrant context. Thus, it is clear from the beginning that the appeal of IS is not limited to those who have grown up as first or second generation British. There are also various nationalities represented among the data, as subjects come from Sudan, Somalia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Ethiopia.

### **Economic Background**

Economic deprivation does not seem to be a push factor for radicalization or departure to Syria. Instead, the opposite seems to be true. As in the case of Aqsa Mahmood, a high profile recruiter from Glasgow, her family was described as “comfortably middle class” (Randall, 2014). Financially prosperous, her family lives in a reputable neighborhood in an expensive house and sent Aqsa to a prestigious private girls’ school for a number of years (Dettmer, 2014). Another girl, Lena Mamoun Abdelgadir, also came from a well-to-do family. Similar to Aqsa, Lena’s family also sent her to an expensive girls’ school for years until she graduated and entered medical school (Farmer, 2015). Lena has since accompanied a group of eight other medical students and graduates from a medical school in Sudan on a trip to Syria. Their motivations are unclear. While it could be entirely humanitarian in nature, it is known that some of those in the group had at least been exposed to radical teaching while at the medical school (Bennhold, 2015).



### **Degree of Religiosity**

Of the nineteen women and girls on whom data was gathered for this study, most were Muslim by familial background. Of the group, there were two who are known to be recent converts to Islam. These women are Sally Jones and Kadijah Dare. The first woman, Sally Jones, is an outlier in many ways to the rest of the women who have left Britain to join IS. In her mid-forties and ethnically British, Jones is neither young nor was she raised with an immigrant Muslim background. For a number of years in the 1990s, this single mother of two played guitar in a female rock band, flaunting miniskirts and blond hair. This is a significant departure from the black burqa and gloves that she now wears in her Twitter photos. Her neighbors described her behavior as erratic, recalling her male friends and the bizarre things that she did, including the instances in which she believed she was a witch. Then she met online and fell in love with Junaid Hussain, the young computer hacker from Britain who was charged with murdering James Foley (Greenwood, 2014). Hussain, who was young enough to be Jones' son, had left the UK to fight for IS. Jones followed some time later in 2013 (Whitehead, 2015). They were married after her arrival and lived together until a drone strike specifically targeted her husband in August, 2015. She has been very active on IS social media, frequently tweeting messages about the glories of her husband's martyrdom and her desire to behead Christians with a "dull knife" (Whitehead, 2015). Currently, there are fears that she may be preparing to become a female suicide bomber for IS, given a recent threat that she made in her Twitter feed (Newman, 2015).

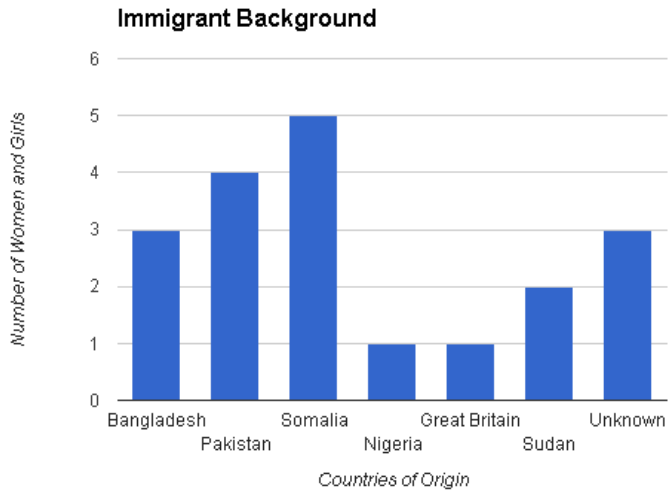
Kadijah Dare, the other convert to Islam, is not as extreme as Jones. The daughter of Christians, she had migrated from Nigeria to the UK as a child. She was a devout Christian until her college years, when she began attending a mosque and converted (Styles, 2015). In 2012, she

left for Syria, taking her young son with her. Shortly after arriving, she married a Swedish IS fighter known as Abu Bakr, who has since been killed (Piggott, 2016). MI6, the British intelligence agency, views her as one of the biggest threats emerging from IS, on account of her popularity and hostility in her social media posts (“White British girl who's now a 'celebrity jihadi’”, 2014). For instance, after the beheading of James Foley, she famously tweeted requests for another foreign journalist for her to behead, desiring to become the first woman in IS to execute a “UK or US terrorist” (Halliday, 2014).

Aside from these two cases of converts, the remainder of the women investigated for this study are Muslim by background. However, their levels of religiosity varied. In the case of Shamima Begum, for instance, she is reported to not even have known how to pray (Ferguson, 2015). Others did not even wear a *hijab*, the Muslim head scarf, until shortly before leaving the UK. This was true in the instance of Sharmeena Begum, the first girl from the Bethnal Green Academy to leave for IS-controlled territory (Sinmaz and Reid, 2015).

### **Ethnic Background**

The nineteen subjects for this study were found to be from six different countries. Three of the women’s ethnic background could not be determined due to lack of information. However, the remainder came from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, the United Kingdom, and Nigeria, with the majority being Somali. All had spent at least part of their lives in the UK and had existing ties to the country at the time of their departure to Syria.

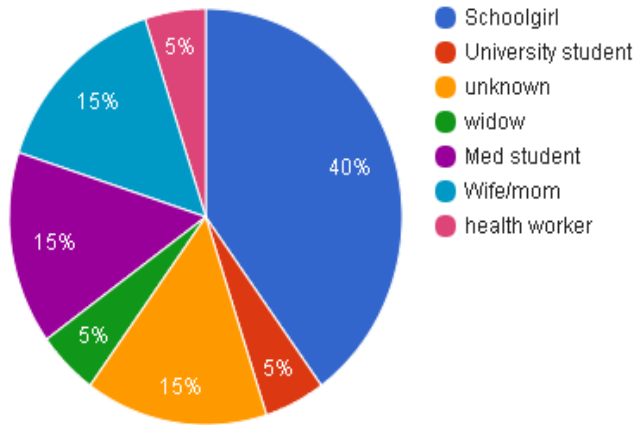


Ethnicity is crucial to note as it cannot be argued that they have national ties to the country since none of the young girls and women were originally from Syria. Indeed, none of them even came from the Middle-Eastern countries surrounding Syria. Neither do they have any direct ethnic stake in the establishment of IS. Nevertheless, they are all immigrants in a foreign society and occupy a position that is relatively vulnerable to exploitation by the same societal structures that IS is ideologically opposing. This shared link then explains the solidarity with a conflict that is not their own.

**Occupational Background**

At the time of each individual’s departure, the majority of the females were enrolled in school and performing well academically. Some forty percent were schoolgirls, with another twenty percent attending a university or medical school. This statistic is reflective of their age (discussed below).

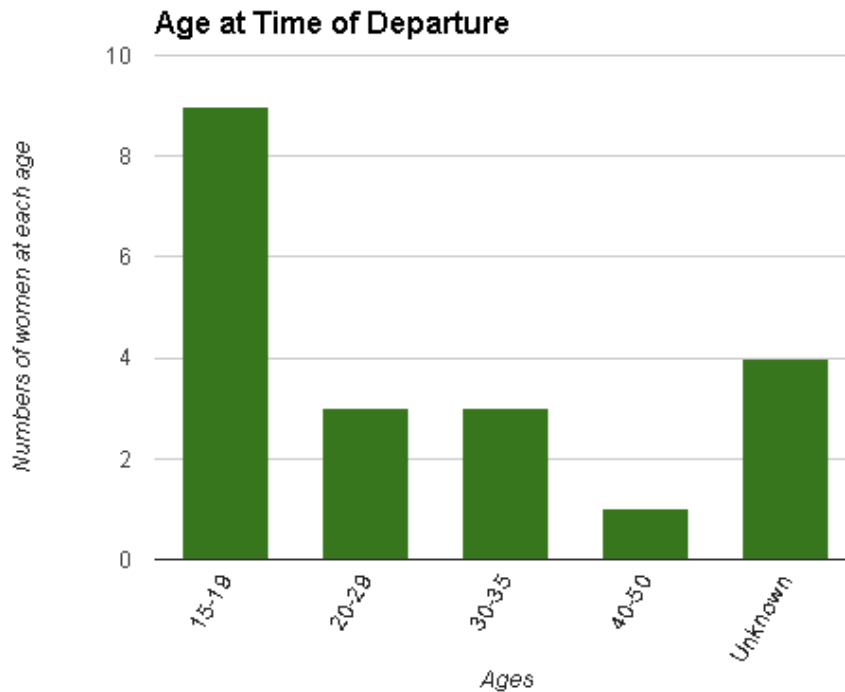
**Occupations at Time of Departure**



A brief look at their occupations further strengthens the argument that these women were educated and relatively well-off. Their motivations to join IS cannot be adequately explained by either lack of education or the inability to enjoy a certain lifestyle or provide for basic needs. It follows, therefore, that there must be some non-economic factors providing the impetus for their decision to join.

### **Age of Female Recruits**

At the time of departure, the majority of the females in the subject group were found to be between the ages of fifteen and twenty. A total of eleven of the subjects, over half of the group, were under the age of 25. This is an important fact to note as this age is often associated with a great deal of searching for a personal identity.



While it is normal for young people to go through a period of self-searching and redefinition, it is not normal for them to become involved in dangerous extremist activities as sponsored by IS. In the case of these young women and girls, they desire to fit in with the culture but the culture does not completely accept them. Thus, they create their own culture in a reactionary move against the mainstream culture. While not a new phenomenon, what is different in their case is that they are forming their counter-cultural identity in a militantly conservative form of Islam and in a radically militant movement associated with it.

### **Recruitment Network**

Many of the women and young girls who left for Syria were friends of one another and did not travel alone. As in the example of the Bethnal Green schoolgirls, the three left together, sometime after their fourth friend had also left. This friend, in turn, is suspected to have been groomed for recruitment by Aqsa Mahmood (Randall, 2014). Now, of the Bethnal Green trio,

Amira Abase has been trying to recruit girls through her social media. This is an example of a peer recruitment network.

Often times, sisters would become radicalized and leave together. This was the case for the Dawood sisters-Sugra, Zohra, and Khadijah. All three left the UK in May, 2015, with their nine children under the pretext of traveling to Saudi Arabia for religious purposes. They disappeared on the return trip and have since been reported being smuggled into Syria. It is also alleged that a brother had already left and was fighting in Syria. This is another example of how the recruitment network operates (“Bradford Dawood family 'split to cross Syria border.'”, 2015) and is similar to the case of the twins, Salma and Zarah Halane. Originally from Somalia, these sixteen-year-old girls were high achieving students until they ran away from home in June of 2014, in route to Syria (Glendinning, 2014). Here, there could be two causes for their radicalization. Like the Dawoods, it is alleged that the twins’ older brother had already joined IS (Wagner, 2014) and there are rumors that Aqsa Mahmood could have been involved too (Randall, 2014).

### **Conclusions**

This research has focused on the recruitment by IS of young British Muslim females growing up in an immigrant context. It looks at several of the explanations and theories of foreign fighter involvement including becoming radicalized and committing extremist acts. Specifically, it evaluates the theories that material deprivation and poverty and a lack of education cause an individual to adopt extremism. These theories have been proven to be inapplicable here, as the majority of the subjects were highly educated and did not appear to be suffering from the effects of poverty. Thus, alternative theories were offered to explain their motives for joining IS. Drawing upon research done on the foreign fighter complex, it suggests

that the motivating reasons stem not from a lack of material resources or attainment of education, but rather a transnational identity based in some shared identity- religious, ethnic, or ideological. I argue further that these women are grasping this opportunity to develop their sense of identity by participating in an international group. By so doing, they are taking this shared identity, religious in this case, and by participating in it, creating their own personal identities. Thus, adherence to, and participation in, some style of an orthodox form of Islam constitutes the basis of their personal identity and provides them with the impetus for joining a foreign conflict.

The data gathered for this research seems to corroborate this. Most of the subjects were young at the time of departure, an age at which it is common to question and to struggle to define one's personal identity. They also were mostly of immigrant backgrounds, either being first-generation Britons or moving there during their childhood. Sixty percent were pursuing some type of educational degree, most with excellent school track records. With the exception of Sally Jones, none appear to have been on economically difficult times. These two findings rule out the relevance of the first two theories for explaining the causes of extremism.

Therefore, I argue that it is instead a search for a personal identity that is propelling these girls and young women to join IS. Growing up in an immigrant context, they identify fully with neither their country of origin nor the country in which they grew up. Hence, they turn to other alternatives to find their identity, in this case an ultra-orthodox form of Islam. This imperils them to the appeals of radical extremist groups such as IS.

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## **How US Joint Ventures are Playing a Political Role in US-Cuban Relations**

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### **Abstract**

With a primary focus on the US-Cuban tourism industry, this paper seeks to determine how economic interests served to thaw relations between the US and Cuba by analyzing the influence of corporate lobbying, specifically how joint ventures in Cuba have influenced the US and Cuban governments' decision making. For the US, both internal and external influences played a large role in the recent decision to develop a rapprochement strategy toward Cuba. This research seeks to analyze those influences through the lens of shifting bilateral relations.

### **About the Author**

Hannah Jarman is a junior at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign studying Global Studies and Communication. Her specialization in Governance, Conflict, and Resolution and focus on Latin America brought her to Havana, Cuba in January 2016 with the University of Illinois Department of Political Science PS 300 course. Her research is supplemented by primary source observations from her trip abroad. She extends a special thanks to ACDIS for awarding her the Undergraduate Travel Scholarship research grant to aid in this research.

### **Introduction: the History of US-Cuban Relations**

Cuba in the 1950s was characterized by extravagant nightlife, a glamorous music scene, and Mafia-run business ventures. The United States had its economic influence in Cuba through several industries including sugar. These ties began in 1884 when Cuba faced a collapse in international sugar prices and the US quickly made its way to the country to modernize the technology and develop direct economic ties in one of Cuba's largest industries (Brenner et al, 2015, p117). In addition to this overwhelming investment, the Cuban government under former leader Jose Batista welcomed Mafia influence, eventually developing a large network of casinos throughout the country. When Fidel Castro and the Revolution occurred in 1959 in an effort to overthrow the Batista regime, relations with the US began to crumble.

US relations with Castro and the Revolution did not improve after the expulsion of the American Mafia and the US sugar industry. Rather, US-Cuban politics reached a new age of divergence. In 1960, Castro nationalized all foreign assets as one of his first actions in power, expelling most foreign business from the country. Castro's government aligned with the Soviet Union, instilling fear throughout the West and motivating the initiation of countermeasures by

the US government. Cuba's steps towards socialism provoked the US during the Cold War to institute an embargo to stop trade to and from the island.

In 1960, President John Kennedy was elected and inherited the Eisenhower administration's plans to invade Cuba and unseat Castro. The Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961 heightened tensions beyond the termination of diplomatic relations with Cuba that would characterize the next 55 years. As sanctions were established in 1962 by the US and as Cuba began nationalizing its economy, the political and economic ties between the two countries became more strained. Until recently, the thought of joint ventures in Cuba was a distant possibility for US business.

Countries around the world have increasingly found economic opportunity through the establishment of joint ventures in Cuba. With the thawing of relations, the US is now at the brink of re-establishing its own joint ventures on the island. Consequently, the tourism industry has evolved to include more reputable partnerships than those from the 1950s. Tourism produces a strong economic, internal drive for both the US and Cuba. With the hope of tapping into this untouched multi-billion dollar market on the horizon, US ventures are anxious to lobby powerful committees and individuals for a complete lift of the embargo.

This research will show that US business interests are the medium by which the political thawing of relations between the US and Cuba has been possible. Without business interests submitting influence, the rapid economic changes currently occurring in Cuba would not exist. This, in turn, creates domestic incentives in Cuba to liberalize the economy. From the perspective of the US, this economic influence is more effective than using sanctions to try to reverse the Revolution's ideologies. Now more than ever, active lobbying by US business has

given President Obama the opportunity to embrace a foreign policy initiative in the national interest of the US and Cuba on both a foreign and domestic level.

This paper will analyze the effects of the US sanctions on Cuba in terms of an evolving economic environment, the current international interests present on the island that have further influenced economic liberalization while prompting a response from the US, and the lobbying efforts of US businesses to open relations completely. Through this analysis, a holistic image of the current economic situation facing Cuba and the US will be presented that will help in understanding why this change occurred.

### **Effects of the Sanctions**

In 1963, the US enacted the Cuban Assets Control Regulation Act (CACR) in conjunction with the 1917 Trading With the Enemy Act (TWEA) to create an embargo against Cuba as a policy tool against communism (Spadoni and Sagebien, 2013, p79). The Helms Burton Act of 1996 codified these interests by making it necessary that both an executive order and approval by Congress were needed to end the embargo. When the economy was nationalized in 1960, all US property in Cuba was nationalized by the Cuban government (Renwick, 2016, n.a.). Notably, a large land grant owned by Harvard to study tree species became a part of the Cuban economy and now serves as an open arboretum where tourists flock to see the wide array of tree species, both native and foreign to the island. This economic model functioned until the economically-crippling effects of the US embargo took hold after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The 1990s in Cuba were given the title of the “Special Period” by the Cuban government when Cuba witnessed a large economic downturn after the fall of the Soviet Union. Tourism,

such as the aforementioned example, appeared to be Cuba's answer to this "Special Period." As their primary trading partner and source of foreign aid, the Soviet Union's fall left Cuba struggling to compensate for its lack of international, political and economic support. In 1987, approximately 87% of Cuba's trade was with the Soviet Union while loans totaling almost \$11.6 billion streamed out from behind the Iron Curtain. (Benzing, 2005, p70). As the US simultaneously experienced an economic upturn, foreign relations involving Cuba dropped down the priority lists of policymakers.

Cuba was reluctant to resort to joint ventures to save its economy. However, foreign investment became the fundamental solution to escape economic recession. This led to a 1992 constitutional amendment in Cuba that opened the country to joint ventures. Initially, foreign investors could only own 49% of any given business such that the Cuban government had majority control (Benzing, 2005, p71). Because European and Canadian tourism was so high, the number of European and Canadian partially-owned businesses in the country began to increase. Investing in Cuba's foreign direct investment (FDI) is risky, however, as Cuba does not publish annual data on its capital inflows and outflows (Feinberg, 2013, p14). Historically operating under a veil of secrecy, the Cuban government's disinclination to release the flows of capital within their country is problematic as businesses are unaware of how or where their assets would be allocated. Even so, as the tourism industry continues to grow, foreign investment in Cuba is making the country's tourist sector one of the most competitive in the region. This liberalization of the economy officially began under the shifting policies of Raul Castro in 2008.

### **Influence of International Joint Ventures**

Cuba's opening of its markets to foreign ventures was not politically and economically expedient. Nevertheless in 2013, foreign investment accounted for 7% of the new Cuban

economy, and 34,000 Cuban jobs were a direct result of joint ventures in the country (Feinberg, 2013, p16). This stems from the “240 joint ventures in Cuba, involving 57 countries in 40 different areas of the economy” that characterized foreign investment in the late 1990s when Law 77 was passed (Baumolh, 1997, n.a.). Enacted in 1995, Law 77 offered protection to foreign investors and gave some industries 100% ownership of their investments in Cuba (Benzing, 2005, p71). Canada was one of the countries that took advantage of these economic opportunities despite the divergent political interests of the US. Canada’s FDI remains one of the highest in Cuba, and Canada was Cuba’s fourth largest bilateral trade partner in 2009 (Spadoni and Sagebien, 2013, p82). Canadian joint ventures across different industries include Cerbuco/Lebatt (beer company), Leisure Canada (tourism), YM Biosciences (medical engineering), and Sherritt International (oil, nickel, agriculture). Canada took advantage of Cuba’s economic growth in the early 2000s when US business could not.

However, at the transition of power from Fidel Castro to his brother Raul Castro in 2008, accusations of corruption amongst these joint ventures rose to the surface. In 2011, Cuban authorities authorized a shutdown of Canadian joint venture Tokmakjian Group, an Ontario-based company that renovated car engines in Havana on accusations of fraud (Spadoni and Sagebien, 2013, p81). The Cuban government grew wary of international business, and subsequently initiated a campaign against corruption in foreign investment. The impact of this campaign placed higher scrutiny on big business in Cuba. In 2002, over 400 joint ventures were established; however, the Cuban government eliminated almost half of these ventures when it discovered that the economic advancements that had originally been touted did not fulfill expectations (Feinberg, 2013, p15). As a result of these changes, businesses found it incredibly difficult to operate successfully under the Cuban government’s scrutiny.

In 2013, the Cuban government established The Mariel Special Development Zone that epitomizes Cuba's economic evolution since the early days of the Revolution. Despite being weary of international joint ventures and capitalism, the Cuban government recognized the importance of developing a commercial port given the island's strategic geopolitical location. On November 1, 2013, the Cuban government released the rules and regulations for the Mariel Free Trade Zone as it is commonly known. This zone is geographically located 28 miles from Havana and is intended to become a hub of foreign investment.

With an intention for commercial entities to take advantage of the newly-expanded Panama Canal, Cuba saw an opportunity to expand economically. In stark contrast to the 1992 constitutional amendment that allocated only 49% ownership of the shares to foreign investors, foreign business will now be able to have 100% ownership, with up to 50 year contracts, and a 10 year period before having to pay 12% taxes on profits (Frank, 2013, n.a.) in the Mariel Zone. The National Bank of Economic and Social Development in Cuba and the developmental bank of Brazil, another country who has ambitions of foreign investment in Cuba, partnered with the Cuban government to contribute \$900 million to the infrastructure of the port (Davalos Leon, 2013, p168).

Although this was a significant stride towards liberalization of the economy by a fervently socialist government, there still exist strict limitations on commercial activities and a tough acceptance process to be a part of the Mariel Zone. The Dutch-British company Unilever has been one of the first and most influential to be accepted into the Mariel Zone (Frank, 2016, n.a.). Unilever is expected to open a factory by 2018 that will bring thousands of jobs to Cuba. As Cuba seeks foreign investment to develop its economy, has seen the benefits of offering majority ownership to the businesses as an incentive to set up shop. These economic



developments are important in the context of thawing relations between the US and Cuba in the past eight years. Without this liberalization, momentum for meaningful policy reform in Washington D.C. with regard to Cuba would not have materialized.

### **Future of US Joint Ventures in Cuba**

The US Department of Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) amended the CACR to lift specific sanctions regarding US business and travel activities in Cuba on January 16, 2015 (Spiliotes et al, 2015, p1). Specifically, certain exports can be sent to Cuba and certain business-related activities are now permissible for travel through amendments to the Exports Administration Regulations. Although the entire embargo has not been lifted, there are more business opportunities for US companies.

US businesses have been anxiously waiting almost 50 years to begin legally investing in the Cuban economy through joint ventures. While there has not been an official end to the US embargo, foreign companies are excited about the attractive market opportunities that will become available when US relations with Cuba have been completely normalized. In order to understand the political process behind the decision to normalize relations, it is important to analyze three key factors-- international pressure, Cuba's slow economic liberalization, and political lobbying efforts.

International pressure comes from the UN General Assembly. The UN has signed a resolution every year for 22 years asking the US to lift its trade embargo on Cuba (Renwick, 2016, n.a.). The only two countries that have consistently opposed this resolution are the United States and Israel. Human rights activists and international leaders have spoken out against the US

embargo as an exhibition of oppression, but for 22 years has not inspired action from U.S. politicians.

Most importantly, the lobbying efforts in Washington DC have played a role in all conversation involving US-Cuban relations. The Sunlight Foundation is a nonprofit and nonpartisan organization devoted to the establishment of open government through dissemination of transparent information. Through their online database, they have logged lobbying efforts based on the lobby group, the client, and the general issue at hand. Although this database only logs surface level data about certain lobby efforts, the research is extensive and provides 2,560 pages of categorized lobby information. From this database, it is evident that US business plays a significant role in the actions of the government. Specifically, the Cuban lobbying effort has grown significantly to reach all domestic political outlets with the power to shift the foreign policy conversation towards advancing the thaw. Without these business interests pushing to the forefront, the conversation on Cuba would continue to be a quiet one.

In 2015, the US Department of Commerce authorized business transactions in Cuba to be worth up to \$4.3 billion, a 30% increase from the previous year (Renwick, 2016, n.a.). In September of 2012, travel agency, Insight Cuba, lobbied the Senate Banking and Foreign Relations Committees as well as the House Appropriations Committee to help license renewal to continue sending tour groups to Cuba. Gephardt Group, a lobbyist group “enabling countries to compete in the global marketplace”, was the primary lobby group for Insight Cuba (Gephardt Group, 2016). Similarly, alcohol product producer and distributor Barcardi Limited is filed as having lobbied in May 2009. Their efforts have focused on everyone from the US Ambassador to the UN to the entire US House of Representatives and the Counsel of the President for reanalysis of US policy towards Cuba.

The list of companies lobbying for open trade and investment with Cuba is diverse and extensive. In 2014, the number of companies and organizations pushing for a complete thaw in relations skyrocketed due to hope for progress during President Obama's discussion of conducting dialogue with Castro. The Engage Cuba Coalition, which includes corporations such as Viacom, Choice Hotels, The Havana Group, P&G, Comcast NBC Universal, and Honeywell, stemmed from this hope. These powerful corporations are lobbying to end the trade embargo completely. Before President Obama's trip to Cuba in March, 2016, Engage Cuba utilized ties to the White House to provide an agenda for the business-oriented discussion during Obama's trip. While Netflix, Verizon, and Air B&B have already opened business in Cuba, the process is slow and selective (NPR, 2016, n.a.). However, the Cuba lobby is only growing. Akin Gump, the country's largest lobby firm, is making plans for their trip to Cuba to represent agricultural producers and distributors within the upcoming year (Ho, 2016).

Lobbying efforts to end the 55-year-old embargo are intensive. While manufacturers and agricultural industries have played a role in the lobbying efforts, tourism, leisure, and telecommunications have had the most leverage in the attempt to convince Congress to open trade barriers with Cuba. While tourism services are not the only US businesses pushing for the thaw, tourism's impact on the Cuban economy has been an increasingly influential one.

Cuba has achieved progress toward its economic liberalization; however, the Cuban government still publically abides by the same policies and values established during the 1959 revolution. Nevertheless, through the Mariel Port project and the introduction of international business into Cuba's economic sphere, the US has witnessed a small step towards the progress it hoped the embargo would promote. This economic progress plays a significant role in discussion by policymakers about the future of diplomatic relations.

### **Analysis: Larger International Security Implications**

Much as the American Mafia brought both infrastructure development and political corruption to Cuba, joint ventures and a growing tourism industry could bring similar advances and vices. Today, Cuba operates on a dual economic system in which two different currencies exist. This utilization of both - the national peso and the Cuban convertible peso (CUC)—complicates matters. While those working in the tourist industry make significantly more money by earning the internationally competitive CUC, the non-tourist sector workers fall further behind on the economic playing field.

A taxi driver can earn up to 20 CUC for a single car ride. Comparatively, an agricultural worker or urban employee often earns, as the national average, roughly 408 pesos for an entire month (Brenner et al, 2015, p195). The CUC is worth 25 times more than the national peso (The Economist, 2013, n.a.). With most consumer goods being sold in CUC, this creates a problematic dual economy that has prompted the Cuban government to rethink economic strategies domestically. This dual currency system creates counterproductive systematic inconsistencies for the running of a socialist state. One of the largest negative internal implications of allowing tourism-centered foreign joint ventures is the increase of wealth inequality in the country -- unless Cuba standardizes its currency. This requires a deeper consideration of how foreign investment will interact with the socialist economic system by a Cuban government that is looking to reform its economy.

In addition to internal struggles, Cuba is conscious of its position on the world stage. Once priding itself as the “Leader of the Third World,” Cuba does not receive the same cold attitude from the rest of the world as it does from the US. In 2015, many leaders, notably the Presidents of Chile and Ecuador, in the Organization of American States (OAS), refused to come

to the Seventh Summit of the OAS unless Cuba was included in the conversation. Cuba had its membership taken away in 1962 under US influence in the organization. Additionally, the UN General Assembly has voted several times against the US embargo on Cuba. Giving Cuba a voice that had been muted for years in regional organizations is important to the political alignments that exist today.

Opening up relations with Cuba has the potential to shift the political environment of the Western Hemisphere. Cuba was removed from the US State Sponsor of Terrorism list in May of 2015, which is one of the Obama Administration's most noteworthy steps in the rapprochement process. Cuba received this designation during the Cold War because of alleged repressive political ideologies and communistic actions.

Now that Cuba is no longer nominally an enemy to the US and its economy is liberalizing out of both necessity for modernization and sustainable solutions to economic stagnation, Cuba has an important decision to make. Over the past 15 years, Cuba has created an economic and political interdependence with its close ally Venezuela. Despite strained economic conditions for both countries, their relationship comes from a close alignment of political ideologies between the Castro family and Venezuelan President Maduro. Venezuela depends on Cuba for human capital in the form of doctors, teachers, and military advisors. Mutually, Cuba depends on Venezuelan oil (Piccone and Trinkunas, 2014, n.a.). Although both nations would benefit from an ease on economic interdependence because of increasing internal instability within each country, this is not probable to occur unless both countries diversify their international trading partners and allies. As Venezuela faces a huge economic downturn caused by low oil prices, Cuba made the strategic decision to accept the opening of political relations with the United States. This shift is not just politically expedient but is also a push for economic survival in the global economy.

Simultaneously, the United States has powerful self-interests as well as an external reputation to uphold. The US must begin to question whether its policy toward Latin America is sufficient. With increasing hostility from South America by countries such as Venezuela and Ecuador, it may be beneficial to continue liberal political thought in the maintenance of relations with other actors in Latin America. Finding mutually beneficial partnerships and avoiding parasitic ones may be the next step for American foreign policy in the region in order to avoid breaches of international security.

However, the US is also in a race with China to secure economic relationships in the region before the Chinese market has gained dominance in Latin America. Chinese economic influence is growing in the region exponentially. As a global trade competitor, the US has an interest in not only maintaining ties in Latin America but bolstering them as well. External interests to open relations were evident in both the US and Cuban agendas. These economic needs and desires have the power and potential to play the most important role in political decisions.

Ultimately, the tourism industry has become the first true revelation from both the US and Cuba to analyze their policies toward one another; the US risks losing a growing tourist industry and economic influence in Latin America while Cuba risks an economic downturn. The US-Cuban relationship has the potential to be mutually beneficial, and despite the risks, it is clear that US politicians have begun to realize this fact.

### **Conclusion**

As the prospect of US joint ventures in Cuba becomes more potent, an interesting relationship emerges between policy creation and corporate interests. Not unlike other policy

sectors, business interests and politics intersect strategically to establish wide scale political change. That is not to say that certain obstacles do not remain such as property claims in the country. Nonetheless, the influence of the tourism industry can be illustrated through this emerging relationship between two countries once categorically established as enemies. Recognizing the larger implication of this research is key to understanding both the US and Cuban role in the international sphere. As long as business interests exist, foreign policymakers will be pressured to view the foreign relations process through an economic lens. In the case of US and Cuba, diplomacy and foreign investment are not mutually exclusive foreign policy tactics. Rather, their purposes intertwine to create a new interpretation of economic alliances.

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**Disruptive Element: Frozen Conflicts and the CDRN**

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**Abstract**

The focus of this paper is on the four separatist territories that make up the Community for Democracy and Rights of Nations and how they derail the western integration efforts of their parent states. This piece touches on the major geopolitical players in the former Soviet Union, the origin of four frozen conflicts and the bureaucratic complications caused by the separatist regions.

### **About the Author**

Justin Tomczyk is a junior at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign studying Political Science with minors in Russian Language and Informatics. He is a FLAS language fellowship recipient and has spent considerable time in Eastern Europe.

### **Introduction**

Relations between Russia and the western world have deteriorated rapidly over the past decade. Policy makers have found themselves at odds with the Russian Federation over numerous issues – from political developments in the middle east to concerns over human rights and civil liberties. Among the many topics that divide Russia and the western world, the eastern expansion of NATO and the European Union remains one of the largest. As of today, four countries within the former Soviet Union have expressed deep interest in joining both NATO and the EU. While different in culture, language and religion they share one common trait: the presence of frozen conflicts within their borders. In this piece I will be examining the way that frozen conflicts have complicated and delayed the EU and NATO integration procedure for these countries and the role that Russia plays in this process.

### **Bloc Politics**

When studying political developments in the former Soviet Union it's critical to understand the role of intergovernmental organizations (IGOs). IGOs are a vehicle for cooperation between independent states and can cover a wide variety of policy areas, from collective security to economic cooperation. Membership in an IGO also indicates a greater alignment to a set of ideas or practices.

### NATO/EU

The European Union and NATO are important players in the former Soviet Union. The EU and NATO cover different policy areas but feature a large overlap in membership. NATO is a defensive alliance created during the Cold War. Over the past 20 years, NATO has gradually evolved its mission of collective security to include components of peacekeeping and counter terror operations. The European Union is the product of decades of cooperation between Western European countries. The EU functions as a monetary union, a single economic market and a tool for united European foreign policy. Membership in the EU or NATO shows a conformity to western values and cooperation with western leadership. As of now, the European Union and NATO have expanded to include almost all former members of the Warsaw Pact, three former members of the Soviet Union and several Yugoslav republics.

### EEU

The Eurasian Economic Union is an organization similar to the European Union. Like the European Union, the EEU seeks to form a single market among its members and coordinate both economic activity and foreign policy. Where the EEU and EU differ is in their leadership and the dynamic between their members. The EEU is composed of four countries - Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Russia. When looking at these four countries we can see Russia's absolute advantage over the other members. Russia is not only the largest in terms of size and population but also in economic and military might. In comparison, power is much more evenly distributed throughout European Union -while Germany may lead the group in economic strength, France and the United Kingdom have a larger foreign policy influence.

## GUAM

Officially known as the “GUAM Organization for Democracy and Economic Development”, GUAM is a regional IGO of states aspiring for EU and NATO membership. The name is an acronym of its members - Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Moldova. GUAM’s function is similar to the Visegrad 4 and Baltic Council - to promote regional cooperation during western integration. An example of GUAM cooperation would be the establishment of the Transcaspian trade route. All members of GUAM are pursuing EU-associate status. EU association is not full membership (nor is it a guarantee of future membership) but rather an elevated diplomatic status. EU associates are considered a component of the EU’s united foreign policy and are compatible with the EU customs standards and industry regulations.

## CDRN

The CDRN is one of the lesser known IGOs in the former Soviet Union. It’s membership is made up of unrecognized breakaway states locked in frozen conflicts. Conflicts are deemed frozen when there is no discernible end in sight yet the intensity of combat has significantly decreased. Because the CDRN’s members are not recognized by the United Nations and have no formal diplomatic ties to any country the organization acts as the only avenue of international cooperation. Examples of cooperation between CDRN members includes the establishment of a visa regime for CDRN citizens and joint declarations of mutual defense in case of attack. It’s worth noting that all members of the CDRN are locked in frozen conflicts against GUAM members.

### **Conflicts in Context**

The frozen conflicts that created the breakaway states of CDRN began during the turbulent years during the collapse of the Soviet Union. The main players in these frozen

conflicts are the newly created post-Soviet states, the ethnic minorities within them and the Russian Federation.

### Abkhazia

Abkhazia is located in the northwest part of Georgia. It is flush with the Russian Federation's border and is on the eastern half of the Black Sea. Abkhazia is the home of the Abkhaz people and spent much of its time in the Soviet Union as an autonomous oblast. The first conflict between the Georgians and the Abkhazians began between 1992 and 1993. After years of tensions between Georgians and Abkhazians, Abkhaz separatists declared themselves independent and began organizing themselves for armed rebellion with the intent of creating an independent Abkhaz state. Georgia responded with a counter-attack and planned to retake the territory. Georgia struggled to regain the separatist lands and eventually called upon the OSCE and international community to mediate some sort of ceasefire. While officially neutral in the conflict, Human Rights Watch has found significant evidence that shows unofficial Russian support for Abkhaz separatists in the form of weapons and Russian irregular volunteers (HRW). As of now, Abkhazia is considered an autonomous region of Georgia with its own functioning government in Sukhumi.

### South Ossetia

South Ossetia is located in the northernmost part of central Georgia. It is inhabited by native Ossetians and Russians. The territory known as "North Ossetia" is located in the Russian Federation. South Ossetia was considered an autonomous Oblast during the Soviet Union but was administered by the Georgian SSR. In 1990, South Ossetia declared its independence from Georgia. Georgia refused to recognize any sort of independence from the region and considered

such a declaration to be an infringement of its sovereignty. While the USSR (and later Russian Federation) proclaimed neutrality during the conflict, some Georgian reports show overt signs of Russian intervention in support of the Ossetian separatists. Eventually, a ceasefire was brokered between the Georgians and South Ossetians with a status of semi-autonomy granted to the contested territory. Part of this deal included the creation and deployment of a multinational peacekeeping brigade in South Ossetia. During the 2008 surge of fighting between the Georgian military and Ossetian fighters, the Russian Federation intervened in support of the Ossetians and launched a counterattack against Georgia.

### Nagorno-Karabakh

Unlike the other breakaway states of the CDRN, Nagorno-Karabakh does not border Russia nor does it contain a significant amount of Russian speakers. Nagorno-Karabakh was an autonomous oblast located within Azerbaijan with an Armenian majority. It's separated from Armenia by a thin strip of Azeri territory. While autonomous the area was considered a part of Azerbaijan. During the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Nagorno-Karabakh declared itself independent from Azerbaijan and voiced its intent to integrate into Armenia-proper. Azerbaijan refused to recognize this declaration. After months of mounting tensions, the Armenian military launched an offensive to connect Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenia. The following war between Armenian-backed separatists and Azerbaijan nearly escalated into an interstate conflict. Eventually, the OSCE brokered a tense ceasefire and a peacekeeping mission was established. While low-level skirmishes continue along the border with Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh enjoys limited autonomy and good relations with Armenia.

## Transnistria

Transnistria is a small strip of land located in Moldova's eastern half. The area runs vertically along the Moldovan-Ukrainian border and has a population of approximately 500,000 people. Transnistria was part of a larger Moldavian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic within the Soviet Union. This autonomous entity covered what is today Transnistria and parts of Moldova and Ukraine. During the collapse of the Soviet Union, many ethnic Russians within Moldova were concerned about the future of Russian language and identity in the newly formed republic. Russians living in Moldova felt threatened by the formal establishment of Romanian as the national language. After months of increasing tensions between Moldovan and Russians living in Moldova, the residents of Transnistria declared themselves the "Pridnestrovian Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic" ("PMR") and established Tiraspol as their capital. Initially there was little response from the Moldovan government. It wasn't until Moldovan authorities began clearing barricades and roadblocks set by the PMR that small-scale conflict between separatists and Moldovans. The conflict was mostly limited to skirmishes and minor clashes with police. While the official stance of the USSR was neutrality towards the conflict, extensive evidence and personal accounts attribute the 14th Soviet Guards Army to collaborating with the Transnistrian separatists. The 14th army was stationed near Odessa and provided material support and training to the separatists in addition to engaging Moldovan forces in combat. As of today, Transnistria remains in a state of limited sovereignty and contains a joint Ukrainian-Russian-Transnistrian peacekeeping force.



## Methods of Disruption

### Border Uncertainties

As a result of these separatist conflicts, Georgia and Moldova have had significant trouble in securing the integrity of their borders. This is a particular problem in areas along the Russian Federation. These separatist states have become conduits for human trafficking, arms smuggling and other black market trades (E.P 2006). This is due to the inability of proper authorities to enforce the law (C.E.U 2000). Many EU members have voiced concern that the inability for Moldova and Georgia to limit black market activity within their borders shows that they are unfit for EU associated status (E.C 2014). To further complicate things, recent events have shown that the borders of these areas are fluid. Separatists have gradually moved the Abkhazian and South Ossetian borders further and further southward since the ceasefire (Elleson). This past summer, sections of a BP pipeline in Georgia fell under control of separatist forces.

### Separatist Citizenship and Passports

Many GUAM members are in the process of negotiating a visa-liberalization plan with the European Union. This would minimize the need for visas and document checks when traveling to and from the EU. Such an agreement would also open the possibility of visa-free travel throughout the European Union. Unfortunately, the existence of separatist and semi-autonomous states has complicated this process. This is due to the unclear citizenship status of people living in separatist areas and an ongoing debate whether or not the visa regime would apply to them. There are three types of passports held by CDRN residents:

#### 1: Soviet Passports

It's very common for elderly residents of separatist areas to hold documents issued by the Soviet Union. In many cases it is unclear which country their citizenship would be transferred to.

If man living in Abkhazia holds a Soviet passport with “Georgian” marked as his nationality, who holds liability over him? It is worth noting that almost all Soviet passports are currency considered invalid.

## 2: Separatist Passports

All four members of the CDRN have issued their own form of passport. They are almost entirely invalid for international travel (Civil.ge). This is due to both the unrecognized status of the countries issuing the passports and the lack of counterfeiting prevention in the document. The main use for separatist passports is for travel within the CDRN. Many holders of separatist issued passports are considered stateless persons (Hewitt).

## 3: Foreign passports

It's very common for CDRN residents to hold passports issued by foreign countries. The most common foreign passport among CDRN residents is a Russian passport. Passports issued by GUAM members are also used by those living in separatist regions. The exception to this is Nagorno-Karabakh, where Armenian passports are the norm.

## Russian Media and influence

While Russia pledged neutrality during the separatist conflicts its support for the CDRN's break-away governments is undeniable. Russian influence is visible at many levels. The lowest level is in the day to day interactions of CDRN residents. Russian language is the mother tongue of a majority of CDRN citizens. While this makes sense in a location like Transnistria, this trend is even visible in areas like South Ossetia where majority of the residents identify as “Ossetian”. Russian language is also used in schools and governments across the CDRN (including the

CDRN Secretariat's website). The most accessible and available form of media in the CDRN comes from Russian sources like RT, Sputnik and TASS.

When we look towards the functions of governments within the CDRN, Russia's influence persists. Many politicians in the CDRN, such as former President Smirnov of Transnistria, have extensive ties to Russia's political system (Oleksy). This includes the financial operations of breakaway states. The Russian Federation's monetary support for the members of the CDRN ranges from financial assistance and loans to the subsidization of pension programs and social services (Puiu).

The most visceral display of Russia's influence over CDRN members is its military presence. While officially part of peacekeeping operations, Russia has used its peacekeeping brigades for its own gain. We've seen the mobilization of peacekeeping forces as a sort of deterrent towards Russia's neighbors. During the 2008 Russian-Georgian conflict, most of the Russian offensive was conducted by military units stationed in breakaway territories (Deibert). Over the past two years, Russia has issued mobilization and readiness drills to its forces stationed in Transnistria in response to the escalation of the Ukrainian conflict (Day). The usage of peacekeeping brigades in national defense policy questions the true motives of Russia's military presence in the CDRN.

### **The Future**

The future of the CDRN is uncertain. There have not been any serious efforts to push for international recognition of separatist independence nor is there a strategy to reintegrate breakaway states. A recent surge in fighting between Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan has raised questions about the long term sustainability of these frozen conflicts. Many predict that as the conflict in Eastern Ukraine gradually winds down that a semi-autonomous region may form

in Donetsk and Luhansk. While it's difficult to say what the future holds for these pseudo states, it will be impossible for Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Moldova to integrate into the EU or NATO as long as the current frozen conflicts continue.

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## **South Asia: After the Bomb**

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### **Abstract**

The effect of nuclear weapons has long been debated. Some argue that these weapons have a stabilizing effect on already volatile regions and rivals, while others fear that it will only further escalate tensions. In their book debating a nuclear world, Waltz and Sagan take opposing positions on the effect that the atom bomb had on the territorial issues India has with its neighbors Pakistan and China. The case of South Asia and the bomb is unique in the sense that while they are all ancient civilizations, their current regimes are all the same age. We are thus offered a cocktail of ancient civilizations, young regimes, territorial conflict, and history's most lethal weapon. This paper seeks to discover if the presence of nuclear bombs has impacted the ability to resolve territorial disputes between these nations. After looking at the foreign policy of each country and the history of their development of nuclear weapons, I find that, yes, possessing nuclear weapons has delayed the resolution of this territorial issue.

### **About the Author**

Amrutha Prasad is currently wrapping up and undergraduate degree in Political Science, along with minors in French and Global Studies and a certificate in Arms Control, Domestic, and International Security. Her interests include war and peace studies, security studies, and American foreign policy. As an undergraduate, she worked extensively with the ACDIS Security Studies Group, where she served initially as Vice President of Academic Affairs and is just ending her time as Vice President of Social Affairs. In Fall 2016, she will begin a master's in foreign policy at the Elliot School of International Affairs.

### **Introduction**

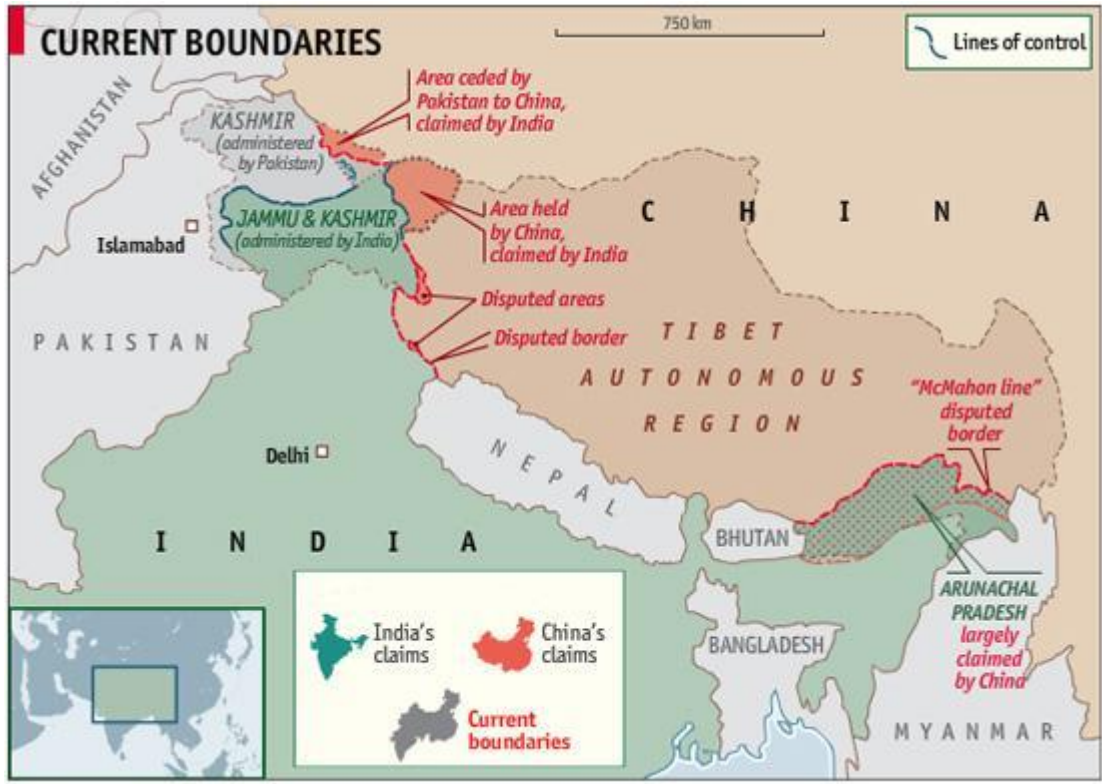
The presence of nuclear weapons in South Asia has created a thoroughly unique situation. Although each of the societies there (Indian, Chinese, and Pakistani) has been long established, their current regimes are about the same age. India gained independence in 1947, Pakistan was created that same year, and China was proclaimed a People's Republic in 1949. We are thus offered a cocktail of old civilizations, young regimes, territorial conflict, and history's most lethal weapon. What effect have nuclear bombs had on bilateral relations between India and China and India and Pakistan? Specifically, has the possession of nuclear bombs impacted the ability to resolve the territorial disputes between these nations?

While recognizing that it is exceedingly difficult to understand the thought processes of decision makers, this paper hypothesizes that the possession of nuclear weapons makes territorial disputes even more difficult to resolve. In order to answer these questions, this paper will draw upon research in deterrence theory, which allows us to consider questions related to how likely a state is to be attacked if it possesses nuclear weapons. Additionally, the countries will be

analyzed in terms of motivations to proliferate. Following an analysis on the impact of nuclear weapons on each country's foreign policy and their respective behaviors during conflict with each other, the paper will look at each country at the supranational level, in order to determine long-term policies towards nuclear weapons. In order to draw conclusions, evidence will be presented from other academics that investigate the effectiveness of thermonuclear weapons, commonly known as "hydrogen bombs", as tools to keep peace, as well as looking at the statistics for the number and outcomes of bilateral interactions that India has had with both Pakistan and China. Lastly, based on these conclusions, the paper will investigate the ability to make policy predictions for other countries.

Almost since the time of Pakistan's creation and India's gaining independence from the United Kingdom, the two neighboring countries have been engaged in conflict over the rule of Kashmir, a region to the north of India and to the northeast of Pakistan. In an attempt to settle the dispute, they established a "line of control" (LOC) in 1972, effectively dividing it into India's Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan's Northern Areas. In addition, India also has a territorial dispute with China over Aksai Chin on the western front of Kashmir, as well as India's northeastern state of Arunachal Pradesh, claimed by China as the Tawang district as a part of South Tibet. These disputes led to a war between the two states in 1962, which resulted in a humiliating defeat for India. Lastly, in 1963 Pakistan ceded a portion of the Kashmiri lands to China, adding to the amount of disputed lands between two of Asia's largest powers.





(The Economist 2012)

A few scholars have advanced the argument that Kashmir is irredentist in nature. Irredentist questions are those of pan-nationality involving territories that are currently administered by other states but that share ethnic or cultural ties to the state laying claim to these territories. As shown by Vasquez in "The War Puzzle Revisited" territorial conflicts are those most likely to lead to war until they have been resolved. Thus, as far as conventional engagement goes, peace is impossible until there is a clear victory and territories are firmly established (Vasquez 2009).

Two theories of particular importance are deterrence theory and nuclear peace theory. In direct contrast to the results put forth by Vasquez, deterrence theory hypothesizes that the possession of nuclear weapons automatically makes any potential conflict so disastrous that they

never involve themselves in any. Nuclear peace theory takes this idea one step further and argues that nuclear weapons have the potential to induce stability. Thus, these theories both posit that in introducing weapons with major potential for destruction potential and by making a situation more unstable, nuclear weapons may actually contribute to peace and security (Waltz 2013).

These two contradictory positions put China, India, and Pakistan in a unique position. On the one hand, war is inevitable because of the questions of territory and irredentist claims. On the other hand, war is arguably impossible because each of these states is a nuclear power and the damage inflicted on any other parties would be too great to risk significant conflict. Notably, possessing nuclear weapons has not prevented conflict between the parties; despite testing in 1998, India and Pakistan fought the Kargil War in 1999, fought using entirely conventional weapons. Further, while the Indo-China border dispute has not escalated to all-out war since 1962, there is regular military activity on that border (Pandit 2014).

Recent advances in nuclear weapons technology have enabled states to select strategic targets such as military command bases to avoid laying waste to cities. An example of which are intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs). China developed ICBMs in 1975 and India tested the Agni V in 2012 and 2013 (CIA 1976). These reduce the risk of nuclear war and make limited and controlled conflicts possible. Even more reassuring in the case of Sino-Indian border disputes is that both states have adopted no-first use (NFU) policies towards nuclear weapons, swearing not to be the first to use nuclear weapons in a conflict. Thus, if the conflict manifests as a war once more, it is most likely to be settled by means of a conventional conflict.

Pakistan's approach to nuclear weapons is slightly different. While they have a range of ballistic missiles, they are yet to develop ICBMs. Unlike India and China, they have opted to use

nuclear weapons only defensively rather than choosing a no first use policy. This does not necessitate that they first be attacked with nuclear weapons before proceeding to use theirs, but that nuclear weapons can be used in case of conflict. This is worrisome as if Pakistan were ever in a war, it could escalate into nuclear war. Further, India has both a higher military capability and higher defense spending when compared to Pakistan; this serves both as a potential threat and driving force in Pakistan's refusal to adopt a no-first use policy- so that they have a deterrent and a credible force with which to counter attacks (Global Firepower 2013).

Of the many reasons states proliferate, the idea of prestige and/or status come into question. According to Sherrill, one of the many reasons states proliferate is the prestige attributed to a nuclear weapons state (Sherrill 2012). This idea is useful in predicting the mentalities of nations and their decision makers. Nuclear weapons help states assert dominance in a states region. China proliferated in response not only to protect against American aggression but also to assert dominance in the region. India did so in response to China as it did not want an unfriendly neighbor to dominate the continent, and Pakistan proliferated in order to show greater military parity with India (Miller 2014).

This theory can also be applied to interpreting why these territorial disputes are proving difficult to resolve. Territory is such an essential part of a state that if one were to relinquish a portion of it, it is interpreted as weakness while nuclear weapons are seen as a symbol of power and dominance. Territory is equated to resources and so if they are weak enough to relinquish something as important as territory, then they could be viewed as too weak to have a voice in international forums. These are only some of the issues raised as to the actual power of a country in the case of territorial disputes, added on to the perceived prestige of being a nuclear weapons

state. Merely because they are nuclear weapons states, each of these countries has more prestige and status to lose than they otherwise would.

Fear of the loss of status or prestige does not preclude states from trying to cooperate so as to avoid conflict. A large part of the peace between India and China was the Panchsheel or Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, which was signed in 1954 (Ganguly, Pardesi 2009). These principles were mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence. Although this agreement deteriorated eight years later with perceived Indian interference in Tibet, the Panchsheel regained its status of importance in the 1970s (Panchsheel 2004). Sino-Indian relations soured once again when India tested nuclear weapons but since then relations between the two states have improved. Additionally, as Garver argues, Sino-Pakistani understandings do not prevent cooperation between China and India (Garver 2001). Although each country monitors the others' alignment with the United States for fear of their power, they are better able to come to agreements and bridge diplomatic divides on a regional and/or bilateral level. Thus, the more two countries are economically tied together the less likely they are to fight each other, as put forth in democratic peace theory.

Mitra and Thompson also find that recent rhetoric between India and China has improved, and is reflective of each looking at the other as more of a partner than an adversary (Mitra, Thompson 2005). In a significant shift, India and China signed agreements in 2005 during the Chinese premier's visit to India in which India recognized China's claim to Tibet and China recognized India's claim to Sikkim, a Himalayan state. This is not to say that their territorial disputes have been resolved but as a result of discussions and diplomacy, these questions seem to be moving towards resolution. Of further importance are trade relations

between India and China which developed as a result of India's economic liberalization in 1991. These trade relations play a key role in softening tensions between the two states and ensure that any skirmishes do not get out of hand.

It is possible that a similar course of action could be used with regards to Pakistan, by not only deepening cultural, diplomatic and trade ties between the two countries, but attempting processes of reciprocity in terms of recognition of territory. As mentioned by Taneja et al in their 2011 paper, despite an unfavorable political climate, India and Pakistan have not diminished trade relations (Taneja et al 2011). However, Indo-Pakistani trade relations take place erratically with nationalism soon overtaking a sense of economic pragmatism. Further, if this trend of nationalism overtaking other interests continues between India and Pakistan, it will continue to reverse any thawing between the two parties and no real progress will be made on any front for the foreseeable future. Despite having achieved "nuclear maturity" in the aftermath of the Kargil War and the 2001-2002 standoff, matters tend to remain tense on the Line of Control with both parties continually preparing for an attack from the other. Thus, the Indo-Pakistani economic climate is often a function of the climate on the border. Juxtaposed with this view, there is the dynamic between India and China, as countries aspiring to become fully developed economies. They cannot afford to have the sword of a territorial dispute constantly hanging over their heads.

The aforementioned research has highlighted nuclear deterrence and irredentism supplying us with contrasting theories for predicting events in South Asia. However, before launching into a discussion of deterrence theory as is applicable in this region, it must first be defined. This theory states that the possession of nuclear weapons will stop or prevent an attack on the state that possesses them either for fear of annihilation (if the attacking state does not possess them) or for fear of mutually assured destruction (if the attacking state does possess

them). The idea of mutually assured destruction is that if two nuclear powers strike each other with their nuclear arsenals, in attacking the other party with their nuclear arsenals, they are both doomed, or their destruction is mutually assured. Thus, nuclear war is highly unlikely, if not impossible.

It is in South Asia that this theory will truly be put to the test. As established in the previous section, the territorial issue that sits between China, India, and Pakistan is not one that will be easily resolved. So how does deterrence theory apply here? India and China went to war in 1962 and ended in a conclusive Chinese victory, two years before China tested their first nuclear weapon, in 1964. On the other hand, India and Pakistan have continued to have serious confrontations on their border, most notably the Kargil War, after developing nuclear weapons. Thus, perhaps deterrence theory can only be applied on a case-by-case basis. Here, it can be applied to the Sino-Indian conflict as neither party has engaged the other in a significant form since China developed a nuclear arsenal. Added to this is the fact that both of these countries have signed onto no first use policies, meaning that even if their dispute were to escalate into another war, the likelihood of it becoming a nuclear war is very low. While the historical approach taken by Vasquez shows us that territorial issues are most likely to lead to war, and thus the most probable course of action for the Asian powers to solve their territorial conflicts, it is most likely to be a limited conflict on a conventional scale similar to the Kargil War (Vasquez 2009).

Contrarily, deterrence theory does not apply in the case of India and Pakistan. As evidenced by the aforementioned Kargil War, these two countries are able to engage each other in a limited war, using conventional tactics alone. Thus, while deterrence could, theoretically, be applied to the case of India vs. China as both countries adopted the policy of NFU, it could be

argued that it does not even exist in the case of India vs. Pakistan as neither country is afraid to engage the other. This is a clear violation of the tenets of deterrence theory. However, the matter gets sticky when one begins to consider whether nuclear weapons are even in the picture- that is, why are India and Pakistan comfortable engaging on a conventional level, but not comfortable with escalation. Perhaps their wariness of escalation is proof of deterrence theory being applied in this case, for they fear that if one uses a nuclear weapon against the other, it dooms them both.

So what does the outcome of deterrence look like in the case of India and Pakistan? In the case of Indian and Chinese deterrence, we saw increased trade and diplomacy. However, in the case of India and Pakistan, increased dialogue is showing signs of helping the two nations work more closely. For instance, when the Indian parliament formed a new government in 2014, Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was invited to new Prime Minister Narendra Modi's swearing-in ceremony. Both states have also been known to employ something known as "cricket diplomacy". While it may seem trivial- as though importance is being detracted from diplomacy and undue importance is being given to a sport, such cultural ties have the ability to strengthen ties between the two countries. As can be surmised by the name, cricket diplomacy is simply using cricket as a tool to either better or weaken diplomatic relations between the two countries. Since both India and Pakistan are former colonies of the British Raj, cricket is a common cultural thread between them. This form of diplomacy was recently exercised between these two parties in 2011 when Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh invited his Pakistani counterpart Yousuf Raza Gilani to watch the Cricket World Cup Semifinal in which both countries had qualified.

On a deeper level, relations between India and Pakistan seem to be improving. Despite the 2008 terrorist attacks in India that disturbed relations on a political level, their economic

cooperation and exchange remained largely unaffected by it. Notably, this trade stability is relatively recent as the rise in political tensions halted almost all trade until the early 1970s, when both countries began to build an economic relationship. With the establishment of the WTO in 1995, Pakistan was granted “most favored nation” status by India soon after (De 2013). This status is important as it allows for non-discriminatory trade between two countries. However, the strength of relations between South Asia’s two largest economies, India and Pakistan, seems irrelevant when in 2011 their trade with each other accounted for less than half a percent of India’s total trade and 5.4% of Pakistan’s (De 2013). Until quite recently, one of the most important economic breakthroughs between these two countries was the 2005 Joint Communiqué produced by a meeting between Pervez Musharraf and Manmohan Singh (Khan 2009). This Communiqué rang of optimism and the promise of greater economic integration between the two neighbors. Of even more significance is Pakistan’s agreement to work towards granting India MFN status as India work towards doing away with their “negative lists” or lists of items that could not be bought and sold from the other (Taneja et al 2013).

Hence, it is clear that India and Pakistan are potentially headed down the same path as India and China- one of increased cooperation and diplomacy that promises to bring unprecedented development, stability, and prosperity to South Asia. It would also fundamentally alter everything currently known about the dynamics of South Asian politics, diplomacy, and the like, turning the region into a hotbed for growth. As relations improve, each of these countries would become more powerful on the international scale and increase India and China’s status as emerging powers. It could perhaps even make them the leaders of the Brazil-Russia-India-China bloc of countries. As mentioned previously, one thing to guard against would be any growing antagonism between these two powers. While it is undeniable that this vision of the future has a



bipolar distribution of power, this bipolarity has the ability to be amicable and stable or antagonistic, frayed, and volatile.

Alternatively, one cannot help but recognize the potential relevance of the stability-instability paradox. This idea states that there can be greater stability in a system of two opposing nuclear powers as they automatically become more wary of fighting each other while there is increased instability on a lower level as there are more proxy war among smaller, less powerful states. This idea could come into play as India and China ascend the international ranks and become increasingly important players in the international arena. However, which states would become the proxy states is yet to be seen. Further, it is not yet known whether this could be applied to India and Pakistan. On the other hand, this theory need not only apply to international powers, but nuclear powers as well. In that case, lower level proxy wars are a possibility between India and Pakistan as well, although the states that would partake are undetermined.

The Cold War can serve as a model of the stability-instability paradox for India and Pakistan. The story reads the same; two volatile nuclear powers that could spark a war between them at any given moment. Yet, even during the Cold War, the United States and Soviet Union had created their own stability- by never outright fighting each other but allowing smaller proxy wars. There are some very important differences to be noted here, though. For one, the sheer difference in the total number of warheads that the two Cold War powers had (which was near 70,000 at the height) and the total number of warheads that India and Pakistan possess (currently estimated at 120 each for a total of 240) (Isaacs). Secondly, the closest the Cold War powers ever came to actual nuclear war was during the Cuban Missile Crisis. However, India and Pakistan have already gone to war. Thus, as shown by S. Paul Kapoor, the Cold War can't be used as a model for nuclear South Asia as conditions in the latter are not derived from the stability-

instability paradox as much as they are from a combination of escalatory tactics and diplomacy (Kapur 2005).

What can be garnered from this Cold War model for South Asia is the way in which the Cold War powers cooperated, that is, through the SALT treaties. The two SALT Treaties or, Strategic Arms Limitation Talks were the product of two rounds of trilateral talks that led to the START or Strategic Arms Reduction Treaties. These treaties were centered on arms control and reducing the number of nuclear warheads that each country possessed. Due to the nature of the way that South Asia proliferated, these talks would need to be trilateral. Further, the total number of nuclear weapons possessed by China, India, and Pakistan *together* is less than what either of the Cold War powers *currently* have (CNN). Thus, even if they were to sit down for trilateral talks, the scope for the amount of progress they can make is limited by their possession of fewer nukes. However, the potential impact of China, India, and Pakistan even having such talks is quite important. If, for example, they were to make a Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty, such as the one made by the US and USSR, this alone would help contribute to the continued non-use of nuclear weapons in South Asia.

Lastly, there is more to Indo-Pakistani cultural ties than just cricket. Before 1947, they were one country. During the violence of partition, a part of India was cut off and turned into another country, leading to a lot of displacement of people. Recently, there have been an increasing number of grassroots movements seeking to reestablish contact between or unify families that were separated and lost during Partition. Thus, while India and Pakistan may have a significant religious difference between them, they have many cultural ties, shared history, and to some extent, a shared population. This strong “bottom-up” type of association reflects a potential ability for both countries to come together and overcome their differences.

The current situation of the world shows little likelihood of there being another case similar to the relationships between China-India-Pakistan. These cases cannot be considered a model of how nuclear-power dynamics can take place, but there are some broader lessons from the behavior of these three states that could potentially be applied to other cases. While there are no other nuclear powers that also seek to resolve a territorial dispute, the evidence presented in this paper shows the importance of economic relations and diplomatic ties. These are both important in terms of ways to collaborate and, perhaps more importantly, ways to punish each other without directly escalating a conflict to war. Perhaps the most important conclusion that this paper has made is the cross between the conflict of nuclear deterrence and irredentism. Based on the evidence provided above, it can be safely deduced that the irredentist movement will take precedence but the fear of nuclear war will definitely play into the dynamic. Thus, as in the cases of India-China and India-Pakistan, states with a territorial conflict between them attain nuclear weapons are more likely to pursue peaceful methods to resolve their dispute. These peaceful methods may not necessarily work, either these cases or in those in the future, but they cannot be faulted for trying.

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## **American Foreign Policy Towards the Islamic State**

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### **Abstract**

As the Islamic State evolved, so did American foreign policy and the Obama administration's ability to counter threats such as the Islamic State (IS). The Administration's strategy is comprehensive and utilizes the entire capacity of the US government, its partners, and its membership organizations. The nine core elements are distinct, and each one has ratified national and international policies to demonstrate the proactive pursuit of each line of effort. In looking at statements and resolutions drafted by the UN and G-7, it is clear that the United States is driving the foreign policy discussion in the fight against IS.

It is also clear that the policy-makers behind Operation Inherent Resolve have broken free from the foreign policy axioms that hindered the Bush Administration officials from engaging in effective decision-making. Instead of superimposing liberal democratic ideals on Iraqi institutions, the United States is supporting effective and inclusive governance. Additionally, the United States is no longer of searching for American interests within American values. The US government views the fight against IS to an issue of regional and global security and enlisted its partners in the Middle East, NATO, and the United Nations to support its mission of degrading and ultimately destroying the Islamic State. This paper examines how the United States' failed Iraq policy facilitated the rise of a radical Sunni insurgency, analyzes the United States' foreign policy towards the Islamic State, and offers criticism of American strategy.

### **About the Author**

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### **Introduction**

On June 6, 2014, a convoy of pickup trucks entered the two-man checkpoints in the city of Mosul, a city in the northern Iraqi Nineveh province. Two days later, despite the efforts of four divisions of the Iraqi Security Forces and air support from Western and Gulf nations, the second-largest city in Iraq fell to IS, a jihadist group recently divorced from al Qaeda.

Throughout northern Iraq and nearby Syria, scenarios that American involvement in Iraq were intended to have prevented were occurring. The democratic, liberalized Iraq that the Bush Administration had envisioned was never actualized. The sequence of steps taken by the provisional government had robbed the Iraqi state of its ability to effectively administer services and provide security for their people, aggravating of sectarian conflict. The Obama Administration quickly became cognizant of the scope of the Islamic State and its evolution from an al Qaeda affiliate to a territory-holding terrorist organization with a concrete hierarchy and a hold on a stockpile of weapons and petroleum. Under President Obama, the Administration devised a nine-point strategy that culminated in Operation Inherent Resolve, a comprehensive plan to degrade and ultimately destroy IS.

### **The Neoconservative Strategy**

The problematic nature of American foreign policy in Iraq can be traced back to the factors surrounding the invasion of the Iraqi state in 2003. In his book *Overreach: Delusions of Regime Change in Iraq*, Michael MacDonald offers multiple hypotheses to why President

George W. Bush ultimately called for the invasion of Iraq and the removal of Saddam Hussein in favor of a democratic regime. He argues that Hussein's Iraq was on the American governmental agenda since the late 1970s, given its strategic importance as a buffer zone between revolutionary Iran and Israel, a source of oil, and a springboard for American influence in the Middle East. MacDonald identifies three groups of supporters for the war in Iraq- neoconservatives, neoliberals, and liberal hawks, all of which ascribed to foreign policy axioms that would fail in Iraq. This broad base of support, including Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz and Senator Hillary Clinton, believed that American values and American interests were one and the same. They also believed, just as incorrectly, that American values were universal (MacDonald, 2014).

When American-led coalition forces took Baghdad in 2003, Paul Bremer was appointed to the position of Coalition Provisional Administrator. As CPA, Bremer was the top civilian administrator and chief executive in Iraq, and could rule by decree. His role in occupied Iraq has been compared to General MacArthur in Japan and the General Lucius Clay, who was in charge American zone in Germany after World War II. Republicans and Democrats debated on the issue of how to govern the new Iraqi state. Many stood behind the "fire the coach and keep the team" method, which entailed deposing Saddam Hussein and maintaining the administration and civil service which could be of use under new leadership. Bremer, however, got rid of a majority of the 'team,' disbanding the military and 'de-Ba'athifying' the state by dissolving Hussein's Arab Socialist party, all with the intent of democratizing Iraq. The Ba'ath Party, led by Hussein and composed of socialists and Arab nationalists, had dominated Iraqi politics since 1968. This "disband, de-Ba'athify, democratize" approach weakened the administrative ability of the Iraqi state beyond its already crippled condition due to US-led sanctions (Al-Ali, 2014). The specter of



democracy in Shi'a-majority Iraq inspired fear in the Sunni minority, former Ba'athists, and former military officers. Local Sunni sheiks who had exercised local authority through political deals with the Hussein regime were also wary of changes in the composition of the Iraqi government. This fear of reprisal, combined with a history of violence between factions and the decreased utility of central authority in Baghdad prompted a Sunni insurgency to form, with increased intensity in the tribal areas of the northern Anbar province. Meanwhile, foreign fighters began to flow into Anbar province. These fighters were part of Tawlid al Jihad (Unity of God and Jihad), later Tanzim Qaedat al Jihad fi Bilad al Rafidayn, or al Qaeda in Iraq. They were led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a Jordanian Sunni radical who had been trained in Afghanistan and was granted a \$200,000 loan by Osama Bin Laden himself (Weiss, 2015).

### **Counterinsurgency Under Petraeus**

In response to the influx of foreign fighters in the Anbar region, General David Petraeus bolstered the counterinsurgency capacity of the American military. First, he ordered the publication of a counterinsurgency (COIN) manual to be distributed to the United States Marine Corps. Then, he evaluated and exploited the political situation in Anbar Province, co-opting the Anbar Sheiks and allying against al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), the group that would later become the Islamic State, who had overstepped and alienated the local Sunni sheiks (MacDonald, 2014). AQI was terrorizing the Shi'a population and bombing religious sites, sparking sectarian reprisals that necessitated protection in tribal areas. The sheiks in the Anbar province joined Petraeus's campaign against al Qaeda in what became known as the Anbar Awakening. Petraeus's COIN campaign paved the way for counterinsurgency successes and the reduction of violence in the beginning of 2007.

However, the coalition-Anbari sheik alliance may have contributed to what would become ISIL's "us against the world" mentality, as it separated radical foreign fighters from the indigenous Sunni communities and the tribal networks they claimed to protect.

Meanwhile, the insurgency was evolving in response to leadership changes and death. On June 7, 2006, two US F-16 fighters dropped two 500-pound laser and GPS-guided bombs on al-Zarqawi's safehouse in Baqubah, which resulted in his death (Roberts, 2006). Since the death of al-Zarqawi, a number of emirs (leaders) have succeeded Zarqawi as emir of AQI and its evolved forms. These include Abu Ayyub al Masri, Abu Omar al Baghdadi, and current emir Abu Bakr al Baghdadi. They all remain committed to AQI's objectives of expelling the US from Iraq and turning Iraq and the surrounding region into a Sunni caliphate, but have operated under different names. In October 2006, internet messages circulating between AQI and several smaller insurgent groups referred to the establishment of the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI) in western and central Iraq. Eight groups in total, calling themselves the Mujahideen Shura Council, collectively established ISI (Weiss, 2015). Under al Baghdadi's leadership, militants were sent to engage in the Syrian conflict, eventually expanding the mission of the organization and prompting ISI to become ISIS (the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria) or ISIL (the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant). In 2014, al Qaeda general Ayman al Zawahiri disavowed the Islamic State, denouncing any affiliation with Baghdadi's organization (Weiss, 2015). Since that divorce, the US government saw ISIL as a distinct threat, an umbrella organization that captured much of the radical Sunni fighters that emerged in the aftermath of the Iraq war. In June 2014, Baghdadi declared his insurgency a "caliphate," dropping all previous acronyms and becoming the Islamic State.

### **The Administration's Strategy**

Three primary sources were used to determine the objectives of US foreign policy related to IS in Iraq and Syria – G-7 Statement on joint action against IS released by the US Department of State, President Barack Obama's address to the nation on the IS threat, and the Administration's official strategy on countering the Islamic State. All three sources contain similar language and address overlapping policy objectives. The most detailed strategy for countering the IS threat is the administration's strategy, which alludes to nine "core elements" or "lines of effort" that work in harmony towards the destruction of IS. These core elements include supporting effective governance in Iraq, denying IS safe haven, building partner capacity, enhancing intelligence collection, disrupting IS's finances, exposing IS's true nature, disrupting the flow of foreign fighters, protecting the homeland, and providing humanitarian support (White House, 2015). Manifested in policy form, these nine objectives amalgamate into Operation Inherent Resolve, a \$5.6 billion program implemented by the Department of Defense and the Department of State with the goal of destroying IS. In this section I will detail how the United States intends to accomplish each of these regional objectives.

### **Winning the Material War**

The first core element mentioned in the Administration's strategy is supporting effective governance in Iraq. American and coalition support for the Iraqi government is evident in almost every document pertaining to counter-IS efforts. For example, in the G-7 Statement, which was drafted by the member states and the High Representative of the European Union, the ministers "affirm [their] support for the new Iraqi government and encourage Prime Minister al Abadi to rapidly develop and implement his government's National Program as well as an inclusive policy

which unifies the country by representing and defending the interests of all Iraqi men and women” (Embassy of the United States, 2015). The White House Fact Sheet states that “[The United States is] supporting the new Iraqi government on efforts to govern inclusively and effectively.” In President Obama’s address to the nation on the IS threat, he states that he “insisted that additional US action [depends] on Iraqis forming an inclusive government.” Inclusivity in Iraqi politics is a major focal point that the current administration is rightfully concerned with given the incidence of sectarian violence in Iraq and tensions between Sunnis, Shia, and Kurds. After the violent treatment of Sunni communities by former Prime Minister Nouri al Maliki, fears exist that al Abadi, a Shi’a prime minister, will continue this anti-Sunni policy. Iraqi security forces are also overwhelmingly Shi’a and work with Shi’a militia from Iran. Thus, fostering inclusivity in both politics and the armed forces will calm fears of reprisal from the Shi’a majority in Iraq.

Perhaps the most costly line of effort in the Administration’s counter-IS strategy is the commitment to denying IS safe-haven. In his address on IS, President Obama asserts, “a core principle of my presidency is that, if you threaten America, you will find no safe-haven” (Obama, 2014). To accomplish this, the Administration calls for a “systematic campaign of airstrikes,” spanning both Iraq and Syria (White House, 2014). According to Kenneth Katzman, a specialist in Middle Eastern affairs, the goals of the campaign have evolved from “stopping the advance of Islamic State forces” and protecting American personnel and religious minorities, to supporting military operations. Presently, the airstrike campaign provides support for Iraqi ground forces and also works to destroy IS’s ‘logistical and operational capability.’ For example, on April 21, 2015, alone, coalition military forces conducted 22 airstrikes within Iraq using fighter, bomber, and ‘remotely piloted aircraft’. These airstrikes were used to destroy IS artillery

weapons, vehicles, fighting positions, tactical units, heavy machine guns, buildings, excavators, mortar systems, staging areas, and an IED factory (Department of Defense, 2015). Conceivably, IS's 'safe-havens' are located in larger cities like Mosul and Fallujah. The largest planned offensive in place is a plan to retake Mosul, which fell to IS forces in June 2014. The first phase of the liberation, known as "Fatah" or "Conquest," has begun, with the 15th Iraqi Army division working side-by-side with Kurdish forces in Makhmour to take back neighboring villages and push Islamic State rocket teams further away from American and Iraqi bases. Since January of 2015, the city has been surrounded by Kurdish forces with the intent to box in militants and disrupt supply routes. American airstrikes have been carried out against infrastructural and military targets, including bunkers and armored vehicles (Department of Defense, 2015).

Building partner capacity is a longstanding strategic goal in the broader Middle East region, but is an especially salient one in the battle against IS. The United States relies on military and paramilitary forces both on the ground and in the air to compliment its military strategy. For example, Jordan is assisting in launching airstrikes in Iraq; while in Syria its regional partners include Jordan, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates. On the ground, the United States depends on Iraqi security forces, Shi'a militia, and Kurdish forces to regain territory while providing air support. The program that best demonstrates the United States' commitment to building partner capacity is the \$1.6 billion Iraq Train and Equip Fund (ITEF), which provides for training sites, supplies and equipment for twelve Iraqi brigades. The administration's strategy contains provisions specifying to "[provide] the resources to help reconstitute and develop security forces" (White House, 2015). This includes sending 475 American service members to Iraq to train security forces, as well as to set up National Guard units. President Barack Obama ensures that "these American forces will not have a combat

mission...but they are needed to support Iraqi and Kurdish forces with training, intelligence, and equipment” (Obama, 2014). The G-7 statement by foreign ministers employs more passive language. In it, the ministers “welcome all contributions to improve security, including by means of training and equipment” (Embassy of the United States, 2015). Despite this difference, the influence of the administration’s strategy on joint documents is glaring. One criticism of how the United States builds partner capacity involves the entities accepted into the security coalition. In Iraq, the United States is training Peshmerga militia fighters loyal to the Kurdistan Regional Government who have only temporarily set aside their separatist grievances against the Iraqi government to fight the IS threat. The Central Intelligence Agency has even been granted permission to funnel weapons and equipment from the Iraqi Security Forces to Kurdish forces (Katzman, 2014). In Syria, the administration has considered co-opting what President Obama calls the “moderate” opposition, and what Rear Admiral John Kirby refers to as “vetted Syrians”. What was once a 3-year program to train and equip 5,400 members of the Syrian opposition, using regional partners like Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar to “host program activities,” has been stalled. However, the Syrian Democratic Forces and the New Syrian Army remain in the program. The United States is arming and training multiple rebel militias with arguably little promise that they will remain loyal to the United States once the IS conflict is resolved.

One of the major challenges facing the United States and the entire anti-IS coalition is the task of disrupting their financing, which, unlike other jihadist groups, is not primarily funded by foreign donations (Johnson, 2015). In contrast, IS’s main revenue stream comes from selling oil. According to the Congressional Research Service, the United States is pursuing a three-pronged approach to disrupting their finances- attacking revenue streams, restricting their access to the

international financial system, and imposing sanctions on IS officials and their external financial backers. Again, the United States turns to their regional partners, the United Nations, and the military to accomplish these objectives. First, the United States is pushing partners to draft legislation targeting cross-border smuggling networks. Unfortunately, these laws are often unenforced. Military strikes on petroleum collection points and refineries, however, have reduced IS oil revenues from one million dollars a day to several million dollars a week (Katzman, 2014). The United States also aims to curb IS access to Iraqi banks, and works with the Iraqi and international financial community to limit IS's ability to store and transfer money. In September 2014, The United Nations Security Council passed resolution 2178, which worked to prevent the flow of funding to IS. Lastly, the US Department of Treasury identifies and sanctions individuals involved in IS's funding and recruiting efforts. Through this three-pronged approach-- unilateral, regional, and international financial disruption, the United States is constraining IS' funding and supplies.

### **Winning the Rhetorical War**

Beyond material war, United States is also waging a psychological battle against the Islamic State. Three of the nine core elements will be referred to as the heart of the Administration's Strategy - namely, exposing IS's true nature, disrupting the flow of foreign fighters, and protecting the homeland. These objectives are all concerned with the hearts and minds of potential jihadists, and winning the rhetorical war against radical Islam. The United States has expressed their commitment to working alongside partners within the Muslim world to "highlight IS's hypocrisy and counter its false claims of acting in the name of religion" (White House, 2015). President Obama has emphasized IS's "Un-Islamic" nature in multiple speeches, and Secretary of State John Kerry has ceased to refer to IS as the Islamic State, preferring the

Arabic acronym Da'esh (Dawla Islamiyya Iraq wa al-Sham). Delegitimizing IS's message is a critical step in stemming their efforts, which have brought their casualty-to-replacement ratios "close to equal" (Katzman, 2014) The White House describes IS as an organization that is "well-resourced and has demonstrated an ability to recruit and radicalize through social media" (White House, 2015). The Islamic State has published its manifesto online, is active on social media sites like Twitter, and is estimated to have recruited 20,000 foreign fighters globally-3,400 of those from Western countries (White House, 2015). The Brookings Center for Middle East Policy estimates that there are no fewer than 36,000 Twitter accounts supporting IS (Berger, 2015). In response to these efforts, the United States has facilitated the creation and adoption of United Nation Security Council Resolutions 2170 and 2178. UNSCR 2170 calls upon all member states "to take national measures to suppress the flow of foreign fighters..." while UNSCR 2178 requires member states to prevent the "recruiting, organizing, transporting or equipping of [foreign fighters]" (Katzman, 2014). Additionally, Robert Bradtke of the State Department works with partners in Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East to curtail the flow of foreign fighters from their respective countries (Katzman, 2014).

Curbing the surge of combatants from Western countries is related to the most abstract objective cited within the nine "core elements," which is that of protecting the homeland, the United States. The primary rhetoric in all documents that have referenced the Islamic State released by the US Government is that "if left unchecked," IS could potentially stage an attack on the United States or its allies. For example, the Administration Strategy Fact Sheet states, "if left unchecked, [the Islamic State] could pose a growing threat to the United States and others beyond the region." It also articulates fears about foreign fighters returning to their place of origin. The US Government is "[concerned] that these trained and battle-hardened fighters will



try to return to their home countries and carry out deadly attacks” (White House, 2015). The Islamic State has, in fact, referred to an invasion of the United States, and created images of the jihadist black flag flying atop the White House. They have also referred to the 'Fall of Rome.' Whether this refers to the actual Italian city, the 'American Empire,' or the general Western world is largely unclear. While it is also uncertain whether IS has the resources to organize such an attack, the American intelligence community coordinates with source, transit, and returnee destination countries to monitor threats (Katzman, 2015).

### **Stemming the Crisis**

Lastly, the United States is committed to providing humanitarian aid to assuage the refugee and displaced persons crisis in Iraq and Syria. Since the invasion in 2003, the United States has paired its military efforts in the region with humanitarian aid. Between 2003 and 2012, the US provided 31% of all humanitarian assistance to Iraq, a total of \$36 million (Global Humanitarian Initiative, 2015). In the fight against the Islamic State, the need to provide food, water, and supplies to Iraqis is just as immediate. In August of 2014, as American forces carried out airstrikes on Amirli, a farming community 105 miles north of Baghdad that had been besieged by IS, coalition forces also dropped 10,500 gallons of fresh water and 7,000 MREs (meals ready to eat). In Erbil, another city in northern Iraq, ethnic Yazidi refugees under the protection of Kurdish forces received 5,300 gallons of drinking water and 8,000 MREs (Griffin, 2015). Much of the aid provided to Iraq is coordinated through the United Nations. A Strategic Response Plan, initiated by the United Nations in 2014, requested \$3.7 billion in aid (Global Humanitarian Initiative, 2015). The United States is also the single-largest donor of humanitarian aid for those affected by the Syria crisis. USAID estimates that 7.6 million Syrians are internally displaced, and 3.9 million Syrians are displaced to neighboring countries. Since fiscal year 2012,

the US Government has provided Syria over \$3 billion in humanitarian assistance (USAID, 2015). Displaced populations also put pressure on the Lebanese, Jordanian, and Turkish governments. The infrastructures that are in place are inadequate to accommodate the thousands of refugees in neighboring countries' schools and hospitals. Although the United States is a leader in providing humanitarian support to both nations, donor countries have failed to keep up with what USAID calls "the biggest humanitarian emergency of our era."

### **Conclusion**

As the situation in Iraq deteriorated, it became clear that the missteps of the coalition government led to a burgeoning Sunni insurgency that preyed on the populace's fears of Western imperialism and ethnic reprisal. From the ashes rose Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi's self-declared caliphate, and in response, the Obama Administration has forged a comprehensive strategy to counter the Islamic State. The nine core elements of Operation Inherent Resolve seek to broaden the anti-IS coalition and foster regional cooperation. They draw upon American resources both inside the government and around the globe, and seek to destroy IS's capacity to recruit, reap profits, and secure territory. In an effort to learn the mistakes of neoconservatives and the coalition government, there is an emphasis on political stabilization within the Iraqi state. Operation Inherent Resolve has drawn criticism from those who believe the administration should not "cut deals" with opposition and separatist elements, however, it ensures that our allies possess local knowledge that coalition forces from the United States and Europe do not. Through pragmatism, and fighting terror for the sake of global security rather than installing democracy, Operation Inherent Resolve acts as a blueprint for battling the new paradigm in world terror, the Islamic State.

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